

Cultivating New Local Futures: Remittance Economies and Land-use Patterns in Ifugao, Philippines

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In the Philippines, female migration for contract domestic work transforms the local landscape. The changes in land, labour, crops and cropping patterns that are occurring may not reflect local ecology or economic opportunity as much as they represent gendered versions of new local futures, envisioned on a new global scale.

Circular migration for contract work overseas is recreating translocalities from what were previously imagined as isolated, peripheral communities.¹ Migration changes these local communities not just through flows of remittances and investments, but also at the level of locally imagined futures. This article presents an ethnographic case study of one such community in the rural Philippines, an indigenous² village in Ifugao Province now linked into novel global networks by female circular migrants. Here, struggles over new versions of locality and tradition arise with female migration for contract domestic work, resulting in transformation of the local landscape.

Exploring contests over local futures in this setting, the study will use a qualitative approach to argue that agriculture is not a separate local economic realm or domain of representation but is intimately linked, through household economics and individual performances, with local interests in global flows of meaning and bodies. In choosing to work abroad, female overseas contract worker (OCW) migrants also produce transformations in local agricultural systems. As recipients of cash remittances, single fathers envision new local futures in ways that may overdetermine their absent wives' preferences.³ Through an exploration of these remittances and the context of their

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1 See, for example, Jonathan Rigg, *More than the soil: Rural change in Southeast Asia* (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited, 2001) and David Seddon *et al.*, 'Foreign labor migration and the remittance economy of Nepal', *Critical Asian Studies*, 34, 1 (2002): 19-40, for descriptions of similar processes in rural communities elsewhere in Southeast and South Asia.

2 'Indigenous' is used here in a specifically Filipino context to designate the upland peoples officially referred to as 'cultural communities' (see note 5 below).

3 The Althusserian concept of 'overdetermination', meaning the exertion of influence whose precise

investment, the study ties the work of female migrants to the land-use decisions of their households. Describing how these decisions fit into the complex and multi-sited Ifugao agricultural system provides a view of how the local interpretations and impacts of female circular migration recreate local landscapes, both real and imaginary.

First, a caveat for the reader: the argument in this article is staged through ethnographic data describing these links between landscape and economy at a particular point in time (1996–7). The accompanying statistics are descriptive and are provided to contextualise this ethnographic data for the reader.⁴ The links described between crops and migration are conjunctural, while the modifications of local landscapes reported are clearly multi-causal. That the linkages between crops and gender and migration are not sustained over time does not mean that at one particular moment they were not influential. The sketch of these linkages provided here contributes to the literature on local places and globalisation, landscape and gender, but this description in no way precludes the potential that people may in the future continue to do the same things, i.e., convert fields and plant beans, but for different reasons.

Femininity and local tradition in Ifugao

‘Kanta ti Ina’ (Mother’s song)

<i>Agrugi ti agsapa</i>	Beginning in the early morning
<i>Awan pulos inana</i>	No rest ever
<i>Tuloy-tuloy inggana</i>	Continuing until
<i>Ti init ket bumabab</i>	The sun descends
<i>Ti aldaw ko napunno</i>	My day is full
<i>Nadumaduma trabaho</i>	Of various tasks
<i>Agbirok sida, agluto</i>	Looking for viand, cooking
<i>Agsakdo ken agbayyo</i>	Fetching water and pounding rice
<i>Agsagana ti balon</i>	Preparing food to take
<i>Mapan ak iti talon</i>	I go to the ricefields
<i>Ituloy ti bunubon</i>	Continue transplanting
<i>Isimpa irigayson</i>	Fix the irrigation
<i>Tiempo panagkakape</i>	Coffee season
<i>Kwarta ti biroken mi</i>	Money is what we’re looking for
<i>Para mantika, inti</i>	For cooking oil, sugar
<i>Asin, sabon, piliti</i>	Salt, soap and transportation money
<i>Anak dumakadakkelen</i>	The children are getting big
<i>Masapul panunoten</i>	I must think about
<i>Pag-alaan kwarta manen</i>	Where to get money again
<i>Pag-iskwela palpasen</i>	So that they may finish school
<i>Uray anya ikasta</i>	No matter what I do

causality and/or relationships are difficult to disentangle, is drawn from J. K. Gibson-Graham, *The end of capitalism (as we knew it): A feminist critique of political economy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

⁴ To sustain this argument with quantitative data alone requires a reliable, replicable social survey designed to demonstrate that beans in the fields reflect the actual receipt of cash remittances. Such a survey was beyond the capacity of the field research program in 1996–7.

<i>Agkurang-kuran latta</i>	Things are still lacking
<i>Daytoy ti gasat ngata?</i>	Is this fate?
<i>Kastoy kadi ingga-inggana?</i>	Will it be this way forever?

In the farming communities of the Philippines, as the lyrics of the song suggest, women's 'domestic' labour traditionally spreads beyond the house and into the agricultural landscape. The case study site for this article, Asipulo, is a village located in the mountains of Ifugao Province in the Cordillera Central of Northern Luzon. The village hosted me for two periods of field research on gender and agriculture, first in 1991-2, and then during a second visit in 1996-7.

Asipulo is classified as a "cultural community" with members speaking one of several indigenous (local) languages.⁵ People learn Pilipino and English, the national languages, through the school system, radio and print media.⁶ Approximately 14 hours from Manila, the town centre is accessible only by jeepney down a gravel road. There is no telephone service and electricity only arrived in 1996. Yet the people from this village understand themselves as world travellers and global subjects, rather than 'tribal minorities'. This self-understanding as part of a 'modern' and 'global' world is largely constructed through the experiences of female contract workers and their households. Female migration is, however, a relatively new phenomenon in this region. Close attention to local histories of gender discourse explains the alacrity with which 'tribal' people, particularly women, have entered the global labour market.

In Asipulo, female labour and feminine agricultural knowledge have traditionally been intimately involved in the major subsistence crops of rice and vegetables and have a prominent role in the production of coffee and vegetables for cash. While men have hunted and travelled beyond the boundaries of the community, women have tended the fields and gardens. Women's work in cultivating the crops and maintaining the fields, glossed in English as "cleaning", is what creates "home", inscribing evidence of inhabitation in the landscape and thus of locality. The daily bodily practices that produce the material features of places also generate the historical structure of feeling that creates a felt sense of locality – 'home' is produced materially through the bodily practices that sustain its landscapes and the feelings of 'belonging' that tradition invokes.

In Ifugao and the surrounding Cordillera region, work has historically been gendered on a fairly contingent and flexible basis, with only a small percentage of agricultural tasks strictly marked for one gender.⁷ Yet, conceptions of femininity, masculinity and androgyny as well as what constitutes men's, women's and "just anybody's" work are spread across multiple and conflicting discourses on ethnicity,

5 'Cultural community' is the official Philippine government designation for the 'tribal' communities of the indigenous northern Philippines. See http://www.ncca.gov.ph/phil_culture/ncca-people.htm under the Ifugao link for a listing of the 'Northern Cultural Communities' into which the Ayangan-speaking Ifugao people of Asipulo municipality, Ifugao province, can be mapped. The Cordillera Autonomous Region (CAR) is the group of northern Philippine provinces that are the traditional lands of these particular cultural communities.

6 English-language terms in double quotation marks are presented as used by respondents; Ifugao words, and words from other Philippine languages used by people in Ifugao are italicised. Single quotes denote the author's figurative usage.

