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Coping with Disaster in The Philippines

Local practices for coping with natural disasters

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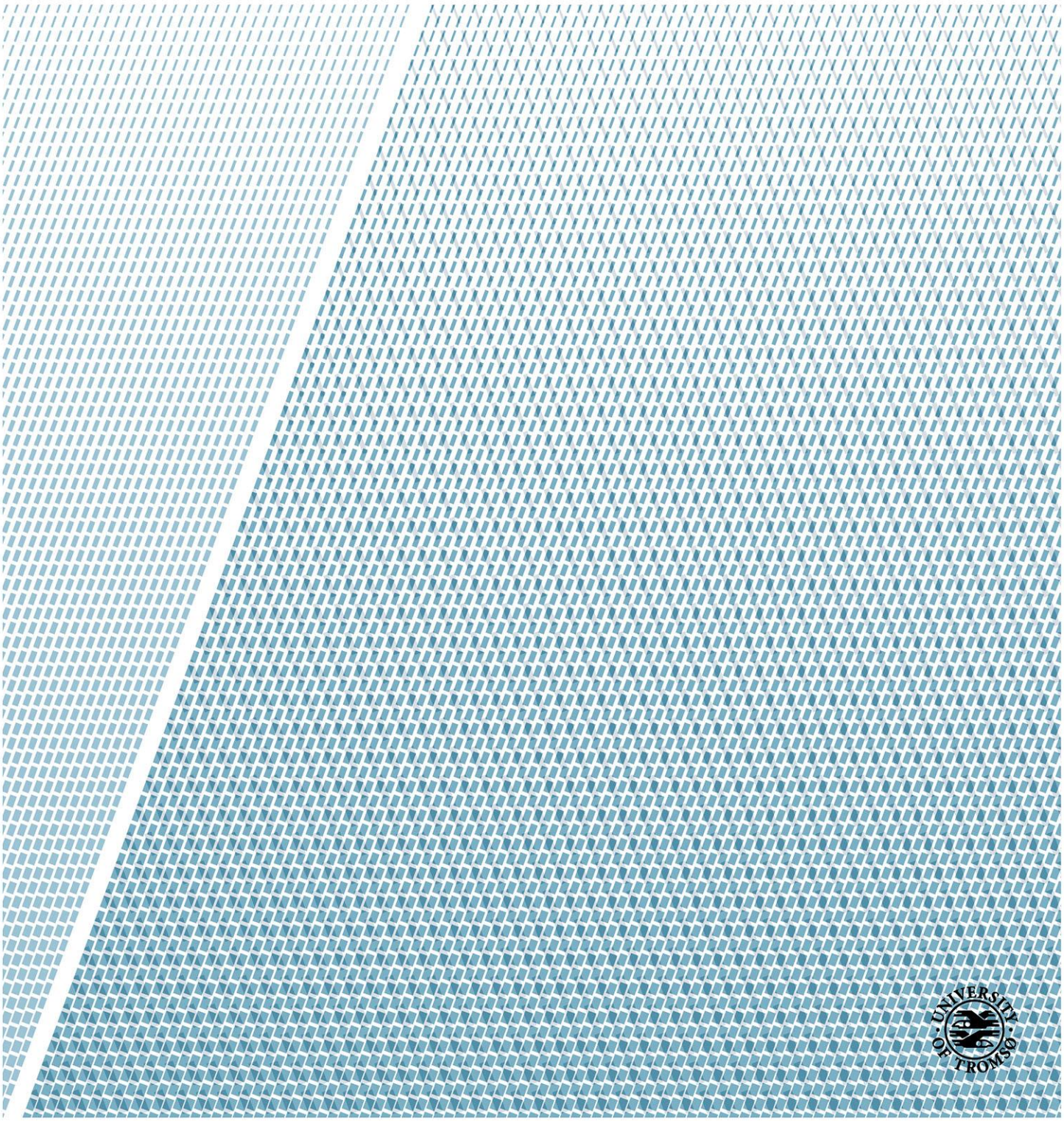
Master thesis in Social Anthropology



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Dedication

This master thesis has been quite a journey, from a freshmen arriving Tromsø 5 years ago and up until now. I feel privileged and humbled, as my studies has given me insights, opportunities to travel and a degree in Social Anthropology at the end. This thesis is the most interesting and fun, but at the same time most nerve-wrecking and difficult challenge I have met so far. There is a lot of people that deserves thanks, and I hope that I have managed to include everyone.

Special thanks to Jennifer Hays, who has been an excellent advisor and for guiding me through the whole process.

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Lastly, very special thanks to all my friends in the Philippines, whose real names are not specified. There would be no thesis without you. My friends in the apartment in Tagbilaran, thank you for having me, and especially for taking me with you everywhere and taking care of me while I was sick. I am forever indebted. The man with the golden tooth, my American friend and his wife at my favorite café in Tacloban and Marlon, thank you for taking care of me and making me feel welcome in Tacloban. To all the people I wrestled with and ate dinner with afterwards, thank you for training with me and giving me a good time. To all the people I worked with at various places, thank you for the good times and conversations.

Tromsø, 07. November 2016

Daniel Rød

Abstract

This master thesis is based on a fieldwork carried out in Tagbilaran, Bohol and Tacloban, Leyte in the Philippines the autumn of 2015. The Philippines is frequently exposed to natural disasters, and the inhabitants of the Philippines has developed local practices for coping, known as coping strategies, buffering mechanisms or coping mechanisms. This thesis describes and discusses these coping mechanisms in the light of the earthquake in Bohol late 2013, and typhoon Yolanda (international name Haiyan), which at the time was the strongest tropical storm to make landfall on record in late 2013. This thesis will also discuss how local practices of coping are overlooked by plans made by governmental agencies, and some of the possible consequences this can have on the local population, who no longer can rely on the coping mechanisms when they face disasters and adversity.

Denne masteroppgaven er basert på et feltarbeid utført i Tagbilaran, Bohol og Tacloban, Leyte i Filippinene høsten 2015. Filippinene er ofte utsatt for naturkatastrofer, og innbyggerne har utviklet lokale praksiser for katastrofehåndtering, kjent som håndteringsstrategier, bufferstrategier eller håndteringsmekanismer. Denne oppgaven beskriver og diskuterer disse håndteringsmekanismene i lys av jordskjelvet i Bohol sent 2013, samt tyfonen Yolanda (internasjonalt navn Haiyan), som var den sterkeste tropiske stormen som har blitt dokumentert i å nå land sent i 2013. Denne oppgaven vil også diskutere hvordan lokale praksiser for katastrofehåndtering blir oversett av planer lagt av myndigheter, samt hvilke mulige konsekvenser dette vil ha på lokalbefolkningen, som igjen ikke kan støtte seg på sine egne håndteringsmekanismer når de møter katastrofer og motgang.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

I have been hospitalized with Dengue fever for a week now, and I am finally well enough to write about the experience. I was admitted into the hospital severely dehydrated, with a fever reaching 40 degrees Celsius, and with a very strong headache and pains inside my hips and knees. Everything is a bit better now; I received a private room the second day, and now I am only awaiting the results from my blood samples before they discharge me.

I thought the whole fieldwork was put on hold when they admitted me. I was wrong. The whole hospital stay became a small case study on what Filipinos do in crisis or near-crisis situations. Marilyn[1], my landlord for the last month, cheerfully told me the following: "You came here to research on tragedies, now you are the one having one". It seems that the Filipino reputation for cohesion was true. It was tradition to "admit" the whole family as watchers if a person gets ill. Someone from the house I stayed in has been at my side at all times, sometimes even two to three people, even at night. I have also received a lot of food and help to everything imaginable, walks in the hallway, calling attention to the nurse, choice of doctor and so on.

When he arrived too late for the hospital gate at night to visit me, Fred (second-in-charge in the house I was staying in) bluffed his way past the guards with a closed envelope with "money" (newspaper cut in appropriate size), telling them that this is the money I was going to use as payment for the hospital stay. When I asked my friends whether this treatment from friends and family was usual (as I told them that it was okay for me if they wanted to sleep at home), Marilyn told me that it was to make sure that the patient got the right treatment and it was usual. She later added that she could not live with her self if she did not. Oscar told me that so many people visited him when he was ill that the doctors wondered if he was ill at all, because his room bore more resemblance to a party than a hospital room.

I spent my first night in the hospital at a dormitory. I observed that all the patients also had their closest friends and family in numbers at their bedside. Fred, Marilyn, Charlie, Layla, Oscar and even Dustin had been here. Dustin, who usually does no more than what he has to, even offered to stay here longer so that Fred could go for a bicycle ride.

It will take at least two to three days after discharge before I will feel well enough to start up my fieldwork again; I feel that I am getting tired just by writing this. I believe that this experience will be helpful for my thesis and the cooperation and the help I received are a central part of coping with disasters. --Field notes Tagbilaran 03-09.09.2015[2]

[1] Marilyn and the other names on informants and other people I met during my fieldwork used in this thesis are all pseudonyms.

[2] I have chosen to refer to my own field notes in several parts of this thesis. I have made no distinction between my field notes and my field diary. They have also been rewritten to ensure the complete anonymity for my informants.

This master thesis is based on my fieldwork in the Philippines carried out in the last four months of 2015, and it is also my contribution towards understanding of how Filipinos[3] deal with disasters, and especially natural disasters. I chose to include the above excerpt from my field diary because it was one of the first glimpses into how Filipinos deals with disasters and adversity. The Philippines is a nation struck by natural disasters unusually often. It is situated geographically on the eastern frontier of Southeast Asia towards the Pacific Sea and geologically right on the top of a tectonic "ring of fire", a metaphor for several colliding tectonic plates forming a circle-like figure in the Pacific Ocean. This makes the Philippines prone to tropical storms known as typhoons, as well as earthquakes, erupting volcanoes, and other calamities.

I went to fieldwork with an assumption that people have to cope with disaster, as it is often a do-or-die kind of scenario. The research questions I went to fieldwork with were forged with this context in mind:

How do people in the Philippines cope with natural disasters, especially considering practical and cultural coping mechanisms post-disaster?

What effects do these coping mechanisms have on society?

The assumptions above were challenged throughout my fieldwork, as the map I made before I went to fieldwork was not quite the terrain I walked into. The coping practices themselves were both more complex and more deeply rooted in the local culture than I assumed, and the way the local coping practices were met by society and especially different parts of the government were also a 'discovery' for me. The coping practices and how they fit in into the society comprise the main theme and recurring subject in the thesis.

The remaining section in this chapter is included to provide some basic insight before embarking upon the data and the analysis later in this paper. I will start off by giving a small introduction on Filipino history before I delve shortly into the anthropology, and statistics of disasters in the Philippines. In Chapter Two I present methodological approaches and

[3] I refer to inhabitants of the Philippines as *Filipinos* in this thesis. My informants used both the term Filipino and *Pinoy* (a demonym derived from the last four last letters in Filipino + y) when referring to themselves in plural, and both terms are commonly used. Other local terms like *Boholano* or *Leyteno* were observed, but I do not refer to them in this thesis. I have chosen Filipino over Pinoy as that was the term my informants used the most when referring to themselves while speaking English with me.

challenges, and Chapter Three will contain some of the most relevant theoretical perspectives for my thesis.

In the analysis, I have chosen to start on the ground on the local level with my informants to show how people cope with disasters, before I widen the perspective out to the local society and beyond. Chapter Four is the first analysis chapter. I use a model provided by Fredrik Barth to analyze the local coping practices, and I present and discuss different concepts or variables that play in into the local coping practices, based on my own ethnographic data.

I continue on the metaphoric ground level in Chapter Five. Here I present and analyze the different local coping practices my informants use when facing disasters. These local coping practices are dubbed coping mechanisms in this thesis, and I argue with the use of my own ethnographic data and the model provided by Barth that they are a result of the variables and concepts presented in Chapter Four.

In Chapter Six, the perspective is wider, but still with my informants, as I discuss the effects the local practices of coping have on the local society. Chapter Seven takes the local practices of coping into a wider perspective, and I use theoretical perspectives from Barth, James Scott and others to show how local practices/coping mechanisms for disasters meets the practices in governmental agencies in the Philippines.

History of the Philippines

The Philippines today is a nation state and a republic, and a geographically diverse one. There are at least 7,100 islands within the boundaries of the nation, and the archipelago is located on the south-eastern edge of Asia towards the Pacific Sea, 966 km south of China with the closest island being 249 km south of Taiwan, between 4 and 21 degrees north latitude, and 116 and 127 degrees east latitude.

Overview map of the Philippines (google maps 2016)

People have dwelled in the area today known as the Philippines for thousands of years, and its earliest settlements may have been as early as 50,000 years ago. The earliest trade was with the Chinese and the Arabs, and the religions practiced at the time of colonization indicated that the Filipino culture derived from India or Malaysia.

The first country to colonize what would later become known as the Philippines was Spain, starting with the landing of Ferdinand Magellan in March 1521. The conquest started in 1565 and was completed a few years later. The Spaniards controlled most of the archipelago with the exception of some regions, and resources such as slaves, cotton and other goods were extracted from what became a poor local underclass. According to colonial policies, informal and formal education was introduced together with Christianity as its main religion. The conquest itself was a relatively peaceful one as opposed to the ones in South America, as it was performed more with the cross than the sword, at least in a metaphoric sense.

The “Filipino Revolution” took place in 1897. Locally, there was open conflict and resistance in several places against Spanish oppression. Spain, being at war with the United States of

America at the time, surrendered the Philippines to its opponent in 1898. A new colonializing power took over the Philippines, now a nation with a growing nationalist sentiment. Japan invaded the Philippines in 1941 as a part of its campaign during World War II, but had to let it go to American forces starting in 1944 (Arcilla 1994).

The Philippines was declared a sovereign and independent republic on the 4th of July 1946, and Ferdinand Marcos was elected president in 1966. Marcos declared Martial Law in 1972, abolishing the Philippine congress and ruled by the Presidential decree until 1986, when he was deposed by the EDSA revolution (Jocano 1999, p. 42).

Anthropology in the Philippines

The Philippines is a nation with a wide range of cultural practices. This has not gone unnoticed by anthropologists, and the best known among many might be Michelle and Renato Rosaldo, who carried out their first fieldworks among tribes of head-hunters in the mountains in North-Luzon in the mid-1900s. Another well-reputed anthropologist spending time in the Philippines is Frank Lynch, well known for his work on Filipino values and rural life. He is considered a leading figure of anthropology in the Philippines, and his readings are central in anthropological curricula in several Universities in the Philippines. Another leading figure is the Philippines' own F. Landa Jocano, whose work on urban slums in the Philippines has been pioneering in his field. I will also mention Norway's own John-Henrik Ziegler Remme, who also conducted fieldwork over many years in the Philippines and especially in Northern Luzon. Some of the theoretical perspectives from the abovementioned authors will be revisited in the theory chapter, as some of them will be central to this thesis.

Natural disasters in the Philippines

> [A disaster is] a process/event combining a potentially destructive agent/force from the natural, modified, or built environment and a population in a socially and economically produced condition of vulnerability, resulting in a perceived disruption of the customary relative satisfactions of individual and social needs for physical survival, social order, and meaning (Oliver Smith and Hoffmann 2003, p. 4).

Natural disasters[4] are phenomena well known to any Filipino. Soledad Natalia M. Dalisay and Greg Bankoff argues that disasters are embedded into people's stories of everyday lives,

[4] *Natural disaster* is here referring to the destructive force from the natural; see quote from Oliver Smith and Hoffmann above. Examples can be typhoons, volcano eruptions, landslides, floods and tsunamis. *Disaster* points

integrated as forces of nature (Bankoff 2003, Dalisay 2009). The frequency and impact of natural disasters has been noted in history time after time with the somehow dubious distinction of rating the highest number of disasters during the 20th century. This has definitely made its impact on the society (Bankoff 2003).

> Between 1900 and 1991, there were 702 disasters, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, drought, landslides and the like –an average of eight a year, causing 51 757 fatalities (Bengco 1993:2) (Bankoff 2003, p. 31).

> The development of the Philippines has been affected by its climate. For example, heavy humidity and rainfall most of the year spread certain diseases. Typhoons have always disturbed the economic programs of the government. And located on the earthquake belt, with a large number of volcanoes, the Philippines has seen its plans for modernization often ruined or delayed by the inset of natural disasters (Arcilla 1994, pp. 13-14).

In his book *Cultures of Disaster* from 2003, Bankoff states that the Philippines have a "history of hazard", pointing to the facts above and over 450-year historical accounts from early Spanish chronicles to modern statistics of natural disasters. The documentation pre-1900 is, according to Bankoff, somewhat patchy and selective, but from 1900 and forward the records are relatively complete (Bankoff 2003).

Earthquakes range from as few as twenty-four a year to as many as 257 in 1970, with 2,486 earthquakes between 1920 and 1975, averaging close to forty-nine a year. Not all earthquakes becomes a disaster, but a major earthquake hits every major region at least every century, with the capital Manila being hit four times in recorded history (Bankoff 2003). The latest big earthquake hit the island of Bohol in 2013 with a 7.2 on Richter's scale, only a short time before the same island experienced the typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda (CNN 2013).

There are also several active volcanoes in the country, and their activity is correlated to seismic activity according to Bankoff, who counted nine documented eruptions between 1565 and 1700, nine from 1700 to 1800, sixty-seven between 1800 and 1900, and twenty between 1901 and 1980. The biggest single occurrence was at Taal in 1911, causing the death of nearly 1,500 people (Bankoff 2003).

