Cultural Change Among the Kalinga and Catalangan: Discontinuation of Rituals and Conversion to Christianity in the Foothills of the Northern Sierra Madre

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ABSTRACT

This article is based on oral history interviewing and fieldwork in San Mariano, Isabela in 2004, following in the footsteps of 19th century naturalist Carl Semper and William Henry Scott, who visited the area in 1975 and described some aspects of the culture and rituals of a group they called Catalangan. At the time of our research, they were referred to as Catalangan and Kalinga, and had discontinued the ritual cycle. We argue that conversion to Christianity among these groups post WWII should be understood as a political process, whereby groups outside the mainstream of lowland culture and political institutions become integrated into Filipino society. In our research, we focused on reconstructing the rituals these groups used to conduct through repeated conversations with elders, and the particulars of the process of conversion. This brought to light the mechanisms through which Indigenous peoples' own ways of life became devalued, and lowland Filipino culture became the standard to aspire to. Christianization, in this analysis, is both a cultural and a political process. The dynamics of this process originate in Spanish colonialism and are linked to changes in livelihood, notions of landownership and land use. Distinctions first introduced by the Spanish, between Christians and non-Christians (Infieles), still reverberate in contemporary Filipino culture, and overlap with binaries such as 'uncivilized' and 'civilized' linked to the global persistence of coloniality. Finally, as we show towards the end of the article, the process of conversion is linked to another type of 'conversion' introduced by capitalism: from subsistence-based swidden farming (kaingin) to cash crop farming and the spirals of debt and loss of land this often entails.

Keywords: Indigenous Peoples, Northern Sierra Madre, Ritual change, Conversion to Christianity

This article summarizes some observations from fieldwork that we conducted in 2004 among two groups of shifting cultivators who have gone through a very recent process of integration into mainstream lowland Filipino society. These are the Kalinga (Kali-nga, different from the Kalin-ga of the Cordillera) and Catalangan of San Mariano, Isabela. They are apparently Indigenous to the area. The German naturalist Carl Semper first described these two groups in 1860, and the historian William Henry Scott reported on the situation of the Catalangan after a brief visit in 1978 (Scott 1975, 1979; Semper 1861). Apart from these reports, little was recorded about them. We focus in particular on three interlinked aspects of this process of integration into lowland Filipino society: discontinuation of rituals linked to the agricultural cycle of traditional farming practices, 'conversion' to Christianity, and changes in livelihood.

As we will argue, conversion to Christianity should be understood as a political process, whereby groups outside the mainstream of lowland Filipino culture and beyond the reach of Filipino political institutions become integrated. Christianization, in this analysis, is both a cultural and a political process. The dynamics of this process originate in Spanish colonialism and are linked to changes in livelihood, notions of landownership and land use. As we will show, distinctions first introduced by the Spanish, between Christians and non-Christians (Infieles), still reverberate in contemporary Filipino culture, and overlap with binaries such as 'uncivilized' and 'civilized.' Crucially, they also overlap with the kinds of distinctions summarized by the term 'coloniality,' a concept developed by South-American and African intellectuals to make visible all the ways that colonialism, even after the formal relinquishing of colonising nations, still continues today (Boatcă and Roth 2016; Bigornia 2025; Mignolo and Walsh 2018; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). In particular, theories on coloniality show how the entanglements between religious, racialized and gendered notions of society introduced and imposed through colonialism have shaped and continue to shape cultural formations worldwide. This results in a hierarchical order where some bodies and lives are seen as more valuable than others, generally placing white, able-bodied heterosexual males at the top.

More particularly, our interpretation of the process of change among the Kalinga and Catalangan is informed by anthropological/historical understanding of conversion and colonialism as linked processes (Hefner 1993) as well as available studies on cultural change and Christianization of other ethno-linguistic groups in the Philippines,

such as Rafael's (1993) historical study on conversion, and studies of popular beliefs and conceptions of power of mainstream Filipino culture (Cannell 1999; Kerkvliet 2002; Lewis 1992; Rafael 1993; Russell and Cunningham 1989).

Rafael, in his history of the conversion of the Tagalogs, described the process as follows:

> Conversion, like conquest, can thus be a process of crossing over into the domain– territorial, emotional, religious, or cultural–of someone else and claiming it as one's own. Such a claim can entail not only the annexation of the other's possessions but, equally significant, *the restructuring of his or her desires as well. Affective bonds are thus forged within a hierarchy of interests* (Rafael 1993, *xvii* italics by authors)

However, to understand this process of conversion, and whether it indeed constitutes a 'conquest' as Rafael argues, we need to understand more about the domain *from* which people are crossing into the new domain constituted by conversion (Roberts 2012). What cultural and religious domains, what 'hierarchy of interests' and affective bonds did the Catalangan and Kalinga leave behind? Is this process, in fact, complete? In our research, we focused on rituals and their discontinuation to foreground such questions. This has the benefit of recording in writing knowledge about these rituals, previously available only in oral form. Thus, we focus on the particulars of the process of conversion, bringing to light the mechanisms through which Indigenous peoples' own ways of life became devalued, and lowland Filipino culture became the standard to aspire to. As we will show, the process of conversion is linked to another type of 'conversion': from subsistence-based swidden farming (kaingin) to cash crop farming and the spirals of debt and loss of land this often entails.

Since the visit of Scott in 1978, the landscape and environment of the foothills of the Sierra Madre changed dramatically, as well as the communities near the forest frontier. What has this meant for the Kalinga and Catalangan? Like the hunting-gathering groups usually known as the Agta, they are apparently also indigenous to the area, and as Scott and Semper described them, they had their own customs and ritual practices. The Agta are readily identifiable and singled out as an ethnic group even by people unfamiliar with the area because of their distinct appearance and lifestyle, and several studies have been published on them (Estioko-Griffin 1985; Griffin and Griffin 1997; Headland and Headland 1997; Magana 2000; Peterson 1978). In contrast, the Kalinga and Catalangan can be easily overlooked as distinct groups. When other researchers took note of them, they observed that the two groups seemed intent on integrating with lowland culture,

downplaying any ethnic differences (de Jong, 2003). To some extent, this wish to lose their distinctiveness is surprising, since the Philippines is one of the most progressive countries worldwide with regard to legislation for the rights of Indigenous peoples. The Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) passed in 1997 enables Indigenous Peoples to claim rights to land where they have lived since time immemorial (Persoon and Minter et al. 2003). In 2004 however, the Kalinga and Catalangan we spoke to were not aware of this legislation or what it could mean in their situation. At the start of our research in 2004, people in San Mariano often commented that 'they [the Kalinga and Catalangan] are already Christian now' or 'they are already civilized,' implying that they were losing their distinctiveness as a group. Indeed, the Kalinga and Catalangan themselves often saw their difference with migrants as a burden. How did this come about?

Before going into these questions, we will outline some methodological considerations. Next, to show how the current process of conversion is rooted in colonialism, we review some historical sources on the construction of ethnicity as a historical political process and the role of Christianity in the same process in the Sierra Madre region. After this, we describe some of the rituals as they were narrated to us for the insights they offer into the social organization of the Kalinga and Catalangan prior to the dominance of the migrants in their communities. We also discuss the reasons that the elders gave for discontinuing the rituals. In the final part of this paper these are contextualized in relation to two processes: the process of Christianization and the process of land use change, both linked to the influx of migrants in the San Mariano area and the incorporation of the entire community into the cash economy.

In the footsteps of Semper and Scott:
Methodological Considerations.