7 See Albert Bacdayan, 'Mechanistic cooperation and sexual equality among the Western Bontoc', in *Sexual stratification*, ed. Alice Schlegel (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), pp. 270-91. This is a description of the gendered division of labour in an Igorot community written by a mission-school-educated male member of the local elite.

gender, religion and development.⁸ As part of a locally mediated process of “modernisation”, the desirable gendering of work has become more specified and women in particular have withdrawn from the manual labour associated with agricultural production. Local ideas of tradition and gender have developed in explicit dialogue with globalised representations of gender and ideas of progress promulgated by government departments, international aid projects and the national media. In engaging with discourses of gender and progress, Ifugao people have reinterpreted the same feminine “knowing what to do” that produced local agricultural landscapes through female labour; the term now signifies the ability to position oneself advantageously within local interpretations of discourses of development and “modernisation”. For instance, in my research interviews I found that an Asipulo woman referred to as a “pure housewife” may in fact have a large agricultural supply business or own a store. Thus, in Ifugao the “housewife” designation marks not a woman’s confinement to a ‘domestic’ space, but her ‘liberation’ from the manual labour of farming work.

While discourses on femininities, housewives and sexualities are deployed in the Asipulo community as tactics to constitute a local reality, women’s economic opportunities are not limited to the subsistence realm or to their local world. Rather, their knowledge spans a variety of options, from farming to community development work, education, jobs in Manila and work abroad. As the folksong quoted above suggests, the local construction of feminine knowledge is that of a woman who “knows what to do” to provide for her household and herself.⁹ In a context of land scarcity, “knowing what to do” includes the feminine responsibility of making ends meet. As one female respondent put it, “If the pot is empty, I’m the one to fill it”. This feminine knowledge is constructed not around notions of a feminine ethnoscience or of any specific responsibility to the local landscape, but rather in terms of a set of skills and abilities to take advantage of opportunities available on a national and global scale.

Since the 1930s, Asipulo has experienced a transition from purely subsistence to simple commodity production and greater political integration into the apparatus of government. “Knowing what to do” now involves skills and opportunities within a hierarchy based on security of income and social status: government employees and overseas workers are at the apex, followed by local entrepreneurs, cash-crop farmers and, finally, subsistence farmers. “Knowing what to do” is a contingent and fluid position for women that means placing oneself as high as possible on this ladder. These days, women who “know what to do” are likely to migrate for contract domestic work, rather than farm.

8 Gender in Asipulo is egalitarian, following the definition of gender egalitarian society established by Sherry Ortner, *Making gender: The politics and erotics of gender* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), pp. 173-80: ‘It is not that these societies lack traces of “male dominance,” but the elements of “male dominance” are fragmentary – they are not woven into a hegemonic order, are not central to some larger and coherent discourse of male superiority, and are not central to some larger network of male-only or male-superior practices’ (p. 174). As one male respondent remarked, ‘since both women and men are necessary, one is not more important than the other – like shoes’. Local discourse on gender complementarity reflects both local agricultural economics and distinct ideas of spiritual power and the body.

9 Both male and female respondents cited this as the most desirable trait in a female partner and the definition of Ifugao femininity. This demonstrated a discursive continuity with the reports of American colonial administrators that women were valued locally not so much for beauty, pleasing nature or child-bearing and child-rearing skills but for their industry in tending to their hillside shifting cultivation gardens. For historical examples, see Roy Barton, *The halfway sun* (New York: Brewer and Warren, 1930).

Women who migrate do so not only to escape the perceived indignities of manual labour, but also to provide economic support and security for their families. Because people in Asipulo struggle to make ends meet on an agricultural landbase that is inadequate to meet the needs of the population and over which they do not have secure tenure, the flexibility and mobility of local women are important elements within household strategies for secure livelihoods. Cash remittances from women working abroad are invested in new crops and land in areas outside their sending communities. Female migrants are the “new heroines” of their families at home and their households are the envy of their struggling neighbours. Thus female outmigration becomes simultaneously an option or strategy to consider, an actual material practice and a way of constructing local femininity and reshaping senses of self and place.¹⁰

Female migration and national policy

For women the desire to go abroad is fuelled not only by the examples of other migrants but also by government policy. The export of female contract labour has been pursued as a development strategy by the Philippine state since the mid-1970s.¹¹ Contracts are procured, labourers recruited and workers deployed, all under government supervision through the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA). Provincial women must commute to and from the metropolitan offices of the POEA to be “deployed”; in the provinces, they can deal with local recruiting agents whose authenticity and POEA approval may be doubtful. James Tyner reports that there is a particular demand from employers overseas for labour recruited from “the provinces” because these *probinsyanas* are perceived as less interested in socialising and consumer culture, more docile and more energetic in cooking, cleaning and childcare.¹² This construction of rural femininity and its market value explains the prevalence of recruiting drives – both real and fake – in provincial communities, including those of the Asipulo. Though it may not be particularly accurate given Ifugao tradition, this same idea of rural women as domestic, backward and immobile is the stereotype that Asipulo women are trying to escape by either taking contracts abroad or engaging in ‘modern’ agriculture.

Statistics are not available for the deployment of OCWs by province, nor would such information necessarily accurately reflect the distribution of their communities of origin given the lack of postal and telephone service in the mountains. Tyner and Daniel Donaldson provide POEA special tabulations indicating that a total of 4,018 OCWs left the Cordillera Administrative Region in 1997 as new hires.¹³ Perhaps some of the women from respondents’ households are represented in these non-gender-disaggregated data. However, several of the women interviewed for this study moved temporarily to lowland

10 Deirdre McKay, ‘Migration and masquerade: Gender and habitus in the Philippines’, *Geography Research Forum*, 21 (2001): 44-56. The topic of how remittances are used is further elaborated in Katherine Gibson *et al.*, ‘Beyond heroes and victims: Filipina contract migrants, economic activism and class transformations’, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 3, 3 (2001): 365-86.

11 Jorge V. Tigno, ‘International migration as state policy: The Philippine experience as model and myth’, *Kasarinlan*, 6, 1-2 (1990): 73-8.

12 James Tyner, ‘The gendering of Philippine international labour migration’, *Professional Geographer*, 48, 4 (1996): 405-16, 413.

13 James Tyner and Daniel Donaldson, ‘The geography of Philippine international labour migration fields’, *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, 40, 3 (1999): 217-34.

areas and gave addresses of friends or relatives during the deployment process. By becoming OCWs, they were participating in a socioeconomic phenomenon well established elsewhere in the country. In the Ilocos, Raul Pertierra reports that some areas have 13 per cent of their adult working population overseas, with 62 per cent of households reporting migrant workers; 70 per cent of those migrants are female.¹⁴

In the Asipulo case, there are far fewer workers abroad. The explanations for this situation given by respondents in my interviews included the distance of their home communities from the recruiting sites and POEA offices, and the existence of cultural and linguistic differences between the mountain groups and the lowland metropolitan inhabitants that lead to stereotyping and poor treatment in agencies and government offices. Most important, and most often cited, was a lack of capital for the initial expenses. Costs for migration vary, but estimates from my respondents ranged from P45,000 (then US \$1,718) for Singapore or Hong Kong to P120,000 (\$4,500) for “Saudi” (referring to the Middle East in general) and over P180,000 (\$6,870) for Canada or Europe.¹⁵ These estimates included expenses related to the contract itself, like airfare, a medical exam, agency fees for placement and possibly training, travel expenses to and from government offices, possible gratuities for government offices and the fees of ‘fixers’ who shepherd applications through the bureaucracy. Though many respondents expressed interest in overseas work, these costs of deployment were cited as the major reason why, compared to areas in the lowland Philippines, relatively few women from Asipulo have taken contracts abroad.