Tropical cyclones, typhoons and epiphenomena (surges, floods, landslides, and so on) are the most significant of the natural disasters, accounting for more loss of lives and property than the others combined. Averaging twenty a year, the Philippine Area of Responsibility has 25 %

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to the whole process/event including an eventual natural disaster as the quote from Oliver Smith and Hoffmann above.

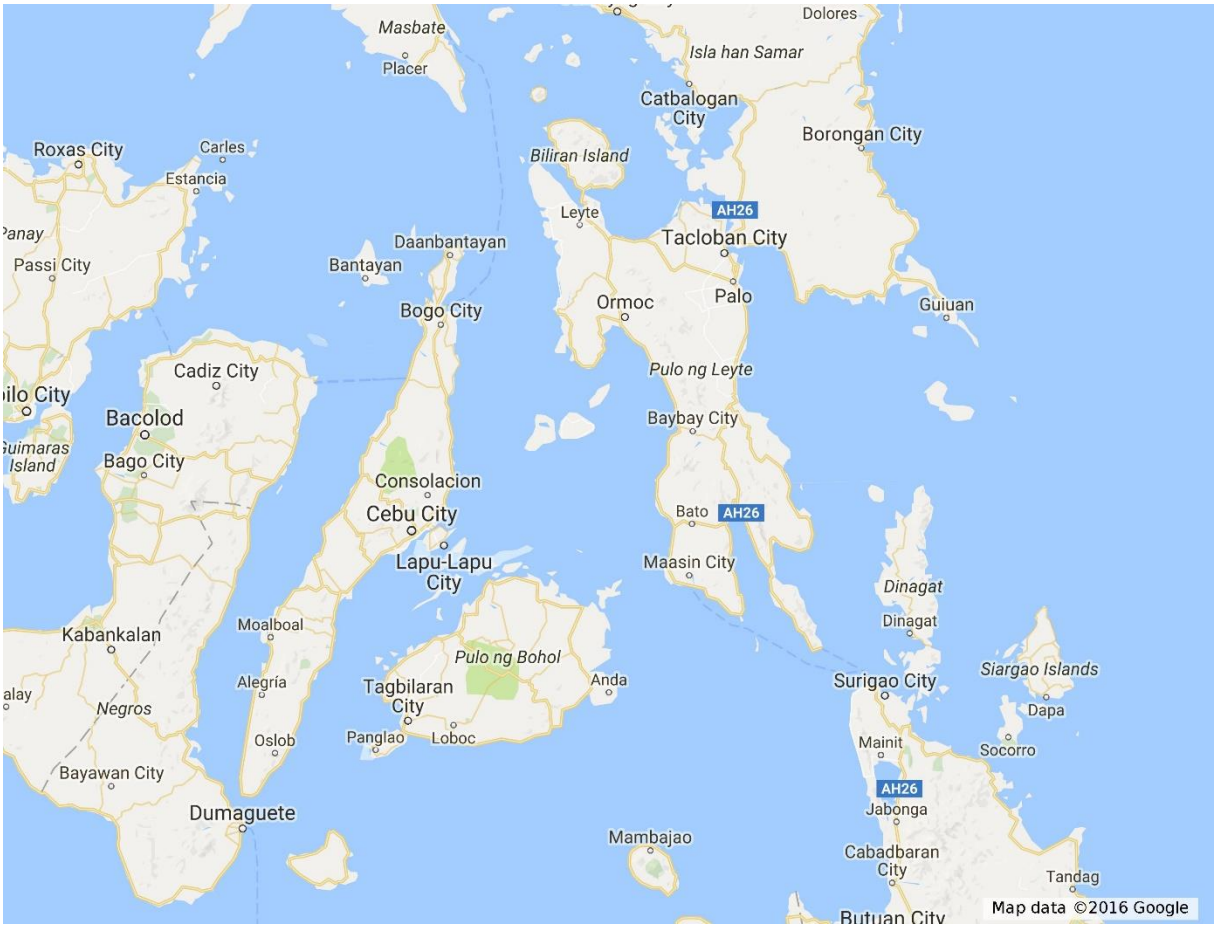
of all occurrences of such events in the world. Only about half of the annual average storms make landfall, and not all are considered disasters. As opposed to earthquakes and volcanoes, tropical cyclones and typhoons are season-bound and mostly occur in the wet season between July and November (Bankoff 2003).

The natural disasters most relevant to my fieldwork are an earthquake in Bohol, and the super typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda, both happening in late 2013. Some basic information is given in the next chapter, as it will serve the reader in understanding the data and analysis later on.

Chapter 2: Doing fieldwork in the Philippines

This chapter deals mostly with some methodological and ethic challenges and aspects found during my fieldwork and while writing my thesis. It is included so that the reader can better understand the context for the rest of my thesis, especially my data and analysis. I will start with an outline of my fieldwork and the actual disasters, before I go into the specific methodological and ethic challenges encountered during my fieldwork and the writing of this thesis.

An outline of my fieldwork and the actual disasters



Map over the actual parts of the Visayas (Google maps 2016). I stayed in Tagbilaran City on the island of Bohol and in Tacloban City on the island of Leyte, both in the Visayas region. For reference, Manila is towards north in the region and island of Luzon, and the Pacific Ocean is the ocean to the east. Note that Tacloban city is quite vulnerable for typhoons coming up from southeast, directly from the pacific ocean.

The fieldwork officially started when I flew down to the Philippines August 17th, 2015, landing in Manila the 18th. Some days were spent planning in Manila, before I flew south to

Tagbilaran on the Island of Bohol on August 21st. I went here because the people in Bohol experienced both a 7.2 earthquake and the typhoon Yolanda with international name Haiyan, the strongest typhoon (and tropical storm) to ever make landfall, back in October/November 2013. I spent around two months in total in Bohol, mostly in Tagbilaran, before I decided to move to Tacloban, Leyte on October 24th. Tacloban was still experiencing the aftermath of the typhoon Yolanda in a severely hit area.

I spent most of the last months of my fieldwork in Tacloban, before I went home from the Philippines on December 12th, landing in Norway on the 13th.

Tagbilaran

Bohol is an island in the island group Visayas in the middle of the Philippines, close to Cebu (both the island and the city) to the west and Leyte to the east. It is perhaps best known for eco-tourism, with a focus on sights such as the "chocolate hills" and tarsiers, an endangered primate. Its biggest city is Tagbilaran, situated on the southwest part of the island, with approximately 100,000 inhabitants.

My time was mostly spent in Tagbilaran in an apartment/small house together with eight to nine other Filipinos. These people became my good friends, and some of them also became informants. Their ages varied from eighteen to thirty years of age. Most days were spent following some of them in their daily routines. Set routines varied from person to person, but consisted of running a company[5], a traveling agency, being a part of a "multi-level marketing" company, going to college for some of them, as well as managing their own families and social circles with their obligations.

I also spent time as an assistant instructor at a martial arts academy, teaching mostly wrestling and Brazilian Jiu Jitsu to locals. Some time was also spent hanging out with the people in the sports club, mostly young males and females from eighteen and up with a majority being in their mid-twenties. The club worked mostly as a social arena for me, and only some research was carried out there. However, it was a good place to network, seek advice on Filipino culture, navigate Tagbilaran, and handle the practical aspects of life.

[5] The name and type of the company has been anonymized for the privacy of my informants.

I also did some work with a religious NGO[6], which I found very helpful. One of my most important informants came from that NGO, and she was quite helpful in my quest to understand what I was seeing around family life and social life in Bohol.

The Earthquake in Bohol

The Earthquake in Bohol hit the 15th of October 2013. Its magnitude reached 7.2 on the Richter scale, with the epicenter in Sagbayan in northwest-Bohol. Its effects were felt all over the Visayas (the middle of three regions in the Philippines), with 95 aftershocks felt. Epiphenomena like landslides and sinkholes were also reported post-earthquake. The total number of casualties were 227, with 975 injured. Close to 80,000 houses were reported damaged, and close to 16,000 structures were totaled, not including roads, bridges and airports. The damage cost done to public infrastructure alone was estimated to be above 2 billion PHP / 45 million USD. (NDRRMC 2013)[7]

Tacloban

Tacloban is one of the two biggest cities in Leyte, the other being the neighboring city Ormoc. Both lie on the Island of Leyte, which is also a part of the Visayas east of Bohol. Leyte and its neighboring island Samar are on the eastern frontier towards the Pacific Ocean, and are on the storm frontier for a huge part of the average twenty typhoons that hit the country every year.

Tacloban has 200,000 inhabitants, and was, before 2013, best known for its agriculture and fishing industries. In 2013, the city was the landing point of typhoon Yolanda, the strongest typhoon (and storm) in the world to ever make landfall.

I went from Tagbilaran to Tacloban on the 24th of October, and spent most of my time there until I left on the 10th of December for Manila and on the 12th for Norway. I lived at a hostel/small hotel for the two months, and carried out my research from there, as well as volunteered for an NGO on the side. I spent in total three weeks volunteering at the same time as I was carrying out my fieldwork in other places. One of the best friends and informants I found in Tacloban worked at a hotel. He showed me around town, was very helpful in my daily navigations, and provided considered observations on his and his countrymen's actions, since he was accustomed to foreigners and their "antics" through his work and education.

[6] NGO is an abbreviation for Non-Governmental Organization. Examples are the Red Cross or Medecins Sans Frontieres.
[7] NDRRMC is an abbreviation for the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council in the Republic of Philippines.

I would also like to mention my friendships with a priest and a European architect, both of whom were very helpful with my fieldwork, my social life, and navigating the local community. Both brought me into their daily life, and showed me how the NGO project (and NGO world) I was partaking in as a volunteer played out from different angles. I also learned how the recuperation process after a natural disaster looks from the viewpoint of someone (the priest) who has regular access to different parts of society across socioeconomic classes.

I also spent a lot of time training in martial arts, and found myself in the position of a coach after giving all the fighters more than a run for their money at the local gym. I spent at least two nights a week at the gym, which proved to be a very nice arena to see how Filipinos socialize without taking too much notice of my presence. After most trainings, we would go out to eat, and they were glad to help out with my fieldwork, share their stories and also discuss my findings. They also helped me immensely with getting around with practical issues, such as the location of certain places and so on.

The effect of Haiyan/Yolanda in Tacloban

The greatest tropical storm to ever make landfall (international name Haiyan, local name Yolanda) made it to the east coast of the Philippines from the 6^{th}-9^{th} of November 2013, with speeds close to 400 km/h (CNN 2013, Masters 2013). Official figures from April 2014 state the following numbers: 16 million people were affected. 4.1 million people turned homeless and 1.1 million houses were partly or totally destroyed. Close to 29,000 people were reported injured, 6,300 casualties were reported and 1,061 persons were reported missing.[8] The total estimated cost of April 2014 was 89 billion Philippine pesos. This translates into roughly 16 billion Norwegian kroner or close to 2 billion US dollars (NDRRMC 2014).

Information gathering and recording

This thesis is based on empirical data primarily drawn from the fieldwork carried out in the Philippines autumn 2015. The data itself is mostly presented and discussed in the analysis chapters. The main strategy and method for data collection during my fieldwork was participant observation, the most common strategy among social anthropologists (Angrosino 2007b, p. 11ff). Some semi-structured interviews and similar data-collecting methods were also performed before, during and after the fieldwork itself.

[8] The death tolls after Yolanda are contested, and such a view is supported both by my own data and by Atenzia, Eadie and Tan-Mullins. They attribute the uncertainty to the way the Philippine government counted casualties, as a dead body had to be presented to the authority to be counted (Atenzia, Eadie and Tan-Mullins, 2016).

The participating part of participating observation can have several levels to it, ranging from just observing from the outside to full immersion (Angrosino 2007a,p. 54ff, Spradley 1980, p. 58ff). Every level of participation gives its own kind of data, as they all are unique vantage points for observation. Great insights can be obtained if used well, though every level of engagement has its own problems. In some cases, it can be hard to distinguish engaged anthropology from activism, and the tension and ambivalence of ethics of intervention together with engaged anthropology is both debated subjects (Low and Merry 2010).

The fieldwork that was carried out for this thesis had several different levels of engagement as well as being multi-sited, giving me access to more than one perspectives and the privilege of comparison between several perspectives. A multi-sited approach is recommended by Ada Engebregtsen among others. Engebregtsen argues that a multi-sited approach is necessary if anthropology still wants to inhabit its role as a critic. Inhabiting several viewpoints illuminates complexity and takes away reductionist uniformity and methodological dogma (Engebregtsen 2002). Having the opportunity to compare both levels of engagement from different field sites helped me not go blind to my own data and enabled me to see the differences between important and arbitrary data.

I recorded most of my data in small books I carried throughout the fieldwork. If writing in books was not possible, I made small notes on my mobile phone. The most important notes taken in the field made it to my field diary, where I also wrote more in-depth about my experiences and thoughts. I wrote in my diary consistently, where I summed up my daily life experiences, as well as writing down short versions of my field notes, interview notes and analysis.

The field notes are presented thematically, not chronologically through the thesis, and I have made no distinction between my field diary and field notes when referring to either. I have, however, chosen to include the date and place for every note. In that way, the reader can go back to the outline of my fieldwork in the start of this chapter to get a reference point to where I was at the time of collecting that exact piece of data.

My ethnicity

One of the things I was most curious about before doing fieldwork is the fact that I am of Filipino descent, but knew close to nothing about Filipino culture. This did affect my fieldwork, but not as expected. The more trivial parts like not looking like a foreigner and therefore being “ripped off” by merchants at every purchase aside, the biggest advantage was

that in spite of people knowing about my presence and background, they seem to forget that I was even there or that I did not understand much, if anything at all.

Every time I entered a social situation, whatever happened seemed to carry on, not taking into account that a foreigner was there. This became apparent when I was together with people with a foreign and especially a Caucasian look. In those instances, everything just stopped a little. All of a sudden, people had a sense of otherness to the foreigner. For instance, a fellow master student in anthropology from Germany pointed it out while hanging out in Tacloban, as she thought I got access much easier than her, being male and looking like a local, in spite of her being fluent in the local language (which I was not). One might speculate that this also could related to gender as well as ethnicity, however, I have no data or comparative grounds to give such a discussion a fair treatment.

The biggest drawback to them taking me for a local was that even though they knew I did not understand anything of what was going on in several situations, they still forgot to explain things from the bottom up like they did with people that were clearly foreigners. They just assumed that I had the necessary knowledge to act accordingly at all times. I also drew some attention when failing to live up to normal social expectations, but my lack of knowledge or failure to carry out the right action was not really sanctioned as far as I observed. Some found it weird that I did not speak the local language, but eased up when they learned where I was from and why I did not speak their language.

Another obvious methodological challenge was the language barrier, as Philippines has approximately 183 different languages (Etnologue.com 2016). Having some travel experience in the Philippines beforehand, I knew that most Filipinos speak English well, better than most Norwegians do. It all turned out surprisingly well, due to the aforementioned diversity of languages and cultures in the country. I experienced four languages while conducting fieldwork: Cebuano in the Visayan dialect spoken in Bohol, Waray-waray in Tacloban (and Leyte), Tagalog, and English. The two latter are *lingua francae* in the Philippines; most people have both as either first, second and/or third language. Most Filipinos are almost as fluent in English as Tagalog, and my informants recounted incidents with Filipinos from different parts of the country having to speak English to each other because none of them knew Tagalog.

I experienced it as somewhat of a relief to be able to speak English, knowing that a lack of preparations in taking classes (most likely in Tagalog) before departure did not seem to hinder my fieldwork too much. With Tagalog, I would be at best a stuttering field worker trying to

speak his fourth language to someone speaking his or her second or third language, and my level of Tagalog would never match their proficiency in English. Learning more than phrases and the basics of Visayan and Waray in two months each seemed counterproductive at the time.

Some information and nuances were of course lost in translation, and I most likely lost the opportunity to speak to some people as well. A good example of the loss of nuances is given later in this chapter, where my lack of knowledge of a language gave me problems asking questions. As a consequence, my data was mostly gathered through participant observation. Still, it all seemed like a livable compromise with a language barrier that ended up not being as tall as I feared.

Why I scrapped my interview guide and started to look at actions more than words

One of the biggest Eureka-moments for me during fieldwork was understanding how Filipinos preferred to ask questions. I noticed that some of my question did not make sense to them, so I asked the roommates I had in Tagbilaran. My roommates lighted up, as if I just discovered something they wanted to tell me, but did not know how. The "discovery" lead to a conversation that lasted for some hours, and countless examples were given. Most importantly, it also lead me to focus on what people do and not so much what they say they do, a hallmark of the anthropological approach. I made a small summary of the points of advice given to me that day:

In the Philippines, one's reputation and place in a social life is important. Putting someone in a situation where that reputation is threatened or questioned, or in a situation where one could not carry out the expectations that come with their position, is looked upon as being socially unintelligent at best.

Saying please, at least in the Visayan dialect of Cebuano, also had the potential to land in the category of socially unintelligent, as it did not translate into a category of polite phrases, but rather into pleading or begging. Saying no to someone pleading is frowned upon, and Filipinos (at least Boholanos) did feel cornered when they felt that the pleading was misused. However, as they are quite versed in the English use of the term, they know that foreigners do not mean it as pleading, but have a hard time stopping the reflex upon feeling anger/disappointment when they feel cornered.

