



Between Two Worlds: The Past, Present, and Future of Igorot Youths

Shaun Stewart '17 and Sam Pack, Ph.D.
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Abstract

The idea of liminality, established by Victor Turner, refers to a quality of ambiguity between two states of existence. In this capacity, young Igorots in the Philippines find themselves not fully accepted by, or fully belonging to, either mainstream Filipino society or the world of their ancestors. Based on the application of this framework, I ask the question: how do notions of Igorot identity become more salient based on living environment? Through participant observation, surveys, and interviews in both urban and rural environments, this project documents how people living in these locations strive to maintain connections to their ancestral cultures. In rural areas such as the village of Batad, modernization and a shift from cooperation to individualism has revealed a lack of interest in more ancestral practices for some youth. In more urbanized areas such as the city of Baguio, student groups and other organizations seek to bring more attention to indigenous cultures and ideas through the use of performances, events, and other programs. As the youth of different minority ethnic groups continue to follow this path of urban migration, there may come a continual shift or loss of ancestral traditions within identity formation, through which others can understand the history of these different groups. [Key words: Igorot, liminality, identity]

Research Settings



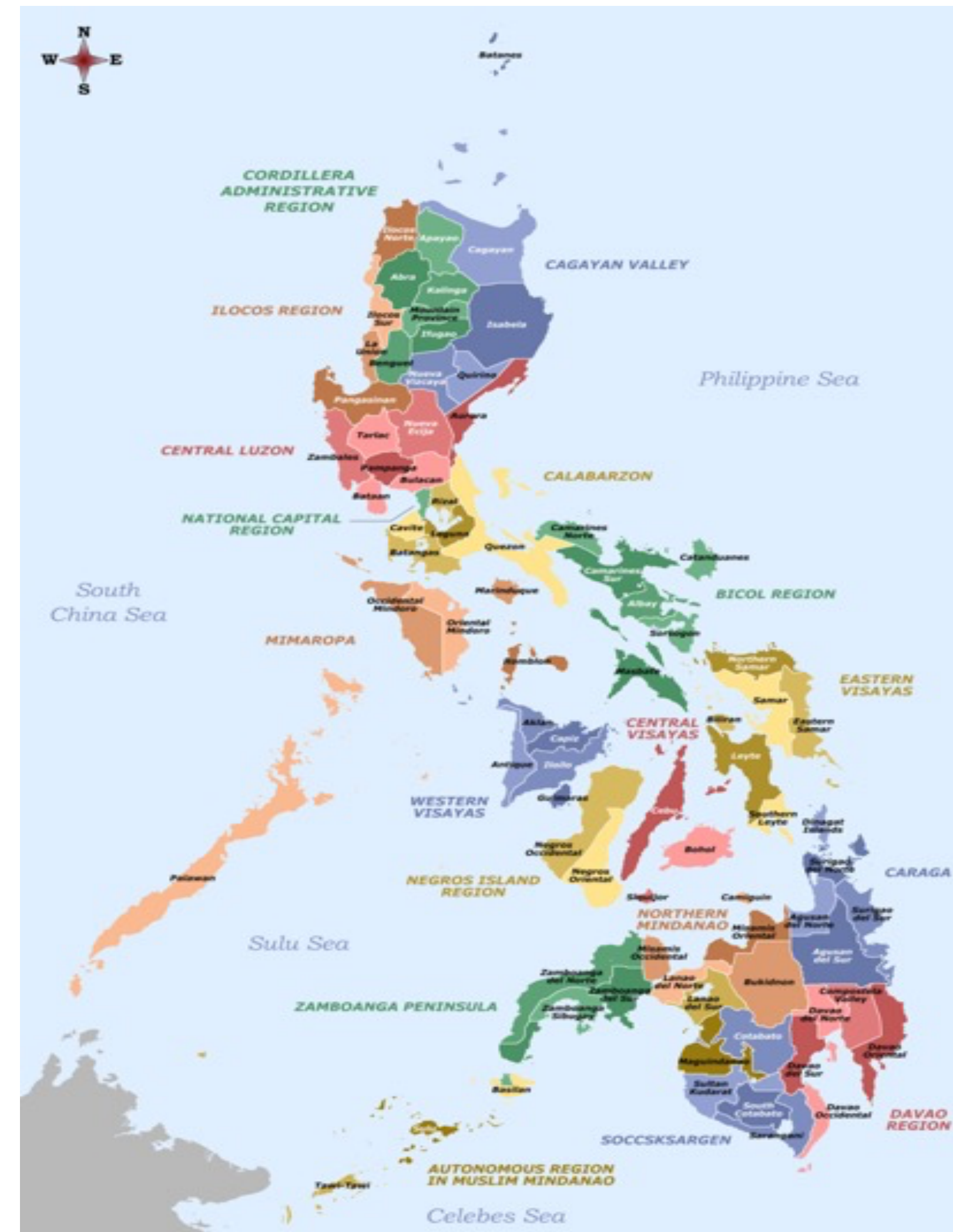
Figure 1: Batad Rice Terraces, Northern Luzon, Philippines