The significance of remittances

Remitting money home is the key way in which female (and male) circular migrants change their sending communities. Shivani Puri and Tineke Ritzema’s review of migrants’ remittances worldwide estimates that 58 per cent are sent in the form of cash from overseas, while 35 per cent arrive as cash brought home, and 7 per cent are in-kind, in the form of goods.¹⁶ In the Philippines, much of this remittance flow goes unrecorded by the state. Puri and Ritzema estimate that for the 1982-90 period, 50-55 per cent of remittances were unrecorded because they passed outside official banking channels. In this situation, it is difficult to retrieve accurate household-level data on the total amount and frequency of remittances, perhaps because they are such an important part of the informal economy yet are protected from possible diversion and taxation by the state and community.

This informal and ‘hidden’ aspect of the Philippine remittance economy was the context for my collection of community and household data on remittances presented here. In 1997 I surveyed a comprehensive sample of households in two *barangays* (municipal sub-units) of Asipulo, Haliap and Panubtuban, looking at their connections to family member and communities outside the municipality.¹⁷ This survey was intended

14 Raul Pertierra, ‘Lured abroad: The case of Ilocano overseas workers’, *Sojourn*, 9, 1 (1994): 54–80.

15 Figures were estimated by respondents in 1996 when the US dollar was worth 26.2 Philippine pesos.

16 Shivani Puri and Tineke Ritzema, *Migrant worker remittances, micro-finance and the informal economy: Prospects and issues* (Geneva: International Labour Office Working Paper, 1999), p. 8.

17 The survey began with a field census to establish the number of inhabited houses – 267. This figure differed substantially from the National Statistics Office census data, which was apparently several years out of date. The community is composed of thirty neighbourhood clusters called *sitios*. In each *sitio*, research assistants and I met with local officials and with their help ‘guestimated’ the wealthiest and poorest households, based on locally recognised indicators such as roofing materials, appliances, livestock

to provide background material in which to nest ethnographic data collected through in-depth interviews with returned OCWs and their households and participant observation. The survey did not ask respondents to quantify cash amounts but rather to confirm the presence or absence in their household economy of a regular amount of money being remitted by a household member living elsewhere.¹⁸ Those respondents who indicated they did receive cash were then asked to name the location of the remitting household member in either a rural area, urban area or overseas.

Most respondents said that they received agricultural materials and goods, but not cash, from relatives outside the community. Virtually all households were engaged in some form of agriculture and most had connections with kin in other rural areas. Poorer households reported plans to “transfer” to another place along the agricultural frontier when their children married and inherited the family lands in Asipulo, but they were rarely receiving cash remittances from their kin in these areas. In contrast, wealthier households often reported members living and working in urban areas, usually as professionals in Baguio City and Manila. Urban, and in many cases, overseas cash remittances added to the capital available to invest in these tenant-operated lands. Twelve per cent of sample households reporting regular cash remittances from urban areas belonged to the upper-income group.

Confirming respondents’ reports in Asipulo, remittances are reported to form a significant proportion of cash income in the rest of Ifugao province. For the provincial economy of Ifugao as a whole, in 1990, an estimated breakdown of income sources was as follows: wages (10 per cent), entrepreneurial activities including agriculture (43.2 per cent) and other activities, including remittances received from outside the province (47.8 per cent).¹⁹ It is quite likely that the occurrence of remittances was significantly under-reported in the Asipulo survey. None of the respondents receiving cash were eager to discuss the amounts received, but would generally indicate where they had “put” the money – usually into house construction, education, transport and new crops as investments. Returned migrant workers themselves were much more willing to discuss the actual amounts they had remitted, as the ethnographic data to come will indicate.

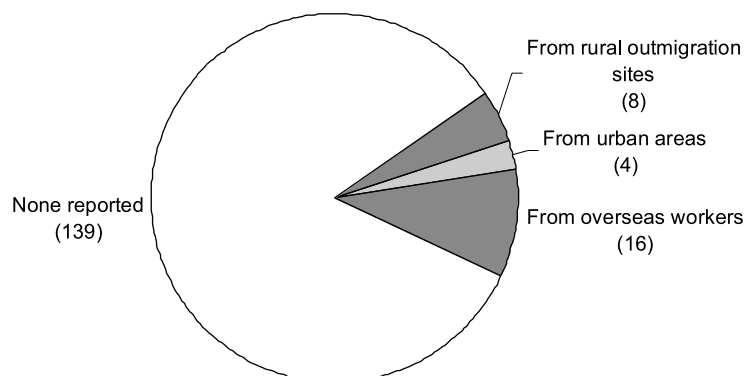
Figure 1 details the prevalence of cash remittances to Haliap and Panubtuban households from areas outside the municipality. Of the households surveyed, 17 per cent reported income remitted in cash by kin who had migrated. Five per cent of the households had income from kin who had migrated to other rural areas; 10 per cent from family members working overseas and 2 per cent from professionals working in urban areas.

and harvested crops. We then interviewed inhabitants in the wealthiest (representing upper income), poorest (lowest income) and a target of 50 per cent of the remaining houses, for a total of 167 surveys completed or 62 per cent coverage, spread across the community geographically.

18 Pre-testing of the survey questions indicated that asking for specific amounts of cash and dates would not solicit accurate answers and might lead respondents to withdraw from the research project. Thus a more qualitative approach was taken: asking general questions, then attempting to follow up on specific cases in open-ended interviews.

19 Republic of the Philippines, *Ifugao socioeconomic profile* (Lagawe: National Statistics Office, 1990). Provincial economic statistics are updated every 10 years; in 1996, the year of this study, the 1990 data constituted the most recent available information.

Figure 1:
Households reporting income from out-of-province, by source of income,
Haliap/Panubtuban (1996) (n=167)



Respondents indicated that the most significant cash remittances, both in regularity and amount, were from women working overseas as contract domestics. These OCWs from the *barangays* of Haliap and Panubtuban were all female and were deployed as described in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Deployment of female OCWs from Haliap/Panubtuban (1996)

Location of Employment	No. of Individuals
Hong Kong	8
Singapore	3
“Saudi”	2
Taiwan	2
Malaysia	1

This sample suggests that the most important translocal connections in Asipulo were to workers in Hong Kong. The significance of this connection was marked by the construction of a concrete festival stage and basketball court at the Asipulo Municipal Hall. The stage was given to the municipality by the Asipulo–Hong Kong Benevolent Association, a group of Hong Kong-based female overseas workers drawn from the *barangays* composing Asipulo municipality.

By doing domestic work abroad and sending cash home, these women are giving the community the economic and material grounds for celebration. If we understand globalisation as a situation where the power relations that affect the production of locality are fundamentally translocal, these women are key actors.²⁰ Their remittances have the potential to create a two-way connection between their conditions of

20 Arjun Appadurai, ‘The production of locality’, in *Counterworks: Managing the diversity of knowledge*, ed. Richard Fardon (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 204–25.

employment in Hong Kong and the land-use and cropping practices followed by their sending households in Asipulo. This condition of translocality is inscribed on the landscape through a plaque naming the Asipulo–Hong Kong Benevolent Association as the donors of the festival stage.

Remittance economies and local landscapes

Such group donations are, however, relatively rare. Open-ended interviews on the topic of OCWs and remittances with local leaders, returned OCW women, and members of their households were conducted to explore the community's understanding of remittances and work "abroad". Most of the returned OCWs interviewed in this study reported that they remitted money into their home communities only through their families, who then often invested in material goods – the construction and renovation of houses and stores, and the purchase of agricultural implements, cars and motorcycles. Returning workers bring appliances, clothing and toys as gifts. Community leaders and other key respondents in Asipulo could pick out the households with OCWs because of the distinctive "improvements" to house construction and the possession of diverse, locally novel appliances such as rice cookers and video recorders. They asserted that, unlike their own town, a community with many workers overseas can be distinguished by the newness of its houses, cars and exotic appliances. Having "complete appliances" in the family home is a local indicator of OCW-funded success and providing the same is the dream of many female migrants. Neighbours often asked me, after the interview, if the appliances of the sixteen households with workers overseas at the time of the research were "complete".