Asking yes/no questions can easily fall into the socially unintelligent category as well, and is mostly avoided except when one knows that the answer is yes, or when the answer does not hurt or corner anyone, like the following “are you going to the bathroom now?”

According to my roommates, asking an individual a question of a more serious nature could trigger a series of events. First, the Filipino in question would feel rather honored to be addressed in such a personal way. Second, a Filipino mostly wants what is best for the group, so he or she would look for his friends if they are present to figure out what they want; be it going to the cinema, or whether the soup needs more spice (which can be rather tricky). Due to the unusual nature of such a question, it may take some time for the Filipino in question to come up with an answer.

If the same question is a yes/no question, it could be even worse, as it may make one feel cornered on behalf of, and in danger of, answering something other than the rest of the group. One prefers not to ask a question directed specifically to a person when it could apply to a whole group, especially with a “you” directed at an individual. “Do you want to join me at the movies afterwards?” is quite unusual, and even “do you think this soup needs more spice?” is also rather unusual even among friends. A more normal way of doing so would be by asking through making statements like “we should go to the cinema!” or “come taste the soup and see if it needs anything”. If done this way, everyone can voice their opinion, and even say no (and eventually make up an excuse for doing so) without anyone losing face.

All the points above can be thought of as actions that can be explained in the light of obtaining *social acceptance* and the *avoidance of shame* and shaming others in practice, as theorized by Lynch and presented later in the theory chapter (Lynch 1974). It is also relevant to the small discussion I have on the individual and group in the analysis.

In short, all those points of advice given to me by my roommates made me scrap my interview guide, and put structured interviews in the back of my head, never to quite return throughout the rest of the fieldwork. I also started to rely most on participant observation, documenting people’s actions and informal talks instead of formal interviews. My data is therefore quite heavily based on actions made by people, and not strictly what people said.

A challenging ethical issue

Ethical challenges may rise in any research project, and this project is no exception. Every informant has verbally given consent after they were informed about the research objectives.

They have actively agreed to participate with a chance to withdraw at any time. They were also made aware of me taking notes through my fieldwork. There is, however, one ethical challenge that I would like to emphasize.

First, I would like to clarify that my research was of the contemporary sort and permission was granted by the Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC) at the Ateneo de Manila University. I chose not to personally obtain data from certain actors during my fieldwork. My reasons for not interviewing certain actors is somewhat methodical and for my own safety and my data.

I deliberately chose not to interview representatives of the central and local government in the Philippines and Tagbilaran and Tacloban, as there exists a law giving the government the right to seize and keep data and visas if the data/artefacts were obtained by an archaeological or anthropological study performed without research permit given by the National museum. The permit was something that the staff at the local branch of the National Museum was friendly about, but they made it quite clear that going in without a permit from the National Museum was breaking the law. I contacted the IPC, who argued that the law in question was irrelevant to me. Even though I was granted access to the field by the IPC at the Ateneo Manila University, I knew that people in the local governments and other governmental agencies has used the law to seize data in earlier instances.

All the data on actors from governmental agencies presented in this thesis are obtained by documents or through other sources, some of them being my informants. This choice lead me to focus on the people I met during my stay and how they coped with disasters. The actor-perspective is therefore a deliberate choice I have been very content with my choice, but I also considered it the only viable one when it came down to collecting ethnographic data.

Summary

Chapter Two has mostly revolved around the fieldwork I did back in 2015, together with some methodological and ethical issues I experienced during fieldwork and the writing of this thesis.

Chapter 3: Relevant theoretical perspectives

My thesis is mostly situated in the field of anthropology and actor-based anthropology. However, it definitely borrows from several fields and discourses. Natural disasters are not new under the sun, and I also borrow some from relevant fields of history and a tiny bit from archaeology/behavior ecology, as both provide relevant insights into coping with natural disasters over time. This is not to say that other perspectives do not provide insights, and this thesis could be relevant in discourses revolving aid and development, neo-colonialism, orientalism, environmental preservation, and others.

I will introduce some relevant theory in order to show how coping with disasters employed by Filipinos can be analyzed as actors making choices. These choices lead to local practices for coping, practices that have effects on the society in which they are situated. These local practices also meet other practices by bigger actors, and this collision is a main point in this thesis.

Coping with disasters as a choice based on values and context

I wish to make use of Barth's *generative process analysis*. Barth's model is inspired by models from rational choice, economy and mathematics. In this model, an actor makes certain strategic choices. The actor has certain values as a basis to his or her choices and he also experiences certain limitations and incentives to the choices. Barth states that "The most simple and general model available to us is on of an aggregate of people exercising choices while influenced by certain constraints and incentives" (Barth [1966] 1981, p. 34). The observable in such a model is the actor and his or her actions. I have found his model relevant to my analysis, as it enables me to discuss and theorize how the local practices of coping with disasters can be looked at as choices, which again is a result of several different factors. It also enables me to show and discuss how these local practices are one among several processes that can have an effect on society, and how society can have an effect on the local practices.

Below is an attempt to visualize Barth's model, based on an illustration made by Hans-Einar Hem (Hem 1999):

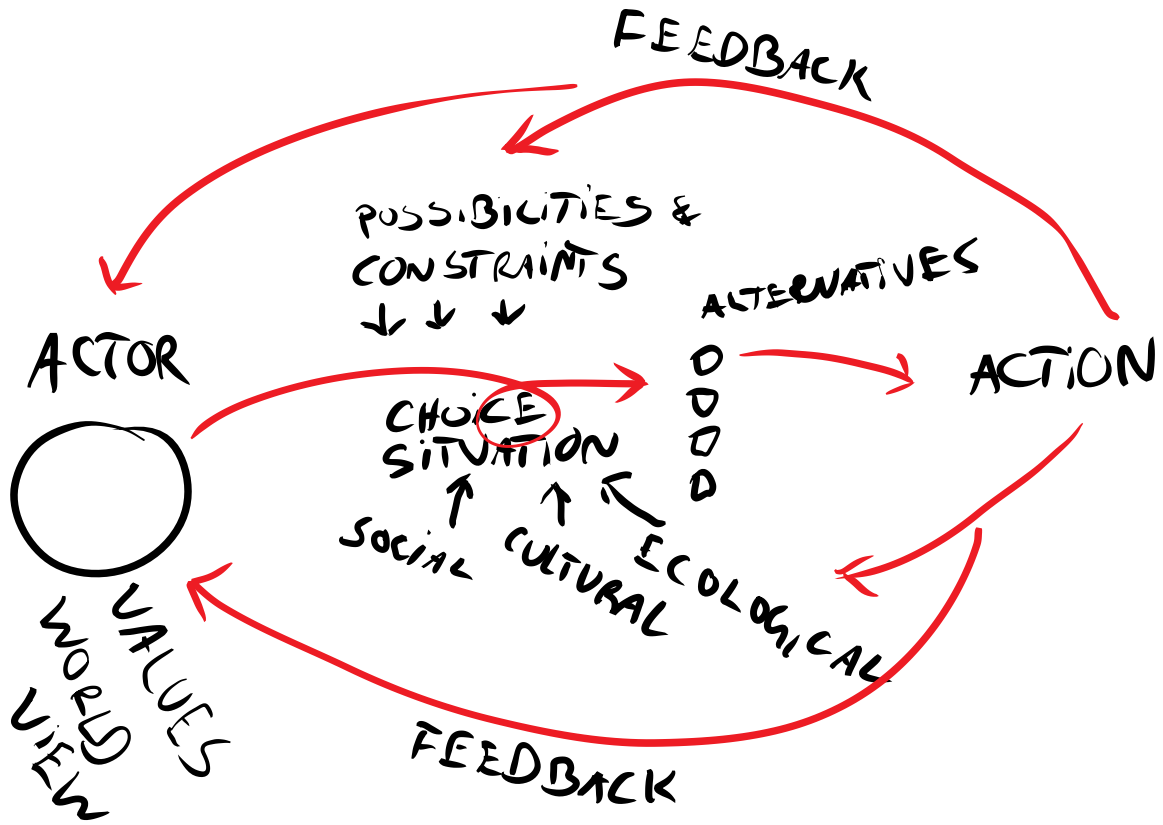


Figure 1. Hem (Hem 1999, p. 315). My translation.

The local society, or *Social Form* in Barth's own term, can according to Barth be said to be the generated and somehow unintended product of all the choices summed up through processes made by the actors therein. Hans-Einar Hem uses Coleman to explain this dimension graphically:

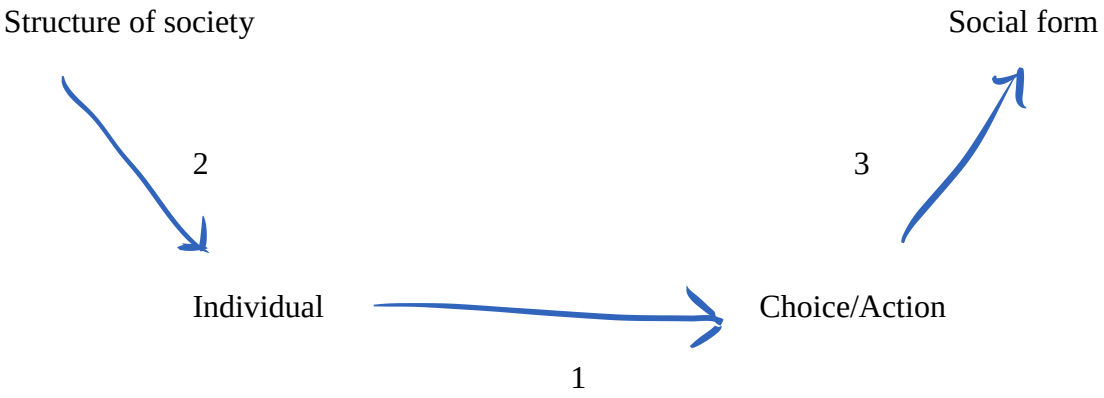


Figure 2. Coleman as understood by Hem (Coleman 1974 in Hem 1999, p. 320). My translation.

The point 3 in figure 2 is a graphic illustration of the effect of the choice situation depicted in figure 1. The social form and structure of society can also play back into the given agendas,

values and limitations experienced by any actor as point 2 in figure 2 shows, making the whole process a dialectic one between strategic actors on one side and social form on the other (Barth 1994).

It is important to note that the actors in my interpretation of the model have limited rationality (trying to get by as well as one thinks one is able) as opposed to some rational choice theory, where a theoretical actor makes choices based on the assumption of both trying to maximize their output and having access to all information available (Barth 1994, 1981). I will give a more in-depth discussion on the rationality of the actors, agenda and values as predictor for choices and my use of the model for this thesis in the analysis chapters.

For the purpose of this thesis, Barth's model will not be followed in every aspect, but the model will be modified to fit with respect to the terms and categorizations I have made.

Values and other important cultural concepts in the Philippines through an anthropologic lens

In this section, I will present some key values and concepts within the general value orientation of the Philippines that are relevant to this analysis. They will be helpful in understanding why my informants do as they do, and they are all relevant to the local practice of coping.

Choosing the group over the individual

The anthropologist Frank Lynch is well known for his work on values and social acceptance in the Philippines. He talks extensively about *social acceptance* as the biggest implicit value in the Philippine society, abstracted as the need for *smooth interpersonal relations* (SIR), values that will be treated more in depth below (Lynch 1973). Another, related way of looking at social acceptance is provided by F. Landa Jocano, another well known Filipino anthropologist:

> (…) Philippine society is a group-oriented society, not an individualist one. The concern of most Filipinos is how to maintain harmonious relations with one another, especially within the group (Jocano 1999, p. 52).

Jocano presents a series of Filipino sociality and general principles present in the Filipino culture in his book "Working with Filipinos" from 1999. Although individualism is sneaking in as a part of modernization, interdependence is the preferred norm according to Jocano. Jocano further states that individuals expresses themselves as individuals, but his or her

agenda or interests is subordinated that of the group. Misuse or overuse of the term for I (*ako* in Tagalog) is frowned upon, and selfishness is seen as the opposite of an ideal state of cooperation (*bayanihan*) (Jocano 1999).

The terms and principles following beneath are all relevant to coping with disaster, and most of them are relevant to the group-oriented culture found in the Philippines. I believe that they can also serve as principles "to think with", as an introduction to Filipino values. Though here presented by Jocano, the same or similar terms are also present in works by Lynch and Bankoff among others. Most of these are terms in Tagalog, the official language in the Philippines, and Jocano provides an approximate translation of the Tagalog terms.

Paikikisama

Paikikisama translates into the desire and ability to get along with others, but also having a concern for, and being supportive of, group interests. It is concerned with a part of *Kapwa* (meaning being a part of or on equal terms with others), as a part of several relational imperatives (Jocano 1999, p. 66). As such, Filipinos place the ability to get along with others quite high, a theme further investigated by Lynch, who adds that it might translate to "good public relations" in some contexts (Lynch 1973).

Utang-ng-loob

Utang-ng-loob (sometimes *Untang na loob*) translates into *debt of gratitude* (Jocano: 1999: 71). An informant presented a common example to me: "*If someone saves your life, you would be forever thankful and in debt of gratitude, even if you saved his life later on. It might even carry on through generations*". *Utang-ng-loob* is an aspect of reciprocity, where *Utang na loob* is the feeling of being indebted in gratitude, even if the debt itself is settled. Repayments normally takes form as services like serving at weddings or other occasions or helping out at the creditor's wish. For an extensive treatment of *Utang-na-loob* in a bigger framework, see Mary Hollnsteiner's book Reciprocity in the Lowland Philippines (1973).

Bayanihan

Although *Bayanihan* is only briefly treated by Jocano, who translates *Bayanihan* into *cooperation* (Jocano 1999), my data and other literature suggests that *Bayanihan* is a rather important term. Gertrudes R. Ang describes it in the following way:

> [Bayanihan is a trait and] a practical response to both individual and community needs which, under certain circumstances, would be difficult to achieve if people with meager means did not

> organize themselves and pool together their resources. (…) In fact, wherever cooperative labour takes place, bayanihan is present (Ang 1979).

My data also suggests that *bayanihan* has connotations of heroism and that *bayanihan* is some kind of spirit or attitude, exemplifying it through people helping each other out without thinking about themselves.

S.I.R / Social Acceptance

S.I.R, or *smoothness of interpersonal relations* is an intermediary value towards the ultimate goal, which is *social acceptance* and avoidance of shame, or *Hiya. Social acceptance* and *S.I.R* are in this context both theoretical constructs made by Lynch and first presented in his article *Social Acceptance Reconsidered* (Lynch 1973). In this text, Lynch outlines a whole value system, but I have chosen only to focus on the parts central to my thesis. S.I.R is defined by Lynch as a facility at getting along with others in such a way as to avoid outer conflict. S.I.R consists of *Paikikisama* (as discussed above), the use of euphemisms to deliver unpleasant communication as pleasantly as possible, and the use of a go-between, an intermediary person used for the same function as euphemisms, oftentimes for embarrassing requests, complaints or unpleasant decisions (Lynch 1973).

Bahala na

Bahala na is described as the risk-taking tendency Filipinos might display. *Bahala na* is not directly related to the more group-individual-oriented values above, as *Bahala na* is perceived as daring, courage and accountability (Jocano 1999, p. 70). Examples can be gambling, driving, doing practical tasks that look dangerous to others like climbing outside building structures without security and so on. My informants has described it as "*F**k it, I'll do it anyway*" kind of attitude. Not surprisingly, people exhibit this trait in various degrees. Sometimes, this tendency comes at odds with other values and interests, like crossing dangerous waters in a small boat just to fulfil ones obligations to a given group while simultaneously putting people at risk. *Bahala na* is treated as a coping mechanism by Bankoff, as discussed below.

Disaster history and anthropology in the Philippines

This thesis aims to look at the local practices for coping with disasters. I am not the first one to do so, and several authors from several fields has made their contributions. I will present the most important ones below, as the thesis will both draw from and discuss these

contributions and theories later in the analysis. The most thorough work to date is that of historian Greg Bankoff's work *Cultures of Disaster* on disasters in the Philippines, which also includes a chapter on cultures of disaster. He does not place himself too far outside the discourse of disaster anthropology, stating that disasters are embedded in political structures, economic systems and social order. However, he believes that only an ethnographic scope on the coping mechanisms of disasters is not enough and a wider scope is needed:

> Self-evidently disasters can no longer be viewed as merely meteorological or seismic phenomena divorced from social and cultural systems; neither can they be reduced to 'laboratory studies' of individual or group behaviour during extreme situations (Bankoff 2003, pp. 152-153).

Bankoff states that disasters have become an integral part of society, rather than an abnormality. This is a view supported by Natalia M. Dalisay, who has done anthropological research on disasters in Bikol, Luzon, Philippines. She states that hazard is perceived as everyday forces in nature. As Bikol and the Philippines are quite prone to typhoons especially, disasters are perceived as just a part of being Bikolano, an inhabitant of Bikol. As forces of nature, they "can be read from signs in the nature" (Dalisay 2009).