As mentioned, there are very few written sources on the two groups being discussed here, and the two publications of direct relevance are more than a century apart (Scott 1979; Semper 1861). When crossing the Sierra Madre from the eastern side, Semper wrote that he encountered two groups living in the foothills of the Sierra Madre along two rivers streams that come together to form a side arm of the Cagayan River, east of Ilagan in the present-day province of Isabela. He referred to the first group living along the Catalangan River as 'Catalanganes,' while he called the second group, living along the Pinacanauan de Ilagan, 'Irraya' or by the general name of Kalinga. According to him, both groups subsisted on swidden cultivation and trading forest products, game and contraband tobacco with the Christian groups living in the Cagayan river valley. He also reported his attempts to know something about their beliefs and rituals. Although he admits that his understanding

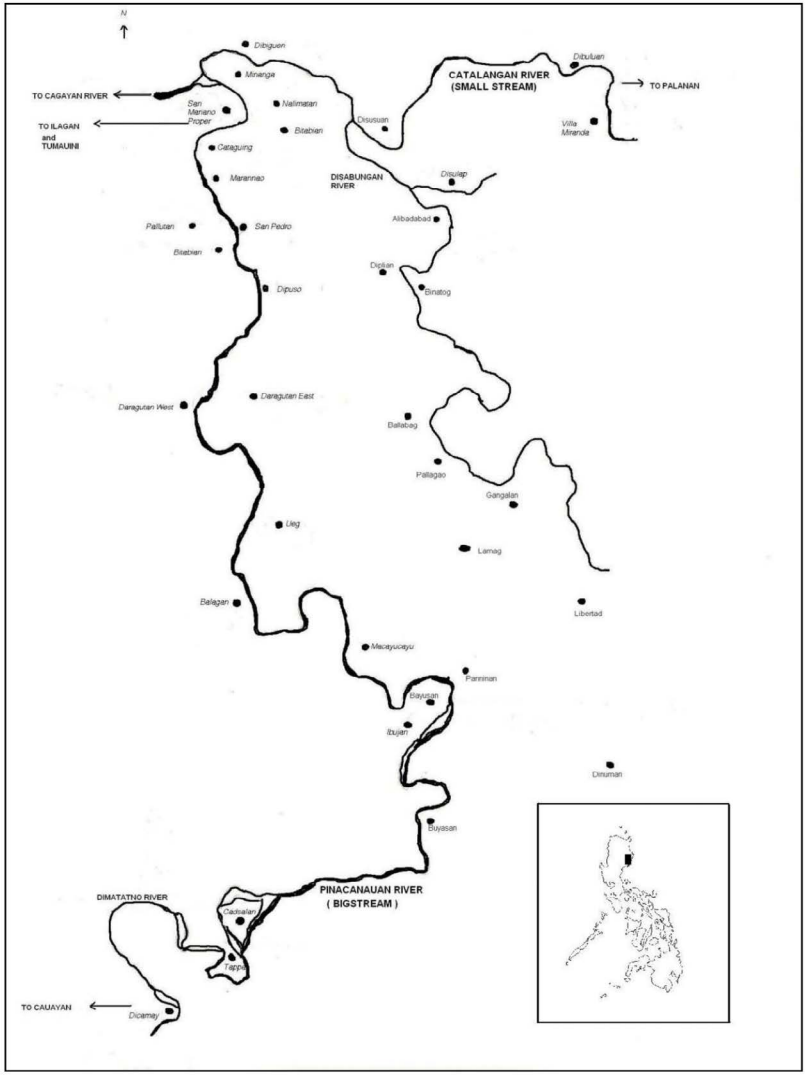

Figure 1. The area of the Kalinga and Catalangan, based on Namria map 7476 IV[1]

of them is limited, he thinks the Catalangan have relatively 'pure' beliefs and rituals, while the Irraya have been influenced by the degenerated culture of the 'Tagalischen' (lowlanders who had been under Spanish colonial rule for a long time) (Semper 1861). The Catalangan were quite hostile to his party and refused to offer him hospitality. He reported that he ordered his men to break into their storerooms and threatened to levy a war tax to force them to sell food to his party.

In 1978, William Henry Scott stayed for five days in the sitio of Dilumi, barangay of Dibuluan, along the Catalangan river to see to

what extent 'Semper's Kalinga' had changed (Scott 1979). He did not visit the group identified as 'Irraya' by Semper. His main informant then was Ipiyak Impiel, in Scott's words, the 'leading citizen' of Dilumi. In terms of material culture and subsistence strategy, Scott found them relatively unchanged compared to Semper's description and described the importance of a specific planting ritual, the *bawang*. He noted that they had given up some of the characteristics described by Semper (tattooing, for example). He thought this was because they became tired of facing the ridicule of the Christian migrants flooding into the area, already outnumbering the Kalinga. These migrants followed in the wake of the large-scale logging operations that were opening up the mostly forested area east of Ilagan (Van den Top 2003).

The area where Semper first encountered these two groups is now within the present-day municipality of San Mariano, east of Ilagan in the province of Isabela. This municipality is on the border of the Northern Sierra Madre National Park (NSMNP). It has been the site of extensive commercial logging from the early sixties until the early nineties. Although the large-scale operations have stopped, there are still plenty of small-scale illegal logging activities. These are financed by lowlanders, who often employ locals to find and extract the last remaining hardwood trees. The area is now dominated by lowlanders who migrated there at the height of large-scale logging. Finding land, they started out as kaingin farmers, generating income from planting and selling bananas, peanut and watermelon, and from small-scale illegal logging (Van den Top 2003). Since the late nineties, the land was increasingly planted to yellow corn (locally called Cargill after the company that provides the inputs of genetically modified seeds, fertilizers and pesticides), leading to increasing pressure on available land.

We started our research by trying to find Scott's main informant, Ipiyak, along the Catalangan River. When we asked people in the barangay of Dibuluan along the Catalangan river if Ipiyak was still alive, we were told that he had passed away, but that his son Poldo still lived in Dilumi. Indeed, Poldo and his wife Serpida still remembered Scott's visit: tall as he was, he crawled under the house to look at the way they had tied together the beams of their houses and made their roofs. Their own house was much simpler than Ipiyak's: an L-shaped raised floor made of bamboo, with only two bamboo walls and a bamboo roof. They were too old to work in the fields much. Both of them were very shy, not used to receiving visitors. As one of us (Knibbe) is white and did not speak Ilocano very well, this probably reinforced their shyness. However, over time we were able to build trust and familiarity, because we kept coming back. Noting our interest in subjects that few others were interested in, they became enthusiastic informants about their history and culture, making sure that we understood everything right.

We repeated this process with other key informants, especially those who were pointed out to us as *maganitos* along the two river arms. *Maganitos* (healers) were assumed to be able to communicate with the *anitos* (spirits) to search for the cause of an illness and misfortune, thought to be related to the anger of the *anitos*. All in all, we spoke to five *maganitos* in the Catalangan region, and four in the Pinacanauan region, all multiple times. In addition, we spoke to older people who were sons and daughters of deceased *maganitos*, and in one case, someone who was the widower of a *maganito*.

Importantly, *anitos* are not ancestors. In 1979, Scott wrote the following about the nature of their beliefs:

> All of these relics were explained as signs of respect for the anitos, but it was rather indignantly denied that anitos had any connection with departed ancestors. Ipiyak himself [Scott's informant in Dilumi] said that he did not know what happens to the spirits of the dead with a finality that discouraged further inquiry. (Scott 1979, 98)

Because our informants were afraid to name the exact *anitos* for fear of calling their attention to the fact that they had discontinued the rituals, we also refrained from inquiring too closely and will not repeat the names of those *anitos* we did hear about through others.

In addition, it is important to note that most of our informants, as well as other Catalangan and Kalinga, could usually only provide vague references to historical timeframe, so we used their approximate ages and that of their children to estimate dates, as well as other reference points such as mayoral terms, WWII, and when loggers entered their area. Along the Pinacanauan, people were less shy and more precise in terms of historical timeframe.