Follow-up semi-structured interviews with these sending households and community leaders indicated that the cash remitted by OCWs is used as capital for new commercial agricultural crops, particularly where men farm without the labour of female partners. Respondents indicated that OCW money sometimes goes to buy supplies for starting up a business for the husband such as a tailoring, woodcrafting or vulcanising shop and pointed out local examples of such investment. Other distinguishing features of communities with many workers listed by respondents are the number of competing *sari-sari* stores (selling sundries, often on credit), tricycles and jeepneys operated by the husbands and families of OCWs and the prevalence of new commercial crops in the fields.

In Ifugao, respondents reported that OCW remittances have been invested in planting fields of green beans for sale on the national markets. This investment has been part of a broader, multi-causal transition where lands formerly under wet-rice cultivation have been converted to bean gardens.²¹ Specific qualitative examples of the relations between remittances and bean farming within women's life histories in this local context show how the circular migration of female OCWs to and from "abroad" can transform rural landscapes in material ways visible not just in housing and appliances, but also in crop and land-use decisions.

21 Detailed in more depth in B. Engelhard *et al.*, 'Bean growing in Ifugao Province, Philippines: A preliminary survey of socio-economic conditions and plant protection problems in *Phaseolus Vulgaris L.*', *The Philippine Agriculturist*, 74, 4 (1991): 471-7.

Gloria's story

To illustrate the emerging connection between new crops, land conversion and OCWs' remittances, I turn to ethnographic examples drawn from in-depth interviews with returned and would-be migrant women. The case of Gloria, a returned migrant worker (*balikbayan*) from Asipulo, is not intended to stand as the definitive example of female circular migration and its local impacts, but offers a way of opening discussion on how agricultural transformations can be linked to gender and globalisation. Gloria's household was surveyed and a follow-up interview was conducted with her husband and mother. Gloria herself did several in-depth and open-ended interviews during my year of fieldwork in 1996-7. We were similar in age and had both travelled; she met me as she was returning from Singapore and was very interested in details of life in Canada, where she hoped to find her next overseas contract. Perhaps because she saw me as a useful source of information on a desirable destination, she was willing to provide much more specific detail on her contract abroad and remittance patterns than I could gather from follow-up interviews with the households of the sixteen OCWs absent at the time. The following is a series of transcripts from Gloria's interviews. Though it is likely that she is not being entirely accurate in her recollection of the amounts she earned abroad and remitted home, her story neatly outlines the ways in which female migration links to new crops in the form of bean gardening.

Gloria was twenty-seven years old and had just returned from Singapore when she first saw me on a jeepney. Her Chicago Bulls ballcap and sunglasses marked her as a *balikbayan* to me, but we didn't actually speak then. She was curious about me, though, and appeared at the clinic door a day later, wanting information on Canada. I promised to answer her questions as best I could, if she would tell me about her work abroad for my research.

Gloria is a high school graduate, married with three children. Her passport says she is single. She left for Singapore when her youngest child was one year, nine months old. Now her children are nine, seven and four. Her sister-in-law took care of the children while she was abroad, helping out her husband and mother. Apart from her remittances, the major source of household income is her husband's bean gardening. They got married when they were eighteen, because there was no money for college. They did not inherit any wet rice fields from their parents, so they are 'landless'. Her husband liked the idea of her working abroad, because there was no work at home. And she's curious by nature: 'When I hear of far places, I think, "I would also like to see that place!"'

Visiting family at home, the agent found her in the *barangay*. This agent was the sister of a high school classmate and was recruiting for a placement agency with contracts in Singapore. She wanted overseas experience though she knew she wouldn't earn so much more money in Singapore – only P5000 (US\$191) per month for a new Domestic Helper.²² (She actually earned S\$270, see below).

From Singapore, she was able to send P5000 every month for her family. She sent the money bank-to-bank by calling an agent who came to the employer's house in

22 At the time of the interview in May 1996, the exchange rate was 18.7 pesos to one Singapore dollar.

Singapore to sign and process the papers. There was a service fee of S\$13–\$16. When she had time off, she went to Lucky Plaza (a mall which is a favorite gathering place for Filipino migrant workers in Singapore) and paid about the same amount to send the money. The money went to her family's account at the Philippine National Bank in Lagawe. Then she sent a letter, telling her mother to go to the bank in Lagawe with her ID and her tax declaration for their lands.

When she had been in Singapore six months, her brother borrowed P10,000 from her to go into gardening. She got the money as an advance on her salary and sent the money through the bank. So she was having S\$200 deducted from her S\$270 per month salary. This was to pay back the money, P10,000, her brother had loaned her to pay the fees for the Philippine recruiting agency and training course. She didn't want to stay on, though the employers liked her. She found it boring, the salary was low, and she had to stay inside and do the same work every day. So, when she ended her contract, she brought back P20,000 plus, only about four months' salary, as her savings. She also bought some clothes and a tape deck, but there is no electricity in her house yet.

Now that she is back, she wants to go abroad again. When I ask why, she explains: 'There is no improvement here. I send money, but it is scattered. Just for usual expenses: food, fare, school books... Nothing permanent, still just beans. This time, I will reserve some money for myself and then look for land to buy.' Going abroad is the only option Gloria can see to earn money. She believes that she will fit into a hierarchy of experience: 'There, abroad, the first time your salary is very small – like me, only P5000, but after five or six years, maybe you get P7500 per month.' She has already used her savings to pay the fees for an agency in Canada where she knows that contract migrants can become "permanent" (residents).

Gloria's story shows how migration creates new economic identities and new visions of the future for both the migrant and her family. In the follow-up household interview after the survey, her husband Nardo indicated he had used her remittances to become self-employed as a producer of a commercial crop – beans. Before Gloria went to Singapore, Nardo worked for her bean-gardening brother as a day-labourer because he lacked the capital to start his own garden. Gloria's brother was already gardening and he, not her husband, was the source of the cash that sent her overseas. To repay her brother for the loan, Gloria went into debt against her future salary in Singapore, effectively tying herself to her job. This loan did not consume her entire salary, though, and she sent most of the rest of it to Nardo.²³ After she began sending money home and he invested it in his own bean garden, he also began hiring other people as day-labourers. He anticipates that Gloria will eventually reunite the family overseas or maybe gather enough capital to move to a frontier region where land can be bought for less, so he doesn't want to invest too much time and money into acquiring terraced ricefields in Asipulo. He has decided to continue gardening and save money to invest in a chainsaw so that he can earn extra cash as a day-labourer in logging.

23 The salary calculations in the extract above are from a verbatim transcript of one of Gloria's interviews. Gloria may also have had part-time cleaning or babysitting work – usually glossed by OCWs as "aerobics" – to supplement her salary.

Gloria, meanwhile, is not satisfied with bean gardening as an investment for her savings. She wants to buy riceland, which she sees as the most secure long-term investment. Eventually, she might become a landowner with tenants from whom she could extract feudal surplus. Gloria's plans indicate that the income stream from remittances has the potential to produce class transformations, both in terms of new forms of self-employment and capitalist entrepreneurship and in terms of access to property and the ability to employ tenant and wage labour. Nardo, her husband, has become an employer as opposed to a permanent employee, while Gloria plans to buy riceland to be farmed by tenants. Though her remittances have allowed Nardo to redefine himself as an employer, Gloria is not satisfied with this transformation in her husband's class process as an "improvement". Moreover, such individualised household investment 'strategies' increase social and economic polarisation at the local level but do not strengthen or diversify the national economy.²⁴ In many cases, women like Gloria have little control over the way that their household distributes the money they send and they return home to find "no improvement". Gloria envisions going overseas for another contract and thus giving herself the opportunity to put aside savings earmarked for her own private land acquisitions.