Practical coping mechanisms towards disasters

Bankoff presents a series of highly relevant coping mechanisms in response to disasters in the Philippines, which he has divided into a practical/pragmatic category and a cultural category. The practical/pragmatic ones includes relocation and migration, both being preventive coping mechanisms attempting to prevent the same set of circumstances from reoccurring. Architectural syncretism and agricultural practices are another practical/pragmatic coping mechanism sorted under impact-minimizing coping mechanisms, seeking to minimize losses and facilitate recovery. Bankoff also mentions crop diversification and placement of the crops over several scattered locations as an agricultural strategy for the same hazards, making sure that one always has some food in a worst case scenario. Bankoff cites James Scott on such strategies making sense among farmers mainly engaged in minimizing risk rather than maximizing profit (Bankoff 2003, p. 165). Lastly, Dalisay states that the inhabitants in Bikol argued that human activity also contributes to disasters. Degradation and logging (oftentimes illegal) is often a primary reason for landslides and flash floods during thunderstorms, and incorrect garbage disposal can also worsen disasters.

According to Dalisay, the inhabitants of Bikol were seemingly fully aware of both physical and social vulnerabilities to disasters. Some housing structures (especially 2-stories concrete houses) were better than others, and some locations (coastal areas or mountain slopes) were perceived as more vulnerable than others. Socially, one considered some occupations (fishing) as dangerous. Poor, elderly and children were considered more vulnerable both due to physical capability and lack of resources, often pushing these people to live in marginalized areas.

Dalisay states that some resilience was found among the inhabitants of Bikol. Constructing storm resistant housing structures, or reinforcing the existing ones, are considered valid options. An organized community, especially on the information infrastructure level, could help deliver critical information quickly. The inhabitants perceived themselves as being able to assess risk and being tough, as well as being able to find solutions in hard situations. Being able to find and make food in hard situations, oftentimes through inventive methods was considered a key concept. This toughness and adaptability was often ascribed to an identity tied to the locality and the local area of Bikol itself (Dalisay 2009).

Halstead & O'Shea (1989) provide a more general outlook towards risk management and ecological adaptation taken from behavioral ecology and archeology. They claim that societies all over the world historically employ a wide range of strategies called 'buffering mechanisms' to counteract scarcities. These strategies are designed to lessen the impact of variability by dampening its effects, and include everything from myths to alternative modes of subsistence. Their usefulness depends on the social and environmental context, including both the structural characteristics of the society at large and the structure of resource failure the society is likely to experience (Halstead and O'Shea 1989, p. 3). Strategies for countering unpredictability and variability can be grouped into four basic categories, namely mobility, diversification, exchange, and physical storage, the last one being the least relevant for this thesis. The categories employed by Halstead and O'Shea are wider than presented below, and only the essential and necessary ones for this thesis are included.

Mobility is, according to Halstead and O'Shea, the simplest of the buffering mechanisms, and it works by taking advantage of the spatial and temporal structure of resource failure in effect to move away from scarcity towards abundance (Halstead & O'Shea 1989, Næss 2004).

Diversification includes a broad range of both passive and active practices. Its underlying principle is to broaden the base of subsistence, exploiting both variability in plants and

animals and variability in areas in order to reduce risk and catastrophic shortage (Halstead & O'Shea 1989, Næss 2004). I will argue that this diversification can apply to wage labor as well, and I will explore this further in my analysis[9].

The concepts of **sharing and reciprocity**, i.e. exchange are virtually universally accepted all over the world as social values according to Halstead and O'Shea. As a strategy for buffering scarcity, exchange functions in similar fashion as storage, i.e. present abundance is converted, this time through social transactions, into a future obligation if needed, i.e. I help you now, if you help me later. Halstead and O'Shea mention that food might be given freely in time of need with little formal recognition of the anticipated reciprocity in small-scale societies (Halstead & O'Shea 1989).

Physical storage refers to strategies that are directed towards stabilizing available food so that it may be consumed at some later stage. This principally is a means of dealing with temporal structures of food availability (Halstead & O'Shea 1989). This principle is the least applicable to my analysis, as I do not have much data on storing food to counteract scarcities among Filipinos.

Additionally, Halstead and O'shea put forward *limiting factors* as a valuable tool to analyze and *"reduce complex ecological problems to manageable proportions*", as "*survival is usually limited in any given context by just one or two critical resources".* This is a valuable point for my thesis, as limiting factors will be theorized as possibilities and constraints in the context for coping with disasters later in the analysis[10] (Halstead and O'shea 1989, pp. 2-3).

Cognitive/Behavioral coping mechanisms towards disasters

Bankoff identifies several cultural, cognitive and/or behavioral coping mechanisms. Those are *Bahala Na* (fatalism) and *pakikipagkapwa* (being one with the others) (Bankoff 2003, p. 166 ff). He also cites Jocano in that *Bahala Na* is a concept of fatalism, an idea that fate is predetermined, and fate will happen despite a person's best effort and/or divine intervention. I here understand Bankoff meaning that *Bahala Na* represents a whole concept of fatalism outside just the meaning of the words, which according to my informants loosely translates into "come what may". It also includes ideas of responsibility, courage and fine risk assessment (Bankoff 2003, p. 167, Jocano 1999). Bankoff argues that this fatalism is somewhat a result of syncretism between Christianity and religions existing in the Philippines

[9] This will be treated in Chapter 5 as a part of several pragmatic and ecological adaptations.
[10] Limiting factors will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

before Christianity. According to Bankoff, religion and its fatalism acts as *"a formidable armour against suffering caused by disaster"* (Bankof 2003, p. 168). An example provided by Bankoff is the frequent use of overloaded ferries, even when typhoon signals had been risen by the Coast Guard. Another example would be people living under volcanoes, knowing that there is a threat of *lahar* (volcanic debris) ruining their livelihood (Bankoff 2003, p. 167).

Dalisay provides a similar argument where disasters are perceived as an act of God. As such, disasters can be wake-up calls when people do things against God's will, or to remind people to take part in religious activity. Religion and the church itself with its local saint is also mentioned as being important both before, during and after calamities, as it gives the people guidance on both spiritual, emotional, psychological and practical matters as well as a place to ask for divine forgiveness (Dalisay 2009).

The second cognitive/behavioral coping mechanism according to Bankoff is *Pakikikagkapwa*, which entails several concepts of relational imperatives (Bankoff 2003, p. 168 ff, Jocano 1999). This term means "being one with the other or with others", or being "part of the group", with connotations of shared identity, unity, togetherness and common association (Bankoff 2003, p. 168, Jocano 1999, p. 66). It also includes the terms *bayanihan* (cooperation) and *paikikisama* (the desire/ability to get along with others). Bankoff puts forward humor through telling stories and jokes to deal with stress and anxiety as an aspect of *Pakikipagkapwa*. Even when collecting bodies, people would tell each other horrible jokes, and the stories of the calamities are shared as often as possible. An example of *Pakikipagkapwa* would be sharing and pooling resources like food and shelter after disasters, even between nearby communities not affected by shortage (Bankoff 2003, pp. 168-169). Similar values are also presented by Dalisay. *Damayan*, *bayanihan* and *pagtatarabang* are all values that express a spirit of community and helping each other out. This spirits leads into a practice called *pagpagadagos*. This practice could be providing resources or shelter to your neighbors, friends, and family, both in anticipation and after a typhoon. Though it started as "a personal and household mechanism", local authorities have now started to provide official buildings as shelter in times of need (Dalisay 2009).

The anthropologist Ty Matejowsky adds ethnographical depth to Bankoff's principles when he describes how merchants in the Philippines are practically minimizing their losses during natural disasters. The Filipinos are expecting natural disasters in certain cycles depending on the season, and the entrepreneurial initiative does not become significantly lower because of natural disasters. According to Matejowsky, the merchants in question bear a fatalistic attitude

towards disasters. This attitude is grounded in a perceived lack of ability within authorities to prepare for and deal with disaster, especially when it comes to support small businesses post-disaster. The merchants do not expect any help from authorities, and both merchants and customers are flexible in their economic transactions in a post-disaster context (Matejowsky 2012).

Social organization in the Philippines

My thesis will discuss the effects the local practices of coping has on local society, and it is therefore relevant to include a section on the local social organization in the Philippines in the theory chapter.

According to Jocano, the three most relevant categories for social organization in the Philippine society are *family*, *kinship* and *barkada* (Jocano 1999, p. 55). The illustration beneath is a reproduction of a model made by Jocano to illustrate such structures:

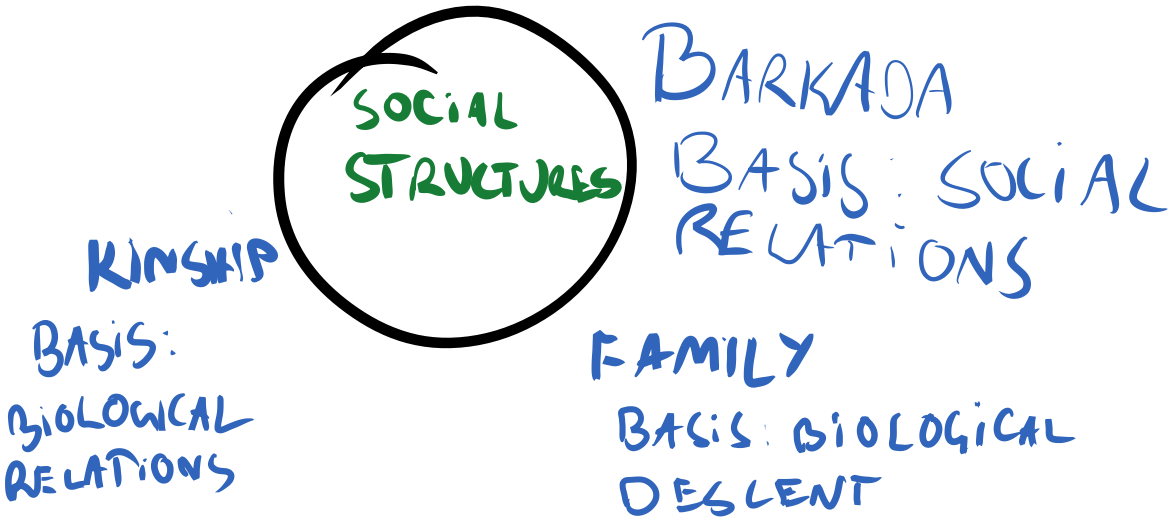


Figure 3. Illustration by Jocano (1999, p. 55).

Family consists according to Jocano of the nuclear family with parents and children, where biological descent is the basis of organization. This is the basic and most important element of the Filipino social organization, and the family is considered the source of almost everything in life, such as basic needs, economic support, social status, emotional support and security in old age. The interest of the family is paramount over the individual, and mistakes made by one individual will befall the whole family. One can also organize family in an extended form outside the nuclear family, usually extended to close kin within relatively close vicinity (Jocano 1999, pp. 55-57).

Kinship consists of near and distant (biological) relatives known to an individual. The kin group provides further assistance when the family is unable to do so. According to Jocano, this is especially visible in politics, as most ward leaders are related to the politicians and so on. Kinship is, according to Jocano, called upon when needed, and he cites Lynch that *"relatives are important, but their importance is relative"* (Jocano 1999, p. 58).

Barkada is a loosely organized peer group, oftentimes consisting of friends, colleagues, and the like, taking form as anything from a normal group of friends or groups of colleagues to a street gang. Here one derives psychological and economical support outside ones family, and it is considered important especially among professions. Getting along (*Paikikisama*) and loyalty are values usually associated with the *barkada* (Jocano 1999, p. 59).

Hollnsteiner writes about reciprocity in the lowland Philippines. It is relevant to social organization, as it contains a discussion on in-groups and out-groups for reciprocal actions, as well as their extensions as to whom and how actors can reciprocate. She also discusses how reciprocity in-group is designed to achieve security through interdependence, often through *Utang Na Loob* (debt of gratitude), which can reinforce a client-patron relationship; as such, a debt of gratitude often is inherited between generations. Ambivalence on reciprocity among actors is also noted by her, and how being free from binding relationships can secure upward mobility. She also postulates that the whole system with in- and out-groups for reciprocity might disappear with modernity, an interesting statement taking post-disaster coping in 2015 into account (Hollnsteiner 1973).

Critique against aid and development

This section is included here because a part of the analysis will discuss how the local practices of coping meets governmental agencies. This thesis is situated most firmly in disaster anthropology. However, aid and development, with actors ranging from intergovernmental organizations, governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are often a large component of relief efforts after natural disasters, as natural disasters take lives, cause huge material damages, and the need for relief and help are acute. The abovementioned actors within aid and development have become a part of the total picture of dealing with disaster, and as such, a part of the context for dealing with natural disasters anywhere. Their involvement is not always successful, and their relief efforts have met criticism.

Critique appears from several fields, including political science, sociology, economics and also social anthropology. Some of the most well-known theorists in anthropology are James

Scott and James Ferguson, who present arguments ranging from the problem with master plans and overlooking local practices, to problems with a politicized sphere of aid and development (Scott 1998, Ferguson 1990). Arguments originating from the heritage of *Orientalism* by Edward Said have also been a part of the critique against aid and development, with the base premises being that differences are exaggerated by *Western discourse*[11], which judges and makes *otherness* out of those on the outside. It has been argued that this judging and exaggeration in itself gives western discourse and anthropology in the west a problem of representation, and Tord Larsen among others have asked why those outside the western discourse cannot represent themselves (Larsen 2008).

In the case of aid and development, the idea of development has been scrutinized as a part of ethnocentric thoughts originating from colonial times. The economists Alberto Alesina and David Dollar go through meta-studies and their own research, and argue that a large portion of foreign aid goes to unproductive public consumption in the recipient country. They also argue that aid-giving patterns are more determined by political and strategic concerns such as voter patterns and the colonial past of the donor-countries than conditions among beneficiaries in the receiving country (Alesina & Dollar 2000). The anthropologist Mark Schuller gives a similar argument, where he argues that aid-money is often used as a political tool and an entry-point for imperialism by the donor-country. He also argues that the beneficiaries of aid lose to the politics of the giving country, as conditions and budget constraints becomes more relevant than the real needs among beneficiaries.

Governments and local practices

A central part of the analysis is to discuss how local practices meet bigger actors like the government. In *Seeing Like a State,* Scott describes how governments attempt to force legibility on their subjects. He also argues that big schemes and master plans fail to improve the human condition because high-modernist ideologies prevent the planners from seeing the local practices and local information. This can, according to Scott, be explained due to the following missteps:

First, governments are too confident in themselves, believing they were agents of God's will. Second, governments underestimate their subjects and the lack of homogeneity among their

[11] The use of *western discourses* in this thesis points to actors within aid and development, though Edward Said had a broader understanding and included writers, designers and artists in his argument. The critique can also point to the western discourse and its participants as a whole, but the locus of this thesis is within disaster anthropology and the definition is therefore narrower.

subjects, grouping them into falsely standardized subjects without context and formal and informal practices. Third, governments believe they can account for more than the first chain of consequences, but you cannot really dictate solid grand plans for the future. Scott advises the following steps to counter the missteps above: Take small steps while planning and plans should be reversible. Plans should also account for surprises and human inventiveness (Scott 1998).

Summary

This chapter has presented the most important theoretical perspectives relevant to my analysis. Values and ways to cope with disasters in the Philippines have been presented, as well as a model provided by Barth to analyze the coping mechanisms for dealing with disasters. I have also included some theory on the social organization of the Philippines and a perspective on how local practices meet government plans by James Scott. All these perspectives will be used in the analysis in my contribution to understand coping with disasters in the Philippines.

Chapter 4: Coping with disasters

"The values prepared them for the calamities". Quote from Father Christopher.

--Field notes Tagbilaran 24.08.2015

The quote above sums up one of the main analytical points of this chapter quite neatly. This chapter is the first of the analysis chapters, and I will start 'on the ground' with my informants to show the 'building bricks' for the local practices for coping with disasters, before I go into the local practices themselves in the next chapter. This chapter is also a further presentation of the theoretical foundation for my analysis, and I would like to start off with a presentation of the main theoretical frameworks for this thesis.

A model of Decision-making processes

My intention for this part of the analysis is to show the 'foundation' for the local practices for coping in the Philippines. The local practices of coping are in this thesis referred to as coping mechanisms. Coping mechanisms in this thesis is defined as choices/actions helping in coping with disasters, and therefore similar to the coping mechanisms as presented by Bankoff (2003), Dalisay (2009) and the buffering mechanisms in Halstead & O'Shea (1989)[12]. I also want to show that these coping mechanisms have some effects on the society in which they are employed, and I also want to show that if the input on the model is changed, so might the use of coping mechanisms and the society which they are employed.