Small, rural village located within Banaue Province
Known as a UNESCO World Heritage Site
Rice terrace plots are passed on from generation to generation
Represents the "rural" side of project



Figure 2: Baguio City, Northern Luzon, Philippines

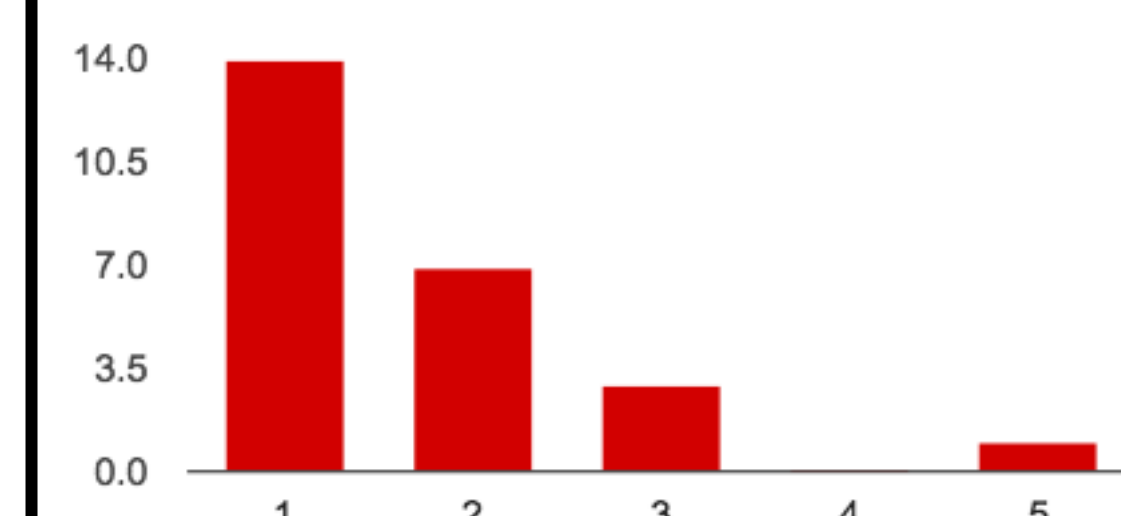
Known as the "Summer Capital" and is located in Benguet Province
Comprised of 4 main universities
• University of the Philippines, Baguio
• Saint Louis University
• University of the Cordilleras
• University of Baguio
Most of these schools have indigenous groups on campus
• PAGTA of UP Baguio, BIBAK of SLU
Also other indigenous groups such as the Cordillera Youth Center
Represents the "urban" side of project