Reading remittances into the landscape

As Gloria's story indicates, her remittances from Singapore went to support her husband's market gardening. Nardo represents a larger group of 'sole parent' gardeners in his community, all relying on OCW remittances for their capital outlay and searching for land to buy, rent or convert from wet rice to garden. This search for suitable land and the popularity of gardening creates changes in the broader agricultural landscape. To explain the context in which such remittances can recreate landscapes, this study will outline the ecology and economy of local agricultural production, first describing the Asipulo landscape and then exploring the ecology and labour demands of the major crops grown within it.

Several different types of land use make up the locality (see Table 2). The upslope recharge area is called *fontok* (mountain) and is usually covered with forest. These forested slopes are composed of open access communal areas (*ala*), privately owned woodlots (*pinusu*) and privately owned areas underplanted with coffee (*nakopihan*). On the margins of the forest, people open shifting cultivation (swidden) fields (*habal*, Tagalog *kaingin*) and these are found in various stages of succession. People may plant fallow areas in later succession with fruit trees or coffee. Further downslope is a zone of houselots (*fobloy*), with small clusters of houses making up hamlets or *sitios*. Depending on the contour, people have created *sitios* above, below and within the *pajaw* or terraced rice paddies. Depending on the rains and the proximity of a field to irrigation channels, some ricefield owners may plant their paddies with green beans. These are the fields local people name with the English term "garden". Respondents indicated that many fields are now permanently under beans because of both the lack of water and the changes created in the soil by the fertilisers and pesticides used for the bean crop.

24 Edgard Rodriguez, 'International migration and income distribution in the Philippines', *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 46, 2 (1998): 329-50. See Gibson *et al.*, 'Beyond heroes and victims', pp. 372-7, for an analysis of a similar case.

Water is the limiting factor in the subsistence production of rice. Most local people describe the entire agricultural system as dependent on the flow of water from springs located in the upslope recharge zone. These springs are channelled into their irrigation canals in order to flood the successive rice paddies of a particular 'stack'. The outflow for the water is the river – *guangguang*. Estimates for the various locally defined categories of land use in Gloria's *barangay* of Haliap are presented in Table 2, while Figure 2 expresses the proportions of the various land-use classifications graphically.

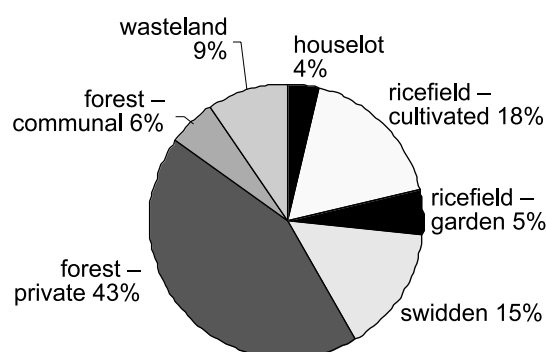
TABLE 2

Estimates of land-use in Haliap

Land use	Area (ha.)	% of total
Houselot <i>fobloy</i>	31	4
Ricefield <i>payoh</i>	182	23
cultivated	140	18
converted to garden	42	5
Swidden <i>habal</i>	120	15
Forest <i>ala</i>	392	49
private forest <i>nakopihan/pinusu</i>	347	44
communal forest	45	5
'Wasteland'	75	9
Total	800	100

Source: Central Cordillera Agricultural Program field staff, 1996

Figure 2:
Estimates of Land-use in Haliap



Making land-use decisions

To understand the impacts of remittances on pre-existing trends towards land conversion requires a fine-grained temporal analysis of the local agricultural cycle and the diversity of subsistence and commercial activities to which households allocate their

labour.²⁵ In Asipulo, subsistence cultivation or simple commodity production of wet rice is combined with swidden and the commercial production of coffee and beans. Farmers make their cropping decisions based on the availability of water and the arrival of the rainy season, typically in May through November. The availability of labour is also a crucial factor; between the specific requirements of each crop and the vagaries of climate there are particular bottlenecks in the supply of agricultural labour each year. March through May are pre-harvest 'slack' months where both men and women look for contract work out-of-province – paving roads, picking fruit and the like. May is the month for planting swiddens and women spend their days in the fields, while their husbands typically stay at home, caring for the children. Respondents reported that peak labour demand for both women and men occurred during the August harvest through December field preparation and again in the February planting season. Both men and women noted that although tasks such as repairing the rice paddies may be ideally masculine, women often share in the labour. For instance, in January many of the younger men are busy with bean gardening and women take part in the repair of the rice terraces.

In the ongoing production of landscape, the conversion of wet rice paddies into garden is of particular interest. The data above, collected in April 1996 by Central Cordillera Agricultural Programme extension workers, show that 23 per cent of terraced ricefields in Haliap, formerly used for wet rice, were then being cultivated as bean gardens.²⁶ Though it is plausible that the 10 per cent of households who reported engaging in transnational migration (a likely under-reporting) could own this 23 per cent of ricefields, this is unlikely. Some of the fields were probably converted to beans 'in advance' to raise the cash to support eventual migration, as outlined in the argument below.

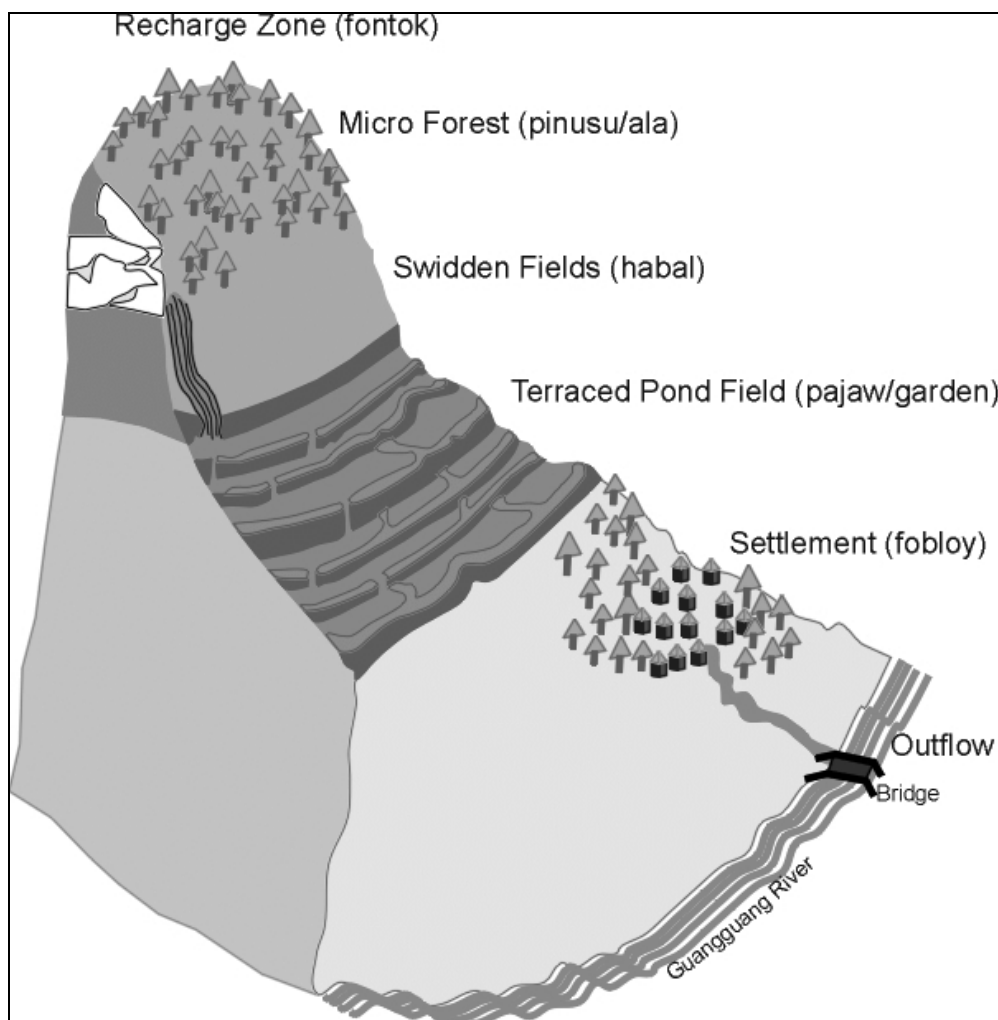
Respondents themselves attributed conversion of rice paddies to gardens to several factors – the utility of gardening beans as a site to invest cash remitted from abroad, the interest of younger farmers in 'modern' methods of input-intensive crop production, and a lack of water for the rice terraces. In their comments on land use, these respondents said that most of the desirable areas have been terraced for rice and the community is currently depleting the forest in the upslope recharge area to make gardens and swidden, thus reducing the water supply available for wet rice farming. In response to the shortage of water for rice farming, local people are bringing more and more land into production as "garden" in order to produce cash crops that can be sold to purchase rice on the national market.

