Gendering Violence in the 'Philippine Anthropocene': A Feminist Political Ecology of Disasters

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Abstract

Disasters in the Philippines are often construed as the weather: they are naturalized and normalized; their violent disruptions, though familiar, are sporadic events managed by a weak Philippine state through the central role of the military. While the country ranks most vulnerable to spectacular geophysical, meteorological and climatological hazards, daily experiences of chronic vulnerability and 'slow' violence do not define disasters. But what is a disaster, and how can questions of surviving violent environments be de-naturalized and re-politicized in the present context of the 'Philippine Anthropocene'? This doctoral dissertation is a feminist political ecology project which uncovers the politics of community-based disaster management as practiced by grassroots women leaders in three case studies across the country: their gendered experiences and understandings of disasters; the root causes and material manifestations of intersecting vulnerabilities; and their daily activisms in response to disasters. In collaboration with the Citizens' Disaster Response Centre and three of its regional centers, I interviewed women disaster preparedness committee officers of an informal settlement in Barangay Bagumbayan, Taguig City; a village of small-holder farmers in Barangay Malabago, Santa Cruz, Zambales; and an island of small-scale fishers in Barangay Gibitngil, Medellin, Cebu. I draw on embodiment scholarship to enrich critical disaster studies through the use of ethnography, film-making, interviews and *kuwentuhan* or group storytelling circles in gendered spaces. These methods of 'slow' disaster research attune me to the violence experienced in the everyday by women in marginalized communities including their daily efforts to work for well-being and survival. These are documented in "*Barangay Magiting* (Village Heroes)", a short film series which accompanies this dissertation. I demonstrate that the practices of community-based disaster management--which encompass daily efforts for community organizing, pre-disaster preparedness, post-disaster recovery, development work, and mobilizing for socio-ecological-climate justice activism--have become an extension of women's daily unpaid care labour for their households and communities. These efforts offer radical albeit limited possibilities for re-centering questions of power in disaster response. Embodied practices of *pa-hinga* (resting to let breathe) both in disaster research and practice inform a politics of hope in the present context of compounding violence, intensifying weather conditions and state terror.

Dedication

To Franco, Ysabel Gabriel, and Mama-Inana Deanie
who shared sanctuary with me.

Acknowledgements

I am most grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Philip Kelly, whose steadfast guidance, kind encouragement and unfailing presence have accompanied me throughout the five years of my doctoral studies. We pursue intellectual labour through such turbulent times, and his committed mentorship to support his students' scholarship-activist endeavors I am indebted to. I am grateful for the encouragement and expertise of my dissertation committee members, Dr. Jennifer Hyndman and Dr. Shubhra Gururani. Together they have all celebrated with me many milestones, including finishing my comprehensive exams before my wedding, my pregnancy, the birth of my daughter, parenting during the pandemic, and the completion of my doctoral dissertation.

My doctorate studies was generously funded by the Ontario Trillium Scholarship from 2015 to 2020. The fieldwork my research team and I conducted in the Philippines from September 2018 to March 2019 was funded by the Doctoral Research Award granted by the International Development Research Centre, and the Vivienne Poy Asian Research Award facilitated by the York Asian Research Centre. I was joined by filmmakers Grace Pimentel Simbulan and Relyn Angkuan Tan whose friendship and creative talents have been a source of strength. Joy and laughter filled our travels across the country with unforgettable memories. Transcripts for all our interviews and translations for data in Cebuano were skillfully completed by Aldwin Empaces; and the visual design of my diagrams were improved with the artistic eye of Raul Hular. I was kindly assisted by York University's GIS Technician, Connie Ko, in learning digital cartography remotely to draw my maps.

It was my privilege to learn from and collaborate with staff members of the Citizens' Disaster Response Centre and its regional centres over the years. Their pioneering work for community-based disaster management and social justice in the Philippines forms an ongoing and multigenerational legacy in which this research project forms a small part of. It is my hope that this dissertation and the videos created in accompaniment of my written work contribute to elevating their often unacknowledged, exhausting, precarious and courageous labour at the frontlines. My research team and I are also most grateful to all the women grassroots leaders we had the privilege of meeting in Barangay Bagumbayan in Taguig City, Barangay Malabago in Zambales, and Barangay Gibitngil in Cebu. Their generosity hosting us in their homes and with

their families, sharing meals, their stories and aspirations with us, have all been tremendous teachers. Their daily efforts responding to disasters and working for well-being in their communities have enriched my personal-political commitments for social-ecological justice. It is my hope that my written work and the film series are able to cast light on the lived realities of slow violence and likewise survivors' long and persisting efforts for more just worlds.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Prologue: Disaster Research and COVID-19

As I complete the writing of my doctoral dissertation in the Winter of 2020, three consecutive tropical cyclones devastated the Philippines within a short span of twenty days. Typhoons Quinta (international name: Molave), Rolly (Goni) and Ulysses (Vamco) affected more than 30 provinces in the country [Figure 1], with Rolly initially monitored as a Category 5 super typhoon, equal in intensity as that of super typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan). My colleagues from the Citizens Disaster Response Centre (CDRC)[1], a nationwide network of civil society organizations, reported encountering additional logistical challenges in conducting relief operations due to COVID-19 travel restrictions on the ground. Small municipalities in the Bicol region bore the brunt of Rolly's first landfall and reported a dire lack of resources for disaster recovery as 70 to 80 percent of their reserved annual calamity funds had already been spent for COVID-19 responses.[2] A series of damaging earthquakes also struck the provinces of Masbate, Batangas and Davao Occidental in the last quarter of the year, with COVID-19 also posing added challenges to relief distribution and recovery efforts. And it is perhaps under this exceptional and extraordinary context of the ongoing pandemic, punctured with these repetitive meteorological and geophysical disasters, which I sense has heightened a collective state of dismay over state disaster management efforts among the Filipino public that is quite unlike any other time before. While the pandemic has impacted the whole world, in the country it disproportionately devastates urban poor communities and daily wage earners in Metro Manila[3]. At the time of this writing, social media platforms I participate in are awash with calls for cash donations and community kitchens for victims of the recent typhoons; these calls run alongside campaigns for

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[1] www.cdrc-phil.com

[2] "Typhoon after typhoon, Bicol's poor suffer the most" (November 12, 2020): https://www.bulatlat.com/2020/11/12/typhoon-after-typhoon-bicols-poor-suffer-the-most/

[3] www.urbanismo.ph is a collective of scholars and development practitioners which recently published studies on the overlap of COVID-19 hot spots and informal settlements in Metro Manila: *"Mahirap maging mahirap, nakamamatay*" (It is difficult to be poor, poverty kills).

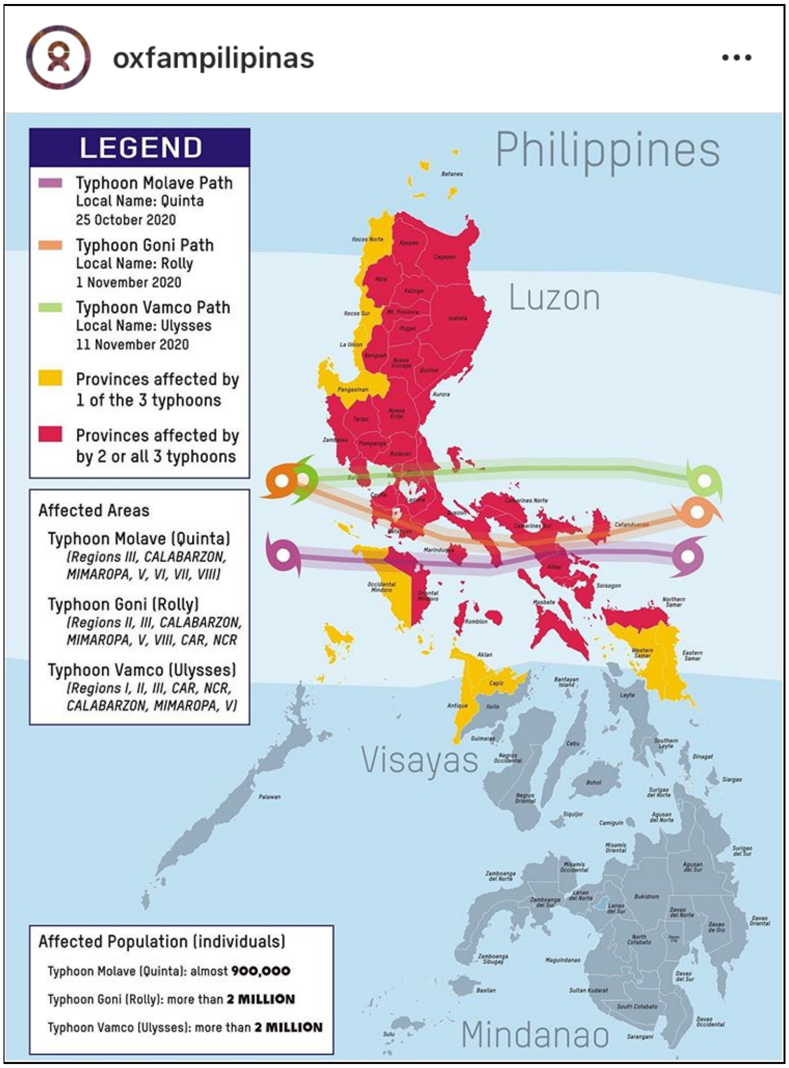
oxfampilipinas
Philippines
LEGEND
Typhoon Molave Path
Local Name: Quinta
25 October 2020
Typhoon Goni Path
Local Name: Rolly
1 November 2020
Typhoon Vamco Path
Local Name: Ulysses
11 November 2020
Provinces affected by 1 of the 3 typhoons
Provinces affected by by 2 or all 3 typhoons
Affected Areas
Typhoon Molave (Quinta)
(Regions III, CALABARZON, MIMAROPA, V, VI, VII, VIII)
Typhoon Goni (Rolly)
(Regions II, III, CALABARZON, MIMAROPA, V, VIII, CAR, NCR)
Typhoon Vamco (Ulysses)
(Regions I, II, III, CAR, NCR, CALABARZON, MIMAROPA, VI)
Luzon
Visayas
Mindanao
Affected Population (individuals)
Typhoon Molave (Quinta): almost 900,000
Typhoon Goni (Rolly): more than 2 MILLION
Typhoon Vamco (Ulysses): more than 2 MILLION

***Figure 1**: Map of typhoons October-November 2020 (Oxfam Sa Pilipinas 2020)*

food drives and personal protective equipment for medical frontliners, which have been sustained by individuals, families, groups of friends, companies and non-government organizations (NGOs) for over a year now. In the first months of the pandemic my own family, as many other households have, had converted our house into a headquarters for soliciting and packing personal protective equipment in support of essential workers across Metro Manila. While I am always astounded by the various scales with which fellow Filipino citizens organize and mobilize private efforts to provide relief during times of need, and I have personally participated with great zeal in multiple transnational efforts to support volunteer-run donation drives, I am also committed to surface questions of power and vulnerability in disaster research.

In a recent TEDxYouth talk in Manila, 23-year old artist and environmentalist Issa Barte spoke: "Change your headlines! It is not 'Filipino resiliency'. These headlines of our smiling *kababayans* (fellow citizens) reaching out through floods or storms should not only speak of their endurance, but of the things that put them in that position in the first place" (2020). The myth of disaster resiliency is now in question[4], as are popular romanticized references to *bayanihan* or the spirit of collective cooperative evoked as 'Filipino post-disaster resiliency' (Su and Mangada 2016), surfacing what CDRC and its partner civil society organizations in progressive social movements have long been posing: even before natural hazards strike, marginalized communities have been living in conditions which can only be described as disastrous.

In a paper I recently published in a special issue on world-systems analysis and the Anthropocene, I wrote my reflections on the everyday nature of disasters in the country (Go 2020). As climate justice movements gather momentum across the global North, with burgeoning interest in the Anthropocene, alongside the hegemonic discourses and practices of climate change adaptation spreading across the global South, I offer sobering reflections on the everyday disasters in what I write as the 'Philippine Anthropocene': the present geological epoch is not only defined by anthropogenic climate change with predicted future impacts on a planetary scale; instead I contend that the violence of freak weather conditions compounding on the anthropogenic forces of normalized and state-sanctioned forms of abandonment and terror has already been unfolding and experienced within the geopolitical boundaries of a nation-state. Written in the present political context of intensifying state attacks on civil society by the Duterte regime, felt most intensely with the recent passage of the Anti-Terror Law in July 2020 which allows the government to target its critics in the midst of the failing and militarized management of the COVID-19 pandemic[5], I recast the light on the anthropogenic forces which do not only manufacture violent lived environments for marginalized communities, but simultaneously endanger the lives of disaster response workers at the front lines--forces that could be more lethal than the strongest storm in the planet's recorded history.

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[4] "In the Philippines, typhoons shatter myth of disaster resiliency" (November 17, 2020): https://www.bulatlat.com/2020/11/17/in-the-philippines-typhoons-shatter-myths-of-development-disaster-resiliency/

[5] "The Philippines has the worst coronavirus outbreak in Southeast Asia, and critics warn the government could use it to crack down on dissent" (August 2020): https://www.cbsnews.com/news/covid-19-philippines-worst-coronavirus-outbreak-in-southeast-asia-crackdown-on-dissent/

In completing this dissertation during a global pandemic, I locate my scholarship in this historical moment of a growing awareness to re-politicize discourses on disasters and crises. What is a disaster, and how can questions of surviving violent environments be de-naturalized in the present context of the 'Philippine Anthropocene'? I uncover the politics of community-based disaster management as practiced by grassroots women leaders in three case studies across the country. By employing a postcolonial[6] feminist lens, I centre the voices and stories of women grassroots leaders engaged in community-based approaches to disaster response to examine their gendered experiences and understandings of disasters; the root causes and material manifestations of intersecting vulnerabilities; and their daily activisms in response to disasters. In collaboration with the Citizens' Disaster Response Centre and three of its regional centers, I interviewed women disaster preparedness committee officers from an informal settlement in Barangay Bagumbayan, Taguig City; a village of small-holder farmers in Barangay Malabago, Santa Cruz, Zambales; and an island of small-scale fishers in Barangay Gibitngil, Medellin, Cebu. I draw on embodiment scholarship and decolonial[7] research methodologies to enrich critical disaster studies through the use of ethnography, film-making, interviews and *kuwentuhan* or group storytelling circles in gendered spaces. These methods of 'slow' disaster research attune me to the gendered violence experienced in the everyday by women in marginalized communities including their daily efforts to work for well-being and survival. These are documented in "*Barangay Magiting* (Village Heroes)", a short film series which accompanies this dissertation. I demonstrate that the practices of community-based disaster management--which encompass daily efforts for community organizing, pre-disaster preparedness, post-disaster recovery, development work, and mobilizing for socio-ecological-climate justice activism--have become an extension of women's daily care labour for their households and communities. These efforts offer radical albeit limited possibilities for re-centering questions of power in disaster response. Embodied practices of *pa-hinga* (resting to let breathe) both in disaster research and practice inform a politics of hope in the present context of compounding violence, intensifying weather conditions and state terror.

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[6] My use of the term 'postcolonial' in this dissertation refers to the analytical framework I use. It is defined by a critical engagement with colonialism and its legacies in a postcolonial nation-state such as the Philippines. In Chapter Two, I reference the work of Chandra Mohanty to demonstrate how a postcolonial feminist analysis of women's survival testimonies and embodied experiences destabilize dominant Western discourses, assumptions, and the binary constructions of "East/West", "traditional/modern", "victim/survivor", "natural/cultural", among others. A postcolonial feminist framework allows for theorizing violence as disasters.

[7] My use of the term 'decolonial' in this dissertation refers to the research methodology I employ. In Chapter Three, I elaborate on how Indigenous scholars have championed the active undoing of Western epistemologies and methodologies on how research is practiced and performed. I write that the embodied practices of *pahinga* (resting to let breathe), collaborative and slow research, founded on a praxis of relationships, responsibilities and reciprocity, all constitute decolonial scholarship.

My doctoral research's central conceptual contribution is its postcolonial feminist analysis of women survivors' gendered understandings and experiences of violence in their daily lives. Drawing from anti-racist feminist scholarship, I extend Rob Nixon's compelling conceptualization of 'slow violence' (2011) to demonstrate that it is not only slow violence in the everyday that is unseen, but people themselves whose humanity is unrecognized. By theorizing violence as disasters, I revitalize and reaffirm the political dimensions of disasters as championed in critical disaster studies, political ecology and feminist scholarship; and in addition, I underscore the importance of centering the voices, lives and experiences of survivors from marginalized communities. My work disrupts the disciplinary silos which have categorically separated disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, humanitarian and development aid, from broader development and social justice agendas. Instead my research's findings underscore that women grassroots leaders from disaster-stricken communities understand, experience and embody violence in a temporal and spatial continuum--disasters are not singular isolated events caused by a physical hazard, but permeate across the scales of a woman's body, the household, the broader community, the nation and beyond. The women's efforts therefore to respond to the gendered violence of everyday disasters encompass the daily care labour they enact for themselves and one another.

Opening: Voices of Disaster Survivors

Disasters figure prominently in our popular consciousness across the Philippines—from the historical Mt. Pinatubo eruption in 1991, to regular earthquakes, El Niño warnings, and the chain of typhoons entering from the Pacific during the yearly typhoon season. I remember the Payatas trash slide in 2000 that buried over 200 people in the mountains of garbage they scoured everyday for a living; the Ormoc flash flood in 1991, likened to the Biblical tale of Sodom and Gamorrah by my grade school teacher, where deforested lands drowned over 5,000 people overnight. Super typhoon Yolanda (international name: Haiyan) in 2013 left ships stranded inland crushing entire cities bare. PAGASA, or the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Agency, remains in charge of tracking every meteorological force traversing the bounded Philippine Area of Responsibility; it is also the first government office ridiculed by the public for complaints ranging from miscalculated storm signals to power outages, and cheered by students whose classes are cancelled by their city governments. Other technical agencies such as PHIVOLCS or the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology is featured prominently in the news when volcanoes exhibit signs of eruption and preparations for evacuations are underway. Meanwhile, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Commission (NDRRMC), formed in 2010 under the Office of Civil Defense and subsumed into the larger Department of National Defense, is mandated to protect people during emergencies. While it is the highest decision-making body for coordinating across levels of disaster risk governance, it remains largely unfamiliar to the greater public despite the frequency of disaster events. Disasters in the Philippines are therefore construed as just the weather: their devastating effects are naturalized and normalized in the predictable failures of a weak state; their violent disruptions, though familiar, are seen as sporadic and random, and therefore questions of justice and inequality are irrelevant. Disasters whether 'natural' or 'human-induced', are managed by a weak Philippine state through the central role of the military, and resolved by the public's incessant calls for volunteers and donation drives--acts of charity by and for disaster-weary peoples. But what is a disaster, and how can questions of surviving violent environments be re-politicized in the country?

The Philippines is ranked third among all of the countries with the highest risks worldwide according to the World Risk Report 2018. With its location along the Typhoon Belt in the Pacific, an average of 20 typhoons enter the country's waters each year, with eight to nine making landfall; hydro-meteorological events including typhoons and the accompanying floods, landslides and storm surges account for 80% of losses in life and property (Jha 2018). Super typhoon Yolanda is one of the most severe disasters to hit the country, with 16 million impacted, 1.1 million houses destroyed, and hundreds of thousands of hectares of crops damaged (FAO 2018a). The country is also located within the Pacific Ring of Fire, a region where volcanic activity and earthquakes occur. Due to this geophysical context, the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery measures that at least 60% of the country's total land area is exposed to multiple hazards, and 74% of its national population of over 100 million susceptible to their impacts (GFDRR 2017). The Philippines is also among the top countries at risk of adverse impacts of climate change including the occurrence of stronger typhoons, sea-level rise, and elevated storm surges in coastal regions. The Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 ranks the Philippines among the countries with the largest proportion of its capital investments at risk. Former chief negotiator for the Philippine delegation at the UN climate talks, Yeb Saño, reported that 2% of the country's yearly Gross Domestic Product is lost to the typhoon season, creating a vicious "disaster trap" with another 2% consumed by recovery activities. While precipitation is steadily increasing and extreme temperatures are becoming more frequent, an overall climatological drying trend is also occurring outside the monsoon season (Villafuerte et al. 2014). This predicts that future droughts may pose the highest risk to crop yields, perhaps an ominous reference to the tragic police shooting of drought-stricken farmers protesting for rice in Kidapawan City in 2016.

The knowledges used to formulate the national disaster situationer illustrated above (see UNDRR 2019) are produced by technical, geoscientific and economic expertise. In subverting the power of such publications, akin to the top-down technologies of hazard maps which negate the presence of human agency in their representations, I now segue into the following section with vignettes and reflections from the national Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Summit 2018 I attended in Manila during my fieldwork. I do this to foreground the voices of survivors from across the country, and to honour their lived and embodied experiences of a variety of disaster events. Their grounded realities in turn contextualize and shape the theoretical frameworks and analyses I offer and develop in the following chapters throughout this dissertation. In writing this opening, I similarly situate myself and my own positionality in this study as I later draw from these embodied reflections to shape my own methodology and research methods. I intentionally sustain this manner of writing, which interweaves field notes and personal narratives with scholarly analysis, throughout the dissertation as a feminist practice of creating space--both in pages and extended through the accompanying videos--to foreground voices from disaster-stricken communities.

♫ ♪ *“Bahay kubo (na sira-sira!),*
Kahit munti (na giba-giba!),
Ang halaman doon (natuyo na!),
Ay sari-sari (inanod ng baha!)” ♫ ♪ [8]

♫ ♪ *“Nipa hut (it is all broken down!),*
Even though it is small (it has fallen apart!),
The vegetables that grow there (have dried up!),
Are plenty in kind (drowned by the floods!)” ♫

On November 28-29, 2018 a two-day national DRRM Summit was hosted by the Disaster Risk Reduction Network Philippines (DRRNet Phils), a national coalition of civil society organizations, people’s organizations, practitioners and advocates of community-based disaster risk reduction and management (CBDRR, CBDRM or CBDM). The Summit was also jointly organized by the National Anti-Poverty Commission, a national government agency that oversees poverty reduction programmes in the country. The basis for this partnership is Republic Act 8425 or the Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act, which identifies 14 basic sectors that require focused intervention for poverty alleviation: one of which is the sector for victims of calamities and disasters, which also cuts across the other sectors representing farmers, fisherfolk, the urban poor, Indigenous peoples, women, differently-abled persons, the elderly, and so on. The Summit was attended by over 150 participants who survived a variety of disaster events from across the country. The Summit’s objective was to gather participants’ perspectives on how to promote more just DRRM efforts; insights gleaned from the panels and workshops were published as urgent policy recommendations to inform the proposed creation of a new Department of Disaster Resilience as announced by the President earlier in the year. I attended the Summit both as a volunteer assisting organizers and also as a researcher to learn directly from how survivors of various disaster events in the country understand and engage with DRRM.

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[8] A witty jingle adopted from the classic folk song “Bahay Kubo” (Nipa Hut), composed by a group of participants in the DRRM Summit 2018.

I include this video of the Summit to provide the reader with a glimpse of how government offices, civil society organizations and community members convene and represent themselves in such national forums [Figure 2]. As a public awareness campaign tool produced by the Centre for Disaster Preparedness, the short video presents to the general Filipino public the multiple stakeholders involved in the practice of DRRM in the country. Although there are no subtitles in English provided, the viewer can glean how panelists presented their testimonies as survivors of various disaster events; the different workshop activities conducted to gather participants' inputs on DRRM; how collective action, protest and negotiations with the government are among the strategies employed by civil society to seek redress for state neglect in disaster response; and the ways in which affect, loss and grief were central to the participants' embodied engagement. I also view the video as a self-reflexive tool for situating myself in the "field".

National Irrigation Administration
DRRM LEARNING SUMMIT
AND REVIEW OF THE DISASTER RESILIENCE BILL
GATE 1
-3:47
HD

Figure 2: *"DRRM Learning Summit and Review of the Disaster Resilience Bill"*
(Center for Disaster Preparedness 2018)

Member organizations of DRRNet Philippines were the lead proponents and advocates for the passage of the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010 or Republic Act 10121. In their adherence to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction subsequently set by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015, civil society organizations in the Philippines envision CBDM as an approach which fundamentally recognizes the need to reduce vulnerabilities to disasters and strengthen people's capacities for preparedness, response and recovery. In a confused turn, however, the newly appointed Secretary to the National Anti-Poverty Commission gave away his own misunderstandings of DRRM in his keynote address. With sweeping statements pledging "101% support to save our planet", to "go green for the climate", and "to fight for our survival!", the bureaucrat's greenwashed opening remarks ironically exposed his--and I would argue the state's--own poor comprehension of what disasters are and their relationship to his Commission's central mandate to tackle poverty and vulnerability. The state's conflation of DRRM with climate change writ large, and its relegation of disasters to apolitical "green" environmental matters, stand in stark contrast to the following recollections poignantly and painfully shared by the Summit's panelists.

The Summit organizers invited select panelists from across the country to share their own experiences of disasters in their communities [Figure 3]. It was remarkable to me that while each of the panelists began with a testimony to recount specific singular disaster events, each and every one of their presentations would always revert to what I write as the *'slow' violence of everyday life*--day-to-day hardships that they know most intimately well, and tragic realities which have long been naturalized as banal and mundane.

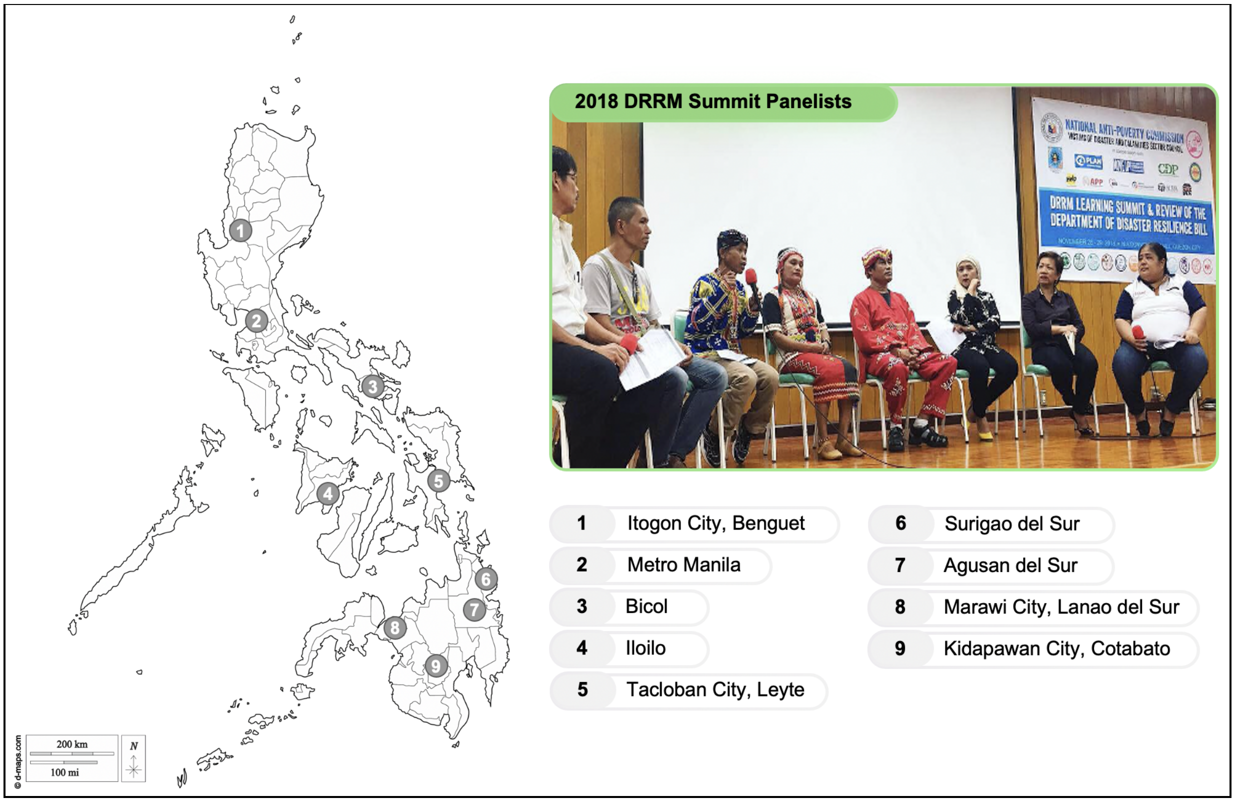
2018 DRRM Summit Panelists
NATIONAL ANTI-POVERTY COMMISSION
DRRM LEARNING SUMMIT & REVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DISASTER RESILIENCE BILL
1 Itogon City, Benguet
2 Metro Manila
3 Bicol
4 Iloilo
5 Tacloban City, Leyte
6 Surigao del Sur
7 Agusan del Sur
8 Marawi City, Lanao del Sur
9 Kidapawan City, Cotabato
200 km
100 mi
N
© d-maps.com

***Figure 3**: Map locating panelists' points of origin*
(map and photo by the author 2018)

A pastor and fisherman from the province of Iloilo who survived super typhoon Yolanda spoke of the continued "hand-to-mouth" existence in their coastal town. The surge of relief aid and rehabilitation efforts have now all subsided five years later, and their lives have returned to the hunger they knew before the storm. Two *datus* (chieftains) from Mindanao, the southernmost region of the Philippines, spoke of the great tragedies in their Indigenous communities who have known decades of armed conflict between the military and rebel groups. One of them recounted how his tribe struggled with drought during El Niño, while officially designated evacuation centres including their children's *Lumad* (Indigenous) schools have been occupied by both communist guerrillas and the military. The other *datu* testified of how his grandfather was killed for refusing to join the armed rebels, how he lost a child to the armed conflict, and another child from the mere lack of birthing facilities. The sound of desperation rang clear in his voice, his face sombre, cold, unafraid for his own life as he spoke of dangerous political truths publicly into the microphone. A woman from the northern Cordillera province attested to the militarized response that followed the 2018 Itogon landslide in the mining town where she lives. While the government and the media blame the small-scale miners for the lethal landslides they died from, she contested that the disaster was primarily caused by two months of ceaseless rains which eroded the bare mountain slopes that a large-scale mine had abandoned without rehabilitation. A *baylan* (healer) recounted the trauma of surviving a flash flood in Agusan del Sur. Her testimony then turned into a long lament for the continued armed conflict on their ancestral domains where oil plantations and loggers in connivance with local government officials have dispossessed them from their own traditional territories. She wailed exclaiming, *"Ang lawak-lawak ng lupaing ninuno namin pero kaming mga katutubo ang hirap na hirap, ang pinaka dukha! Nagpapatayan!"* ("Our ancestral lands are so vast and abundant, and yet we Indigenous peoples suffer the most misery and live in greatest poverty! Killing one another!") A man in a wheelchair asked the audience, "Do we know the names of the deaf, blind, handicap, mute and mentally ill who died from fires, floods and earthquakes?" Present-day early warning signals, evacuation routes and centres, and protocols for rescue hardly take into consideration the needs of those with varying disabilities. Meanwhile a delegation of Muslim Maranao women who travelled to Manila from the southern province of Lanao del Sur marched to Congress the day before demanding reparations and compensation for the Marawi Siege[9] in 2017. The women spoke on behalf of internally displaced peoples who, like them, are still living in evacuation sites and were not duly consulted by Task Force Bangon Marawi, a public-private consortium which is in charge of the city's rehabilitation plans. The Muslim women condemned Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism, but also criticized the government for waging an all-out war against the Maute terrorists, reducing their city into rubble. "They should not have bombed us! Our houses, our clothes, television sets… none of this was the source of terror. Let us return to our homes. Let us rebuild our homes. Human dignity. We cannot pray without water in the evacuation centres. Please let us go home." Marawi's refugees have not been able to return home to date.

On May 2017 President Duterte declared Martial Law throughout the entire territory of the southern Philippines as a means to address radical Islamic terrorism and narco-terrorism in

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[9] The five-month long armed conflict in Marawi City between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Maute group, a band of Islamic extremists composed of former Moro Islamic Liberation Front guerrillas and foreign fighters, began on May 23, 2017. It is the longest urban battle in Philippine modern history.

Minandao, as per Presidential Decree No. 216. The government suspended the Writ of Habeas Corpus or a citizen's right to question unlawful detention; martial law in Mindanao was only lifted in January 2020, while a "state of emergency" remains in effect to this day allowing military and police personnel to impose checkpoints and curfews during the pandemic. A Canadian travel ban on Mindanao was put in place while I was preparing my research proposal and ethics review application; upon arrival in Manila in September 2018, CDRC colleagues from regional centres in Mindanao also strongly discouraged my field visits due to ongoing security threats on their own staff. Attending the Summit in Manila and being in the same hall with hundreds of disaster survivors from across the country was an intense encounter and a remarkable opportunity for me to bear witness to lived realities that one may not always have the chance to see firsthand through travel and fieldwork on the ground. Summit participants were invited to grieve together, to mourn with strangers as if their experiences of great loss were intimately one's own. Listening to the panelists' stories, I noted, was to also touch fresh again a pain that is all too ordinary: "Disasters are everyday like the weather" (Go 2020), I would later write, as participating in the Summit and my case studies for this doctoral research project reminded me.

Dissertation Outline

This doctoral dissertation is a feminist political ecology project which uncovers the politics of community-based disaster management as practiced by grassroots women leaders in three case studies across the country: their gendered experiences and understandings of disasters; the root causes and material manifestations of intersecting vulnerabilities; and their daily activisms in response to disasters. In collaboration with the Citizens' Disaster Response Centre (CDRC) and three of its regional centers, I interviewed women disaster preparedness committee officers of an informal settlement in Barangay Bagumbayan, Taguig City; a village of small-holder farmers in Barangay Malabago, Santa Cruz, Zambales; and an island of small-scale fishers in Barangay Gibitngil, Medellin, Cebu. I inquire: How do women disaster preparedness committee officers define disasters in their own communities? What are the causes and material manifestations of vulnerability in each community as seen in their local livelihoods, access to disaster relief, and security from violence? How do women leaders understand well-being for themselves and their communities? What efforts for CBDM do the women leaders engage in? Do these actions transform the root causes of their vulnerabilities? What successes have they achieved? What obstacles do they face from more entrenched multi-scalar power relations including their relationship with local government officials, security forces, landed families, business interests, and NGO actors including the CDRC regional staff?

My research also examines how CDRC is situated in the broader civil society ecosystem of non-government organizations (NGOs) and people's organizations (POs) that engage in service delivery, community organizing and advocacy around issues of disaster management. How do CDRC's regional centres practice community-based disaster management (CBDM)? What are the strengths and limits of its CBDM framework, how does it challenge predominant state-led approaches to DRRM, and does it transform the root causes of people's vulnerabilities?

This dissertation is structured into the following eight chapters:

Chapter One situates the study in the present context of the 'Philippine Anthropocene', which I write is characterized by intensifying hydro-meteorological, geophysical and climatological hazards unfolding alongside the lethal forces of state terror. Together these forces shape violent environments in disaster-stricken communities and endanger the lives of disaster responders from various civil society organizations in the country. I opened this dissertation with voices from survivors present at a Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Summit, and I continue to include personal narratives, reflections, vignettes, song lyrics and videos throughout the dissertation as part of my feminist practice of acknowledging the embeddedness of multiple embodied knowledges of those I learn from, mine included.

Chapter Two is a review of related literature and demonstrates how critical social theories and feminist political ecology offer critical approaches to disaster studies. To subvert hegemonic conceptualizations of disasters as spectacular tragedies and their representations in fast media, I turn to feminist and anti-racist conceptualizations of 'slow' violence as a way to theorize and thereby 'see' violence as everyday disasters. I engage with theories of the Philippine state to argue that state violence must be central to understanding how disasters are manufactured. I propose that the activist labour for social-ecological-climate justice cuts across the disparate realms of disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) and climate change adaptation (CCA) undertaken by various non-government organizations; and that the daily care labour undertaken by grassroots women leaders in the form of community-based disaster management (CBDM) pose radical albeit limited alternatives to the governance of DRRM-CCA. I emphasize that a postcolonial feminist lens is crucial for critical disaster research and practice as it pays attention to experiences of intersectional vulnerabilities, gendered violence, and activisms in daily lived environments.

Chapter Three expounds on how my positionality and motivations, molded by years of transnational scholarship and activism, inform my engagement with this research project. I write how a politics of hope, replenished by the embodied practices of *pahinga* (rest) and *pa-hinga* (to let breathe), can sustain engaged scholarship in the current political context of the 'Philippine Anthropocene'. I detail how the collaborative processes I have sustained with research partners throughout the years have shaped the design of this research, including the multi-media outputs that accompany this publication. I propose that the ethnographic methods, interviews and *kuwentuhan* or group storytelling circles which my all-women research team and I employed in the conduct of fieldwork, all constitute a methodology for 'slow disaster research' which allows for one to counter a politics of speed and spectacular tragedies, and bear witness to the slow gendered violence of daily disasters and also the ongoing efforts women grassroots leaders undertake in response.

Chapter Four provides a historical account of the formation of Philippine civil society and traces the origins and development of DRRM efforts as undertaken by non-state actors in the country. I locate the Citizens' Disaster Response Centre (CDRC) as a pioneering DRRM non-government organization within a broader civil society ecosystem, with its beginnings in anti-Martial Law activism during the 1980s, and which has since championed its own community-based disaster management (CBDM) framework through community organizing for development and human rights. While civil society has been granted a central role in promoting community-based approaches to DRRM as enshrined in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, the violence of state terror and the role of the state in perpetuating disasters remain lacking in such governing policies. Instead my three case studies reveal that CBDM practices as enacted by women officers of disaster preparedness committees and their support NGOs can challenge and negotiate with multi-scalar power relations which shape gendered violence in each of the *barangays* or villages.

Chapter Five is the first case study on disasters as experienced in the lives of women in Barangay Bagumbayan, Taguig City, Metro Manila. I examine how the violence of urban poverty is experienced in the face of hydro-meteorological hazards such typhoons and floods, forces of eviction such as fires and demolitions, including state-sanctioned armed violence, domestic and sexual violence, which all shape gendered understandings of disasters in the daily lived environments of an informal settlement. The CBDM efforts practiced by the women officers of a recently formed disaster preparedness committee extend beyond preparing and planning for flood evacuation drills; they draw on the vibrant friendships they have with one another to sustain efforts in leading fellow mothers who benefit from a government social welfare programme, advocating for women's protection from gender-based violence, and participating in a broader alliance for urban poor rights. I contend that while oppositional state-society relations have shaped the broader urban poor rights movement in Metro Manila, the case study in Bagumbayan demonstrates how women grassroots leaders have also welcomed the opportunity to work in and alongside their local government.

Chapter Six is the second case study on disasters as experienced in the lives of women in Barangay Malabago, Santa Cruz, Zambales. I examine how the violence of environmental destruction caused by nickel mines in the province, the persecution of environmentalists, and the threats to health and livelihood of small-holder farmers, all compound on the imminent threats posed by intensifying typhoons. The catastrophic loss of rice planted in rain-fed paddies and compounding debt among small-holder farmers shape women's gendered vulnerabilities and daily experiences of disasters. The CBDM efforts practiced by the women officers of the *Sama-Sagip* disaster preparedness committee include extensive efforts for pre-disaster preparedness, evacuation and the provision of post-disaster relief; they similarly support broader environmental justice campaigns mobilized by activist organizations in the province. While state-society relations remain fraught with tension given the continued operation of mines in the region, the women officers draw strength from the conviviality and camaraderie they share among one another as their daily care labour extends beyond the safety of their individual households to the wider *barangay.*

Chapter Seven is the third case study on disasters as experienced in the lives of women in Barangay Gibitngil, Medellin, Cebu. I examine how the violence of super typhoon Yolanda (international name: Haiyan), while exceptional in its intensity, is not separate from the experiences of daily disasters in the lives of small-scale fishers living on the island-*barangay.* The chronic neglect in the provision of basic social services, economic marginalization caused by commercial fishing in their municipal waters, and threats to land security as posed by a local island-owning elite and government officials, have all been enduring dangers. Women officers of the disaster preparedness committee speak of their gendered experiences of vulnerabilities in the face of armed and state-sanctioned violence. In the midst of these disasters, whether during a super typhoon or long before and after the storms have passed, the women draw strength from the strong comradeship they have with one another to continue CBDM efforts such as pre-disaster preparedness, evacuation and the provision of post-disaster relief; participating in *barangay*-wide development and livelihood initiatives; and also leading ongoing mobilizations to secure their rights to land through a broader network of social movements.

Chapter Eight is the concluding chapter and summarizes the key findings of this doctoral research project. Inspired as I have been by the continued daily, often mundane, little and sometimes quiet efforts undertaken by research collaborators and informants to work for one another's protection, survival and well-being in the midst of the terrifying disasters of the 'Philippine Anthropocene', I end with an ardent call for a politics of hope to be replenished among engaged scholars and practitioners alike.

My doctoral dissertation aims to contribute to the field of critical disaster studies with the use of a postcolonial feminist lens which centres the voices, stories and lived experiences of women grassroots leaders in marginalized communities in the Philippines. With its attention on the complex interactions of identities, power relations and lived environments, a feminist political ecology framework examines how disasters are manufactured. I use postcolonial and feminist lenses to see the state-santioned capitalist, nationalist and patriarchal forces of dispossession that are everyday in the making. I draw on the concept of 'slow' violence to subvert the politics of speed which shape the dominant discourse of disasters in the realm of the spectacular: I write that disasters in the 'Philippine Anthropocene' are not only newsworthy catastrophic events wrought by meteorological and climatological hazards, but are also mundane experiences of violence in the everyday lives of the marginalized. I demonstrate how disaster research is not only done in the urgent haste of post-disaster situations, but sustained through commitments of engaged scholarship to peoples and places. Through my multi-year collaboration with staff of CDRC in shaping the research questions and outputs of this doctoral research I intend to not only analyse the politics of CBDM, critique its possibilities and limitations, but also contribute to advocacy and activism for more just disaster response efforts. My practice of 'slow' creative and collaborative research with a team of women filmmakers pays attention to the women grassroots leaders' gendered experiences and understandings of disasters; the root causes and material manifestations of intersecting vulnerabilities; and their daily activisms in response to disasters. By gathering testimonies in *kuwentuhan* or group storytelling in the gendered spaces of homes, outdoor kitchens, communal gardens and daycare centres, I bring attentiveness to the women's daily struggles in violent lived environments and their daily care labour in the form of community-based disaster management. I offer the embodied practices of *pahinga* (rest) and *pa-hinga* (to let breathe) as ways to replenish one's politics of hope in 'desire-centred' disaster research and practice --referencing Indigenous and feminist scholarship, I write that the women leaders' aspirations and shared sense of conviviality and empowerment through their communal efforts for disaster preparedness, response, development projects and social-environmental justice activism all constitute hopeful possibilities in the 'Philippine Anthrpocene'.

Chapter Two
Disasters and Political Ecologies of Violence: A Review of Related Literature

Overview

Chapter Two is a review of related literature which I draw from as theoretical foundations for my analysis of disasters and political ecologies of violence in the Philippines. The first section provides a genealogy of disaster studies and how approaches in the field have been informed by a variety of paradigms in the recent decades. My dissertation builds upon critical social theories and feminist political ecology to rethink disasters and understand vulnerability as the reduction of defences and capacities for survival by socio-political economic power relations. In subverting the ways policy frameworks govern disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) efforts, I turn to feminist and anti-racist conceptualizations of 'slow' violence as a way to theorize violence as disasters. I emphasize that a postcolonial feminist politics is crucial for critical disaster research and practice because it pays attention to experiences of intersectional vulnerabilities to disasters and gendered activisms in daily lived environments.

In the second section of this chapter I turn to theories of the Philippine state and argue that it can also be treated as a lethal hazard, particularly in the context of the Duterte regime and its distinct methods of manufacturing disasters and endangering the lives of those responding at the front lines. I refer to the work of critical disaster scholars to develop a framework for relating climate change adaptation (CCA), disaster risk reduction (DRR or DRRM), and development agendas. I propose that while each of these realms can be conceptualized as a subset of the other, the foundational work for social-ecological-climate justice cuts across these fields and reveals the role of state violence in shaping disasters in marginalized communities. The labour of progressive civil society and activist organizations in the country pose radical albeit limited alternatives to the practice of DRRM-CCA. I propose a postcolonial feminist lens is crucial to a political ecology of disasters in the Philippines, which I use in my analyses of three case studies on women's grassroots work in Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

I. Towards a Critical Approach to Disaster Studies

a. Genealogy of Disaster Studies

The interdisciplinary field of disaster studies first emerged in the 1950s following the Second World War, and has since been preoccupied with managing crisis situations, seeking to reduce vulnerability and assist in post-disaster recovery. Given its origins in the height of the Cold War, a prevailing “paradigm of war” has presented disasters as situations which require the military’s central command and would elicit people’s reactions to aggressions: “bombs fitted easily with the notional of an ‘external agent’, while people harmed by floods, hurricanes or earthquakes bore extraordinary resemblance to victims of air raids” (Gilbert 2003, 233). This view reflected the institutional demands for disaster studies which included civil defense or civil security agencies created during the two world wars (Drabek 1986; Gilbert 1998, 13). Interpreting disasters through functionalist and positivist approaches continues to thrive in present-day approaches to disaster management with emphasis on order and social control. This is seen for example in the US Department of Homeland Security’s leadership over the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The same governance structure is replicated in the Philippines’ National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) which is managed by the Office of Civil Defense under the Department of National Defense. The dangers of a militarized approach to disaster response are well documented by scholars who study the securitization of disaster management efforts and the ways in which it coincides with disaster capitalism (Klein 2007), neoliberalism and racism (Pyles, Svistova and Ahn 2017) as most starkly evident at the wake of Hurricane Katrina (Giroux 2015). Similarly, studies of disaster response in the Philippines post-super typhoon Yolanda (international name: Haiyan) expose how militarization occurred alongside cases of disaster capitalism, evictions and other forms of violence (IBON Foundation 2015, 2017; Yee 2018). As detailed in Chapter Three, civil society organizations in the country today continue to challenge the state’s enduring ambitions for an even greater militarized and bureaucratic management of disaster risk through the proposed Department for Disaster Resilience.

The enduring top-down, technology-centred and masculinist approaches in disaster management are not only legacies of the war paradigm, but also of a hazards paradigm which views meteorological forces and other natural phenomena as external forces acting upon society. Geophysical, hydrological and meteorological hazards are often referred to as ‘extra-ordinary’, ‘un-controllable’, ‘in-credible’, ‘un-predictable’ and ‘un-certain’, affecting regions that are ‘under-developed’, ‘over-populated’, ‘un-informed’, ‘un-prepared’, and ‘un-planned’ (Gaillard 2015, 3). The hazards approach has promoted a hegemonic cultural discourse that denigrates large regions of the world as ‘disease-ridden’, ‘poverty-stricken’, and ‘disaster-prone’ (Bankoff 2001). These threats require interventionist approaches from external ‘experts’ who are able to produce knowledge represented in maps such as the example shown in Figure 4; while artistically rendered, such cartographies visually produce a kind of deathscape as seen ‘from above’: topographies that are terrifying, even uninhabitable, and also void of any social agency or interaction in lived and living environments. Dangers are perceived to be external, and risks as something to be rationally managed and ameliorated. Before the Second World War, disaster risk management efforts were preoccupied with engineered solutions to water management such as the construction of embankments, dams and barriers primarily for state control. This approach promotes the advancement of quantitative technologies to calculate, model and predict Nature with greater accuracy and precision; the proliferation of hazard mapping projects in ‘high risk’ places, particularly in the context of climate change today, therefore also serves to advance technocratic management strategies and to promote adaptation mechanisms that run the danger of overlooking political questions of power and why people are vulnerable in the first place. As I demonstrate in each of my three case studies in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, hazard maps produced by international aid agencies for local government units in the Philippines reproduce deathscapes void of any representation of and participation from the very people they supposedly serve. The management of vulnerability and development in the global South thereby constitute the same enduring imaginative geographies constructed by colonial Orientalist discourses, pathologies of ‘warm climates’, neo-Malthusian paranoia and panic over environmental security concerns in the tropics.

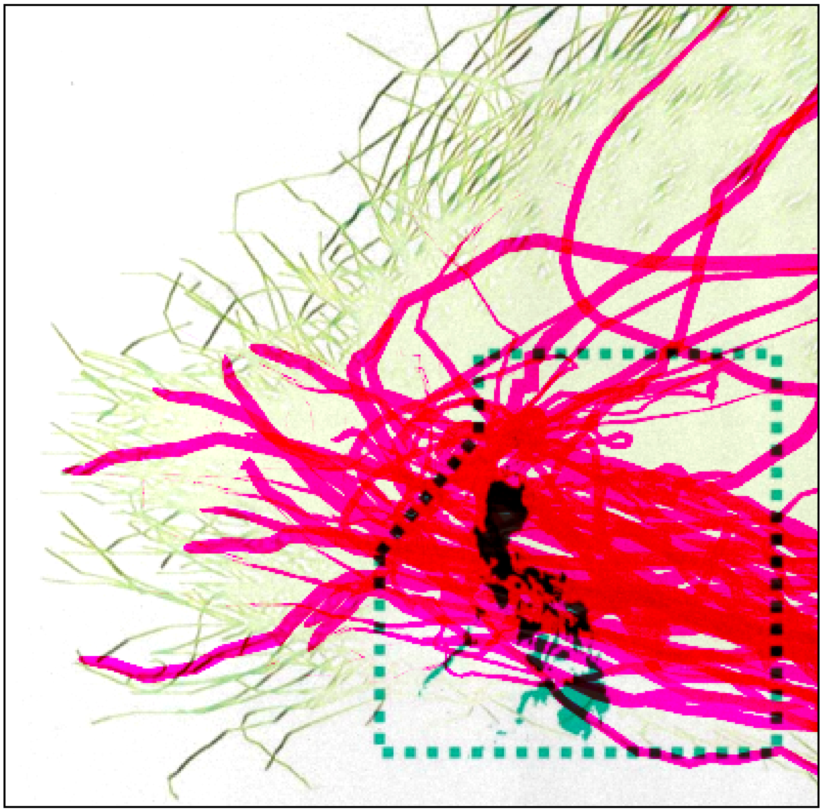

Figure 4: *Map of typhoons in the Philippines 1951-2017*
(The Philippine Climate Almanac 2019)
An artistic rendition of a map of the Philippine Area of Responsibility with green lines representing tracks of all typhoons; and pink lines representing those with greatest impact in terms of intensity, damages and casualties

A social science perspective on disasters emerged in the 1960s and continued into the 70s and 80s in parallel with the growth of political ecology. Sociologists, geographers and anthropologists began to focus on understanding individuals' and groups' responses to disasters (White and Haas 1975; Barton 1969; Kreps 1984; Bates and Peacock 1987; Dynes, de Marchi and Pelanda 1987), challenging the hazards paradigm in disaster research. This conceptual shift in disaster studies framed disasters as no longer being solely a reaction to a conflict or a defense against external attacks, but can be seen as an action, a result, a social consequence and a process. In a critical turn, materialist analyses of disasters drawing from Marxist approaches presented disaster response as having to go beyond the provision of relief aid but to transform the very political economic structures that breed vulnerability to disasters. The concept of social vulnerability for example was first presented by Hewitt's *Interpretations of Calamity* (1983) to examine the structural factors for increasing poverty and how these socio-political processes shape vulnerability. Vulnerability was later defined by Blaikie and Brookfield (1987), in what was to become the beginnings of political ecology, as the degree to which one's social status influences the differential impact by natural hazards and the social processes which led to and maintain that status. The uncovering of vulnerability in disaster research requires a political analysis of power, examining people's susceptibility to harm, together with processes which maintain this exposure to danger.

In parallel with the development of disaster research, the field of political ecology also originated in the natural hazards tradition, and later emerged with "the main premise that ecological problems were at their core social and political problems, not technical or managerial, and therefore demanded a theoretical foundation to analyze the complex social, economic, and political relations in which environmental change is embedded" (Neumann 2014, 5). The field has grown from its sustained critique of Malthusian logics of population control, technocratic solutions to environmental degradation, and narratives of ecoscarcity which attribute violent conflicts to the lack of resources. These logics remain just as pervasive decades later, as seen for example in the cases of coastal villages blamed for their own exposure to storm surges and in the destruction of mangrove forests. In a similar vein, the natural hazards paradigm persists through the emphasis given to disaster victims' "rational" individual choices, free markets and regulations, bypassing any analysis of the state, accumulation strategies by the elite or corporate interests, and other socio-political and economic forces and constraints on people's lived realities. Referencing Watts' work on famine in Nigeria, Robbins writes in a critical introduction of political ecology that "while drought is a *climatic* event, famine and mass starvation are *social* ones" (2004, 77). The field has since held steadfast to "political commitments to social justice and structural political change, highlighting struggles, interests and plight of marginalized populations" (Perrault, Bridge and McCarthy 2015, 8)--what Wisner also calls the work of theorizing a "socialist human ecology" or an "activist political ecology" that includes practice and study of resistance to power (2015).

With its critical analysis of nature, society and power, political ecology uncovers environmental crises to be social and political problems and therefore is most suitable for critical disaster research. Political ecology's commitment to social justice and making visible how power relations shape access to resources, the meanings of nature, and control over resources is therefore an important framework for the study of disasters and disaster response. It is also useful for revealing the contradictory roles played by the state in claiming to protect human security while further entrenching human vulnerability. In the book *Mapping Vulnerability* (Bankoff, Frerks and Hilhorst 2004) contributing scholars underscore that vulnerability is fundamentally a political ecological concept (Oliver-Smith 2004): history reveals that vulnerability may be centuries in the making; that vulnerability and poverty mutually reinforce one another (Delica-Willison and Willison 2004); and that rather than an essentialist characteristic or trait, vulnerability is a reduced capacity to act, a form of powerlessness resulting from political economic dynamics including the state and other actors (Cardona 2004). Vulnerability may be understood as a result of marginality, determined by the intersections of class, gender, age, ethnicity and disability (Enarson et al. 2003), which in turn makes vulnerable people's lives a "permanent emergency" (Bankoff 2001, 25). Disaster scholars drew from Watts's groundbreaking work on famine in Nigeria (1983), and Blaikie and Brookfield's work on soil erosion and land degradation (1987), to argue that environmental and ecological crises are at their core social and political problems, not managerial issues to be resolved simply through techno-fixes or the funneling in of more aid. Hewitt writes of vulnerability therefore as the political ecology of human endangerment: "society, rather than nature, decided who is more likely to be exposed to dangerous geophysical agents, and to have weakened or no defenses against them" (Hewitt 1997, 141). If vulnerability is a socially constructed state of powerlessness, then one must take seriously the processes of endangerment, trace patterns of frailties, and map out where protection was withdrawn or absent. By paying close attention to the 'geographicalness' of risks, how bodies and places experience uneven patterns of danger, Hewitt asks us to look at the social geography of danger and vulnerability as it is found and felt mainly in domestic and everyday living (Ibid, 157).