I have found that a slightly modified version of generative process analysis by Barth as discussed in the theory chapter works quite well when trying to show how Filipinos cope with disaster from an actor-perspective. Barth's model predicts that the actor meets certain choice situations[13]. These choice situations are "strategic", in that not all choices are equal. Some choices are more important than others, and only choices of analytical importance are included in this model. Several factors come into play into these choices. Some are brought into the situation by the actor him/herself, in this instance values. Other factors come into the choice from outside the actors, such as natural disasters. These factors have been dubbed possibilities and constraints in this thesis (Barth 1994). I have modified figure 2 as presented

[12] See the section of disaster history and anthropology in the Philippines in Chapter 3 for more information.
[13] See the section Coping with disasters as a choice based on values and context in Chapter 3. I will also refer to figure 2 in the same chapter.

in chapter 3 to show how I put coping with disaster into Barth's theoretical framework in this thesis:

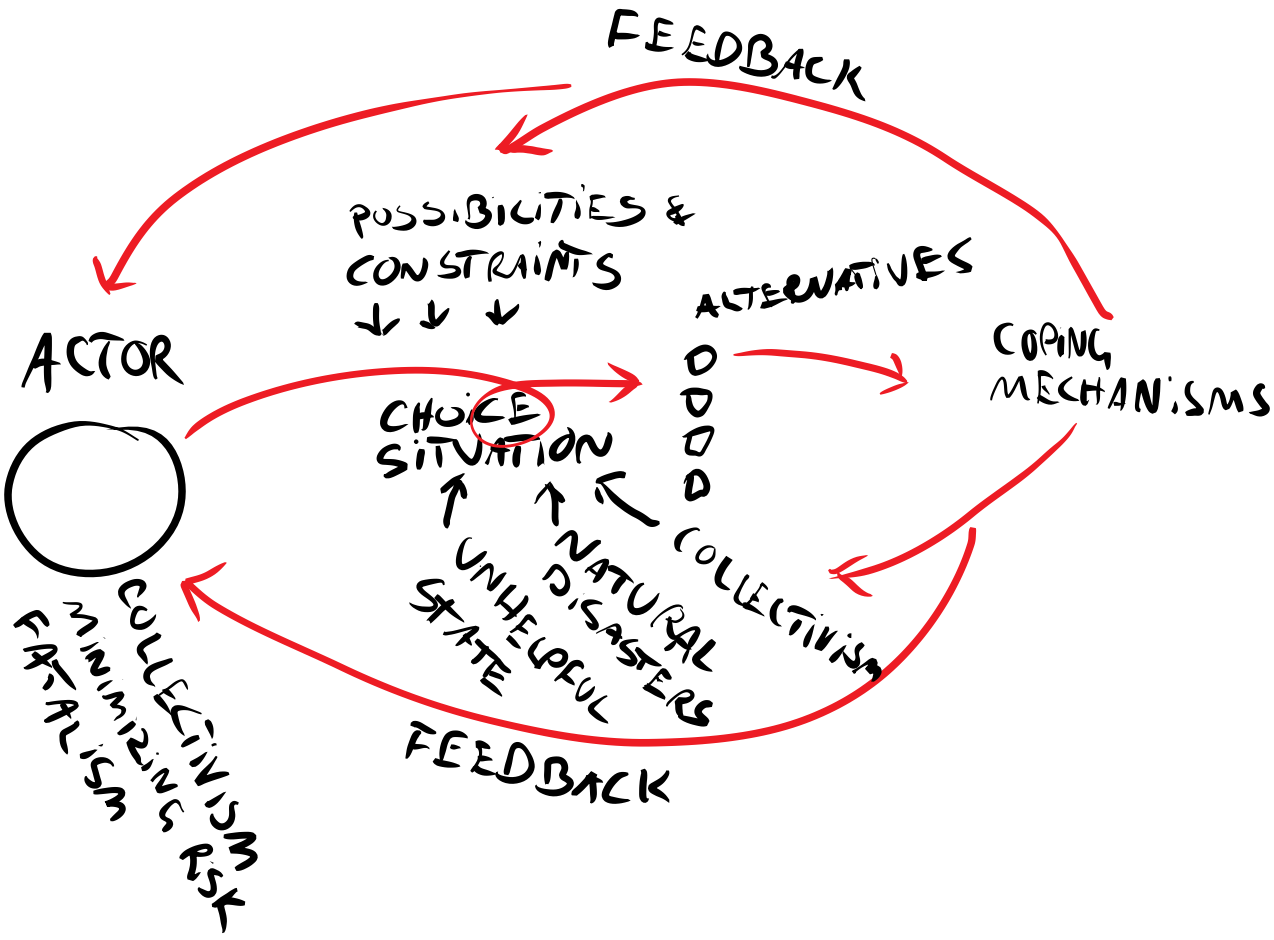


Figure 4. Based on Hem (1999, p 315). Values, worldview and the different possibilities and constraints are changed from figure 2 into the different variables actual for this thesis.

As one can see in the illustration above, the coping mechanisms are a result of the choice situation where both values from the actor and possibilities and constraints external to the actor plays a role. Choices and actions are practices rarely based upon one specific variable alone, and all the variables are intertwined to a great degree, most likely even greater than what I am able to show in this text. I will present the values and possibilities and constraints in question in this chapter, and then use chapter 5 to show how these different variables turns into choices, and how some of these choices can be analyzed as coping mechanisms for disasters.

Models of and models for and other problems with models

Though I am using a model provided by Barth in my analysis, my use of the model is not the one of a *moral model*, one that judges things as good or bad, to give punishment and reward (D'Andrade 1995). Orientalism and applying western values and ideas to phenomena outside the west are not unproblematic, and I have actively strived to avoiding those pitfalls, as I do not wish to make judgments.

I would like to specify that even if some of the terms presented are originally *emic* or folk terms, the analysis as a whole is *etic*, an analytical construct made by the researcher (Harris 1976). Terms used in the thesis like *fatalism*, *coping mechanism* and so forth are therefore etic terms, though some of them, like *bayanihan* and *bahala na* have an emic etymology. What I present are through my eyes and bias, making the analysis and the use of the model subjective.

Arguments have been made against models belonging to the category of rational choice. The anthropologist David Graeber points out some of these arguments, and the first common argument is that a marriage between anthropology and economy does not yield any results that we did not already know, the result being that the use of the model becomes purely descriptive. Also, people and societies are complex, and such models can make both people and society appear more simple and standardized than they are. Another problem with models from the rational choice category is that they do not explain why actors want to maximize certain things over others, and therefore, prediction becomes close to impossible and the model meets a dead end (Graeber 2001).

The problems posed by Graeber is to some degree actual in my use of Barth's model. I do not propose that Barth's model can explain the world or necessarily predict the future. However, I believe that Barth's model can be used to show choices categorized in an orderly fashion, as well as showing some nuances on how these choices came as a result of an actor acting within a certain context or situation. In my case, the choices are categorized as ways to deal with natural disasters, in the context of natural disasters and other factors. Models like Barth's model also imply that actions have consequences and effects, and it also allows me to show how the context of natural disasters and the way people cope with them has had effects on society in surprising ways. I am also arguing later in the thesis that output (social form) in this model can change if the variables in the model are changed, an important premise in the use of Barth's model to avoid being only descriptive.

The rationality of the actors

The actors in the model presented by Barth are by premise rational, maximizing profit or minimalizing risk. In some similar models, actors appear more like a calculating computer than a human. The lack of complete knowledge about any situation, as well as the inclusion of perception, feelings, emotions and sentiments as well as being a part of a society and with its norms and bigger actors make "computer rationality" rather impossible for any human being. My informants are acting well in line with what are expected from them within their context. I will even argue that all the values, choices and the coping mechanisms, and even the social form to a large degree, *are* my interpretation of the rationality of my informants, and my informants seem to have an informed preference of their values, agendas, choices, actions and consequences. When it comes to the rationality of the actors, I would agree with Barth on the middle way: that the actors try to get by in a way that they perceive as their very best with what they perceive they have (Barth 1981,1994, Langøy 2015).

To say that my informants and the actors in this thesis are rational on their own terms and within their context may seem to be so obvious that it is excessive. However, my experiences during my fieldwork showed me repeatedly that many people from especially European and American countries felt that Filipinos were acting irrationally, also when dealing with disasters and handling aid-resources. This also includes people working in aid and development agencies. I found this outlook among people from western countries a bit worrying, and the choice of Barth's model, in addition to its analytical value, reflects this worry of mine.

Actor size and The individual and the group in the Philippines

The actor in Barth's model can theoretically vary in size and scale, and Barth opens up for groups to be an actor in his model through the relation of incorporation (Barth 1994). Barth himself has also used it on actors being single persons[14]. The actor in my thesis is of an individual, which leads me to one of the bigger anthropological discussions in south-east Asia, as many have argued that the idea of individualism and selfhood is different in the Philippines from in the west. This does clearly play a role when choosing the size of the actor.

There is an extensive debate in anthropology on the tension between the individual and the group or society in south-east Asia, with some arguing that certain societies do not operate

[14] For an example on the actor as a single individual, see Economic transactions in Darfur/Økonomiske transaksjoner i Darfur (Barth 1994).

with individual identity. Marilyn Strathern argues in her *Gender and the Gift* from 1988 that the divide between the individual and society is not a division recognized among her informants in Melanesia:

> In one sense, the plural and the singular are 'the same'. They are homologues of one another. (…) The causes of internal differentiation are suppressed or discarded. (…) In other words, a plurality of individuals as individuals ('many') is equal to their unity ('one') (Strathern 1988, pp. 13-14).

Edward LiPuma, on the other hand, leaves some more space for the individual in his *Modernity and Personhood in Melanesia.* He argues that even though individuality is not thought of the same way in Melanesia as in western societies, there is a place for the individual, revealed explicitly by the practice of sorcery (LiPuma 1998).

Another argument with a little more emphasis on the individual was delivered by Clifford Geertz in his article *Person, time and conduct in Bali* (Geertz 1973). Here, people are perceived as individuals, but through the symbolic role tied to birth order, kinship, teknonyms, status, or public titles. Personal names are according to Geertz metaphorically guarded as a military secret.

The ideas of Geertz are probably more like the ideas of personhood presented by Michelle Rosaldo, who has done extensive work among the Ilongot, headhunters living in Luzon in the north of Philippines. Rosaldo believes that some limited sense or concept of self is apt to be a cultural universal. She does not claim that Ilongot individuals do not exist, but she argues that Ilongot does not necessarily differentiate between *the presentation of self* and the *self*. Rather, their deepest sense of who they are is located in a set of actions that do not achieve the separation of the individual from the group. She puts her argument neatly together in the quote below:

> In short, it seems misleading to identify individuality with the Ilongot sense of self, first, because Ilongots do not assume a gap between the private self and public person and, second, because the very terms they use in their accounts of how and why they act place emphasis on the ways in which all adults are simultaneously autonomous and equal members of a group. (…) Self and person, I have argued, need not to be conceptually opposed, although it strikes me as perfectly reasonable to insist that, given variations in experience-in-the-world, all individuals will differ (Rosaldo 1984, pp. 147-148).

I find Rosaldo's argument to be compelling, and not too far away from the perspective I have chosen for this thesis. The division between individuals and the group are quite blurry in

south-east Asia and in the Philippines, as all the arguments above shows. I have chosen to opt for individual actors as a part of the group, a view presented nicely by Jocano:

> A person may express himself as an individual, but his interests as such are likely to be subordinated to the group (…) A person can behave independently or rely on his own resources, but it is expected that he maintains a certain level of sociability, or in native parlance, marunong mikaisama (Jocano 1999, pp. 52-53).

I have chosen the actor to be an individual within the group, as I found this view to be the most consistent with my data where I have found my informants coping with disasters as an individual within a group. This is reflected in how my informants tells their stories and perform their actions, as I perceive all my informants to express themselves as individuals, but a part of and subordinated to the group.

The "actor" in my analysis reflects my ethnographic data concerning people coping with disasters, and the actor is therefore a theoretical construct, constructed on the basis of all my ethnographic data on different individuals dealing with disasters. The actor is not a completely rational "poker-playing, math-doing entrepreneur" trying to gain as much as he or she can for him/herself, but rather an amalgam of the experiences of me and my informants, and hopefully it resembles, and is somehow representative of, a typical Filipino and his or her ways of dealing with disasters.

Values as predictor for choices

I am arguing in this thesis that the coping mechanisms are a result of several variables, and I argue that values can be used as a good predictor for the choices inside the coping mechanisms. This is supported in the original form of the generative process analysis, though Barth himself took a step away from value as predictor at a later point[15].

Value is a term with several different definitions, being both a verb and a noun. Among nouns, definitions in the Oxford dictionary are ranging from the more mathematical or economical definitions meaning *worth* or something *to be held in regard*, sometimes even in a numerical or monetary sense, to principles and standards, oftentimes of moral or behavioral nature. Among verbs, value can bear the meaning of the act of estimation, but also the result of such an act, the act of *considering* or *valuing* something to be of meaning or worth (Oxford

[15]Barth later felt that values were not the best predictor for actions, as values tend to be unspecific and subjective, not necessarily held by all the actors within the relevant sphere, and lastly, people did not necessarily act in line with their own values, sometimes even when they thought they did so (Barth 1994).

Dictionary 2016). There is even a wide literature on the theme, with different meanings put in the word value, with David Graeber presenting the three main streams in anthropology below:

> 1. "values" in the sociological sense: conceptions of what is ultimately good, proper, or desirable in human life 2. "value" in the economic sense: the degree to which objects are desired, particularly, as measured by how much others are willing to give up to get them 3. "value" in the linguistic sense, which goes back to the structural linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure (1966), and might be most simply glossed as "meaningful difference" (Graeber 2001).

The use of value in this text goes both towards moral or behavior standards and value in the economic sense, using definitions both in the first (sociological) and the second (economical) of the three streams of Graeber. I have made no distinction, as the exact definition of value is in this case subordinated to how values can play into people's choices.

Before we go into the separate values and other variables, I would like to cite Lynch on a very important issue:

> One should not expect every value to be uniquely Filipino, because notable differences in value systems are caused not so much by differences in the individual values as by the differences in ranking and emphasis. (…) It follows then, that when we speak of certain values as being characteristic of Philippine society, we do not mean that these conceptions of the desirable are found only in the Philippines. On the contrary, it will be seen that almost all the values explained in the pages that follow constitute elements in the value system of other nations, including the United States (Lynch 1973, p. 6).

Even if Lynch is operating with a slightly different definition of values than I do, with values being (moral) standards used to make decisions (Lynch 1973, p. 5), his words rings true. The values (and other variables) presented in this thesis can very well be found in another, local configuration anywhere else in the world where people live. I believe this is important as I do not want to portray and judge the Filipinos as strange and exotic others.

Collectivism

My argument is that *collectivism*, including *social acceptance*, and within the latter, especially the wish for *smooth interpersonal relations* abbreviated as *S.I.R* (the ability to get along and avoid outer signs of conflict), are maybe the major values (as well as a possibility and constraint) that Filipinos use to make decisions. These also apply when coping with disasters. Collectivism is, in this thesis, defined as the subordination of individual goals to the goals of the collective, usually a strong and stable in-group like family or tribe, and my use of

collectivism includes the close family and kinship ties found in several parts of the Philippines (Jocano 1999, Kerkvliet 2013, Triandis et al. 1998). This collectivism has several nuances, and I will draw heavily upon perspectives from both Jocano and Lynch, presented in the theory chapter. Underneath are several empiric examples from my field diary.

> Belonging to a group is seemingly very important to my friends and family in particular. Marilyn's education was decided by the family, though she later went to pursue another degree. Filipinos does not seem to leave people alone. I observe that they almost never walk by themselves, and they eat together almost all of the time. It does also seem that they are aware of it themselves. Oscar, one of my roommates, moved in to the apartment where he now lives because he felt alone. Belonging to the group can also lead to peer-pressure, and Oscar has done bungee jumping and climbs in caves even though he is terrified by both, just to be with his friends. --Field notes Tagbilaran 22.08.15

The piece above from my fieldwork describes collectivism as a desired value. I would also like to refer to the story about me being admitted to the hospital in the introduction chapter for another example of collectivism in practice. My informants were quite aware of collectivism as a group value, and the quotations from my field diary and the methodology section shows that group interests ranked higher than the interests of the individual. My use of Collectivism is also compatible and might overlap with the observations by the anthropologist Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet, who claims that the following ideas are widespread in the Philippines: First, people with more should help those who have less, and second people have basic needs that should be met (Kerkvliet 2013). However, I did not encounter these ideas myself.

The search for *social acceptance* and for *smoothness of interpersonal relations* with great emphasis on smooth interaction and avoidance of conflict is a theoretical concept by Lynch presented and discussed in the theory chapter. I believe that both are a part of the *collectivism* presented above, being both a value and a way to attain and keep in-group cohesion at the same time. Lynch is very vocal about social acceptance and S.I.R being a researcher's construct, an etic approach to values found in the Philippines. An example of S.I.R was given in the methodology chapter, and though one should not repeat oneself unnecessarily, I have chosen to do it here:

One prefers not to ask a question directed specifically to a person when it could apply to a whole group, especially with a "you": "do you want to join me at the movies afterwards?" Even "do you think this soup needs more spice?" is also rather unusual, even among friends, with the same exceptions as the yes/no questions, though not for the exact same reasons.

According to my roommates, it could trigger a series of events. First, the Filipino in question would feel rather honored to be addressed in such a personal way. Second, a Filipino mostly wants what is best for the group, so he or she would look to his friends, if they are present, to figure out what they want, being it going to the cinema or if the soup needs more spice (which can be rather tricky). Due to the unusual nature of such a question, it may take some time for the Filipino in question to come up with an answer.

Here one can see that S.I.R is used to avoid conflict in order to attain *social acceptance* and avoid shame or *Hiya*. I will argue that my informants tended to prioritize group needs over individual needs most of the time, with emphasis on smooth interpersonal relations. However, the degree of the wish of being together and having smooth interpersonal relations with the group is context sensitive, as it differs from place to place over time. The tension between collectivism and individualism is present in my data material, as the example of Marilyn choosing economics over nursing education shows above. Jocano among others has argued that modernism has injected a flavor of individualism and individual freedom into the experience of being human that has not been present in the same degree in earlier time (Jocano 1999).

Minimizing risk

Minimizing risk is presented here as a value, though I am sure it can be argued that it is not. It is not 'something' to be desired, and not quite a conception of good or bad. One can think of it as an agenda or attitude, and in some ways a value as well in the sense of a standard used to make decisions (Lynch 1973, p. 5). It is included here as a variable playing into people's choices, carried by the individual actor.