In some details, the accounts of Poldo and Serpida challenge that of Scott in 1978. At the time, Scott listed Ipiyak's last name as Impiel (unbeliever), which is the last name people were assigned if people were not baptized, a practice linked to Spanish colonialism. This last name has all kinds of negative associations, which we will explain in more detail in the section on ethnic classifications and the section on Christianization. However, according to Poldo and Serpida, Ipiyak and most other Catalangan had already been baptized when Scott visited them in 1978. The lowland trader with whom Ipiyak traded rattan for white corn had convinced him to be baptized. Later, a lowland neighbour convinced Ipiyak to have his only son (Poldo) baptized as well. Ipiyak was baptized Aggabao, and his son was baptized Poldo Velazco. Poldo was still a boy when he was baptized, so that must have been just after WWII.[2]

Figure 2. Baket Serpida, former *maganito* in Dilumi.

Figure 3. Baket Garatiyo, *maganito* in Cadsalan.

Another important difference with Scott's account is that it was, in fact, women who led the *bawang* (planting ritual) also described by Scott. Following his description, we had assumed that Ipiyak, and later Poldo, was in charge of the rituals. Yet, when we asked about the *bawang* it was consistently Serpida who answered. Similarly, in Dibuluan, it was a group of women who responded to our request to tell us more about the old rituals. To our shame, we must admit it was only after several conversations with Poldo and Serpida that it occurred to us to check this. Serpida confirmed that she and the other women were the ones who led the rituals.

The *bawang*, a planting ritual mentioned by Semper and Scott, as well as other rituals associated with the agricultural cycle, were not performed anymore at the time of our research. In contrast, many of the healing rituals are still done, although the number of *maganitos* is going down, according to our informants. During our fieldwork, we found several informants who used to lead the agricultural rituals, and a few ritual practitioners who were trained to perform the agricultural rituals as well as community rituals and healing rituals. Most of the agricultural rituals were led by women who dance and get possessed by anitos. The individual healing rituals can also be done by men. We attended one possession healing ritual because we happened to be interviewing the healer when she was called to cure a baby, but otherwise the information presented here is based on the long interviews we conducted with maganitos and older people who had often attended these rituals.

Understanding the ritual practices, the ritual specializations, the way they were passed on and figuring out why they were discontinued, as well as getting a clear picture of what they entailed in terms of social organization, took plenty of time. We are not at all sure that our findings exhaust the picture, because until the last day of our fieldwork we kept finding new information. The account below should be seen in that light: as a tentative synthesis of our findings so far. Nevertheless, they do enable us to sketch some of the mechanisms through which conversion and cultural change took place.

The article by Semper also describes his encounters with the Irraya, or Kalinga along the Pinacanauan, who, according to him, were more influenced by 'Tagalog' culture. In present day language, there is a difference in pronunciation when people speak of the Kalinga of San Mariano indigenous to the Sierra Madre and the Kalinga in the Cordillera. In the first instance the word is pronounced as 'Kali-nga', and in the second as 'Kalin-ga.' These days, 'Irraya' is not used by the people living along that river, rather they describe themselves as Kalinga, and Irraya means 'town' in Catalangan. Scott did not visit this group, and there are very few other historical records. Yet, we included them in this research since researchers were not sure whether they should be considered as part of the same group, or a different one.

As we will outline below, we found that the Kalinga and Catalangan considered themselves to be separate groups, with slightly different languages, separate cycles of agricultural rituals which also differed somewhat in execution. In addition the Kalinga also had status rituals, prescribed when illness and misfortune arose, which the Catalangan did not have.

The next section delves into the question of ethnic labels during colonial times. This is based on both literature research and oral history. We searched for references to people living in the foothills of the Sierra Madre in the north of Luzon in the more readily available historical sources in the Philippines, academic libraries, and on the internet. Whenever we found a text on the Sierra Madre, we narrowed it down to those parts that might refer to the region of present-day San Mariano and searched for descriptions of people living east of the towns of Ilagan, Tumauini and Cauayan.

Apart from Semper's article, we found only general descriptions of the people in this area during colonial times. Both the Spanish and the Americans never encountered the people living there long enough to say more than that they were wild, pagan, and practiced swidden cultivation. They are classified variously as Kalinga, Igorot, Gaddang, Kalibugan or Calabugan, or listed as unknown ethnicity.[3] Since the authors of these reports do not mention how they obtained these data and the geographical indicators are very vague, it is often quite difficult to assess what these names mean or whom they refer to.[4] Current thinking in anthropological theory sees ethnic labels as the result of a dynamic process of outside ascription and self-identification that changes with demographic and political circumstances. This means that on different levels, different ascriptions by outsiders and self-identifications might prevail (Roosens 1989; Scott 1962). As Scott describes it: the archives form a 'parchment curtain' through which only glimpses can be found of people's own self-understanding (Scott 1978). In our interviews with elders, we therefore paid attention to how they identified themselves and described how their ancestors described themselves in terms of their ties to the wider region, and in relation to migrants coming in from other regions.

Because the rituals were discontinued, the section on rituals relies almost exclusively on oral history and interviews with *maganitos*, who led the rituals, or their descendants. It is important to note that none of the *maganitos* had formal schooling. As we will outline below, younger generations are no longer trained to conduct the rituals, meaning that Indigenous education has fragmented. Given this situation, our immediate concern after completing the research was to create a report that was as complete as possible, which we distributed to the barangay captains and guest families of our research, so that the younger

generation of Kalinga and Catalangan might have access to their history in a written form. However, both the report and this article contain many gaps in knowledge. We are also fully aware that meanings and labels shift, that some things are hard to explain to outsiders, and that our insight at the end of our research was still far from complete. The following two sections present reviews on written and oral sources on ethnic classifications, before going into the ritual practices as they were described to us.

Through Colonial Eyes: Who are the People East of Ilagan?

As mentioned in the introduction, current scholarship on coloniality views the colonial period as not fully ended because the distinction introduced by the colonizers, in this case the Spanish and later the Americans, still inform current cultural formations through which people are classified and read in terms of skin color, gender and religious affiliation. Spanish missionaries played a key role in this as the processes of Christianizing and establishing administrative control went hand in hand.

In 1755, the area east of Ilagan until Palanan was delineated as the 'Catalangan mission' by the Spanish religious authorities (De Jesus 1982; Salgado 2002).[5] This mission encompassed the peoples living along the Catalangan, Disabungan, Disulap and Pinacanauan rivers, roughly corresponding to the area of the present-day municipality of San Mariano. Although it existed on paper, it seems the mission never really took hold. In the Spanish and American colonial documents, the area of the Kalinga and Catalangan emerges as a place where they never fully established administrative control. It is referred to as a place where 'pagans' (infieles) dwell (according to the Spanish), only inhabited by 'wild savages' (according to the Americans). Under Spanish colonial rule, the most relevant distinction, encoded in law, was that between Christians and pagans (De Jesus 1982), while the 'Negritos' (now Agta) were recognised as a completely separate category due to their distinctive lifestyle and appearance. The aim of the Spaniards was to bring the pagans under their control through conversion. Thus, becoming Christian meant coming under Spanish rule. Throughout the Philippines, they forced people to live in the cities so that they could be 'reduced' to Christianity. In the Catalangan mission however, they failed to force the inhabitants to come down to the towns, despite regular raids. Therefore, they decided to 'reduce' them in their villages, which we could read as an admission of defeat (Salgado 2002). Those living east of Ilagan, Tumauini and Cauayan escaped this regime.

This area was also the place lowlanders fled to when they could not bear the pressures of the Spanish colonial administration anymore,

and apparently the people of the lowland city of Ilagan wanted to keep it outside the control of the Spanish. This may have been because it was a good source of contraband tobacco (De Jesus 1982; Keesing 1962; Salgado 2002).[6] Furthermore, the foothills of the Sierra Madre served as the hideout of rebel groups since Spanish times up to the present day: the Katipunan at the end of the nineteenth century, the Hukbalahap during WWII and afterwards, the NPA since the years of Marcos's regime until now.