The field of political ecology is underpinned by Marxist analyses to provide a radical approach to studies of the political economy of vulnerability, resilience, and adaptation by examining how capitalism produces environmental crises and why those most heavily impacted are those in the worst socio-economic positions (Layfield 2008). It sets out to trace patterns of accumulation, map political economies of access to and control over resources, and denaturalize violence in normalized structures of resource control. It explains why “material climates matter” (Taylor 2014). The Capitalocene for example, understood as a system of power, profit and re/production in the web of life, defines the global capitalist order as the nature and origin of the planet’s ecological crisis in the twenty-first century (Moore 2017). Scholars have sustained a sharp anti-capitalist critique of the neoliberal nature of disaster response (Klein 2008, 2015) and shine light on the “normal hell of capitalism” in everyday realities (Williams 2011) which undergird the structural processes of how disasters unfold. Radical geography (Smith 1984; Harvey 1996; Castree 2001) has mapped out power structures and relations to write questions of power into the production of class relations, social injustices, and vulnerability to disasters. My three case studies examine people’s livelihoods, access to capital and resources in order to understand how material vulnerabilities are produced, how people define disasters, and experience vulnerability to such dangers. The third subsection of this chapter references the “political economy of permanent crisis” (Bello 2015) in the Philippine context as the violence of poverty and dispossession relate to the state.

Apart from examining how structural constraints on material livelihoods fundamentally produce vulnerabilities to disasters, I also draw on feminist scholarship and its commitments to examining inequalities and power relations through multiple interlocking forces of oppression to inform my own work with grassroots women leaders involved in frontline disaster response. “In disaster contexts, gender, poverty, disability, ethnicity, sexuality and other power dynamics demand comprehensive analysis, allowing for historical and comparative analysis in diverse environments and attending to interactions between agency and structure, vulnerability and capacity, empowerment and disempowerment, change and continuity” (Enarson and Pease 2016, 8). While earlier gender and disaster researchers laboured to write about women and girls’ vulnerabilities, more recent work also explore women’s diverse subjectivities and responses to disasters as inspired by a growing recognition for women-led grassroots efforts in disaster risk reduction and management (Ariyabandu and Wickremasinghe 2003; Dasgupta *et al.* 2010; Enarson and Chakrabarti 2009; Bradshaw and Fordham 2015). Recognizing that vulnerability is not equally distributed, the use of intersectional analysis outlines that “gendered vulnerability does not derive from a single factor, such as household hardship or poverty, but intersecting with economic, racial and other inequalities, these relationships create hazardous social conditions placing different groups of women differently at risk when disastrous events unfold" (Enarson and Chakrabarti 2009, 159). At this point I turn to the crucial importance for using a postcolonial feminist lens in political ecological research.

b. Feminist Political Ecology

Feminist political ecology provides a framework that explores the complex interactions of identities, power structures and the lived environment. While issues of survival, the protection of livelihoods and habitats, and unequal access to and control of natural resources have been central to the field, more feminist political ecological studies on climate change and disaster risk are needed to challenge the vulnerable feminine subjectivity of the "disaster victim" (Resurrección 2017). In their influential volume *Feminist Political Ecology,* Dianne Rocheleau, Barbara Thomas-Slayter and Esther Wangari argued for how gender intersects with class, race, caste, culture and ethnicity to shape processes of ecological change (1996). Contributing authors focused on the lived and gendered experiences of grassroots environmental movements and activisms to restore communities and environments after degradation. Over twenty years since its publication*,* the field has drawn from poststructuralist leanings in a "constant circulation of theory, practice, policies and politics, and the mixing of various combinations of gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, ontologies and ecologies, with critique of colonial legacies and neoliberal designs" (Rocheleau 2015, 57). While feminist political ecology has studied issues of biodiversity conservation, land struggles and population control more broadly, demonstrating how environmental struggles are feminist struggles (Mollett 2017), a recent emergence referred to as "new feminist political ecologies" (Elmhirst 2011) demonstrates increased attention to postcolonial feminist critiques of development.

In her foundational piece *Under Western Eyes* (1984) Mohanty champions an anti-racist, anti-imperialist feminist politics, actively decolonizing feminist thought to problematize how Western feminisms appropriate and colonize the complexities of women's lives and identities in the global South "as a group or category automatically and necessarily defined as religious (read:

not progressive), family-oriented (read: traditional), legally unsophisticated (read: they are still not conscious of their rights), illiterate (read: ignorant), domestic (read: backward), and sometimes revolutionary (read: their country is in a state of war; they must fight!)" (Ibid, 40). Feminist academics and practitioners writing about the social construction of gendered vulnerabilities may perpetuate what Mohanty writes as the 'Third World difference'. Mohanty's call to place racialized gender in the centre is echoed by Mollett and Faria's critique of feminist political ecology which they argue has often hidden race behind a color-blind feminist commitment to gender analysis (2013). Drawing from the theorizations offered by critical race feminists, Mollet and Faria call for a postcolonial intersectional analysis in feminist political ecology—this demands a rigorous examination of how capitalism, patriarchy, ideologies of race, ethnicity, and gender, nation-building projects and international development processes all shape gendered nature-societal relationships (2013, 117). The themes of environmental justice, land and property struggles, biodiversity conservation, not excluding climate change and its impacts, are therefore not void of racial and gendered power. Racialized experiences of gender are also simultaneously classed, and shaped by age, ability, religion, and ethnic-regional identities. Feminist scholarship on disasters and climate change can in turn challenge the tendency to essentialize women across the global South with a postcolonial feminist lens, complicating the singular categories of "victim" and "agent", in recognition for the dynamic, intersectional, historical and in-process productions of subjectivities (Huynh and Resurrección 2014; Hyndman 2008; Cupples 2007; Arora-Jonsson 2011; Enarson and Chakrabarti 2009). While Mohanty and Black feminist scholarship have long shaped feminist geographies, 'new feminist political ecologies' (Gururani 2002; Sundberg 2004; Mollett 2010) have laboured more consistently to engage postcolonial and Black feminist thinking in more critical and intersectional forms of gendered analysis in development (Mollett 2017, 163-164).

I draw from feminist scholarship in disaster research to examine gendered impacts and experiences of disasters (Enarson and Morrow 1998; Enarson and Chakrabari 2009; Neumayer and Plumper 2007; Oxfam Philippines 2014), and in thinking about how vulnerabilities are produced in the material lives of the women I learn from in my doctoral research. In Mangada and Su's fieldwork post-Haiyan, they write of widowhood as a devastating consequence of the super typhoon and the gendered experiences of neglect, insecurity and vulnerability among widowed women (2019). At the wake of the cataclysmic Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004, socially produced gendered roles such as caregiving, clothing norms, inability to climb trees or swim, and women's labour have also placed particular bodies in particular locations of vulnerability on the morning of December 26th (Oxfam International 2005). In her work in Sri Lanka, feminist geographer, Jennifer Hyndman (2008, 2011) has argued that focusing on gender alone in disasters is insufficient. Beyond the 'women in development' (WID) framework proposed by liberal feminists in the 1970s, the 'women and development' (WAD) and 'gender and development' (GAD) frameworks advanced by socialist feminists in the 1980s, Hyndman and de Alwis propose FAD^2: 'feminism and disaster' + 'feminism and development' to uncover landscapes overlaid with historicized political dimensions of deadly warfare that preceded the tsunami in both Sri Lanka and Aceh, Indonesia. It is only by uncovering these layers, as if reading through a geographical palimpsest, that the full aftermath of the 2004 tsunami's violent destruction can be fully understood. Drawing from Mohanty's feminist politics to examine the unstable categories of 'woman' and 'widow' in Sri Lanka, Hyndman further differentiates between tsunami widows' and war widows' experiences of conflict and loss in the contexts of ethno-national identity, disaster and armed conflict. Similarly in her research on everyday livelihood strategies in Sri Lanka, Ruwanpura (2008) finds that in the backdrop of protracted war, ethnic polarization, militarization, a stalled peace process, and socioeconomic insecurity, the intersection of gender, ethnic and religious identities locates women across uneven and fragmented landscapes: "Struggles over interethnic justice, neoliberalism, economic distribution, the disempowerment of women, caste bigotry and such have shaped the Sri Lankan political landscape in significant ways over the last decades… Even the tsunami cannot wipe out the imprint of these fault lines" (Nesiah, Nanthikesan and Kadirgama quoted in Hyndman 2008, 105).

Similarly the book *There Is No Such Thing As A Natural Disaster* (Hartman and Squires 2006) offers multifaceted and critical portraits of the social implications of Hurricane Katrina to reveal the intersections of race, class and gender in the ways Black women survived the hurricane. In the chapter entitled "Abandoned Before the Storms", DeWeever and Hartmann

(2006) outline statistics to reveal glaring disparities which have been entrenched for years before the levees broke that day: Black women's average earnings ranked at the bottom third in the nation with the lowest representation in professional fields; although their labour force participation equals that of white women, Black women brought home much lower annual earnings. *Racing the Storm* (Potter 2007) similarly highlights race-based perceptions of and responses to Katrina survivors by government entities, the media, volunteers and the general public. The chapter by Cotton (2007) reveals most vividly what she argues is a 'typology of citizenship' in the United States: a biopolitical categorization of individuals who merit government assistance and those whose abandonment is justified. In Chapters Five, Six and Seven, and in the short videos which accompany them, I attempt to sketch similar portraits of how marginalized communities have been predisposed with vulnerabilities that have been produced by the combined forces of economic disempowerment, state neglect, armed terror and elite interests.

"Some of the most creative and urgent perspectives on ecological change are generated through postcolonial contexts and critique" (Chakrabarty 2015, 13). This leads me to finally draw upon Indigenous feminist scholarship and the critique they offer of the Anthropocene and its other formulations in my own work on disasters and climate change. Métis feminist, Zoe Todd (2016), problematizes the persisting ways Indigenous intellectuals and their cosmologies, knowledges and wisdom are erased or bypassed entirely in the name of 'discovering' new theoretical frameworks, whether by Latour's Actor Network Theory or by the many Al Gores of the world, in addressing climate change. Anishinaabe scholar, Leanne Simpson, underscores that it is "critical to view climate change within the political reality that continues to deny Indigenous self-determination and land rights" (2004, 26). Indigenous scholars argue that in the settler-colonial context of Turtle Island (North America), anti-colonial solutions must be at the heart of climate change solutions, else Indigenous struggles for self-determination and the protection of land rights will be compromised by continued forms of exploitation and conquest, even in the name of climate change mitigation or adaptation. In her scholarship on Indigenous environmental justice, Deborah McGregor similarly calls for a decolonization of the climate change dialogue (2021) in order to recognize environmental racism and the multiple ways climate justice is defined by First Nations communities. Simpson names anthropogenic climate change as a threat not only to assets and resources, but experienced as an ongoing threat to Indigenous self-sovereignty in the context of settler colonialism: “It is difficult to heal when one is still under attack” (Ibid, 28). In a similar vein, I offer the concept of the ‘Philippine Anthropocene’ as a means of tempering global Northern anxieties in anticipation of future climate change impacts: I write that the violence of intensifying weather conditions are not only already being most and disproportionately felt by countries like the Philippines, but that other anthropogenic forces of state, capitalist and armed violence have also been shaping violent environments for marginalized communities--and even endangering the lives of disaster responders in the country. One must not only look at the weather for causes of lethal loss and damage, but with Indigenous, postcolonial and feminist lenses one can see the state-santioned capitalist, nationalist and patriarchal forces of dispossession that are everyday in the making. To echo Simpson’s quote: it is difficult to declare the beginning of “post-disaster” recovery efforts when daily disasters continue to ensue.

To end this section, I reference Robbins’ introduction to political ecology where he brings to the fore the following catastrophes which figure largely in recent memory: the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the summer monsoon of 2010 in Pakistan, Hurricane Katrina of 2005, and the intensifying impacts of global warming “all disclosed the violent inequities of a wholly *unnatural* global political economy which paved the way for the outrageous, unjust, and jarring devastation these events wrought amongst the world’s most marginal communities” (2011, 80-81). In my study of the political ecology of disaster response in the Philippines, I take on a similar purpose of revealing a wholly unnatural social context which endangers particular bodies, communities and ecologies--even before a hazard hits. Political ecology stories are of justice and injustice: they de-naturalize and re-politicize disasters which devastate along the fault lines of class, race, and gender among other axes of social differences. I undertake a feminist political ecology study which does not only look at meteorological and hydro-geological hazards impacting a particular community, but also examines closely local state-civil society power relations and gendered human-environment relations in place-based case studies.

c. Theorizing Violence as Disaster: Postcolonial Feminist Perspectives

What is a disaster? Scholars and practitioners of disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) have defined disasters in multiple ways, including mathematical formulations[10] for calculating risk indices and expressing the interdependent relationships among the concepts of risk, hazard, vulnerability and disaster. In explaining how hazard and vulnerability are mutually conditioning situations, Cardona writes: "One cannot be vulnerable if one is not threatened, and one cannot be threatened if one is not exposed and vulnerable" (2004, 37). I have witnessed how NGO staff and practitioners in the Philippines differentiate these technical terms when conducting trainings on community-based disaster risk reduction and management, often translating the definitions literally into Filipino for community members to understand. However, my experiences as a community development worker, disaster relief worker, and conducting research among disaster survivors have revealed how community members do not clearly distinguish between the English terms "hazard" and "disaster"--an insight that is also validated by staff members of the Citizens' Disaster Response Centre. For example the Filipino words "*panganib*" or "*peligro*" mean danger, threat or violence; while they can pertain to a hazard which is defined as a latent danger or an external risk factor, these words are also conflated with the word "*sakuna*" which refers to the disaster itself. The danger or experience of violence is in itself the disaster. I have reflected the interchangeable use of these terms in the interview guide questions [Appendix A] I drafted in preparation for fieldwork as a way of resonating with people's colloquial speech and to build conversations without imposing technical expertise. I examine how a postcolonial feminist lens can offer critical ways to theorize violence, and in turn frame violence as disaster as my informants do in their own narratives.

Violent Environments have been conceptualized in multiple ways by political ecologists: as habitus, as relations, as often unseen and silent disciplines of governmentality, and "as a site-specific phenomenon rooted in local histories and social relations yet connected to larger processes of material transformation and power relations" (Peluso and Watts 2001, 5). This attention to various temporal and spatial scales of violence working simultaneously on specific local contexts is valuable in the examination of embodied experiences of violence in sites of extraction, green militarism, armed resource conflicts, and also of disasters and climate change. Peluso and Watts "provide accounts of the ways in which specific environments, environmental processes, and webs of social relations are central parts of the ways violence is expressed and made expressive" (Ibid, 25). One could also consider Davis' examinations of wrenching violence in the cases of global urban poverty in *Planet of Slums* (2006) and the politics of famines across the Third World (2001). He uncovers that there is nothing natural with these disasters: instead they are violent products of colonial rule, cash crop booms, global market prices and competition, the enclosure of the commons, and the devastation of traditional household ecologies. Similarly, to uncover new geographies of violence and the political casualties of climate change, Parenti's research travels across the *Tropic of Chaos*—the name he gives to "a belt of economically and politically battered post-colonial states girding the planet's mid-latitudes" (2012, 9)—uncovers the climatological aspects in violent conflicts in the global South. Taylor's book *The Political Ecology of Climate Change Adaptation* (2014), drawing from the work of Watts, Neumann, and Robbins among others, also un-hinges the violence of the climate crisis from a tsunami or the next drought. Instead through the lens of political ecology, he writes: "We can approach climate change not as a rupture between society and a climate thrown out of balance by human actions but as a series of tensions in the way that meteorological forces are actively worked into the production of our lived environments" (2014, 19). This framing also aligns with Peluso and Watts' definition of violent environments as "the transformation of resource systems under the impact of violence, to the shifts in environmental entitlements, to the politicization of livelihoods, and to the new vulnerabilities created during these processes" (2001, 5).

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[10] An example is: Risk = Hazard x Vulnerability

In light of the astounding scholarship gathered above, I recognize that such work is gripping in their ability to represent meteorological forces as appearing to be state-like in the racist biopolitical forces they wield: the 'Third World', the '*Tropic of Chaos*' (Parenti 2012), are repeatedly colonized time and time again by the collision of state violence, extractive industries, global markets, and anthropogenic climate change. These can perhaps be considered a successful response to what Indian novelist, Amitav Ghosh, writes in *The Great Derangement* (2018) as a challenge to writers and artists to represent the unthinkable; such projects can serve to rip the veil of the “natural” away to reveal the politics in political ecologies of violence and to challenge what Robbins calls “apolitical ecologies.” It is crucial for me to ask, however, how my politics of writing differ in significant ways as a Filipina scholar doing research in and with communities in the Philippines. How does one do political ecology to perhaps reimagine and re-represent hazards in unnatural ways and to uncover the root causes of vulnerability to violence, without falling into the genre of crisis narratives? An important audience for me too are disaster-weary, and for whom life, survival and well-being are not ‘options’ but imperatives; nor would they concede to have their lives be the doomsday stories scholars have the luxury to tell on pages. Armed with a postcolonial feminist agenda, I take serious trouble with the voyeuristic politics of writing “damage-centred” research (Tuck 2009). I strongly believe that the colonialist manufacturing of deathscapes on paper cannot justly represent the lives of survivors. How may the theory and practice of political ecology not only serve to reveal for us multiple layers, causes and embodied experiences of state and colonial violence, which are gendered, raced, and classed for different bodies and spaces, but also and more importantly offer a politics and praxis of hope which will actively transform these realities? Chapter Three provides a lengthier exposition on my positionality, commitments to feminist, embodied and decolonial praxis in the form of *pahinga* (rest) and *pa-hinga* (to let breathe) as my personal politics of hope which shape this doctoral research.

At this juncture I turn specifically to Rob Nixon’s *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (2011), as foundational to the development of my own conceptualization of violence in the realm of disasters. Nixon combines a commitment to postcolonial scholarship, social justice activism, and offers a compelling theory of violence beyond the realm of the spectacular. The powerful poetics of his prose presents slow violence as one that can be out of sight, delayed, attritional, incremental, accretive, invisible, which creates “long dyings” (Ibid 2), whose casualties are postponed often for generations, in the example of unexploded landmines or carcinogens from an arms dump, which silently displaces disposable bodies. “It is essentially static, it *is* the tranquil waters” (Ibid 11)—referring to the sanctioned, normalized and naturalized forms of violence. Nixon’s analytical concepts allow for an unearthing, a revealing of multiple layers of violence working in conjunction with one another—a way of seeing beyond hegemonic sight, into alternative ways of witnessing sights unseen. Such a theoretical framework holds much potential for reimagining what defines a disaster: these need not be spectacular events on the global stage, or those deemed newsworthy, but disasters can also lie in the mundane and everyday as I demonstrate through postcolonial feminist theorizations of violence.

Nixon's work on slow violence has recently seen growing interest among geographers and researchers across disciplines who are grappling with the multi-faceted nature of violence, including those whose work foreground feminist and anti-racist perspectives (Cahill and Pain 2019). By insisting on an intersectional understanding of spatial violence as championed by feminists of colour (hooks 1990; McKittrick 2013; Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981; #BlackLivesMatter), critical geographers further Nixon's argument that it is not only slow violence that is unseen but the people themselves whose humanity is unrecognized. Therefore one must not only labour to "witness sights unseen" (Nixon 2011, 15) but also "explicitly centre the concerns, knowledge and bodies of those who suffer violences that have been forgotten, hidden, or otherwise erased" (Cahill and Pain 2019, 1054). Feminist and critical race analyses of violence provide strong precedents to the study of slow violence as seen in the ways feminist geopolitics and Black feminist scholarship demonstrate how violence is experienced in banal, everyday, intimate and routinized ways (Dowler and Christian 2019). With a postcolonial feminist lens, the ongoing processes of colonialism and racial capitalism are revealed not as one-off spectacular events but as concurrent and continual in their dispossessions. Rezwana and Pain's research in Bangladesh for example exemplifies how both cyclone disasters and gender-based violence are layered disasters which are simultaneously dramatic spectacles and also slow long-term chronic processes impacting women and children (2019). De Leeuw extends slow violence to understand contemporary colonial violence being perpetrated in the intimate geographies of First Nations women's and children's bodies (2016). George's research in the Pacific Islands considers the relation between the "hot conflict" of masculinized militarism and the "slow violence" of sea-level rise that underpin women's insecurity (2014). In my own research with women survivors of super typhoon Haiyan, I frame the strongest storm in the planet's recorded history as part of a continuum of colonial, gendered, capitalist and racialized violence (Go 2017). By drawing from feminist and antiracist scholarship, one can centre and theorize from the embodied knowledge and expertise of those most affected by violence, slow and otherwise.

Nixon's work intervenes to challenge the contemporary politics of speed: "In an age when the media venerate the spectacular, when public policy is shaped primarily around perceived immediate need, a central question is strategic and representational: how can we convert into image and narrative the disasters that are slow-moving and long in the making, disasters that are anonymous and that star nobody, disasters that are attritional and of indifferent interest to the sensation-driven technologies of our world image?" (2011, 3) A long line of feminist thought has shed light on the gendering of slow violence and challenged the disproportionate attention given to immediate, dramatic and masculine acts of statecraft and armed force (Dowler and Christian 2019, 1069): Black feminists in particular have written extensively on the slow toxicity of racism and sexism which compound over time to affect premature death among Black women (McKittrick 2011; Lorde 1997); postcolonial feminists demonstrate the continuities of colonial past and present (Mahtani 2014; Mollett and Faria 2018); and Indigenous feminists have laboured to reveal the colonial violence that continues to harm lands and bodies (Green 2007; Suzack et al. 2010). Cahill and Pain's edited collection of feminist interventions argue that Nixon runs the risk of reifying binaries of slow/fast, visible/invisible, spectacular/mundane; instead, the mutually constitutive relationship between the intimate and global, the personal and the political, is more accurate (Hyndman 2003; Cahill 2007). My own response to this challenge of representing slow violence is detailed in Chapter Three where I describe the creation of the three videos for each of my case studies and my methodology of "slow research"--a combination of ethnographic research, interviews and *kuwentuhan* or group storytelling which I write allows for the embodied practices of rest (*pahinga*) and letting breathe (*pa-hinga*) to reveal understandings of violence as disasters in people's daily lives. While I have decided to write of "slow violence" and "slow research" as ways to subvert the politics of speed, which I argue is complicit in the neglect, erasure and misrepresentation of disasters in the country, I am aware that "slow" is relative and raises ethical questions in one's visualizing practices. One may ask: "Slow for whom?" "Who is seeing and who is being represented?” “How might research on violence provoke action, and transform how we ‘see’ and ‘act’ in our world?” (Cahill and Pain 2019, 1062). The three short videos created by my research team supplement the written work; as detailed in Chapter Three, I explore some of these questions in creating the multimedia component of this dissertation.

With great care I flip through the pages of *Agam* (iCSC 2014), a beautiful collection of poems, short essays, and photographs that tell Filipino narratives of uncertainty and climate change. One simply cannot rush through this book. One needs to be quiet too. Each turn requires a slow look, often a painful look, at the violence of disasters—we have learned to give them many names; we speak and write about them in many tongues. These pages, alongside the stories heard so vividly at the DRRM Summit described in Chapters One and Three, affirm for me the need to take on a postcolonial feminist approach to political ecology in order to frame experiences and understandings of what it means to live in particular places and their material climates. It is no longer enough to blame single handedly the one beast of Capitalism, or judge Man guilty of planetary crimes. An anti-racist feminist political ecology invites a rigorous examination of how colonial histories, legacies and ongoings converge with ideologies of modernity, development, progress, patriarchy, and the state no matter how weak and terrifying. These all shape nature-societal relationships, determining who has power and who has been reduced to positions of powerlessness. Each page of *Agam* tells me about climates changing, lives changing in the face of familiar and new forces of violence. Each page, as those I labour to write in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, also tells a story of refusal.

II. Violence and Disasters in the Philippines

a. The state as hazard

My work defines disasters not as isolated accidents but extensions of the violence of permanent emergencies and everyday struggles. Heijmans’ research in the country puts forward that “disaster management is increasingly linked to human rights work” (2004, 125). Her case studies also draw from the work of the Citizens’ Disaster Response Centre (CDRC), including partner civil society organizations such as IBON Foundation and the Philippine Alliance of

Human Rights Advocates. Despite the critical turn to vulnerabilities in disaster studies, the field continues to define disaster risk as a function of a hazard's magnitude, frequency and speed, including people's susceptibility to harm and the processes that maintain that susceptibility. This maintains a certain 'naturalness' to the treatment of hazards. I ask: what if the state *is* a hazard?[11] In light of the ongoing rise in authoritarian rule in the country, where over 30,000 have been killed to date by the president's 'war on drugs', one may ask: Who needs another super typhoon, when you have typhoon Duterte?[12] In this section I draw from scholarship on the Philippine state and civil society, and argue through my three case studies that the existence of a weak anti-development state and the vibrant opportunities for grassroots democracy, and in particular gendered forms of communal leadership, exist in a dialectical relationship. Practices of community-based disaster management (CBDM) by non-state actors, in a negotiated repertoire of cooperating with and challenging the state, have the potential to transform vulnerabilities.

Bello *et. al.* defines the Philippine state to be an "anti-development" state which is characterized by a weak central authority captured by upper-class interests, focused on elite representation rather than the formation of a strong central bureaucracy independent of the private sector (2005). In contrast to other nation-states in postwar Asia where an activist "developmental" state has emerged to discipline the private sector, the present-day postcolonial Philippine state remains a legacy of the pre-1930s American model of governance which "subverts the democratic potential of the masses by the realities of concentrated wealth and power" (Ibid 4). While restrictive economic policies and corruption are often used to explain the Philippines' underperformance in the region, Raquiza demonstrates through her comparative studies between Thailand and the Philippines how state configuration of power ultimately determines economic performance (2013, 2). She writes that the Philippine state assumes the form of a "proprietary polity" model, in which power is organized around personalities, social status, and personal wealth which lacks a strict separation between economic and political policy domains, thereby providing opportunities for governing elites to drive policy-making in pursuit of their own personal agendas. Bello agrees that corruption cannot be singularly blamed for the lack of development in the Philippines as the popular discourse itself is deployed to deflect questions from the state's neoliberal agenda. Instead one must examine how governing elites and economic technocrats build political dynasties through money, media popularity, strategic marriages and mergers among other characteristics of Philippine electoral politics across all levels of government (Coronel 2007). Economic and political strategies are often developed and operationalized within families, as seen through in-depth chronicles of the most powerful families in the country who have held office through three colonial regimes and five republics (McCoy 1993). As I demonstrate in my three case studies, Barangay, Municipal and Provincial levels of disaster governance are significant local bases for struggles of power; these are contexts wherein one can see how an anti-development state alienates masses in political processes, and produces violent environments of degradation and endangerment, which in turn cause permanent crises to prevail in the country.

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[11] In a series of video podcasts I co-hosted with fellow Filipino geographers at the York Centre for Asian Research, we framed contemporary social justice and human rights issues as disasters in the Philippines: https://www.yorku.ca/laps/2017/09/27/york-grad-students-launch-video-podcast-on-frontline-responses-to-turmoil-in-philippines/

[12] Echoing one of my informants in Chapter Five: "Duterte is the biggest disaster of all" (Rappler 2020): https://www.rappler.com/voices/thought-leaders/analysis-filipinos-arent-resilient-duterte-incompetent-abusive

The Duterte regime specifically wields a distinct form of state violence that I write about as a lethal hazard. Its violation of human rights and rising death toll from extrajudicial killings are well documented, yet its ambitions to institute a new Department of Disaster Resilience heightens a state-led, top-down and militarized approach to disaster management. The current COVID-19 Inter-Agency Task Force is populated by retired generals, in the same manner that his appointed Cabinet members are. The regime's franchise denial of ABS-CBN, one the country's largest media and entertainment networks that was critical of the administration, led to an information deficit which compromised people's preparations for Typhoon Ulysses (international name: Vamco) in November 2020. And while the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council was cut PHP 4 billion in its budget in 2020, the National Task Force to End Communist Local Armed Conflict was allocated PHP 19.1 billion to intensify its red-tagging efforts--which in turn threaten the very civil society organizations involved in frontline disaster preparedness and response efforts! The current political context makes blatantly clear the simultaneous ways the state manufactures disasters and persecutes non-state disaster responders. Framing the state as a hazard fundamentally challenges the central assumption held by global and national policy frameworks that the government protects human rights in light of its DRRM-CCA plans and overall development agendas.

My place-based case studies on the practices of grassroots organizing and leadership for CBDM, however, also provide a more nuanced narrative than a state-versus-the masses. In Tadem's study of grassroots democracy, non-state approaches, and popular empowerment in rural Philippines, he argues that "to only focus the critique on the weak state misses the other half of the picture, which is the opportunities a weak state holds for grassroots communities and social movements to practice alternative development paradigms and strategies" (2012, 173). I argue that it is critical to understand Bello's "anti-development state" as being simultaneously a "weak state" (Migdal 1988), one which is fundamentally unable to assert its authority or implement its policies, programmes and projects in the manner they were intended to be. While it is certainly characterized by the deep penetration of private interests and preferential access to elites, friends and relatives (Magno 1991-1992; Miranda 1991-1992; Doronila 1994), and may also appear powerful in the armed terror it is able to inflict through the military and police, the terror of an anti-development state which opposes its people is far from being all-powerful: I underscore that as much as its terror is often displayed by armed brutality, it also lies in its incompetencies--the ways in which it abandons, neglects, and is lacking in skills and resources have fatal consequences. And by wielding such violence, the state too I argue can be a hazard. In Chapter Four I provide greater elaboration on the historical formation of Philippine civil society, the emergence of disaster response efforts from non-state actors, and the origins of radical practice of community-based disaster management efforts which aim to transform the root causes of people's vulnerabilities.

b. Disasters and Development

"Despite the lethal reputation of 'natural' disasters, a much greater proportion of the world's population die from 'normal' events such as violent conflict, illnesses and hunger; earthquakes, floods, famines or epidemics garner much greater humanitarian response, when more lives are lost to preventable tragedies" (Wisner *et al.* 2004, 4). Scholastic and institutional silos, however, maintain the artificial divisions across disaster, development and humanitarian studies, across ‘human’, ‘economic’ and ‘environmental’ security, sustainability or climate research, and consequently fail to capture the complex theories and stories which arise from the lived realities and environments of communities impacted by intersecting forces of violence. Scholars who call for an integrated framework that examines the nexus between disasters and development recognize that no efforts in DRRM can be taken in isolation from socio-political inequalities, just as no engagement in development work is risk-neutral (Wisner, Gaillard and Kelman 2012; Gaillard 2015). There also remains a weak consideration of how state terror and other ‘human-induced’ dangers can be accounted for as disasters today. In *Natural Disasters and Development in a Globalizing World,* Pelling presents the various paradigms which uncover the tragic nexus of disasters and development in the postcolonial world (2003). Marxist scholarship in the field has demonstrated the political economic roots of underdevelopment and increasing inequalities as determinants of exposure to disaster risk, framing disasters ultimately as failures of human development and capitalism as a force which creates uneven spatial and social distribution of risk (Wisner 2003); wherein greater development, security or prosperity for some is systematic production of vulnerability for others. “Vulnerability provides a conceptual link in improving our understanding of the relationship between disasters, development and people” (Bankoff, Frerks and Hilhorst 2004, 3). While materialist studies have revealed disasters as being deeply embedded in everyday social structures, more recent scholarship employ the political ecology lens to examine both the political context of human interaction with the environment, such as the micropolitics of community involvement in disaster management, and also the ways in which dominant discourses on disasters can be challenged.

Since its origins in the Cold War, disaster studies has become increasingly important in the past decades with expanding globalization, impacts of anthropogenic climate change, the occurrence of large-scale catastrophes brought about by capitalist exploitation of natural resources, including US-led wars, genocide, and systemic poverty affecting entire populations. Global institutions such as the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the World Bank and international development and humanitarian agencies acknowledge that developing countries suffer the worst from these disaster events, though these may not be framed as state-sponsored violence, nor legacies of western colonialism and neocolonial practices. In his paper entitled

“Towards a Postcolonial Disaster Studies”, Carrigan proposes instead that disaster response and management is central to postcolonial concerns, to examine how colonial practices produce different forms of vulnerability, and raising the question of “what happens if we treat postcolonial studies as a form of disaster studies and vice versa?” (2015).

Given the transnational nature of my work moving between the Philippines and Canada the past years, I have become aware of seemingly two parallel realities: on one hand an electrifying global climate justice movement that has been recently taking on a rapid rise across the global North; and on the other hand, the marginal engagement with climate change across the Philippines, let alone DRRM efforts that are still far from sufficient, despite ranking as one the top countries most vulnerable to predicted climate-induced disasters. I have stepped in and out between these two fields of action, having both served in post-disaster relief response in the Philippines and also sustained engagement with climate justice actions in Vancouver and Toronto. I have found myself ‘translating’ between and across these sites: speaking to community members in the Philippines about the role of anthropogenic emissions by industrialized countries in the growing frequency of freak storms coming through their villages; and also sharing to climate activists in North America about the chronic disasters experienced in the Philippines to temper their preoccupation with an apocalypse that is only always ‘yet to come’. These two worlds and two sets of discourses exist simultaneously yet hardly meet to be reconciled (see Bankoff and Borrinaga 2019). Contributing scholars of a recent handbook on DRRM and CCA also illustrate the tense relationship between these two realms of action (Kelman, Mercer and Gaillard 2017). Despite the compelling reasons for increased synergies between the two, a ‘dance’ with competing interests among donors, government agencies, NGOs, and researchers, have impeded the due integration of DRRM and CCA worldwide --leading to deathly consequences of having 80% of disaster-related deaths occur in climate-related events worldwide (Wisner 2017).

Policy experts propose that the realms of development, DRRM and CCA are ideally expected to intersect by tackling what is presumed to be a commonly held goal of “reducing vulnerability” and “enhancing resilience”. The mess, complexity and at times outright contradiction among the three in reality, however, prove otherwise. Kelman, Mercer and Gaillard outline the key differences between the two to include: the varying typologies of hazards which each responds to, diverging perspectives on time, separate frameworks, distinct governance structures, different historical genealogies, contrasting levels of political interest and availability of funding sources (2017, 3-8). Conventional climate change mitigation and adaptation interventions focused for example on the reduction of emissions may not address the root causes of underlying risk factors; conversely, disaster risk reduction efforts may not take a long-term vision of future climatic hazards (Wisner 2017, xxix). In my own experiences assisting in legislative advocacy during my doctoral fieldwork, two distinct camps for DRRM and CCA have existed and continue to work independent of one another, while they may strategically cooperate on shared urgencies such as lobbying against the proposed Department of Disaster Resilience as I write in Chapter Three. Non-government organizations active in DRRM have taken to the mission of helping ensure the Philippine DRRM Act is enforced and practiced on the ground wherever governments fall short; therefore they are also present in disaster-prone areas where the work of training local government officials and community members in hazard mapping, evacuation drills, search and rescue operations, among other activities take place. On the other hand, non-government organizations active in CCA advocate for ending the global fossil fuel industry, promoting the use of renewable energy, and closing down coal power plants in the country. Some are also present in areas identified to be in need of CCA measures such as planting flood resistant crops and mangrove reforestation along vulnerable coasts.

Referencing once more my postcolonial feminist commitments to centering and foregrounding the voices and lived experiences of women grassroots leaders in disaster-stricken communities, I contend that their realities are not represented by these categories. Community members from three of my case studies and panelists heard during the 2018 DRRM Summit do not understand their lives to be cut up into a number of disparate terminologies, frameworks and technical jargon. The dangers and risks they encounter are in fact a blend of what is commonly distinguished to be either ‘natural’ or ‘human-induced’: “Ordinary people experience, perceive, respond and adapt to what goes on around them holistically. This is well known by researchers and practitioners who work with civil society and local governments in community-based DRR (CBDRR)” (Wisner 2017, xxix). In fact the most urgent priorities for community members often reflect present-day hardships due to the absence of social-ecological justice--forms of vulnerability that have long been historically produced, and which will be in dynamic interplay with future changes in the climate. Their most pressing concerns do not lie in a future predicted with worsening climatic hazards, but remains deeply embodied in day-to-day material struggles such as those concerning food, land, livelihood, shelter, protection from armed conflict, literacy and education--issues that categorically fall under the UN sustainable development goals as per community development workers, or termed as social justice issues as per activists. This is further evidenced in an international study by Wisner *et. al* examining more than eighty applications of CBDRR. Results revealed that non-DRR related problems were perceived as a priority in the community (2008).

Kelman, Mercer and Gaillard (2017) therefore propose that rather than viewing DRR and CCA as two discrete fields that are in urgent need of integration or cooperation, DRR must instead *include* CCA. Scholars are critical of how, with the hegemonic discourse of climate change taking hold of political and public consciousness throughout the world today, CCA may be a dangerous scapegoat for DRR and other developmental challenges, promoting top-down highly technocratic approaches to well-being and survival. The authors for example critique popular discourses which blame climate change for Hurricane Katrina: climate change did not build New Orleans below sea level, nor did it elect George W. Bush as president or Ray Nagin as mayor who responded poorly to the disaster (Ibid, 7)--one must also add that climate change certainly did not create longstanding racism and Black poverty in the US. Attention needs to be sustained on issues of justice and equity as the central concerns. Following this proposal, my three case studies in Chapters Five, Six and Seven illustrate how CCA can be viewed as an assumed component of DRR initiatives--these broad range of efforts undertaken by progressive NGOs and grassroots women officers leading disaster preparedness committees in their *barangays* or villages are in turn founded upon a broader human rights-based development framework where social-ecological-climate justice issues are struggled and aspired for.

Conclusion

In their paper on the university's role in reducing disaster risk, Hilhorst and Heijmans, who have both worked extensively on and with progressive civil society organizations and social movements in the Philippines, call for scholars to be more directly engaged with teams of practitioners and policy makers to ensure a better synchronisation of academic theorizing with social engagement (2012, 247-248). They also underscore the need for a specialised code of ethics for disaster-related research: a commitment to provide the affected communities with information and knowledge products as acknowledgment of local ownership "and an orientation by researchers towards changing the world and not just understanding it" (Ibid). Today different schools of thought continue to exist in parallel within the field of disaster studies: technocratic approaches; structural approaches that frame disasters in terms of vulnerability and development; systematic approaches that emphasize interconnections between disasters and the wider system they occur, as in the growing convergence between DRRM and CCA; and a focus on the socio-culturally constructed nature of disasters. The authors note that a dualistic divide also remains in how disasters are studied: state-led management of risks persists in the global North where it is hard to conceive how socio-political processes cause disasters; and on the other hand a more explicit relation between vulnerability and social injustices is prominent in the global South wherein the state's legitimacy and capacity are often in doubt (Ibid 2012, 743). It is in the postcolonial context of the Philippines, shaped by a weak anti-developmental state and a vibrant civil society, where I situate the analyses of my three case studies.

What counts as a disaster, and therefore what counts as disaster response, preparedness and prevention efforts, are political choices. While policy and legislative frameworks for humanitarian aid, disaster risk reduction and management, and development exist to categorize the work of practitioners, I contend that there are urgent implications for theorizing violence as disasters. As a UN OCHA official commented in a recent meeting with Philippine civil society organizations to pilot anticipatory disaster responses in time for the 2021 typhoon season: "Gender-based violence [and other such forms of violence] is a longstanding development issue... it is bigger than any disaster event, and which cannot possibly be resolved by the emergency response funds we have at our disposal" (2021, private communications). As evidenced in Chapter Four, I write of the fluid categories of the “humanitarian”, “development worker” and “activist” that CDRC staff move in and out of, exemplifying how institutional, legal and professional categorical molds that define “DRRM” are unsettled when the lives and stories of women grassroots leaders take the central stage in defining what disasters are. While CDRC has developed a staunch critique of the state and militarized power, I contend that theorizing violence as disaster through a postcolonial feminist framework also enriches and fills gaps in existing DRRM work as practiced by progressive NGOs in the country. Critical disaster studies can be enriched by interventions from feminist, postcolonial and Indigenous lenses which enable one to see the state-sanctioned capitalist, nationalist and patriarchal forces of dispossession that are everyday in the making. As the majority of the disaster preparedness committee officers practicing community-based disaster management (CBDM) in my three case studies are women, gendering violence frames CBDM as an extension of women’s daily care labour for their own households and greater communities. This is revealed in the stories and lived experiences of women farmers, women fishers, and women from an urban poor community.

Chapter Three: Slow Research on Disasters in the Philippines

Overview

Feminist activist writer, Rebecca Solnit, opens her essay on darkness recalling Virginia Woolf's diary written in the advent of the First World War: "The future is dark, which is on the whole, the best thing the future can be, I think." When Europe was convulsed in killing and dying, Solnit writes, "dark" seems to be pointing to what is inscrutable, not as in terrible (2006, 1). A struggle with darkness too I think has gripped those working in Philippine civil society today, myself included. It is not only the rising death toll from the drug war, or having one's own safety endangered for having a critical voice.[13] Darkness it seems is also the gaping black hole of not knowing where all of this is headed, as the unclear implications COVID-19 has on authoritarian rule and human rights violations in the country. Impunity had long been a feature of Philippine political life, but the rising death toll of the Duterte administration's 'war on drugs' ranks among the worst disasters in the Philippines, supported by a disturbingly durable level of popularity, and therefore legitimacy, for Filipinos both in the country and overseas.[14] To hope, or to want to commit to a politics of hope, in this moment it seems is not naivety, reckless optimism, or a denial of the violent atrocities of state terror. Instead it is a desire for sanity, calm, and clarity--a countermovement to paralysis for which collective political action is needed and also vital. Hope is not a rigid attachment to a particular outcome, but is a kind of radical openness to possibilities, dangers and uncertainties, for "the future is dark, with a darkness as much of the womb as of the grave" (Ibid, 6). And as will be surfaced in this chapter, hope is indispensable and can be replenished.

Chapter Three lays out the motivations that sustain my personal-political commitments to this work, including the bodies of feminist, decolonial, embodied and slow scholarship which I draw from to think about the design and conduct of my research. In the first section of this chapter, I offer vignettes from my journal entries during my fieldwork in the Philippines conducted from September 2018 to April 2019, interwoven with personal reflections spanning the past six years in my various transnational involvements as a scholar and practitioner in the fields of disaster response and climate justice activism. By foregrounding these personal narratives and intimate reflections, I illustrate how my own current praxis, motivations and the conduct of my doctoral research project have been shaped by experiences, insights and reflections throughout the past years. I acknowledge my positionality and continued embeddedness in a web of relationships and responsibilities; and I also honour the deeply embodied experiences, understandings and knowledge of despair, grief and fear in the field of disaster work, and which in turn give rise to my personal politics of hope shaped by *pahinga* (rest) and *pa-hinga* (to let breathe)--without which, ongoing engagement in the field including this doctoral dissertation would be difficult to sustain. Through the interweaving of personal reflections, I demonstrate that embodiment scholarship can enrich disaster studies.

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[13] In a 2019 report, Human Rights Watch Philippines warns that tactics used in the drug war have morphed into a death squad aimed at political activists. In June 2019, UN human rights experts and the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions reissued a call for an international investigation on the killings in the country. The ban on their entry has not been lifted by the government.

[14] The Alitaptap Collective (www.alitaptapcollective.wordpress.com) was founded in the Fall of 2016 by Filipino geographers at York University. In a chapter for the proposed "Alternative Transnational Economies and Solidarities" book project, we write about drawing from reservoirs of hope as transnational scholars to respond to ongoing state violence and collective trauma.

In the second section of this chapter, I proceed to detail the design of my research projects including the methodology, methods and research questions I used. I write how my earlier reflections on the vital importance of *pahinga* (rest) and *pa-hinga* (to let breathe) shape my conduct of “slow research” on disaster studies. I explore how my teammates and I practiced this in our fieldwork, and how we facilitated *kuwentuhan* or group storytelling as a format for focus group discussions among women leaders. I write that this allowed us to tune into the slower rhythms of daily life in contrast to the fast-paced rush characteristic of disaster response and research. As an all-women team we joined our interviewees in gendered spaces of private and communal dwelling where women, often in the company of their children and one another, tell stories of their daily community organizing efforts and grassroots leadership in a restful atmosphere. I examine the artistic decisions my teammates and I made in the film-making process to navigate security concerns for our collaborators. The videos actively seek to counter the politics of speed in which disasters are predominantly represented in mass media, spoken about and responded to, thereby allowing for experiences and understandings of slow violence to also surface in defining what disasters are in each of the three communities.

I. Journal Entries

a. Disaster Weary

It was a blazing hot afternoon, and Jeza who I have affectionately called "*tita*" or aunt, agreed to meet me at the Citizens' Disaster Response Centre (CDRC) office to begin planning my fieldwork schedule. I had just arrived in Manila on the weekend, my flight caught in between the tail end of typhoon Ompong (international name: Mangkhut) and the shocking headlines on Monday's papers: on October 1st 2018 the Philippine Congress had hastily approved a new House Bill to create a Department of Disaster Resilience. Malen, another staff member who I address as "*ate*" or older sister, had been sending me screenshots of rapid assessment reports from their regional centers in Luzon while I was packing my bags in Toronto a few days before. I knew they would be quickly deployed for relief delivery operations for Ompong-affected regions when I landed. The news of the proposed Department, however, would also send the few who are left in the office to join rounds of civic patrolling and lobbying in the Senate. Everyone would be too busy to bother with me, I thought with some embarrassment for the dissertation I was setting out to do in light of the immediacy of everyone else's work. Ompong, Tokhang[15], Duterte and this circus show run by our country's legislators. I numbed out of my jetlag, and heaved a sigh of great exasperation at the frenzied chaos that welcomed me back home. I did not think I could meet anyone at CDRC, and was relieved that at least someone had time for me.

The office was empty and quiet, and felt sleepy with the heavy heat. We turned an electric fan on to cool us down. Even the garage was vacant. I learned that the truck had driven off on a long ride with donated sacks of rice for Central Luzon. Tita Jeza sat me down next to her and began talking away with both her laptop and phone in hand, savvy with decades of multi-tasking, including hosting guests like myself and coordinating meetings all at once. She is always so sweet and humorous, and her nimble hands busy with energy--perfect for her diplomatic role of looking after local partnerships among other civil society organizations, speaking at interviews on radio and television, and representing CDRC at public forums. What we intended to be a planning session for my fieldwork turned into a long afternoon of *kuwentuhan* or sharing stories at the office. We could still feel the urgency from yesterday's meeting.

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[15] Operation Tokhang is the Philippine National Police's nationwide anti-illegal drug campaign. The name is coined from the Cebuano words "toktok" (to knock) and "hangyo" (to politely request), where authorities knock at an alleged drug user's house inviting the suspect to surrender voluntarily. In a sinister turn, Tokhang in reality is a shoot-to-kill directive and has claimed over 30,000 lives as reported by the Commission on Human Rights in 2019.

Yesterday an emergency meeting was hosted by The Climate Reality Project inviting all concerned civil society organizations engaged in disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) and climate change adaptation (CCA) efforts for an urgent huddle [Figure 5]. Only twenty four hours after the proclamation of the approved House Bill 8165, civil society rushed to begin a policy review. I found myself a seat in the corner of the cramped meeting room, and was among representatives from a range of non-government organizations and concerned government agencies. Prominent groups from the CCA camp present were the Philippine Movement for Climate Justice; the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities; *Aksyon Klima Pilipinas* (Climate Action Philippines); and *Aksyon sa Kahandaan sa Kalamidad at Klima* (AKKMA or Action and Preparedness for Calamities and Climate Change), the only people's organization present. Champions from the DRRM camp present were the Disaster Risk Reduction Network Philippines and some of its convening member organizations including the Center for Disaster Preparedness and CDRC, represented by Tita Jeza and myself. International non-government organizations such as Christian Aid and Oxfam Philippines were present as funders and partners of their local DRRM-CCA counterparts. The National Council of Churches and *Dakila*, a youth-led activist collective, also attended. Several of these organizations have since been identified as "communist terrorist groups" by the Philippine military in 2019.

CDRC
DISASTER RESPONSE CENTER FOUNDATION
BLAST DRRM
OXFAM
Disaster Risk Reduction Management & Climate Change Adaptation
SURGE
TOWARDS THE SCALING UP OF RESILIENCE IN GOVERNANCE
Commemorating Ten Years of Building the Disaster Resilience of Philippine Local Communities
AKSYON KLIMA PILIPINAS
Aksyon Kahandaan sa Kalamidad at KliMA
INSTITUTE FOR CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABLE CITIES
72-A

***Figure 5**: Logos of civil society organizations*

(L):Entrance gate to CDRC's office with a banner displaying logos of regional centers;
(R): Logos of some of the civil society organizations present at the meeting (photos by author 2018)

The rush with which House Bill 8165 was approved in Congress caught everyone by surprise. And upon closer reading, its contents troubled those who have been advocating for community-based disaster management (CBDM) for decades. The Bill reveals a supra-department with a bureaucracy over five times larger than other parallel departments; its powers will be concentrated at the national level, with a top-heavy militarized approach to disaster response. Its structure swallows both the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council and the Climate Change Commission into its folds; it would therefore bloat its coffers with access to the People's Survival Fund, an annual PHP 1.1 billion national budget for climate change adaptation activities, and the Green Climate Fund established by the UN for developing nations' climate change adaptation and mitigation practices. As super typhoon Yolanda revealed the drawbacks of the current council-led governing structure of disasters, the discourse of instituting a powerful governing body that can thoroughly lead all phases of preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery is gaining currency. As the President himself was quoted to have said in enthusiastic support of the proposed Department, "*Isa nalang ang sisisihin!*" ("There will only be one [Department] to blame [for the failures of disaster preparedness and response]!") "But it's the Office of Civil Defense on steroids!" exclaimed a horrified participant in the meeting. The CBDM framework which is at the core of the existing Philippine DRRM Act was now missing. Climate governance was also missing. Is the Bill repealing both the Philippine DRRM Act and the Philippine Climate Change Act? These are landmark pieces of legislation acclaimed worldwide! Heads were throbbing. This slipped right past our noses. The absence of a human rights framework sent chills across the room.

Through all the commotion and confusion of the noisy discussions, one of the lead convenors of the Disaster Risk Reduction Network Philippines, asked for the microphone from the back of the room. She stood up and everyone turned their seats around to listen. She said she has spent her whole life advocating for community organizing, human rights, and just approaches to DRRM. Stunned by the contents of the Bill and utterly heartbroken, she sobbed through her words. She spoke of what could be lost from all the gains won by advocating with local people's organizations and civil society organizations in the past decades. "And this is no time for jokes!" As an elder in the room, she reprimanded a younger male colleague who humorously referred to the Bill's contentious Section 10 on forced evacuations as "Tokhang". "What do we want?" She posed to the entire assembly. She disapproved of the creation of the Department, but also did not want the existing National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council to remain within the Department of National Defense; there was nothing stellar with role modelling the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency's placement within the Department of Homeland Security, we reminded one another. The coalition needed to be absolutely clear on a stand despite key differences among member organizations in attendance. A united front[16] is needed, she reminded us all sternly. There was so much work to be done--and unknowingly, my fieldwork had begun with a commitment to support legislative advocacy efforts in the many months to follow.

As I sit at my desk in Toronto writing this chapter in the Summer of 2019, a member of my research team in Manila reported that her mother, who heads the country's leading human rights NGOs, has provided their family with a lawyer's contact information in the frightful instance that the military knocks at their office doors “to collect her”. I quickly called my own mother to ask if her colleagues at the nationwide caucus of NGOs have put a similar emergency plan in place. Dread gripped us all over again, daughters and mothers halfway across the world, alerting us to the threats that are ever close by. It is difficult to write--and certainly not with the convenient closure afforded by a “post-disaster” stance, when the disasters are very well ongoing, and it remains unsure how helpful one’s academic labour can be in alleviating any of this. Fear paralyses. And so does exhaustion from violence lashing in like waves from multiple fronts. I recall an email Ate Malen wrote me as an update on their efforts in August 2017. I was on the first year of my doctorate studies at York University, and it was also a year into the then newly-elected Duterte administration:

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[16] Members of the national-democratic bloc in the Philippine Left did not openly condemn Tokhang in the early months of the Duterte administration when prominent leaders accepted Cabinet posts in the new government. Despite the end of their short-lived alliance with the President, this controversy maintains divisions within Philippine civil society today. The comments allude to the need for a unified opposition.

> “Lots of crisis situations happening one after the other here in the country. I've been to different evacuation areas for Marawi evacuees last June and this month, and the future doesn't look bright. With the extension of Martial Law, the *Lumad* (Indigenous) schools are still under attack. More so after Duterte himself threatened to bomb schools allegedly teaching students to rebel against the government. Earthquakes everywhere... Now it's typhoon season…. We're also busy with capacity building activities: trainings for communities and companies. I don't know who gets bored in this situation!”

It is this mixed sense of exasperation, weariness and persistent urgency I read in her words that illustrates the compounding nature of violence experienced in both the lived environments and in the embodied experiences of disaster response workers in the country. Six years ago, on November 8, 2013, super typhoon Yolanda (international name: Haiyan) made landfall on Guiuan, Eastern Samar with wind speeds of over 300 kilometres per hour. After the power and news blackout that followed in the immediate aftermath, images and sound bytes from the rubble of unprecedented catastrophic destruction emerged. The strongest storm in all of recorded global history left us with over 10,000 dead. I served as an emergency relief worker for seven months and assisted in coordinating relief and early recovery efforts for the Secretariat of Task Force Tabang Visayas. Mass graves were dug in every town we worked at in the Eastern Visayan region, and over five years later, rehabilitation efforts are still underway with much controversy and bureaucratic neglect. Today Tokhang and the recent passage of the Anti-Terror Law has killed over three times Yolanda’s death toll and endangers the very bodies working to protect the victims. I am keenly aware that not unlike other disaster responders in the country, CDRC staff members work in a state of chronic fatigue, often literally running out of breath.

In our many conversations together, Tita Jeza shared with me reflections from decades of working for social justice in the country. She leafed through the pages of my research proposal while recalling her early years with CDRC. I wondered how many scholars she has hosted all these years and how fruitful or not those published studies were for the organization's work. "How exciting you have a team of filmmakers from the University of the Philippines! And all of you young ladies too! Oh, and your friend Grace, her last name, how is she related to…", Tita Jeza mused out loud. Her stories spiralled through memories of underground organizing during the Marcos dictatorship, and I would later learn of my friend's own politically charged family histories. Tita continued her thinking back to the work of nation-building in the 80s, 90s, with the failure of national industrialization, the failure of agrarian reform, the continued export of Filipino labour, to Filipinas' ridiculous racialized obsession with whitening creams, the pursuit of white men (and how absolutely embarrassed she was to have to tell a cab driver that the visiting executive from an international funding agency she shared the ride with was not a lover!), the pressures to leave the rural and migrate to the urban, overcrowding and poverty in the cities, desires to migrate overseas for a better life, Martial Law in Mindanao, all the killings, and then these storms, floods, earthquakes, droughts, and fires, and climate change... we both sank into heavy sighs. Then taking notice of the empty office, remembering how everyone else was busy at distant relief delivery operations, Tita Jeza mused softly:

> *"Hindi naman siguro bawal mapagod.*
> *Ang lahat napapagod.*
> *Hindi naman bawal malungkot.*
> *Ang lahat nalulungkot.*
> *Pero ang pag-asa,*
> *hindi tayo pwedeng mawalan!*
> *Kailangan lang siguro ng **pahinga / pa-hinga**,*
> *para makapag-recharge tayo."*
>
> "Maybe it is not wrong to be tired.
> Everyone gets tired.
> I don't think it is wrong to be sad.
> Everyone gets sad.