The reason for including *minimizing risk* and not *maximizing profit* here is context-specific. I will argue that minimizing risk and maximizing gain is two different sides of the same coin, as maximizing gain is hard without also minimizing risk, and in the case of this thesis, both are a part of risk managing for natural disasters. Since the context is disaster and risk management, lowering the potential damage an unstoppable natural disaster might create is of utmost importance and is prioritized above making profit.

Minimizing risk is an etic construction in the case of my thesis. It is assumed to be the logical foundation of the choices found especially in the last coping mechanism; *Pragmatic flexibility and ecological adaptation*. However, Kerkvliet argues that his informants in Luzon, Philippines held maximizing their own gain as a just and right value (Kerkvliet 2013). The

strategies of *mobility*, *diversification,* and *architectural adaptation* seem to be a result of the wish to maximize gain or minimize risk. I want to emphasize that minimizing risk was never mentioned by my informants as a strategy explicitly. Rather, they explained and showed me the need to build a tall enough house in case of flood and the wish to leave the city in case of a typhoon forecast or the need of several livelihoods if one were to fall away. Ideas on minimizing risk in the context of natural disasters are also supported by Bankoff (2003) and Halstead & O'Shea (1989). More data and a further discussion are provided in the next chapter, especially in the section with pragmatic and ecological adaptations.

Fatalism

Fatalism does not quite fall into the definition of value given above, as Fatalism is more of a belief or attitude than a value. However, I have chosen to include it in the value section, as fatalism is also carried within the actor, and it plays into choices in ways similar to the values above.

The examples below show several of my informants partaking in actions which they know might be hazardous, and where the attitude of fatalism is visible.

> Today, my roommates and I talked about Bahala Na. According to my informants, it translates into "come whatever may", though the meaning may also include ideas like "you only live once", "fate is in God's hands" and "God decides whether or not I live or die today". I believe that this is a rather fatalistic attitude. Marilyn told me how she used Bahala Na as her rationale when she switched education from nurse (which her family preferred) to economics. She also associated this attitude with taking trips by boats and ferries despite knowing better. Fred pointed out that one can see versions of Bahala Na everywhere, on cars and stickers. Oftentimes people write "God drives this car", "Security is in God's hands" and similar statements on their vehicles. --Field notes Tagbilaran 22.08.15.

> The thing that has scared me the most on a day-to-day basis here in the Philippines is the traffic, and today was no exception. Fred and I had a one-hour drive to get a bed for the house, and we ran a bit late. On our way back, the rain came down the way only rain in the rainy season can, which meant that the visibility was limited to only a few meters and the road was only visible in contours. Our window wipers also stopped functioning. That did not stop Fred, who crossed himself before he continued to drive 60 km/h, even though we were not in a hurry on our way back. Everything turned out okay in the end, and I am now currently enjoying the new bed. --Field notes Tagbilaran 14.09.15.

I would like to establish fatalism as one of the most important concepts of which choices relevant to coping with hardships and disasters are made upon. Some of the practices can be

found described by the informants themselves, and some of the fatalism has to be analyzed out of practices and other data. What they have in common is the idea of fatalism, belief that the future is predetermined, often by higher powers. This fatalism has been defined by Bankoff as *Bahala Na*, translated into "simply fatalism" or a "leave it to fate" sentiment (Bankoff 2003, p. 167). When I refer to fatalism as a value, it is this sentiment of fate that I am using. I have decided not to use *Bahala Na* as a term for this sentiment, as *Bahala Na* also carries other connotations of courage, risk assessment and the like as described by Jocano in the theory chapter, seemingly forgetting the everyday fatalism outside hazardous situations (Jocano 1999). This might be due to my limited knowledge of Tagalog, but I find fatalism a fitting term to encompass the *Bahala Na* (including fatalism, courage, risk assessment and responsibility), the religious aspect, and the everyday aspect of this "leave it to faith" sentiment. As the quotations above shows, this "leave it to faith" sentiment has quite religious undertones.

The religious undertones of fatalism

The Philippines is in a peculiar situation when it comes to religion. Not many Asian countries have Christianity as main religion. The Philippines is an outlier, having Roman Catholicism as its state religion. The quotes beneath show how the fatalism above oftentimes shows itself via religious statements:

> It seems like the fatalistic outlook/attitude of Bahala na has some religious undertones. According to Marilyn, it carries the meaning "The fate is in God's hands" or "God decides whether or not I live or die today". --Field notes Tagbilaran 22.08.2015

> "We cope because of culture, based on faith and families. We have no control; we have only God. In the end of the day, only faith is left." --Quote from Father Christopher.

> It seems that Filipinos ascribe gain to God, listening to prayers. Redemption is communal according to Father Christopher. --Field notes Tagbilaran 24.08.2015

It is not in my interest to investigate how this came by ecological adaptations or colonialism, though either explanations or a combination of them seems viable. I will however, argue that religion is some sort of vehicle for fatalism, and that they can be found side by side. All the quotes above show how fatalism and fate is ascribed to the will of God, a phenomenon both Bankoff (2003) and Dalisay (2008, 2009) partly describe (see the theory section and below for more). I do not have conclusive data for why it has become like this, but the quotes beneath are some thoughts my informants had on fatalism among church members.

> Had lunch with Father Al [an american baptist priest] today. (…) We discussed fatalism, religion and disasters today. I proposed that Filipinos are using fatalism as an explanation model for disasters, but also as a rationale for actions crossing into illegal territory. This was the answer Father Al gave me: "Deep down, nothing matters when you die, [almost] no matter how irresponsible you have been [when alive], someone outside is going to help you get closer to heaven. Fatalism extends to Eternity". --Quote from Father Al.
>
> In short, Al argued that a person who passed away will get help from his peers that are still alive to pass purgatory. This is done through prayers and mass, sometimes even paid for. The relation to God in Catholicism is a group relationship through Virgin Mary, sometimes even through the local saint as well, as opposed to Protestantism, where each individual him or herself has a relationship to Jesus and God. Father Al also suggests that this makes the group even more important, and that the actions of a single person are relatively insignificant unless he really is a saint or the opposite, a sinner whose sins cannot be forgiven. --Field notes Tacloban 19.11.2015

The ideas proposed above are certainly interesting, since parts of the fatalism I found might have roots from ideas deep within Catholicism put into the Philippines by Spain several hundred years ago. The take-home point is that fatalism in the Philippines has roots in religion, and that fatalism often shows itself through religious statements and actions. This fatalism plays into choices of coping, a point that will be further explored in the next chapter.

Possibilities and constraints

I am arguing in this thesis that the coping mechanisms are a result of several variables, and I will argue that the context for the choices inside coping mechanisms can be theorized as possibilities and constraints.

When dealing with any situation, a context can always be found. This context gives a certain framework within which the situation happens. The definition of disaster by Oliver-Smith and Hoffmann from Chapter Two recognizes both the destructive agent/force in natural disasters, and the socially and economically produced conditions of vulnerability as components. Halstead and O'Shea (1989) argue that one can normally isolate a few factors that are crucial for survival for people in general. The model provided by Barth as the base for analysis in this thesis also operates with external possibilities and constraints for people's choice situations (Barth 1994, Halstead and O'shea 1989, Hem 1999). The possibilities and constraints in this thesis are factors found outside the actors, and they include both the destructive agent/force in natural disasters, and the socially and economically produced conditions of vulnerability.

I argue that although this section on possibilities and constraints is shorter than the section values, it is no less important than the values when trying to explain coping. By that I mean that if there were no natural disasters, there would be no need to cope with them. I am sure that if one involved the fields of geology, economy, risk governance and societal safety among others, this part of the thesis could be expanded with great insights. Such an approach is commended by Bankoff among many others (2003). But as this is a thesis in social anthropology, I have chosen to stay within my own field of interest as the format of this thesis forces prioritization.

Natural disasters as a constraint

Natural disasters are one of the main premises for this thesis and the context for coping with natural disasters. I have already argued in chapter two that natural disasters are of such prevalence in the Philippines that they are considered by Filipinos to be an integral part of nature (Bankoff 2003, Dalisay 2009).

> "The problem was not the quake, but afterwards. We had three months without water and electricity. But the news made it worse that it was. It did destroy tourism for some time though". --Quote from Marilyn. --Field notes. Tagbilaran 24.08.2015

> I went out to eat with Robert and two others after today's training session. It seems like these meals are a great opportunity to gather data. I noticed that when we were ordering, no one was ordering for themselves, just like in Tagbilaran. When I asked Robert if this was the norm, he and the others stated that one seldom only buys for oneself.

> They [my training partners] asked me about my research, and soon they started to share their stories from typhoon Yolanda as well. The streets were flooded, and there were dead bodies everywhere. People were looting any kind of stores, and prices went through the roof. The order one normally observes was gone, and Robert stated that he walked around with a gun, something everyone did according to my friends around the table. Robert's wife was going to give birth only a couple of days after the typhoon, and Robert was struggling to get milk for his newly born child. He gave up on his quest after some time, as the prices reached 5000 PHP (approx. 100 USD/850 NOK). --Field notes Tacloban 02.11.15.

The quotes above show some of the disrupting effects natural disasters can have on life. Locally, people experience death, the loss of homes and livelihood, a risk of certain diseases, and I will assume that the events can cause psychological traumas by themselves. Disasters appear on an average of eight a year, with close to 600 average casualties per year (Bankoff 2003, p. 31). It also creates problems for the state and business actors, and several

modernization projects have been ruined or at least delayed by the onset of natural disasters. When this thesis revolves around dealing and coping with disaster, it is clear that nature plays in to people's coping mechanisms and people have to manage the risks associated with the disasters.

Collectivism as possibility and constraint

> I went to do Karaoke together with "The gangz", a group consisting of my roommates and the rest of the people in their Multi-level Marketing Firm group. Karaoke seems to me like a national favorite and the enjoyment in the group was immense! They were, however, somewhat uncomfortable with me not joining in, and they exerted a lot of peer pressure for me to sing and drink with them, sending me the microphone and sending me drinks. I finally caved in to their great enjoyment, ending with me singing four songs in a row and scoring 100 % on "Boys don't cry" by The Cure. Filipinos really love their love songs and songs that gives them motivation, whatever that means. We all went home afterwards to eat more cake. --Field notes Tagbilaran 17.09.15

Collectivism is not only a value some individual actors take with themselves into social situations. Almost everyone does, and I have found the collectivism and SIR in the Philippines to be of such a strong nature that it comes in as an external limitation into choices made by the individual, often times in the form of group pressure, and "what will the others say?". This wish seemed to be not only individual, but communal, and the group pressure this communal longing for unity spawned was felt on my body, especially during my karaoke escapades as seen above.

I would like to emphasize that Collectivism is noted as both a possibility and constraint, as it is a tremendous resource for people who are in need. As the examples in the next chapter on coping mechanisms will show, resources like food, jobs, a place to stay, money, help and so on comes from the peer-group, most of the times from the in-group of family and friends. Such use of each other as resources can be found in other places in the Philippines as well (Bankoff 2003, Dalisay 2009, Jocano 1999, Hollnsteiner 1973). In short, it is both a possibility/resource and constraint at the same time. A group pressure for sharing might be perceived from the givers perspective as a constraint and especially if resources were scarce. This was not necessarily the case for the recipient, who might look at it as a possibility and resource to draw from. Most of the times, neither is completely true, as most of my informants were glad to help their family and friends, or at least neutrally thought of sharing as the norm. Further examples and discussion are placed in the next chapter.

The Unhelpful State as a constraint

People perceive the state as insufficient for helping them cope with disasters, a view found among my informants, but also in literature (Matejowski 2012). The warning system employed by the governmental agency PAGASA in 2013 has also met some criticism:

> The worst [part about the typhoon Yolanda/Haiyan according to Marlon] was the tsunami. I met Marlon at the hostel where I was staying. He told me about his experience of the typhoon Yolanda/Haiyan. The typhoon hit at five in the morning with strong winds. When the water came into Marlon's house, he went on his roof through a small hatch, and stayed there for several hours. The worst was the tsunami with fifteen foot tall waves, which hit his house three times from different directions due to the local geography. No one expected that part, because the PAGASA warned them about a storm surge, not something reminiscent of a tsunami.
>
> Marlon did not eat for four days, as he injured his ankle during the disaster and could not go anywhere. It was hard to go anywhere due to water and debris, and there were dead bodies everywhere. The closest pick-up point for aid was several kilometers away. He stayed at a neighbor's place, as the neighbor had a bigger concrete house. When listening to Marlon, I can sense that he feels sad when talking about the subject. --Field notes. Tacloban 24.10.2015.

The lack of evacuation pre-Yolanda/Haiyan was, according to my informants, caused by the use of the technical term *storm surge* instead of more common words like *tsunami*. My informants thought of this as the government not doing its job (though the warning system itself has been revised and seemingly fixed). My informants feel that they are somehow left to deal with the disasters by themselves:

> Jay, the boss of Fred and Marilyn, told me about his experience of the earthquake. It took some time for business to return afterwards. His house was destroyed in the earthquake, but both his house and his business are now back on track, two years after the earthquake in 2013. Jay also states that the earthquake was much worse than typhoon Yolanda/Haiyan. He attributes coping to the fighting spirit of the Filipinos: "Filipinos fight for survival, it is the way we are. Even if no one helps us, we still fight". --Field notes Tagbilaran 25.09.2015

I believe that a lot of the coping mechanisms and especially the part about sharing are as strong as they are because people perceive that the state is unhelpful, corrupt or not interested in helping them. I will also refer to the subsection on corruption in chapter 6.

Summary

In this chapter, I have shown the 'building bricks' or variables playing into the local practices for coping/coping mechanisms. I have also presented the generative process analysis model

by Barth, which I use in order to analyze the coping mechanisms. I have included this table in order to provide a short overview of the variables playing into choices in my use of Barth's model. I believe that the table in itself is a neat summary of what this chapter has been about. The next chapter will be about the coping mechanisms people employ, and how these are a product of the variables presented in this chapter.

Type of variable		**Key concepts within the variable**	**Plays mainly into**
Value	Collectivism	Social acceptance/SIR,the prioritization of the group over the individual	Bayanihan/sharing as coping mechanism, see next chapter
	Minimizing risk	Active preventive efforts to avoid damage from natural disasters	Pragmatic and ecological adaptations as coping mechanism, see next chapter
	Fatalism	Bahala Na, Fate, Religion	Using fatalism as explanatory model as coping mechanism, see next chapter
Possibilities and constraints	Natural disasters	Natural disasters as destructive agents, natural disasters perceived as a part of life, as a part of nature	All the coping mechanisms, but especially Pragmatic and ecological adaptations as coping mechanisms, see next chapter
	Collectivism	Peer pressure and using others as resources	Bayanihan/sharing as coping mechanisms, see next chapter
	The unhelpful state	Perceived lack of trust in the government and their ability with dealing with disasters	The coping mechanisms grow stronger as people rely on themselves and their own networks.

Chapter 5: Coping mechanisms, the local practices for coping

This chapter is still very much on the ground with my informants, and where the last chapter presented factors and variables that played into the local practices of coping, this chapter will present and discuss the actual local practices of coping with disasters. Below is an illustration showing how I use Barth's model, but I have added on actual choices and coping mechanisms as a result of all the variables playing in into the choice situations.

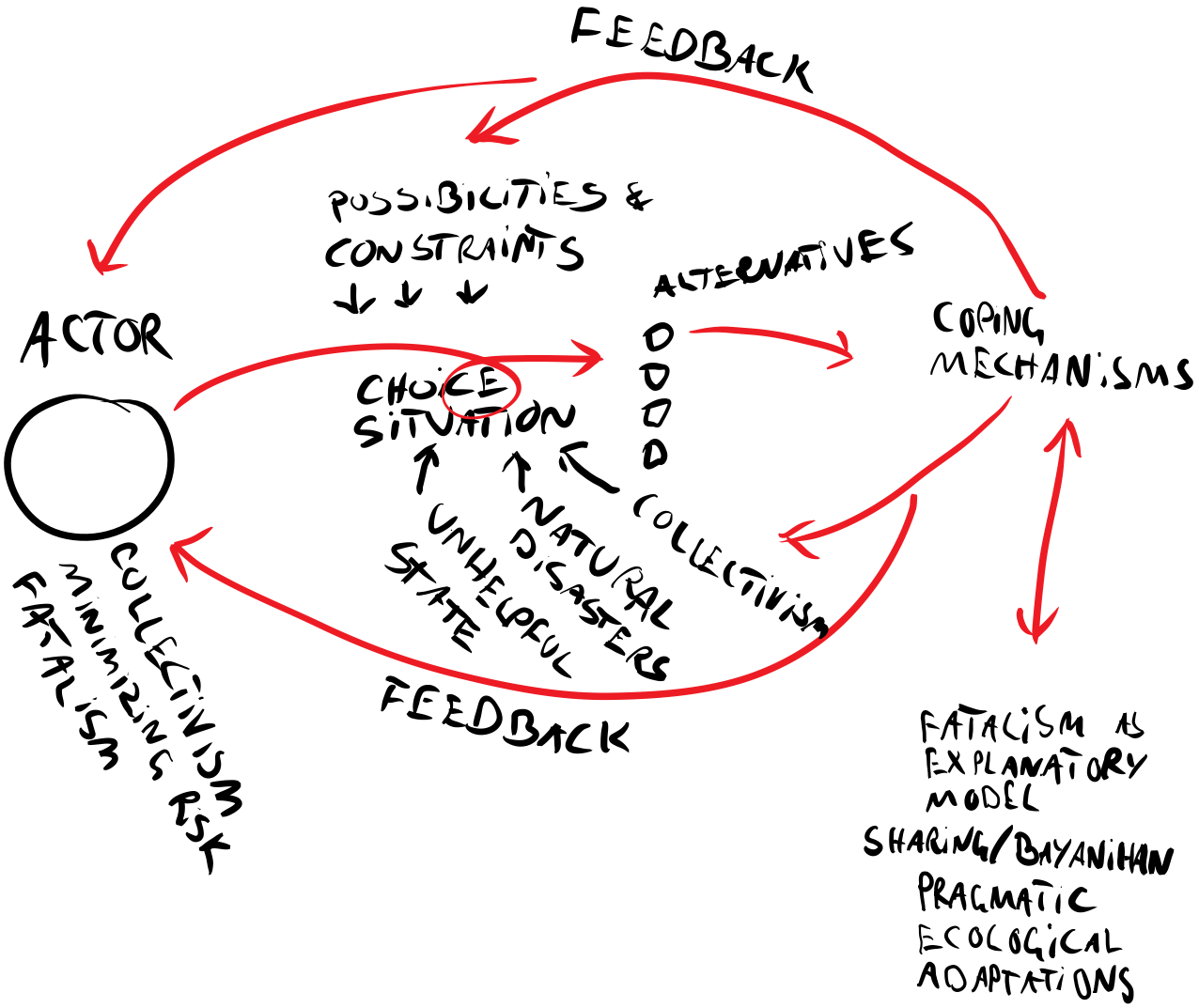


Figure 5. Based on Hem (1999, p. 315). The coping mechanisms has been included from figure 4.