Generally, the Americans, taking over as colonizers from the Spanish, were more interested in the culture and customs of the 'non-Christian tribes', and had a grudging, romanticized admiration for them for having maintained their cultural integrity, unlike the 'degenerated' lowlanders. Nevertheless, under American rule as well, the most salient classification remained the distinction between 'non-Christian' tribes and Hispanicized, Christian Filipinos. Moreover, like the Spanish, the Americans saw it as their duty to missionize among the tribes and civilize them. However, we did not find any colonial American sources specifically referring to the Catalangan or Kalinga in the area covered by our research.

When Semper visited the area of present-day San Mariano in 1860, he perceived four different groups: the Catalangan, living along the river of the same name, Agta (Negritos), Christianos who had fled from the lowlands, and Írraya or Kalinga. He found the Agta living among the houses of the Catalangan. Along the Ilagou, he noted that the Agta were tilling their own land (presumably, he identified them as Agta based on physical characteristics). According to him, Kalinga was a general name used by the Christianized lowlanders to indicate 'pagans' (this is also mentioned by Scott, who says Kalinga means 'enemy' in Ybanag, the language of one of the largest ethno-linguistic groups along the Cagayan river). Thus, based on written records we may conclude that, although only noted by Semper, there was a distinction between Christianos and Indigenous (unchristianized) inhabitants in this region and that these groups could further be distinguished through the labels of Agta, Catalangan and Kalinga. In San Mariano in 2004, Christian lowlanders used the term Kalinga in the same way as Semper describes in 1861, to indicate the people that they considered 'not yet Christian', or 'not yet civilized', referring to the evolutionary framework introduced by the Spaniards.

Ethnic Classification Through the Eyes of our Informants

Nowadays, the groups living along the Catalangan and the Pinacanauan might all call themselves 'Kalinga' (Kali-nga) to distinguish themselves from the 'Christianos', the people who migrated there from the lowlands (mostly Ybanag and Ilocanos). However, especially among

the younger generation, they might deny this heritage, preferring to identify as Ilocano, which is also the lingua franca of the region and roughly synonymous with 'Christian' and lowlander (thus, Ilocano has become a more general label than an indication of the place of origin). In addition, the people living along the Catalangan also call themselves Catalangan, to distinguish themselves from the Kalinga along the Pinacanauan. The latter did not recognize the name 'Irraya' ascribed to them by Semper. In Catalangan 'Irraya' is the word for community or town, so Semper might have mistaken the Catalangan referring to the Kalinga settlements for the name they ascribed to the Kalinga as a group

Locally, the area of the Catalangan River is referred to as the 'small stream'; while the area around the Pinacanauan is called the 'big stream', and this is another way the two groups distinguish themselves from each other. For example, there is a group of Kalinga in Minanga and Dibuluan located in the small stream region who distinguish themselves from the Catalangan by calling themselves 'big stream' Kalinga because their ancestors came from there and because, as we will see later, their ritual practices are different. Thus, the Catalangan may also be known as 'small stream Kalinga'.[7] The two groups say that although their languages are similar, their vocabulary is different.[8] For simplicity's sake, we will stick to the label of Catalangan for those living in that area, and reserve the label of Kalinga only to those living in, or originating from, the Pinacanauan area.

Ritual Practices and Social Organization[9]

As we mentioned at the start, the agricultural rituals were mostly discontinued, and most Kalinga and Catalangan are now baptized, getting rid of the surname 'Imfiel'/Infiel/Impiel. How, if at all, are these processes linked in the experience of the Kalinga and Catalangan? As we mentioned in the introduction, we were interested in finding out more about the domain from which the Kalinga and Catalangan crossed over into the domain of lowland Christian culture to which they, in particular the younger generation, were now keen to be accepted. One entry point to this was to ask about the agricultural and other collective rituals. While the next section focuses on their discontinuation, this section presents the knowledge we were able to piece together from maganitos themselves, and their descendants. Here, we will mainly focus on the agricultural rituals and what they tell us about the social organisation of the two groups, the cooperation between people across geographical distances as well as the affective bonds between them, and the anitos.[10]

Kalinga Agricultural Rituals

Among the Kalinga, the cycle of agricultural rituals consisted of three rituals, plus one optional ritual if the harvest had been bad the preceding year: *Bawang, Dumagot, Awatan* and the optional ritual *Pataw*. One of the maganitos, women who have a special connection to the anitos and have been trained to perform the appropriate rituals, would organize these rituals.

For the pre-planting ritual of *Bawang*, food was offered to the anitos, and when everybody was gathered, the organising maganito would start calling the anitos by name. There were seven anitos, so she would be possessed seven times. Other maganitos (whether accomplished or still in training) could also take their turn. The woman who was perceived as having a special connection with the most powerful anito would dance (i.e. get possessed by the anitos) last. During this intensive interaction with the anitos, men played the gongs, and *bassi* (sugarcane wine) was passed around. This ritual was the most important one, requiring intensive preparations and organisation. The dancing, possession and playing of gongs together made this into a major event in the annual calendar.

Dumagot was done the next day, to predict how the harvest would turn out. After catching fish in the river, this would be cooked with rice. The rice was then thrown to the ceiling: the way it stuck to the ceiling or fell and scattered indicated the type of rainfall to expect after planting. When this had been done, the planting could start.

Awatan was done after harvest, and involved the offering of food to the anitos: five plates of upland rice, five pieces of *binallai* (a sticky rice delicacy), a coconut shell filled with rice and a bundle containing a cake made of sticky rice in the shape of a crocodile. A saucer with oil was put on top of the bundle containing the crocodile-shaped rice cake. Before calling the anitos, the maganitos would dip their fingers in this oil to put some on their forehead and scalp.[11]

Pataw was only done when the harvest was bad, and involved a show of strength by carrying a pig around the *uma* and a wrestling contest.

According to our informants, the early migrants in the big stream area fell in with the ritual cycle and, like the Kalinga, waited with planting until Dumagot (predicting the harvest) was performed, because otherwise they would have no companions to help them plant.

Catalangan Agricultural Rituals

The Catalangan had a simpler series of rituals: they had a communal pre-planting ritual, and individual pre-harvest rituals. They are both called *bawang*. Again, it was the women who got possessed and led

the rituals. Apparently, there was no post-harvest ritual. There were several women who would do *bawang*, but they all had to wait until the woman with the 'biggest' anito had conducted the *bawang*.

In preparing for the pre-planting *bawang*, the whole community was involved. To coordinate the preparations, Ipiyak distributed knotted ropes. Each rope had ten knots, and each day one knot would be cut. In this way, all the food and bassi would be ready in time, and everyone knew when to gather at the household with the 'biggest' anito: Poldo's mother. Before everyone gathered, a special house would be made (a *kalamig*). The women leading the ritual would sit inside and lay out the food offerings, with the men waiting underneath the raised floor. As soon as the women had their first bite, the men would come out from under the floor and everybody would start stuffing each other's mouths with binallai (sticky rice cakes). Our informants liked talking about this part, since it involved a lot of fun and joking. Then the women would take turns getting possessed (it was not clear in what order) while the men played the gongs.

The day after the bawang, the *pagulugan* of the woman with the biggest anito would be planted first. The pagulugan was a small piece of land especially dedicated to the anito. After this had been planted, the others could also start planting.

The other women who had a tie to a specific anito would do the pre-harvest bawang individually. She would get some bundles of rice, burn it over a fire and cook the grains that fell off. With this, she would bless her children, to keep them safe from illness and accidents.