By creating demand for more "garden" land, the investment of OCW remittances creates further water shortages and limits the land available for wet rice. Thus conflicts over land use have emerged between households wishing to invest migrants' remittances in the new bean crop and those struggling for subsistence solely by growing wet rice on the limited local resource base. This tension could be seen as embodying the conflict between the 'tradition' of rice cultivation and the 'modernity' of beans, the same tension that emerged in Gloria and Nardo's conflicting visions of their future in the locality.

25 Engelhard *et al.*, 'Bean growing in Ifugao', discusses trends in land conversion in Ifugao.

26 Unpublished 1996 data from Central Cordillera Agricultural Program Surveys, CECAP archives.

Figure 3:
The Representational Landscape of Haliap/Panubtuban



Source: Central Cordillera Agricultural Program Field Staff, 1996

Rice cultivation

“Ifugao culture is rice culture” is a truism repeated to visitors to the province. It almost goes without saying that if you are asking an Ifugao person about ‘land’, you are discussing rice paddies, traditionally the only kind of land worth having. Terraced rice fields are the most secure form of real property in the local land tenure system, held in trust by individual households for family lineages.²⁷ Traditional protocols for sales, rental,

²⁷ Terraced rice production across the Cordillera is dependent on spring-fed irrigation systems. The productivity of the system relies on adequate water flowing from the forested recharge area up the slope and down through the terrace system. Though archaeological records indicate that the technology has been practised since approximately 500 BCE, most of the terraces in the region date to a much more recent

mortgages and sharecropping overdetermine their management. Historically, the possession and proper cultivation of rice fields determines social status in a system that divides people into two groups. People in the wealthy *kadangyan* group achieve this status through inheritance or through the staging of elaborate prestige feasts that redistribute their accumulated wealth. Poor people, *nawotwot*, are their clients, exchanging labour in planting and harvesting rice for a share of the crop and providing political support as required. Gloria's plan to buy riceland would both elevate her household in terms of traditional ideas of status, locally. This kind of status transition for migrant workers was behind the comment made to me by one community elder: 'OCW-*balikbayans* are now our new *kadangyans*'. Gloria also hoped that owning riceland would provide economic security through a steady stream of cash income and secure and adequate supply of rice.

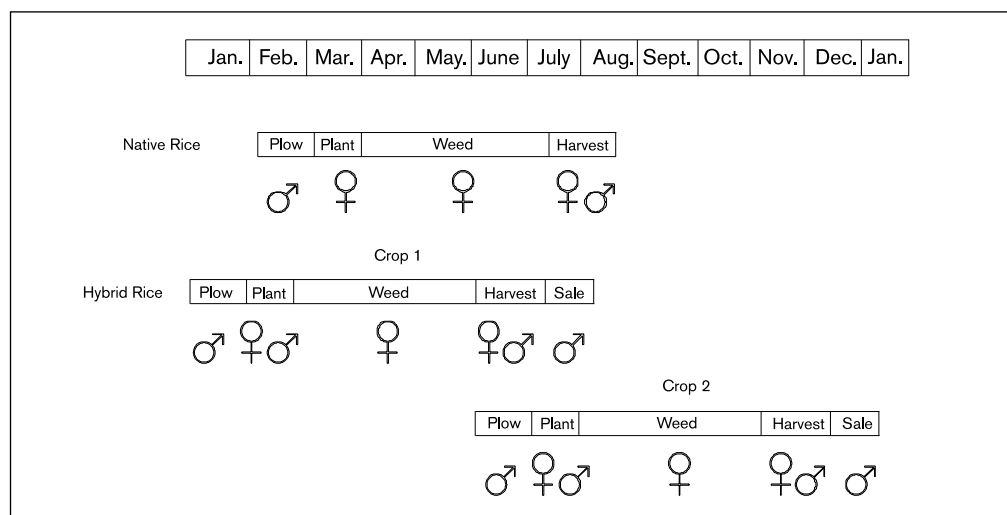
Two types of rice are grown in Asipulo; a dwindling number of paddies are planted with traditional local varieties while the majority of farmers plant "improved" hybrid varieties of rice. Exchange labour work groups of women traditionally planted and harvested native rice. The harvest was carried out with a small knife to preserve the seeds on the panicles and the rice was then bundled and carried from the fields to granaries by men. None of the crop was sold; instead, the rice was stored in bundles in family granaries for home consumption.

Hybrid rice is cultivated from seed bought in the market and planted twice in the year, around January and July. Hybrid varieties require "medicines" – chemical fertilisers and pesticides – for proper cultivation; people purchase these outright or on credit against the sale of the harvest. Respondents reported that hybrid rice can be successfully alternated with beans, whereas traditional rice cannot, a situation they attributed to the fact that chemical inputs used for the beans draw down the natural fertility of the soil.²⁸ Now, both men and women plant and harvest the hybrid rice; during the latter stage, panicles are cut in swaths with a scythe and threshed in the field. Using the scythe (rather than the knife) and threshing are considered 'heavy work' and the labour group is now predominantly male. Threshed hybrid rice is placed in *cavan* bags (50 kg each) and men carry it to the road, where it will be transported to a commercial rice mill rather than a family granary. The field owner burns the rice straw on the field to return some nutrients to the soil. After milling, the owner either sells the harvest or stores it for family consumption. Since the varieties are standardised, a harvest of hybrid rice can be sold at the prevailing market price like any commercial crop.

The gendered labour patterns for each type of rice are depicted in Figure Four. The figure illustrates how conversion of fields to hybrid rice from native varieties has freed up female labour because men help with the planting and do most of the harvesting. Weeding, though done by women, is an intermittent task that requires less intense labour input over a longer period. Moreover, because the hybrid rice crops are most often sold for cash, farming tasks can be performed by day-labourers paid in cash, rather than by family or exchange labour.

period, late in the Spanish era – an argument developed in William Henry Scott, *A Sagada reader* (Manila: New Day, 1988). The ripple effects caused by Spanish rearrangements of lowland populations forced even uncontacted peoples up into the mountains. They withdrew to the heights in front of waves of migrants fleeing Spanish-dominated zones on the Ilocos coast, the lower Cagayan and in Central Luzon. Many of these peoples began planting rice in terraced pondfields relatively recently; Haliap is one such community. 28 Engelhard *et al.*, 'Bean growing in Ifugao'.