But hope,
this we cannot lose!
Maybe we just need **rest / to let breathe**,
so we can replenish ourselves.

I understood. Hearing these words from a veteran disaster responder and social justice activist spoke directly to a politics of hope that is intimately personal and also shared collectively all at once. From Tita Jeza's own deeply embodied experiences of exasperation, grief and fear was an understanding that hope is indispensable and can be replenished through *pahinga* (by resting) and *pa-hinga* (by breathing). I understood. This is what I have also learned over the years to bring into practice, without which a sustained engagement in this field of work, including completing this doctoral dissertation, would be impossible.

b. Pahinga, Pa-hinga: Rest and Let Breathe

My work among disaster responders who are at the front lines of intensifying climatic hazards and who are also increasingly targeted by state terror is enmeshed in the dangers of the current political moment. I therefore find it impossible to not engage deeply, intimately in an embodied politics of hope: one that takes seriously the body's experiences of exhaustion, fear and grief--not only those of my research informants, colleagues and collaborators, but including mine as well. Paying attention to the body's ability to rest, to let breathe, and revitalize its commitments to work for social justice in the midst of violence, I have learned through the years, is equally crucial, if not an imperative, to continue this work. This practice shifts away from what Indigenous studies and critical race scholar, Eve Tuck, refers to as the violence of "damage-centred" research (2009). As I have written in Chapter Two, I challenge the crisis narratives produced by critical scholars whose focus is limited to documenting peoples' pain and brokenness in order to hold oppressors accountable. Such a framework also violently denies people's hopes and life-giving resources.

In the 2019 *Antipode* conference on the themes of "geographies of trouble" and "geographies of hope", Les Back's opening lecture poignantly articulates hope as a kind of attentiveness to the world--it is neither naive optimism nor blind pessimism, it must never look away from the trouble, but is instead "cultivated and shaped in the here-and-now by the practice of attentive witnessing, taking in what is happening, interpreting its meaning and the possible gifts to the future that might emerge" (2021, 7). Referencing Black activist intellectuals such as Martin Luther King Jr. and feminist scholar bell hooks, Back critiques pessimism as a type of luxury not everyone can afford. Similarly in a series of papers published entitled "Geographies of Fear and Hope", geographers examine the power of both fearfulness and hopefulness, and inquire how "research can move us beyond fear and toward constructive and hopeful interventions in our world" (Lawson 2007, 335). Back echoes the same inquiries by asking, "What might be a hopeful orientation to knowledge be in our current moment? Where might we look and listen for hope?" (2021, 4). Together they underscore the importance of recovering and highlighting grounded, inclusive geographies of hope which can move us beyond merely coping with hazards and toward creating more just and sustainable futures (Lawson 2007, 337). In similar ways, the biennial Geography of Hope conferences bring together Indigenous scholars, activists and allies to also collectively explore how work can be sustained for socio-ecological well-being. They in turn highlight the vital importance of decolonial, feminist, ethical and ecological praxis which deepen people's relationships to place. My dissertation similarly grapples with the ever-present fears of working in the context of disaster response and state terror, and examines where hope lies. I write that it begins in the body.

In the book *Sharing Breath,* scholars of embodiment studies in Canada challenge the privileging of the mind in political and intellectual projects, including those of critical scholarship (Batacharya and Wong 2018). To disregard the body, to hold embodied engagement at arm's length, and to recoil from spirituality or deny a place for the sacred in knowledge production itself reflects a Eurocentric bias (Ibid, 10-12). Feminist scholarship has long chanted that the "personal is political", yet Cartesian splits keep the intellect elevated over the body; dualities of theory-practice, wellness-illness, thinking-being, private-public, and individual-collective remain apart. "While critical analysis helped deconstruct power, the dominance of the discursive-analytical mind had stifled their inner life force of hope, creativity and imagination" (Wong 2018, 259). In a similar vein, I find that by only critiquing the failures of a weak state, the workings of disaster capitalism, and the violent forces which evict, dispossess and endanger lives of the marginalized, one could also form dangerous meta narratives which overlook and deny survivors' own embodied acts of care for one another's well-being, their own aspirations, and persistent efforts in post-disaster reconstruction and healing. Critical disaster studies, I contend, can be enriched by embodiment scholarship which theorizes bodies as knowledgeable, as sites not only of violence and oppression but also of physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.

In a poignant connection with feminist Indigenous scholarship in Turtle Island (North America) I found that scholars across the Philippines too have written about understandings of well-being and survival and how these are all fundamentally tied to breath embodied. *Ginhawa* (comfort or well-being) in Tagalog is recovery from a sickness, overcoming poverty, and the ease of breathing; in Visayan, it is breath itself, energy and vitality, without which life is impossible. Well-being is *moginhawa* in Cebuano, *guminhawa* in Aklanon and Waray, *mangisnawa* in Kapampangan, and *manginanawa* in Sambal--all derived from the same root word meaning "to breathe" (Paz 2008, 5). In Teresita Maceda's essay, even revolutionary leaders fighting against Spanish rule in the 1800s had a fully articulated discourse on *kaginhawaan* (well-being) as shaped by an anti-colonial vision of a just and free society (2008, 48-49). Cultural explorations on *ginhawa* (well-being) and its relationship to *hininga* (breath) have been examined by scholars of *Sikolohiyang Filipino* or Indigenous Philippine Psychology (Enriquez 1992). Filipino psychiatrists providing psycho-social services in post-disaster contexts have in turn also drawn from this earlier work to understand distress described in words like *paghahabol-hininga* (literally a chasing after the breath), *naghihingalo* (panting for breath), *buntong-hininga* (sighing), *kapos sa hininga* (running out of breath), and *huling hininga* (the last breath) (Ladrido-Ignacio 2011; Tan 2012). *Ginhawa* (well-being) is an embodied personal peace experienced in material comfort, sustenance, and harmony among one's social and spiritual relations. As feminist and critical race scholars have offered, decolonization is not merely a discursive practice but must be materialized, enacted and deeply embodied (Tuck and Yang 2012; Mohanty 2003; Lawrence and Dua 2015).

During the 2018 DRRM Summit, colleagues and I were all working in great haste, multi-tasking and pulling overnight shifts as work piled up on multiple fronts. Participants were flown in from all across the country to Manila. While looking after guests' accommodations and transportation, organizers were at the same time keeping vigilant for any updates from the Senate regarding the proposed establishment of a new Department of Disaster Resilience. A press conference was also needed to publish DRRNet Philippines' official statement, and I volunteered with these tasks. While assisting in the Summit as a volunteer, I also had the opportunity to listen to the panels as an audience member and to facilitate workshop activities. As a participant observer I took notes of the rich discussions shared by participants, including my own reflections. As I opened in Chapter One, tremendous power lives in these voices of survivors from such catastrophic violence: the recent Itogon landslide from super typhoon Ompong; armed conflict on ancestral *Lumad* lands; super typhoon Yolanda; drought, rice rations and bullets fired at protesting farmers in Kidapawan; Martial Law and the Marawi siege that displaced an entire city. In this hall gathered hearts, bodies and spirits that have been broken countless times. It reminded me of a similar forum I assisted in organizing in December 2013, a month into the immediate aftermath of super typhoon Yolanda. A task force of civil society organizations quickly decided to fly representatives of over fifty of the worst affected local government units to Manila for a rapid needs assessment. Like for many in the 2018 DRRM Summit, it was the survivors' first time to be physically removed from ground zero. While participants had their files on hand ready to work, many simply wanted respite away from the battlefield in their own hometowns. Some turned away in agony from seeing any videos or photos of the devastation on screen; some gasped at the sight of destruction in their own towns, as if seeing their realities for the first time. Many shared that all they wanted was some respite from the disaster zone. Participants in the 2018 DRRM Summit expressed the same sentiments. While there was much to accomplish in two days, what they cherished most was the chance to take some rest (*pahinga*), as if attending the summit in Manila was a retreat. Here they could pause for a while, air their concerns, speak from their lived experiences, and be heard. For many it was their first time to mourn and ask: How can we possibly carry on?

Samira Gutoc, a legislator and Muslim woman from Maguindanao, spoke valiantly to the assembly on behalf of those still living in evacuation sites after the Philippine military sieged the city of Marawi for five months in 2017. She attended the Summit along with a contingent of Maranao women who marched to Congress the day before lobbying the government for reparations when the military waged war against the Maute terrorist group and reduced their historic Islamic city to rubble. Gutoc's message was of grief and dignity:

> "We must honour one another: rescuers, social workers, doctors, local government officials, all who give of themselves to others. Human dignity needs to be respected: *ang pinapanganak at ang namatay* [those being born and those who died]. The Muslim need to see their dead, bury their dead, with care and honour. Our mosques and our churches are our sanctuaries. *Walang-wala na po tayo.* [We have been left with nothing.] *Kailangan nating magdasal.* [We need to pray.] How can our sacred spaces be kept away or denied from us?"

She wept with her words, and many in the room cried with her in their seats as if we all understood what she spoke of--the importance of finding rest and taking refuge, to be afforded some sanctuary to rest and let breathe--despite coming from all across the archipelago. Honour one another. Care for the dead[17]. Pray and reclaim our sanctuaries. Maranao women survivors shared during a panel that when their mosques were bombed down, Christian neighbors offered what remained of their churches so that they may continue the conduct of their weekly prayers. It was in these multiple roles of being a volunteer, researcher, and also an embodied participant in these momentary gatherings, where I had the experience of pausing, reflecting with and listening to members of various marginalized communities across the country.

In 2014 I pursued graduate studies in Canada shortly after resigning from post-Yolanda emergency work. Perhaps not unlike disaster survivors flown to Manila for forums and post-disaster debriefing, I felt a tremendous privilege to be physically distanced from the battlefield while countless other colleagues, local aid workers, volunteers, friends and family included, continued the work. Being a scholar overseas gave me an extended period and space to rest, to literally regain my breath, and unexpectedly for me, to grieve the catastrophic destruction we were witnesses to. While taking courses and working at the university, I plunged into a season of furious climate justice activism in British Columbia, the unceded territories of the Coast Salish Nations. I delved deep into a meditation practice in the tradition first taught by Zen Master, Thich Nhat Hanh, to students and social workers who were serving communities ravaged during the Vietnam War. I thought then in desperation: if reservoirs of hope could be replenished in places and times of immense destruction, I too must find ways to breathe for life!

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[17] In Su and Mangada's work among widowed women of super typhoon Haiyan, they write of the importance of dignified burial practices in post-disaster recovery (2020).

Unknown to me at that time, my inquiries into the compounding violence of disaster events and climate change were also being sustained in parallel by an intimate search for a politics of hope. Mentored with loving support by professors Pilar Riaño-Alcalá and Natalie Clark at the University of British Columbia, whose own decolonial research projects on mass violence, collective trauma, and disaster memory encouraged my own learning, I explored how breathing and movement could teach me. In addition to writing and publishing in academic journals, my participation in protests and direct action for climate justice on the streets, including artistic practices and installations for collective grieving all constituted my continued transnational engagements with disasters in the country. In an artist statement I published on a collaborative virtual ritual I created for Yolanda victims, I wrote: “The back of my heart, the bare back, is where I hold breath heavy and grief most tightly. The entire body holds structures of feelings: It remembers, aches, cries, gathers strength, and hopes” (Go 2017a, 302). Embodied scholarship has helped me challenge the privileging of printed work and the presumption that critical engagements always have something to say. Silence too can hold tremendous power. Like the darkness that Solnit points to, the aching emptiness, the void and lament of *“walang-wala”*[18], or of being left with absolutely nothing at the wake of a super typhoon, is not a negative space. “Breath and movement—just as the hammering of new roofs or the planting of rice seedlings when the skies clear after a storm—offer nonverbal, embodied, and active ways of insisting on survival when speech and other literacies fail” (Ibid). Moments like these can perhaps be gleaned from the short videos my research team and I created entitled “*Barangay Magiting* (Village Heroes)” on each of the three field sites (Go, Simbulan and Tan 2019a; 2019b; 2019c). While they primarily serve as advocacy and educational tools, my team and I also creatively experimented with alternative ways of representing disaster-stricken communities. In a fourth video I entitled “*Pa~Hinga* (Rest; Let Breathe)” (Go, Simbulan and Tan 2021) [Figure 6], I invite viewers to an artistic-contemplative exercise of slowing down to the rhythms of daily life in each of the three disaster-stricken communities. Lines of laundry hanging to dry, wild orchids growing on fallen trees, prayers said over meals, hands slowly mending fishing nets line by line, and planting rice row by row. If our team has succeeded in this creative experiment, the viewer may see disasters differently: one could learn to see signs of lingering disasters, of suffering and fragility, in often subtle and quiet ways; and at the same time, one could also learn to see signs of persistent acts of care, rest and restoration.

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[18] My feminist ethnographic work among Waray women survivors writes about their testimonies of *“walang-wala”* or having absolutely nothing left (Go 2017c). Dennis D. Gupa’s ongoing doctorate research on community theatre in Samar also explores Waray survivors’ stories of having everything taken away from them. Our steadfast friendship over the years has nourished our joint commitment to work with and learn from survivors of disaster events in the country.

Pa~Hinga (Rest; Let Breathe): a contemplation on life amidst disa...
Copy link
PA ~ HINGA
Watch on YouTube

Figure 6: *“Pa~Hinga (Rest; Let Breathe): A contemplation on life amidst disasters”*
(Go, Simbulan and Tan 2021)

II. Designing Slow Collaborative Research

a. Feminist and Decolonial Praxis

In the postcolonial context, 'research' has been inextricably linked with imperial and extractive processes of knowledge production, expertise, and authoritative claims over peoples, experiences and knowledge. As I argue in Chapter Two, damage-centred research in the example of Parenti's *Tropic of Chaos* or Davis' *Planet of Slums,* is in danger of perpetuating the same violence on its subjects despite its intentions to uncover and hold oppressive power accountable. Decolonial research methodologies in turn offer an ethical praxis founded in responsibilities, reciprocity and relationships. Such praxis counters the deathscapes manufactured through the writing of colonialist apocalypses on paper, and attests to people's own voices and efforts to transform their lived realities. Reflecting on the transnational nature of my work, moving back and forth between Canada and the Philippines, I realize that commitments to places and people have sustained my efforts in the past years[19]. My participation in climate justice actions in Vancouver and Toronto, led by First Nations land and water protectors, taught me how to link the intersections of environmental and racial justice in the global North with issues of vulnerability and survival in the global South. In Toronto my involvement with Water Allies[20], an interdisciplinary collective of scholars, environmental activists and community members committed to feminist and decolonial work across the Great Lakes, has also invigorated my embodied engagement in water walks led by Anishinaabe grandmothers for healing bodies of water and our own bodies in ceremony.

Meanwhile in the Philippines, I keep returning to circles of development workers, community organizers and activists whose efforts for social justice are among the marginalized sectors in the country. In straddling these multiple geographical sites, moving in and out of the spaces of academia, NGO and activist circles, it can be difficult to translate across multiple discourses and social movements. It is also challenging to navigate power, privilege and differences that are constantly shifting depending on where I am. In order to not lose my way, I wrote: “I have found that one way to navigate these ever-shifting landscapes is to tread carefully along the threads of webbed relationships which I stand in and form part of” (Go 2017b, 449). In addition to being a scholar, I am also a mother, a daughter, a wife, a sister, a student, a granddaughter, a niece, an aunt, a friend and colleague, and therefore always in relation to those I work with and learn from. Drawing from decolonial and feminist scholarship, I am learning to continuously ground my work in relationships, reciprocity and responsibilities. “*Uuwi ako para manaliksik. Para maintindihan, makiramdam, makiramay, makipag-kapwa. Uuwi ako para magtrabaho*” [“I go home to do research. To understand, to feel with, to grieve with, to be among myself in others. I go home to do the work.”] (Ibid). The country is not so much a site for fieldwork as it is also “home” where many of my relations reside and hold me in belonging. And now I must also add, it is equally important for me to also return to the home that is my body, where pausing and resting helps me breathe myself whole. I do this in order to be able to continue working in a place called “home” which exposes bodies to grave threats from the violence of disasters.

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[19] I join other Filipino geographers of the Alitaptap Collective in thinking through and engaging in transnational practices of solidarity with activists in the Philippines. Dr. Andre Ortega shared with us that "commitments to place" must be central to radical politics in the field of critical human geography.

[20] www.waterallies.com

The recent growth in the slow scholarship movement (Martell 2014; Garey, Hertz and Nelson 2014) offers possibilities for how politics of rest, care and resistance may be practiced in academic work. In a collection of essays in “For Slow Scholarship” (Mountz *et al.* 2015) feminist geographers offer ways to slow down and claim time in order to renew commitments to good scholarship, teaching, and service and a collective feminist ethics of care. In challenging the isolating, embodied effects of neoliberal temporal regimes, they contend that “good scholarship requires time to think, write, read, research, analyze, edit, organize and resist the growing administrative and professional demands that disrupt these crucial processes of intellectual growth and personal freedom” (Ibid, 1236). In a similar vein, disaster scholarship is not only affected by the fast-paced productivity-oriented metrics of the university, but can also be further accelerated by a maddening awareness for the compounding violence experienced by one’s research communities, and an accompanying chronic sense of urgency to act, write, and respond swiftly to emergencies. Therefore it has been my own personal practice to explore ways to bring slowness into this work: I do this by grounding my intellectual, affective and activist labour in the larger webs of relationships which hold me; by remembering myself as part of and belonging to these relations, including friends and colleagues who I have collaborated with in this doctoral research; and by letting myself rest and breathe so as to sustain myself in the difficult contexts in which we work. To hope, or to want to commit to a politics of hope, is not naivety, reckless optimism, or a denial of the violent atrocities of state terror. Instead it is a desire for sanity, calm, and clarity--a countermovement to paralysis for which collective political action is needed and also vital for. As will be detailed in the following section, slowing down as a research methodology was a way for my teammates and I to challenge representations of spectacular violence in fast mass media and damage-centred research. Instead by tuning into the slower rhythms of everyday life in each of the three communities we visited, we were able to glean not only the slow violence of disasters experienced daily in marginalized communities but more importantly we made space and moments for stories of well-being to be part of our data gathering process.

b. Collaborative research on disasters

Scholars have grappled with the complex methodological and ethical questions in the conduct of field studies on disasters. While there may not be a distinguishable set of social science research methods specific to disaster studies, the circumstances and the contexts surrounding disaster research are unique. Disaster anthropologists Susanna Hoffman and Anthony Oliver-Smith have written of the responsibilities and suitability of researchers in playing active roles in framing disasters, informing disaster response policies, and participation in rehabilitation (2002). While there is often great haste to enter and study disaster events, the potential for research to cause good or harm are intensified in disaster situations (Gill 2014). Methodological challenges in designing protocols often emerge in the context of quick-response research (Donner and Diaz 2007) where there is a “lack of time”--a lack of time to decide which events are worthy of study, a lack of time to develop theory and hypotheses, a lack of time to develop research instruments (Stallings 2003, 23); and as I have personally grappled with, the challenges associated with the perceived lack of time to respond to every disaster event as an engaged scholar collaborating with frontline responders. I propose ‘slow disaster research’ to challenge the assumption that one must hurriedly enter the field “when disaster strikes” in order to do disaster research; instead, my research team and I arrived in each of the three field sites in “fair weather and when the skies were clear”. There were no post-disaster relief operations or rapid needs assessments to witness firsthand; however, much is revealed in the daily lives of people who are living amidst disasters.

In formulating my doctoral research over the past years, I first began by asking colleagues at CDRC what they believe are important questions to ask and investigate, what their most urgent priorities are, and most importantly, how I may be most useful to them and their time. It was not a quick one-time conversation. We have sustained these discussions patiently over the next five years of my doctorate studies as we navigated changing ethical and security concerns along the way. CDRC staff consistently underscored the importance of highlighting the lives and work of grassroots leaders in the *barangays* they work in as these community leaders are the least recognized by national government agencies, locally elected officials, DRRM policy experts, mass media, including international and local NGOs. To centre the research project on the women disaster preparedness committee officers in the *barangays,* and not on the professional staff of CDRC’s regional centres, offered me an opportunity to engage in an embodied practice of slow scholarship: tuning into a sense of time that is drastically different from the fast-paced urgency driving the professional work of most DRRM and humanitarian actors including CDRC staff. Instead working in the slower rhythms of everyday life in disaster-stricken communities allows for gendered experiences and understandings of slow violence to be gleaned alongside seemingly mundane efforts undertaken by women residents themselves for individual and collective well-being.

I also realized that despite the number of academic articles written on CDRC by critical disaster studies scholars over the past decade (see for example Heijmans 2012; Cadag and Gaillard 2011; Delica-Willison 2004), CDRC staff today have scant knowledge of these publications themselves. This may be due to a number of factors including: the loss of institutional memory when previous staff members who have participated in earlier research projects have left; and the dire lack of time for current staff members to read and engage with lengthy academic publications given the overwhelming amount of work needed to be done on a daily basis. I was personally concerned that my research collaborators may find little relevance in how this dissertation impacts their work as practitioners—even more so the lives of the disaster preparedness committee officers in the *barangays* who are furthest from such academic outputs. CDRC staff expressed their need of assistance in documenting how their regional centres practice CBDM, and given the overwhelming amount of tasks their staff are preoccupied with in relation to conducting on-site disaster relief and response, they have little manpower, time and resources to devote to writing about the experiences of disaster preparedness committee members themselves. Hence CDRC staff and I conceptualized the idea of putting together a research team to help me create "*Barangay Magiting* (Village Heroes)" (Go, Simbulan and Tan 2019a; 2019b; 2019c) featuring our interviews with grassroots women leaders. I recruited two professional filmmaker friends and paid them for the work as provided for by a grant I secured from the International Development Research Centre. These videos serve as research data for my dissertation, and as an educational tool for me to engage a wider public on alternative discourses on disasters; likewise the videos serve as advocacy material for CDRC to showcase the work of their regional centers and the practice of CBDM by disaster preparedness committees. Given the ongoing concerns that Republic Act 10121 will be repealed with the establishment of a new Department of Disaster Resilience, CDRC staff have encouraged me to create the short videos as a way to gather evidence for the successes encountered in the practice of CBDM. Hence my research team and I intentionally cast an optimistic lens on CBDM and we chose to depict grassroots women leaders in a celebratory spirit as "village heroes" in the film series. To date the three videos are the only documentation available on CBDM as practiced by each of the three disaster preparedness committees, and CDRC staff have since screened them during trainings and workshops. The videos also contribute to DRRNet Philippines' ongoing campaign to safeguard just DRRM approaches in Republic Act 10121.

During the course of my studies, I also co-hosted a video podcast series with colleagues at the York Centre for Asian Research. The first episode features my conversation with CDRC's former Executive Director, Suyin Jamoralin, as an extension of my ongoing research collaboration with the organization (Go 2017). I have also experimented on a collaborative writing process with CDRC staff in writing Chapter Four, which includes voices of anonymized staff members in the final text. We have co-edited the chapter's content through multiple iterations while navigating security issues relating to the views expressed. The videos were also edited while taking into consideration extensive feedback from staff of CDRC and its regional centres. In the spirit of a collaborative research process, I have chosen to publish their evaluation of the videos in Appendix B. All these collaborative efforts in the span of the last five years required sustaining relationships and a shared objective of producing a variety of work outputs which aim to have theoretical and applied contributions.

c. *Research Questions*

The first component of the doctoral research project aims to map the ecosystem of civil society engaged in disaster response in the Philippines. I ask the following questions:

- Where is CDRC located in the broader civil society ecosystem of non-government organizations (NGOs) and people's organizations (POs) that engage in service delivery, community organizing and advocacy around issues of disaster management?
- How do CDRC's regional centres practice community-based disaster management (CBDM)? What are the strengths and limits of its CBDM framework, how does it challenge predominant state-led approaches to DRRM, and does it transform the root causes of people's vulnerabilities?

The second component of the research examines the actual practices and politics of CBDM as seen in three case studies. In each of the field sites, my research team and I asked the following:

- How do women disaster preparedness committee officers define disasters in their own communities?
- What are the causes and material manifestations of vulnerability in each community as seen in their local livelihoods, access to disaster relief, and security from violence?
- How do women leaders understand well-being for themselves and their communities?

- What efforts for CBDM do the women leaders engage in? Do these actions transform the root causes of their vulnerabilities? What successes have they achieved? What obstacles do they face from more entrenched multi-scalar power relations including their relationship with local government officials, security forces, landed families, business interests, and NGO actors including the CDRC regional staff?

d. Fieldwork, Interviews and Filmmaking

My research team's visits to each of the three field visits ranged from two to three weeks in length. For security purposes we did not stay longer as counselled by our research collaborators. The threats to civil society with continued harassment of human rights workers and community organizers was dramatically demonstrated with the repeated arrests of internationally renowned journalist, Maria Ressa, in Manila during the conduct of my fieldwork. As a security measure in our own travels, our research team was in turn accompanied by CDRC regional staff members who have been working in the select *barangays*; we were hosted by select disaster preparedness committee officers and their families, who ensured our team also paid our courtesy visits to local government offices to make our presence known. In each of the trips my team consisting of two other women filmmaker friends from Manila and myself negotiated our gendered presence with different configurations of local power relations, positionalities, interests, and security issues, sometimes with and without our cameras. My teammates and I were comforted by the strong bonds of friendship we shared and kept one another in joyful company throughout our travels--and while this did not make us bullet-proof, we drew courage from our companionship in similar ways that we later realized the women grassroots leaders do the same in their *barangays*. As I write in each of the three case studies, conviviality, camaraderie, shared knowledge and a strong sense of belonging in one another all offer a kind of empowerment that sustains the women's grassroots work on disaster response.

While my team and I did not conduct long-term studies, we practiced working in a 'slow' manner in each field site: we did not rush to just check tasks off a list, but ensured to also arrive in each place respectfully as guests to our host families and collaborators; to listen and be part of conversations, and to also partake in daily chores and activities that allowed for momentary coming-togethers with our hosts and research participants. I draw on decolonial research methodology by Indigenous scholars (Wilson 2008; Tuhiwai Smith 1999), including those practiced in Filipino decolonial scholarship (Pe-Pua 1990, 2006; Strobel 2010; Go 2017a) to view our interviews with grassroots women leaders as an embodied research method of reciprocal teaching and learning, speaking and listening, meaning making and theorizing. Our focus group discussions were often held in *kuwentuhan* or group storytelling circles in gendered spaces of individual dwellings and communal venues such as outdoor kitchens, a makeshift daycare or training centre, where children and other members of their families stepped in and out to join the conversations in an organic manner. These discussions were free flowing and unhurried. I did not audio-record any of these group discussions, and simply took handwritten notes with pen and paper to remember important points shared during *kuwentuhan.* These were moments of respite, when interviewees enjoyed spending time together with fellow comrades, neighbours and friends, when we were able to rest together and momentarily withdraw from some of the daily demands of their housework, extended care work in their neighbourhoods, and efforts in community organizing. *Kuwentuhan* in the safe company of neighbours, kin and friends allowed for participants, my research team and I included, to rest and for stories to be shared and heard often in a comfortable and relaxed manner; this method of interviewing in turn offered shared experiences of communal support, comfort and well-being for both researchers and responders. Chapters Five, Six and Seven offer rich vignettes from each of our three field sites which detail our experiences and practices in greater length.

In addition to *kuwentuhan,* my research team and I also conducted semi-structured individual interviews with women leaders in each of the three disaster preparedness committees, staff members of the respective regional centers, and officials representing concerned local government units [Table 1]. Each of these interviews ranged from 20-40 minutes in length, and were audio-recorded with a microphone as a preliminary rehearsal to the video recording in front of the camera. All of the interviewees provided written and verbal consent [Appendices C and D] to be both audio and video-recorded; and my research assistant in turn transcribed each of these individual recordings, and provided translations from Cebuano to English for the third case study in Barangay Gibitngil. I later conducted content analysis on all the transcripts in order to identify recurring themes and shared concepts which inform my detailed analysis of each of the case studies.

I did not provide my informants with any monetary honoraria for their voluntary participation in the interviews; instead I offered to host meals and snacks during these gatherings. At the end of each field visit, I paid our local host families to cover their expenses on food, transportation and other necessities. I also gave a personal gift in the form of monetary donation to each of the three disaster preparedness committees to thank them for their participation, and this fund was used by each committee to procure basic items they may need in their work. For instance, the disaster preparedness committee in Zambales used this donation to purchase rain boots, plastic tables and chairs to furnish their training centre.

		Brgy. Bagumbayan	**Brgy. Malabago**	**Brgy. Gibitngil**
		Taguig City	Zambales	Cebu
Disaster Preparedness Committee	Filmed	5	9	6
	Not Filmed	0	0	0
NGO Staff of Regional Centre	Filmed	1	2	2
	Not Filmed	1	1	1
Government	Filmed	2*	0	0
	Not Filmed	0	2**	3***
		** Brgy. DRRM Officer and Staff*	*** Mayor and Municipal DRRM Officer*	**** Municipal DRRM Officer, Municipal Provincial Development Officer, Brgy. DRRM Officer*

Table 1: *Interviewees across three case studies*

In navigating the differentiated and multi-layered ethical and security concerns for multiple participants, it is first crucial to underscore that women disaster preparedness committee officers in particular wanted to be featured in the films as a way of celebrating and giving credit to the multi-faceted work they engage in in their respective *barangays.* All of them expressed that this was the first time they had been interviewed for their work in CBDM, and particularly for women farmers and fishers in Barangay Malabago and Barangay Gibitngil who live far from city centres, this was also their first time to be interviewed in front of a camera. There was a vivid sense of enthusiasm and excitement shared by women disaster preparedness committee officers across all three *barangays* to participate in the research project, and central to this optimism is the opportunity to give face and voice to their own lives and their work given the challenges they face in their respective lived environments. There was also a remarkably jubilant spirit in their participation in the film-making process as they wanted to publicly showcase their work to other disaster preparedness committees across the country: they are aware that CDRC has a nationwide network of over 400 similar disaster preparedness committees, and during *kuwentuhan* at each of the field sites, I joined the women in exploring the potential for their videos to be screened to the larger network to facilitate exchanges. The women officers therefore chose to be identified with their real names in their interviews for the film. Hence given the central objective of the videos to showcase CBDM in practice, my research team and I chose the title "*Barangay Magiting* (Village Heroes)" in recognition for the celebratory spirit the women have in showcasing their work to a general public.

NGO staff members of the regional centers also agreed to be included in the videos and eagerly facilitated our interviews in the *barangays* they work in. They were, however, careful to remind me that the central focus on each video was to be kept on the community leaders who are given less visibility and recognition for their efforts as compared to NGO staff members. They also consented to using their real names in their video interviews as they have been serving as the public face of their offices' campaigns, programmes and presence in websites and social media accounts online.

In the filmmaking and final editorial process, my team and I had to make deliberate and careful choices in how to frame the interviews and issues being presented to the public. Each of the three "*Barangay Magiting* (Village Heroes)" videos opens at the beginning with a montage of television news clips featuring a variety of disaster events: storms, flash floods, earthquakes, the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in 1991, the shooting of drought-stricken farmers who were protesting for rice at Kidapawan City in 2016, military raids in conflict zones, among others. The active tempo of these short clips and sound bytes stitched together mimics mass media's coverage of such news: these are action-packed sights and sounds of spectacular violence bombarding the viewer's senses with catastrophe on a daily basis. And yet, just as my teammates and I have consumed such news all our lives growing up in Manila, we wanted to experiment and pose a different way of representing disasters. We paired slower rhythmic background music, including the sounds of bamboo flute and gentle percussion, with scenes of everyday life in the three *barangays.* While these are marginalized and disaster-stricken communities, we refrained from representing the violence they endure in a sensational manner or with the heart-racing tempo of action films. Instead paying attention to the mundane details of daily life reveal both 'slow' violence and efforts to respond to these disasters.

As can be seen in Table 1, we included all disaster preparedness committee officers in the videos but not all NGO staff and government officials we interviewed are shown. Given that the videos are easily shared and viewed publicly online, our team deliberately chose to present various oppositional state-society relations in a much less prominent way: by not explicitly confronting and identifying names of local government officials, local elites and corporate entities, we made a calculated decision to reduce security risks for those identified in the videos. For example, the first film on Barangay Bagumbayan highlights some of the successes NGO staff members had in collaborating with the Barangay government; we chose not to feature any ongoing issues relating to the government's war on drugs, and instead signalled very subtly to the issue with a two-second footage of a "Tokhang" poster outside the Barangay Hall. In the second film on Barangay Malabago, we chose to completely exclude video-recorded interviews with the Mayor and the Municipal DRRM officer given the controversial relationship between the Municipal government and nickel mines in the province; we similarly decided against presenting any footage or photos of the women's participation in public protests against the mine. In the third film on Barangay Gibitngil, we also chose to exclude interviews with the Municipal government given the fragility of ongoing land tenure claims the fishers in the island have in opposition to a local island-owning family and local officials. In making all of these editorial decisions, our team intends for our videos to serve as useful advocacy and educational purposes without overtly highlighting the power relations which may potentially endanger our informants. Instead, I choose to detail these issues by writing them in lengthier prose in this dissertation as a means of cloaking information. The names of all our informants throughout this dissertation are subsequently anonymized with pseudonyms.

e. Selection of Sites

CDRC staff and I initially planned to select three sites each representing the three major island groups of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. However, at the time of my fieldwork, the entire Southern Philippine island of Mindanao remained under Martial Law; the Mindanao-based regional centres of the Citizens' Disaster Response Network discouraged my research team to visit, given their fears over security issues for their own staff members. Instead with the assistance of CDRC staff, we selected three *barangays,* each with a distinct profile of vulnerabilities: Barangay Bagumbayan is an urban poor community in Taguig City, Metro Manila; Barangay Malabago, a coastal community of small-holder farmers in the Municipality of Santa Cruz in the Province of Zambales; and Barangay Gibitngil, an island community of small-scale fishers off the main island province of Cebu. While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to cover all cases of CBDM practices nationwide, CDRC staff and I agreed that it is important to give a full sketch of diverse sectoral experiences of disasters from farming, fishing and urban poor communities, and hence the three selected sites [Figure 7].

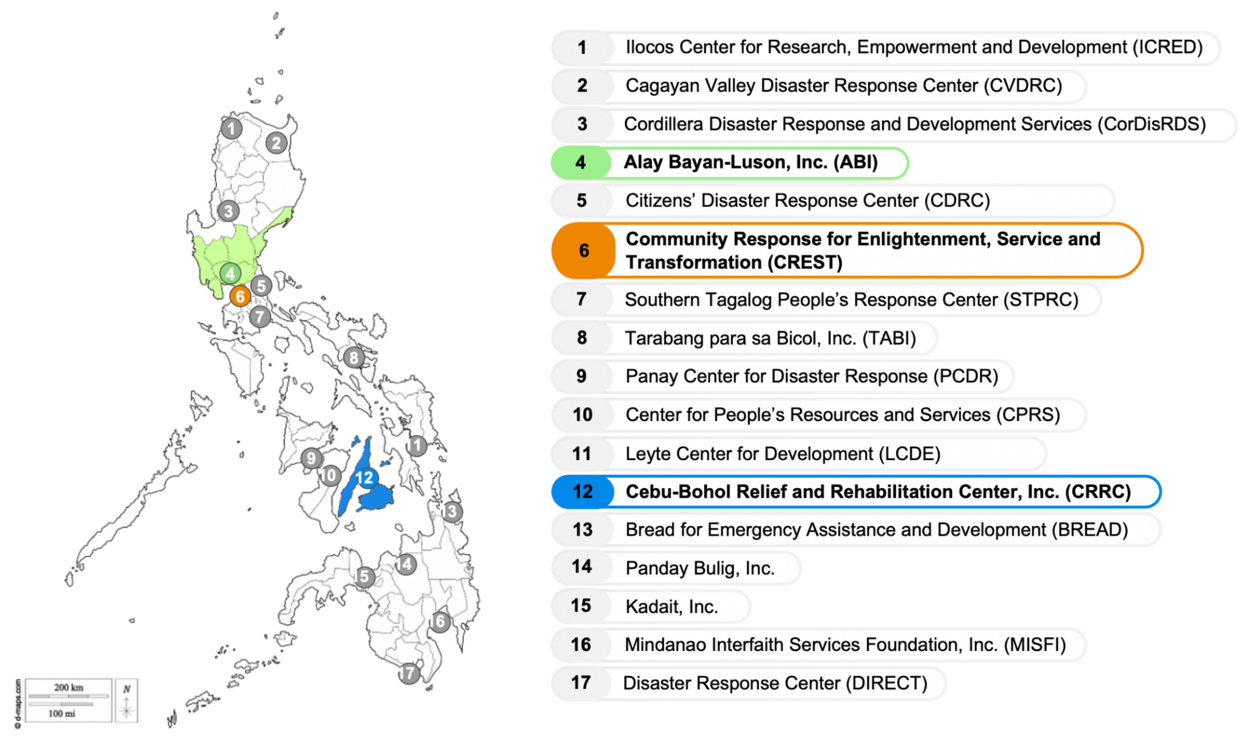
1 Ilocos Center for Research, Empowerment and Development (ICRED)
2 Cagayan Valley Disaster Response Center (CVDRC)
3 Cordillera Disaster Response and Development Services (CorDisRDS)
4 Alay Bayan-Luson, Inc. (ABI)
5 Citizens' Disaster Response Center (CDRC)
6 Community Response for Enlightenment, Service and Transformation (CREST)
7 Southern Tagalog People's Response Center (STPRC)
8 Tarabang para sa Bicol, Inc. (TABI)
9 Panay Center for Disaster Response (PCDR)
10 Center for People's Resources and Services (CPRS)
11 Leyte Center for Development (LCDE)
12 Cebu-Bohol Relief and Rehabilitation Center, Inc. (CRRC)
13 Bread for Emergency Assistance and Development (BREAD)
14 Panday Bulig, Inc.
15 Kadait, Inc.
16 Mindanao Interfaith Services Foundation, Inc. (MISFI)
17 Disaster Response Center (DIRECT)
200 km
100 mi
N
© d-maps.com

Figure 7: *Map of the three partner regional centres in the Citizens' Disaster Response Network (map by author 2021)*

1. Community Response for Enlightenment, Service and Transformation (CREST), is the regional center in Metro Manila and focuses on promoting community-based disaster management in urban poor communities across the national capital region. While floods are the most common hazard among informal settlements, fires, demolitions and police violence are also devastating yet normalized occurrences for the urban poor. CREST trains and organizes disaster preparedness committees, which are grown into a network of people's organizations across Metro Manila. It was formally established in 2005 by church leaders and community organizations involved in upholding the rights of urban poor communities. My team and I interviewed local government officials, CREST staff, and women leaders of the disaster preparedness committee in Barangay Bagumbayan, Taguig City on issues of housing and safety from poverty and gender-based violence.
2. Alay Bayan-Luson, Inc. (ABI), is the regional center serving Region III or Central Luzon, and has been focused on the impacts of flooding, droughts and various cases of development aggression in the form of mining and other extractive industries. ABI's programmes focus on training and organizing disaster preparedness committees, which are in turn strengthened into a regional network of people's organizations working to address vulnerabilities stemming from environmental degradation, poverty and powerlessness in the region. My team and I interviewed local government officials, ABI staff, and women leaders of the SAMA-SAGIP disaster preparedness committee in Barangay Malabago, Sta. Cruz, Zambales on issues of livelihood security, debt, challenges to rain-fed agriculture, and environmental degradation affecting smallholder farmers.
3. Cebu-Bohol Relief and Rehabilitation Center, Inc. (CRRC), is the regional center serving the island provinces of Cebu and Bohol. It trains and organizes disaster preparedness committees, and in turn grows a network of people's organizations responding to displacements due to natural calamities and man-made disasters. CRRC is currently focused on the increasing number of intensifying typhoons affecting small-scale fishers and farmers across the Visayan region. In addition to prioritizing the management of marine ecosystems to secure livelihoods and subsistence economies along with their

partner civil society organizations, agrarian reform and land tenure issues also remain top in CRRC's agenda. My team and I interviewed local government officials, CRRC staff, and women leaders of the disaster preparedness committee in the island-*barangay* of Gibitngil, Medellin, Cebu on the impacts of typhoons, land tenure insecurity, and resource competition with commercial fishing affecting residents of the island.

Conclusion

Hope is not an ignorant denial of the violent atrocities of spectacular, chronic and slow disasters. It feels, sees and recognizes grief, exhaustion, despair and fear in the body; and instead of succumbing to a paralysis for which sustained individual and collective political action is vital for, it turns to a radical openness to possibilities. Back writes that "the kind of scholarship needed to sustain hopeful thinking must be "collective, dialogic, inventive, artiful and trans-disciplinary" (2021, 19). As I illustrated in this chapter, feminist, embodied and collaborative 'slow' scholarship on disasters can sustain an attentiveness to not just the troubles in violent lived environments but also to the creative impulses and potentials that lie in team work and collaboration --I elaborate on the women leaders' shared aspirations and how they celebrate their daily efforts in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. In this chapter I demonstrate how a geography of hope begins in the body; hope is an indispensable resource which can be replenished with *pahinga* (rest) and *pa-hinga* (to let breathe), and is embodied and also shared in the company of others. In my personal reflections spanning years of engagement in transnational scholarship and activism in the fields of disaster response and climate justice activism, I have delved into an intimate exploration of my embodied experiences which has given rise to a personal politics of hope shaped by rest and breath. In turn my conduct of this doctoral project as a volunteer and collaborator for civil society organizations, a research team member conducting interviews with women grassroots leaders in three *barangays,* and also a subject, has been shaped by slow scholarship--the practice of slowing down to counter the fast-paced, urgent nature driving disaster studies and disaster response efforts, allowing for moments of resting in the company of one's relations to offer glimpses of daily disasters and efforts to transform these lived realities.

Chapter Four: The Philippine Civil Society Ecosystem of Disaster Response

Overview

This chapter addresses the first set of questions for this dissertation through a historical review of the formation of Philippine civil society and the politics of civic engagements in disaster response in the country. Where is the Citizens' Disaster Response Centre (CDRC) presently located in the broader civil society ecosystem of non-government organizations (NGOs) and people's organizations (POs) that engage in service delivery, community organizing and advocacy around issues of disaster management? How do CDRC's regional centres practice community-based disaster management (CBDM)? What are the strengths and limits of its CBDM framework, how does it challenge predominant state-led approaches to DRRM, and does its practice of CBDM transform the root causes of people's vulnerabilities?

The first section of this chapter lays out the historical formation of civil society in the Philippines and traces the origins and development of disaster response efforts. Scholars have studied the distinct vibrancy to Philippine civil society as characterized by the remarkable prominence, variety and number of NGOs making the country a unique opportunity to study citizen activism that is unequaled elsewhere in Southeast Asia. I contextualize CDRC in this broader historical and political context to illustrate how its particular framework and practice of disaster response originated from a lineage of political-activist development practices in the country.

In the second section of this chapter, I invite collaborators from CDRC to join me in mapping the present-day ecosystem of civil society involved in disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM). We aim to illustrate how members of Philippine civil society, located in a broad political spectrum shaped by plurality and heterogeneity, have emerged with varying approaches to DRRM as seen in their engagement with disasters, development dilemmas, and the state. I draw on theories of the Philippine state and its relations with civil society to illustrate how CDRC's efforts in community organizing is central to CBDM.

I. Philippine State-Civil Society Relations

a. History of the formation of Philippine civil society

Scholars of civil society in Asia have theorized and defined Philippine civil society in multiple ways (Constantino-David 1995, 1998; Diokno 1997; Silliman and Noble 1998; Clarke 1998, 2012; Alagappa 2004; Tadem 2009, 2011; Civicus 2010). Broadly defined civil society is often understood in the realm of voluntary and collective public action, as the "politically active popular sector" of society (Constantino-David 1998, 13) that is independent of the market and the state. It seeks policy changes and state accountability through participation in public protests, social movements, and NGOs. In differentiating itself from the private and public spheres, civil society becomes an arena of contestation (Alagappa 2004) where its conceptions of the public good are continuously deliberated and put into collective actions. As a force of democratization members of civil society may organize individuals and groups on sector-specific concerns, engage in protests, lobby, form coalitions and networks around common issues or goals, and collaborate with or challenge government bodies. Civil society is often defined for what it is *not*--as Clarke notes, the phrase 'non-governmental' suggests an inverse relationship between NGOs and the state (1998). With the prevalence of weak states across the global South, the most significant realm of NGO activity lies in what the postcolonial state is unable to do, lacks at, is absent in, or even threatens to attack. In the Philippines, this historically includes the provision of basic services, promoting economic development, protecting human rights and democratic institutions, including providing disaster relief. Civil society, however, is not a homogenous non-state space. The elusiveness of the civil society concept is important to flag given the widely diverging ideologies and policy agendas that constitute the terrain (Civicus 2010). As I will be demonstrating in the subsequent sections, Philippine civil society is marked by fissures and divisions (Holmes 2011); and differentiated by a combination of strategies to cooperate with, reform or challenge the state. While an oppositional binary between state and society is an enduring construct to frame actions undertaken by elements of civil society, a porous state-society division is made most evident by the "crossing over" of activists from left-of-centre

NGOs and people’s organizations (POs) to state positions across multiple administrations in attempts to implement socio-economic reforms (Reid 2008). These “sideways strategies” undertaken by “crossovers” uncovers the boundary between state and civil society as an important and messy arena of contentious politics: contention does not only take place outside of government institutions and social movements, but that it can take place within and between (Lewis 2013, 52).

Across Southeast Asia, the Philippines has provided the earliest and most remarkable mobilizations in support of liberal democracy by forces identified with “civil society”, evidenced for example in Asia’s first national election-watch campaign and the famed 1986 People Power Revolution hailed as Asia’s lone peaceful revolution (Hedman 2005). Today contemporary Philippine civil society is composed of a wide variety of non-state actors including: [1] individual professionals, academics, development workers, practitioners, and volunteers; [2] non-government organizations (NGOs), a majority of which have professional full-time staff and are registered through the Securities and Exchange Commission; [3] faith-based organizations and charities; and [4] people’s organizations (POs) formed through grassroots or community organizing and which are largely reliant on voluntary leadership from community members themselves. While the term “NGO” has different connotations across countries, Clark (1998) and Silliman and Noble (1998) use the label to inclusively refer to any voluntary organization that is independent of both the government and private business sectors; they follow the common Philippine practice of defining NGOs as support organizations to grassroots organizations such as POs. In addition, to distinguish between ‘genuine’ NGOs from fake ones, Constantino-David also clarifies that the former must be “development-” or “people-oriented”[1]. As of 2019, there is a staggering total of 357,337 civil society organizations (CSOs) registered with the Securities and Exchange Commissions in the Philippines, which includes an estimate of 179,000 non-stock, non-profit organizations; 18,065 cooperatives; 84,278 labour organizations; and 64,933 workers’ associations (Caucus of Development NGOs 2019). These numbers signal the vibrancy of Philippine civil society and the wide expanse of issues represented in development projects, advocacy campaigns and forms of civic activism; these figures also hint at the overwhelming number of non-state actors and the chaotic challenges faced in mobilizing across differences in size, political orientation, and power in terms of differentiated access to resources and relationships with the government.[2] These official numbers also do not necessarily represent POs or smaller organizations and associations at the grassroots level such as the disaster preparedness committees discussed in Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

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[1] This language is echoed among NGOs beginning in the 1980s, and will later be evident in the original “Citizenry-Based and Development-Oriented Disaster Response” framework launched by the Citizens’ Disaster Response Center (CDRC) in 1984.

Civil society as it is formally defined today only emerged after the Philippine state and its political instruments were firmly established with the declaration of independence from American colonial rule in 1946. Some forms of civic organizing existed during the Spanish colonial period in the form of cooperatives and trade unions; however, charitable acts conducted mainly by prominent families, the church, and state only served to mutually reinforce their own powers. The beginnings of disaster relief are seen for instance in how Spanish colonial rule relied on both church and the wealthy to provide food, maintain social order, and pacify revolt during the 1878 famine (Clarke 1998, 53). The subsequent proliferation of relief and welfare organizations in the early 1900s remained intimately bound with the American colonial policy of 'benevolent assimilation' and its deliberate efforts to transplant American democracy and its institutions in the Philippines. American civic organizations such as Rotary, Kiwanis and the Red Cross established branches in Manila as a way of promoting democracy shaped by elite philanthropy and decreased state intervention in the economy (Ibid 54-55). While it preached the modernist seductions of 'self-governance', 'democracy' and 'liberty' through participation in civic life, the American colonial strategy thrived in its unhindered ability to extract natural resources from the colony. In 1916 the Philippine legislature passed an act to establish the Philippine Red Cross independent of its American counterpart, which sparked tensions between the two in vying for disaster relief activities (Ibid, 56). Church-inspired NGOs formed by foreign missions and supported by elite philanthropy were engrossed in anti-communist efforts in the 1930s, and continued to counter peasant movements until the 1960s.

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[2] The Philippine Civil Society Index published a "Philippine Social Forces Map" to sketch the relationships among state, civil society, market and armed groups; and a "Civil Society Map" to illustrate relative size of CSOs in the country (Holmes 2011, 147-148). These diagrams are by no means comprehensive, and to date there is no map published to visually represent all registered CSOs in the country.

World War II intensified the need for relief, welfare and reconstruction efforts. Spanish and American colonial rule handed over socio-economic structures of inequality to the local elite, turning the new Philippine state into an instrument for few families to accumulate wealth and maintain control over land. Through the process of land monopolization, American colonization successfully consolidated and established a clearly visible national oligarchy whose power base lay in hacienda agriculture and not in the capital city (Caouette 2013a). The Philippine patrimonial state began in the postwar political economy where access to the state apparatus remains the major avenue to private accumulation for favoured and would-be favoured elites (Hutchcroft 1991). As will be demonstrated in the following historical accounts, landed oligarchic elites continue to maintain control over the electoral process and the state through a network of patronage (Caouette 2013a). The US-Philippine alliance persisted post-WW2 between returning US military and local landlords, and the maintenance of American military bases in the country. A post-war communist movement was led by the *Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas* (Communist Party of the Philippines) and the *Hukbong Bayan Laban Sa Hapon* (Anti-Japanese People's Army) guerrilla force, and with the support of corporate philanthropy, national leaders quelled the growing militant peasant-led rebellion and large peasant unions. New NGOs established during the Cold War were formed to combat rural insurgency as a legacy of "US democracy" in the country. For example the Jesuit-based Institute of Social Order (ISO), still housed in the Ateneo de Manila University today, was formed in 1947 to counter communist initiatives. Similarly the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement, which remains one of the largest NGOs in the country today, was formed in 1952 to undercut peasant support for the communist movement (Constantino-David 1998, 28). At the height of the Cold War, the Philippines as an American ally was perceived internationally to enjoy economic and democratic stability; and with NGOs celebrated as forces of democratization, civic participation and liberties, the Philippines became an important recipient of the Official Development Assistance (ODA), which channelled funds from international foundations, including funds from the CIA and USAID, with the aim of promoting civic organizations to erode support for mass agrarian movements. The ODA became a major stimulant to NGO proliferation in Asia at this time, with the Philippines as its ideal destination for international development projects.

In 1965 Marcos expanded the role of the Armed Forces of the Philippines to community development efforts in order to displace civic organizations engaged in relief and welfare activity. The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) broke off from its original party and was formally established in 1968 waging a national democratic struggle through Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. The New People's Army (NPA) was formed as the CPP's armed wing, and together they aimed to establish a socialist state through a protracted people's war. When Marcos declared Martial Law in 1972, activists and oppositionists were arrested; mass media was controlled by the regime; and NGO proliferation slowed down and a small number remained largely controlled by prominent businessmen and philanthropists. In 1973 seven months after the declaration of Martial Law, the National Democratic Front (NDF) was formed to bring together underground revolutionary activists and organizations many of which supported the CPP and NPA (Rocamora 1994; Caouette 2013b). The resulting national democratic or "nat-dem" movement was chiefly led by the CPP-NPA and granted support by various organizations including the Catholic Church which played a courageous and determining role in protecting and mobilising urban poor communities (Caouette 2015, 145).[3] Civic space narrowed down options for activists during the Marcos dictatorship as the president excluded collaboration with NGOs in the Four Year Development Plan for 1974-77, cut funding from the proceeds of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes, and created state patronage networks to undermine hundreds of independent rural cooperatives (Clarke 1998, 63). Marcos also declared Presidential Decree No. 1566 in 1978 which tasked the military with top-down and centralized command of disaster response. As will be seen in the decades to follow, CDRC and other CSOs advocating for community-based disaster risk reduction and management will lobby for Republic Act 10121 in the year 2010 to successfully replace Marcos' decree and legislate more just approaches to disaster response.

After 1975 new NGOs emerged stimulated by rising poverty and political marginalization. Under authoritarian rule, they worked closely with POs and eschewed collaboration with the state to varying degrees (Ibid, 67). The former first lady Imelda Marcos herself had plundered the ODA to enrich herself by controlling the Ministry of Human

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[3] In Chapter Five, the founders of CREST, an NGO that practices community-based disaster management across informal settlements in Metro Manila today refer to this history of the urban poor movement as its own.

Settlements which alienated progressive organizations grappling with rising poverty and landlessness. The “politics of plunder”, which has always been a part of Philippine political life, reached an epidemic, flagrant and a “certain pathological dimension” during the Marcos years (Aquino 1987, 4), although enduring patrimonial features across administrations account for how dominant economic interests continue to plunder the Philippine state (Hutchcroft 1991). From 1972 to 1981, an estimate of 70,000 were imprisoned, 34,000 tortured, 3,240 killed, and 390 disappeared in what is considered one of the darkest periods of state terror in Philippine history. From 1980 to 1986, CPP and NDF relations deteriorated among national democrats; while a broad number and variety of NDF organizations engage in a wide repertoire of contention ranging from grassroots organizing, popular demonstrations, parliamentary struggles and radical approaches (Dizon 2020, 47), groups chose to either leave the national democratic movement or remain and participate covertly or openly in a mass movement. NGOs established by NDF activists became an institutional base to challenge the CPP’s vanguard role over the underground Left, and launched a new rival direction opposed to armed struggle (Clarke 1995, 116). Activists who identify as social democrats on the other hand were looking for alternatives to Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and were explicitly anti-communist. Religious activists associated with both camps: Christians for National Liberation were among the “nat-dems”, while Jesuits were linked to “soc-dems”. Former priest, Edicio de la Torre, for example who helped establish the Institute for Popular Democracy in 1987 had left the NDF movement to challenge the CPP hegemony; he is quoted to have said: “NGOs were an idea the CPP borrowed from the church” (Ibid, 114).