This chapter will mostly concern itself with presenting actual choices and actions categorized as coping mechanisms, made by actors within a context with possibilities and constraints and the values carried by the actors themselves. The choices presented were found among data taken from everyday choices and actions to choices and actions made with (natural) disasters in mind. They are by no means all the choices that are possible or found during my fieldwork; they are just the ones I found most relevant for coping with hardships and disasters. As mentioned earlier, coping mechanisms in this thesis are defined as choices or actions which help with coping with disasters and are therefore similar to the coping mechanisms presented by Bankoff (2003), Dalisay (2009) and the buffering mechanisms in Halstead & O'Shea (1989). There are some minor differences. The main difference is that I have chosen to separate values and possibilities and constraints from the coping mechanisms, where, for example, Bankoff has made no distinction as shown in the theory section. The reason for doing so is that I have found that fatalism and collectivism as values can play into more than one coping mechanism, and I make an analytical divide between values and the coping mechanisms which enable me to show these nuances.

The choices I look at cluster themselves in three categories, whereas all the choices within the given category are presented as a coping mechanism or strategy for dealing with disasters and hardships. The three categories of choice/coping mechanisms are:

1. Using fatalism as an explanatory model
2. Sharing/Bayanihan
3. Pragmatic and ecological adaptations.

All are somehow related to each other, and the categorization and divisions between them are analytical or from my own work. Some choices falls into several categories and all the choices in different categories can be said to be made using the same variables (with different configurations and different emphasis) to some degree.

Some of the coping mechanisms do have coping with disaster as a primary purpose, and some do not even have coping with disasters as the primary or even secondary purpose. They may be performed passively, unconsciously, and without the actor thinking of it as a coping mechanism at all. This applies especially to externalizing experience and sharing; I do not believe that the Filipinos are consciously sharing all the time, always thinking that this might give them "a favor to spare" for later. However, agricultural and architectural adaptations are adaptations and coping mechanisms my informants made knowingly with natural disasters in

mind. I have made no divide between the more passive mechanisms with coping as secondary purpose, and the adaptations with coping as the main rationale.

Fatalism as an explanatory model

I would like to take up the thread of fatalism from the last chapter and show how this fatalism can be used as a coping mechanism in order to deal with disasters by using the fatalism to actively explain disasters and events, and sometimes as an explanation to take unnecessary risks. Fatalism as a value or even a coping mechanism in itself is not a new idea, and some of the most relevant viewpoints can be found in the theory section of this thesis. Bankoff emphasizes the idea of *Bahala Na* together with religion in order to understand fatalism, a view supported by Dalisay, who found religion to be a coping mechanism in two coastal communities in the Philippines (Bankoff 2003, Dalisay 2009). Matejowsky also mentions and discusses a fatalist attitude for coping with roots in a perception of an unhelpful state which does not stand up for its citizens, while F. Landa Jocano talks about fatalism in more general terms in his book *Working with Filipinos*. (Matejowsky 2012, Jocano 1999).

> Note to self: Do also remember the story about Fred's friend who was hit by lightning but survived. His father-in-law perceived this as a miracle, and begged Fred's friend for his T-shirt, which would serve as a proof of the miracle. --Field notes Tagbilaran 05.10.15

The quotation above shows how natural phenomena with the potential to turn into disasters are ascribed as "an act of God" (See Bankoff 2003 and Dalisay 2009 or the theory chapter for more). In itself it does not necessarily say much; as such an explanation for that kind of event would be common in a lot of different cultures. The quotations below shows some more nuance, as a natural disaster is interpreted as a punishment from God.

> Remember the story about how a mudslide in Leyte took down a whole entire neighborhood/Barangay, but left the next one alone. According to Fred, this was perceived as a punishment from God for all the prostitution that happened inside the destroyed neighborhood/Barangay. --Field notes Tagbilaran 05.10.15

> Me, Marlon and two Danish master students in city planning went to the area of San Jose today, the area that was hit the worst by the typhoon. The destruction was severe to observe, but the most interesting thing happened when we sat down for a break. Here Marlon told us that he believes that the typhoon was the wrath of God, as people were dating in the local church before the Typhoon. When I asked him whether that was a bit strict, he stated that Tacloban is an example for the whole Philippines. --Field notes Tacloban 22.11.2015

I found the statement by my informant above to be somewhat unexpected and rather straight forward when I heard it for the first time. However, Dalisay believes that this is not too uncommon. Disasters can, according to Dalisay, be wake-up calls when people do things against God's will, or to remind people to take part in religious activity (Dalisay 2012).

Both the examples show that divine intervention as an explanation model for rather extreme experiences, and both Bankoff and Dalisay show examples of the same. During the earthquake in Baguio, people turned to their knee to pray instead of running, and people are known to undertake journeys by boat even though a typhoon warning has been issued in the spirit of *Bahala Na* (Bankoff 2003). Bankoff argues that that type of fatalism is a somewhat generated or syncretic result of Christianity and local religion, which as such acts as *"a formidable armor against suffering caused by disaster"* (Bankoff 2003, p. 168). This is also in line with literature by Dalisay, who talks very generally about religion and the Church as a place where people can find safety and guidance on different levels during and after a disaster (Dalisay 2009).

It does not stop there. Sometimes this use of fatalism is taken a bit too far, as actors sometimes use this fatalistic outlook as a rationale or excuse for taking unnecessary risks. An example from the fatalism chapter bears repeating together with an explanation:

> The thing that has scared me the most on a day-to-day basis here in the Philippines is the traffic, and today was no exception. Fred and I had to take a one-hour drive to get a bed for the house, and we ran a bit late. On our way back, the rain came down the way only rain in the rainy season can, which meant that the visibility was limited to only a few meters and the road was only visible in contours. Our window wipers also stopped functioning. That did not stop Fred, who crossed himself before he continued to drive 60 km/h, even though we were not in a hurry on our way back. Everything turned out okay in the end, and I am now currently enjoying the new bed. --Field notes Tagbilaran 14.09.15.

In this case, my friend chose to take a risk he perceived as dangerous. We were not in a hurry at the time, but my friend chose to put his trust in God on some level and at the same time decided to go through with driving the car (over the speed limit), an action which I perceive as taking an unnecessary risk.

The take-home message and analytical point of the choices clustering inside the category/coping mechanism of *using fatalism as an explanatory model is* that externalizing experience helps my informants to find meaning, cope, and relate to the event of disaster and hardship when facing uncontrollable forces of nature.

Sharing/Bayanihan

"Security is sought not by independence so much as by interdependence" (Lynch 1973, p. 14)

I would like to present *Sharing/Bayanihan* as a coping mechanism for disasters and hardships. The whole coping mechanism can be looked at as analogous with *pooling resources* (Halstead and O'Shea 1989), and most of the actions and choices in this category show people sharing food, housing, jobs, help and other resources within their own network, reflected in the citation above. This category of choices is mostly a consequence of the values of collectivism and the wish for smooth interpersonal relations, as well as a response to the external limitation in an unhelpful state.

Bayanihan is shortly presented in the theory section as cooperation, a spirit of cooperation and a practical response to individual and community needs (Jocano 1999, Ang 1979). Other definitions have been provided, but the one above are the ones used in this text. Several choices and episodes cluster inside this category, and the examples below show everyday sharing within the household that I was a part of, as well as how their relationship is intertwined.

> At 05:30, Charlie and Layla get out of bed to get ready for college. They are cousins who share a room in the apartment where I am staying. Ginger (colleague of the houselords Marilyn and Fred), James (the brother of houselords Marilyn and Fred's best friend) and Oscar (who went to high school together with Marilyn and Fred) are also getting up by then to get to work. Dustin (Marilyn's brother) may rise some time later to do household chores. All is accompanied by food sizzling in the kitchen and loud singing, with boy-band music being a favorite. Normally, most of them are out the door when Marilyn, Fred and I get out of bed. Fred makes breakfast and the rest of us (normally 4-6) eat to our heart's content. --Field notes Tagbilaran 03.10.15.

> Our household in Bohol has a maternal boss, as Marilyn serves as the one in charge. She oversees the economy, while Fred gets money from her to buy and make food. Traditionally, Fred would have a responsibility to bring in the money, while Marilyn would decide what to do with it, buy food and cook. Fred does most of the grocery shopping, and both I, Marilyn, Charlie and Dustin eat Fred's food at almost every meal. The other people in the house also partake when they can.

> When Fred does grocery shopping, he buys food for everyone. The same happens when he cooks. If more people attend the meal than Fred expected, he just cooks more rice and we share whatever fish/meat/sauce/vegetables we have for the day. This also applies to all the food in the refrigerator, including mine. Everyone eats what they want, including the food I

> bring into the house, and no one seem to demand food back. The whole sharing of food-phenomena looks like general reciprocity within a family, except for the fact that most people within my household are not in biological relations with each other. --Field notes Tagbilaran 07.10.15.

The two examples above do not seem to say that much at first glance, as communal eating is possibly one of the most normal everyday activity found in any household around the world. Some of the people I lived with had a considerably better economy than some of the others in the house, but everyone ate to their hearts content. It is interesting that food is pooled without much regard to whose pocket it came from, as if the reciprocity was general. The connection from collectivism as a value to sharing/bayanihan is clear, as people employ a spirit and actions of sharing towards the group, and I will argue that this type of sharing is one of the main components in how Filipinos deals with disaster.

Other literature supports this view, too. Halstead and O'Shea among others makes claims that sharing can be on the grounds that a favor always comes with a conscious or unconscious claim of reciprocity in a time of need (Halstead and O'Shea 1989). Jean-Cristophe Guillard et al. Jean-Cristophe Guillard et.al argue that coping with disasters in the Philippines is anchored in daily life, and that it does not lead to extraordinary measures. They also argue that the survival and management of disaster by people in a local community in central Luzon, Philippines, is tied strongly with the strength of their livelihood and social network. Networks are used to get money to buy food, mostly through loans or postponing debt among friends, family, small retail shops and fish nursery owners, and both *pagkikipagkapwa* (here translated as a sense of communality), and *Bayanihan* (here translated as a mutualization of labor) is used to explain and describe the phenomena (Jean-Cristophe Guillard et al. 2008). Kerkvliet also states that people in Luzon in the Northern Philippines relies on their network to pool resources when in need, and connectivity is often crucial and a favorable relationship is necessary to get access to land, work, loans, emergency help, entrance to school, attention in a government office and more. On top of that, he states that individuals seldom works or earns money for himself, but rather to the household (Kerkvliet 2013).

I agree with both Halstead and O'Shea, Kerkvliet, Jean-Cristophe Guillard et al. and Kerkvliet that sharing and taking care of each other is mandatory to cope with disasters. I will also refer to the very start of the thesis when I was admitted to the hospital with dengue fever. That time, my friends and informants did everything they could to take care of me. One might argue that this is a strong, single case of empathy, but as you can see from the example in the

introduction, this empathy, spirit of cooperation and sharing, was more the norm than the exception. Underneath is an example of sharing and cooperation in a specific post-disaster context:

> Tom told me how he managed during and after Yolanda. He evacuated his whole family (mother, sisters, and nieces) as the last living male member in his family. He was also participating in the looting and stealing from stores after Yolanda, and he carried a knife himself. Tom believed it was ok, since there were no laws, police or food around after Yolanda. --Field notes Tacloban 12.11.15.

I agree with Halstead and O'Shea and the others that this reciprocal sharing and taking care of each other can be a fine way to cope with hardships, risk and disasters, though the idea of sharing just to "have one favor to spare" does not show the whole richness of it, neither does it show how this plays with society as a whole. Neither has the backside of the medal on such sharing been discussed, where collectivism takes form as peer pressure, which presses people into sharing. The latter will be shown in the next chapter, but I will first present to you another facet of sharing/bayanihan.

Sharing/bayanihan further than just in-house sharing and taking care of your family and kin during disasters. People also share jobs, money and favors, and they prefer to do business with their friends and family. My informant Fred put it like this: *"If there is no friendship, there will be no business".*

The first example is of Marilyn and Fred's MLM[16] sales group, which is called *The Gang*. It consists of a huge group of friends doing business together as well as spending a lot of spare time together, some even living together. "The Gang" is gathered at almost any possible occasion, and it is a prime example of doing business within a close circle.

> Today we went shopping for cake and groceries for Fred's birthday. The birthday went all fine, and The Gang, (the multilevel marketing group everyone in the house is a member of) was there as well. --Field notes Tagbilaran 17.09.15.

> I was invited to a graduation dinner tonight by a friend of Marilyn and Fred. She is also a member of The Gang. Fred joked around a bit about me being the mascot. The birthday itself

[16] MLM is an abbrevation for Multi Level Marketing, a controversial marketing strategy where companies not only compensate salesmen for their sales they generate themselves, but also for the sales other salespeople that have been recruited by the first salesman makes. This allows for several levels of salesmen, hence the name of the marketing strategy. Most MLM companies operate on the legal side, but some are illegal pyramid schemes which exploit their members. MLM companies are illegal in several countries.

> was celebrated at a boarding house at the university, and both the family of the graduate and The Gang was there. --Field notes Tagbilaran 18.10.15.

Below are some more examples of businesses within a circle of family and friends. I was lucky enough to partake in the endeavor of visiting thrift shops looking for clothes to sell forward in the smaller towns where family and friends stayed.

> Fred and Marilyn employ a lot of business options. Today I joined in on buying clothes at a thrift shop in order to sell it further in Fred and Marilyn's hometown. Fred, Marilyn and sometimes Charlie buy them, and they bring it to Marilyn's mother in Marilyn's hometown, who sells them forward to her friends. --Field notes Tagbilaran 03.10.15.

> I talked to Fred today. He is currently having a luxury problem. He has a travel agency with Marilyn and a friend from college, and the company (and especially the marketing) is doing better than expected. Today, another travel agency in the capital Manila wanted a cooperation deal, and they were also approached and asked if they could cater 50-100 guests at the time. --Field notes Tagbilaran 09.10.15.

As such, doing business within the group or network is a good, strong and rational choice when it comes to natural disasters. Matejowsky shows how flexibility in payments between merchants in the Philippines is a way to cope with disasters (Matejowsky 2012). Mateowsky does not mention how close these people were in relation to each other, but my guess is that they do at least appear in the same social/professional network, and the flexibility they provide each other implies some kind of trust normally gained by actually knowing each other.

Pragmatic and Ecological adaptations

The last category of coping mechanisms is dubbed *Pragmatic and ecological adaptations*. The strategies shown below are choices with active and conscious efforts on behalf of the actors, at least when compared to the more passive efforts in the previous categories. This coping mechanism also has more of "the rational actor" in it, as mobility, diversification, architectural and agricultural adaptations all are seemingly developed in order to minimize risk. They are also of a more pragmatic nature and more directly linked to natural disasters, as opposed to the more cultural/cognitive coping mechanisms that are using *fatalism* as an explanatory model and *Sharing/Bayanihan.* This is also in line with the divide made by Bankoff (2003), who divided his coping mechanisms into practical and cognitive/behavioral coping mechanisms.

Mobility

Mobility is, according to Halstead and O'shea (1989), one of the buffering mechanisms oftentimes employed to deal with adversity in general. Though mobility is oftentimes associated with pastoral adaptations, it can very well take other forms:

> Shopping malls and other commercial work places were closed for three months due to rebuilding. People moved home to their families in the district for some time. These times were not too easy on people's economy. However, people seem to cope, and Marilyn and Fred have a lot of jobs: their daytime job, their membership in a multilevel marketing firm, their travel agency, renting out spare rooms and buying clothes in a thrift shop and selling them forward for an advance. --Field notes Tagbilaran 24.09.2015

In the example above, people employed mobility and their network as well as sharing in-group when moving out of the area in question and into another for the necessary time being. Marilyn and Fred moved home for some time when their workplace was rebuilt post-earthquake in 2013.