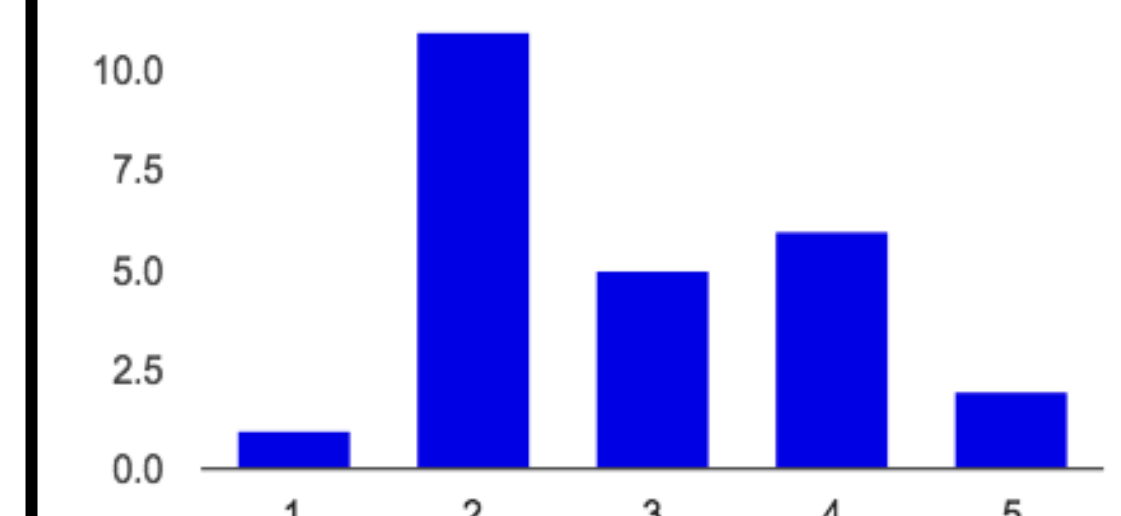
Methodology

This project consisted of surveys and one-on-one interviews over the course of a month in the Philippines. While in Baguio for three weeks, I distributed survey and conducted surveys, which offered some important insights about the demographics and other general information. Then I used this information to identify certain individuals for focus group interviews. During my week in Batad, I interviewed several innkeepers, students, and some teachers.

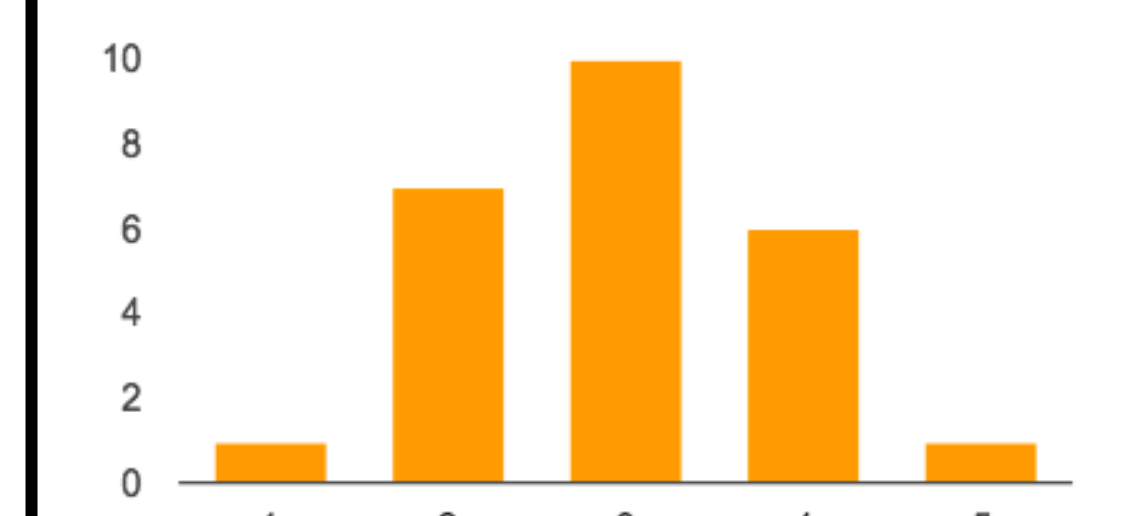
Survey Data



Graph 1: Importance of personal ethnicity within student groups



Graph 2: Effect of city on cultural values



Graph 3: Use of degree in future ties to aiding people of a similar ethnic group

Themes

- Generational Shifts
- Education
- Individualism vs. Cooperation
- Igorotak

Interviews

Baguio

- "Student groups like PAGTA lead discussions, lectures, and other programs in order to continue teaching others about these cultures" (Hazel Pespes)
- "They were laughing at our attire especially the boys because their butts are showing. They were comparing us to some tribes that we're not" (Rosa)

Batad

- "This generation wants to leave and go other places but some have no choice" (Renny Dulado)
- "Youth are uninterested in working in the rice terraces and their parents do not want them to stay" (Romey)

Conclusions

Rural Environment

- Due to the influence of tourism and other capitalist agendas, there is a cultural shift from communalism to individualism which coincides with an economic shift from agriculture to wage labor
- Due to this, some ancestral practices and cultural ideas may be left behind

Urban Environment

- Indigenous groups such as PAGTA and BIBAK have allowed for connections to respective ethnic provinces
- Within cities, groups also fight against the government in order to protect cultural land and other aspects related to their respective cultures

Liminal Environment between Urban and Rural

- People from villages and other rural locations shift to more urban locations in order to benefit
- People from urban environments seek connections with their respective provinces, which allows for the perspectives to overlap

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