With the fall of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986, the succeeding Aquino and Ramos administrations increasingly institutionalized NGOs and civil society participation in governance. The feverish euphoria of the People Power Revolution sparked an enduring discourse of liberal democracy which poses civil society as a necessary condition to facilitate the completion of the democratic transition, with decentralization as a magic ingredient for democratization (Holmes 2011, 161). Corazon Aquino began her presidency by appointing prominent activists, human rights lawyers and martial law survivors representing various NGOs into her Cabinet. Democratic space encouraged the thriving of pluralist ideas and proliferation of development NGOs, POs and coalitions (Caroll 1998). Responsibilities and resources were transferred from central to local governments in order to promote greater efficiency in the delivery of basic services; to increase citizens' participation in local checks and balances; and to promote fiscal autonomy of local governments. Donor assistance grew and ODA flows as the percentage of GNP reached record levels in support for the new Aquino government. This supported the proliferation of activist and development NGOs in a loose regulatory environment which created a rival institutional power-base to the state (Clarke 1995, 71). The enactment of the Local Government Code in 1991 offered opportunities for NGOs and POs to influence local government decisions: "Nowhere in Asia does a law so explicitly accord NGOs a role in governance" (Silliman and Noble 1998, 18). In the same year, the Caucus of Development NGOs (CODE-NGO), the largest national coalition of networks of NGOs today, held its 1st National Congress where close to a thousand NGOs, POs and cooperatives attended. The Congress ratified its Covenant on Philippine Development and the Code of Conduct for Development NGOs, which greatly facilitated the professionalization and expansion of social development work in the Philippines. In a decentralized model of governance in the last thirty years, CSOs have had the opportunities to intervene and participate at various scales, expand their horizontal bases, from which they can subsequently scale up for action at the national level. Clarke writes that in a span of ten years from 1986 to 1995, NGOs and the Philippine state had forged one of the closest relationships found in the developing world: state-NGO collaborations were strategic in a country long dominated by agrarian elite, and the alliance was designed to strengthen democratic legitimacy rather than reform or overthrow the state (1995, 94).

In 1998, the Party-List system allowed sectoral groups like peasants, labour, women, urban poor, indigenous cultural communities, and youth to be represented in the Parliament with a maximum of 20% of the total seats. Sectoral representation enables CSOs including those from the people's mass movement to influence national policies. For example the *Bagong Alyansang Makabayan* or BAYAN (New Patriotic Alliance) which has been representing national democratic organizations since 1985 has an elected representative in Congress today. The Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act also mandates NGO and PO representatives to sit in the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council

(NDRRMC) across national, regional, municipal and *barangay* levels. Patronage politics, however, is a persisting feature of the weak Philippine state, whether pre-, during or post-martial law, and the government continues to be choked by oligarchs and personally favoured associates or cronies. The oppositional nature of state-society relations stands despite the porous nature of this divide as made evident by the "sideways strategies" (Lewis 2013) employed by multiple reformist activists who "crossed over" to government in post-Marcos administrations. In a study of development NGOs, Reid argues that the entrenched clientalist, semiclientalist and clan-based politics which shape the Philippine state have persisted and ultimately absorb "cross-over" NGO personnel despite their critical and reformist agendas (2008). Hence remains what is known as a longstanding democratic deficit in Asia's oldest democracy.

b. On state terror

In a comparative analysis to other postcolonial states in the Southeast Asian context, the Philippine state has remained remarkably weak while it accelerated the accumulation of capital by the country's elites (McCoy 2009). Juxtaposed to Thailand's strong monarchy, Vietnam's communist party rule, and the orderly economic governance in Singapore and Malaysia, the crony capitalism characterizing the Philippine state resembles Indonesia's bureaucratic elites and has allowed a few fortunate families to gain a monopoly or oligopoly at the expense of worsening poverty[4]. The entrenchment of the Philippine elite is examined in McCoy's study of families and political dynasties in the country (Ibid), a political system which Bello *et al.* calls "the anti-development state" (2005). The American pattern of a weak central authority coexisting with a powerful upper-class social organization was maintained in postcolonial Philippines, creating a weak state that is constantly captured by elite interests--and Bello *et al.* furthers this provocation by arguing that Philippine civil society itself has been complicit in preventing the emergence of an "activist developmental state" which can discipline the private sector as other societies in postwar Asia have (Ibid, 3). I expound on this argument with CDRC staff's own provocations in the second section of this chapter. The promise of political liberation and economic and social progress that accompanied the overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship remains elusive, and it is the "stifling hypocrisy of the EDSA discourse" which Bello later argues is a condition for Duterte's success thirty five years later (2017). Therefore while the Philippine state has been described as predatory, patrimonial and oligarchic, Quimpo argues that a regime rather than a state is perhaps a more appropriate unit of analysis (2009). With the characteristic features of traditional clientelism, heightened repressions, political appointees in the bureaucracy, rigged elections and increasing military influence, one could argue that growing authoritarian features have been shaping state terror in the country.

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[4] The Philippines and Indonesia score the highest number of COVID-19 cases in the region to date, with the Philippines lagging last behind Southeast Asian countries in vaccination.

Over 30,000 have been killed in the last four years of President Duterte's ongoing "war on drugs" (Human Rights Watch) --a death toll which supersedes both the Marcos dictatorship and the strongest storm in the planet's recorded history. In addition to the "kill lists" published by local governments to identify suspected drug addicts among their constituents, the Malacanang's own "terror list" red-tags hundreds of individuals and organizations across civil society as suspected "communist terrorist groups", including activists, NGO workers, PO leaders, human rights workers, journalists, and even the UN special rapporteur on indigenous peoples' rights. In November 2019, eight of the Citizens' Disaster Response Networks' 17 regional centres were identified by the Department of National Defense as terrorists along with other civil society organizations.[5] The Duterte regime's response to COVID-19 has also led to serious rights violations, where lockdown measures and curfews have resulted in the arrests of tens of thousands; urban poor communities have also faced the dual risk from the anti-drug campaign and the pandemic.[6] In the 2019 Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index (CSOSI) Report which rates the country's overall CSO sector, negative developments are noted with the government's continued vilification of the sector and increase of reports on state harassments, all of which led to a drop in public trust (Caucus of Development NGO Networks 2020). In a forthcoming publication of the 2020 CSOSI Report, a further drop is recorded in all dimensions concerning the sustainability of CSOs. Bleak scores are noted for the overall sector's financial viability due to foreign and local donors' shifting funding priorities with the COVID-19 pandemic; CSOs' ability to visibly promote advocacies and expand service provision; a less stable legal environment due to intensified state scrutiny over CSO registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission; and a decrease in organizational capacity to coordinate with POs and community-based groups. These are all the combined consequences of a constricting civic space, the passage of the Anti-Terror Law, and the pandemic (Ibid 2021). Indeed the current Duterte regime has been described as fascist (Bello 2017), running on brutal populism (Coronel 2019) and penal populism (Curato 2016). And while the global climate justice movement calls for adaptation and mitigation measures to intensifying weather conditions, CDRC and partner civil society organizations have long posed the critique that state terror is an equally lethal 'hazard' in the Philippines.

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[5] "Red-tagged Oxfam, NCCP slam military for 'malicious, careless' attack" (November 2019): https://www.rappler.com/nation/red-tagged-oxfam-nccp-slam-military

[6] "Philippines: 'drug war' killings rise during pandemic" (January 2021): https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/01/13/philippines-drug-war-killings-rise-during-pandemic

II. Mapping the Civil Society Ecosystem of DRRM

a. The Citizens' Disaster Response Centre

> "In a country plagued by massive poverty and by both natural and man-made disasters, various movements have sought to confront the power structure and raise alternative courses of action to the level of public debate. Poverty and disasters have a way of exposing the inadequacies of the state while at the same time encouraging a level of volunteerism from the citizenry" (Constantino-David 1998, 26).

The Citizens' Disaster Response Center (CDRC) was founded in 1984 during Martial Law as part of a broader people's mass movement, in a striking recognition of the political nature of disasters and disaster response in the country. It was formed with the primary aim of addressing the debilitating gaps in government services in disaster response. The Philippine state is mandated to provide these public services but service delivery gaps are in turn implemented by civil society organizations such as CDRC. As a result the nature of DRRM work in the country inevitably raises questions of state power, neglect and accountability. A debilitating drought in 1983 was compounded by six successive strong typhoons and exacerbated by state terror and neglect all in the year of 1984--a direful time recalled by former CDRC executive director, Suyin Jamoralin, as the year "nineteen eighty *poor*" (Go 2017d). The first two killer typhoons were

Maring that affected Luzon in August, and Nitang that hit Mindanao and parts of Visayas in September; then Paring, Reming and Toyang followed, all affecting Central and South Luzon. Hardly recovered from Nitang, the Visayas Region was again hit by Undang. Damage caused by these typhoons reached PHP 4.6 billion, and an estimate of 2,500 persons perished and 280,000 families were left homeless (Heijmans and Victoria 2001, 6). In addition to this devastating series of typhoons, Mayon Volcano erupted on September 23, 1984, affecting more than 35,000 families across 10 towns in Albay. Lava devastated 1,654 hectares of pasture and cropland amounting to 24 million pesos worth of crops and livestock destroyed (Ibid, 7). As if 'Nature' itself was acting on the political stage, these 'natural' disasters heightened people's discontentment in the 18th year of the Marcos dictatorship.

Impacted communities especially among the farmers and the urban poor sent urgent appeals to cause-oriented groups, POs and faith-based organizations. As a result, a "Support Disaster Victims Campaign" was launched from October 1984 to July 1985 and aimed to mobilize a broad mix of civic organizations, service agencies, individual volunteers particularly from urban centers and Metro Manila, to extend financial, material, technical, and manpower support to people in remote rural areas where there was no ready access to social services (Heijmans and Victoria 2001, 7). In an interview I had with Zenaida Delica-Willison in March 2019, one of CDRC's founding members, she noted that while there was a constricting space for civic action during Martial Law, an anti-Marcos student movement was growing and lent its support to the campaign's disaster response efforts. The atrocities of Martial Law heightened a public discourse that could say: "there are no natural disasters!", as it had become blatant that the 'natural' and the 'state' were destructive forces. As Delica-Willison suggests, the Philippine state itself seems to nurture the causes of rather than reduce people's vulnerabilities (1997).

CDRC was formed in Manila as a direct offshoot of these efforts to begin formalizing the initial efforts promoted by the "Support Disaster Victims Campaign". Delica-Willison shared that as they were all learning by doing in these formative years, she and other CDRC co-founders came to the realization that rehabilitation efforts were insufficient--"the issues of vulnerability needed to be politicized" (2019 personal interview). The group therefore fashioned itself into an institution that responds to transforming the situation in the country through preparedness, relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts. In 1987, the First National Conference on Citizenry-Based and Development-Oriented Disaster Response (CBDO-DR) and Preparedness Work was held with the theme: “Addressing the state of marginalization and disaster-vulnerability of the Filipino people and the Philippine environment”. Disaster response was distinctly framed in the language of nationalism and nation-building--an affective and patriotic discourse that continues to shape and mobilize civil society today. It was in this conference that the general principles and framework of CBDO-DR were formally laid out as a pioneering guide by CDRC in alternative disaster management (Heijmans and Victoria 2001). This would later shape the CBDM framework which CDRC speaks of in Filipino as *“Nakabase sa Komunidad na Pangangasiwang Pansakuna”*.

Marybeth (2019 personal interview): *“Bagamat gumagawa ng development work ang CDRC ginagawa ito sa loob ng kontekstong baguhin ang sistemang umiiral. Ayon kay Dambisa Moyo, isang Zambian-born economist na maraming sinulat hinggil sa impact ng foreign development aid sa mga papaunlad na bansa, itinatali ng development aid ang mahihirap na bansa sa walang katapusang korupsyon, kahirapan at pagiging palaasa sa tulong. Ayon pa rin sa kanya, kadalasang nagsisilbing pangmentine sa kasalukuyang kaayusan o sistema ang foreign development aid.*

“While CDRC is engaged in development work, we do it in the context of changing the prevailing system. The work of community organizing and tackling the root causes of vulnerability are two things that are often absent from a majority of NGOs. There is a need for intensive community organizing and to hold steadfast to the foundational principles of CBDM in order not to be detracted from the real work.

Dumadalas o dumarami ang NGOs na nakikipag-ugnayan sa pamahalaan para tumugon sa mga batayang pangangailangang serbisyo pero babahagya lamang nababawasan ang kakulangan. May hindi natutumbok na usapin. Hindi lubos na tumitimo sa mga nasa pamahalaan na sila ang pangunahing may tungkulin na magbigay ng serbisyo. Hindi gawain ng mga NGO na punan ang serbisyo kundi magpaalala, itulak ang pamahalaan ng gampanan ang tungkulin. Sa kalagayang nakakakuha ng development aid ang ilang NGOs at nagagampanan nito ang ilang tungkulin ng pamahalaan, di kaya nahihirati ang pamahalaan na di tumugon sa mga ito?

A growing number of NGOs are coordinating with the state in order to provide basic social services, yet the great amount of needs is hardly reduced. There is something amiss in all this. It is not fully realized by those in government that they have the primary mandate to provide services. It is not the job of NGOs to replace their services, but to remind and pressure the state to fulfill its mandate. Given that NGOs are recipients of development aid and are able to fulfill the functions of the state, could it be that the state has grown accustomed to not respond to its duties? Given the great number and long history of NGOs in the Philippines, why does the great lack in basic services remain hardly addressed? And despite the legislative mandate for NGOs to work in collaboration with the state, why does a dire lack in services persist?"

By 1986, Clarke notes that most NGOs have become bitterly opposed to the Marcos regime, and aimed to primarily build an infrastructure of political power and a socio-economic capacity that was autonomous of the government and had the potential to undermine it (1998, 67). It was in this context that CDRC also began to build an organizational infrastructure: the Citizens' Disaster Response Network (CDRN) started in 1985 with two NGOs: CDRC in Manila; and *Tarabang Para sa Bicol* (TABI or Help for Bicol) given the Bicol region's long history of responding to regular typhoons, earthquakes and the eruption of Mayon Volcano. CDRN[7] has since expanded to a total of 17 regional centres nationwide, with CDRC as the national headquarters in Metro Manila serving as a coordinating body, providing support in technical assistance, funding, advocacy and research to its network members. Each of the regional centres function as independent NGOs with their own full-time staff; each regional centre is registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission, secures its own funding[8] from local and international donors including grants from aid organizations, church groups and philanthropic donations; and focuses on serving the provinces and municipalities in their respective regions of operation [see Figure 7 for the geographical distribution of this nationwide network]. Each regional centre therefore train and oversee disaster preparedness committees led by a handful of appointed leaders or officers on the *barangay* level; a disaster preparedness committee, however, may in turn mature into full-fledged people's organizations (POs) over time with ongoing support from NGOs as community members continue to train in advancing sectoral issues [see Table 2]. While people's organizations may not be formally institutionalized as NGOs, often do not have paid staff and remain reliant on voluntary leadership, they are led by community members themselves; unlike disaster preparedness committees which are *barangay*-based, POs represent members from across municipal, provincial and national scales.

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[7] I use the terms CDRN and CDRC interchangeably in the text as the latter serves to represent and coordinate across its nationwide network.

[8] Chapters Five, Six and Seven detail how each of the three regional centres involved in this study is supported by funding from multiple sources. I refrained from detailing these relationships in Figure 8 due to security concerns.

CDRC's first disaster management orientation seminar for its regional centres was conducted in 1989, soon followed by a similar seminar for its partner NGOs and POs (Dulce, Abano and Delica 1994). Since then these orientations continue to be conducted by its regional centres especially in far flung and remote communities that are impacted most severely by various disasters.

Proceeding the fall of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986, Philippine civil society enthused the broader public to actively participate in all forms of 'nation-building' efforts including development work, volunteering, and voting. On June 12, 1991 the catastrophic Mount Pinatubo eruption triggered a parallel explosion in the number of NGOs in the country responding to the disaster, demonstrating the strength of civil society in the Philippines. This was further intensified when a tragic flash flood killed over 5,000 people in Ormoc City on November 5, 1991. More than USD 1 billion was lent to the Philippines as ODA to fund reforestation projects in Ormoc through NGOs and POs in partnership with the Aquino administration. This period empowered CDRN as a national network. As can be seen in a later 1994 TV commercial entitled "Hands that Build the Nation", Delica-Willison was featured extending CDRC's invitation for Filipino citizens to volunteer and join in all forms of disaster response work.

Given the archipelagic geography of the nation-state and its vast regional diversity, CDRN's regional centres are each able to concentrate their efforts in responding to the distinct combination of 'natural' and 'human-made' disasters in their corresponding areas of service. The sharing of experiences, exchange of ideas on disasters and how they impact communities, how community members are able to respond, all enrich the content of the current CBDM training modules and how we understand disasters in the country. Since their formation, the regional centres have supported the most vulnerable and least served communities, families and individuals, especially internal refugees displaced by disaster events, not excluding demolitions, evictions, armed conflict and other forms of dispossession. Given over three decades of experience and expertise in community organizing, training and supporting CBDM projects, I believe that each of the 17 Regional Centers today could offer a distinct framework for defining the political ecology of disasters and disaster response in its locality--and when pooled together, I believe CDRN is uniquely poised to offer a critical update on a national disaster situationer in light of the past decades and the current Duterte regime.

Jeza (2019 personal interview): *"Sa dami ng mga nakatayong NGO, kakaunti ang may adbokasya na tugunan ang 'ugat' ng mga suliraning kinakaharap ng mamamayan. Karamihan ay naglalayong tugunan ang mga kakulangan sa mga batayang pangangailangan at serbisyo. Walang pagbanggit na alamin at tugunan ang ugat ng mga ito. Isa ang CDRC sa mga kakaunting NGO na nakadikit sa mayor na adbokasya ang pagsisikap na tugunan ang ugat ng bulnerabilidad ng mamamayan at nakasaad ito sa mga batayang katangian ng CBDM."*

"Despite the outstanding number of NGOs in the country, few are committed to the advocacy of addressing the root causes of the hardships faced by citizens. Most NGOs aim to address the gaps in the provision of basic services, without seeing the need to resolve the root causes of these issues. CDRC is one of the few NGOs which holds staunchly to the advocacy of resolving the root causes of people's vulnerabilities, and this is a foundational characteristic of our approach to CBDM."

b. Community Organizing as Disaster Response

In a historical review of the experience of development NGOs in the country, Constantino-David lays out community organizing as the foundational practice of challenging and reworking power relations in Philippine civil society: "community organizing springs from the premises that established power systems can be countervailed by collective action, and that the powerless must participate in their own development and assert their rights" (1995, 156). As a systematized set of skills and practices, she dates the origins of community organizing to 1970 when the Philippine Ecumenical Council for Community Organizing emerged alongside the Zone One Tondo Organization, which championed the beginnings of the Philippine urban poor movement. Throughout the 1970s, these training centers expanded across rural and urban areas wherein trainees in community organizing grew along with the progressive movement as a response to Martial Law. Armed with liberation theology and Freire, structural analyses of oppression proliferated; community organizing took on an ideological character, which later led to tensions within the people's mass movement wherein CPP community organizers were criticized for recruiting urban poor leaders into the party, while non-CPP community organizers were accused of lacking revolutionary vision with their 'no-links' rule with the party. It was during this challenging time that CDRC's CBDO-DR, an alternative framework to disaster response rooted in the practice of community organizing, began. In her own dissertation entitled *Risky Encounters*, critical disaster scholar Annelies Heijmans notes that CDRC's framework of CBDO-DR must be understood in this context of a growing social movement that began to contest the Marcos dictatorship, to recognize "the importance of viewing disaster risk reduction as a political process" (2012, 83-84).

Marybeth (2019 personal interview): *"Maraming organisasyon, grupo o sektor ang involved sa NGO work. Hindi kaila na sa latag ng ating politika ay mayroong tinatawag na spectrum (mula dulong kanan hanggang dulong kaliwa). At masasalamin sa mga tinatayong NGO, kahit sa anumang adbokasiya, ang spectrum na ito, kabilang na riyan ang mga NGO na involved sa DRRM. Kahit sa mga maituturing na makakaliwa, may iba't-ibang antas pa rin ng pagiging kaliwa, ganun rin naman ang mga tinatawag na maka-kanan. Sa mga itinuturing na makakaliwa, o iyong mga sinasabing naghahangad ng pagbabago sa status quo, mayroong naghahangad ng pagbabago sa sistema at mayroon namang naghahangad ng pagbabago ng sistema. Noong 1991, nagkaroon ng mayor na paghihiwalay sa hanay ng mga makakaliwa, at apektado dito ang mga NGOs."*

"There are many organizations, groups and sectors involved in NGO work. Unknown to many is that a political spectrum (ranging from extreme right to the extreme left) exists, and this spectrum is also reflected among NGOs working in any field of advocacy, including those involved in DRRM. There are varying degrees of 'left-ness' and 'right-ness'. Among those from the left who are seeking for a change in the status quo, there are those seeking for a reform in the system and those seeking to reform the system altogether. In 1991, there was a major split in the left and NGOs were also affected by this division."

The framework of community-based disaster risk reduction and management began to emerge globally in the 1990s to challenge the dominance of top-down, technology-centred interventionist approaches by outside experts. Its earliest proponents can be traced to the *La Red* (The Network for Social Studies on Disaster Prevention in Latin America) (Maskrey 2011); *Duryog Nivaran,* a research, training and advocacy network in South Asia; the founding of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center in 1995 (Lorna 2002); and promoted by scholar-practitioners who have worked closely with NGOs such as Oxfam (Maskrey 1984; Von Kotze and Hallaway 1996). Community-based approaches to reduce disaster risk have been given many names[9], all emphasizing concepts of participatory learning and action. In the Philippines CBDO-DR as the first articulation of community organizing for disaster response highlighted a commitment to examining and reworking unequal and unjust power relations among the poor, and was created by CDRC to challenge the dominant disaster response approach adopted by the government and other aid agencies. CBDO-DR frames disaster events and experiences not as 'natural' hazards but as a matter of vulnerability for which the Philippine government is held responsible. In her chapter in the book *Mapping Vulnerability,* Heijmans underscores that in her scholarship on disasters in the Philippines, the work of addressing root causes of vulnerability in DRR is a political issue --tightly and dangerously bound with human rights work (2004, 125). Heijmans notes that through her work with civil society organizations such as CDRC, the IBON Foundation and the Philippine Alliance on Human Rights Advocates --some of the groups that have been targeted in the "terror list" published by the current Duterte administration-- development aggression[10] is clearly defined as a disaster. In the process of CBDO-DR, members of the community are gathered by CDRC regional staff members or field workers to examine the hazards that endanger them; to identify who is most vulnerable among them, where and why; to identify their capacities and strengths; and to outline plans for transforming their situation through collective action. After conducting a series of CBDM trainings and workshops, a disaster preparedness committee is formed composed of community members themselves; with the sustained support from CDRN's regional staff members, community members are able to lead their own grassroots efforts for disaster preparedness, response and rehabilitation, among other initiatives for sustainable community development. The phrase 'citizenry-based' expressed a sense of moral duty and solidarity among Filipinos to help each other. This is a distinguishing feature of CDRC's approach, which emphasized that communities at risk require supportive partnerships across a wide range of actors in society in order to reduce their vulnerability (Ibid 87). Heijmans writes that the origin of the Filipino CBDO-DR tradition should be understood within a long history of peasant struggles, social protests, and oppositional state-society relations, and can be traced back to the early 1970s when activist organizations took the initiative to render support to peasants affected by floods in Central Luzon (Ibid, 85). Such an approach to DRR according to Heijmans enables a shift from managing disaster events as temporary 'interruptions' to development or momentary 'inconveniences' to a developing economy, towards linking poverty, disaster risks and vulnerability to development. Instead it enables the participation of local community members who are aware of the causes of vulnerability and what they can do; and ultimately the recognition of exposure to disasters as a violation of human rights, seen in the growing trend for a rights-based approach to DRR (Ibid, 126-127).

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[9] Examples include: community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM), community-based disaster management (CBDM), community-driven disaster risk reduction (CBDRR), and community-based disaster preparedness (CBDP) among others. This dissertation uses CBDM.

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[10] The term has largely been used by Indigenous peoples' movements to pertain to development projects conducted without their free, prior and informed consent, and which in turn violate their human rights. It is now used across sectors in the country referring to the violation of human rights by state or corporate-sanctioned development activities.

By the end of the 1990s, however, CDRN's own community organizers increasingly critiqued the notion of 'citizenry', and preferred the phrase 'community-based' to put a premium on their day-to-day labour of community organizing among the marginalized--a practice adopted by those in the people's mass movement to differentiate its practices from those of the government (Ibid, 88). At that time, 'community-based' connoted an 'anti-government' stance, which the military profiled as being enemies of the state. Since the fall of Marcos and following the fissures within the National Democratic Front in the 1990s, community organizing has expanded into a wide range of development programmes including safeguarding democratic institutions, promoting livelihood, securing land tenure, protecting indigenous peoples' rights, women's rights, and others. Today members across progressive movements in the country lead their own civic organizations, each focused on a particular sector where community organizing remains one of the key strategies employed in a broader repertoire of contention.

CBDM also shifted to an approach taken by a less autonomous civil society which now works in partnership with the government (Devereux 2001). CBDM grew into mainstream practice as defined and popularized by the UN and the international humanitarian community. CBDM as it is used today is still largely limited to raising awareness for disaster risks and what to do in cases of emergency (Heijmans 2012, 89). In her review of the practice of CBDM in the Philippines, Allen notes that despite its widespread adaptation, most disaster management actors and institutions more easily accept 'depoliticized' forms of CBDM (2006, 90). Although CBDM's overriding aim is to empower local people by supporting them to be increasingly self-reliant, disempowerment may in turn also occur when participants are steered away from linking their vulnerability to bigger and more politically contentious issues such as land-use planning or coastal development (Allen 2004). In reviewing for example the practice of CBDM by the Philippine Red Cross, Allen notes that strategies have succeeded in so far as the creation of mechanisms by which communities can ask for help; these, however, do not challenge the government in any meaningful way with regard to policies and mandates that protect communities from environmental degradation (Allen 2006, 90).

While CBDO-DR and its radical commitments is a trademark of CDRC, its network has similarly shifted the name of its approach to CBDM, with the latter gaining widespread use by other local CSOs and local government units particularly with the passage of the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act in 2010 which legally mandates that DRRM efforts must be 'community-based'. In a paired study of state and NGO-led responses to an earthquake in the Bicol region, Bankoff and Hilhorst provide a compelling argument for how two paradigms continue to exist in how disasters are perceived and responded to despite a shared CBDM vocabulary in the country (2009). Bankoff's study of the Albay Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council demonstrated that the government's focus was on removing physical exposure to hazards through evacuation plans; whereas Hilhorst's study on TABI[11] uncovers that it set out to probe the underlying socio-economic inequalities which cause vulnerabilities to disasters, and to foster a people's movement for disaster response. Despite the common use of shared language relating to CBDM, the state and an NGO's diverging ways of 'seeing' disasters and therefore the politics of risk reduction remain. Today CDRN's nationwide network continues to practice CBDM across all of its 17 regional centres, staying committed to the core fundamentals of CBDO-DR. Through my three case studies, I demonstrate how this practice of CBDM remains a radical praxis of uncovering the root causes of people's vulnerabilities--limited as these efforts may be at times to completely transform violence in daily lived realities.

In 1999 Delica-Willison and other CDRC founders resigned to establish the Center for Disaster Preparedness (CDP). CDP was carved out of CDRC's Training and Education Desk, and became an independently registered NGO that focuses on training and capacity building efforts for government agencies, local government units and other NGOs. Republic Act 10121 mandates the cascading of CBDM to all levels of government, and this has in turn created a large demand for such efforts which CDP serves to fulfill as a lead consultancy servicing local governments and the Office of Civil Defense. With the professionalization of NGO work in the last three decades, it is important to note that the NGO sector has also become an income generating industry where project deliverables became priorities over community organizing (Constantino-David 1998). Like all registered NGOs, CDRC is also accountable to its international and local funders; its full-time staff are salaried; and its wide range of programmes and services to date include providing trainings on disaster preparedness, evacuation center management, and fire and earthquake preparedness for companies and schools. To clarify its distinctive focus on community organizing, however, CDRC remains attentive to its nationwide network of regional centres, which in turn continues to support networks and alliances of POs and disaster preparedness committees formed through its CBDM trainings. CDRC links the grassroots disaster response organisations to the language of the broader people's mass movement, whereby community-level organizations are functional in disaster preparedness and simultaneously enhanced with collective bargaining capability on larger scales.

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[11] TABI is now renamed as Tarabang Para Sa Bicol, Inc. and was published as one of the 18 "communist terrorist front groups" by the Department of National Defense in 2019.

c. Relationships with other Civil Society Organizations

In taking a survey of civil society organizations in the country presently involved in DRRM, I argue that most if not all NGOs today participate in some manner or form of activities relating to the four pillars of DRRM: [1] prevention and mitigation; [2] preparedness; [3] response; and [4] rehabilitation and building back better. The passage of the Philippine DRRM Act in 2010 and super typhoon Yolanda in 2013 are significant events which have led to a widespread involvement in DRRM across civil society. While some NGOs have institutionalized a formal DRRM program in their services, others may not self-identify to be a "DRRM NGO" and yet would spontaneously mobilize relief operations at the event of a disaster and respond to communities where they have existing partnerships or development projects in. Individuals, families, schools, religious institutions, professional associations, personal networks and charitable groups mobilize often in informal ways to respond to disaster events. As it is outside of the scope of this dissertation to survey over 350,000 civil society organizations officially registered in the Securities and Exchange Commission--which does not include a tally of people's organizations, disaster preparedness committees, and other more ad hoc collectives involved in some aspect of DRRM--I have chosen to illustrate a diagram to map the Disaster Risk Reduction Network (DRRNet Phils) and its relationships with other key civil society actors across the landscape [Figure 8].

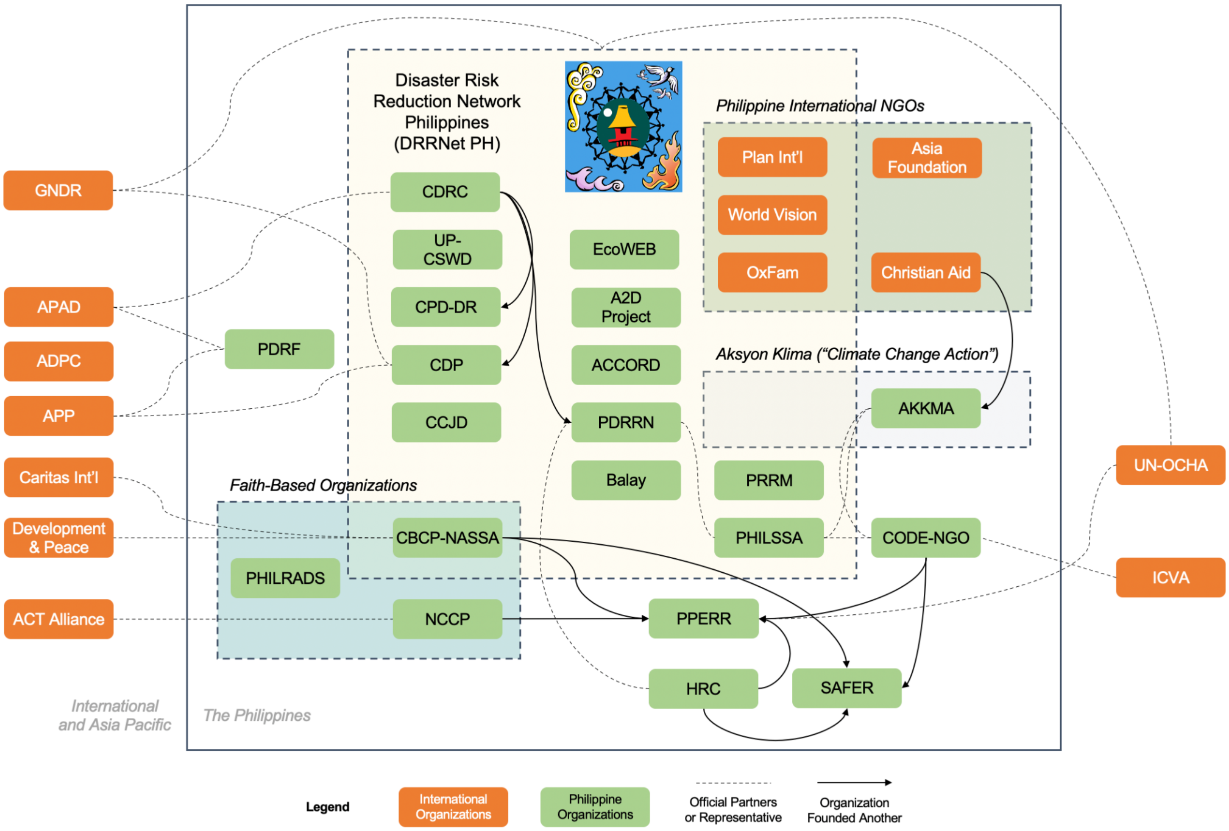
Disaster Risk Reduction Network Philippines (DRRNet PH)
Philippine International NGOs
GNDR
CDRC
Plan Int'l
Asia Foundation
UP-CSWD
EcoWEB
World Vision
OxFam
Christian Aid
APAD
CPD-DR
A2D Project
PDRF
ADPC
CDP
ACCORD
Aksyon Klima ("Climate Change Action")
APP
CCJD
PDRRN
AKKMA
UN-OCHA
Caritas Int'l
Balay
PRRM
Faith-Based Organizations
Development & Peace
CBCP-NASSA
PHILSSA
CODE-NGO
PHILRADS
ICVA
ACT Alliance
NCCP
PPERR
HRC
SAFER
International and Asia Pacific
The Philippines
Legend
International Organizations
Philippine Organizations
Official Partners or Representative
Organization Founded Another

***Figure 8**: Map of civil society organizations involved in DRRM*

There is a wide variety of non-state actors engaged in DRRM-related activities, including international NGOs with country offices in the Philippines, national faith-based organizations and local development NGOs. Formal partnerships and informal ways of cooperating with one another exist all across the landscape and cannot be fully represented in the diagram. I situate DRRNet Philippines ("the Network") as the central focus of the diagram given its prominence in advocating for and representing civil society's participation in DRRM efforts both in the country and globally. It currently represents over 60 member organizations implementing community-based approaches to DRRM [Appendix E]. I selectively represent some of the Network's members and partners, including other significant non-state actors that lie outside of the Network's membership. The following are key points to highlight about the Network:

- The Network sits in the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) as the Philippines' national NGO representative; it is also a member of the Global Network for Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR).
- The Network includes members that are faith-based organizations, international NGOs, and local development NGOs.
- There are significant synergies between DRRNet Philippines and *Aksyon Klima,* a parallel network of over 40 NGOs focused on climate action [see Chapter Three].

While it was a pioneering "DRRM NGO" and is considered the oldest in the country, today CDRC is but one of thousands involved in DRRM. It claims to be the original proponent of community-based disaster management through its distinct brand of community organizing to link disaster preparedness committees with larger scales of social movements; yet given the widespread promotion of localized and decentralized approaches to DRRM across the country, CDRC has become relegated to one of many in the landscape. The following are key points to highlight about CDRC and its nationwide network of regional centres as it is situated in the broader terrain:

- CDRC is one of the eleven lead convenors of the Network. Each of the founding member organizations is represented as a cell inside the Network.
- CDRC has founded the Centre for Disaster Preparedness (CDP), the Consortium for People's Development - Disaster Response (CPD-DR), and the People's Disaster Risk Reduction Network (PDRRN). All three are also lead convenors of the Network and operate independently of CDRC.
- CDRC, along with the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF), serves to coordinate the Philippine platform for the Asia Pacific Alliance for Disaster Management (APAD).

It is also important to emphasize that significant work on DRRM is being undertaken outside of the boundaries of DRRNet Philippines. For example:

- The Shared Aid Fund for Emergency Response (SAFER), a localized funding mechanism that disburses quick response funds to member organizations, was co-founded by the Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO), Caritas Philippines (CBCP-NASSA) and the Humanitarian Response Consortium (HRC). The Philippine Partnership for Emergency Response and Resilience (PPERR) was also co-founded by the same organizations.
- The *Balik-Lokal* Campaign, which advocates for localizing humanitarian emergency response [not show in Figure 8], was organized by DRRNet Philippines in partnership with Christian Aid, Caritas Philippines (CBCP-NASSA), the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), the Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO), the People's Disaster Risk Reduction Network (PDRRN), Partnership of Philippine Support Service Agencies (PHILSSA), and *Aksyon sa Kahandaan sa Kalamidad at Klima* (AKKMA) .

One can glean the astounding number of CSOs in the country today through the display of disaster response efforts from civil society in the wake of super typhoon Yolanda. Countless local volunteers, donors, and NGO staff were deployed across the Visayan region and worked alongside international humanitarian agencies. Nationalist discourses mobilized citizens in the country and overseas to volunteer, donate and contribute to post-disaster efforts. No single agency, even the Office of Presidential Assistant for Rehabilitation and Recovery, however, has succeeded in coordinating all relief, recovery and rehabilitation efforts by local, individual and international non-government actors. Unlike CDRC's pioneering role in the arena of disaster response of the mid 1990s, today it is joined by a staggering profusion of NGOs that have taken a variety of DRRM-CCA efforts [Figure 8] as part of their development programmes, charities, including corporate social responsibility efforts. The discourse of climate change is also taking on a dominant lead in the humanitarian space for competing access to international funding. The changing ecosystem of disaster response in the country poses crucial opportunities and challenges for CDRC as it continues to chart its efforts across multiple fronts, including: sustaining hundreds of grassroots disaster preparedness committees; community organizing nationwide; lobbying with partner CSOs for just DRRM policies in the context of authoritarian rule; navigating security issues for its field staff; and legitimizing its DRRM programmes to international funders in light of the global climate crisis.

Outside of its own network, CDRC also continues to extend its support to other partner NGOs involved in development work and DRRM, inside and outside the people's mass movement. It is important to note that DRRNetPhils' boundaries are porous as members are at liberty to opt out and new members can likewise easily join in; its members span across the spectrum of the political left and are not limited to the National Democratic movement. Each member organization can choose to constructively or critically engage with the state, in the same way that DRRNetPhils co-authored a statement to condemn the Anti-Terror Law alongside a wide array of non-government organizations across the landscape. While the Network continues to coordinate with the Office of Civil Defense today, it also continues to advocate for the National Disaster Risk Reduction Commission to be removed from the Department of National Defense and be replaced by a National Disaster Risk Reduction Authority as an independent body. CDRC's work also spans across multiple scales and relates with various civil society organizations at different levels. At the grassroots levels of the *barangay* (village) and the municipality, its 400 disaster preparedness committees or *Komite sa Kahandaan sa Sakuna* across the country are linked to broader mass movements for various sectoral issues, which are in turn also propped by other progressive NGOs in the country. At the national level, CDRC serves as the Secretariat for the Citizens' Disaster Response Network and partners with other members of DRRNetPhils in Metro Manila to engage with national government agencies. It is also represented in the Asia Pacific region as one of the country representatives for the Asia Pacific Alliance for Disaster Management. And through its membership with DRRNetPhils, CDRC is also linked to the Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction which works at the international level. These multi-scalar relationships and multi-fronted engagements demonstrate that CDRC is not bound to a singular and oppositional mode of relationship to the state, but actively employs a repertoire of strategies to advance its goals of CBDM. Today it maintains the position that while the government is primarily responsible for instituting programs in disaster management and social services, NGOs are duty-bound to assist affected communities where government's efforts are inadequate and unable to eliminate the structural causes of disasters (Heijmans and Victoria 2001, 10). Civil society continues to frame its work as 'filling in the gaps' for government inadequacies, not excluding engaging in efforts that directly oppose and challenge the interests of those in power.

d. Humanitarians, Development Workers, Activists?

In her own accounts of working with CDRC in the early 2000s, Heijmans notes that CDRC staff shift between multiple frames to speak of their own work on multiple fronts: "We talked 'people's mass movement language when internally discussing the dilemma of prioritizing organizing work for social change vis-à-vis improving people's livelihoods through social and economic projects. When writing proposals, we used language from disaster management literature, foregrounding CDRC's political view on 'disaster' and 'vulnerability', which provides CDRC with a distinctive identity and mandate to the network, and a framework to communicate with donors. Humanitarian language is used tactically vis-à-vis government forces and the military to create access to disaster and conflict affected communities" (2012, 88). Multiple frames are used strategically at different moments (Hilhorst 2003), and reflect agility in communicating legitimacy across multiple fronts which includes the people's mass movement, government entities, and foreign donors.

In my interview with Delica-Willison, she recalled CDRC members asking themselves: "Are we humanitarians?" She gestured to "this Red Cross thing" that the organization is often perceived as or is likened to. The principles of impartiality and neutrality are among the core humanitarian standards that CDRC recognizes it must uphold, as do its partner CSOs involved in DRRM efforts. She countered, however, to add: "But we are pro-poor, pro-vulnerable, and the marginalized. We clearly have a bias! We do disaster relief in the context of development work" (2018 personal interview). This expression sums up the multiple and sometimes paradoxical categories which CDRC's many efforts are located in: I write that CBDM is the activism practiced by CDRC as development workers who understand their community organizing efforts as a radical approach to disaster response. The recognition that the work for DRRM is fundamentally tied to work for social justice is not a unique trademark of CDRC today, as progressive NGOs, environmentalists and social movements share a committed attention to poverty, the lack of basic social services, and the violation of human rights as the factors shaping vulnerability and high risk to disasters. By linking its networks of disaster preparedness committees and people's organizations with other members of the people's mass movement, DRRM issues of vulnerability and survival are also ultimately linked back to political economic and social issues of land tenure, gender, labour, literacy, community development, and human rights. Such an approach to DRRM defies the predominant either-or categories of 'humanitarianism' and 'development', and threads across social-ecological-climate justice activism.

The following Chapters Five, Six and Seven illustrate this in greater detail. Table 2 provides a summary of how CBDM is practiced by three of the regional centers in three of my case studies for this dissertation. As will be seen in the subsequent chapters, CBDM in practice blurs the categorical distinctions across development work, humanitarianism and activism as shaped by local state-society relations and a distinct assemblage of forces of endangerment, vulnerability and grassroots efforts.

	Brgy. Bagumbayan Taguig City	**Brgy. Malabago** Zambales	**Brgy. Gibitngil** Cebu
Regional Centre	Community Response for Enlightenment, Service and Transformation (CREST)	Alay Bayan-Luson, Inc. (ABI)	Cebu-Bohol Relief and Rehabilitation Center, Inc. (CRRC)
Year Founded	2009	2000	1987
Founding Members	Urban poor movement in Tondo, Manila	Environmental justice campaigns across Luzon	Peasant movement in the Visayas
DRRM Issues	Urban poverty, floods, fires, demolitions, sexual and domestic violence	Farmers' struggles against typhoons, floods and mud-floods, debt, food insecurity, and extractive industries	Fishers' struggles against super typhoons, commercial fishing, food insecurity, land disputes and displacements
Structure of Disaster Preparedness Committee (DPC)	The Bagumbayan DPC has been linked with other urban poor people's organizations across Metro Manila.	The Malabago *Sama-Sagip* DPC was created to merge preceding work by community members in environmental justice campaigns in Zambales. It is supported by other environmental organizations present in the region.	The DPC in Gibitngil was formed out of the Gibitngil Farmers and Fisherfolk Association, which is the island chapter of *Pamana Sugbo*, a provincial federation of fisherfolk organizing against forced evictions and securing land struggles in Cebu.
State-Society Relations	Members of the Bagumbayan DPC enjoy support from the Barangay government and some have been employed by the Barangay and the City Hall.	The Malabago DPC enjoys cooperation with the Barangay government, but navigates an ambiguous relationship with the Municipal government's shifting stance regarding mining and upcoming tourism development.	The Gibitngil Farmers and Fisherfolk Association and its DPC enjoys cooperation with the Barangay government but have experienced direct antagonism, violence and armed harassments in their protests and legal battles against the ex-mayor and local elite in Medellin.

***Table 2**: Summary of Case Studies*

Conclusion

Lenda (2019 personal interview): *"Ngayong paparating ang ika-35 taong anibersaryo ng CDRC, kasama sa mga napagtalakayan kung ano ang feel na gusto namin: Old? Vibrant? Strong? Sa huli ay ginusto naming maging vibrant lalo't nag-iiba ang landscape ng humanitarian/development work: papatindi ang atake sa mga development workers, panggigipit sa NGOs, at patuloy ang mga maniobra ng INGOs para ikutan ang lokalisasyon.*

"Now that it is CDRC's 35th year anniversary, part of our discussions has been the question of how we want to feel about our work thus far: Old? Vibrant? Strong? In the end we agreed on the importance of being vibrant, especially with the changing landscape of humanitarian and development work in the country: there are growing state attacks on development workers, harassment of NGOs, and international NGOs continue to maneuver around the need for localization.

Sa kabila ng aming pagdiriwang sa pananatiling matatag ng CDRC sa harap ng papalaking hamon sa gawain, nakalulungkot ding isiping 'narito pa kami'. Hindi ko matandaan kung isa ka sa mga nasabihan ko sa mga unang taon ko rito sa CDRC --na sa kalaunan ay gusto naman talaga naming maging obsolete. Ibig sabihin ay wala nang rasong umiral dahil napunan na ang mga puwang.

While we celebrate CDRC's resilience in remaining steadfast despite the mounting challenges in our work, we are also sad to think that 'we are still here' because eventually we do want our work to become obsolete. Which means there are no more reasons for us to continue, as the gaps have been duly filled.

Importante kasing maipaalala rin namin sa aming mga sarili na bahagi lamang kami ng malaking larawan ng laban ng mamamayan para sa kanilang kagalingan. Mahirap mag-ilusyon o masyadong malakihin ang aming papel."

It is also important to remind ourselves that we are only part of a much bigger struggle for people's well-being. One must remain humble and not be disillusioned by giving ourselves such an indispensable role."

Through a historical review of the formation of Philippine civil society and the politics of civic engagements in disaster response, I situate CDRC as a pioneer in the formulation and practice of CBDM in the country. It emerged in the context of activism during the Marcos Martial Law years and has developed a staunch critique of the state, corporate and elite powers in the production and perpetuation of people's vulnerabilities to multiple disasters. Today, however, CDRC stands as one of thousands of civil society organizations involved in disaster risk reduction and management efforts. While CDRC's claims to the practice of CBDM is no longer unique given the widespread localisation and decentralisation of DRRM, its commitments to community organizing and to linking its disaster preparedness committees to broader scales of progressive social movements for social-enviromental-climate justice prove to be remarkable causes for being vulnerable to state attacks. The weak anti-developmental Philippine state often stands in an oppositional relationship to the work CDRC engages in; although CDRC's ability to maneuver across the multiple categories of "humanitarian", "development" and "activist" also enable it to challenge and cooperate with the state.

The backdrop of a global climate crisis places the Philippines in ever imminent danger. I believe, however, that climate change and its preoccupations with the future detracts from the deep looking CDRC and other progressive CSOs involved in DRRM invites us to examine disasters that have been decades in the making. Learning the history of civil society in the country is to encounter long standing struggles to respond to and survive multiple disaster events--these range from spectacular catastrophes such as the eruption of Mount Pinatubo in 1991 or super typhoon Yolanda in 2013 that are well remembered in the international humanitarian stage; there are also, however, far greater numbers of silent, slow and daily forms of violence such as chronic poverty and dispossession that shape vulnerabilities for the most marginalized. This includes the ongoing disasters in the 'Philippine Anthropocene' made ever turbulent with intensifying freak weather conditions and an authoritarian regime that makes it ever difficult for human rights defenders, community development workers, and activists all across the spectrum of the Philippine Left to respond to a variety of disasters. It is in this urgent moment that I take courage in echoing a provocative question offered by Marybeth above: "With such a long history and the great number of NGOs in Philippine civil society today, why do basic human services remain in great lack and the need for social justice continue to be so great?" In laying out the history of CDRC's formation and the development of a politicized framework for disaster response, this chapter shines light on the distinct CBDM framework practiced by CDRC which offers radical albeit limited possibilities for transforming violent environments in the country.

Chapter Five: Disasters and Urban Poverty

Overview

From October 2018 to January 2019, my research team and I drove for a total of over 20 separate day visits to Barangay Bagumbayan. Driving from Marikina City, through Quezon City, passing San Juan City, we would drive down C-5 Road to reach the southernmost tip of Taguig City at the southern end of the National Capital Region. The three of us were born and raised in Metro Manila: myself now a *balikbayan,* a Filipina who returns to visit the Philippines from overseas, and the other two have lived their whole lives in our home cities in Metro Manila. Setting out in the early hours for a long drive to escape the morning traffic, we chatted about what each day's visit would bring: I may have meetings set with particular members of the disaster preparedness committee, or with Barangay officials; on some days we would be accompanied by staff from the regional centre, CREST; and other days we were on our own. We also knew that each field visit often brings unexpected and unplanned possibilities which we were careful to leave space for.

After every field visit from Bagumbayan, on our drives together back home in the late afternoons, we would talk about what stood out for each of us from the day's visit learning about the politics of disasters and disaster response among residents in Bagumbayan's informal settlements. We lamented the realities people live with in our cities. The three of us did not have to see such staggering inequalities firsthand everyday, sheltered as we are by our families' middle and upper class backgrounds, with informal settlements often hidden from our view by tall walls erected by local city governments for their "beautification projects", or as they are crammed deeper and further away from main roads. The obscene realities of urban poverty, partially revealed as they may be through street children begging for alms or of homeless families living on the roadside, have also long been normalized as disparities natural to everyday life in Metro Manila. Yet as much as we were gripped by witnessing the precarity and struggles of everyday life for the urban poor in Bagumbayan, we also remarked that none of the people we have met desired any pity. Each person we spoke with and invited for interviews did not wish to dwell on a miserable sense of themselves; they wanted to tell their own stories of community organizing, excited to share their thoughts on camera, eager to show us what their lives are like and the brilliant aspirations they have for better times. Uneasy as we were sometimes walking through tight alleys with our big cameras and tripod stands, our research informants often prodded us to take a photo or a video of their surroundings: a tool to document and expose the stagnant waters in their area, or the sacks of cement they had piled as their own flood mitigation efforts. They wanted us to take images so that others may know about them, recognize them, to participate in a kind of exposé for an audience, so that more resources and solutions may perhaps arrive to support them. As I wrote about in Chapter Three, my team and I were wary of perpetuating damage-centred research through a voyeuristic lens. In turn we developed our own practice of "slow research": a mindful awareness of both the chronic violence in the everyday socio-ecological realities we were documenting, and also of people's real enthusiasm to work collectively towards transforming these difficulties.

Our research team asked the same set of questions in each of the three field sites we visited: What is a disaster for this community? What are the causes and material manifestations of vulnerability in this community as seen in how residents shape and are shaped by their lived environments, local livelihoods, access to resources and security from violence? What kinds of social power relations are grassroots women leaders embedded in? What efforts do they engage in as leaders of their disaster preparedness committee? Do these actions transform the root causes of their vulnerabilities, and serve individual and collective well-being? What successes have they achieved, and what obstacles do they face from more entrenched multi-scalar power relations?

To create the first video in the series, we interviewed a total of five officers from the Bagumbayan disaster preparedness committee, one CREST staff member, and two government officials from the Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office. Outside of the film, we spoke with more CREST staff members, held a focus group discussion with parents from one of the informal settlements in Bagumbayan, and we also had the chance to interview a community leader from a prominent urban poor people's organization for his thoughts on disaster risk reduction and management including climate change adaptation efforts (DRRM-CCA) as these relate to the context of urban poverty in Metro Manila more broadly.

In this chapter I share my findings from our first case study of Barangay Bagumbayan, Taguig City in Metro Manila. Drawing from our interviews with leaders of the disaster preparedness committee, CREST staff, and a leader of a people's organization, I contend that in the context of urban poverty among informal settlers in Metro Manila, *kahirapan* (suffering) or the violence of material and economic poverty, is a kind of a disaster. Hydro-meteorological hazards do not always pose dangers so long as community members are able to respond with a sense of resourcefulness and capability, and these leadership abilities are strengthened with sustained long-term community organizing efforts. One's gendered vulnerability or sense of powerlessness on the other hand is shaped in a patriarchal context wherein state and police power is often perpetrated by armed men. The state itself poses a type of hazard in the ways it sanctions evictions and demolitions in the name of DRRM. Community-based disaster management (CBDM) as practiced by disaster preparedness leaders and NGO staff members of CREST in Barangay Bagumbayan therefore consists of a range of community organizing efforts which extend beyond DRRM activities to also include securing women and children's rights against sexual and domestic violence, and participating in a broader urban poor rights movement across Metro Manila. Well-being as defined by our interviewees on the other hand is expressed as the enjoyment of securing one's own dwelling place, made more comforting through the cultivation of strong friendships among neighbours and comrades in the efforts of leading and community organizing. While the history of the urban poor movement in the Philippines and the brutality of living conditions in informal settlements have been fraught with violent oppositional relations against the state, the case of Bagumbayan demonstrates that state-civil society relations can also be porous. Just as Barangay government officials may change during elections, membership in urban people's organizations is also remarkably fluid given the distinctly mobile character of urban migration among informal settler communities. Women officers celebrate both their participation in CBDM as supported by CREST, and also in leading fellow mothers in a government social welfare programme; they welcome possibilities to both contest and cooperate with the local government as a way for securing a means of livelihood and elevating the scope of their grassroots leadership across the *barangay.*

I. Urban Poverty and Disasters

I first met “Ka Jose” or Comrade Jose at a forum where representatives of various people’s organizations (POs) involved in DRRM-CCA were convened for a meeting by the largest coalition of development NGOs in the country. It is less common to be among community leaders in such conventions, where professional NGO staff members including project officers and managers often meet to discuss ongoing efforts; meanwhile, whenever PO leaders are in attendance, a certain vibrance and change of tone permeates the air--it is less a formal ‘business meeting’, and becomes more of a lively, candid and even blunt assessment of current realities in the very communities they live in. The middle-aged, bright eyed and ever enthusiastic man welcomed my request to hear more about his lifelong work as a community organizer for urban poor communities in Metro Manila. Long before “DRRM” became a buzz term in legislative and technical frameworks, he had learned how to escape rising floods as a child and had been leading demonstrations to block demolitions of informal settlements as a young man. Ka Jose passed away shortly after I completed fieldwork due to health challenges, and to commemorate his leadership I honour his memory in this writing [Figure 9]. He wore many hats as a prominent public speaker and figure: one of them is serving as the National Capital Region Coordinator for an alliance called AKKMA or *Aksyon sa Kahandaan sa Kalamidad at Klima* (Action in Preparedness for Disasters and Climate Change)[12], a nationwide network of organized urban poor people’s organizations advocating for DRRM-CCA efforts in their own localities. It was founded in 2009 at the wake of Typhoon Ondoy (international name: Ketsana) which disproportionately impacted urban poor communities across Metro Manila (see Alvarez and Cardenas 2019); while a relatively young alliance, AKKMA has made significant gains in community organizing, networking and advocacy. Listening to his stream of stories surviving disaster events such as the catastrophic flash floods brought by Typhoon Ondoy in 2009, or putting out fires lit by men hired to evict residents from their shanties in the slums, and struggling through daily poverty and violence, I asked if he thought any of these disasters were “natural”, “man-made”, or “environmental”. How would he explain his work as a veteran community organizer? He replied,

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[12] As illustrated in the diagram on Chapter Four, AKKMA lies outside of CDRC’s nationwide network and works independently of CREST across urban poor communities in Metro Manila; yet they are all member organizations of DRRNet Philippines.