Although the organisation of the ritual required coordination, and some anitos were seen as 'bigger' and more influential than others, our Catalangan informants denied the existence of formal leadership roles among them. They also denied that the women who led the planting rituals or their husbands had a larger say in community affairs. Nevertheless, we had the impression that the families with a link to an anito could be described as higher in status because the other families would bring them food at the time of the planting rituals, and because they would be first in line to be helped with the planting.

Among the Catalangan, we found five, possibly six, different lineages of women who were trained to get possessed and offer to their anito. We were able to trace these lineages because the anitos are mutually exclusive: a woman with a smaller anito could attend the festivities of the woman with the biggest anito, but she could not get possessed during these festivities. Moreover, a woman with an anito could not work in the fields of a woman with another anito. Even her children could get sick if they helped in the fields of a woman with another anito. Thus, connection to an anito shaped patterns of collaboration in planting and harvesting. Since the pagulugan of the woman with the biggest anito would be planted first, this seems to

imply that this household had a higher status, and having a connection to an anito gave higher status in general; not all households were obligated to an anito.

Although the anitos among the Catalangan were mutually exclusive, several women might get possessed by the same anito during the bawang. This was because these women were in training to take over the responsibility of performing the rituals from the oldest woman.

It seems the social organisation implied by the relative differences in power among the anitos was confined to the area of the Catalangan River. The Catalangan also did not compare the strength of their anitos to that of the maganitos from the big stream Kalinga, some of whom came to live among them after WWII. However, they did borrow gongs from a Kalinga maganito after their own gongs broke (or were buried, according to some, see below).

In contrast, among the Kalinga, informants agreed that the maganitos and healers provided direction to others, and their families were regarded as higher in status. A Kalinga maganito might train several girls to follow in her footsteps. She was taught to perform the rituals of the agricultural cycle, but also a cycle of eight community rituals dedicated to various groups of anitos who were considered to be especially powerful. A family who had done all the rituals would be regarded as higher in status. However, the links with an anito were apparently not mutually exclusive: a girl might train with several maganitos to become an accomplished maganito herself, and the different maganitos participated in each other's rituals. Furthermore, several anitos could be called upon during the same rituals.

The community rituals were very complicated and expensive affairs.[12] Usually, a maganito would advise a family to perform these rituals when one of their children got sick, to prevent further sickness. If a family failed to perform the next ritual and the child of one of the neighbors fell ill, this could be attributed to the failure of the other family to complete the cycle. To complete the cycle could take years, because the expense (number of pigs and chickens to be butchered) increased with each ritual, as well as the number of maganitos required to perform the rituals.

In sum, although social organisation seems to have been relatively non-hierarchical, a link to an anito, and how powerful this anito is, gave a woman, and her family a certain prominence but also responsibility: all those who had been responsible for performing the rituals, or in a few cases still performed healing rituals, stressed that it was important to do the rituals properly. They would emphasize that they asked for forgiveness for any inadvertent mistakes. The anitos were thus seen as ambivalent: able to bring prosperity and a good harvest, good health,

but also easily angered. In these cases they would need to be placated. Anger would be manifested through ill health, a bad harvest, bad luck. In those cases, it was the task of the maganitos to find out how to get the anitos into a better mood, a daunting responsibility. The burden of this responsibility will be discussed further in the next section.

Discontinuation of the Rituals

We were told early on that the Kalinga and Catalangan had discontinued performing the *bawang* and other agricultural rituals. Yet, it was also clear that many still feared the anitos. This made it difficult to speak to people about why they were discontinued. Among the Catalangan, it was sudden and controversial, while among the Kalinga it seems to have been gradual and less controversial. Among the Catalangan, maganitos who were fully trained to do the rituals and had already been taking over the responsibility from the older maganitos stopped performing. Often when we asked about this, people first avoided our questions, then burst out and said things like: 'many people died' and 'there was a lot of malaria' and then shut up again.

When we asked directly why many people died, why there was suddenly so much malaria, we were again stonewalled. But in informal conversations, it turned out that people tended to attribute these hardships to the anger of the anitos for discontinuing the rituals and thus indirectly blamed the maganitos for no longer protecting them from this anger. One Kalinga maganito to whom Catalangan also turned for healing even commented: 'they all gave up their own ways, and as a result many people died. But why should they be ashamed of their ways?'

As our research progressed, we became more puzzled: if people still, when we spoke to them in 2004, believed that illness and death may result from not performing the rituals, why did they stop performing? And where did this shame come from? As we found out, we could not ask this too directly, because this was interpreted as a reinforcement of the suppressed line of reasoning that 'blamed' the women who discontinued the rituals for all that misfortune. In addition, elders and especially maganitos were afraid that talking about the rituals might remind the anitos that they had not received any offerings anymore, thus inviting their anger.

One maganito just said that she 'buried the beads' (for dancing while possessed) when the woman who trained her died, and that was the end of it. She did not want the burden of preparing the offerings and getting possessed. It is physically exhausting, because during possession the body moves uncontrollably. Furthermore, it was psychologically demanding to be linked to an anito and have the responsibility of preventing their anger. They might get angry if the

rituals were not performed correctly and visit misfortune and illness upon the Catalangan. The woman who declared she had buried the beads was the first one who stopped, but at that time there were still other women who were offering to the same anito.

Two other maganitos gave an explanation that was a little more elaborate. One said that it became too hard to provide the proper foods for the anitos, that it was a burden. She was getting old, and afraid that she was forgetting the right way to appease the anitos. Her daughters did not want to learn the steps for the dancing, so she went to a Christian born-again pastor to have the connection with her anito removed. The other one said that her husband died, and her sons complained of the burden of making the kalamig and preparing the proper foods. Looking back, she became emotional about it: 'why did we give up our ways (*ugali*)'?

Interestingly, while Catalangan informants stressed that it was a burden to perform the rituals, among the Kalinga, nobody complained of this. Perhaps this complaint can be understood by looking at the circumstances of the Catalangan at the time when they discontinued the rituals: the seventies and early eighties. From 1982 to 1995, the presence of the NPA in the area was especially strong, with an NPA camp nearby, and there were frequent encounters between the NPA and the army (de Jong 2003). Often, they were not able to work in their fields, and people evacuated a couple of times or went to live closer together. In his publication, Scott mentions that the AFP forced people to live closer together, instead of in groups of five or six houses as they had been used to (Scott 1979). This was confirmed by our informants, who said they all moved to Dibuluan. Going out to their *uma* was dangerous, and people lived in fear of both parties. People were also enlisted by the NPA to work in communal fields and pass along supplies from San Mariano to the NPA camp. The NPA would shoot suspected informants and criminals and the army would torture people to get information about the whereabouts of the NPA (de Jong 2003).

It is likely that the dangers of living between these two fires superseded any fear of the anitos getting angry because the rituals were not being performed. Furthermore, farming practices were interrupted and gatherings were made difficult by the constant danger. In 2004, the fear of the army and the NPA was still fresh in people's minds and the subject was too traumatic to talk about in depth. At the time of our research, the NPA was still active in the area, so it was a topic most people avoided discussing with outsiders like us.

Although the NPA was also quite active in the area of the Kalinga, along the Pinacanauan, especially until the early eighties (when presumably they moved to the Catalangan area), the discontinuation of the rituals there seems to have been more gradual, and nobody mentioned excessive malaria and other illnesses like the Catalangan

did. However, the presence of the NPA and AFP did restrict travelling, so people could not attend each other's rituals. One maganito among the Kalinga performed the agricultural rituals until the early nineties, but when she got too old, nobody took over. One of our main informants among the Kalinga was trained to perform the agricultural rituals, the community rituals as well as different kinds of healing rituals, but just before she accomplished the last 'test' in her training, her mother died. Now, she says she cannot find anyone to perform this last ritual with her (it involves four days of non-stop drumming and storytelling) so she cannot lead the other rituals either. Besides, doing the community rituals is too expensive now; people would rather sell the meat of any pigs they manage to raise for cash, instead of butchering them.