Figure 4:
**Gendered labour patterns in rice cultivation for varieties grown
 in paddy fields – native and hybrid**



People have moved through the transition from local to commercial rice varieties while simultaneously experiencing much broader changes in the way they understand themselves. Women were traditionally the custodians of native rice varieties and the rituals used to ensure their productivity. Choosing to try to access the benefits available from certain religious practices, formal education and different roles within a gendered division of labour, however, many women have moved away from what might be recognised as a ‘traditional’ knowledge. This movement means that for women “knowing what to do” involves accessing cultural capital through education, affiliation with non-local churches and re-allocating time freed up from rice cultivation. Bean gardening has recently emerged as one new activity in which women have invested their labour and savings while work overseas is another and more prestigious new occupation.

Bean gardening

Phaseolus vulgaris, known as the Baguio bean, is now the major commercial crop in Asipulo.²⁹ People have converted dry rice terraces to monocrop fields of beans. Local people use the English terms “garden” and “Baguio bean” to emphasise the relative novelty of large-scale commercial vegetable production and the sophistication of local links to national markets. The expansion of land area and labour time dedicated to this crop has created major adjustments in the local agricultural system and landscape over the last decade.

Introduced in the early 1980s, bean gardening was initially a male activity, brought to the community by the Department of Agriculture with the cooperation of teachers at the primary school. In Asipulo, few young men find places in the formal workforce and often leave school to pursue casual labour, lumbering and gardening. In 1992, when I

²⁹ Ibid., p. 475.

first visited Asipulo, the typical gardener was young and single, still partially dependent on either his parents or married siblings. In exchange for subsistence, gardeners offered help with household expenses when and if they made a profit. Most wanted to buy consumer goods that established their status as potential husbands. Other producers of beans fell into two categories: those affluent enough to afford the risk and those desperate enough to brave the odds. Most of the fairly secure, married households did not engage in gardening as a major part of their economic strategy. They tended to be indirectly involved through the rental of fields, provision of some wage or exchange labour or the support of a younger sibling. Married men observed that the economic risk seemed too much to impose on their families, and several spoke of bad experiences with pesticides and indebtedness.³⁰ One gardener interviewed in 1992 compared gardening unfavorably to gambling because it involves a large capital expenditure or sizeable debt incurred against an uncertain return.

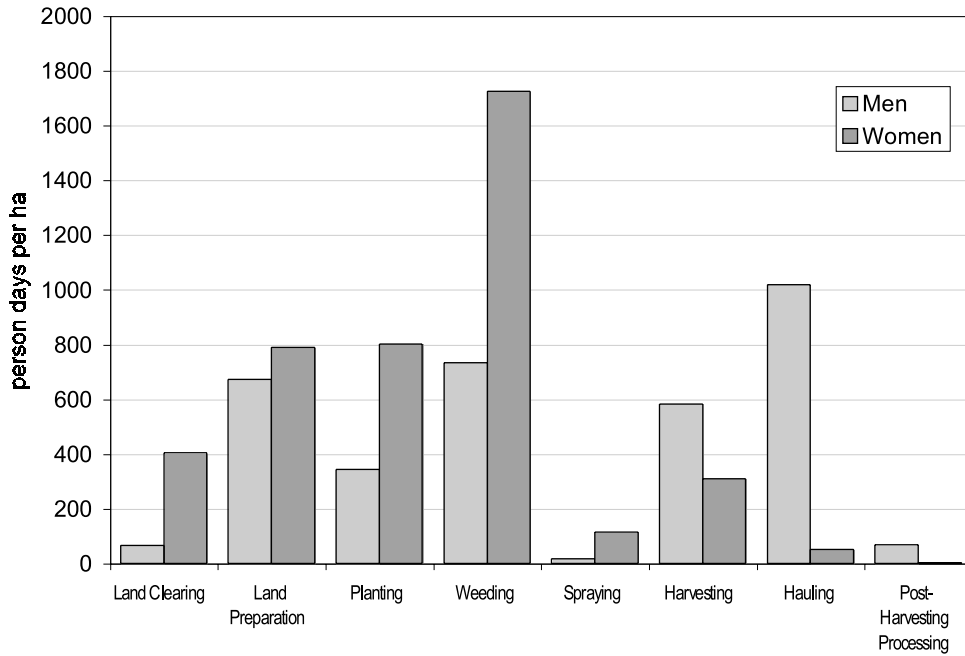
Those gardeners who inherited or negotiated access to a good field and had capital had the advantage, and they sold their harvest at the best price. Others got their inputs on credit from vegetable dealers, often at usurious rates, and contracted to sell to the same dealer below the market price. When supply exceeded demand, buyers would refuse beans produced outside an input-credit arrangement. Debts to the dealer were paid regardless and often compounded by attempts at a second crop. Capital was required to produce independently and independent producers were more likely to make money. The only time a contract gardener was virtually guaranteed a profit from beans was the typhoon season – if, of course, the storm destroyed his neighbours' crops.

Gardeners needed money to invest in the inputs and fields and to pay off debts. Many accessed it through illegal logging, either as customary owners of forest land or as loggers. Although this timber extraction was illegal, the law was rarely applied in the ancestral domain of indigenous groups; people disputed the ownership of trees in previously communal forest lands. Along with gardening came a growing demand for timber for the national market. Beginning in the late 1980s, wealthy households began to claim parts of the community's forests as private property. Deforestation led to more dry fields appropriate for beans. This allowed those with relative security in the cash economy to rent out their dried fields for the bean crops of the more marginal households. Thus, the connections between privatisation, deforestation and market participation were charged with class tension.

When it came to growing beans, women were definitely involved in contributing labour to male gardeners' crops, either as unpaid household labour or as day-labourers. Figure 5 details the labour time allocated to the various garden activities by gender for married couples. Figure 6 indicates the way in which garden activities are inserted into the agricultural cycle.

30 Ibid., p. 475.

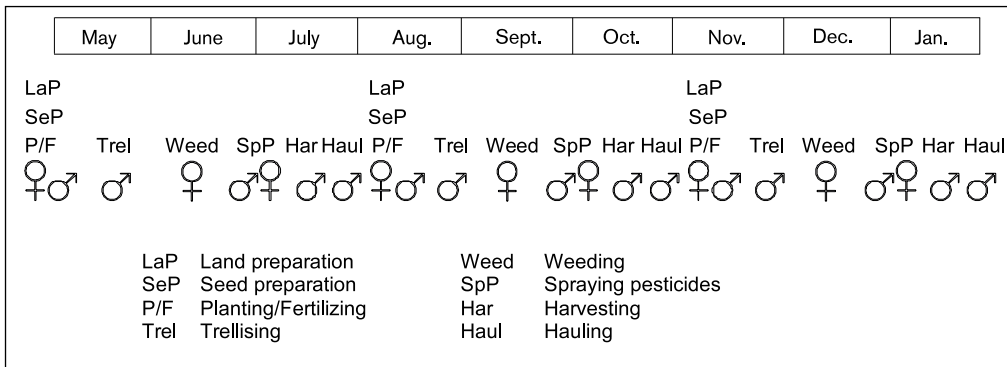
Figure 5:
Labour distribution in garden activities by gender, for married couples farming as a household unit



Source: Central Cordillera Agricultural Program Field Staff, 1996

Figure 6:
Labour patterns in garden activities over the agricultural year

Sources: Central Cordillera Agricultural Program Field Staff, 1996 and author's observations



Gendering local modernities

Though beans were a 'men's' crop in 1992, four years later things had changed. With the departure of women like Gloria for education and eventual work overseas, their male partners found themselves without an unpaid household workforce or female exchange labour to call upon for the 'female' tasks. More and more gardeners began to hire women as day-labourers, a practice supported by the inflow of remittance money. Women working in the bean gardens gained familiarity with the strategies and work of gardening and began to invest in gardens of their own. By 1996, gardening was generally recognised as an option for women, who were involved in it with increasing frequency. Notably, like the young men saving up to get married or Nardo, waiting to go overseas with his wife, female gardeners were likewise envisioning their agricultural activity as part of a plan to move elsewhere.