> *“Halu-halo! Katarungan na pang kalikasan man o na panlipunan, ang lahat ay magkaugnay! Yung pagkalbo ng mga gubat sa Rizal, ang mga matitinding baha sa syudad, and matinding pagtaas ng presyo ng mga bilihin, ang araw-araw ng kahirapan, maling pamamahala… Ang 2019 elections ang malaking disaster na parating!”* (It is all mixed up! Whether you define it as environmental or social justice, everything is interconnected! The clearing of the forests in Rizal, the intensifying floods here in the city, the hike in commodity prices, everyday poverty, bad governance… The 2019 mid-term elections is a big disaster on its way![13]”)

To end our first meeting together, Ka Jose graciously invited me to personally visit him in his home so that I could see where he lives and better understand what disasters mean to the urban poor.

My research team and I waved at Ka Jose who was standing on the curb waiting for us outside an enormous shopping mall. He greeted us back, and led the way for us along the busy streets and down a narrow flight of stairs leading down a bridge. Right along the Santa Mesa River, under the shadows of a bridge where cars and buses scurry over, lives an entire community of over 75 families. Ka Jose has lived here since he was a child, and today his children would drop off his grandchildren with him at the same house he has lived in for decades. He greeted and waved to every person we passed along the alleys; he knew everyone and everyone knew him. We smiled and said hello as his neighbors noted our presence, cheering and teasing us with our cameras. “Make sure to take a photo of the stagnant flood waters there--she has been wading in her house for months!” “Take a video of the pile of garbage there that is not being collected.” A tool for exposé: community members saw our equipment and wanted us somehow to broadcast their lived environments, perhaps the way newscasters they watch on primetime television do. These were the emergencies piling on them day after day: unseen, unknown, unimportant and hidden under the bridge, without requiring any urgent resolution. To see slow violence, it was important for us to move at the pace of their daily life. We squeezed through the dark and tight walkways winding through the maze of houses stacked tightly over one another. There were strings of neon orange life jackets hanging from wooden beams at every corner, and life saving rings hanging like Christmas decor alongside lines of people's laundry. Strung through this entanglement of people's clothes, racks of scavenged glass bottles for recycling, chained pets, and sacks of plasticware for vending, were these life saving equipment for a community that has survived yearly floods and Typhoon Ondoy which submerged their entire community under 15 feet of flood waters. Ka Jose led us out to a sunlit spot, where a patch of sky opened from under the bridge above us. We sat on plastic benches that overlooked the Santa Mesa River, its thick grey waters flowing now with a calm and lethargic rhythm alongside us.

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[13] The quotation here reads as an ominous prophecy of the landslide victory of Duterte’s candidates in the Senate.

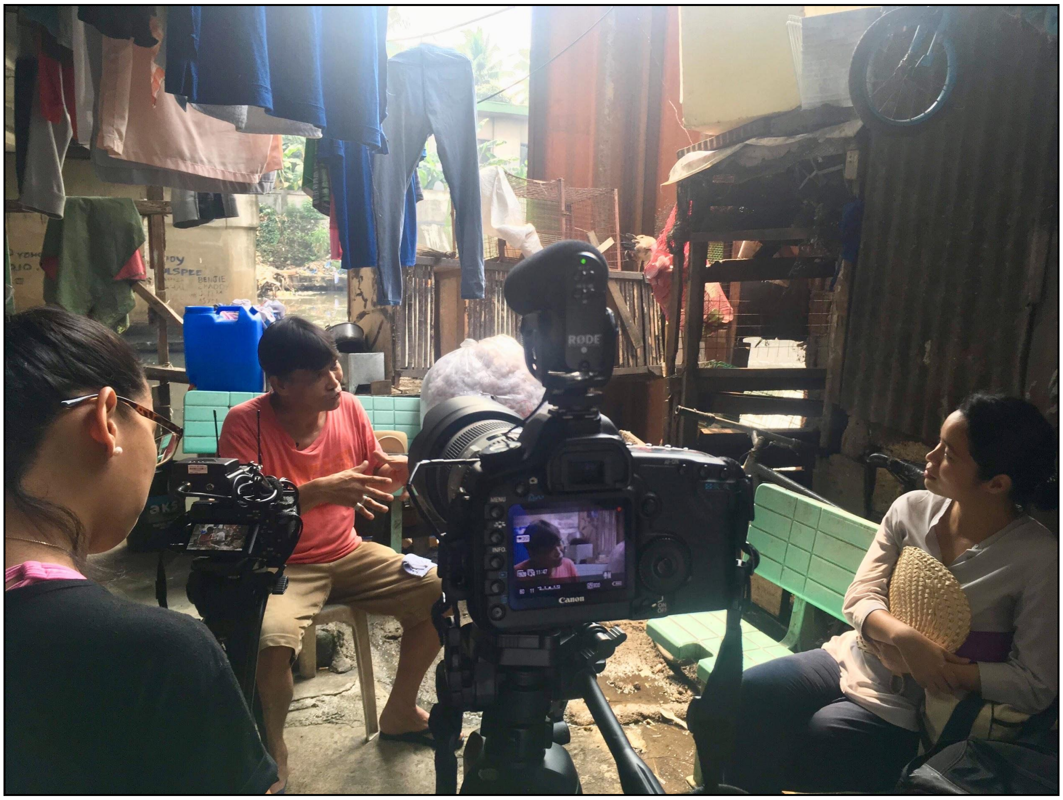

Figure 9*: Author's interview with Ka Jose outside his residence (2018)*

What is a disaster here? Of the 100 million Filipinos, 51.2% live in urban regions (PSA 2019), with population density in urban regions measuring 60 times higher than the national average at 20,785 persons per square kilometre. A quarter of the national population reside in

Metro Manila, with urban congestion, urban sprawl and informal settlements compounding physical, social and environmental vulnerabilities in the National Capital Region (Morin et al 2016). An estimated one third of Metro Manila's inhabitants reside in informal settlements of makeshift housing structures often built with wood, metal sheets and plastic. The provision of basic services and solid waste management are direly lacking in communities such as the one living under the bridge. Ka Jose opened his stories by telling us that storms, floods and earthquakes do not discriminate: these forces do not stop at city borders; they do not pick and choose their victims, and certainly not by the ballot one casts or the politicians one supports. And yet disasters occur because people are impacted differently by these hazards: *"Kaya lang naman nagkakaroon ng disaster dahil sa iba't-ibang antas ng kalagayan ng mga na-apektuhan"* ("The only reason disasters happen is because of the different living conditions people who are impacted live in.") For his community, floods are not seen as disasters. Every year the river rises with heavy rainfall, and year after year they live through these perennial floods. Experiences and conditions of chronic vulnerability have naturalized such dangers, and this familiarity has even turned a recurrent hazard into a "friend": *"Pag baha rito parang fiesta. May nag-iinuman, may mga naglalarong mga bata diyan. Parang kaibigan na namin ang baha, dahil taon-taon naman talagang may baha."* ("It is like a fiesta here every time there is a flood. Men are drinking, and children are out playing. The flood is like a friend to us because it comes every year.") By contrast, Typhoon Ondoy was a major catastrophe for his community, as it was for many urban poor communities across Metro Manila that were struck by the unexpected and rapid rise of flood waters. Ka Jose likened this apocalyptic event to a Biblical tale of a great flood: unprecedented, unpredictable and unimaginable. A disaster therefore is defined by the suffering and harm it inflicts, not only due to the intensity and magnitude of the force, but more so because of people's inability to prepare and respond. In the same vein, a forthcoming earthquake with an estimated magnitude of 7.2 called "The Big One", measured along the 100-kilometre long West Valley Fault running across Metro Manila and nearby provinces, will be extremely destructive.

A disaster is characterized by violence, and can be understood in how it harms. *Kahirapan,* literally translated as suffering, and which also means economic poverty, is a persistent violence that shapes the material conditions of their everyday lives. Poverty is a daily disaster for the urban poor. In a poignant story he told of when he was still a young community organizer is his 20s, Ka Jose remembers how he came home one day huffing and puffing proudly from a successful protest he had led against the forced evictions of his fellow informal settlers. He braggingly exclaimed to his wife, *"Nakapagpatigil ako ng demolisyon!"* ("I was able to stop a demolition!"). To which she replied, *"Wala tayong pambili ng bigas."* ("We do not have any money to buy rice.") Ka Jose recalls this moment as if it hit him like lightning: the work of saving an entire community from the disaster of a demolition is just as important as the work of surviving the disasters of hunger and poverty that haunted him and his own family everyday. One could not attend to one and neglect the other.

Repeatedly his stories emphasized that vulnerability is defined by the state of one's own living conditions or the "level" of one's socio-economic status: *"sa antas ng buhay at kalagayan mo".* For a member of an urban poor community, a disaster occurs to the degree in which she or he is disempowered by conditions which may very well pre-exist and pre-date the occurrence of an actual event. *"Kung mahirap ka, kung wala kang pera, walang magandang espasyo, walang magandang pasilidad… isang araw mo siyang bahain, isang araw siyang hindi makapag-trabaho, napaka laking bagay sa kaniya iyan."* ("If you are poor, if you do not have any money, if you do not live in a good dwelling place, without proper facilities… when you are flooded for a day, unable to work for a day, this becomes a matter of survival.")

Vulnerability as it is defined by government officials, planners or the technocratic rhetoric of DRRM includes living in "high-risk" zones such as riverside shanties under a bridge. Life here is depicted as dangerous, without adequate sanitation, light, and ventilation; people are exposed to the hazard of a polluted river, placing them at risk of drowning. In their critique of resilience and disaster risk management in Manila, Filipino urban scholars, Kristine Alvarez and Kenneth Cardenas, write that in the case of Typoon Ondoy, the demolition of slums has been rationalized by the state as a means of "building back better" in post-disaster rehabilitation efforts, with slums stigmatized by elite and expert knowledge as the source of urban flood risk and an eye sore through the lens of aesthetic governmentality (Alvarez and Cardenas 2019). Paradoxically, however, what the state calls dangerous to human security is in fact what people may deem to be life-sustaining. A seemingly "high-risk" site such as informal settlements under a bridge affords more “wellness” than a relocation site without livelihood, food sources, and social networks of support. *“Hazardous talaga rito, pero ang tanong namin: doon sa paglilipatan naman namin, hindi na nga hazardous -- nakakamatay na. Kasi from ‘danger zone’, dinadala kami sa ‘death zone’. Ang layo, semeteryo ang katabi mo, walang hanapbuhay. May bahay nga, pero wala namang trabaho, walang makakain, kaya walang buhay.”* (“It is true that this place is hazardous, but our question is: isn’t the relocation site we are being told to go to much deadlier? From a ‘danger zone’ we are being moved to a ‘death zone’. It is so far away, we are made to live next to a cemetery, and there are no means to make a living. They give us a house, but there are no jobs, no food, and so life cannot be possible.”) The logic of putting people out of a particular harm’s way in turn exposes them to multiple harms, trading safety from a particular disaster to exposure to other multiple disasters. These stories provoke a challenge to policy, discourses, logics and practices relating to DRRM-CCA. In examining the power relations between such an urban poor community and government officials who may not provide genuine opportunities for due consultations, solutions posed to tackle DRRM-CCA challenges may easily work against those allegedly being “rescued” from harm. Indeed in a sinister turn, the Philippine state through its various task forces and agencies enforced Oplan LIKAS (or Operation Plan Evacuate) to “rescue” over 40,000 families living alongside major waterways by evicting them through a “voluntary” resettlement scheme. Alvarez and Cardenas argue that the Philippine state has facilitated a highly uneven distribution of disaster risk in Metro Manila by promoting DRRM and “resiliency” strategies premised upon the eviction of slum dwellers (2019). By stigmatizing slums as blockages and blaming the poor for the floods, the state overlooks the role of commercial, legal and formal properties, and middle- and upper-class homes in polluting, obstructing and degrading waterways (Ibid 238-241). In the context of forced evictions, demolitions and the lack of security in urban informal settlements, the state itself poses a type of hazard: armed police and hired agitators act as violent forces which harm bodies, destroy houses, arrest, shoot, and displace.

Vulnerability is experienced as the lack of home, and in turn well-being and safety is having a home secured. *Bahay*[14] or a house cannot truly be a home until *buhay* or life and life-sustaining conditions are present. With the clear recognition that disasters are violent conditions which cause harm and endanger life, Ka Jose elaborates from his own experiences that he defines CBDM efforts as actions he and members of his community take to self-organize, individually and collectively, to ensure one another's safety. Before the term was even advocated for by NGOs and before its adoption into legal frameworks, Ka Jose's family and community have led their own "CBDM" work addressing preparedness, response and rehabilitation across generations. While Republic Act 10121 now mandates that local government units in partnership with community members serve as frontline responders during disaster events, he clarifies that this official legal and technical framework has simply named and claimed practices they have long been doing in the example of escaping from rising floodwaters if one lives under the bridge. This does not require formal assistance and protocols from the local government, and almost entirely relies on their own resourcefulness and leadership. Today this includes responding to the threat of floods by putting up their own soup kitchens, with every neighbour contributing their own kitchen utensils, food items, and proceeding to their own self-designated "evacuation centers" or places of safety which bypass the official management of the local government.

Most importantly, as a lifelong community organizer and an active leader in various people's organizations, Ka Jose defines CBDM as political organizing itself: the struggle to fight for one's rights, to defend one's home, equipping oneself with knowledge of human rights and the laws so that one is able to speak back against state power and police authority. As will be seen in the experiences of community organizing in Barangay Bagumbayan, the urban context is particularly challenged by the need for a strong unified sense of community given the highly diverse and mobile flux of residents in and out of informal settlements. Such densely populated communities are prone to internal conflict and harassment from external actors (*"taga-labas"*) who are sometimes hired by government and other private interests to create trouble and division among them. Strong leadership allows for more concerted efforts in preparedness, trainings in search and rescue operations, conducting first aid, and evacuation. In the face of disaster events such as demolitions, evictions, and arrests without warrants, power lies in one's own knowledge and ability to encounter state power and to secure one's right to the city.

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[14] *Balay* or *bahay* means home. Balay Rehabilitation Center is a human rights NGO which frames internal displacement, war, torture, extra-judicial killings and state violence as disaster events in the Philippines. It is a partner of CDRC and also a member organization of DRRNet Philippines. www.balayph.net

In her paper on the urban poor's right to claim shelter in the Philippines, Filipina geographer Hazel Dizon traces the origins of political organizing among the urban poor to Tondo, Manila in the 1960s and which rose in the 1970s with growing anti-Marcos activism (2019). The historical formation of Zone One Tondo Organization (ZOTO), a pioneer in the urban poor movement, and its later morphing into Ugnayan ng mga Samahan ng Mamamayan ng Buong Tondo Foreshoreland (Federation of People's Organizations of Tondo Foreshoreland) or "Ugnayan", laid the grounds for a variety of resistance strategies employed by urban poor organizations which faced increasing demolitions in the 2000s with the boom in real estate across Metro Manila. Much like the efforts undertaken by POs which Ka Jose engages in, ranging from staging demonstrations, rallies, barricades, to attending legislative consultations and meetings with government agencies along with CSO partners, Dizon writes that both a 'repertoire of contention' and a 'repertoire of strategy' are used in the urban poor movement to secure decent housing, a living wage, and the protection of human rights. It is in this broader political context of challenging state power and also negotiating with it which informs the work of community organizing by CDRC's regional center in Metro Manila, in its work of promoting CBDM in the context of urban poverty.

II. CREST and community organizing as community-based disaster management

CREST or Community Response for Enlightenment, Service and Transformation, Inc. is one of the 17 regional centers of the Citizens' Disaster Response Network (CDRN). It is the youngest center in the nationwide network, founded in 2005 by leaders of POs and church-based organizations who have been working in upholding the rights and welfare of urban poor communities across Metro Manila. It began with a series of community development efforts in Tondo, the most densely populated district in the city of Manila, which included supporting a daycare, feeding programs, installing water catchment systems and toilets, electrification, and advocating for women's rights in cases of domestic violence. They did not have a formalized organization and simply rented out a desk from a school office to conduct these efforts primarily on a voluntary basis, with donations sourced from local charities. CREST was officially registered as an NGO in 2007, and formally became part of CDRN in 2009 in the catastrophic wake of Typhoon Ondoy. Given CDRN's strength as having the earliest and widest network of CBDM practitioners in the country, CREST as its regional center in Metro Manila began to offer disaster preparedness orientations in the urban poor communities it worked in, upholding "pro-people DRRM-CCA initiatives" which ensure the participation and protection of the communities they serve. Starting in 2014, CREST began to develop its own projects which continue to run at present: these include school-based DRRM trainings, and developing audio-visual materials for the deaf, mute and blind among the urban poor. These trainings for teachers, students, and persons with disabilities in districts across Metro Manila are primarily funded by German NGOs such as Aktion Deutschland Hilft (Germany's Relief Coalition), Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund, and Action Medeor (German Medical Aid Organization); these project grants are also continually supplemented with assistance from local donors and volunteers. To date, CREST now supports a network of 35 disaster preparedness committees formed through their conduct of CBDM trainings across all the 16 cities and one municipality in Metro Manila. Alongside its community organizing efforts, CREST staff also conduct trainings on CBDM, provide emergency response efforts, and engage in campaign and advocacy efforts alongside other civil society organizations on social justice issues shared by urban poor communities.

The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) has issued two consecutive non-binding international agreements to address global targets and priorities for action in the realm of disaster risk reduction: the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005-2015), and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030). Both frameworks recognize the state as the primary actor responsible for reducing disaster risk; however, with growing advocacy from non-state actors globally, the Sendai Framework has included a recognition for the key role of civil society, volunteers, organized voluntary work organizations, and community-based organizations (see Sections 24(o) and 36(a) in UNISDR 2015). As of 2015 therefore the UNISDR, as does the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010, acknowledges the importance of community-based disaster risk reduction and management (also referred to as CBDRR, CBDM, CBDP or CBDRRM) frameworks for policy and practice globally. By definition this framework champions locally owned and appropriate DRRM strategies, including preparedness planning, conducting capacity and vulnerability analysis, participatory planning, creating risk assessment tools, forecasting and setting up early warning systems, conducting rescue, relief, recovery, resettlement, rehabilitation, and long-term mitigation measures. In the Philippines today, both state and non-state actors have made and are making claims to the practice of CBDM as mandated by the law. As a consequence of its institutionalization across government agencies, levels of regional and local governance, and with the advocacy from civil society organizations, a single term has multiplied to mean a variety of things across contexts and practices. For a city or municipal mayor for instance, CBDM may mean ensuring a full-time staff is hired for the legislated position of a Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office, with little need to ensure that this desk is sufficiently equipped with funds and resources to duly involve the participation of local constituents in all phases of preparedness, relief, response and rehabilitation. For an NGO, CBDM may mean gathering community members for a one-time training on first aid or rescue operations, with little need to ensure that participants understand the hazards that endanger them, the causes of their own vulnerabilities, and unable to see their own capacities to respond. Even the terms "hazard", "disaster", "risk", "vulnerability" and "capacity" are understood and deployed in multiple ways by a variety of state and non-state actors, let alone the ways in which community members themselves understand these terms in their own vernaculars and lived experiences.

As detailed in Chapter Four, CREST and the rest of the CDRN's regional centers define and practice CBDM through a distinct framework which they have pioneered since the 1980s. In addition to encouraging the participation of community members in all phases of DRRM, CREST staff members emphasize that they must ensure that their community organizing efforts lead to increasing the leadership capacities of people living in disaster prone areas: forming and sustaining a disaster preparedness committee, which can later be linked to a wider web of people's organizations through *Ugnayan*[15]. This term means 'linkages' and today refers to alliances of urban poor organizations such as *Ugnayan ng mga Samahan ng Mamamayan ng*

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[15] This term today broadly refers to national democrat-affiliated urban poor organizations, and signals its difference from other social democrat-affiliated and non-aligned urban poor organizations.

Buong Tondo Foreshoreland (Federation of People's Organizations of Tondo Foreshoreland) and *Ugnayan ng Maralitang Tagalungsod* (Alliance of the Urban Poor), which Dizon writes are the founders of the urban poor movement in the Philippines during Martial Law (2020, 42-46). Today it is central to CREST'S practice of organizing disaster preparedness committees to scale up power across a broader progressive social movement and shifting power to the victims. In this praxis of community organizing, community members recognize their own agency and ability to lead, organize and act for themselves; no longer as passive beneficiaries of aid and relief, but as active political actors and subjects who are able to shape and transform their realities. Each of the 35 disaster preparedness committees supported by CREST to date have unique contexts and political dynamics to contend with in every *barangay*. For example, given the historical prominence of the urban poor movement in Tondo, residents have long refused to leave their homes when called to evacuate by government officials, feeling unsafe in evacuation centers managed by the local government unit, and fearful that they will be unable to return to their houses which have been threatened with demolitions. Stories of antagonistic relations between the disaster preparedness committee and Barangay officials are common, given the former's association with activist organizations which have challenged the state or police on upholding human rights. In the City of Marikina, however, CREST staff report their experiences to be reversed: residents are familiar with and willingly participate in official evacuation processes led by the government, and officials too have been largely supportive of efforts led by the disaster preparedness committee. While each of these cases differ in their experiences and conduct of CBDM, for CREST a successful practice of CBDM does not require cooperation with the state; this in contrast to what is enshrined in the Sendai Framework or Philippine legislation which assumes these state-society relationships to be favourable to one another. Instead, the most vital outcome for CREST is its ability to organize a disaster preparedness committee that can be part of a broader civic network composed of groups such as neighbourhood associations, women's rights groups, parent-teacher associations, and other *samahan* or collectives.

With only a team of four to five full-time staff members, how can CREST's efforts be realistically sustained all across the National Capital Region? In addition to sharing about the mound of challenges they face in their work of combined community organizing, training, activism and advocacy, staff members also reflected on how crucial it is to sustain their personal presence in the *barangays* where they have trained and formed disaster preparedness committees. By visiting and providing continuous trainings, staff are also able to enjoy cultivating their personal relationships with residents; they often have become friends with those they work with, pay visits outside of work affairs, and have been adopted as members of these communities. On an individual basis staff members also invite their own colleagues from other NGOs, friends and volunteers to support the communities they work in--serving as a kind of a referee or mediator for other external actors to work with community leaders who would otherwise not be known to civic organizations more broadly. Programmatically CREST also sustains its disaster preparedness committees through *Ugnayan*, which in the context of CBDM, also acts as a disaster preparedness network spanning all of Metro Manila composed of POs, civil society organizations, community associations, and disaster preparedness committees that are aligned in a similar "pro-people" approach to DRRM which focuses on the most vulnerable sectors of society. Through *Ugnayan*, the disaster preparedness committees formed and sustained by CREST staff members are linked with a larger web of actors in multi-sectoral organizations such as those for youth and women in urban poor communities. Together they can partner and draw support from one another. Periodically CREST staff would convene representatives from *Ugnayan* member organizations to report updates on the situation of their communities. In times of disasters, *Ugnayan* member organizations can help one another gather data and access relief resources to distribute in their communities, linking disaster response efforts with development work and promoting CBDM in a variety of methods across urban communities in Metro Manila.

In October 2018, I was invited by CREST staff members to join an orientation they were conducting for a team of medical students who signed up as volunteers for their CBDM programme in Barangay Bagumbayan in Taguig City. While CREST staff members focused on matters concerning officers of the disaster preparedness committee, they invited the student volunteers to focus on assisting with the medical needs of parents, teachers and students in a local daycare centre located in an informal settlement. These two domains of community development work may appear unrelated but in CREST's framework of CBDM, one needed to connect the dots to understand the needs, vulnerabilities, and capacities of an urban poor community in order to transform their lived environments. CBDM therefore does not exclude development issues such as addressing the health concerns of mothers and children in the *barangay*. Huddled inside a makeshift classroom built by residents for their own children, I squeezed in with a group of over 20 adults, each one of us seated in children-sized plastic chairs. The ceiling hung low, crowding us further in. A team of daycare teachers and mothers expected us and had generously prepared a feast of rice, fried fish, and a large tray of party noodles; they served us bottles of ice cold pop from the corner store to cool us from the heat of concrete walls and roofs of galvanized iron sheets. We were invited to eat while CREST staff began the morning's orientation on the Philippine disaster situation: *"Hindi lahat ng disasters napapanood sa TV. Maraming panganib na naging pang araw-araw na."* ("Not all disasters can be watched on television. Many dangers have become a daily affair.") Staff proceeded to share statistics to contextualize the politics of disasters and disaster response: the World Risk Index ranks the Philippines ninth globally for being vulnerable to disasters (2019); and the associated socioeconomic damage due to disasters between 2000 and 2016 was about $20 billion with average annual damages of $1.2 billion (Jha et. al. 2018). It was no surprise for us gathered that morning to be reminded of the country's geophysical location in the Pacific Ring of Fire, with 22 active volcanoes, and the entry of an average of 20 to 25 typhoons every year. Yet it is the massive and increasing inequality in the country, what political economist Walden Bello calls an immobile class structure that is the worst in Asia (2005, 2), with 46.5% of the national population living in urban areas and 18.4 million in urban informal settlements (Dizon 2019, 106), which CREST underscored as the underbelly of people's socio-economic and political vulnerabilities: poverty not only inhibits people's ability to cope with meteorological and geophysical hazards, but also makes them easy targets in armed conflict, police brutality, demolitions, development aggression, and other forms of dispossession.

III. Case Study: Barangay Bagumbayan, Taguig City, Metro Manila

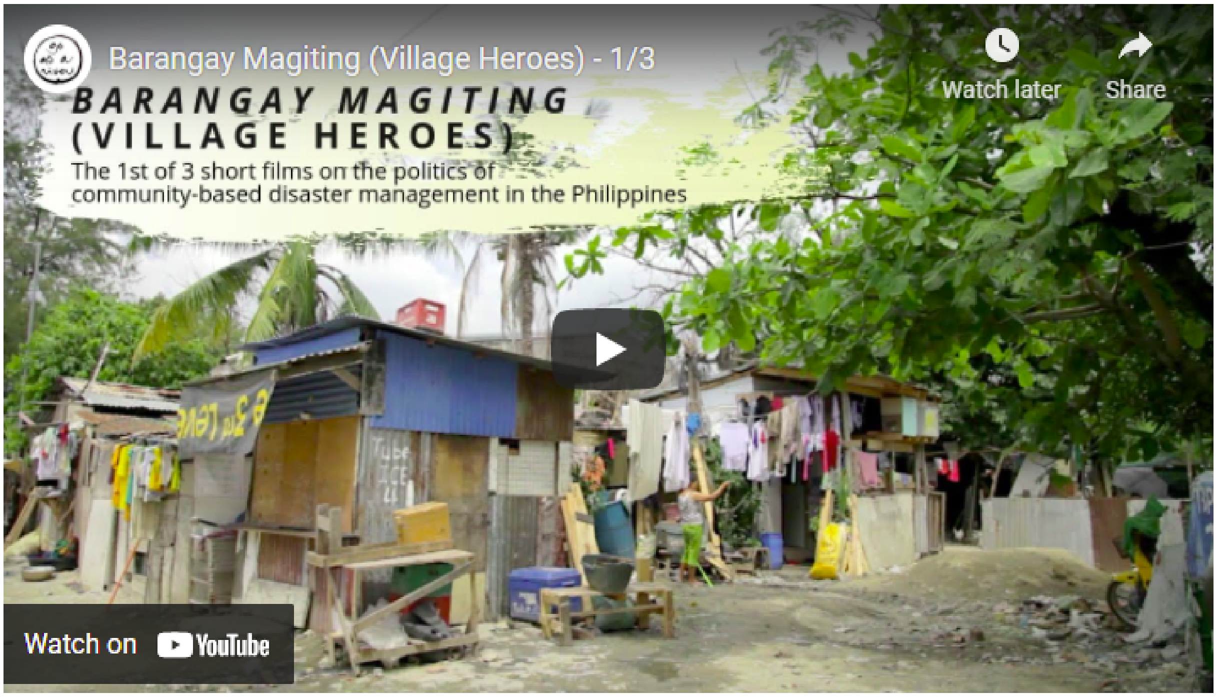
Barangay Magiting (Village Heroes) - 1/3
BARANGAY MAGITING
(VILLAGE HEROES)
The 1st of 3 short films on the politics of community-based disaster management in the Philippines
Watch later
Share
Watch on YouTube

Figure 10 : Video of first case study

Taguig is one of the 16 cities in Metro Manila, known for its Bonifacio Global City which is one of the country's leading financial centres. Taguig is further subdivided into 28 *barangays*. Barangay Bagumbayan is located in the southernmost tip of Taguig, bordering Barangay Bicutan to its north, the city of Paranaque to its south, and to its east is Laguna de Bay--the Philippines' largest lake and which supplies Metro Manila's population of 16 million a third of their fish. From a census in 2018, the *barangay*'s population is estimated at 47,965 individuals, with 13,850 families or households living in a densely populated land area of 3.26 square kilometres (Barangay Bagumbayan Contingency Plan 2019). Barangay Bagumbayan is further divided into 6 *puroks* or neighbourhood zones. Once a remote coastal village, rapid industrialization in the past decades has transformed Taguig into the seventh most populous city and one the leading financial centres in the country. In the 1960s the South Luzon Expressway or South Super Highway was built by the national government connecting cities across Metro Manila to the southern provinces of Laguna, Cavite and Batangas. It brought in businesses and the setting up of stores and factories into the southern stretch of Taguig. Bagumbayan residents who used to primarily depend on fishing and farming were hired into these commercial industries, along with an increased influx of migrant workers from various parts of Metro Manila and other provinces. The past decades of increased urbanization along the coast has severely damaged the water quality and state of fish populations in the lake, with pollution from industrial waste, untreated sewage, overfishing and drastic changes on the coast line. Based on the 2018 census, an estimate of 19,500 individuals are employed full-time by private companies as labourers for factories and office workers in Bagumbayan and neighbouring *barangays* or cities. This includes men from the informal settlements who are employed in these factories and warehouses; some are contracted as construction workers in real estate development projects in the city. Only 1000 identified fishers remain to date in the entire city of Taguig, farming fish and harvesting water hyacinth to sell--a weed that has exploded in numbers due to eutrophication with the rise in nitrogen and phosphorus concentration, leading to several fish kills in the lake. Today less than 300 in Bagumbayan are still involved in farming, fishing and poultry activities. It is common for residents to engage simultaneously in both the formal wage economy and a variety of activities in the informal economy such as vending, peddling, laundering, driving tricycles and jeepneys, or housekeeping.

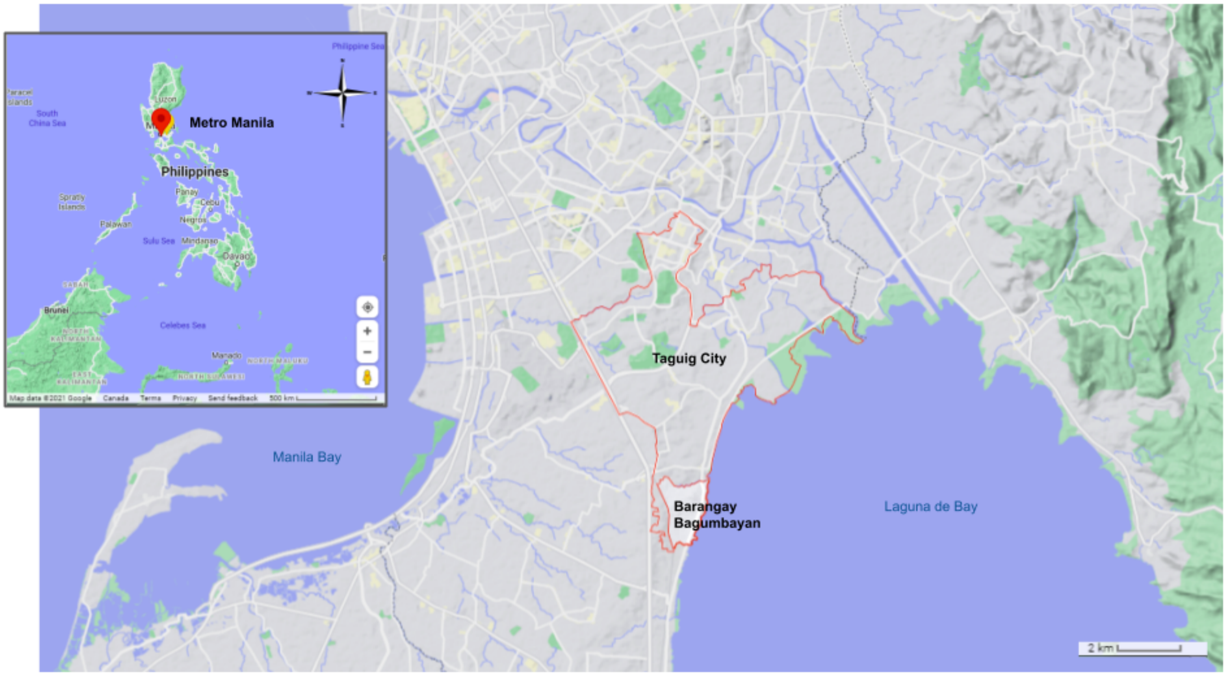
Metro Manila
Philippines
Luzon
South China Sea
Philippine Sea
Spratly Islands
Palawan
Sulu Sea
Mindanao
Davao
Celebes Sea
Brunei
Taguig City
Barangay Bagumbayan
Manila Bay
Laguna de Bay
2 km

***Figure 11**: Map of 1st field site: Brgy. Bagumbayan, Taguig City, Metro Manila*
(Map by the author using Google Maps 2021)

While the City of Taguig is ranked a first-class city with an average annual revenue of PHP 5 billion, and a mere 3.12% poverty incidence[16], the residents of informal settlements in Barangay Bagumbayan portray a vastly different reality. In an assembly of parents at the Senai daycare located along Laura Drive, referred to as one of the most "depressed areas" by both its residents and Barangay officials given the extent of its informal settlements, my research team and I joined a focus group discussion to ask what local residents thought were the gravest dangers to them. Purok 2, 3 and 5 [Figure 12] are coastal districts located right along the shoreline of Laguna de Bay. Residents recall that these residential areas have primarily been built on "reclaimed" lands--landfills that were formed on the lake with the piling of garbage by factories and warehouses located in the *barangay,* and also filled with cement and debris by migrant settlers who wanted to level the ground to build their houses on. Like Lendy's narration in the film interview, Cecille and other residents also recall first arriving to the area in the early 2000s with parts of the lakeshore still covered with tall wild grasses (*talahib*); they cleared these areas of grasses, weeds and rocks, and with their own hands dumped stones and other found debris over the land to raise the ground to the same level as the road. Today's informal settlements are living on *"tinambakan na lupa"*: land "reclaimed" by mounds of industrial pollution and also piled on by the poor in their efforts to raise land from the coast.

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[16] The average national poverty incidence, or the proportion of poor Filipinos whose per capita income is insufficient to meet their basic food and other needs, is estimated at 16.7% in a 2018 census (Philippine Statistics Authority 2020).

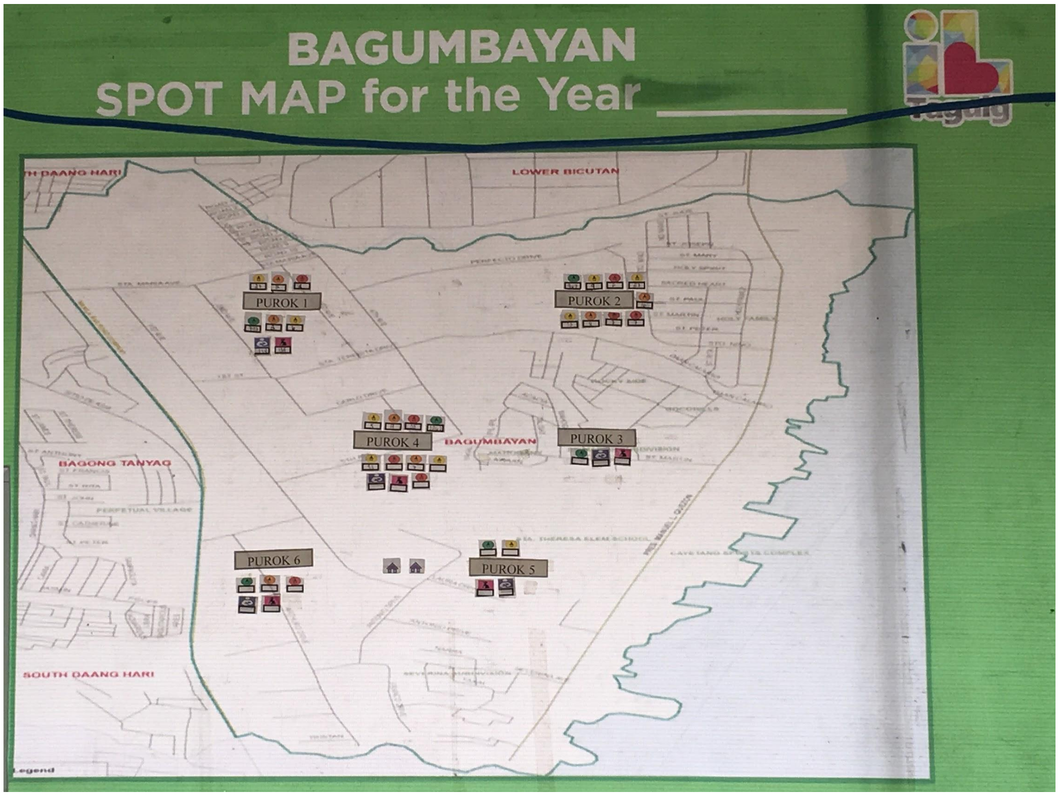
BAGUMBAYAN
SPOT MAP for the Year
LOWER BICUTAN
PUROK 1
PUROK 2
PUROK 3
PUROK 4
PUROK 5
PUROK 6
BAGUMBAYAN
BAGONG TANYAG
SOUTH DAANG HARI
Taguig

Figure 12: *Map on a printed tarpaulin hanging in the Barangay Hall*
(Photo by the author: October 2018)

a. What is a disaster here?

What is a disaster? What are the causes and material manifestations of vulnerability in this community as seen in how residents shape and are shaped by their lived environments, local livelihoods, access to disaster relief, and security from violence? To answer my research questions, my team and I invited disaster preparedness committee officers to semi-structured one-on-one interviews and also *kuwentuhan* or group storytelling sessions. These conversations allowed for them to individually and collectively narrate gendered experiences and understandings of violence, and these also took place in gendered spaces where their domestic, reproductive and professional labour simultaneously occurred as mothers, wives and women grassroots leaders in their *barangay.* Cecille invited us into her single-quarter house where she, her husband, their two young children and pet roosters all cohabit in; Wilma hosted us both at the Barangay daycare centre and at the Barangay office for Violence Against Women and Children where she works the help desk; Lendy invited us into her house which shared a wall with their neighbourhood's makeshift daycare centre, a physical extension of her family's living quarters; and Gina proudly hosted us both at her single-quarter house and the office in the Barangay Hall where she now works at. In a densely populated urban *barangay* in Metro Manila, it was challenging for our informants to find "suitable" space where our research team of three, including our filming equipment, could physically squeeze in with them; there were also classed concerns of how "appropriate" the material conditions were for the perceived prestige of an academic study. In a corporeal sense the conduct of our interviews revealed the spatial configuration of urban life in informal settlements. Yet our informants made and found room for our interviews in intimate spaces that ultimately revealed how their private dwelling spaces combined their domestic-professional care labour for their families and extended neighborhoods. In contrast to the masculine spaces of formal state power as in the office of the Barangay Captain and his Barangay DRRM Officer which stored hazard maps, life-saving equipment and first aid kits, the spaces selected by the women disaster preparedness committee officers for our discussions were remarkably intimate and intended for childcare. I write that these locations allowed for our all-women team to interact with and listen to our informants in a more restful, relaxed and comfortable atmosphere, and also affected the kinds of narratives filmed in the video.

Despite living by the lake, none of the women I interviewed engage directly in fishing for livelihood, and mostly attended to their households and other informal economic activities before their current salaried jobs; yet they attest to the prominence of typhoons and floods in their lives and lived environments along the lake. In a study of the four-decade history of aquaculture in Laguna de Bay, Filipino geographer Kristian Saguin writes that typhoons and floods have played a role in the transformation of landscapes and livelihoods of lake villagers (2016). Rather than seeing these hazards as external forces which occasionally disrupt human plans, Saguin frames them as intrinsic to life among aquaculture producers. Parents at the daycare and all disaster preparedness committee officers say that floods are one of the gravest dangers (*panganib*), especially for those living by the lakeside like Cecille who recounts in her film interview how her house was swallowed by the rising lake during a storm. In a review of the results of the

CBDM training conducted by CREST in 2016, disaster preparedness committee members noted that heavy rains during the rainy season from the months of June to September always gives rise to floods in as little as 30 minutes of continuous downpour. Informal settlements built on the lake and other low-lying coastal areas and alongside creeks or canals, including those in the "most depressed" neighbourhoods of Laura Drive, Marcelo, Kalaw, Paso Baba, Adia and Cocohills, are most severely impacted.

Though rains bring floods in regularly, Bagumbayan residents attest with some pride today that floods have become less severe in the past years with the higher cemented ground they have built in particular neighbourhoods. As demonstrated in Saguin's study, hazards are not external forces that simply act upon a static society. Hazards such as typhoons and floods became factors that state managers and fish pen operators around Laguna de Bay needed to build into their practices (2016, 540). As such, typhoons and floods do not simply act upon lakeside informal settlements in Barangay Bagumbayan. As seen in the film, residents like Cecille have responded to these perennial hazards by building their own flood mitigation structures on reclaimed land, prioritizing the needs of small children who are most vulnerable to drowning; these hand-built and informal alterations on the land in turn reinforce their stakes on the ground they have built their shanties on, and buttress their claims to rights to shelter in informal settlements. Bagumbayan's north and south borders are marked by two creeks which flow downstream from higher ground and out towards the lake. The flow of flood waters is blocked and exacerbated by garbage from factories located up the slope, mixing with the residents' own trash along the way. The lack of regular waste collection and segregation, the clogging of canals and creeks with waste, all make it difficult for flood waters to drain out to the lake even with the expansion of sewage construction by the Barangay government. The women's lakeside stories of typhoons and floods therefore are reminiscent of Ka Jose's riverside stories under the bridge: there is a slow and lethargic rhythm to clogged waterways that are choked with garbage yearlong; their rise during the rains is somewhat familiar and predictable as residents have learned resourceful ways to cope with floods. However, while there has not been any formal effort from the Barangay to evict informal settlers by any flood mitigation plans, other hazards also pose threats to clear parts of the slums in Bagumbayan.

Fires and the threat of evictions are common experiences of disasters for residents in the informal settlements. Members of the disaster preparedness committee shared stories of how their houses were burned ("*sinunog*") at various incidents--fires not caused by mere accidents, but as intended by particular individuals whose interest was to evict residents. Wilma, Gina and Cecille's interviews narrate their own personal experiences of multiple fires, while Lendy's film interview details how her neighbours ran to open the water valve to put out the fire by themselves, only to rush to the fire with the water supply cut off again. With most of their houses made of a mixture of wood, light and scavenged materials, built on top of one another and squeezed next to each other, fires spread quickly and can easily consume an entire neighbourhood in minutes. The cause of these fires are not clearly determined, and no formal charges have been filed against any known suspects; disaster preparedness committee officers, however, speculate that the fires are linked to certain private interests who wish to clear parts of the informal settlements for either the construction of private homes or to access roads leading to private property. In our walks we were shown that the Barangay Bagumbayan Fire Sub-Station is situated in Purok 3, wherein roads are passable only to a mini pumper. The Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office with its 14-personnel team serves as the official fire brigade. Majority of its staff are men and are in charge of rescue operations. While equipped with its own three ambulances or rescue mobiles, the team still has to coordinate with the neighbouring Barangay Lower Bicutan to borrow two fire trucks as Bagumbayan does not have any of its own. Densely populated neighbourhoods are difficult to access by tight walkways, and the women recall how lethal fires can be given the flammable nature of their shanty houses.

Though they have not experienced an earthquake in Bagumbayan, the West Valley Fault which is predicted to cause an earthquake of 7.2 magnitude runs right across the city of Taguig, and also cuts through Barangay Bagumbayan. Residents are aware of this looming threat that they are in grave risk for. The lack of clear wide open spaces in such a densely populated *barangay* poses an impossible task of gathering tens of thousands to the two designated evacuation centres which are the Cayetano Sports Complex and Sta. Teresa Elementary School, both standing beside the Barangay Hall. In our discussions with parents at the Senai daycare center, they consider the makeshift structure itself as one of their own "evacuation sites"; their neighbours' concrete houses including those built by *Gawad Kalinga*[17], a private foundation building houses for the poor, are also deemed as sturdier structures that they can evacuate to. In a census of the over 5,000 houses built in Bagumbayan, only an estimate of 40% of these houses are concrete, titled and privately owned by the residents. The remaining 60% are semi-concrete, built with a variety of light materials including wood, cardboard, plastic and salvaged iron sheets, and these are either rented and shared by multiple tenants, or built and lived in by informal settler families.

The women's stories reveal gendered understandings of slow violence and everyday emergencies. The disaster preparedness committee officers are all beneficiaries of the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Programme* or 4Ps, a government social welfare programme that provides conditional cash grants to the poorest by the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction.[18] Households receive cash grants of PHP 500 per month for health care and PHP 300 for every child if children stay in school, get regular health check-ups, and receive vaccines; pregnant women are also required to get prenatal care and have their births attended to by professional health workers to receive grants. Of the total 4.4 million beneficiaries nationwide, women comprise 88% of grant recipients. As appointed parent leaders in the 4Ps programme, the disaster preparedness committee officers ensure that their fellow beneficiaries participate in monthly family development sessions where they learn about positive child discipline, disaster preparedness, and women's rights.

"Ang kahirapan ay isang malubhang sakuna!" ("Poverty is a great disaster!"), shared Cecille in her interview after sadly recounting the series of disasters she and her family have survived in less than ten years of living in Bagumbayan. She invited me and my research team to walk home with her one afternoon so we could personally see how narrow the pathways were leading to her neighbourhood, making it difficult for any urgent assistance to reach them in times

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[17] In a paper on *Gawad Kalinga*, Kelly and Ortega (2020) examine the drawbacks of private charitable involvement in the execution of state responsibilities for social housing and poverty alleviation.

[18] While the 4Ps and the Social Pension for the indigent elderly are communicated as poverty reduction programmes, cash transfers in fact do not necessarily change beneficiaries' poverty status. Instead they reduce the gaps between income and poverty threshold, or a poor household's vulnerability to future poverty (Albert and Vizmanos 2018, 10).

of emergency; using her body as scale, she demonstrated how difficult it is for small children like hers to walk out of floodwaters. In the film she walks us through pathways made of sacks filled with sand, rocks and cement that she and her neighbours lined together one by one. With their own hands they helped to construct an elevated “sidewalk” for their children to walk on during floods. As many of them are mothers of young children, women officers discussed with us at the daycare the difficulties they have evacuating with little ones during floods or when a fire spreads; in addition to these emergencies, mothers are challenged with attending to children’s daily needs for food, clothes, school materials and medicine. The cash grants they receive are of significant assistance to their households, yet the women officers also remark at how easily their houses can be destroyed by storms, strong winds, and fires; and while these are homes and dwelling places for them and their families, they are aware that these insecure structures could also be easily taken away from them and this is what made them feel vulnerable and also easy targets for harm.

Experiences of sexual and domestic violence are also not divorced from daily struggles in urban poor communities. Lendy is a local coordinator and community organizer for GABRIELA [19] (General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action), a feminist grassroots-based nationwide alliance advocating for women’s rights in the Philippines. She shared in her film interview the painful realities affecting children and women in their neighbourhoods. Like Ka Jose, Lendy considers the ongoing efforts of community organizing, teaching and building awareness among fellow mothers (*kananayan*) about their rights and how to protect them, as a critical means for protecting one’s safety. *“Natuto ang mga kananayan na itayo yung dignidad nila, dahil may mga kananayan din na dahil sa hindi nila alam ang kanilang mga karapatan ay nagkakasya nalang sila na sinasaktan sila ng asawa nila.”* (“The mothers have learned to fight for their dignity, because there are mothers too who without knowing what their rights are have tolerated being hurt by their husbands.”)

Gendered understandings of daily violence are also shared by a member of the current Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office. Rosemarie is the only woman in the 14-person team responsible for an entire constituency of 50,000 people. Rosemarie who is shown in the film is in fact teasingly called “Madame 911” by her colleagues and *barangay* residents because she receives calls in the office desk from anyone who needs urgent help. This includes a wide range of emerency cases such as vehicular accidents, stroke, drowning, heart attack, birth, and during our fieldwork, even a suicide case. During our many walks touring the *barangay* on foot, she is greeted with much affection by her "patients", people who have been assisted by her and her colleagues. Rosemarie's role as staff of the Barangay DRRM office, which is legally mandated to lead preparedness, relief response, and rehabilitation efforts in disaster events, has clearly merged with the daily tasks of a social worker, a paramedic, and an "on-call *barangay* health worker" in Bagumbayan.

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[19] Gabriela is one among many national democratic-affiliated organizations who form an open mass movement. It has been identified as a “communist terrorist group” by the Duterte regime.

In her film interview, a staff member of CREST who has been working in Bagumbayan for five years, shared: *"Ang pangunahin na disaster talaga para sa urban poor ay iyong kabuhayan nila, yung kalam ng sikmura nila. Kapag wala silang kabuhayan, disaster iyon sa kanila. Kapag wala silang matitirahan, yung pana-panahong silang dinedemolish, disaster iyon sa kanila. Maliban pa iyong mga 'natural' na kalamidad, may ganitong kahirapan pang kinakaharap ang urban poor dito sa Metro Manila."* ("The primary disaster for the urban poor relates to their means of living, relates to the pangs of hunger in the stomach. If they do not have a means to make a living, it is a disaster for them. Aside from the 'natural' calamities that affect them, these kinds of suffering burden the urban poor across Metro Manila.") Similar to what Ka Jose shared, whether one lives under the bridge by a river, or by a lake on reclaimed land, residents do not distinguish and differentiate the terms used in DRRM to speak about their lived realities: poverty is the hazard (*panganib*), the disaster (*sakuna*), and the cause of people's vulnerability (*bulnerabilidad*). Poverty places them in greater risk (*risgo*), endangers them, and it is also the result of a people rendered powerless to cope with its own harms. Women disaster preparedness committee officers, their counterpart in the Barangay, and partner NGO staff implicitly share an understanding that gendered emergencies occur daily and are experienced in particular ways by women residents in informal settlements.

b. State as hazard

In the context of gender-based violence, I have been told in private of women's concerns regarding Oplan Tokhang (or Operation Plan "Tutok Hangyo" referring to the government's anti-drug war) in the *barangay* which was well underway during our fieldwork. Given the grave security concerns surrounding this ongoing state-sanctioned abuse of human rights, I choose not to write about any details of these experiences in Bagumbayan but confirm that male armed violence has threatened the neighbourhoods we visited. Of the 5,050 government-reported deaths from police anti-drug operations nationwide, which human rights groups tally to over 20,000 to include those by unidentified assailants, Taguig ranks the fourth city in Metro Manila with 112 deaths (Rappler 2019). In the film my team and I present a subtle reference to this with footage of policemen standing outside the Barangay Hall along with a printed banner of “Tokhang Towards A Drug-Free Philippines”. It includes an enlarged portrait of the former chief of the Philippine National Police who had just been elected Senator in the 2019 midterm elections. The current Mayor, Lino Cayetano, belongs to the political dynasty of Taguig City and whose siblings and in-laws have been one of the closest and staunchest supporters of the Duterte regime. His sister, Senator Pia Cayetano, was a former Mayor of Taguig; his brother, Alan Cayetano, was former Foreign Affairs Secretary and has defended the drug war to global media, and was doubly-elected into Congress with his wife, Congresswoman Lani Cayetano, who was also former Mayor of Taguig. They personally reside in a gated mansion in Barangay Bagumbayan. And by extension, the recently elected Barangay Captain is a friendly ally to Mayor Lino, with his support publicly displayed on large festive banners for the city Mayor. Patrimonial politics and state terror have cascaded down from the national to the city and *barangay* levels in Bagumbayan. Scholars have investigated the complicity of Mayors and Barangay Captains in the national government’s police-led anti-drug campaign (Mendoza, Yusingco and Gamboa 2018), including the ways the Philippine police profit from the president’s drug war (Coronel 2018). Given that all officers of the disaster preparedness committee except one are women, and that Tokhang victims are predominantly men and have left widows[20] and orphans[21] behind, gendered perspectives of safety and well-being gain relevance in my interviews in this broader patriarchal context of male power in government, the police, and the household. For security purposes, I intentionally did not ask my women informants for their views on the government's drug war and how this relates to their CBDM efforts. It is, however, crucial to note that the women's rights group GABRIELA is represented in the disaster preparedness committee, and so is the Barangay's official Violence Against Women and Children help desk. Their respective and combined efforts in advocating for women's rights shape the broader set of actions undertaken for CBDM.

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[20] “Women fighting: Widows, mothers of drug war casualties come together” (Rappler 2018): https://www.rappler.com/nation/women-widows-mothers-fight-drug-war-killed

[21] “Collateral Damage: The Children of Duterte’s ‘War on Drugs’” (Human Rights Watch 2019): https://www.hrw.org/video-photos/interactive/2019/06/27/collateral-damage-children-dutertes-war-drugs

While it is simpler to adhere to a narrative of oppositional state-society relations in the face of police violence and the complicity of state and private interests in endangering the urban poor, the disaster preparedness committee's efforts both challenge and cooperate with government actions at multiple events. For example, while Cecille celebrates the self-led efforts of her neighbours to line sacks of cement to create an elevated pathway, she also acknowledges that these materials were delivered to them by the Barangay upon the residents' request to do something to mitigate the floods. After her house was demolished, she also used the government aid she received to construct another house. The efforts that disaster preparedness committee officers engage in are inevitably shaped by their relationship with the Barangay. As officials and their appointed staff change with each election term, dynamics among government officials, NGO staff members, and community members are also therefore in flux.