Interestingly, no one connected the discontinuation of the rituals directly to the process of conversion to Christianity. In terms of relating to the 'more than human world', Christianity does not directly replace the fear of the anitos, rather the two cosmologies seemed to exist side by side (also apparent in the experience of the one practicing maganito we spoke to). Although in one case, a born-again pastor was asked to remove the connection with the anitos, this did not imply that from now on she was a practicing Christian. An important factor was the presence of the NPA and the army in the two regions, which had a direct effect on people's ability to gather together the resources and people to perform the agricultural rituals.

However, there were also longer-term changes that slowly devalued people's 'ugali' (customs), which meant that even after the hostilities between the NPA and the Army died down, ritual life declined further. These changes are linked to profound changes in the broader society that arose in San Mariano, through which this region became more tightly integrated (politically, economically, culturally) into lowland Filipino society. Christianization, as discussed in the next section, was an important vehicle for this, and introduced a process of devaluation which provides the broader context in which to understand the reasons for discontinuing Indigenous rituals and traditions.

WW II and After: 'Civilising' Through Baptism

During WWII, the Japanese governed the town of San Mariano. Towards the end of the war, the Americans pursued them along the Catalangan River until Palanan (reversing Semper's route). They left a trail of dead bodies and caused the Catalangan to seek refuge in the woods, in Palanan on the other side of the Sierra Madre mountain range, and along other rivers of the small-stream area. Along the big stream where the Kalinga lived, the war seemed to have been less eventful: although they were deprived of salt and clothes for some time, there are no stories of killings by the Japanese. After WWII, the town of San

Mariano developed quickly as a market town and center for the logging companies. Money and people flowed into the area.

This also accelerated the process of Christianization. The annual fiesta of the town of San Mariano became the highlight of the year, when people from the outlying barrios came to town to buy their supplies, camping along the river. On this occasion, many Kalinga and Catalangan would be baptized, receiving the name of their neighbour or trading partner, like Ipiyak and Poldo, or of a locally powerful politician. Migrants aimed to create intimate ties with the people already living there through becoming 'compadres' with their neighbours, becoming the godfather to their children. Mayor Simoi Baua (1947-1963) also sent someone around the outlying barangays to convince all 'pagans' to be baptized. This meant that people would get his name or the name of another powerful family, ensuring their votes in future. Other politicians followed this policy as well.

Furthermore, whenever a school was established, it created the need for a 'proper' last name: without baptism, children's last names would be registered as Imfiel/Impiel. Especially in the context of school and dealing with outsiders, this was experienced as a stigma.

Part of the deeper political-economic integration of the municipality of San Mariano was the establishment of fiestas and schools in the far-flung barangays. This process is still ongoing: in Cadsalan, the local fiesta was only established in 1992. Through sponsoring a fiesta, politicians strengthen their ties to a barangay. Whenever a fiesta is established, mass baptisms and weddings take place, another opportunity for powerful families and old-time friends to strengthen their ties by becoming 'compadres'.

At the time of our research, we did not notice a strong presence of missionaries, whether Catholic or Protestant, in the area. The nearest Catholic churches were in San Mariano, or in one of the lowland cities (e.g. Ilagan, Cauayan, Tumauini). Generally, becoming Christian was not associated with attending church except on special feast days. Nevertheless, we did find some interesting examples of religious creativity, such as the finding of a miraculous stone identified with the Virgin Mary. These were usually confined to one village, and within that village one small group of people. To go into these examples would require more space than we have here; they are described in the report provided to our research participants (Knibbe and Angnged 2005).

Although the process of 'civilisation through baptism' was slow and uneven across the different settlements (among the older people, many still bear the name Imfiel), both the Kalinga and the Catalangan pointed out the advantages of being baptized. As one Catalangan said: it meant you would have a place to stay and people to mingle with when you went to the annual fiesta in San Mariano. Besides, the migrants looked down on the people who were 'not yet Christian'. It was better

to have your children baptized and get a last name, so that they would be able to go to school. But generally, they said they just did it because they were used to 'going along': 'everything the Ilocanos do, we imitate'. Thus, Christianization led to cultural devaluation: rather than remaining 'different' and thus 'Infieles' in the eyes of lowlanders. For many Kalinga and Catalangan it seemed better to become Christians, to be more like the Ilocanos. We will go into this more below.

Power, Deference and Cultural Change

Although the history of 'becoming Christian' says a lot about the emergence of a civilisational hierarchy between the different groups in this municipality on the forest frontier, it does not really say much about the actual changes in relating to the more than human world. Everybody we spoke to, for example, said that being baptized did not mean anything to them in terms of beliefs. They did not 'really' become Christians in the sense of adhering to certain beliefs, because, with some exceptions, they did not *know* anything about Christianity. It also did not necessarily lessen the fear of the anitos, although elders do note that the younger generations do not seem to feel their presence and therefore do not fear them like they do. Thus, it seems that indeed the younger generations have crossed over into a different cultural and religious domain, as Rafael (1993) notes, with different hierarchies of interest and affective bonds: the interests of politicians, traders and farmers coming from outside the area, loosening the affective bonds among them as a group, and weakening their ability to stand together as a group to defend their interests.

This underscores the anthropological-historical analysis set forth by Hefner et. al.: the process of Christianization should not be primarily seen in terms of people submitting to Christianity because it is a convincing doctrine, but interpreted within local power configurations (Hefner, 1993). Clearly, local power configurations should be seen as the driving force behind the process of Christianization in San Mariano: as in colonial times, baptism and establishing local patron saint fiestas after WWII continued to be a tool, now firmly embedded in local Filipino politics, in 'civilising' Indigenous peoples, establishing administrative control, gaining political support and establishing patron-client/tenant relationships. In their own words, the Kalinga and Catalangan just 'went along' and increasingly deferred to the migrants.

The result was a devaluation of their own cultural practices and integration into a civilisational hierarchy where they were located somewhere near the bottom (with only the Agta below them). It is important to note that even when baptism was framed as an act of friendship in an existing neighborly relationship, it forged an *unequal* relationship between Christians and 'pagans'. The Kalinga or

Catalangan would get the name of their neighbour, and the neighbour would conclude with satisfaction that now, his friend was 'already civilized', more like him. In other cases, baptism explicitly established the Kalinga and Catalangan as tenants who obeyed landowners, rather than disappear 'into the forest' when they did not feel like working anymore. It also established them as political 'subjects', as when mayors or political candidates drove mass baptisms. In this way, they were drawn into the networks of relationships that make up the power structures of lowland culture (Cannell 1999; Kerkvliet 2002).

Does this mean that Christianization should be seen as part of a process of cultural fragmentation and assimilation? It would certainly seem so. The older generation complains that the younger generation does not want to learn the rituals, the younger generation complains that their elders are 'supposed to be wise' and advise them, but they don't consider their elders to be knowledgeable and don't seek them out for advice. This indicates a devaluation of the cultural knowledge, skills and attitudes of their elders. Usually, the elders know less than their children about earning money, obtaining consumer goods and rising in status in a community dominated by migrants. They are seen as 'still uncivilized', meaning that they do not know how to move around in the city, how to talk to strangers, or how to strike a good deal.

Nowadays, the Kalinga and Catalangan, especially the younger generations, mostly downplay any differences with the migrants and attempt to assimilate. When they get married to a migrant, they follow the 'Ilocano ways'. Their ambitions and desires do not seem to be different from those of the migrants: to be able to buy consumer goods, build a stone house, have enough cash to have a good time in town.