Female gardeners were often tertiary-educated and had held salaried jobs outside the community. They saw gardening as a stopgap measure, intended to support them while they pursued other plans. Here are two personal histories that exemplify this trend:

Ging began gardening in 1988 when she was in her second year of high school. She explained to me that she was so young that she would not have been thought of as more than a girl when I was interviewing on gender and gardening back in 1992. My question about 'women' was apparently translated as a question about *baballasang* or young, unmarried women – glossed in English as "ladies". While Ging said it was true that "ladies" very rarely gardened in 1992, things had changed now. Most definitely a "lady" and a college graduate, she was considering an offer of marriage from a college classmate and looking for work in nearby towns. To support herself since quitting her first job as a sales clerk in a Nueva Viscaya department store, she had returned to Haliap to garden again. Her most recent bean crop had been grown in cooperation with her brother, on land borrowed (rent-free) from her parents. She invested P900 for fertiliser, seed and pesticides and paid another P600 in labour to help her with field preparation. After she harvested the beans, her brother would carry the full 50-kg sack to the road, while she would take 35-kg sacks to combine later. She sold five harvests ranging from 100 kg to 30 kg, each at about P16 per kilo, calculating that she made about P3,000 profit from the P4,500 she received from the buyer. Her plan for the profits was to reinvest in one more cycle of gardening while she helped her parents plant their ricefields. Then, in January, she would use her savings to visit an aunt in Manila and look for a factory job there.

Not all female gardeners experienced Ging's success.

Feli, a single mother of two, was new to gardening. She was born to Haliap parents in Manila and raised there while her mother ran a buy-and-sell business dealing in Igorot crafts. When the business failed, the family returned to Haliap and she graduated from high school and enrolled in college. While studying in the lowlands, she met her husband and conceived her first child, dropping out of school. After her second child was born, she separated from her husband and returned to Haliap to live with her parents. Never having farmed before, she started in 1995 with a swidden plot where she grew corn to sell for chicken feed. The profits from that were small compared to the labour expended, so she decided to try gardening. Her first garden

was made in 1996 on one of her mother's fields that had recently dried up too much to grow rice. Like Sally, she bought the P900 'package' from a local bean dealer – seed, pesticide, fertiliser. However, after she had planted the crop, she did not water the seedlings frequently enough and they died in the sun. 'I was really hard up with the work', she explained. Discouraged, she is looking into the possibility of applying to work as a maid in 'Saudi' where a college friend has a job. Her concern is raising the money necessary to pay the fees required. 'Gardening is no more for me, I'll just lose more money.'

Beans are becoming a marker of mobility. As a crop, they represent a temporary measure for those waiting for a move elsewhere. Ging is looking for a factory job in Manila, while Feli is applying for contract domestic work overseas. Comparing Gloria's remittances (P5,000/month) to Ging's profit, it is easy to see why, from the local perspective, overseas work looks attractive. Perhaps because of the risk and uncertainty of the bean cropping, sending people "out" (to Baguio or Manila) or "abroad" (overseas) is an essential element of the local discursive versions of "development" and "progress". Both Ging and Feli were planning a move from gardening to find salaried work outside the community.

Conclusion: gendered conflicts on the landscape

Where migrant women withdraw their labour and their gendered ecological knowledges from local agriculture, local farming practices are restructured. The single fathers they leave at home make different cropping decisions, plant novel varieties, and convert land to new uses. The irony is that Gloria's remittances support her husband's gardening, which may in turn be undermining her dream of acquiring rice land. Nardo wants to invest their income in a chainsaw for logging, as well as commercial crops. Unfortunately, the ecological impacts of logging and gardening may undermine Gloria's ability to purchase ricefields by reducing the water in the irrigation system and changing the quality of the soils in the terraces.

Absent female land managers like Gloria cannot always influence their households' daily decisions. Yet, as a migrant worker rather than a practising local farmer, Gloria may have the more sustainable vision of a local future, while those who have remained at home pursue less ecologically sound and shorter-term strategies in hopes of enhancing their own mobility. This conflict within the community may, however, point the way to a new constituency and source of investment for innovative community-level development that is ecologically sustainable. Collaborative investment initiatives for OCWs abroad and their households at home are being explored by a Philippine-based NGO, Unlad Kabayan, and the Hong Kong-based Asian Migrant Centre.³¹ Larger-scale and diverse government and donor initiatives to support the investment of remittances with local sustainability in mind are still lacking.

Conflicting visions of local futures are played out on the landscape, just as much as they are in discussions of appropriate work for women and men. Returning to Gloria's story again, it is evident that she, as a female circular migrant, envisions security in terms of buying riceland at home in Haliap. Her husband Nardo, on the other hand, envisions himself as participating in a modernity created by small-scale commodity producers of

31 Gibson *et al.*, 'Beyond heroes and victims', pp. 378-81.

beans. The difference between Nardo's and Gloria's visions of a local future suggests that it is not the women going overseas, but the men left at home who envision a modernity where they 'play' the market by investing in small-scale commercial agriculture. Their story makes it clear that conflicting visions of the future for the household and for the locality are gendered in particular ways.

The impact of female migration may be even more important at the discursive level, seen in the personal performances of the 'modern' and the 'feminine' by local women. Witnessing the apparent 'success' of migrants like Gloria, other households and individuals decided to engage in bean gardening. Like Ging and Feli, they may see this as a way of preparing for or participating in their vision of a local future where, unlike the tradition of wet rice, the pay is in cash, the timeframes are short and moves from place to place are frequent. This case study suggests that both the raising of the capital for migration and investing the remittances it generates are transforming the local landscape. Feli is trying gardening as part of a plan to go to "Saudi" while Gloria's initial expenses were paid by a loan from her gardener brother. Ging is gardening to support her plan to migrate to an urban area, but she may yet decide to try her luck overseas. Their stories reveal that gardening has a local cultural meaning where producing beans indicates a 'modern' attitude while simultaneously opening up the household economy to the 'potential' of transnational movement. Beans are thus the 'marker of mobility' in a discursive sense, and this discursive marking happens often before there is any material connection established at the household level between bean crops and remittance money.

There is always more than one way to 'read' a landscape. Here, given the discursive importance of beans and the linkages revealed through the stories above, it is possible to read Ifugao bean gardens not just as an investment for remittances generated by OCWs but also as a source of the capital outlay needed for this state-encouraged migration in the first instance. That is, the crops that are planted in Ifugao fields say volumes about how the people planting them envision themselves in relation to both the state and to global labour markets. Bean gardens can be read as remittance landscapes – they both anticipate remittances and produce the capital needed to go overseas – and are thus tied to the translocal nature of apparently local places. Building from this example, similar arguments might be made for the links between agricultural landscapes, commercial crops, and gender relations in other remittance economies. In areas with significant gender-differentiated circular labour migration, it is likely that remittances produce a linked and likewise gendered transformation of agricultural landscapes. The changes in land, labour, crops and cropping patterns that comprise such transformations may not in fact reflect local ecology or economic opportunity as much as they represent gendered versions of new local futures, envisioned on a new global scale.