As it is standard operating procedure for NGOs, charities and other external organizations conducting activities in the *barangay* to report to the Barangay Hall before proceeding, so did CREST when its staff and Bagumbayan's disaster preparedness committee thought to organize a flood evacuation drill in 2016. This initiative was given favourable support by the former Barangay Captain. This endeavour, co-organized by the disaster preparedness committee, CREST staff, and Barangay officials, could have only succeeded in the scale of the logistical requirements given the favourable dynamics among various state and non-state actors. This is not the case in every *barangay* CREST works in, as relationships and local dynamics differ in every locality. CREST staff have therefore expressed in interviews with me a view they hold of "CBDM" which differs from how it is defined by the Philippine DRRM Act or the Sendai Framework: framed by their approach of community organizing, CREST believes CBDM does not always require the support of the local government, and that civilian-led disaster preparedness committees ought to be strengthened to lead, mobilize and act on their own.

Interestingly, this view of oppositional state-society relations held by a progressive NGO such as CREST, is not always identical to how community members themselves view their work. As in the case of Bagumbayan, Wilma, Cecille and Gina had each been offered full-time jobs in the Barangay Hall soon after they were recognized for their leadership capacities made publicly visible during the flood evacuation drill they helped organize. Similarly Jun left his work of peddling toys and household items by bicycle, to be employed full-time in the Taguig City Hall, soon after he was also recognized for their team's leadership in CBDM. Rather than a rigid oppositional divide between state and civil society, these personal stories reveal a porous and fluid dynamic between the two. While the recruitment or professionalization of community leaders by government offices may be seen as a "loss" to local activism by NGOs which are critical of state power, for these individuals it means a gain in financial stability, employment, and a kind of political agency where they can recommend and lead programmes inside their own local government. With the nascent beginning of a new political term in 2018, the newly appointed Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction Management Officer, and the recruitment of key disaster preparedness committee officers into the Barangay, there seems to be high potential for an increase in people-led CBDM efforts in cooperation with the local government. This, however, may not necessarily lead to more overt means of challenging state support for evictions and other human rights violations.

c. Community-based disaster management as women's work

What efforts do CBDM leaders engage in? Do these actions transform root causes of their vulnerabilities? What successes and challenges do they face from more entrenched multi-scalar power relations? A recognition of people's capacities (*kapasidad*) is a foundational tenet in the practice of CBDM --shifting their role from victims or mere beneficiaries of aid, to agents who hold knowledge about their situation, are able to lead, negotiate, and act on their desires. Since the completion of their CBDM training with CREST in 2016 [Figure 17], Bagumbayan's disaster preparedness committee has co-organized a *barangay*-wide flood evacuation drill with the support of CREST staff and the Barangay. The widespread success of this effort, attended by over 800 residents as shown in the video, has led to the disaster preparedness committee's subsequent participation in other DRRM trainings by both the Barangay government and the City government of Taguig. In our interviews, all disaster preparedness committee officers spoke with great excitement and proudly celebrated their collective efforts in leading this flood drill. Gina mentioned the personal fulfillment and value she receives in being able to exercise leadership. When she first arrived as a new migrant to the *barangay* she barely knew anyone and felt estranged and isolated while her husband sought work in the city. Desire for purpose and a sense of belonging led to her involvement in CBDM. Wilma similarly enjoys continuing to coordinate among fellow officers whose friendships she finds key to sustaining interests in continued training and advocacy.

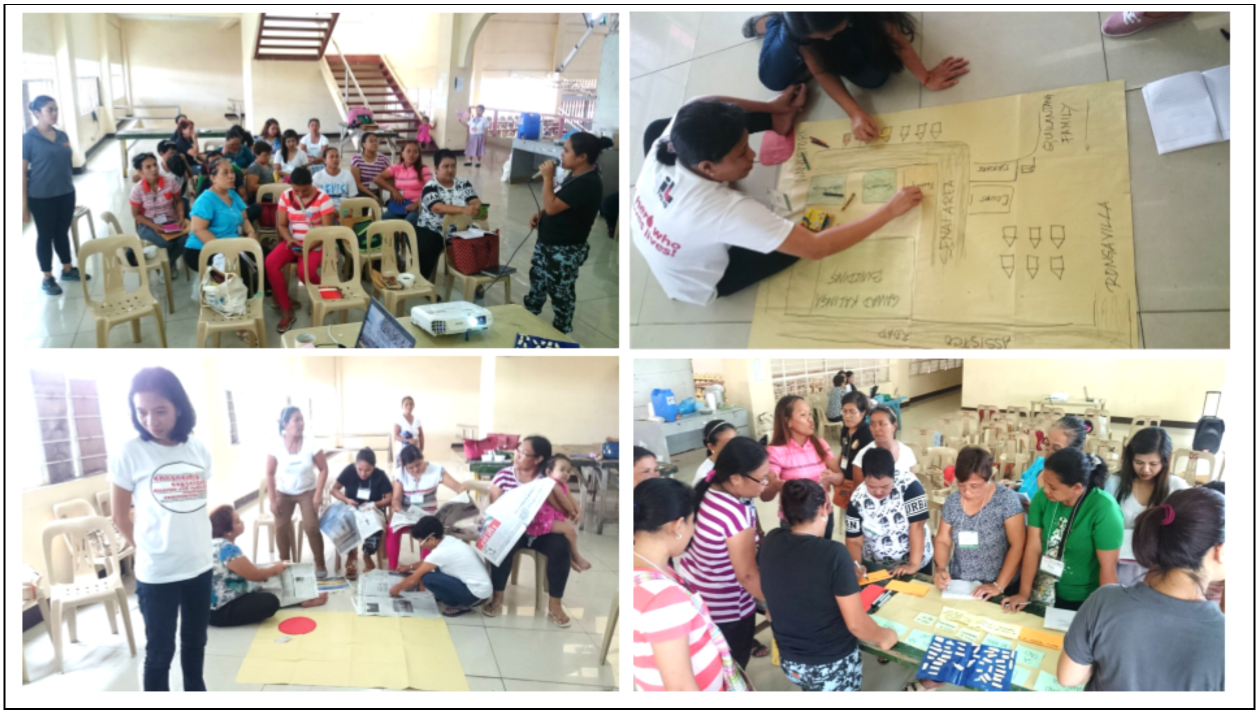

Figure 13*: CBDM training workshops at Brgy. Bagumbayan*
(Photos by CREST 2016)

After the successful conduct of the flood drill in 2016, the women officers have continued with their ongoing duties as 4Ps parent leaders and also aspire for continued CBDM trainings with CREST. They have participated in broader actions concerning multiple issues in their *barangay* such as environmental campaigns to rehabilitate Laguna de Bay[22]; women's rights advocacy through the Violence Against Women and Children help desk which is now staffed by one of the women officers; and urban poor rights across *Ugnayan.* The disaster preparedness committee in Bagumbayan is relatively small and young compared to others across Metro Manila, and CREST is also relatively young compared to other regional centres in the Citizens' Disaster Response Network; hence compared to the other types of actions and scales of mobilization undertaken by disaster preparedness committees in Chapters Six and Seven, it is difficult to evaluate the extent to which CBDM efforts in Bagumbayan have attempted to transform root causes of people's vulnerabilities. One must also take into account the distinct challenges with community organizing among the urban poor: residents in informal settlements are highly transient; participants in one workshop may have left the *barangay* when the next session is organized a few months later. It is difficult to retain the same group of individuals given the mobility in cities. Residents also come from different provinces, speak multiple dialects, and identify with varying regional identities; some have lived in their current place of residence for years, while another may have just arrived a few months ago. The informality of a disaster preparedness committee, as it is composed of voluntary members from different *puroks* or districts in Bagumbayan, also make it difficult for their leadership to be visible, identifiable or officially recognized. Hence the women officers believe they are still in great need of continued support from CREST and partner organizations to mature their efforts in the long term.

The challenge of having no formal authority, with its grassroots and communal type of leadership being reliant almost entirely on personal relationships and friendships, however, could also be its greatest resource. In his film interview Jun recounted that their group first met because they were all 4Ps parent leaders who were selected by social workers for their remarkable leadership skills and enthusiasm in inspiring peers to participate in family development sessions. Jun is the only man in the group. Like Jun, Wilma recalled the beginnings of their friendships during their participation in government-led workshops for 4Ps beneficiaries, and said that it was from such experiences including the CBDM trainings by CREST, that their bonds strengthened and their training in “community service” matured to lead voluntarily in their own neighbourhoods. In our group discussions, disaster preparedness committee officers would often be laughing together, reminiscing how much they enjoyed bonding together over different activities, enjoying games, prizes and sharing food together in these gatherings. This vivid sense of conviviality and camaraderie is a distinctive feature of the successful and continued functioning of the disaster preparedness committee.

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[22] During my fieldwork, women officers of Bagumbayan had just recently attended public events of the Save Laguna Lake Movement, which is a broad alliance organized by activist NGOs such as the Center for Environmental Concerns which I write about in Chapter Six, and *Pamalakaya-Pilipinas* (or the National Federation of Small Fisherfolk Organizations in the Philippines) in Chapter Seven.

These friendships define what is well-being for them. It is the foundation of the leadership roles that each one of them has been maturing in the past years, and gives them the confidence that even without any official titles or uniforms to wear, they can assist in disaster preparation and response efforts. Wilma shared with me in her interview that group chats and group text messaging platforms serve as their own “disaster hotline”--a way to remain in touch with one another as friends, and also a speedy way to call for a gathering, whether by CREST for a new workshop, or an urgent request by the Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office for any volunteer support during an emergency. While these are informal systems of organizing and communication, the women underscore the importance of maintaining close friendships and unity not only among themselves in the committee but in their own respective neighbourhoods. As Cecille recounts in her film interview: *“Nagkakaisa naman po ang mga tao para maibsan iyong baha. Katulad po dito sa amin, lahat po kami nagtutulong-tulong para magkaroon ng daanan”* (“The people here in my neighbourhood are united in helping one another cope with the flood. In our neighbourhood we all help one another in building a pathway for us to walk on in the flood.”) Lendy’s film interview also speaks proudly of how vital unity and cooperation is both within organizations such as the disaster preparedness committee and among residents in a neighbourhood: *“Ang mga tao rito sa amin kung sa pakikipaglaban lang hindi naman kami umaatras sa demolisyon eh. Talagang nagkakapit-bisig iyong mga tao rito upang tutulan iyong demolisyon… At kung magkakaroon ng baha o bagyo, kami mismo ang nagbabahay-bahay. Tinitignan namin ang istura ng kalagayan nila, kung kailangan na bang lumikas o tumawag ng rescue.”* (“People here in my neighbourhood do not back away from a demolition. We all really link arms here to block a demolition… And when there are floods or storms, we ourselves [members of the disaster preparedness committee] go from house to house to see what people's situations are like, and if we need to start evacuating or call [the Barangay] for rescue.")

Conclusion

In this chapter on the case study of urban poverty among informal settlers in Metro Manila, disasters are characterized by the violence of *kahirapan* or suffering and poverty. Hydrological hazards such as floods and storms cause disasters for residents of informal settlements, but they are also endangered by fires and other forms of demolitions which evict people from the homes they have built and are constantly reconstructing in informal settlements. Women officers of the disaster preparedness committee in Bagumbayan narrate gendered understandings of daily disasters which include domestic gender-based violence and concerns for children's welfare. Experiences of police violence in relation to the ongoing drug war are also present in the *barangay* which is a local power base for a political family that has staunchly supported the President's drug war. Vulnerability is defined by the sense of chronic insecurity to having one's home taken away or destroyed, including threats to life-sustaining conditions such as one's livelihood, having enough food, and safety from gender violence. Well-being on the other hand is often expressed as the ability to secure one's own dwelling place and to find belonging in the conviviality and camaraderie shared among women officers as parent leaders in the government's social welfare programme and the disaster preparedness committee.

CREST's efforts are shaped by the broader CBDM framework promoted by members of the Citizens' Disaster Response Network. With its origins in the history of the urban poor movement in the Philippines, CREST roots its practice of CBDM in community organizing processes which see the interconnections across 'DRRM', 'CCA' and broader development efforts. Given the practical constraints on the time and resources of its limited staff members vis-a-vis the scope of its work across Metro Manila, its efforts to transform the root causes of vulnerabilities among the urban poor in Barangay Bagumbayan are largely limited. The physical challenges relating to securing the welfare of over 50,000 residents in a densely overcrowded urban *barangay* in relation to earthquakes and possibly intensifying storms and floods are beyond what any NGO and its partner civilian organizations are capable of addressing, let alone the Barangay government which also has limited personnel and resources. Despite their nascent beginnings in CBDM, women officers, however, have proven capable of organizing *barangay*-wide DRRM activities; their leadership skills have been acknowledged by the Barangay government and several have been hired to work at the Barangay Hall, demonstrating the porous divide between state-civil society relations. The young disaster preparedness committee shows promising potential in continued community organizing for housing, gender and environmental rights through a broader network of progressive and activist organizations facilitated by CREST across Metro Manila.

Chapter Six:
Disasters and Smallholder Farmers

Overview

In November 2018, my research team and I travelled on an 8-hour bus ride from Metro Manila to the Province of Zambales to stay for over two weeks in the coastal agricultural Barangay of Malabago in the Municipality of Santa Cruz. We were met by Alay-Bayan Luson (ABI) staff in the *barangay* who accompanied us throughout our stay in a buddy-system, which is a standard practice they observe for security purposes; they had designated us to host families and had informed members of the disaster preparedness committee about our visit beforehand. For the film we interviewed a total of 9 disaster preparedness women officers and 2 ABI staff; outside of the film, our team also led focus group discussions among the women, some of whom included their husbands in the conversations to share more about their households' experiences with farming rice and tending to mangoes for a living. My research team and I also met with officials from both the Barangay and Municipal local government units.

As in the other case study sites, our research team asked: What is a disaster for this community? What are the causes and material manifestations of vulnerability in this community as seen in how residents shape and are shaped by their lived environments, local livelihoods, access to resources and security from violence? What kinds of social power relations are grassroots women leaders embedded in? What efforts do they engage in as leaders of their disaster preparedness committee? Do these actions transform the root causes of their vulnerabilities, and serve individual and collective well-being? What successes have they achieved, and what obstacles do they face from more entrenched multi-scalar power relations?

In this chapter I share my research team's findings from our second case study of Barangay Malabago, Santa Cruz, Zambales. Drawing from interviews with nine officers of the disaster preparedness committee, two ABI staff, and members of the Barangay and Municipal Local Government Units, I argue that in the agricultural context of smallholder rice farmers who are largely dependent on rain-fed irrigation, their experiences of disasters and vulnerability are shaped by their sense of powerlessness in the face of forces that are beyond their control: these do not only include intensifying climatic conditions in the form of more frequent super typhoons, but also environmental degradation caused by large mining companies, the persecution of environmentalists, and compounding debt due to loss in harvest. Apart from the annual meteorological seasons of *tag-ulan* (rainy season) and *tag-init* (dry season), farmers also speak of a "*panahon ng tag-hirap*", a time or season of suffering marked by the devastating loss of one's harvest, plunging deeper into debt, or facing grave food or financial insecurity, which are in itself experiences of disaster. Well-being on the other hand is intimately tied to women leaders' aspirations: a better life for their children, who could continue or similarly assume leadership positions in their community as the women have been cultivating through a strong sense of camaraderie and conviviality shared among one another. While state-society relations remain fraught with tension and uncertainty due to the continued operation of the nickel mines in the region, the women do not speak of their work as an overt challenge to state or corporate power; their stories instead centre on the desire to strengthen their leadership capabilities leading grassroots efforts for Malabago and beyond with the support of ABI and the presence of other environmental activist organizations in Santa Cruz, Zambales.

I. Farmers and an Environmentalism of the Poor

Super typhoon Ompong (international name: Mangkhut), an equivalent of a Signal Number 5-super typhoon, made landfall in the province of Cagayan, Philippines on September 14, 2018 and subsequently impacted Hong Kong and parts of southern China. It was the strongest typhoon to make landfall in the Philippines since super typhoon Yolanda (international name: Haiyan) in 2013. Preemptive and forced evacuations were conducted across the regions of Ilocos, Cagayan Valley and Cordillera. At Ompong's wake the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council reported that 80 of the 127 killed hailed from the mining town of Itogon where landslides buried houses along the mountain slopes. The Department of Agriculture calculated PHP 26.7 billion (USD 5.2 million) worth of damages to agriculture, the highest since Yolanda. Rice production was hit the hardest with damage amounting to PHP 14.5 billion, followed by corn at PHP 8.2 billion. Region III or Central Luzon, the areas served by Alay-Bayan Luson (ABI), incurred the greatest agricultural losses nationwide at PHP 13.9

billion, particularly for the provinces of Aurora, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac and Zambales [Figure 14].

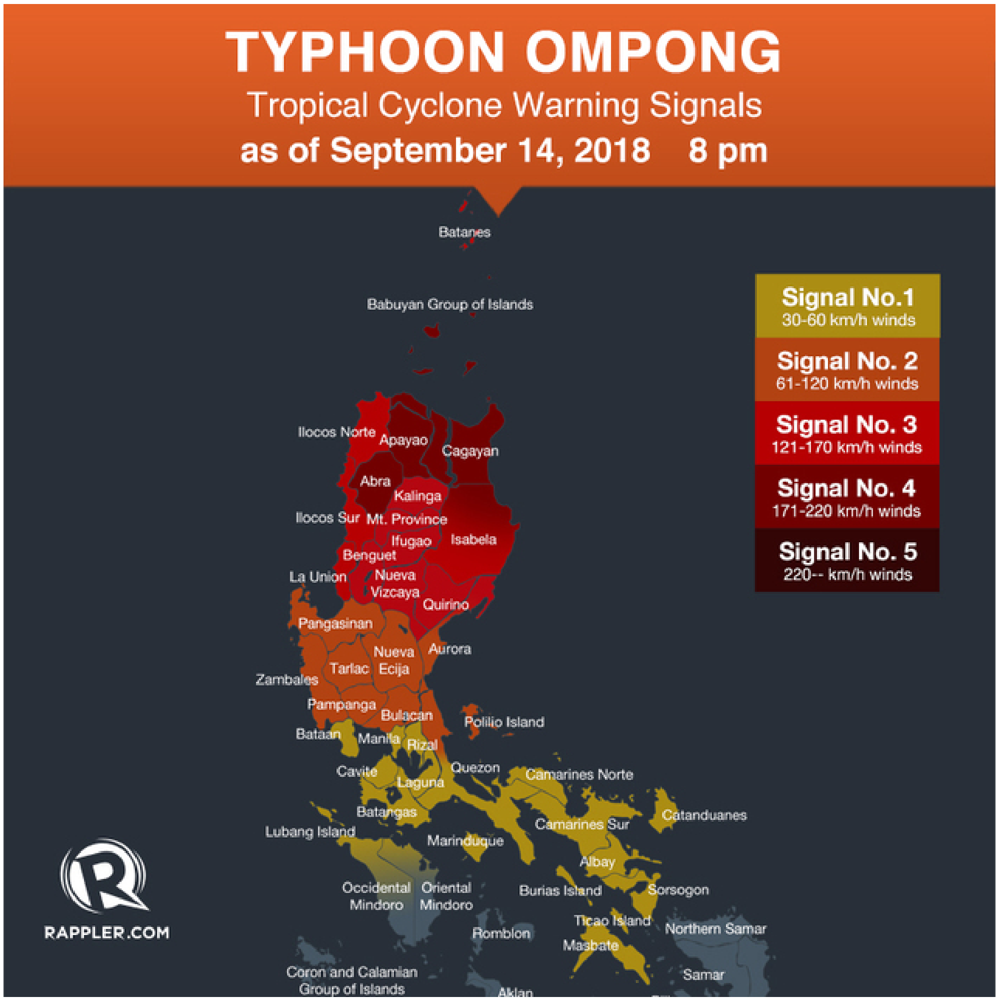
TYPHOON OMPONG
Tropical Cyclone Warning Signals
as of September 14, 2018 8 pm
Signal No.1
30-60 km/h winds
Signal No. 2
61-120 km/h winds
Signal No. 3
121-170 km/h winds
Signal No. 4
171-220 km/h winds
Signal No. 5
220-- km/h winds
Batanes
Babuyan Group of Islands
Ilocos Norte
Apayao
Cagayan
Abra
Kalinga
Ilocos Sur
Mt. Province
Ifugao
Isabela
Benguet
La Union
Nueva Vizcaya
Quirino
Pangasinan
Nueva Ecija
Aurora
Tarlac
Zambales
Pampanga
Bulacan
Polillo Island
Bataan
Manila
Rizal
Cavite
Laguna
Quezon
Camarines Norte
Batangas
Camarines Sur
Catanduanes
Lubang Island
Marinduque
Albay
Occidental Mindoro
Oriental Mindoro
Burias Island
Sorsogon
Romblon
Ticao Island
Masbate
Northern Samar
Samar
Coron and Calamian Group of Islands
Aklan
RAPPLER.COM

***Figure 14**: Map of provinces in Luzon affected by Super Typhoon Ompong (Rappler 2018)*

After Ompong had left the country, the public and mass media praised the relatively low casualties wrought by such a catastrophic storm, held in comparison with the over 10,000 killed by Yolanda. My conversations with CDRC staff, however, highlighted the severity of farmers' suffering which could not be quantified by the death toll. I arrived in Manila to begin fieldwork at the tail end of Ompong, and staff from CDRN's regional centres were sent all across Luzon for relief delivery operations and to support rapid needs assessment by disaster preparedness committees from affected communities. My conversations with Tita Jeza illuminated what is often unseen by the general public: farmers lost three months' worth of harvest, which for smallholders would also mean their very own food supply. When one is desperate to find the family's next meal, compounded by anxieties from debt incurred without a harvest to pay them off, surviving disasters is not simply about staying alive during a storm --it is about life and making a living before and after the storm has passed. Musing over the intensifying storms that now frequent the country more, Tita Jeza and I lamented the challenges in climate change adaptation efforts in agricultural communities when the more fundamental crises of poverty and dispossession remain unresolved in their own present day living conditions.

In a study conducted by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies on the impacts of natural disasters on agriculture, food security and natural resources in the Philippines, the authors noted that from the period of 2007 to 2011, the highest level of damage to rice farming due to drought and floods occurred in Region II while typhoons most severely impacted rice farming in Region III (Israel and Briones 2013, 26-30). Approximately 85.2% of the country's agricultural production is susceptible to disasters. Rice is the primary source of calories nationally, and disasters affecting rice production have detrimental impacts on national food supply. Super typhoon Yolanda's overall damage to the agricultural sector amounted to USD 1.4 billion (FAO 2018a); Yolanda destroyed 67,000 hectares of rice crops, with a million farmers' livelihoods impacted (Di Nunzio 2013), driving nearly a million people into poverty (Bowen 2015). Small-holder farmers are one of the most vulnerable groups in the country where households carry the brunt of disaster impacts and suffer from food insecurity and the lack of diverse coping strategies (Anttila-Hughes and Hsiang 2013). Mangrove ecosystems which prove one of the best buffers against typhoons, coastal flooding and storm surges have been severely deteriorated (Ida Gabrielsson 2018), with large scale mining development as a primary cause of environmental degradation and the loss of rural livelihoods (Holden 2015) as seen in Zambales.

Among all the regions in the country, Region III or Central Luzon ranks the top producer of rice contributing close to 20% of national yields; and of the region's total rice production in 2017, 92% were from irrigated rice fields and 8% from rain-fed rice paddies (Philippine Statistics Authority 2018). The top rice producing regions in the country coincidentally receive the highest number of typhoons annually. Projected climate change impacts on agricultural production in the country are dire, with predicted rice production losses due to regionally changing precipitation, seasonal flooding and landslides. It is therefore undisputed that extreme weather-related events and shifts in weather patterns disrupt agricultural economic activities, threaten food security, and impact farmers disproportionately. The study by Israel and Briones (2013) concluded that typhoons, floods and droughts have the most significant impact on agriculture not on the national level but on rice production specifically at provincial and local levels, therefore requiring site-specific assistance for rice farmers who are in need not only of consumable relief goods but non-consumptive assistance such as post-disaster employment. I would add, however, that each farming community is also situated in its own distinct political ecology of endangerment --these are shaped by a multitude of state and non-state actors, and by hazards that extend beyond the weather. Community members who survive disaster events such as super typhoon Ompong are not merely passive victims in need of aid in the relief, recovery and rehabilitation phases, but are also political subjects who can lead, organize, resist, and shape and interact with their own lived environments.

In addition to the fatal threats of intensifying weather conditions, a report published by Global Witness (2019) ranks the Philippines as "the deadliest country for defenders of the environment"[23], replacing Brazil's murderous record against land protectors. The report's investigations foregrounded how the president's ongoing drug war has fuelled an existing culture of state impunity from previous administrations, emboldening multinational corporations, the army, paramilitias, and local state agencies to use armed violence against communities and social movements. The number of killings among environmental activists rose since the newly elected government came to power in 2016, with 48 recorded deaths in 2017--the highest in Asia, and among them community members who led protests against coal, agribusiness, land grabs, logging and mining. As seen in the case of Malabago and ABI's work across Central Luzon, CBDM takes on a lethal turn when the work for surviving disasters involves questioning corporate power which are often protected by state forces, and protesting against environmental degradation. While "environmental defense" and "activism" falls outside the official scope of

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[23] "Philippines is deadliest country for defenders of environment" (2019, July 30): https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/jul/30/philippines-deadliest-country-defenders-environment-global-witness

"DRRM", in the context of farmers' lived realities, community members do not differentiate between such categories: as farmers work directly with the land, and whose survival and livelihoods depend directly on the conditions and resources in their local environment, they cannot possibly divorce "environmental issues" from their survival of disasters (Martinez-Alier 2003; Guha and Martinez-Alier 1997; Guha 1989).

II. ABI and activism as community-based disaster management

Alay Bayan-Luson, Inc. (ABI) is one of the 17 regional centers that compose the Citizens' Disaster Response Network, tasked to serve primarily Region III or the Central Luzon Region. Its current scope of work, however, also extends to the adjacent provinces of Region I or the Ilocos Region, and Region II or Cagayan Valley. After the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in 1991, a group of people's organizations and service institutions mobilized to form the Central Luzon Disaster Response Network to serve impacted communities in the Central Luzon provinces of Pampanga, Tarlac and Zambales. The Network later created ABI which was formally established in the year 2000 and registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission as a non-profit, non-stock social development agency. Today ABI is also registered with and licensed by the Department of Social Welfare and Development to implement relief, rehabilitation, preparedness and mitigation programmes. As do other regional centers, ABI maintains a strong commitment to what it calls a "pro-people" and "development-oriented" approach to CBDM, which focuses on building and strengthening a regional grassroots network of people's organizations which can address their communities' vulnerabilities as caused by poverty, powerlessness, environmental degradation and political abuse. As per its official programme reports, ABI structures its efforts according to these four pillars:

1. The Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation Programme aims to assist vulnerable communities develop their capabilities in disaster management through:
    - Conduct community-based disaster management trainings
    - Formation of disaster preparedness committees
    - Formulation of community counter disaster plan
    - Training of *barangay* health workers
    - Conduct of non-structural mitigation efforts
    - Reforestation for mitigation and food security

    - Creation of communal and herbal gardens
    - Skills training (first aid, rescue, evacuation, community drill)

2. The Emergency Assistance Programme aims to provide immediate assistance to calamity victims that includes provision of food and other essential relief items through:
    - Relief delivery operations
    - Medical missions

3. The Rehabilitation Programme aims to assist communities in their efforts to rebuild people's livelihoods after disasters through community-based projects geared towards strengthening self-help capacity:
    - Dispersal of seeds and livestock animals
    - Shelter assistance
    - Project management trainings

4. The Advocacy and Partnership Programme aims to engage with solidarity initiatives locally and internationally:
    - Promote public awareness on disaster-related issues
    - Campaign to exert pressure on government for appropriate and prompt action
    - Establish partnerships with local and international donors and partners for services to the most vulnerable sectors of Central Luzon
    - Mobilize volunteers among the less vulnerable sectors for the delivery of needed services to calamity victims and the vulnerable sectors

While CDRN's regional centres are united in their shared advocacy and practice of CBDM across the Philippines, each one also exhibits particular strengths specializing in responding to the challenges unique to their localities. ABI's strength lies in its practice of community organizing wherein disaster preparedness committees are skilled in their conduct of house-to-house surveys and rapid assessment needs. While it is not listed above as one of ABI's programmatic efforts, their disaster preparedness committees are also often invited to participate actively in environmental campaigns including anti-mining protests alongside other POs and CSOs in broader social movements. It is their involvement in such mobilizations which make the concrete connections across the hazards, vulnerabilities and disasters experienced by marginalized communities --and as state and corporate power are contested in such actions, antagonistic and even violent relationships with certain private and state interests can breed.[24]

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[24] In the list of "communist terrorist groups" released by the Department of National Defense on November 2019, ABI is one of 7 CDRN regional centres identified in the list.

I got on a bus from Metro Manila on a day trip to visit ABI's main office in Pampanga in October 2018 to prepare for the upcoming fieldwork. I was met by an ABI staff member and together we made our way off the main highway, and she walked me through a labyrinth of small alleyways and over a foot bridge to reach their office, a small gated house the staff have been renting for years to live and work in. To my surprise, hanging outside their gate was a large printed tarpaulin demanding justice for the death of Wilhelmus Geertman, a Dutch national who had formerly served as ABI's Executive Director. He was gunned down inside this very office in 2012. My heart sank with fear and anguish: I stood there at the gate and saw that in my mind I was also face to face with the death of my friend Dexter, an Indigenous youth leader who was shot and killed in the island of Boracay in 2013 when we worked together on securing their ancestral land claims disputed by private hotel owners; like the SRRM Summit speakers in Chapter One, I saw too my *baylan* (healer-elder) friend from Minadano who fled for asylum overseas while her *datu* (chieftain) friends were slain by bullets fired by both communist rebels and the military for refusing to pledge ideological allegiance to either side. This grievous reality has come back to greet me, or I have returned to greet it once again.

I stepped into the office, greeted by warm smiles among other ABI staff members who were expecting my visit to plan my research team's upcoming fieldwork in Zambales. They gave me a tour of their home office: familiar posters calling for "peace without hunger", proclaiming "no peace without justice", with painted images and stencilled letters in bright and bold colours. I was reminded of Latin America, of brilliant revolutions, of Freire and Guevarra. ABI staff later told me more about Geertman, who they affectionately called "Wim". A theologian and volunteer missionary, he came to the Philippines in 1970 and lived in the town of Baler for over 20 years working with farmers, fisherfolk, and Indigenous communities on human rights issues and land struggles. As recounted in Chapter Four, he joined people's organizations that proliferated during the Marcos martial law years, and in subsequent administrations remained a strong critic of national government programmes such as mining operations in the province of Aurora. Under his leadership, ABI made bold strides not simply in expanding their relief delivery operations but in connecting DRRM efforts with environmental activism; ABI therefore organized community members impacted by logging, mining and even armed conflict to participate in direct actions in addition to their CBDM trainings. ABI staff members believe this work cost him his life when two men, later identified as military operatives, murdered him in their office on July 23, 2012. To date the case remains unresolved and suspects have not been tried for homicide.

In October 2013, Typhoon Santi (international name: Nari) entered the Philippine Area of Responsibility and raised the Signal Number 3 alert on Zambales and other parts of Region III. ABI and other CDRC staff members arrived in Santa Cruz and other parts of Luzon to provide relief delivery operations. This eventually led to ABI's conduct of CBDM trainings in Barangay Malabago in July 2014 --however, it was not just a typhoon which initiated ABI's presence in the community. Other activist and civil society organizations such as *Alyansa Tigil Mina* (Alliance Against Mining)[25], Philippine Movement for Climate Justice, Philippine Miseror Partnership, and *Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino* (Solidarity of Filipino Workers), among others have previously been present in the area for environmental justice action (Environmental Justice Atlas 2015). The Center for Environmental Concerns (CEC)[26] had also previously been community organizing in *barangays* across Zambales including Barangay Malabago in light of socio-economic and environmental issues caused by mining operations in the province. In a fact-finding mission report published in 2012 by the Movement for the Protection of the Environment (or Move Now!), large-scale open-pit mining companies extracting nickel and chromite ores were identified to be responsible for the environmental and health issues in Santa Cruz. They are: Benguet Corporation Nickel Mines Inc. and its contractor DMCI, one of the largest family-owned Filipino conglomerates; Zambales Diversified Metals Corporation which is also owned by DMCI Holdings Inc.; Eramen Minerals Inc. which was founded by local investors to operate exclusively in Santa Cruz; Shangfil Mining and Trading Corp.; and Loren and Leoni or LnL Archipelago Minerals Inc., which is owned by the Filipinas Mining Corporation.

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[25] Alyansa Tigil Mina on citizens' action against mining in Zambales (2018): https://www.alyansatigilmina.net/single-post/2018/01/05/Environmental-destruction-continues-in-Zambales-due-to-mining

[26] Results of a fact-finding mission by CEC was published by the news outlet Bulatlat (2016): https://www.bulatlat.com/2016/03/04/study-says-zambales-red-flood-possibly-linked-to-mining/

In a study conducted to assess the health of Santa Cruz's residents, the ten leading causes of morbidity include acute upper respiratory infections related to mining activities in the area (Farin 2018). Recommendations have been made to the Municipal government to provide residents with free regular medical check-ups for health monitoring; to confirm through the analysis of blood samples if hypertension among residents is attributed to their exposure to toxic metals; to provide alternative sources of treated water; and to ultimately close the mines if health conditions will continue to be put at risk (Ibid). Similarly in an article on the location of large-scale mining projects in typhoon-prone areas in the Philippines, Holden provides a map to illustrate the overlap of metallic mining projects and typhoon vulnerability (2015, 453). The Municipality of Santa Cruz in Zambales ranks high in its vulnerability to these multiple compounding threats.

The disaster preparedness committee formed at the end of ABI's CBDM training in 2013 was consequently given the name "*Sama-Sagip*" (Rescue Together): a hyphenated entity referring to the merging of functions of community-based disaster management by ABI and environmental justice work by CEC. In 2015 ABI staff supported the disaster preparedness committee to conduct a house-to-house survey across the entire *barangay* in order to create hazard maps. Only a week after this exercise, Typhoon Lando (international name: Koppu) arrived and raised alert levels to Signal Number 4 for the province of Aurora where it first made landfall. What the disaster preparedness committee in Malabago intended to be just an "evacuation drill" became a real experience of leading actual evacuation procedures for their families and neighbours. A catastrophic brownish-red coloured mud-flood washed over the Municipality of Santa Cruz. It contained nickel-laterite and submerged entire rice paddies in toxic sludge which also seeped into irrigation systems, killed fishes in the rivers and fishponds, and damaged reefs as it poured out into the sea. The mud-floods drew extensive national mass media coverage on-site and uncovered how illegal logging and malpractices in the mining operations upland caused the damage to lowland *barangays*. The extensive damage and environmental destruction that followed Typhoon Lando remained etched in the memory of Malabago's residents such that Super Typhoon Ompong (international name: Mangkhut) and Typhoon Rosita (international name: Yutu), which came through Luzon less than a month apart in 2018, reminded them of the dramatic floods that swept through their *barangay* only three years ago.

ABI, CEC and the *Sama-Sagip* disaster preparedness committee which they have organized, continue to work together as part of a much broader civil society and activist movement. On the first year anniversary of typhoon Lando, CEC continues to mobilize Santa Cruz residents through the "Move Now!" campaign[27]. The Concerned Citizens of Santa Cruz succeeded in filing a petition in 2016 to the Supreme Court for Writ of Kalikasan or the constitutional provision to protect one's rights to a healthy environment. This included a petition to the High Court to order the mining firms to pay fines and penalties and a PHP 25 billion rehabilitation fund. Under the leadership of the late Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Regina Lopez, a staunch environmentalist who was appointed by the President into his Cabinet and had shut down 23 mines in the country in the short span of her 10-month term, Zambales Diversified Metals Corporation and Benguet Corporation Nickel Mines, Inc. were also suspended; the Supreme Court similarly issued a Temporary Environmental Protection Order on all mining companies in Santa Cruz in 2016. With the controversial removal of Lopez from the Department by the Commission on Appointments, short-term gains won by grassroots environmental campaigns and lobbying started to slip away: in 2018 the Court of Appeals decided not to issue an Environmental Protection Order to permanently stop nickel mining in Santa Cruz.[28] This broader history of environmental justice activism, which the work of CBDM in Barangay Malabago continues to form part of, highlights an understanding of disasters as not being simply inflicted by meteorological hazards, but as shaped by compounding socio-political and economic forces of endangerment. CBDM in turn fundamentally includes environmental activism.

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[27] "People of Sta. Cruz, Zambales call for justice for environmental destruction by large-scale mining" (Center for Environmental Concerns 2016):
http://www.cecphils.org/on-the-1st-year-of-typhoon-lando-people-of-sta-cruz-zambales-call-for-justice-for-environmental-destruction-by-large-scale-mining/

[28] "Environmental destruction continues in Zambales due to mining" (Alyansa Tigil Mina 2018):
https://www.alyansatigilmina.net/single-post/2018/01/05/Environmental-destruction-continues-in-Zambales-due-to-mining

III. Case Study: Barangay Malabago, Santa Cruz, Zambales

Barangay Magiting (Village Heroes) - 2/3
Watch later
Share
BARANGAY MAGITING
(VILLAGE HEROES)
The 2nd of 3 short films on the politics of
community-based disaster management in the Philippines
Watch on YouTube

Figure 15: Video of second case study

The Municipality of Santa Cruz lies at the northernmost tip of Zambales. The Municipality has a population of 60,000 people in a total land area of 440 square kilometres[29]. It is classified as a first class municipality determined by its average annual revenues of over PHP 55 million generated primarily from the mining industry. Despite these high revenues residents living by the coast are small-scale fishers and those living further inland are predominantly smallholder farmers working on rain-fed rice paddies. The land becomes steeply inclined as it progresses further eastward where mountainous areas are sites for logging and mining.

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[29] For comparison in scale and density, the total population of the entire Municipality of Santa Cruz roughly equals the total population of an urban *barangay* such as Bagumbayan in Taguig City who live in less than a tenth of the land area in Santa Cruz.

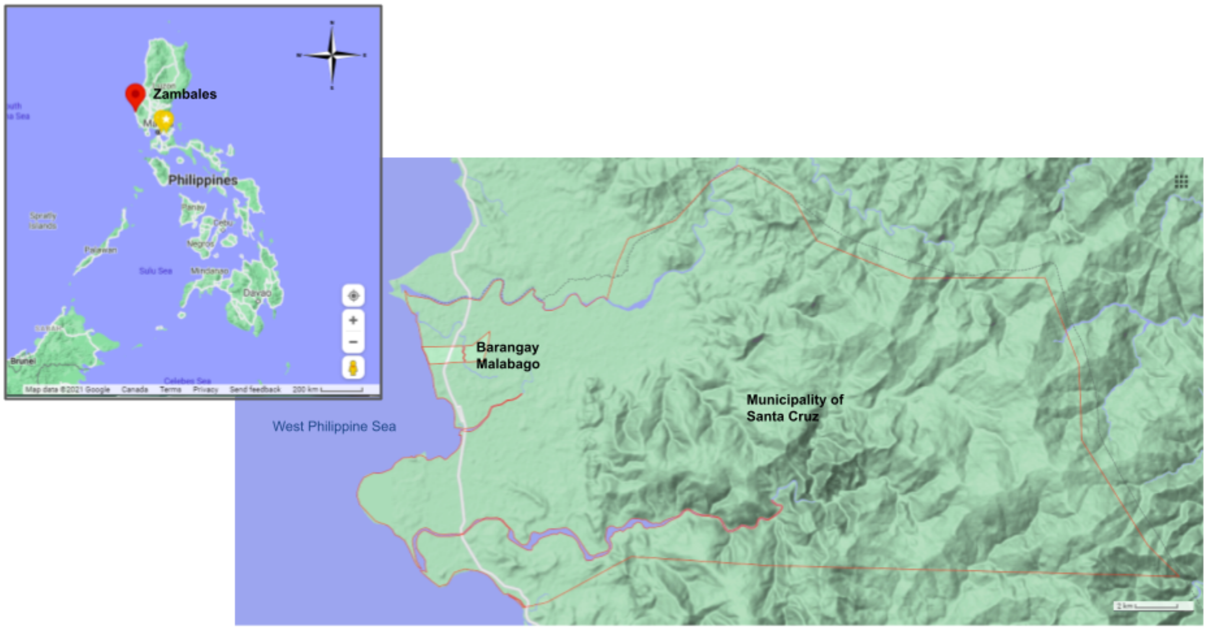

Figure 16: Map of 2nd field site: Brgy. Malabago, Santa Cruz, Zambales
(Map by the author using Google Maps 2021)

The Municipality of Santa Cruz is further subdivided into 25 *barangays*, one of which is Barangay Malabago located at the municipality's northernmost tip. The *barangay* population is estimated at only 2,300 people living in a total land area of 2.2 square kilometres. On the first days of our field stay in Malabago, the disaster preparedness committee officers invited me to introduce myself to the Barangay officials as a visiting researcher is expected to give a "courtesy call" to the local government unit. Seated around a table, the men gave me a proud introduction to the historical origins of their *barangay*, and shared that the name originated from the Malabago tree which the native Aetas often used. In their first encounters with Spanish settlers, the Aeta spoke often of the tree and hence the same name was given to the *barangay*. One of my research teammates who has worked extensively with nomadic Aeta communities throughout Central Luzon remarked how these Indigenous communities have long been displaced in Zambales by centuries of migrants from neighbouring provinces.

When asked about their DRRM efforts, the Barangay officials also took pride in sharing about the food and medical supplies they have readily stored in preparation for times of calamity.

The nearby elementary school serves as their trusted evacuation centre in times of typhoons. It was clear, however, that not everyone in the Barangay knew of the formation or existence of the disaster preparedness committee --it is after all an "informal" organization of women volunteers, without uniforms or IDs, and who do not have any official mandate to fulfill in the eyes of the elected Barangay officials. The Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction Management Officer himself was unclear of his own estimates of household numbers, except for a woman *Kagawad* (Barangay Councilor) who was a former officer of the disaster preparedness committee herself and who had helped in a household survey conducted by ABI staff in 2015. Referring to their own hand-painted map of the *barangay* hanging on the office wall, officers toured me through the 7 *puroks* or neighbourhoods in the *barangay* [Figure 17].

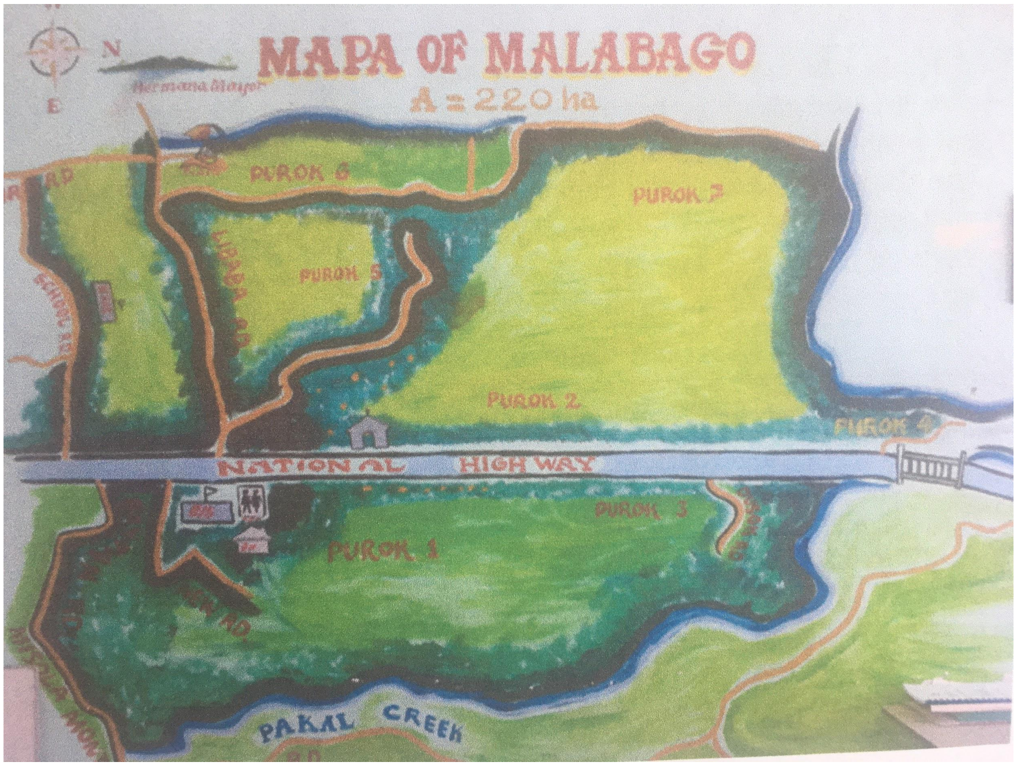

Figure 17: *A hand-painted map of Brgy. Malabago in the Barangay Hall (Photo by author: November 2018)*

The national highway is the main road cutting across the centre of the *barangay,* with Purok 1 and 3 on its east side and Purok 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7 on its west side. Creeks and other waterways flow downstream from higher elevations on the eastern side and out towards the West

Philippine Sea. The *barangay* is mostly covered in rain-fed rice paddies, with some swampy grounds and wet areas used to farm fish. Purok 5, 6 and 7 which are on lower ground and closest to the coast are the most flood prone areas in the *barangay.* At the northernmost tip of Purok 7 is a place residents colloquially refer to as "Isla Cosme". This "island" used to be connected to the mainland and is now separated by water because of the dramatic changes to the coastline caused by the flash floods and mud-floods brought about by Typhoon Cosme. In our focus group interview, disaster preparedness committee leaders speak of how challenging it is to patrol the coastal neighbourhoods of Purok 6 and 7, including Isla Cosme, where a handful of families live on: not only are huts much farther apart and need to be reached by longer walks on foot, but they are also most vulnerable to rising waves from the sea, farthest from the reach of Barangay or Municipality-led rescue operations, and therefore need to be evacuated the earliest before forecasted storms arrive. As seen in the film, the coast along Purok 7 is one of the areas the disaster preparedness committee had selected for ongoing mangrove rehabilitation in order to provide more protection for the fishing families who live there.

a. What is a disaster here?

To answer my research questions, my team and I invited disaster preparedness committee officers to semi-structured one-on-one interviews and also *kuwentuhan* or group storytelling sessions. Many of these conversations took place in our host families' own homes, which allowed for women officers to converse with us individually or in the presence of their families. They narrated their own experiences and understandings of disasters in the gendered spaces of the kitchen, in the privacy of their living quarters, and outdoors in vegetable gardens. These are spaces where the women simultaneously performed their domestic and care labour as mothers, wives, aunts, neighbours, and women grassroots leaders in their *barangay.* The *Sama-Sagip* disaster preparedness committee also built its own training centre as seen in the film. This simple semi-enclosed structure is a multi-purpose venue that is used for their meetings, trainings and also serves as a storage for relief and in-kind donations to be distributed across the *barangay* post-disaster. The women officers hosted our daily group conversations at the training centre; they would remind one another to gather there every day for the duration of our field visit. The training centre also has an outdoor kitchen where they took turns daily to cook our meals together; their children were also regular attendees to these discussions and enjoyed watching their mothers rehearse for their interviews on camera. I write that these sites allowed for our all-women research team and the women officers, and occasionally other members of their households, to discuss extensively in an enjoyable, relaxed and comfortable manner which allowed for *pa-hinga* (to rest and let breathe).

"Ano po ang pinaka matitinding panganib dito?" ("What are the gravest dangers here in your community?") *Ikwento nyo po kung ano ang karanasan ninyo sa mga panahon ng bagyo o tag-tuyo."* ("Please tell us stories of your experiences during times of typhoons or drought.") There is a consensus among all the women officers that storms and the floods that result from the heavy downpour pose the greatest threats to their lives. As farmers or members of farming households, they each recounted the typhoons that have occurred as disasters in their recent memory. Continuous rains for three days bring about floods which are the combination of rain water flowing down from the mountains and also by high tide entering from the sea. This mixture of salt and rain water submerge their rice paddies and kill what they have planted. While impacts on their agrarian livelihoods are a key theme in the women's narratives, it is important to note that gender disparities remain in rural agriculture across the country brought about by societal and cultural norms (FAO 2018b, 23-36). While all the women officers interviewed work alongside men from their households in rice farming and tending mangoes, the women's roles remain largely focused on childcare and domestic duties; in the fields they are often "assistants" to male family members despite their participation in planting, harvesting, processing and marketing of produce. Rural women's contribution to rural economies still remains generally undervalued, if not invisible and also therefore unpaid (WAGI 2003). Agriculture is still seen as a man's profession in the Philippines; hence as will be seen in the narratives detailed below, husbands present during the discussions volunteered more information regarding the effects of disasters on their livelihoods as 'heads of the family'; meanwhile the women's narratives focused more on their experiences as community leaders.

Remy, the current chairwoman of the disaster preparedness committee, spoke of how the mud-floods brought down from the mines by the heavy rains would contaminate the rice grains with brown sandy sediments--they could therefore no longer sell or eat the spoiled rice. Like her fellow women officers, Remy helps her husband Bong in the fields in addition to caring for the household; they subsist on their yearly harvests and sell what is remaining. As their adult children now work in town, Remy is able to attend workshops and trainings offered by NGOs like ABI, and activities relating to disaster preparedness and response fill her time. As shown in the film, Bong who lives and farms in Purok 1 spoke of the 70% loss in his rice yields due to super typhoons Ompong and Rosita in 2018. Walking us through his fields, he told us how the last two typhoons submerged them completely: *"Iyong baha hanggang sa daanan, lubog lahat ng lupa parang lawa; hanggang baiwang ang tubig, at lubog talaga ang mga tanim kaya matinding sakripisyo talaga."* ("The flood submerged even the main road, and all of this land was underwater as if we were on a lake; the flood water was waist-deep, and everything I planted was drowned and so it truly was very difficult.") While both husband and wife are devastated by these losses in livelihood, Bong explained that he is the one who attends to filing paperwork and following up with the Barangay and Municipal governments for post-disaster assistance. He shared that this is because he and most of his fellow men are traditionally the ones who are registered in farmers' databases in the Municipal Hall, a phenomena that is well documented as a barrier to gender equality in agriculture including land rights (PAKISAMA 2015; Oxfam 2016). On the other hand, Remy is busy with informal community organizing labour among her fellow women officers in working with partner NGOs.

Cardo, another smallholder rice farmer whose wife is also a disaster preparedness officer, recounted how he harvested only 5 cavans (or 250 kilos) of rice in 2018 due to Ompong and Rosita, when he could have harvested 15 cavans (or 750 kilos). The amount he was able to salvage is only 1 to 3 months' worth of rice for his family's own subsistence, and how he would find cash to purchase food in the coming months remains to be thought about. *Tag-tuyo* or *tag-init* (the dry or hot season) happens every year from January until June, peaking sometime in April, May and June; if the rains are late, the heat can extend to July. Like most of the smallholder farming families that the women officers belong to, Cardo's family owns two cows. In the event of a severe drought, more than their own human survival, their animals' lives are most threatened when the soil starts to crack dry and their fields turn brown: *"Ililibing mo* *nalang ang 15,000 pesos"* ("You will just have to bury PHP15,000 [when your cow dies]") --the equivalent of the minimum wage for a month, or for those more reliant on subsistence agriculture and the informal economy, can be a significant portion of a family's life savings. As it is important for smallholder farmers and farm workers to find work during the dry season, many in Malabago also take part in the informal economy such as vending, working in the shopping mall at the centre of town, while others migrate to Manila like Cardo's own son, and even overseas to find contractual work. To supplement the precarity of both agricultural work and cash economy, planting vegetables in their own backyards and catching fish in the creeks or by the mangroves offer some additional sustenance which they had offered generously to us during our fieldwork.

Josie too spoke of how Typhoon Cosme (international name: Halong) blew down giant centuries-old mango trees in 2008. The winds were so strong that most of these massive trees were severely uprooted and consequently died, while others survived; those who tend to mango trees for a living continue to spray the living branches of these fallen trees to induce flowering and fruiting. Ten years later, super typhoon Ompong felled more of the surviving mango trees. Tending to the world-famous carabao mangoes can be profitable if one's harvest is successful. For Josie's husband and the husbands of other disaster preparedness officers who tend to the mango trees in Malabago, they need capital to purchase chemical solutions to induce flowering and fruiting, and gasoline to run the motors of their spray machines. It is a delicate and labour-intensive challenge to produce sweet fruits with smooth and blemish-free skins; and as Josie recounts in the film, women stay at the bottom of the mango trees to assist the men who climb, spray and harvest. They start spraying the trees in September in time for a harvest 120 days later in January or February. One diligently waits for tiny flowers to bloom, keeping a close watch over them until they form small fruits the size of one's thumb; these have to be quickly wrapped individually with paper packets, often folded at home by hand by women and children, so as to protect the young fruits from being eaten by birds and insects. Those who tend to the mango trees for a living guard the wrapped fruits, hoping they would grow and ripen successfully. A financier who lends them seed capital takes a cut from the profits, which are split 70-30% or even 80-20% between the debtor and the labourers. Josie recounts: *"Naubos ang mga tanim na palay dahil binaha nung Ompong. Gusto sanang makabawi sa pag-spray ng mangga,* *pero na-Rosita naman ang mga bulaklak at bunga; nawala rin ang solusyon at nilipad na ang mga bulaklak."* ("All our rice was lost from the floods during super typhoon Ompong. We were hoping to redeem some profits at least from the mangoes, but typhoon Rosita blew away all the flowers and small fruits that started to form; all the solution we sprayed were also washed away.")

Maria also recounted how typhoon Lando washed out the first batch of mangrove seedlings they had started to plant in 2015. In memory of Geertman's death, ABI staff supported the disaster preparedness committee's plan of reforesting mangroves along Malabago's coastline and the initiative was first launched on his first death anniversary. Storms, however, continue to threaten what community leaders hope would protect them from future storms, and hence they have continued to regularly visit areas of the coast to continue planting every year as shown in the film.

The hazards are not only hydrological. When I asked how the seasons or the weather affected their lives, like most of the men in Malabago who farm or work in the fields Bong shared: *"Tag-hirap kami rito. Kung hindi kami kakayod, wala kaming ibang maaasahan."* ("We live in times of suffering. If we do not toil, there is no one else we can count on.") His remark highlights that in addition to *tag-ulan* (rainy season) or *tag-tuyo* (dry season), there is another season they live with: *tag-hirap*, a time of suffering or hardship that is brought about not only by the weather. All the rice paddies are dependent on the rain for irrigation (*sahod-ulan*) and hence they can only plant one cycle of rice each year. If there is no rain, nothing they plant in their rice paddies or backyard gardens will grow; and if there is too much rain, everything they plant is also at risk of drowning. The women shared the seasonal cycles they work with each year: in June when the rain begins to moisten the soil, their husbands begin to till the land and germinate rice seedlings (*pagpupunla*); if the rains continue, they begin planting rice in their rain-fed paddies. Harvest time usually falls in October or November if rainfall is sufficient. The seed capital to purchase seedlings and fertilizer are, however, often loaned by smallholder farmers from creditors -- if a typhoon destroys one's crops, the farmer falls into compounding debt year after year. Another rice farmer, Lena, explained in the film how prices are not dictated by farmers like her but by middlemen who buy their harvest from them. If one takes a loan from a debtor before planting rice, the debtor takes a cut from the harvest as part of the loan payment. *Mambubukid* or *manggagawang bukid*, those who do not own their own land and work on another's plot, are hired to help till, plant and harvest: they too suffer if the harvest is significantly diminished as they can be left unpaid in wage or not provided a share of the harvest that was due them.