This perception of being 'uncivilized' and thus in a disadvantageous position can again be compared to Rafael's description of early Tagalog conversion:

> Native converts who failed to anticipate and so to appropriate the terms of Spanish Christianity were unable to convert their desires into a code that could be sent back to the missionary, and so were filled with a sense of *walang hiya.* They found themselves with no position from which to bargain with colonial authority (Rafael 1993, 212)

Similarly, in 2004 those Kalinga and Catalangan who are unable to express themselves in 'civilized' codes vis à vis lowlanders and foreigners (such as researchers and NGO people), felt ashamed, avoided contact with outsiders, and perceived themselves as ignorant and powerless. Seen in this light, it is not surprising that the younger generation preferred to ignore their cultural background and aim to become more 'civilized'.

Nevertheless, on the local level, everybody is aware of who 'is' a Kalinga, Catalangan, mixed, etc. Children taunt each other with the label Kalinga and hush their parents when they speak their own language in the town of San Mariano proper. According to the Agta, the Catalangan are becoming more distant since the migrants came: no more are they brothers and sisters. Rather, the Catalangan focus on getting closer to and intermarrying with the 'Christianos'.

In sum, one of the cultural changes effected by Christianization through baptism is a shift in the way Kalinga and Catalangan perceive themselves, internalizing in the way that migrants see them: as 'outside' or 'at the bottom' of civilized society, marginal, ignorant and powerless. Following this internalization, it seems inevitable that cultural amnesia is the way to get out of this position and move up the social ladder.[13]

Changes in Livelihood, Impoverishment and Loss of Land

So far, our focus has been on the politics of conversion and cultural change. But as we mentioned in the introduction, deforestation, immigration and the introduction of cash crops also completely refashioned the conditions in which the Kalinga and the Catalangan have to provide for themselves. Since the agricultural rituals are linked to the cycle of planting of upland rice, changes in the types of crops planted, specifically a lessening of importance of the planting cycle of upland rice, have also affected the sense of necessity to perform the old rituals.

At the time of our research (2004) we could recognize little of Scott's assessment of a prosperous cultural minority not much changed since the time of Semper's visit. For the Kalinga and Catalangan, scarcity of land and the notion of landownership have created a new situation, and this has contributed to their current poverty relative to migrants. Until recently and in some places up to the present, the Kalinga and Catalangan were shifting cultivators, and considered land to be abundant. In most places, they did not formally regulate access to land and other resources, or recognize ownership of land. Although newcomers would consult them on where to farm, Indigenous inhabitants did not hold onto land they had farmed previously and different agreements with migrants were reached in different places. They only gradually became aware of the importance of holding formal titles to land. Since they had considered it an abundant resource before, they would often 'sell' the land that they were farming to migrants and then go further into the forest to find new land.

The logging of the forests at first only made it easier for them to cultivate new lots, turning former forestlands into grassland. Originally, the Kalinga and Catalangan were not interested in these grasslands, in their words, because they did not know how to use a plough to be able

to clean the land of the tough roots of cogon grass, whereas the migrants had ploughs and could convert the land to other uses. However, since logging is now illegal and the area is now a national park, going further into the forest is now illegal. The influx of migrants combined with the establishment of a national park has drastically reduced the freedom to open up new land for subsistence farming, as they were used to doing.

In 2004, the Kalinga and Catalangan were only just starting to reclaim the land they had farmed before and consolidating the claims on land they were currently farming, following the practices of migrant farmers. This often led to disputes: in some cases, migrant farmers already claimed these lots, in others the land had been formally claimed by a powerful family through a 'table survey'. These 'table surveys' are a problem to all small-scale farmers in the region, turning them into tenants to people who have often not even visited the land they claim to own.

Importantly, the presence of migrants also introduced new options for cash crop farming and cash-based lifestyles to aspire to, such as stone houses and consumer goods, and buying rice rather than growing one's own upland rice. At the time of our research, yellow corn (Cargill feeds) was becoming the dominant cash crop, and the forest frontier has receded drastically, reducing livelihood options. Closer to San Mariano proper, cash crops were usually introduced earlier than in the farther barangays where our research was mostly focused. In these far barangays, corn only became the preferred cash crop in the mid to late nineties, when the roads improved. At the time of our research, the roads were relatively well maintained (it was election time), and growing Cargill yellow corn was still on the rise.

At the same time there were some people who were starting to realize that there are significant drawbacks to growing this crop, especially in the big stream area (this was reinforced by community education by the NPA). On the one hand, everybody was eager to try it: it seemed an easy way to earn money, less labor intensive than the wet rice agriculture previously practiced by immigrant farmers. If everything goes well, one harvest can yield more money than any farmer would be able to earn with any other crop. However, bitter experience taught them that it is very hard to grow yellow corn and to stay out of debt. From planting to harvesting to selling, cash is required: to buy the genetically modified seeds, fertilizer and pesticides, to load it on the truck, even to loan the sacks to pack the corn for transportation. And since it is genetically modified, farmers will have to buy the seeds again the next year. Traders and moneylenders manipulate the price of the corn and the terms of the loans. Typhoons, soil erosion and depletion and the condition of the roads in bad weather increase the risks of growing corn. To make it profitable, one needs a lot of land.

Land that had been abandoned because it became overgrown with cogon was reclaimed, and land disputes were increasing.

In the Pinacanauan area, illegal logging also contributed to the Kalinga gradually losing their access and claims to land. After commercial logging was stopped and the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park was established, logging still continued although on a smaller scale, and more covertly. This is financed by powerful families from outside, who recruit local people who know the forests well and can point out the last patches of hardwood forest. Now that yellow corn is the dominant cash crop, one bad harvest and high interest rates on loans can trap farmers into debt. This means that the attraction of illegal logging as a quick way to get cash increases. Because of cash-crop farming people need cash more than before, when they could rely on their umas. However, if the logs are confiscated, they will get into debts that are almost impossible to get out of again, and might ultimately lead, again, to losing land.

One informant sketched this vicious cycle vividly: a person will put up a quarter of his land as collateral for a cash advance from the people who commission logs. He needs this cash to feed himself and his family during the time he is away. Often, he will not be able to repay this advance, because it is harder and harder to find good trees to cut. He will put up another piece of land as collateral, and try again. Ultimately, he will lose the land, because the terms of the loans are bad, and he constantly needs cash to buy rice.

According to this informant, the shift from subsistence farming to participating in the cash economy has led to famine among the Kalinga in Cadsalan, because they are unable to buy rice. There are also some who have profited from it, as is evident by the growing number of stone houses in Cadsalan (although this is usually associated with wealth generated by illegal logging as well). Among the Catalangan, this process was less evident since yellow corn was introduced more recently and the presence of the NPA had inhibited the accumulation of wealth. Generally, people talked less openly about conflicts over land, the influence of cash crops and illegal logging practices.

In short, in 2004 it seemed there were two basic scenarios for the Kalinga and Catalangan: the people who laid claims to land in time and manage to stay more or less out of debt made the transition from 'outside' civilized society to the 'bottom' and were trying, with varying success, to work their way up. They were able to make use of the ties they had forged with immigrants through baptism, becoming integrated into lowland Filipino networks of (political) patronage. And then there were the people who did not manage to lay claim to good land, or who are losing it due to increasing debts. They made the transition from 'outside' civilisation to a position 'at the bottom' as landless laborers, dependent on cash, sinking into debt bondage.

Conclusion

In this article, we have sketched some aspects of cultural change of two groups living in the foothills of the Sierra Madre east of Ilagan, focusing on the role of Christianization. This process of Christianization is rooted in Spanish colonial times, which introduced a system of distinctions that continues to be powerful today: between Christian and pagans, between 'civilized' and 'uncivilized'. These distinctions are embedded within coloniality, the continuing legacy of colonialism which persists worldwide after the formal end of colonialism. Conceptualising 'conversion' as the crossing over from one cultural domain, characterized by a certain hierarchy of interests, into another we first focused on describing the domain from which the Kalinga and Catalangan came, piecing together the cycle of agricultural rituals through the accounts of (former) maganitos and their descendants. The descriptions of these rituals also give some insight into the social organisation and the relations with the more than human world maintained through them. The Kalinga and Catalangan were two distinct groups, who had their own agricultural rituals that did not mix. Their relatively flat and loose social organisation was made possible perhaps by the abundance of land prior to the massive influx of migrants following large scale logging operations: it was only after this influx that the role of mediating in land disputes was developed, shared between Indigenous and migrant elders.