While disasters impact the entire household, women officers tell us about the particular hardships they endure with regard to caring for small children. Unpaid care work, the majority of which includes cleaning, cooking and caring for family members including elderly relatives within the household and in the wider neighbourhood, is most often shouldered by women and girls. While they might not hold the documents to prove land ownership or reports for typhoon damages to their crops, women farmers have significant control over household decisions and expenses (Oxfam 2020). This was vividly evident even during our field visit when the men of our host families would depart early to either work in the fields or travel to town; whereas the women filled their everyday routines with preparing children for school, cooking, tending to vegetable gardens, visiting neighbours to discuss communal affairs, not excluding daily meal planning for our research team! The slow violence experienced during "*tag-hirap*" or in the season of hardship, felt as food insecurity, malnutrition, anxiety and sickness, would feature in the women's stories during *kuwentuhan.* They spoke about these not as private individual matters but always a communal affair for a tight-knit *barangay* of only 2,300 people. The women's experiences during "*tag-hirap*" were indeed difficult to "see", and therefore also difficult to represent in film, as Nixon wrote of slow violence.

b. State as hazard

What are the causes and manifestations of vulnerability? *"Sino po sa inyong komunidad ang pinaka hirap makabangon o makaligtas?"* ("Who among those in your community find it the hardest to recover or to be safe?") A tidal calendar hangs in my host family's house and they consult this to know the times for the high and low tides at particular dates, and to see when it was a good time for us to visit the mangroves. The calendar reminds me that farmers work intimately with cycles and seasons, and it is their knowledge of such temporal cycles which increase their chances of thriving and surviving. In listening to the farmers speak about their experiences with disasters, it became clear that their sense of vulnerability was also tied to a certain helplessness and dependence on an unpredictable weather. While they do their best to plant at the right time, the success of their livelihoods is never guaranteed; it relies heavily on wishing for good timing ("*tiempohan*") or striking good luck ("*suwertehan*"), as if farming rice or tending to mangoes was gambling or playing the lottery.[30] It is this sense of fatalism which expresses both their vulnerability to weather conditions and the harms that could ensue, and also expresses their sense of surrendering trust in something larger than their sense of selves. In our interviews, the following expressions were commonly shared while farmers and disaster preparedness leaders spoke of their disaster experiences: *"bahala na ang Panginoon"* ("it is now up to God"), *"sa awa ng Diyos"* ("by God's mercy"), or *"kung gusto talaga ng Panginoon..."* ("if this is the will of God..."). These beliefs and cultural attitudes towards disasters, whether defined as meteorological phenomenon or as understood in the hardships of everyday life, have been well documented in cultural studies on disasters in the Philippines including my own work among Waray women survivors of super typhoon Yolanda (Go 2017). Whether these cultural perceptions are interpreted as a manifestation of vulnerability, a sign of resilience, or a mixture of both, in the case of Malabago I offer that these statements express powerlessness in the face of forces that are beyond their control, across climatic, environmental, political and economic realms: intensifying and more frequent super typhoons, the lack of irrigation facilities, the unresolved cases of mining and logging upland, and an ineffective government crop insurance program together act to compound on the farmers' vulnerabilities to the dangers in their lived environment.

The Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC) is an agency attached to the Department of Agriculture tasked with implementing the government's agricultural insurance programme. Created by Presidential Decree 1467 in the year 1978, it has since been implementing the national agricultural insurance system with the aim of protecting farmers from financial losses due to natural disasters and stabilizing farm incomes among smallholders. As shared by the disaster preparedness leaders in Malabago, they have a 24-hour window at the wake of typhoons or floods to report the damages to their crops to the Municipal Agricultural Officer; the amount they receive, however, hardly compensates for the total amount of losses incurred by loans from local informal credit operators. They also shared that not many of their neighbours or fellow residents in Malabago are well aware or informed of the insurance programme. In a comprehensive study conducted to review PCIC's programmes in the past 30 years, the authors noted that PCIC has only succeeded in reaching 8% of the estimated 5.2 million smallholder farmers in the country, challenged by high overhead costs, the need for larger investment funds, poor dissemination of information at the *barangay*-level in smaller municipalities due to logistical and marketing constraints, and the lack of insurance affordability for low-income small farmers (Domingo and Reyes 2009).The majority of PCIC's beneficiaries are rice and corn farmers working in irrigated farms and are covered for natural calamities such as typhoons, floods, droughts, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, plant diseases and pest infestations. Those working in rainfed paddies such as those in Malabago are, however, only eligible to be covered during the wet season, and additional damages incurred by environmental or industrial pollution are not acknowledged in the terms of the insurance programme. Subsistence farmers who are heavily dependent on informal credit seems to have also created a nonviable setting for crop insurance (Ibid). As CDRC notes, the programme is a risk transfer mechanism whereby farmers, who may already be neck-high in debt and unable to afford additional expenses, are made to pay a third party company to guarantee their crops. The root causes of their vulnerability, their sense of powerlessness, helplessness and inability to not only cope but transform their conditions, remain unaddressed by such schemes.

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[30] "Cagayan farmers on Ompong-hit crops: 'Like losing gamble vs nature'" (Rappler 2018) - https://www.rappler.com/nation/212261-cagayan-farmers-typhoon-ompong-crops-losing-gamble-vs-nature

Shortly after the completion of my fieldwork, the now former Mayor Luisito Marty of Santa Cruz was convicted by the Sandiganbayan court of graft and the usurpation of legislative powers for blocking the operations of two licensed mining firms in his municipality in February 2019.[31] In April 2011 Marty refused to issue business permits to Zambales Diversified Metals Corporation Inc.; and Zambales Chromite Mining Company Inc. He prevented the two companies from conducting operations in Santa Cruz despite their ability to secure licenses from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources as required by the Philippine Mining Act. After Marty filed a motion for reconsideration, the court found him guilty and sentenced the ex-mayor to six years of imprisonment in 2019.[32] In the same year, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources lifted the suspension on Zambales Diversified Metals, a subsidiary of one of the largest family-owned Filipino conglomerates in the country. As the second largest nickel-ore producing country in the world, the Zambales mine is one of the 30 in the Philippines which is now set to revive supply to China as the top ore buyer globally. While it remains unclear what Marty's intentions[33] were to block these companies, the MDRRMO's earlier remark regarding jurisdiction poses a crucial challenge to the politics of environmental management and consequently the practice of DRRM. While hazards such as upland mining fall under the jurisdiction of the provincial government and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, their impacts literally cascade down the municipal level and further down to the *barangays,* impacting neighborhoods, households and individuals as they flow downstream and out to sea.

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[31] "Zambales town mayor gets jail term for blocking mining operations" (February 22, 2019): https://www.rappler.com/nation/224091-luisito-marty-gets-jail-term-blocking-mining-firms

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One afternoon I proposed to visit the Municipal Hall to interview their Disaster Risk Reduction Management Officer, the government official who is mandated to look after disaster preparation, response and rehabilitation efforts all across Santa Cruz. One of the women officers, who we affectionately call "*nanay*" (or mother) Nora, a small and skinny 70-year old lady who was often the life of the party at the training centre, grew quiet. I learned that none of the women officers had met the man in person --let alone be given the sole audience of any government official. Later it was collectively agreed upon that my team will be accompanied by ABI staff and Nanay Nora; in turn, my team and I would "shelter" our companions with our cameras and my papers bearing the logos of York University. Our all-woman contingent was immediately led into the office and granted private audience with the official; he also ran up to the Mayor's office, and ushered us in straight away for an interview. ABI staff who had supported anti-mining protests outside this very building giggled in delight and in some shock; while Nanay Nora kept her head hung low as we climbed the palacial steps up to the Mayor's office, a kind of *hiya* or shame that broke my heart to see. Elderly farmers like her have never stepped into the air-conditioned office where coffee and snacks were reserved for VIPs. We passed by a room filled with over a dozen couples dressed their best, gathered for a mass civil wedding to be officiated by the Mayor -- and it was all put on hold because of us! The politician was obviously flattered by the tripods and cameras we propped up in his office. He waved my research brief aside. Our team was shown the various geohazard maps in Marty's office created by the DENR and with the technical assistance of foreign aid agencies such as JICA. Marty was proud to share that he had just recently purchased an amphibious dredger to de-silt the river and other waterways in Santa Cruz to ease the flow of flood waters in the future--interestingly, the husband of one of the women officers was hired as the new operator for this equipment, a contractual job he was excited and relieved to get after having lost all his mangoes during Ompong and Rosita. Marty spoke openly about the deforested mountains and the need to reforest the mangroves to protect the 10 coastal *barangays* in Santa Cruz which are most vulnerable to the open sea. Ironically, however, he also screened us a promotional video his office had created to showcase forthcoming coastal reclamation projects he drafted in partnership with Palafox, a private development firm of architects and planners, to design 70 hectares of land located 300 meters from the shoreline. While such plans complement the Municipality's broader plan to promote tourism along its coast including the privately owned islands of Hermana Mayor and Hermana Menor, and possibly to divest from Santa Cruz's heavy reliance on the mining industry, such development plans also threaten to evict families living along the coast, not unlike Nanay Nora's, and put their livelihoods at risk if their access to fishing grounds are blocked. While these development plans attempt to resolve damage from typhoons, floods and extractive industries, the state too can simultaneously perpetrate the disaster of development aggression and thereby displace the same vulnerable populations it seeks to protect. Here was a brief encounter between formal state power and informal grassroots power; between patriarchal political authority and women's communal leadership; between government and civil society; enabled by the farcical circumstances mediated by filmmakers from Manila, our cameras, and the transnational status I wielded as a Filipina scholar in Canada.

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[32] "Sandiganbayan affirms conviction of ex-Sta. Cruz, Zambales mayor" (April 10, 2019): https://news.mb.com.ph/2019/04/10/sandiganbayan-affirms-conviction-of-ex-sta-cruz-zambales-mayor/

[33] In a Supreme Court resolution for the case of LnL Archipelago Minerals, Inc. (LAMI) vs. AGHAM Party List, a national alliance of scientists advocating for science in a national development agenda, it was documented that Marty had unduly favored some mining companies and allegedly refused to permit others from operating in Santa Cruz.

c. Community-based disaster management as women's work

What efforts do CBDM leaders engage in? Do these actions transform the root causes of their vulnerabilities? What successes and challenges do they face from more entrenched multi-scalar power relations? *"Ano ang ginawa ninyo upang tumugon o makatulong sa mga apektado?"* ("What do you do in order to respond or help those who are affected by disasters?") Since its formation in 2014, the *Sama-Sagip* disaster preparedness committee has been active in a variety of efforts in their *barangay.* Their officers and members take on various roles that resemble a blend of DRRM activities and development initiatives concerning livelihood and health. Their activities are categorized into the following components:

- Education to oversee ongoing workshops and drills in the training centre;
- Health (*Kalusugan*) to create herbal medicines such as ointments and syrups for the use of their own families;
- Emergency Response to lead evacuation procedures and to assist in search and rescue operations; and
- Public Information (*Pabatid Publiko*) to disseminate early warning signs and awareness campaigns in their own *puroks* across the *barangay*.

These efforts are primarily led by disaster preparedness committee leaders with the sustained support of ABI staff, such as the ongoing mangrove reforestation initiative which not only serve as a mitigation measure against future storms but also regenerates a thriving ecology to support food and livelihood security for Malabago's residents. Outside the formal realm of its organization's activities, *Sama-Sagip* members are also invited to join broader social movements such as the "Move Now!" anti-mining campaign led by CEC and other civil society organizations present in Santa Cruz. In surveying this suite of efforts that disaster preparedness committee members are engaged in, CBDM does not remain limited to the traditional DRRM phases of preparedness, relief, recovery and rehabilitation which they conduct with and without the support of the Barangay or Municipal local government; CBDM most importantly aims to strengthen the women's leadership capabilities in their informal positions of power, and therefore also includes involvement in addressing community development needs and participating in forms of activism. These efforts are, however, inevitably limited in their ability to completely transform their lived environments given their interactions with multi-scalar forms of power.

The disaster preparedness committee does not work in a vacuum separate from the state. For example in her film interview, Nelia recounted how they activated themselves and assigned one another various roles during super typhoon Ompong: to conduct house-to-house calls to initiate the evacuation process; to oversee people's needs in the evacuation centre; to conduct a head count and tally of all households; and to identify who is missing and may be in need of rescue. Nelia was one of the disaster preparedness committee leaders assigned to the evacuation centre, where her own family was taking shelter in. Her work was not limited to ensuring her own family's safety; Nelia and her fellow officers continued to look for neighbours, keep a headcount, and look for those missing among them. She recounted having to coordinate closely with the Barangay Council to ensure that everyone received food rations, and to dissuade evacuees from hurrying back to their houses when the storm passed. It was clear to her that their tasks as members of the disaster preparedness committee was not to operate independently or separate from their own Barangay officials, but to further support the work their elected officials were mandated to fulfill, and that together they were able to serve most of the residents in their *barangay.*

At the level of the municipal government, other dynamics are at play. When we visited the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Management Officer (MDRRMO), it was evident that he was oblivious to the existence of a disaster preparedness committee in one of the municipality's 25 *barangays.* Unsurprisingly, his view of DRRM remained confined to the tasks his office is mandated to implement. He recalled how typhoon Cosme's strong winds devastated over 80% of Santa Cruz, and how when he assumed office in 2011 he led forced evacuations in 2016 during typhoon Lando even if many he said did not cooperate. Assuming that my team and I had seen the extensive media coverage of the infamous flash floods in Santa Cruz in 2016, the MDRRMO volunteered a confession to acknowledge the presence of illegal logging operations upland which had caused the catastrophe; in fact he shared that many of these logs which had been buried underground to avoid inspection by DENR officials were washed by the strong rains, as if performing an exposé, and these tumbled down the barren mountains and into the *barangays* downslope. Barangay Councils across Santa Cruz called the Municipal government for help in rescue operations but it was too late because the flood's currents became too strong; he said the Provincial DRRMO and the military were even later involved in rescue but they also lacked the equipment such as an amphibian truck to course through the strong currents and high waters. Two years later, he is proud to share that the Municipal government succeeded in leading widespread evacuations in anticipation of Ompong, and that Santa Cruz had half its total population in designated government-managed evacuation centers, the highest number of evacuees in Zambales. The MDRRMO lamented the realities of climate change, seen most evidently in the growing number of Signal Number 5 storms in the region when Signal Number 3 used to be the strongest they have encountered. He admits to the threats posed by environmental degradation, not to plead guilty of the Municipal government's negligence or connivance with mining corporations, but to argue that this dilemma was beyond the Municipal office's jurisdiction and must be addressed by the Provincial government of Zambales. Given that the suspension for mining companies has been lifted in 2019, and the vigorous demand for nickel ore in the Philippines from China further increases, demanding accountability for the continued environmental destruction by the mines in operation will remain difficult. The environmental justice movement in the province continues with the participation of organized residents including the *Sama-Sagip* disaster preparedness committee.

"Ano po sa inyo ang maginhawang buhay?" ("What is a life of well-being for you?") In her interview, Lilia voiced her aspirations clearly: *"Giginhawa ang buhay kung umunlad ang aming pamayanan, at maibahagi namin ang aming mga kaalaman sa buong komunidad ng Barangay Malabago."* ("Life will be much better if our community continues to progress in our efforts, and we are able to share our knowledge with the whole of Barangay Malabago.") In her film interview, Remy also underscored the value of encouraging the growth of their grassroots leadership as a way of gathering power which they have not always had as women: *"Ang nagagawa ko po ngayon na hindi ko nagagawa noon ay ang paglibot-libot sa mga barangay at naghahanap ng mga datos sa panahon ng kalamidad. Nakakarating po kami sa mga kalapit na mga purok at mga barangay, nag-iinterview ng mga nasalanta ng bagyo, at nararansan din*

namin tumulong o magbigay ng relief sa ibang barangay." ("I am able to do things now that I did not use to be able to before, and that includes going around our *barangay* to collect data in times of a calamity. We also reach neighbouring *puroks* and *barangays*, interviewing those impacted by a storm, and we are also now able to provide relief to other *barangays*.") Their sense of leadership has been strengthening over the years as they are now able to assist not only their own families but in the level of their *barangay* and even beyond. Referring now to themselves as "*namumuno na mga kababaihan*" or women leaders, disaster preparedness officers delight in speaking together about the joys and difficulties of working on various CBDM efforts in Malabago. They express aspirations for their organization to strengthen, for unity and cooperation to remain strong among themselves.

In Nelia's interview, part of which is shown in the film, she shared about both the positive and negative experiences they have had leading CBDM efforts. She had heard others in their neighbourhoods criticize or gossip about their efforts to go around interviewing, conducting needs assessments, and monitoring were of no value. Nelia mused over how they work hard out in the heat of the sun, feel thirst and exhaustion, and when other community members do not appreciate their efforts to ensure relief is distributed among all of them, it hurts. Yet despite these pains, Nelia passionately expressed what she believed to be the source of their continued enthusiasm: *"Kaya bilang malawak ang kaalaman o naging tulong ng DPC at ng ABI sa pagsasanay at pag-aaral, hindi ko na iniisip kung ano man ang masasakit na salita ng iba… ito ang panghahawakan ko para maitupad at mai-angat namin iyong hinanhangad namin bilang namumuno na mga kababaihyan. Ito po ang gusto ko, kaya ang sabi ko: 'Go! Go! Go!'"* ("Given how much knowledge the DPC and ABI has shared with me through the trainings and workshops, I do not give much thought anymore to any hurtful criticism others may say… I will hold on to this knowledge so that we can continue to strengthen what we aspire for as women leaders. This is what I truly want, so I keep telling myself: 'Go! Go! Go!'")

Their sense of well-being is tied intimately to their aspirations for the future, of a life they wish to be better for their children. Lani, a disaster preparedness committee leader and who was also my host, was still breastfeeding her youngest child Nenang at the training center when ABI staff first conducted the CBDM training in 2014. During our fieldwork, Nenang has already turned 5 years old, a bright-eyed and energetic girl who asked me to help in her homework every night before going to sleep. Along with all the children of the disaster preparedness committee women leaders in the film, Nenang too participated in the Scouts Day dressed in her girl scout's uniform; their mothers remarked how they wish their children could one day even be more knowledgeable than they are --not only in the formal scope of DRRM work, but in assuming leadership roles more broadly: Lilia shared, *"Tinatanaw ko para sa aking mga anak na maitaguyod nila kung paano ako naging leader. Maitaguyod nila ang pagiging isang leader din ng mga mamamayan ng Barangay Malabago"* ("It is my vision for my children that they too can stand up in the same way I myself have taken on this leadership role; that they can also stand up to become leaders for the people of Barangay Malabago.") A better life would be one where they did not feel so powerless anymore.

Conclusion

In this chapter on the case of smallholder farmers living and working on rain-fed agricultural lands in Zambales, their experiences of disasters and vulnerability are shaped by their sense of powerlessness in the face of forces that are beyond their control: these do not only include intensifying climatic conditions in the form of more frequent super typhoons, but also environmental degradation from mining and logging upland and compounding debt. Apart from the annual meteorological seasons of *tag-ulan* (rainy season) and *tag-init* (dry season), farmers also speak of a "*panahon ng tag-hirap*", a time or season of suffering marked by the devastating loss of one's harvest, plunging deeper into debt, or facing grave food or financial insecurity, which are in itself experiences of disaster. Well-being on the other hand is intimately tied to Malabago's farmers' aspirations for futurity, a better life for their children, who could continue or similarly assume leadership positions in their community as their mothers have been working hard at in the past years.

Efforts by ABI and members of the *Sama-Sagip* disaster preparedness committee address the overlapping fields of 'DRRM', 'CCA', and broader development efforts, including environmental justice activism. The case of Malabago illustrates how a political ecology of endangerment created by the interplay of meteorological forces and extractive industries results in organized social action, as can be seen for example in how substantial civil society opposition to large-scale mining are located in provinces most at risk to typhoons (Holden 2015). It is clear that CBDM efforts in Malabago have strongly attempted to transform the root causes of vulnerabilities among smallholder farmers through the organizing for anti-mining actions by a network of civil society actions, environmental justice groups and local community members. However, the women do not explicitly speak of their daily efforts as an overt challenge to state or other formal positions of power, and instead express a desire to strengthen and continue their leadership roles for their children as an aspiration for a future when they will be less powerless to the forces that threaten their daily lives.

Chapter Seven:
Disasters and Small-scale Fishers

Overview

In January 2019, my research team and I took a domestic flight from Manila to the island province of Cebu. The annual Sinulog or Santo Niño festival had just come to a close where over a million had gathered for Cebu's iconic street parades; staff of the Cebu-Bohol Relief and Rehabilitation Centre (CRRC) counselled that arriving after the province-wide fiesta would ensure a more productive stay for us. We were met by CRRC staff in their main office where we planned the logistics of our two-week stay at Barangay Gibitngil in greater detail. Women officers from the disaster preparedness committee had been informed of our visit and one of the families had agreed to be our host. From the capital city of Cebu our team drove for three hours along with accompanying CRRC staff to reach the northernmost municipality of Medellin, where CRRC's satellite field office was located in greater proximity to its partner *barangays* in Northern Cebu. We then took a 20 minute boat ride from the mainland to reach the island *barangay* of Gibitngil off the coast of Medellin. Our little wooden boat docked safely at the tail end of typhoon Amang, just as a new low pressure area was forming with another storm brewing in the horizon. The waves were growing bigger, and we were told that there will not be much fish to catch at this time and the boats will also be unable to set out.

As in the other case study sites, our research team asked: What is a disaster for this community? What are the causes and material manifestations of vulnerability in this community as seen in how residents shape and are shaped by their lived environments, local livelihoods, access to resources and security from violence? What kinds of social power relations are grassroots women leaders embedded in? What efforts do they engage in as leaders of their disaster preparedness committee? Do these actions transform the root causes of their vulnerabilities, and serve individual and collective well-being? What successes have they achieved, and what obstacles do they face from more entrenched multi-scalar power relations?

For the film we interviewed two CRRC staff and six women officers of the disaster preparedness committee. Outside of the film we spoke to more CRRC staff, met with the Municipality of Medellin's Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Officer, Municipal Provincial Development Officer, and Barangay officials in Gibitngil. We also facilitated regular *kuwentuhan* or group storytelling sessions among women officers in their individual homes and at a makeshift meeting centre where they frequently brought their children and babies to join our gatherings.

In this chapter I share my research team's findings from our third case study of Barangay Gibitingil, Medellin, Cebu. Drawing from interviews with leaders from the disaster preparedness committee, CRRC staff, and officials from the Barangay and Municipal Local Government Units, I write that in the context of small-scale fishers living on an island-*barangay,* their experiences of disasters and vulnerability are shaped not just by their exposure to intensifying and more frequent super typhoons, but also by their geographical and socio-political isolation. This is reflected in their physical distance from centres of governance and the subsequent neglect in the provision of basic social services; their marginalization and threatened livelihoods are caused by commercial fishing in their municipal waters; and their rights to land and shelter challenged by the interests of and alliance between local island-owning elite and local government officials who have threatened residents with eviction and resettlement in order to pursue tourism development. This web of intersecting forces of violence shape the gendered vulnerabilities and disasters experienced by women of small-scale fishing households in Gibitngil, whether during a super typhoon or long before and after the storms have passed. The case of Gibitngil, however, also demonstrates a successful and ongoing mobilization of women grassroots leaders to secure their rights to land and livelihood across multiple scales. The women draw strength from a vivid sense of camaraderie to sustain their efforts with support from various civil society organizations and social movements upon which the newly formed disaster preparedness committee in Gibitngil is hinged to and was formed out of. This case study exemplifies how CRRC's CBDM efforts in Gibitngil are ultimately sustained by women's daily care labour which do not only attend to their own families' well-being, but extends to post-disaster relief, recovery and rehabilitation efforts for the wider *barangay*, including organizing to challenge state-backed armed violence and make claims for social-ecological-climate justice.

I. Fishers, Poverty and Super Typhoons

On November 8, 2013 super typhoon Yolanda (international name: Haiyan) made landfall in the Eastern Visayas and went across the central region of the Philippines with sustained winds of 315 kilometres per hour. The strongest tropical cyclone in the world's recorded history affected more than 9 million people, displaced nearly 2 million, with over 10,000 dead or missing. The impact of Yolanda on the fishing sector measured to a total of USD 9.6 billion, with USD 280 million in the destruction of boats and other assets (FAO 2018). In a joint agency briefing note authored by Oxfam and NGOs for Fisheries Reform, they estimated that 30,000 boats were damaged or destroyed, and nearly three-quarters of fishing communities across the Visayas were severely affected by the loss of boats, nets and cages (2014). The Department of Agriculture reported that small-scale fishers were the worst affected: most of their small boats which had been authorized to fish exclusively in municipal waters were lost to Yolanda, while larger commercial fishing vessels suffered less. According to the 2002 Census of Fisheries, there is a total of 1.8 million fisherfolk across the Philippines: 99.6% or 1.781 million of which are municipal fisherfolk or small-scale fishers; and only 7,800 of this total figure are engaged in commercial fishing (NGOs for Fisheries Reform 2015). It is the country's small-scale fishers who are facing the harshest impacts of typhoons, fish kills, coastal pollution, marine degradation and other socio-economic threats including insecure fishing rights, compromised access to shoreline and municipal waters, and competition from commercial fishing. Small-scale fishers and shellfish gatherers whose livelihoods are directly exposed to increasing coastal hazards have also been found to be most vulnerable to coastal flooding, coastal erosion and saltwater intrusion (Sales Jr. 2009). In the 2015 poverty incidence report, fisherfolk consistently ranked as the sector with the highest poverty incidence at 41.2%, 41.3%, 39.2% and 34.0% in 2006, 2009, 2012 and 2015 respectively (PSA 2017), and it is particularly high in coastal towns at 43.2% with every fisher earning a daily average of PHP 178.00 or USD 3.50.

To demonstrate against the compounding issues besetting the country's fisherfolk sector, the activist organization *Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamalakaya ng Pilipinas* (PAMALAKAYA or the National Federation of Small Fisherfolk Organizations of the

Philippine)[1] protested against the Republic Act No. 8550 or Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 on the law's 20th anniversary in 2018. In an updated impact assessment conducted by the Center for Environmental Concerns (CEC)[2] through local chapters of PAMALAKAYA, it validated a previous assessment that the law failed to uplift the lives of the more than nine million people directly and indirectly dependent on fishing for their livelihood (2014). They argue that Republic Act 5580 has disfavoured small-scale fishers with the hefty fines required to register their boats; penalties amounting to PHP 100,000 or USD 1,900, a death sentence for 'illegal' fishing; the priority given to reclamation projects by the government; the privatization of municipal waters through aquaculture and ecotourism projects; and the lack of protection for municipal fishers from commercial fishing fleets.[3] The resettlement of fisherfolk affected by disasters is provided for in Section 108 of the Philippine Fisheries Code but has not been duly enforced particularly with the creation of "no-build zones", a policy that bans dwellings on a 40-metre buffer zone from the coast declared by former President Aquino as part of the national government's DRRM efforts post-Yolanda. This policy continues to threaten an estimate of 10.8 million Filipinos living in coastal communities with displacement and lost access to the coast, without due resettlement and livelihood alternatives (Fitzpatrick and Compton 2019).

As published in their joint agency briefing note, Oxfam and NGOs for Fisheries Reform conducted focus group discussions among fishing communities affected by Yolanda and identified the following issues which have hampered reconstruction efforts among survivors (2014, 2-3):

- The lack of adequate livelihood support to account for the heavy damage in boats, equipment, facilities for drying, processing, storing fish, and for aquaculture;
- The lack of data on the status of fishing communities and coastal habitats, with a key concern for the exclusion of women from the government's fishers' registration programme;

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[1] This is the same coalition of fishers mobilizing the "Save Laguna Lake" movement in Taguig and neighbouring cities as mentioned in Chapter Five. The disaster preparedness committee in Bagumbayan participates in some of these actions.

[2] This is the same NGO mobilizing an environmental justice movement against the nickel mines in Zambales as detailed in Chapter Six. The disaster preparedness committee in Brgy. Malabago participates in some of these actions.

[3] "Debunking the Fisheries Code: Small fishers lament heavy fines, loss of livelihood" (Bulatlat 2017): https://www.bulatlat.com/2017/10/24/debunking-fisheries-code-small-fishers-lament-heavy-fines-loss-livelihood/

- Unclear guidelines regarding relocation, distribution of livelihood implements, the definition of damage, and the eligibility criteria for beneficiaries;
- Insecurity in land tenure for fishing communities, compounded by conflicting policies in relocating people away from high risk locations to safer areas.

While these challenges have resurfaced at the wake of a super typhoon, their chronic permanence in the lives of fishers in the country, I contend, have been shaping everyday disasters. In my interview with CRRC's executive director, who I call "*tita*" or aunt Gina, she emphasized the distinct vulnerabilities faced by fisherfolk: *"Ang mananagat tinood jud nga pinaka lisod jud sila kumpara sa mag-uuma"* ("I believe fishers face the roughest difficulties, more than farmers do"). In their decades of working with fishing communities across the Visayan region, particularly in the island provinces of Cebu and Bohol, Tita Gina shared that fisherfolk's dependence on the seasons, their inability to row small boats out to sea during the monsoon months from September to January when the waves are strong, threaten their food and livelihood security. The engines required to take bigger boats safely out to sea are often too expensive for small-scale fishers; and if they do not have access to arable land or other alternative sources of income, fishing families could be food-scarce and strapped for cash. Their desperate dependence on relief aid in the event of a disaster is most prominent in the experiences of CRRC staff. "Of course, they can't cook sand", Tita Tess said, and staff have committed to prioritizing far-flung coastal and island communities in delivering post-disaster relief as households who are unable to fish could easily be without sufficient food for weeks until external aid arrives.

II. CRRC and community-based disaster management as people's struggle

Three successive typhoons came through the country in the last quarter of 1984. UNICEF arrived to respond to Typhoon Nitang (international name: Ike) and Typhoon Undang (international name: Agnes), and partnered with CDRC to provide relief aid to the island provinces of Cebu and Bohol. This was followed by an eight-month drought (*hulaw* in Cebuano) which resulted in an internal refugee crisis. The Cebu-Bohol Relief and Rehabilitation Center, Inc. (CRRC) was then formally established in 1987 to address this conflict across the Visayas; in 1989 it was registered as a non-stock, non-profit disaster response agency with the Securities and

Exchange Commission. Prior to joining CRRC, Tita Gina recounted her active participation with underground religious activist organizations during the Marcos regime as narrated in Chapter Four. When peasants in the neighbouring island province of Negros Occidental were killed by para-military forces for protesting Martial Law, in what is now called the Escalante Massacre of 1985, religious leaders had been involved in rights education and agrarian reforms legislation among the farmers killed. They eventually mobilized relief delivery operations in response to the compounding "natural" and "human-induced" disasters in the region. It was in this context that CRRC was formed, and Tita Gina had become involved in the NGO's combined work for CBDM and social justice action. Today CRRC is one of the oldest members among the Citizens' Disaster Response Network's 17 regional centres. It extends relief and rehabilitation services to marginalized sectors impacted by a variety of disasters, with a strong priority given to fishers, farmers and the urban poor in Cebu and Bohol. Its official programmes include providing education and training; relief assistance during emergencies; advocacy and networking among other civil society organizations; and technical or material support for rehabilitation and disaster mitigation efforts. As will be illustrated in the following section on Barangay Gibitngil, CRRC's efforts also extend beyond these DRRM-related services and include community development efforts and supporting a people organization's efforts to secure land and human rights--seeing that these are inextricably interlinked with issues of vulnerability and survival.

In her film interview, Tita Gina explained the general structure of how they conduct CBDM trainings in a community. While CBDM is a shared practice across all of the regional centres, CRRC has developed its own six-module CBDM programme:

- Module 1: a one-day disaster management orientation begins with an overview of the Philippine disaster situationer; a discussion of the differences between CBDM and the dominant approach to DRRM; and asks community members to think about the combination of "natural" and "man-made" forces which interact to create disasters in their locality; participants will then draft a 5-year local situationer to list down who are most vulnerable to the string of typhoons and socio-economic-political issues
- Module 2: two to three days for a disaster preparedness training workshop where participants draw a spot map, a resource map, and a hazard map as key outputs
- Module 3: formation of a disaster preparedness committee
- Module 4: formulation of a community disaster preparedness plan
- Module 5: conduct of an actual evacuation drill

Community organizing is central to its practice of CBDM. If there is an existing people's organization in the community prior to the CBDM trainings, the disaster preparedness committee is formed as a sub-committee of this broader organization. A people's organization can then be further supported by CRRC to register under the Securities and Exchange Commission in order to obtain government support, such as funding from the Department of Labour and Employment or the Department of Trade and Industry to be used as seed capital to start livelihood projects, as CRRC has done in its other partner communities in northern Cebu. However, in the absence of an existing people's organization, a disaster preparedness committee is formed as the first step taken towards organizing community members around a particular issue, and CRRC assists in connecting them across a larger network of other civil society groups to gather scale.[4]

While its programmes are primarily supported by humanitarian aid agencies and charities, CRRC locates its broader work in a human rights, development and social justice framework. Throughout the years various foreign government agencies such as UNICEF, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Korean Disaster Response Agency; international charities such as Mercy Relief from Singapore and Hope Bridge from Palestine; and local private foundations and NGOs in the Philippines have funded its various programmes. Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe, the social service agency of the German Protestant Church, and other religious development agencies including Caritas Austria, Luxembourg and Belgium, have supported CRRC's relief, early recovery and livelihood programmes at the wake of Yolanda. The Duterte regime has red-tagged these international groups including Caritas Philippines, which is the humanitarian and development arm of the Catholic Church in the Philippines, for their shared adherence to a human rights framework in disaster response. While it is not formally a "DRRM" NGO, Caritas and its civil society partners offered DRRM training crash courses for first aid responders post-Yolanda, and have also extended similar support to volunteers responding to the needs of widows and orphans of the state-sponsored extrajudicial killings. To recognize that the drug war is as much a disaster as Yolanda, whether explicitly expressed or not, comes at a high cost for civil society organizations like CRRC today.

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[4] Chapters Five and Six demonstrate how the regional centres CREST and ABI do the same for the disaster preparedness committees they organize in their respective partner *barangays.*

On the first day of our research team's arrival at the CRRC office, we were greeted by staff who were preparing to give an interview at a local radio programme on the topic of their work in the Island of Gibitngil. I was invited to join them in the booth as they went on air. The radio host opened the show: *"Maghisgot kita sa mga problema sa atong mga kaigsoonang mag-uuma nga apektado pud ni sila kay muingon nga bulnerable kasagaraan kay aduna'y mga typhoon o mga disaster."* ("Let's talk about the many problems affecting of our peasant brothers and sisters as they seem to be vulnerable to typhoons or other disasters.") CRRC staff proceeded to string together super typhoon Yolanda with other catastrophes such as poverty ("*kakabus"*), livelihood and economic insecurity ("*wala'y kasiguroan sa ilahang pagpuyo*"), and problems with land tenure ("*ang problema nila sa hisgutanan sa yuta*"). As fishers and farmers of Gibitngil have been threatened with evictions by a local landowner, CRRC staff emphasized that "*dili nato ma-separate ang problema sa yuta ug ka-bulnerable sa atong mga kaigsoonan*" ("we cannot separate the land struggle with our brethren's vulnerabilities [to other disasters]").

CRRC staff took this opportunity of using mass media to share more about their community organizing efforts as being fundamentally part of DRRM; they also laboured to raise awareness among the Cebuano public about local issues in the more remote and rural areas of the province. They detailed a historical chronology of the issues faced by Gibitngil's residents: there is an estimate of 465 fishing and farming households who have lived on and cultivated the island owned by the Ancajas family, who has subjected every household to a PHP 100.00 monthly rental fee. In 2010, the Department of Agrarian Reform founded the Gibitngil Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association (GARBA-DAR) to organize the 209 households identified as beneficiaries of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Programme: two-thirds of the island were granted to residents, and a third was granted to the family. GARBA-DAR was later renamed by the residents to Gibitngil Farmers and Fishers Association (GIFFA) in order to convey a people's organization independent from the government. In 2011, the Ancajas family sued households who were unable to pay the monthly rent and charged them with eviction. In 2012, the Department of Agrarian Reform issued a Certificate of Land Ownership Award for GIFFA beneficiaries. The Ancajas family, however, contested the certificate and filed for its cancellation on the grounds that the agrarian reform beneficiaries are not involved in agricultural activities;

they cited that the island is not suitable for agriculture and that there is no groundwater source for irrigation. In 2013, at the wake of Yolanda, the Ancajas family offered to "donate" personal property to relocate Gibitngil residents to a "safer zone" in the town of Kawit located on the mainland of northern Cebu; the deed of donation was approved by the former Governor of Cebu who lauded the family's "charitable" effort for post-disaster rehabilitation.[5] The relocation site affords each household 50 square metres of land, with no access to a docking area for their boats and other sources of livelihood. The Municipal government, then headed by the former Mayor Ricardo Ramirez, expressed opposition to the eviction of Gibitngil residents saying that the island is not in danger of storm surges as reasoned by Cebu's own Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Officer.[6] The controversial donation revealed the family's vested interests in converting the island to a tourist destination. Ramirez's own relationship with the island's "left-leaning residents", however, was also fraught with tension.

At this point I must emphasize that it is precisely the activist labour of making the connections between surviving 'natural' disasters and other forces of dispossession and marginalization which proves to be dangerous. The humanitarian efforts of a "DRRM" NGO takes on a lethal turn for its staff and partner community members when the discourse on disasters is de-naturalized and re-politicized. CRRC staff have been involved in supporting the beneficiaries to claim their rights to stay on Gibitngil: "to stand for their right to live, and their right to a living" (*"ang ilaha ragyud nga katungod nga mupuyo, katungod nga manginabuhi"*). In the hands of CRRC staff that afternoon in the radio station were folder files with certified true copies of the Certificate of Land Ownership Award and other documents to be brought to the Department of Agrarian Reform office in Cebu City on behalf of Gibitngil Island's residents. The work of CRRC staff clearly extends beyond "DRRM" efforts as they continue to facilitate dialogues among members of the people's organization GIFFA, staff of the Department of Agrarian Reform in Cebu, the Mayor of Medellin, long after super typhoon Yolanda. CRRC staff have also continued to support GIFFA's ongoing discussions with the Barangay Council regarding the remaining households in Gibtingil who were not identified by the Department of Agrarian Reform as beneficiaries, and what can be done to ensure they can also claim their right to stay on the island. The radio interview demonstrated, as our interviews with disaster preparedness committee officers on the island would later reveal, *"atong mga kaigsoonan nga mga kabus"* ("the miserable plight of our poor brothers and sisters.")

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[5] "Family donates land for Yolanda survivors" (August 2014): https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/359214/Business/Family-donates-land-for-Yolanda-survivors

[6] "Mayor opposes relocation" (August 2014): https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/359622/Business/Mayor-opposes-relocation

III. Case Study: Barangay Gibitngil, Medellin, Cebu

Barangay Magiting (Village Heroes) - 3/3
BARANGAY MAGITING
(VILLAGE HEROES)
The 3rd of 3 short films on the politics of
community-based disaster management in the Philippines
Watch later
Share
Watch on YouTube

Figure 18: *Video of third case study*

The Municipality of Medellin is 120 kilometres away from Cebu City, with a total population of over 55,000 people. It is referred to as the "Sugar Bowl of Cebu" and is categorized as a second income class municipality with a reported annual revenue of PHP 122 million largely from sugarcane plantations on the mainland. It, however, has a 26.55% poverty incidence signalling its residents' economic dependence on subsistence and small-scale farming and fishing, and hired labour in the plantations. The Island of Gibitngil lies in the northernmost tip of Cebu, and is a 20-minute boat ride from the mainland [Figure 19]. The island is home to an estimate of 465 households or 2,245 residents, and is 210 hectares or 2.1 square kilometres in land area. It was formerly a sitio or sub-district of Barangay Kawit, the largest *barangay* in the Municipality of Medellin, but was later established as an island-*barangay* of its own.

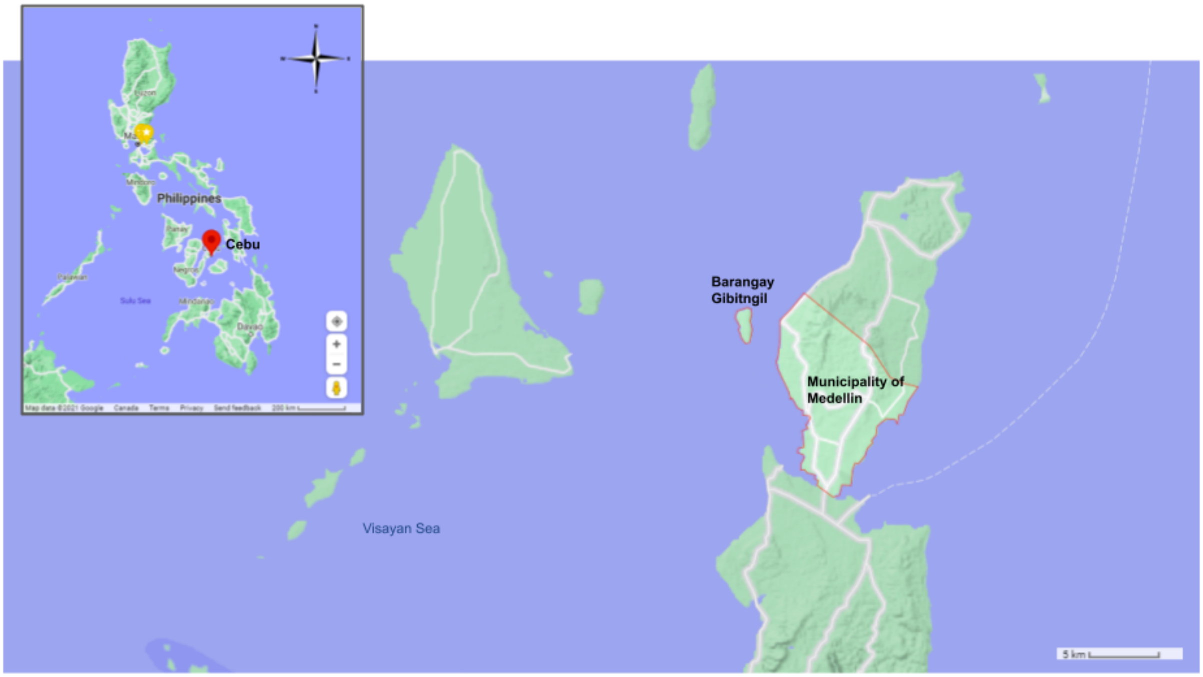

Figure 19*: Map of 3rd field site: Brgy. Gibitngil, Medellin, Cebu*
(Map by the author using Google Maps 2021)

Gibitngil is one of the 19 *barangays* in Medellin, and it is further subdivided into 6 *puroks* and 4 *sitios*: Sitio Pasil, Sitio Lipata, Sitio Bakyad, and Sitio Baring where the controversial Funtastic Island Resort was privately constructed in 2012 [Figure 20]. Like many other small islands, islets and atolls in the Philippines, Gibitngil is challenged with limited freshwater resources, geographical isolation from the mainland and therefore significantly distant from political and economic centres. Vulnerabilities characterizing small island communities include: resource limitations resulting in food insecurity and chronic poverty; dependence on the mainland; lack of access to markets; lack of alternative sustainable livelihoods to complement farming and fishing; political and social marginalization; direct exposure to climate-related hazards; lack of risk assessment, early warning, and search and rescue capacity (Christian Aid 2011, 3).

On our first day in Medellin, our research team paid a courtesy visit to the Municipal Hall where we met the Municipal Planning and Development Officer, and his wife who is the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Management Officer. They both provided copies of their municipal DRRM plans, which supported the plans presented to us by the Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction Management Officer and his team who we met in Gibitngil on our first day on the island. While these documents provide geophysical hazard maps and outline the equipment, material resources and other services required and needed to prepare for and safeguard against each type of the listed hazards in a *barangay,* the official documents barely ensure that the "localization of DRRM" as mandated by Republic Act 10121 are in actual practice. As is often the case, and seen in all three case studies, it befalls on NGOs to ensure these are practiced and that grassroots efforts are alive and well supported in the *barangay* level.

Seated around a large wooden conference table in the Barangay Hall, Barangay officials shared how the island's name Gibitngil came from the merging of two Cebuano words "*kubit*", meaning to catch, and "*sungil*", which refers to a place that protrudes or extends beyond. The island is often referred to by fishers from the mainland saying, "*adto to managat didto kay kusog ang kubit sa nukos sa may sungil*" ("I will row out to fish on that island because the catch on that far end is strong"). The officials in the Barangay are all fishers too, and the men instructed us on the cyclical calendar they follow each year: the monsoon months of August and September bring strong winds and waves, and it is not uncommon for residents to experience some hunger during this "no catch" season. The months of October to February in turn is the "high catch" season for *toloy* or sardines. The months of June, July and August are when fish lay their eggs, and is therefore a "low catch" season. As men in elected government positions, the Barangay officials elaborated on the seawall they had proudly proposed a budget for from the Municipal and Provincial governments after Yolanda as a mitigation measure against strong waves from future typhoons. They also elaborated on the need for better early warning systems, which are currently challenged by the intermittent power supply on the island. Coincidentally large stereos started to blare pop songs outside the Barangay Hall during our meeting, and I was teasingly told the daily public karaoke sing-along had just started now that electricity was back on. I asked if the Barangay officials knew of the disaster preparedness committee on their island, and they confirmed a cooperative working relationship with the women officers who they all knew in the small tightly-knit island community of only over 2,000 people.

Beyond the walls of the Barangay Hall, however, our interviews with the women officers would later reveal multiplicitous and gendered understandings of daily disasters on the island. These one-on-one interviews and *kuwentuhan* or group storytelling were held in the gendered spaces of individual homes and kitchens, in outdoor vegetable gardens where the women worked, and a makeshift structure the women had built to host their meetings. As most of the men in their households departed late in the evening to fish out at sea until the early morning hours, and returned to rest during the day, the women in turn hosted our team while they simultaneously tended to childcare, domestic chores and communal affairs in the *barangay*.

a. What is a disaster here?

The island lies on the route of annual typhoons and yet its residents attest that there had been none as strong and catastrophic as Yolanda in 2013. The island was fortunate to have zero casualties yet all of their five seawalls were destroyed and the Barangay had since requested the Municipal government to help with these repairs. Forced evacuations were conducted by the Barangay before Yolanda arrived, and most of the evacuees took refuge in the only elementary school located at the centre of the island. Barangay health workers were tasked to approach each of the owners of several notably large concrete houses on the island, which were built with the aid of remittance money sent by family members working overseas, to ask if their houses could be designated evacuation centres too for fellow residents who lived in light and semi-concrete housing structures. According to the Barangay's DRRM plans, the coastal sitios of Pasil, Lipata, Bakyad and Baring rate very high in their susceptibility to tidal flooding, storm surges and the rapid increase in sea levels. Those who did not dock their boats on higher ground lost their household's greatest assets to the strong waves during Yolanda. My research team referenced the importance of this daily task, which often physically required a dozen men to accomplish together, in the video *"Pa~Hinga"* (Go, Simbulan and Tan 2021).

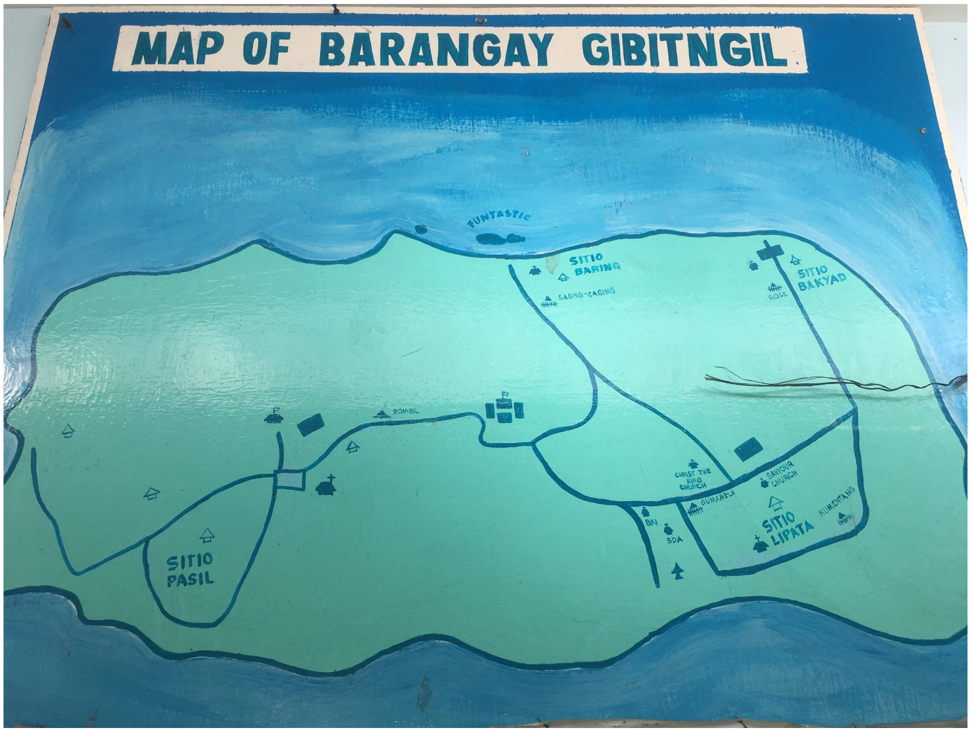
MAP OF BARANGAY GIBITNGIL
FUNTASTIC
SITIO BARING
SAGING-SAGING
SITIO BAKYAD
ROSE
BOMBIL
CHRIST THE KING CHURCH
SAVIOUR CHURCH
GUMAMELA
BKI
SDA
SITIO LIPATA
KUMENTANG
SITIO PASIL

Figure 20: *A hand-painted map on a wall in the Barangay Hall*
(Photo by author: January 2019)

In all our individual interviews with the women officers, their individual and collective stories would begin by vividly recounting their experiences of surviving Yolanda. In her film interview Chabeng recalled how she and her family of small children had to seek refuge in their neighbour's house, preparing items like their birth certificates, some food and water to bring with them. *"Niya didto sige namig hilakay kai kusog na ang bagyo. Niya napundok nami nga sige namig ampo, nga 'Ginoo ihunong na tawon!'"* ("We started crying because the typhoon was getting stronger. We huddled close together and kept on crying and prayed, 'God please stop the strong wind!'") Rosario, the current chairwoman of the disaster preparedness committee, also shared in her film interview the grave difficulties they faced even once the super typhoon had passed. *"Pag-balik namu sa amu-a, wala na among balay. Niya nihilak ko kai unsaon man pag-pabarog ang among balay nga wala man mi kwarta."* ("When we returned home, I saw we had completely lost our house. I cried because we didn't know how to start over again since we do not have enough money to rebuild our house.")

Rosario told us stories of how her family and others had to desperately look for water and food at the wake of Yolanda. Any rice they had in store had spoiled from the rain and became inedible, and so they turned to the fallen banana trees and dug these trunks to drink the water stored inside. They made soup from foraged root crops mixed with banana (*ayub-ayub*), and this sustained them for two weeks until the first set of relief aid arrived on the island. This post-disaster desperation, however, they tell us is not unlike the difficulties they face with food insecurity caused by competition with commercial fishing vessels in Medellin's municipal waters. In her film interview, Evelyn shared the challenges the men from small-scale fishing households face from these large vessels. Barangay officials report that these boats are not from Cebu, but come from the neighbouring island provinces of Negros, Masbate and Samar. These commercial boats use brighter lamps to scare more fish to the surface, and use nets with tinier holes which scrape the ocean floor; a night's catch amounts to 100 boxes whereas small-scale fishers can merely catch 100 kilos of fish in spending all night out at sea. *Bolinao* or anchovy used to be plenty around the island, but the women report that their husbands can no longer find the fish in abundance given the loss to overfishing. *"Parang pinatay na nila kami na buhay"* ("It is as if they have killed us alive"), lamented Evelyn.

Vulnerability in Cebuano is expressed as: *"daling maigo sa katalagman"*, or how easy it is to be hurt or harmed by a catastrophe. In our group discussions, disaster preparedness committee leaders shared how they felt this sense of vulnerability the greatest after Yolanda. Their desperation for aid was heightened by their geographical isolation of being on an island, separated from any assistance in the mainland by the sea. Whenever they heard of boats arriving with aid, they would scramble to the shore, many competing with their own neighbours for limited packs of relief as they were afraid of being last in line. *"Mura mig mga lunos bah nga mag-ilog laman"* ("We were so pitiful, it was like we were drowning"), shared Rosario. It was this real sense of being stranded, unable to leave the island to seek help, and also unable to go fishing for food with their boats damaged or lost, which defined vulnerability for many in Gibitngil.

Experiences of vulnerability, however, do not always take on a spectacular form. Fishers' direct dependence on the weather and seasons characterizes their yearly livelihoods with cyclical uncertainties. The women state it clearly that there are times when they enjoy plenty of catch, and there are also times when they have close to none. One cannot control the weather or the seas: *"Sama aning hangin maluya pamig pasalipod og asa mi dapit makakoan nga linaw."* ("When the winds are strong, it is impossible for us to row out in calm seas.") And it is this sense of having no power over the elements which both defines people's behaviours, such as having to plant edible foods in their backyards and farms or migrating for cash labour in Cebu, and their own vulnerability.

Before sunrise my research team and I watched fishermen and their boats return from a night out at sea. This was the everyday life of Gibitngil's fishers: *ang adlaw-adlaw nga kinabuhi sa mga mangingisda*. Some left at nine or eleven in the evening, and returned at five or six in the morning with the break of dawn. Watching every small boat docking on the shore, we noted that some caught a lot more than others. Together they know where fish are plenty, how far out from the coast, and which areas to scope. Some have more nets than others; others have 'fish finder' machines on their boats while others do not. One man we watched sort through his net with the help of his wife and children who climbed on to his boat from the shore. They had plenty of fish to sort. One by one people from the coast walked up to his boat. Not all of his catch was meant to be sold in the market. Some are for his own family's cooking, and others to feed neighbours who do not have enough cash at hand. Meanwhile, our host caught only a handful of fish after five hours of being out at sea, with a small crab included.

Not everyone on the island is equally vulnerable either. Tina who is a disaster preparedness leader, a Red Cross-trained volunteer, and a *purok* leader for her neighbourhood, shared these differences. A fisherman without his own boat, like Tina's husband, would have to rent one and divide his catch with the owner of the boat. Those who have their own boats can bring all of their catch home. The coastal *sitios* of Pasil, Bakyad and Baring are the most exposed and severely affected by rising tides or strong waves; however, families who live here are also able to do a mixture of fishing and farming as their sources of livelihood. Lipata on the other hand, a *sitio* further upland and inland, is the poorest with families relying completely on farming without easy access to the sea. Lori, who leads one of the fish-drying stations set up by CRRC, said that they share surplus dried fish to those living in Lipata as residents there often do not have fish to eat. Tina's experiences working with residents in Lipata also reveal their greater reliance on paid labour, where hired hands are paid merely PHP 2.00 per kilo of onions harvested while these are sold for as much as PHP 45.00 to 60.00 per kilo in Kawit. Onions die in hard heat but thrive well in the time of strong rains, and can yield two harvests in a month; however, they cannot be consumed as nutritional food in times of hunger. Beneficiaries of the government's 4Ps programme can be assisted by cash allowances, but delayed disbursements and the lack of other supplemental cash sources prove insufficient to meet an entire household's needs. Families with children working in cities or who have migrated overseas to work, proven by a handful of concrete houses on the island which were constructed through these remittances, gain better access to cash sources in times of need.

b. State as hazard

The strongest storm in recorded history was undoubtedly an extraordinary disaster in the minds of Gibitngil's residents; yet the difficulties they faced in surviving Yolanda were not unlike other hardships they have been experiencing to survive and assert their rights to live on the island. Linda shared, *"Noong dumating si Yolanda, sa totoo lang, iyong struggle namin sa lupa at pangingisda, struggle na namin kahit noon pa."* ("In reality, our struggles for land and our fishing rights have been there even before Yolanda arrived.") As the disaster preparedness committee was formed as a sub-part of GIFFA, its women officers are well-versed in the broader land and fishing issues that their people's organization has been responding to before Yolanda arrived. One of them recalled the protest they mounted for days in Sitio Baring to contest the construction of the Funtastic Island resort which would prevent their husbands from docking their small fishing boats along the coast. The ex-mayor Ramirez notoriously visited the island with firearms and enjoyed shooting out at sea as if it were his own personal firing range. The women recounted with outrage the misogynist threats he publicly announced on radio against them to discredit their protests, including abusive rape jokes that he told in mimicry of the President's own illiberal pronouncements (see Curato and Ong 2018). Ramirez had declared fishing illegal along the coast of Sitio Baring, and a husband of one of the disaster preparedness committee officers was arrested and his boat confiscated when he fished from the dock where the resort now stands. His pregnant wife had to go to the police station in Medellin to bail her husband out. Armed men were hired to disperse the protestors on the island, guns were fired in the air, and women standing at the front lines of the barricade were harassed. It is in this harsh context of armed brutality and state-sponsored male violence that the women have been asserting their right to livelihood, to their land and water--"*among isla, among dagat at uma*" ("our island, our sea, our farms"), and to survival. As they recounted, *"Daghan mig na-agian dinhi tungod sa paglaban namu dinhi sa pagpuyo. Niya sa dagat kay gi kuan sa na amu, maong gibabagan sad na sa mananagat diri."* ("We went through a lot here fighting for our land, and also for our sea. We had to fight against being prevented from fishing.").

Shortly after our fieldwork was conducted, Ramirez was brutally murdered in his hospital room while he was in detention for the illegal possession of firearms. Tagged a "high-value" target with links to illegal drugs by the regional police, the usual suspects of this cold-case file includes the police, vigilantes, political opponents and drug cartels. In a heightened time of impunity, Ramirez is one of the 25 local executives killed during the Duterte regime to date.[7] Today even with more sympathetic support from the new Municipal Mayor, Gibitingil's residents continue to face a precarious situation. While Ramirez did not approve of the relocation of Gibitngil's residents to Kawit, the Ancajas family's deed of donation was signed by former Cebu Governor Hilario Davide as part of the larger Capitol-led PHP 12 billion post-Yolanda rehabilitation project for Cebu. Today the Provincial government is a staunch promoter of tourism development[8], particularly with support from the current Governor Gwendolyn Garcia who assumed office in 2019 and is referred to as the "Iron Lady of Cebu". She had publicly declared an "all-out war" against drugs and communist insurgency in mimicry and support of the President's campaign. While elected officials across all levels of governance may change, the entrenched interests in land and capital endure throughout political administrations and maintain precarity in the lives of small-scale fishers such as Gibitngil's residents. It therefore remains to be seen how the Funtastic Island will subsequently impact land rights claims in Gibitngil, and poses as a precedent for other coastal communities in Cebu.

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[7] "Mayors and Vice Mayors killed during Duterte administration" (2021): https://news.abs-cbn.com/focus/07/04/18/mayors-and-vice-mayors-killed-under-duterte-administration

[8] Funtastic Island on Gibitngil is now featured on multiple tourism blogs and sites including Trip Advisor.

c. Community-based disaster management as women’s work

CRRC first arrived in Kawit at the wake of Typhoon Frank (international name: Fengshen) in 2008. A people’s organization was formed when residents living along the coast faced challenges with the declaration of a “no-build zone”, and CRRC had provided post-disaster assistance as well as support in the struggles against relocation. With its field office set up in close proximity, CRRC staff became more knowledgeable and involved with local land tenure issues. In 2013 at the wake of Yolanda, it extended its programmes to Gibitngil for the first time and coordinated its early recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts with GIFFA members. In 2015, CRRC conducted the first CBDM training in Gibitngil which formally created a disaster preparedness committee. Among its many efforts from 2014 to 2019 included the construction of rainwater catchment facilities for the island’s lone elementary school and to serve four *sitios* which are communally managed by GIFFA; in the absence of potable water on the island, these rainwater catchment tanks enable residents to save on costs in purchasing and ferrying gallons from the mainland. Since the tanks can only be filled during the rainy season, a large pump boat was also provided by CRRC to haul water from the mainland during the dry season and when the sea is calm. CRRC also provided new boats for those who have lost theirs during Yolanda, and assisted in the repairs of damaged boats. Fishing nets and flashlights were also distributed to fishers; rolls of nylon string were distributed to fishers who needed to mend their nets; and goats were provided as livelihood assistance to farming households. A community *sari-sari* or convenience store[9] was also set up and communally managed by GIFFA members, and residents can purchase items on credit. As seen in the film, Lori proudly manages one of the fish-drying facilities set by CRRC and Caritas Austria, which helped increase the market value of their catch given that dried fish sells at a higher price. Fish vending capital was also provided for those who wanted to buy their neighbours’ catch to sell in the mainland; fair prices are set by GIFFA members for buying and selling. Collectively these efforts reflect a combination of relief aid and longer-term community development and livelihood assistance.

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[9] CRRC staff reported to me in a personal correspondence in April 2021 that this communally managed *sari-sari* store was lauded by the Municipal government and in turn used for COVID-19 response in the Barangay.

Outside of these formal DRRM programmes and services, however, is the extensive support provided by CRRC staff to community organizing efforts in Gibitngil which define the core of their CBDM commitments. These efforts also belong to bigger scales of organized social justice efforts: GIFFA is the local chapter of *Pamana-Sugbo* (short for *Panaghugpong sa Mananagat sa Sugbo*) or the Association of Fisherfolks in Cebu, which is the provincial affiliate of PAMALAKAYA or the National Federation of Small Fisherfolk Organizations in the Philippines. These progressive social movements organize across scales to challenge the Fisheries Code, the enforcement of "no-build zones", reclamation projects, off-shore mining explorations, and urge local government units and national government agencies to take action against issues which threaten the lives and livelihoods of fishing communities. One of the CRRC staff is also a member of *Pamana-Sugbo* and personally took part in the picket demonstration against Funtastic Island; while another had originally been a member of GIFFA before joining CRRC as full-time staff. One could therefore argue that in the case of CRRC's work for CBDM in Gibitngil (unlike what is seen in the first two case studies with CREST and ABI), the boundaries between the residents and staff have blurred significantly, and that these two groups have almost entirely overlapped given their coinciding roles and similar membership in civic organizations.

In all our individual and group interviews, disaster preparedness committee leaders unanimously agreed on the many advantages of having and being part of a well-organized association in their island *barangay.* Gina reflected on how they needed to seek legal guidance and advice from other civil society organizations when fellow residents were mobilizing to protest at Sitio Baring, and they would not have been able to launch such a concerted effort without the strong foundations laid by GIFFA in the previous years. Meanwhile Tina shared how having a functioning disaster preparedness committee is vital for their island to access and better coordinate relief aid from external NGOs, foundations and charities, as proven in their experience with super typhoon Ruby (international name: Hagupit) in 2014. Disaster preparedness committee members helped in conducting rapid needs assessment and gathering data on affected households, which were easily provided to external groups. A well-organized group such as a disaster preparedness committee, though informal in its role vis-a-vis elected

Barangay officials, can also be recognized and made visible: for instance during post-Ruby DRRM efforts, all the women disaster preparedness committee members agreed to wear white shirts when a medical team arrived on the island for a health mission. The lead doctor remarked how efficient the entire process was working with them, though they were not official government representatives. In her film interview, Lori also shared tearful reflections on how transformative their experience has been being part of a people's organization which can "fall together and rise together". A strong association is also able to think of solutions together, and can lobby and negotiate with the local government more effectively. In recognition for the women's leadership capacities, four of the present-day disaster preparedness officers have been hired as *Bantay Dagat* or local coast patrollers despite the strong prejudice against women in this role. Lori was also later employed by the local municipal government with the election of the current Mayor Joven Mondigo Jr., who has shown to be more supportive of residents' efforts in Gibitngil. While oppositional state-society relations have been remarkable in the case of Gibitngil, this porous divide between government and citizens allows for continued negotiations, discussions, and at times cooperation between parties as seen for example in how the current Mayor had sent the Municipal DRRM Officer to attend CRRC's forums and trainings on DRRM.

In addition to celebrating the strengthening of their grassroots leadership throughout the years, the women also shared their thoughts on the gendered implications of their leadership roles. They spoke of their husbands who take their boats out to sea all night: *"ang laki kapoy biya ilahang lawas kai dagko kaayung bawod"* ("the men return home exhausted because their bodies have been battling waves out at sea"). While men sleep in the daytime to recover, women continue with housework such as laundering clothes, cleaning the house, and looking after the children. Women's role in unpaid reproductive and care labour extends from their individual households to their neighbourhoods and the *barangay* too. Those who demonstrate keen interest in civic issues, participate actively, and have basic literacy and numeracy skills are often selected for leadership roles whether in government or civil society organizations. This may include being trained as *barangay* health workers, *purok* leaders, parent leaders of the 4Ps government social welfare programme as seen in Chapter Five, disaster preparedness committee officers as seen in all three case studies, or leaders of larger people's organizations as seen in Gibitngil. While their additional involvement in communal affairs may put strain in household affairs and marital relationships, the women officers in Gibitngil collectively agree that their active participation in such leadership roles ultimately benefit their own families too. Not unlike the stories of the women officers in Malabago as told in Chapter Six, the women officers in Gibitngil remarked that what they enjoy the most is being able to "roam around" the island busy with all kinds of tasks such as conducting house-to-house surveys, inviting neighbours to trainings, and delivering in-kind donations to different neighbourhoods. Tina also humorously confessed that she had to patiently appease her husband that her growing participation in positions of power is not an emasculating threat to him as "head of the family"--she reasons to him that at least one member of their household is knowledgeable in DRRM, can coordinate directly with the Barangay, and they can collectively therefore benefit from livelihood programmes, and are able to access resources, skills and support from CRRC, other NGOs, and the local government in the mainland. Similar stories of having to negotiate their leadership roles with male relatives and husbands was a source of constant teasing, joking and laughter for the women during our *kuwentuhan.* They candidly offered one another marital advice on how they could "appease" any complaints from their husbands regarding how busy their days were attending to communal affairs outside of the home. Clearly grassroots organizing for CBDM and other struggles to claim rights to shelter and livelihood have all become women's work in Gibitngil, an extension of their unpaid care labour for their households and *barangays*.

On our last day in Gibitingil, my teammates and I rose before the sun was up. The children were awake and started walking over to the shoreline for a coastal clean-up activity which they had self-organized and which we eagerly supported. They had called their schoolmates, playmates and neighbours a few days earlier to conduct this activity together. Their mothers were in charge of cooking: a big pot of *lugaw* or congee was boiling to feed over 30 children. My research team and I bought a large bag of sweet breads and cookies to share. To start the morning, one of my teammates was called to the microphone to lead a warm up exercise: the song "Boom Boom" by the Korean pop band Momoland played loudly from two large speakers, and she led the kids in a spontaneous Zumba work out to everyone's delight. Two young ladies addressed their friends about the importance of cleaning the shoreline, and they all dispersed in groups of threes and fours to fill up large empty sacks of non-biodegradable waste littered along the shore. After hours of cleaning, we gathered with the children and their mothers to eat a hot breakfast, and sang happy birthday to two old grandmothers. It was a communal celebration, and a stirring sense of conviviality and camaraderie was shared all around--much as it sustains the work of women officers in Gibitngil.

In Cebuano, capacities can be defined as "*kasinatian*" or talents, as one would refer to skills in woodworking or weaving and mending fishnets. In the CBDM framework practiced by all the regional centres in the Citizens' Disaster Response Network, the recognition of people's capabilities and strengths is integral to the success of community organizing efforts. This fundamentally shifts the subjectivity of those impacted by disasters from being victims and dependent beneficiaries of aid, to being community members and leaders, political subjects and agents of transformation. Well-being for the women we interviewed is defined by this basic recognition and celebration of their *kasinatian,* of their abilities and talents, which are most visible in the roles they take on as members of their *barangay:* cooking to feed a gathering of children, leading evacuation drills, walking the island on foot to survey household needs, managing their communal stores and fish-drying operations. In a striking similarity to the lives and work of the *Sama-Sagip* women leaders in Barangay Malabago, the women leaders of GIFFA and its disaster preparedness committee in Barangay Gibitngil share a jubilant pride in speaking of their ability to lead in efforts to secure a better life for themselves and one another--to protect their "*katungod nga mupuyo, katungod nga manginabuhi"* ("right to live, right to a good living").

Conclusion

In this chapter on the case of small-scale fishers living on an island-*barangay,* their experiences of disasters and vulnerability are shaped not just by their exposure to intensifying and more frequent super typhoons, but also by their geographical and socio-political isolation. This is reflected in their physical distance from centres of governance and trade and the subsequent neglect in the provision of basic social services; their marginalization as small-scale subsistence fishers whose livelihoods are threatened by commercial fishing in their municipal waters; and threats to their rights to land and shelter by the interests of and alliance between local island-owning elite and local government officials who have threatened residents with eviction and resettlement in order to pursue tourism development. This web of intersecting forces of violence shape the vulnerabilities experienced by women of fishing households in Gibitngil, whether during a super typhoon or long before and after the storms have passed.

Efforts by CRRC, disaster preparedness committee officers, and GIFFA members address the overlapping fields of 'DRRM', 'CCA' and broader development efforts which include mobilizing to secure rights to land and livelihoods through protests and legal campaigns. The case of Gibitngil demonstrates a successful and ongoing mobilization of small-scale fishers across scales of the *barangay,* the municipality, Cebu, and nationwide through the sustained efforts of various civil society organizations and social movements upon which the newly formed disaster preparedness committee in Gibitngil is hinged to and was formed out of. This case study therefore exemplifies how CRRC's CBDM efforts in Gibitngil have not only been limited to post-disaster relief, recovery and rehabilitation efforts, but also involve the organizing of a critical mass to threaten state and elite power with the support of strong civil society partners.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

Summary of Findings

a. Gendering violence in the 'Philippine Anthropocene'

What counts as a disaster, and therefore what counts as disaster response, preparedness and prevention efforts, are political choices. While the Hyogo Framework's central goal was to reduce disaster losses by 2015, its successor, the Sendai Framework has significantly shifted its policy paradigm to the reduction of disaster risk by 2030. These translate into the promotion of development programmes which have the central aim of "reducing risk and building resilience". With outstanding advocacy efforts from civil society organizations worldwide, the Sendai Framework has enshrined a recognition of the central role non-state actors play in disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) efforts globally. In the Philippines this policy framework finds resonance in Republic Act 10121 or the Philippine DRRM Act of 2010, which was authored by pioneering advocates in the country who are represented in the government's National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), in national civil society coalitions such as the Disaster Risk Reduction Network (DRRNetPhils), and in global civil society bodies which have similarly championed the Sendai Framework five years later. While both are landmark policy and legislative frameworks which continue to challenge top-down DRRM approaches by institutionalizing the role of civil society in the localization-decentralization of DRRM governance, my doctoral research's focus on the lives of women grassroots leaders in the Philippines reveal limitations to such policies. I pose an alternate framing beyond what community-based approaches to DRRM offer.

Amidst a growing climate justice movement and burgeoning interest in the Anthropocene, with rising global Northern anxieties for future impacts of anthropogenic climate change, I instead situate this study in the present political moment characterized by intensifying meteorological, geophysical and climatological hazards already unfolding alongside the lethal forces of state terror in the Philippines. Together these forces shape violent environments in disaster-stricken communities and endanger the lives of disaster responders from various civil society organizations in the country. What is a disaster, and how can questions of surviving violent environments be de-naturalized and re-politicized in the present context of the ‘Philippine Anthropocene’? To subvert hegemonic conceptualizations of disasters as spectacular tragedies and their representations in fast media, I turn to feminist and anti-racist conceptualizations of ‘slow’ violence as a way to theorize and thereby ‘see’ violence as everyday disasters. Referencing theories of the weak “anti-development” Philippine state (Bello et al. 2005), I argue that state violence is demonstrated not only in the intensification of brutal militarized governance in the country but is simultaneously exemplified in the government’s “weakness” --its chronic inabilities to provide the services and resources it is legislatively mandated to deliver to its citizens translate to criminal neglect and abandonment with lethal implications. In each of my analysis of the three case studies in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, I illustrate how state, corporate and elite interests collude to form local power bases in the provincial, municipal and *barangay* levels which shape vulnerabilities among urban poor, small-holder farmers and small-scale fishers; these entrenched state-civil society power relations in turn shape the ways in which grassroots women leaders organize to negotiate, collaborate with and challenge the state. In the context of the ‘Philippine Anthropocene’ where an authoritarian regime attempts to further consolidate its top-down militarized disaster governance in response to intensifying meteorological and climatological hazards, I write that the state is also an anthropogenic hazard which is capable of endangering lives, exposing marginalized bodies to risk, and also inflicting terror on disaster response workers serving at the front lines --a hazard more lethal than the strongest storm in the planet’s recorded history (Go 2020).

Nixon’s compelling conceptualization of ‘slow violence’ (2011) is central to my theorization of violence as disasters, in and beyond the realm of the spectacular and what is deemed newsworthy. Critical geographers further his work using feminist and anti-racist interventions to argue that it is not only slow violence in the everyday that is unseen, but people themselves whose humanity is unrecognized: my work therefore “explicitly centres the concerns, knowledge and bodies of those who suffer violences that have been forgotten, hidden, or otherwise erased” (Cahill and Pain 2019, 1054). Employing a postcolonial feminist lens, I write about how the lives, stories and voices of women grassroots leaders from marginalized communities reveal gendered understandings of daily disasters defined by various forms of ‘slow’ violence:

- Women officers of the disaster preparedness committee in Barangay Bagumbayan, Taguig City speak not only of the dangers posed by hydro-meteorological hazards in the form of typhoons and floods, but also of the violence of fires and forced evictions which destroy their houses in informal settlements. Urban poverty is in itself a disaster, which cannot be separated from gender-based violence in the form of domestic and sexual abuse, including state-sanctioned armed violence launched through the drug war.
- Women officers of the disaster preparedness committee in Barangay Malabago, Santa Cruz, Zambales speak not only of the dangers posed by intensifying typhoons, but also of the toxic mud-floods brought down by the storms from nickel mines in the region. The environmental destruction, persecution of environmentalists, loss of livelihoods and compounding debt for small-holder farmers in their *barangay* constitute the gendered experiences of daily disasters they endure.
- Women officers of the disaster preparedness committee in Barangay Gibitngil, Medellin, Cebu speak not only of the dangers posed by super typhoons, but also of the ongoing threats to their livelihoods due to commercial fishing in their municipal waters, and the fears of being evicted from the island by local landowning elite and government officials in pursuit of tourism development. Gendered experiences of armed violence and harassments shape the women’s understanding of disasters.

Staff of the Citizens’ Disaster Response Centre (CDRC) and I have selected the above three case studies with the objective of featuring multiple marginalized communities, their distinct understandings of disasters, and experiences in responding to the violence in their lived environments in collaboration with support non-government organizations and social movements. Given the breadth and expanse of CDRC’s nationwide network of 17 regional centres throughout the archipelago, we decided it was optimal to feature a comparative study of three field sites in order to demonstrate significant parallels and differences in the work of women disaster preparedness committee officers from different marginalized sectors. Table 2 outlines how three regional centres have organized three different disaster preparedness committees, connecting various disaster experiences with development and social-environmental-climate justice. The older the regional centre is, the greater its ability to connect a *barangay*-based disaster preparedness committee to people's organizations or social movements across larger scales. While oppositional state-society relations are commonly found across all three case studies, a porous divide simultaneously exists allowing for women leaders and NGO staff to negotiate, cooperate with and contest state power.

I therefore contend that there are urgent implications for theorizing violence as disasters. The categories of "humanitarian" aid, "disaster risk reduction", and "development" may partially reduce vulnerabilities and work towards enhancing safety and well-being in disaster-stricken communities, but each of these categorical frameworks cannot single-handedly transform violent environments. A feminist political ecology of disasters allows for the gendering of violence and analyses of state power to be central in the study of disasters. As documented in the case studies, this allows for NGO practitioners and women grassroots leaders to connect the dots among a variety of violent experiences; their actions for social-environmental-climate justice are therefore enacted across multiple scales and enable them to work with, negotiate, and at times challenge state power. While my collaborators from CDRC and broader progressive social movements have developed a staunch critique of the state and militarized power, I demonstrate that theorizing violence as disasters through a postcolonial feminist framework also enriches and fulfills gaps in existing DRRM work as practiced by progressive NGOs in the country. As the majority of the disaster preparedness committee officers practicing CBDM in my three case studies are women, theorizing violence as disasters underscores how CBDM has become women's work--a direct extension of their daily care labour, not only for their own households but also the broader *barangay.* As revealed in the stories and lived experiences of women farmers, women fishers, and women from an urban poor community, one must pay close attention to gendered experiences of violence. I propose that postcolonial feminist perspectives and embodiment scholarship offer vital contributions to critical disaster studies and practice.

b. Collaborative research on disasters

While there is often great haste to enter and study disaster events, methodological challenges in designing disaster research often emerge in perceived “lack of time” in quick-response research (Donner and Diaz 2007). As a former emergency response worker in the Philippines, a participant in transnational climate justice movements and an engaged scholar, I have personally grappled with the challenges associated with the urgent need to respond to every disaster event in collaboration with frontline responders. In this dissertation I propose ‘slow disaster research’ to challenge the assumption that one must hurriedly enter the field “when disaster strikes” in order to do disaster research; instead, my research team and I arrived in each of the three field sites in “fair weather and when the skies were clear”. There were no post-disaster relief operations or rapid needs assessments to witness firsthand; however, much is revealed in the daily lives of people who are living amidst disasters.

In a multi-year collaboration with the Citizens’ Disaster Response Centre (CDRC), a progressive non-government organization which has pioneered the practice of community-based disaster management (CBDM) through community organizing for development and human rights, we inquired into what staff find are important questions to ask and investigate, what their most urgent priorities are, and most importantly, how I may be most useful to them and their time. We have sustained these discussions patiently over the next five years of my doctorate studies as we navigated changing ethical and security concerns as it pertains to the current Duterte administration, alongside a ceaseless continuum of disaster events not excluding the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. CDRC staff consistently underscored the importance of highlighting the lives and work of grassroots leaders in the *barangays* they work in as these community leaders are the least recognized by national government agencies, locally elected officials, DRRM policy experts, mass media, including international and local NGOs. To centre the research project on the women disaster preparedness committee officers in the *barangays,* and not on the professional staff of CDRC’s regional centres, offered me an opportunity to engage in an embodied practice of slow scholarship: tuning into a sense of time that is drastically different from the fast-paced urgency driving the professional work of most DRRM and humanitarian actors including CDRC staff. Instead working in the slower rhythms of everyday life in disaster-stricken communities allows for gendered experiences and understandings of slow violence to be gleaned alongside seemingly mundane efforts undertaken by women residents themselves for individual and collective well-being.

Being deeply embedded in and identified with the organization allowed me access to multiple spaces of advocacy work with CDRC's partner civil society organizations during my fieldwork; as a participant observer I was given the opportunity to assist organizers in the DRRM Summit 2018, support legislative advocacy efforts in reviewing the proposed Department of Disaster Resilience, and witness firsthand the working relationships in and among civil society organizations. This collaborative relationship between myself and CDRC also entails shared albeit differentiated risks as it pertains to the state's ongoing attacks on various elements of Philippine civil society. Multiple organizations identified in the diagram in Chapter Four have been "red-tagged" by the government as "communist terrorist groups"; hence, undertaking collaborative research in the current political context has posed significant risks to my study and collaborators, and I have been highly selective of the information and the manner I present them in both the video series and the text in this dissertation. In editing the video series, my team and I have chosen not to include any interviews which openly speak against state, corporate and elite forces; in writing about the women's anonymized testimonies, I have likewise refrained from directly quoting interviews which reference the drug war and other encounters with armed violence. I have decided against publishing funding relationships among local and international non-government organizations in Chapter Four, as such information has been used in the government's own matrices of "communist terrorist groups". In light of these dangers, I have chosen to maintain a constructive stance in my collaboration with CDRC throughout the research process as evidenced in the multiple ways we engaged in dialogue, open feedback and writing across the chapters. While I have maintained an autonomous space to critique and write about limitations in the practice of community-based disaster management by CDRC's three regional centres in the three case studies, I deem it negligent to prioritize critique without practicing solidarity with those whose lives, bodies and work are most at risk today.

In line with the collaborative nature of my doctoral research, I also chose to assemble a research team with two women filmmaker friends from Manila to produce the "*Barangay*

Magiting (Village Heroes)" video series (Go, Simbulan and Tan 2019a, 2019b, 2019c). Working and travelling with a team helped to enhance a sense of safety for each one of us; we were likewise accompanied by CDRC staff from regional centres and hosted by local families in each of the three field sites. My teammates and I negotiated our gendered presence with different configurations of local power relations, positionalities, interests, and security issues, sometimes with and without our cameras. Our many long conversations were helpful in my own thinking and reflective processes; their keen artistic eye helped me keep an attentiveness to the social worlds we were documenting, which Back writes is part of "hope's work" (2021, 4). We were comforted by the strong bonds of friendship we shared and kept one another in joyful company throughout our travels despite the loss, death and violence we were uncovering --and while we did not make one another "bullet-proof", we drew courage from our companionship in ways similar to the women grassroots leaders in the three *barangays*. As I write in each of the three case studies, conviviality, camaraderie, shared knowledge and a strong sense of belonging in one another, all offer a kind of empowerment that sustains collective work.

c. *Politics of hope*

While impunity had long been a feature of Philippine political life, the rising death toll of the Duterte administration's 'war on drugs' ranks among the worst disasters in the Philippines, supported by a disturbingly durable level of popularity and legitimacy for Filipinos both in the country and overseas. To hope, or to want to commit to a politics of hope, in this moment is not a denial of worldly troubles; instead it is a desire for sanity, calm, and clarity--a countermovement to paralysis for which collective political action is needed and also vital for. Back writes that "fostering a different kind of attentiveness to the world is a resource in the service of hope" (Ibid). In Chapter Three I write that this attentiveness is embodied, and that hope can be replenished through the embodied practices of *pahinga* (rest) and *pa-hinga* (to let breathe) (see Go, Simbulan and Tan 2021). I draw on embodiment scholarship to enrich critical disaster studies through the use of ethnography, film-making, interviews and *kuwentuhan* or group storytelling circles in gendered spaces. These methods of 'slow' disaster research attuned me to the violence experienced in the everyday by women in marginalized communities including their daily efforts to work for well-being and survival.

I write about the women's anonymized testimonies in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, and also selectively feature their stories in the "*Barangay Magiting* (Village Heroes)" video series. I demonstrate that their practices of CBDM--which encompass daily efforts for community organizing, pre-disaster preparedness, post-disaster recovery, development work, and mobilizing for socio-ecological-climate justice activism--have become an extension of women's daily care labour for their households and communities. These efforts offer radical albeit limited possibilities for re-centering questions of power in disaster response. Embodied practices of *pa-hinga* (resting to let breathe) in disaster research, as experienced in our *kuwentuhan* in private homes, outdoor gardens, communal kitchens and daycare centres, enabled our research team and informants to experience moments of respite, rest and comfort in one another's presence. The women's interviews expound on their daily struggles with slow violence alongside their jubilant celebrations of the conviviality they enjoy with one another and the collective work they engage in as grassroots leaders in their communities. Their aspirations as mothers, wives, aunts, grandmothers, neighbours and comrades exemplify hope not as blind faith but an anticipation of what is possible: "hope, then, is not a belief as an empirical question" (2021, 7).

Closing: Disaster Research and COVID-19

A new wave of disaster scholarship by Filipino scholars on the Philippines has emerged following Typhoons Pepeng and Ondoy in 2009. Recent research studies include the evaluation of community-based approaches to disaster risk management (Fernandez, Uy and Shaw 2012); local knowledge and participatory mapping projects (Cadag and Gaillard 2012); human security and resilience (Atienza 2019; Atienza, Eadie and Tan-Mullins 2019); children and youth participation in disaster risk reduction activities (Molina et al. 2009, Fernandez and Shaw 2015); feminist disaster research methods (Alburo-Cañete 2020) and feminist analysis of violence (Tanyag 2018; True and Tanyag 2018). I situate my work in this broader community of scholars. My use of a postcolonial feminist analysis in theorizing violence as disasters (see Curato 2018) extends anti-racist feminists' engagement with slow violence (Cahill and Pain 2019) in the fields of critical disaster studies and political ecology; likewise, my use of slow disaster research methods including *kuwentuhan* or group storytelling circles joins a novel exploration of decolonial participatory research methods with disaster survivors (see Alburo-Cañete 2020 for "photo*kuwento*"). My work demonstrates how the field can be enriched by commitments to engaged scholarship, collaborative research with practitioners, and to centering questions of power in disaster response.

Mag-Alay Sa Bayan (Offer to the Nation)[10] by Pordalab

♬ *"Damhin ang panahon,*
Delubyo ay nagbabadya,
At maraming nagugutom,
Hindi ka ba nababahala?
At nasaan ang pag-unlad?
Kung mayroon man sino'ng pinalad?
Ikaw ba'y naghahanap ng lunas?
Magsama tayo upang lumakas.

At ito ang panahon
Mag-alay sa bayan,
Kumilos ngayon!
Baguhin ang mundo
Ating yanigin, lalaya tayo!
Baklasin ang mga harang
Sa ating pag-usbong.
Puso ay ialay sa bayan
Tayo ay babangon.

Mag-alay sa bayan!
Damhin ang panahon,
Delubyo ay nagbabadya,
At maraming nagugutom,
Kami ay nababahala…
Mayroon tayong magagawa." ♫♪

🎶 "Can you not feel the times we are in,
A great deluge threatens us
And many are going hungry
Do you not feel troubled?
Where is real progress?
If there is any, who is lucky to have it?
Are you looking for a solution?
Let us join together to gather strength.

This is the time, this is the season
To offer to the nation,
Let us act now!
To change the world,
We must shake ourselves free!
Let us tear down what blocks
Our rising forth from the ground.
Offer your heart to the nation,
Together we will rise.

Offer to the nation!
Can you not feel the times we are in,
A great deluge threatens us
Many are going hungry
And we feel troubled…
But there is much we can do." ♬🎶

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[10] The lead female vocalist of the band Pordalab (a Filipino slang for "for the love") serves as a development worker for Alay-Bayan Luson (ABI), and dedicated the song to the NGO and disaster response workers. The band's songs call listeners to a love for country and to stand up for issues of social justice.
To listen: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ewk31E_afLw

As I write this concluding chapter in the Spring of 2021, over 350 community pantries have sprouted all across the Philippines in response to mounting unemployment and hunger during the pandemic. A pantry consists of a small table, shelves and a sign on the sidewalk where donations of rice, canned goods and other basic items are stacked for anyone to take as needed. The regime's Anti-Communist Task Force, however, took notice and interrogated citizens running these pantries. "Does it mean kindness is an act of terrorism now?", one asked.[11] In one community store in Metro Manila, over 700 people have queued up to take free items as they needed for the day; and donations keep pouring in to replenish this people-to-people system of mutual aid. These initiatives star no one, and have spread virally. My own sisters and friends in Manila have done the same. Since the start of the pandemic, collaborators from the Citizens' Disaster Response Centre (CDRC) have shared with me that community kitchens were being organized by many of their disaster preparedness committees nationwide, supported by local donations drives, volunteers, and transnational fundraisers. Like much of the perennial disaster response efforts often mobilized ad hoc all across civil society at the wake of typhoons, earthquakes and droughts, these community pantries and kitchens continue to emerge without a central command--the expanse of their proliferation may not be systematically recorded, studied and mapped, yet these small and mundane efforts continue to spread among the disaster-weary who choose to help one another, plagued as we are by the familiar failures of a weak state. Echoing the lyrics of the song, one does not only rage against the forces that predispose marginalized communities to hunger, sickness and death from COVID-19, or of the armed terror that endanger those responding to daily disasters; but one must also sing of the ceaseless work of caring that continue to arise in the midst of the 'Philippine Anthropocene'.

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[11] "Food pantries for hungry Filipinos get tagged as communist" (Aljazeera 2021): https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/24/food-pantry-for

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS

Individual Interview Questions
Leaders of Disaster Preparedness Committee

- Name and leadership positions e.g. in People's Organization, Disaster Preparedness Committees or other civic organizations
- Please tell me about the most common disaster experiences here in your *barangay*, both historically and most recently.
- What do you think a disaster (*sakuna*) is? What are the sources and causes of greatest harm or danger (*peligro / panganib*) here? What makes people feel the least secure and safe?
- Are there particular disasters (*sakuna*) that are most dangerous (*mapanganib*) in your perspective as a woman?
- When were you involved in CDRC's CBDM trainings? Why did you join?
- What do you do in your work as a front line disaster responder, or a leader in CBDM? Do you think your efforts are successful or not? What are the challenges or obstacles you face? What efforts do you think needs support to improve?
- As a woman what do you desire for your organization or work in addressing disasters in your *barangay?*
- What does your local government do in relation to disaster preparedness or response? What do they do to help your community be safer, more secure? Are their efforts successful or not?

Focus Group Questions
Group storytelling with leaders trained in Community Based Disaster Management (CBDM)

- Names and leadership positions each one holds e.g. in People's Organization, Disaster Preparedness Committees or other civic organizations
- As a group and drawing on one another's collective memories, could we all help put together a list of the common disaster experiences (*sakuna*) here in your *barangay*? Both historically and most recently.
- As a group of women leaders in your municipality, could you share your insights on what you think you consider to be a disaster (*sakuna*)? What are the sources and causes of greatest harm (*peligro / panganib*) here? What makes people feel the least secure and safe?
- Are there particular disaster experiences that are unique to you as women and mothers (*kababaihan, kananayan)*?
- As a group of women leaders in your *barangay*, could you share your vision or aspirations of what a good life looks like for your people?
- What does safety, well-being and survival look like? What efforts are needed or need to be continued and supported for this to happen?

Interview Questions

NGO staff members of regional centres

- Name and position in CDRC regional center
- How long have you been working here? Please share a brief history of CDRC's presence and work here in the municipality. Please share an update of your current efforts here in relation to CBDM.
- How do you define what a disaster is here in this *barangay*? What are the most common disaster experiences here?
- What in your view are the successes, limitations and challenges in your own efforts and in the practice of CBDM?
- Who are the most vulnerable in this municipality? Why do you think they are? What has been done and currently being done by your team at CDRC, by the local government, and by other actors here to transform these conditions?

Interview Questions

Local government officials working on disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM)

- Name and position in the local government unit (Barangay / Municipal)
- How do you define a disaster? What are the most common disaster experiences in your locality?
- What is your work as a (position)? Please detail the work you do in relation to DRRM.
- What in your view are the successes, limitations and challenges in your own efforts?
- Who are the most vulnerable in your municipality? Why do you think they are? What could your office in the local government do to transform these conditions?
- As a local government official, are you aware of other efforts by non-government organizations or other individuals who are helping to respond to and prepare for disasters? How different or similar are these approaches to what you are doing in the local government?

Appendix B: Feedback on Videos by CDRC Staff

The following feedback on the "*Barangay Magiting* (Village Heroes)" (Go, Simbulan and Tan 2019) was shared to me by staff of the Citizens' Disaster Response Centre through personal communications after my team and I completed the videos in 2019.

1. Magandang matiryal ito na pangunahing nagtatampok sa Community Based Disaster Management (CBDM), o ang Nakabase sa Komunidad na Pangangasiwang Pansakuna (NKPP) sa pamamagitan ng mga Disaster Preparedness Committee (DPC) o Komite sa Kahandaan sa Sakuna (KKS).
The videos are good material for showcasing Community Based Disaster Management (CBDM, or NKPP in Filipino) through the work of Disaster Preparedness Committees (DPCs, or KKS in Filipino).

Mahusay na ipinapakita nito ang ilan sa mga batayang katangian ng NKPP:
It skilfully demonstrates the key features of CBDM:

A. *Ang mga sakuna ay usapin ng bulnerabilidad ng mamamayan: malinaw na naipakita na ang mga nadidisaster ay mga bulnerableng komunidad.*
Disasters are a question of people's vulnerability: the videos clearly show that vulnerable communities are impacted most by disasters.

B. *Kinikilala at pinalalakas ang kakayanan ng mamamayan: ipinakita sa video kung paano napalakas ang kakayanan ng mamamayan sa lahat ng aspeto ng kahandaan sa sakuna*
Recognizes and strengthens people's capacities: the videos show how citizens are empowered in different aspects of disaster preparedness and response

C. *Tinutugunan ang ugat ng bulnerabilidad ng mamamayan: kahit pahapyaw ay naipakita ang pagtugon sa pang-ekonomiyang ugat ng bulnerabilidad, tulad ng pagkakaroon ng mga proyektong tumutugon sa pagpapaunlad ng kabuhayan. Binanggit din ang problema sa pagkakaroon ng sariling lupang masasaka at ang problema sa pagkasira ng kapaligiran (pagtatanim ng mga bakawan para tugunan ang seguridad sa pagkain sa hinaharap)*
Addresses roots of people's vulnerabilities: the videos provide glimpses of how economic roots of vulnerability are addressed, such as the provision of livelihood assistance. The lack of land tenure and environmental destruction are also mentioned as causes of vulnerability, and the planting of mangroves for food security.

D. *Itinuturing na lubhang mahalaga ang pakikilahok ng mamamayan sa pangangasiwa sa sakuna: Malinaw na ipinakita ang pagiging aktibo ng komunidad*
Considers people's participation as essential to disaster management: the videos clearly show how community members can actively participate

E. *Nakatuon sa kakayanang pang-organisasyon ng mga bulnerableng sektor: naipakita ang kahalagahan ng pagbubuo ng DPCs*
Focuses on organizational capacity of vulnerable sectors: the videos show the importance of community organizing to form DPCs

F. *Pagbubuo ng mga ugnayan sa pagitan ng mga bulnerable at di-gaanong bulnerableng sektor: Di gaanong naipakita ang katangiang ito ng NKPP bagamat may pagbanggit naman sa*

tumulong na NGO. Bahagi naman ng less vulnerable sector ang mga Civil society Organizations (CSOs) na sinisikap rin nating ilapit sa mga bulnerableng sektor.
Creates partnerships between the vulnerable and less vulnerable sectors: the videos do not elaborate on this particular feature of CBDM, although partnerships between supporting NGOs and the communities are clearly depicted.

2. Dahil napakadalang na may ganitong pagkakataon na makagawa ng video isang masidhing pinapangarap rin namin na sana ay magamit sa mga video ang ating sariling mga termino tungkol sa sakuna. Kung di lubhang mahirap gawin, pwede pa kaya na ang voice over ay ma-edit at gamitin ang salitang sakuna sa halip na disaster?
As it is a very rare opportunity to create such video materials, we aspire to also be able to use terms in Filipino. If it is not difficult to do, is it possible to edit the narration to use the word "*sakuna*" instead of "disaster"?

May inihahanda kaming Manual ng NKPP/CBDM at sinisikap naming gamitin ang mga terminong Filipino at hihikayatin namin ang mga rehiyon na gamitin ang mga terminong mas mauunawaan ng mga mamamayan sa kanilang lugar. Totoong napakalaganap ng mga terminong Ingles kasi nga mas agresibo ang paggamit natin sa mga ito, at tayo rin ang nagpalaganap nito.
We are currently developing a manual on Community Based Disaster Management (CBDM) and we are making an effort to use Filipino in the text. We are encouraging our different regional centres to also use their local languages in speaking about disasters in their trainings. English terms have certainly been used more aggressively and propagated by NGO workers like ourselves.

Appendix C: Verbal Consent Script

Verbal Consent Script

For disaster preparedness committee officers
trained in Community Based Disaster Management (CBDM)

Study Name: The Feminist Political Ecology of Disaster Response in the Philippines

Researcher name: Chaya Ocampo Go
PhD Geography Department, York University
Principal Investigator
chayago@yorku.ca

Purpose of the Research:

"Ang aral po na ito ay tungkol sa gawaing CBDM o community based disaster management. Gusto ko pong malaman kung ano ang ginagawa nila bilang mga lider ng mga P.O. o ng D.P.C. sa barangay ninyo. Kung ano po ang iba't ibang mga nararanasang sakuna sa lugar ninyo, at kung ano naman ang ginagawa ninyo upang tugunan ang mga peligro sa inyo. Kadalasan po kasi ang alam lang gawin ng karamihan ay tumulong tuwing may baha na o may nabalitaang trahedya. Hindi nauunawaan ng marami yung pang araw-araw na mga buhay ninyo rito, at kung bakit mas bulnerable ang karamihan sa inyo sa iba't ibang kapahamakan."

"This study is about CBDM. I would like to know what you do as a leader in a People's Organization or Disaster Preparedness Committee in your *barangay.* I would like to know the different experiences of disasters here in your place, and what you do in response to these dangers. Most of our society or our authorities only help once there is a flood or they have learned something tragic happened through the news. Many do not understand your everyday living conditions here, and why most are vulnerable to all kinds of dangers, natural or not."

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research:

"Kung gusto po ninyong makasali sa pag-aaral na ito, gusto ko po sana kayong ma-interview na one-on-one at ang makakuwentuhan din ho kayo kabilang ang mga kasama ninyong lider sa inyong samahan. Itatanong ko po kung ano para sa inyo ang iba't ibang mga sakuna na nararanasan ninyong mga kananayan / kababaihan. Itatanong ko po kung paano kayo nasama sa CBDM training, kung palagay po ninyo na epektibo o nakakatulong ito o hindi. Ikwento niyo rin ho kung ano yung mga karanasan ninyo bilang mga unang tagapag-tugon. Gagawa rin ho ako sana ng maikling video tungkol sa mga karananasan ninyo rito bilang mga lider ng inyong DPC. Wala pong kapalit na bayad ang panahon ninyo, pero paghahandaan ko po ng konting merienda ang mga salu-salo natin. Sana po ay makakasali rin kayo."

"If you would like to be part of this study, I would like to invite you to a one-on-one interview and also to a group storytelling session with all your other fellow leaders here. I will ask you what you think are the disasters you experience as fellow mothers and women here. I will ask you about how you were involved in CBDM training, and if you think it is effective, helpful or not, and what the challenges are to your work. I'd like to hear your stories too as a front line responder. I am also making a short video about your experiences as women disaster preparedness leaders here. There is no monetary compensation for your participation, but I would like to offer some snacks and refreshments each time we get together. I hope you are able to join."

Risks, Benefits and Confidentiality:

"Kung sasali ho kayo sa project na ito, makakatulong po kayo sa pagpapalaganap at pagpapalawak ng kaalaman tungkol sa mga napaka importanteng gawain ng mga DPC at PO leaders. Maiintindihan po ng mas marami kung bakit at paano kami makakatulong sa mga ginagawa ninyo upang maging mas ligtas at mapabuti ang kalagayan ninyo rito. Wala naman pong makakasama sa pagsali sa project na ito, maliban na makikita ang inyong mga mukha at makikilala ang inyong pangalan. Kung gusto po ninyong maging confidential o anonymous ang mga kwento ninyo, pwede po nating itago ang identity ninyo gamit ang ibang pangalan, o ibura ang mukha sa mga video."

"If you are to join this project, you would help spread greater awareness and knowledge about the important work you do in the disaster preparedness committee or people's organizations in your *barangay.* Our audience and readers will be able to better understand how to support the grassroots work you do to help improve the safety and well-being of your community. I do not think there is any risk or danger to participating in this project, except that your faces and names will be shown. If you would like to remain anonymous, we can protect you with the use of another name or blur your face in the video."

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal

"Hindi po kayo dapat mapilitang sumali o manatiling parte ng project. Maaari po ninyong tanggihan. O kung sakaling gusto ninyong umalis sa kalagitnaan ng pag-aaral, pwede rin ho. Iburura ko ang mga binahagi ninyo."

"Please do not feel forced to join or remain part of the project. You may choose not to participate now, and you may also choose to withdraw at any point in the study. I will make sure to delete everything you would have shared in the database."

Consent for Audio and Video Recording

"Sumasang-ayon po ba kayo na i-record ko ang interview natin gamit ang cellphone ko upang maisulat ang inyong mga sagot at kwento?" [Oo o Hindi]
"Sumasang-ayon po ba kayo na makasama sa video na gagawin nating tungkol sa inyong buhay, kabuhayan at mga gawain bilang lider ng D.P.C. at P.O. sa lugar ninyo?" [Oo o Hindi]

"Do you agree to having our interview recorded with the use of my cellphone so that I can later write about your responses and story?" (Yes or No)
"Do you agree to being part of the short documentary clip that we are filming about your lives, ways of livelihood and the work you do as a community leader in your barangay?" (Yes or No)

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

For NGO staff members of the Citizens' Disaster Response Network's regional centres

Date: ___________________________

Study Name: The Feminist Political Ecology of Disaster Response in the Philippines

Researcher name: Chaya Ocampo Go
PhD Geography Department, York University
Principal Investigator
chayago@yorku.ca

Purpose of the Research:

This study examines the experiences of community based disaster management (CBDM) as practiced by the regional centres of the Citizens' Disaster Response Network and the disaster preparedness committees they have organized in partner *barangays*.

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research:

You are invited to a 30 to 45-minute interview to explain your work in relation to CBDM. Your response will be audio-recorded for transcribing and translating. You are also invited to be involved in a short video about CBDM in the localities you work in. No monetary honorarium will be offered; snacks and refreshments will be available during our meetings.

Risks and Discomforts:

I do not foresee any risks or discomfort from your participation in the research. Any sensitive information you may share regarding your work will be kept safe, and you may personally select what to share or not in the video which will be available for public viewing. You may also choose to protect your identity with a pseudonym and/or censored in photographs or videos.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You:

Despite the significant gains in lobbying for localized and decentralized approaches to DRRM, little is known about CBDM and how community organizing helps to create safer communities. This research project aims to contribute to a broader public awareness of the daily disasters marginalized communities live with, what makes people vulnerable, and work that transforms these realities. Voices and stories like yours will be important to learn about grassroots-based efforts on responding to disasters. In addition to writing articles for publication, I will be working with a team of filmmakers to produce three short videos featuring stories from interviews with key informants and will be screened to the public.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:

Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decisions will not influence the nature of the ongoing relationship you may have with me and the research team. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed and you will have the option to also withdraw your data up until the analysis is complete.

Confidentiality:

All interviews will be audio-recorded using my mobile device. In addition, you may also be invited to participate in a video recording of your interview by the filmmaker. Unless you choose otherwise, all information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. All handwritten notes and digital files of audio and video recordings will be securely stored in my safekeeping and by the filmmaker. The data collected in this research project will not be destroyed and may be used – in an anonymized form – by myself in subsequent research investigations exploring similar lines of inquiry. Such projects will still undergo ethics review.

Questions About the Research?

If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact me at chayago@yorku.ca or my supervisor, Dr. Philip Kelly at pfkelly@yorku.ca.

This research has received ethics review and approval by the Delegated Ethics Review Committee, which is delegated authority to review research ethics protocols by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board, and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines.

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I ______________________________, consent to participate in "The Feminist Political Ecology of Disaster Response in the Philippines" study conducted by Chaya Ocampo Go. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature__________________________ **Date**_____________________
Participant

Signature__________________________ **Date**_____________________
Principal Investigator

Additional consent (where applicable)

1. **Audio recording**

□ I consent to the audio-recording of my interview(s).

2. **Video recording or use of photographs**

I ____________________ consent to the use of images of me (including photographs, video and other moving images), my environment and property in dissertation materials, academic articles, documentary film and other presentations.

Signature: Date:

_____________________________________ ____________________
Participant: (name)

3. Consent to waive anonymity

I, ____________________, consent to the use of my name in the publications arising from this research.

Signature: Date:

____________________________________ ____________________

Participant: (name)

Appendix E: Member Organizations of DRRNet Philippines

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION
NETWORK PHILIPPINES
(DRRNetPhils)

The Disaster Risk Reduction Network Philippines (DRRNetPhils) is a national tertiary formation of more than 60 civil society organizations, people's organizations, practitioners and advocates adhering to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and implementing community-based disaster risk management in the country.

DRRNet currently sits at the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council as one of its civil society organization representatives.

It is also a member of:
1. The Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR)
2. United Nations-Humanitarian Country Team (as National NGO Representative)
3. National DRRM Council (as Civil Society Organization Representative)
4. Aksyon Klima

Network Convenors:
- Center for Disaster Preparedness (CDP)
- Assistance and Cooperation for Community Resilience and Development (ACCORD)
- Balay Rehabilitation Center
- Citizens' Disaster Response Center (CDRC)
- Center for Community Journalism and Development (CCJD)
- Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM)
- Plan International Philippines
- World Vision Philippines
- Ecosystems Work for Essential Benefits (ECOWEB)
- Research Group for Alternatives to Development (A2D Project)
- UP College of Social Work and Community Development (UP-CSWD)

As of June 2021, the network consists of the following member organizations:

Luzon
- Community Response for Enlightenment, Service and Transformation (CREST)
- Empowerment and Reaffirmation of Paternal Abilities (ERPAT)
- Good Neighbors International Philippines (GNI)
- Habitat for Humanity Philippines Foundation, Inc
- Initiatives for Dialogue and Empowerment through Alternative Legal Services, Inc. (IDEALS)
- Integrated Pastoral Development Initiative, Inc. (IPDI)
- Manila Observatory
- Marinduque Council for Environmental Concerns (MACEC)
- Operation Compassion

- Oxfam Philippines
- People’s Disaster Risk Reduction Network (PDRRN)
- Philippine Geographical Society (PGS)
- People's Initiative for Learning and Community Development (PILCD)
- Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhilDHRRA)
- Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM)
- Plan International - Philippines
- Philippine Misereor Partnership, Inc. (PMPI)
- Save the Children International - Philippines (SCI)
- Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan
- Simon of Cyrene Community Rehabilitation and Development Foundation, Inc. (SCCRDFI)
- University of the Philippines - College of Social Work and Community Development (UP-CSWCD)
- World Vision Development Foundation, Inc. (WVDF)

Visayas

- Assistance and Cooperation for Community Resilience and Development (ACCORD)
- AWO International
- Build Change
- The National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA) / Caritas Philippines
- Center for Community Journalism and Development (CCJD)
- Center for Disaster Preparedness Foundation, Inc. (CDP)
- ChildFund Philippines
- Citizens' Disaster Response Center (CDRC)
- Coastal CORE, Inc.
- Community Organization of the Philippines Enterprise (COPE)
- Center for Emergency Aid and Rehabilitation, Inc. (CONCERN)
- Consortium for People’s Development – Disaster Response Inc. (CPD-DR)
- Corporate Network for Disaster Response (CNDR)
- Christian Aid Coalition of services of the Elderly (COSE)
- Earthquake Megacities Initiative (EMI)
- Ecosystems Work for Essential Benefits, Inc. (EcoWEB)
- Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors (FORGE)
- Good Neighbors International Philippines (GNI)
- Habitat for Humanity Philippines Foundation, Inc.
- Initiatives for Dialogue and Empowerment through Alternative Legal Services, Inc. (IDEALS)
- Leyte Center for Development, Inc. (LCDE)
- Operation Compassion
- Oxfam Philippines
- People's Disaster Risk Reduction Network (PDRRN)
- Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhilDHRRA)
- Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM)
- Philippine Misereor Partnership, Inc. (PMPI)
- Save the Children International - Philippines (SCI)
- Sibog Katawhan Alang sa Paglambo, Inc. (SIKAP)
- Western Visayas Network of Social Development NGOs, Inc. (WeVNet)
- World Vision Development Foundation, Inc. (WVDF)

Mindanao

- Assistance and Cooperation for Community Resilience and Development (ACCORD)
- AWO International
- Balay Rehabilitation Center, Inc.
- Build Change
- The National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA) / Caritas Philippines
- Center for Community Journalism and Development (CCJD)
- Center for Disaster Preparedness Foundation, Inc. (CDP)
- Charm Radio Kidapawan, North Cotabato
- ChildFund Philippines
- Citizens' Disaster Response Center (CDRC)
- Coastal CORE, Inc.
- Center for Emergency Aid and Rehabilitation, Inc. (CONCERN)
- Consortium for People's Development – Disaster Response Inc. (CPD-DR)
- Corporate Network for Disaster Response (CNDR)
- Christian Aid Coalition of services of the Elderly (COSE)
- Earthquake Megacities Initiative (EMI)
- Ecosystems Work for Essential Benefits, Inc. (EcoWEB)
- Good Neighbors International Philippines (GNI)
- Habitat for Humanity Philippines Foundation, Inc.
- Initiatives for Dialogue and Empowerment through Alternative Legal Services, Inc. (IDEALS)
- Operation Compassion
- Oxfam Philippines
- People's Disaster Risk Reduction Network (PDRRN)
- Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhilDHRRA)
- Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM)
- Plan International - Philippines
- Philippine Misereor Partnership, Inc. (PMPI)
- Ranaw Disaster Response and Rehabilitation Center (RDRRAC)
- SAM-IPIL
- Save the Children International Philippines (SCI)
- Sibog Katawhan Alang sa Paglambo, Inc. (SIKAP)
- Tri-People's Organization Against Disasters Foundation (TRIPOD)
- World Vision Development Foundation, Inc. (WVDF)
- ZC Alliance for Public Safety (PSZambo)