We found that the reasons for discontinuing the rituals cannot be linked to Christianity directly in the sense of replacing one worldview, characterized by relations with the anitos who needed to be placated, by a Christian worldview. Rather, Christian and Indigenous worldviews exist side by side. Yet, in other ways, the process of Christianization as linked to the political integration of the Kalinga and Catalangan into lowland Filipino society did contribute to breaking up Indigenous ways of life.

In our research we found that the system of distinctions associated with Christianity was imposed through specific mechanisms, entwining Christianization with political and administrative integration and forming new affective bonds between Indigenous and immigrants. Specifically, two practices of Christianization were important: baptism and the establishment of fiestas, associating barangays with a patron saint. Baptism was a way through which migrants forged bonds with the Kalinga and Catalangan, and vice versa: by taking on the last name of a migrant through baptism, they could count on his patronage. In return, the migrants hoped to be able to count on the loyalty of the Kalinga and Catalangan they sponsored, in providing labor and in voting. After WWII, there was a more systematic efforts at baptising people, driven by Mayor Baua. This process was still ongoing in 2004, aided by the

process of establishing schools in the area, which created the necessity to have a 'proper' last name, rather than the default name of Imfiel. This drive to baptize people was accelerated further by the practice of establishing fiestas, by associating each village with a patron saint, with a feast on the annual calendar. On such feast days, mass baptisms and weddings take place, adding to the numbers of 'Christians' rather than 'pagans' who fall outside lowland society.

The system of distinctions originating in colonialism and spread through Christianization is further reinforced by the gradual incorporation of the Kalinga and Catalangan into the cash economy, through farming cash crops, and through the consumer goods and aspirations that have become the standards to aspire to for the younger generations. This means that increasingly, farming practices are no longer tied to the agricultural cycle of upland rice, which means the rituals associated with this cycle no longer seem necessary. However, the presence of the NPA did dampen or slow down somewhat the acceleration of integration into the cash economy and consumer society, by challenging government control of the area as well as fostering critical attitudes towards extractive forms of cash crop farming such as yellow corn (Cargill).Yet, in another way, their presence did contribute to the breaking up of Indigenous practices: the fighting between army and NPA has also been an important factor in the discontinuation of the agricultural rituals, causing displacement, and restricting the freedom of movement needed to gather together to perform the rituals.

Although the Spanish and the Americans never fully controlled this area and managed to Christianize its inhabitants, we can conclude that political incorporation into mainstream society has been accomplished after the colonizers left. Christianity and colonization were inextricably linked and instrumental in creating present day Filipino mainstream culture. Therefore, 'Christianization' should be seen as a process of incorporation into mainstream Filipino society, where those who were formerly described as 'Infieles'(pagans) have to struggle to be recognised as respectable, 'Christian' and civilized, leading to the devaluation of their own traditions and cultural distinctiveness and the internalisation by the Kalinga and Catalangan of this system of distinctions.

There are many questions that we could not address in this article, or in the original research on which it was based. Further research could explore this in various directions. One direction is the co-existence and religious/ ritual creativity that comes out of the encounter of Christianity with Indigenous spirituality. We already mentioned briefly the find of a miraculous stone, later identified with the Virgin, which we go into in more detail in the report. Also the fact that one maganito had her ties with the anitos removed by a born-again pastor is interesting, and raises questions about the interaction between Indigenous worldviews with evangelical Christianity. Interesting, too,

is the fact there still were maganitos who communicated with the anitos to find the cause of an illness is interesting: how are such knowledge and practices passed down now? How might they incorporate Catholic notions of sacred power?

Another question for further research is to trace in more detail the ways specific individuals were able to make use of their relationships through baptism to create a stronger position for themselves in the new order of cash crop farming following in the wake of in-migration. For example, how did such relationships enable them to lay claim to lands? How did it help them to find trading partners? What does this tell us about the relationship between Christianization and capitalism? And the larger question: how does capitalism lead to the loss of Indigenous land (Li, 2020)? A related, and more political question is how these two groups might relate to and make use of the Indigenous People's Rights Act. Although in 2004, most people were not aware of this law and the opportunities embedded within it, this might have changed in the meantime. This is related to the bigger questions of coloniality and the question of decolonisation: what might this look like in this case? By providing the report to the people we did research with we prioritised their right to have a record of their history and cultural practices. This article might provide an additional source for reflection and delineation of ways forward for these groups, pointing towards a more decolonial future (see e.g. Castillo, 2022; Bigornia, 2025). At the very least, it is hoped that the analysis here will push back against the uncritical use of designations such as 'pagan', 'uncvilised' and 'wild', recognizing their roots in colonialism and their role in perpetuating its legacy.

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Notes

1. Although the Namria map is detailed, some places are not listed and others are called by different names than the ones used locally. Since we did not have a digital version of this map, we redrew the main outlines of the area using the Namria map, adding some place names.
2. Scott judged Poldo to be around 40 at the time of his visit in 1978. This estimate ties in with Poldo's own: he said he remembers fleeing the Japanese in WWII although he was too young to walk by himself for a long time.
3. See the documents of the American colonial period (and some of the Spanish period) at http://www.hti.umich.edu/p/philamer/. In a database compiled of Dean Worcester's pictures and reports, some pictures of 'Kalinga' near Ilagan exist. However, looking at his travel-itinerary and way of classifying (these pictures are classified under 'Cordilleran peoples') it is unlikely that they are pictures of the Kalinga living along the Pinacanauan. Other references to Kalinga and Catalangan in Isabela in Spanish and American colonial documents were also uninformative: they repeat each other literally without referring to each other. Except in Semper's case, none of the historical sources are clear about how they obtained this 'information' or to which groups in which exact geographical location it refers.
4. To illustrate the unreliability of second-hand information: when we told people in Cabagan that we intended to do research among the Kalinga, a person of high local standing informed us that this would be very difficult, since 'they hide in the woods and only meet once a year'. This was after we had established contact with the son of Scott's informant and talked to many more Catalangan. Most likely, the knowledge of local lowland notables of their 'pagan' neighbours was no better in Spanish and American times.
5. Whenever we refer to Salgado, it is to the chapter on the Catalangan mission, pages 740-490.
6. Cagayan was designated as a commercial market for the sale of tobacco in 1785, which meant that the people there were not allowed to grow tobacco and could only buy it at inflated prices. In 1797, the Spanish relented and towns were assigned to grow tobacco. (De Jesus 1982)

7. According to some informants, the 'big stream' Kalinga were known to raid the settlements of the Catalangan, but they were vague about who they were or where they came from or what these raids entailed (see also Jong de 2003). However, among the big stream Kalinga themselves we heard no stories about raiding at all.
8. We have wordlists filled out by several informants and they do show differences. However, we did not consult any linguist to assess these data or recorded speech.
9. A full description of the rituals (including details we could not really make sense of) can be found in the report.
10. We refer the reader interested in the details of the non-agricultural rituals (e.g. healing and community rituals) to the report (Knibbe and Angnged 2005).
11. We do not know the names of all the anitos in all the rituals. Because our informants did not like to mention the names, we will not do so here.
12. A full description of these rituals can be found in the report.
13. The exception is healing practices, which persist. Although there are less Kalinga and Catalangan healers according to our informants, they can be more easily integrated into the mainstream. All over the Philippines, traditional healing practices persist and evolve within the mainstream (Cannell 1999; Pertierra 1997; Tan 1999).

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