Another example of prioritizing mobility is a trend some of my informants told me about; investing in cars rather than repairing houses in Tacloban post-disaster. My data is not very good on this point, but the sales of automobiles have, according to my informants, risen post-Yolanda/Haiyan, and there has been an increase in traffic. Further investigations have to be made on that lead. According to Bankoff, mobility has traditionally been employed to a greater degree than now, by simply moving out of hazardous areas (Bankoff 2003). My fair guess is that modernity has played a role here, and that livelihood was maybe less place bound earlier, as workplaces in especially first and secondary industry oftentimes requires a place where people can perform their work or services.

Diversification

Diversification as a coping mechanism or buffering mechanism is not foreign, either in general (Halstead and O'Shea 1989) or in the Philippines (Bankoff 2003). Though diversification is oftentimes associated with agricultural risk management, it can, like mobility, also be done in several ways. I will argue that the principles of diversification also can be applied to wage labor, and not only in the context of pastoralism and agriculture. Dalisay also describes engaging in extra-income activities as a way to deal with typhoons and monsoon rains in the Philippines (Dalisay 2008). The example below is a good example of diversification, a part of the last coping mechanism:

> Today we went to the thrift shop again to buy more clothes. I noticed today that the people who are in charge of the thrift shop are also in charge of the multilevel marketing firm in Tagbilaran. It is even the same office! I have now counted, and the following livelihood options are employed by Marilyn and Fred: their day-time job, the Multilevel Marketing concept, the travel agency, renting out spare rooms and buying clothes in a thrift shop and selling them forward for an advance. --Field notes Tagbilaran 13.09.15.

I have also chosen to include another example to show how this diversification plays out in practice through a normal day:

> Marilyn works mostly from home. Her day-time job is as a middle-manager between the board and the workers in her company. Fred is somehow her assistant, and is often sent out on errands of some kind. Dinner is around 16-17:00, and every Tuesday everyone in The Gang meets at the house to have a sales meeting, as everyone is also involved in the Multilevel Marketing firm. Fred is also in charge of the traveling company he, Marilyn and some other friend is having together. This means that he often spends the afternoon as a guide for tourists from every part of the world. We usually gather around 23:00 for some food and to talk; sometimes this talk extends to four in the morning. --Field notes Tagbilaran 02.10.15.

The example in the start of this section as well as the example above shows how some of my informants kept several jobs and livelihood opportunities at once. This type of diversification is also related to sharing and collectivism, as most of these businesses were performed together with others within the family and friends. Three people in the household are working at the same place; three are also operating the Airbnb-rental; two operate the travel company together with another friend, and finally, eight are partaking on some level in the multi-level marketing firm.

The rationale seems to be to minimize the risk for failure by not putting all the eggs in the same basket, though collectivism and the wish to partake in social events and other peoples activities and to be a part of something can play in as well. The practical effect of having several livelihoods is that one could still get by if one fails or goes missing, a completely rational choice if one lives in an area where natural disasters are prevalent and livelihoods are perceived as unstable.

Architectural adaptation

The last subcategory of *pragmatic flexibility and ecological adaptation* is *architectural adaptation.* Dalisay argues that people in the coastal areas of Mindoro and Batangas in the Philippines plants trees as wind breakers, a phenomena I have not observed myself (Dalisay

2008). I have, however, observed and read about the Traditional Filipino housing like the *Nipa hut* and palm huts, which are built on wooden stands over the ground and constructed with nature in mind (Bankoff 2003). The building materials are traditionally wood, preferably bamboo, which is flexible enough to deal with wind and accessible/cheap enough to replace when needed. Most houses made of the traditional materials in rural districts are also elevated, if ever so slightly, from the ground according to my own observations and the statement from my informants. Also, a preference for several stories in a house was explained to me more than once during my fieldwork both in Tagbilaran and Tacloban. This allows water to flow under or into the house in the rain season without damaging the (whole) interior of the house. Concrete houses with several stories can also be used as refuge during floods or storm surges, as was the case with my informant Marlon, who went to his neighbor and lived in his taller concrete house for some days. Some houses are also in contact with the ground in only a couple of key positions, and I will speculate that this is for a related reason. Water and dirt slides can move a house, but it does not destroy such a house in the same manner if the house was taken only a short distance by the same elements. Nowadays, bricks and concrete are popular materials for being able to withstand the same elements, and houses made of all the different materials mentioned above can be observed side by side most places.

Summary

In this chapter, I have presented and discussed the local practices for coping, or coping mechanisms. I have provided a simplified overview table below as a summary of this chapter, shortly showing what the coping mechanism consists of. The next chapter will show how some of these coping mechanisms have an effect on the local society.

Coping mechanism	**Examples**	**Main values**	**Main constraint**	**Effect**
Using fatalism as explanatory model	Using fate and God as an explanatory model for natural disasters, as well as extreme sports and everyday behavior in traffic	Fatalism	Natural disasters Unhelpful State	Dampens the effects natural disasters has on the individual and society Especially Sharing/Bayanihan has an effect on social form, see next chapter
Sharing/Bayanihan	Cooperation and sharing of resources like jobs, food, money, housing	Collectivism	Natural disasters Unhelpful State Collectivism	
Pragmatic and ecological adaptations	Mobility: Moving to family and friends in case of disaster, buying cars instead of houses	Minimizing risk	Natural disasters	
	Diversification: Having multiple jobs, agricultural diversification	Minimizing risk, Collectivism	Natural disasters	
	Architectural adaptation: Nipa hut, preference of several floors on houses	Minimizing risk	Natural disasters	

Chapter 6: Coping mechanisms and its effects on social organization

This chapter will still be partly on the ground with my informants, but the scope will be a bit wider, as I now will discuss how the coping mechanisms (and especially one of them) has effects on society. I will start off with one of the main points made in the generative process analysis by Barth. According to Barth, social form is a generated product of all the processes of choices made by all the (both unconsciously and consciously) participating actors, as the illustration shows below. As such, it is very seldom a result of one agenda and a few choices alone. Instead, the result is more random than what the participating actors might have thought (Barth 1994). In this chapter I will present to you how the Filipino social form looks from my point on the local level, and which affects the coping mechanisms has on this social form. In the case of coping with disaster, my use of Barth's model might be graphically presented like this:

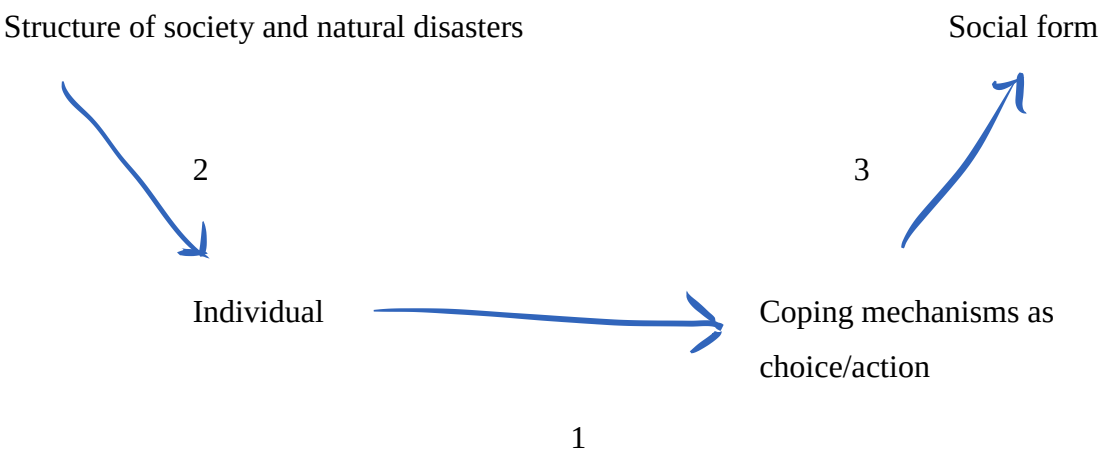


Figure 6. Coleman as understood by Hem (Coleman 1974 in Hem 1999, p.320). Coping mechanisms is included as a choice/action from figure 2.

According to Barth, the social form one can observe at any point can be analyzed as the generative product of actions made by the actors, consciously or not (Barth 1994, Hem 1999).

Barth states that there are several processes that generates social form, and I argue that local practices for coping with natural disasters are among them (Barth: 1994). I do not claim that the categories of choices I present alone have generated social form like the figure above might imply, but I believe that the choices I present definitely have an effect on the society in question. I will now present some aspects of the local society or social form in Barth's terms

as I found it as a contextual background to show how some of the coping mechanisms have some effects on social form or the local social organization in this case.

Examples of social form: The strong in-group

I would like to show some empirical data on what parts of social form or social organization actually look like on the local level, before talking about how it relates to coping mechanisms. I do not intend to outline the whole society as such, but only to show which parts of the society or social organization that I believe are affected by the coping mechanism.

In general, it seems that Filipinos tend to prefer a strong in-group and not care too much about the out-group, who becomes relatively insignificant. First, below is an excerpt from my field diary describing what I believe are important parts of social form on a local level. I would also like to refer to the theory chapter for some clarification on terms like *barkada* .

> Today I met with Father Christopher and Audrey. They are both working at the office in one of the main churches in Bohol, and they were also both central in this church's efforts in helping and rebuilding Bohol after the earthquake in 2013. What I found the most interesting were the thoughts Audrey had on how far cooperation and empathy extends itself among Filipinos. We drew the model beneath together, and the explanation and examples follows.

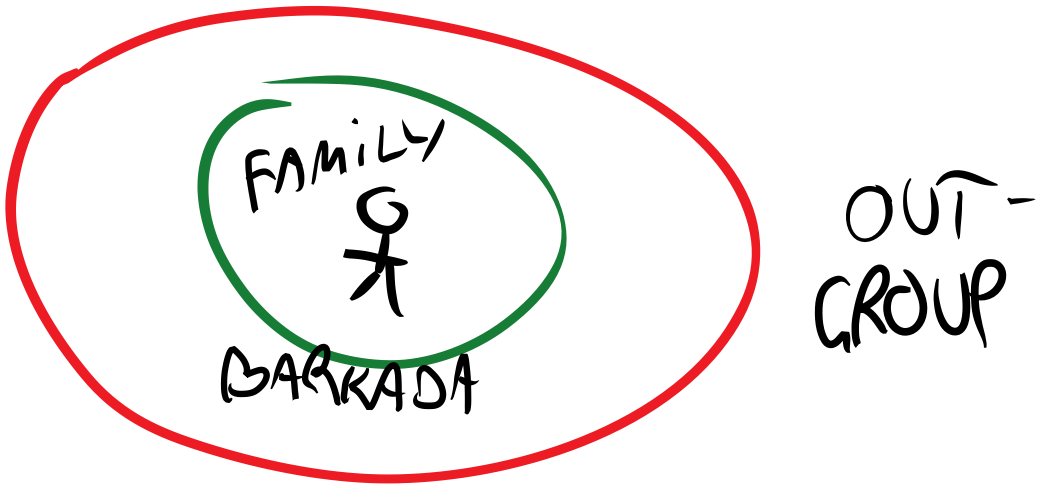


Figure 7. This figure is a copy of a drawing my informant Audrey made during our conversations.

> Audrey states that Filipinos care the uttermost about the people closest to them, especially family and close friends/barkada. These people mean everything, and it is within this circle people are cooperating and the terms Bayanihan and Degong (approximate translation is coming together to share) is applied. Those people are within the inner circle of the illustration.

> The interesting part is what Audrey believes happens to those outside this inner circle. Audrey states that most Filipinos care surprisingly little about people that are not within their inner circle and she thinks little empathy is extended towards the poor. Audrey also believes that most people do not have the resources and time to help people outside their own in-group. "People don't care if it hits someone other than their family. Then there is no incentive [to do something]". She exemplified this by telling a story from another organization she worked with. They were going to give an intern some training to become an economical advisor for people in need. They were shocked when the trainee came back and felt that "helping other people was not relevant, as they were not family for her". The trainee quit shortly after. --Field notes Tagbilaran 25.09.15.

What this excerpt shows is that people place a whole lot of effort into their own peer group or in-group, but not nearly any comparable effort to the people/groups outside their peer group, or the out-group. It shows reluctance or in this case, resistance to helping others outside their peer group and economic class membership. Another, more subtle example of the boundary of in-group and out-group is given below:

> Every year, people gather in their hometown to celebrate their local saint. This is a catholic adaption of a pre-colonial celebration according to Father Al, who is also a Baptist priest. Everyone can come according to tradition, and Marilyn's mother is arranging a fiesta at the family house this year. Hosting a fiesta is prestigious, and uncles, aunts and other relatives, The Gang, and some other friends including me showed up this year.
>
> The day started with loud karaoke and huge amounts of food, and both of these factors were ongoing throughout the day. Fred saved me from another karaoke embarrassment and took me with him to prepare the main dish: roasted pig.
>
> We went back and forth between where Fred and his friends were roasting the pig and the fiesta. I noticed that the area outside the house was full of random people eating food prepared by Marilyn's mother, especially right after church. The people on the outside were served from a table outdoors and outside the kitchen, while the family and close friends were served in the living room. The housekeeper even closed the door between the outdoor serving and the serving indoors. The roasted pig was also reserved for family and friends, and was served indoors. --Field notes Tagbilaran 28.11.15.

On the surface it only looks like friends and family hanging around enjoying themselves and me and an informant sneaking ourselves away from boring tasks, but it also shows that even though the house was full of people and the fiesta was an open event, some clear boundaries were still drawn and maintained. There was even a physically boundary, with the door between the people in the living room (family and friends) and the people on the outside.

Such boundaries between in-group and out group are theorized by Richard Jenkins (2008), who draws on Barth to explain how groups are defined by looking at the differences between the groups along a boundary between them.

There are several models showing how this in-group might look, and I refer to figure 3 by Jocano in the theory section and figure 7 by my informant above. There are some differences between the two models, but those are not as important as their similarities. Both models shows that Filipinos care uttermost about friends and family, and none of the models goes into depths and nuances of such relation with factors like geographical closeness, closeness of kin, the differences between biological kin and extended family among others. I would like to remark that even though the model from my informant is ego-centered, family and the barkada are really social groups and not ego-centered networks carried by the individual. Another difference between the model made by my informant and later reworked by me and Jocano's elder model is that the first model does to some extent show the boundaries to which Filipinos choose to invest their social efforts. Jocano's model does not carry such notation. The most important point from both models however, is that Filipinos tend to have strong in–groups and pay limited attention to out-groups.

The effect of the coping mechanisms on social form: Leveling mechanisms and classed in-groups

The argument above suggests that the boundary of the in-group consisting of family and close friends is strong. I will argue that it is within these boundaries of the in-group that the coping mechanisms take place, especially Sharing/Bayanihan and the practical and ecological adaptations. The people outside the in-group do not normally get any significant attention, as my informant Fred put it like this: *"If there is no friendship, there will be no business"* a claim supported by Kerkvliet (2013), who states that oftentimes, skills are not enough to get a job, land, help and so on. According to the social psychologist Triandis et al. one can find that in collectivist cultures, cooperation is high in in-groups but is unlikely when the other person belongs to an out-group (Triandis et al. 1988).

However, to argue that the Filipino society is a locally tightly knit one with strong in-groups where people have developed a particularly strong liking to their peers who they also cope with disasters together with is not really saying much outside being descriptive. At best, it might only be an interesting side note to how people deals with disasters. My most interesting observation on these in-groups/networks that could easily be lost if only immersed in one of

these in-groups/networks was that the networks mostly consisted by people of the same *economic status*[17]. The relations most of my informants and their family and friends had were with others who had a comparable level of access to resources such as money, livelihood, and jobs. This observation is supported by Kerkvliet, who in his *Class and Status groups in a Central Luzon village* presents a similar observation, where his informants, including his poorest informants, had most of their network with a similar economic status as themselves: *"In san Ricardo, Most people's networks consists largely of people in socioeconomic circumstances very similar to their own who resides in the village or in the vicinity"* (Kerkvliet 2013, p. 213).

Several factors come into play when speaking of class and status divides, theorized by writers like Karl Marx, Max Weber, and James Scott among others. It would also not be too out of place to include colonialism, capitalism and hegemony in the debate on class differences in the Philippines, but I am not looking for any complete explanatory model for status differences[18], nor will I enter the discourse of poverty and its causes completely. Instead I will make the following point: the coping mechanisms and strategies, and especially sharing/bayanihan has a particular effect on social form, an effect related to status differences.

I would like to set focus especially on sharing as a coping mechanism. The principles and ideas I am going to present can be thought of as *leveling mechanisms*, social mechanisms that keep people on the same social hierarchical level. A classic example of this is Richard Lee's *Eating Christmas in Kalahari*, where the anthropologist is put in place among the rest when buying a gift for his friends for Christmas. The idea was to hinder arrogance from festering, and in that way make sure that the society stayed egalitarian (Lee 2003). What such principles can do is that they make individual accumulation of capital and individual class mobility difficult.

Crab mentality as leveling mechanism

Sharing has its downsides. James Woodburn argues in his *Sharing is not a form of exchange* from 1998 that sharing is not necessarily voluntarily performed, and the pressure from others makes sharing a principle of redistribution (Woodburn 1998). Examples have been provided

[17] By status, I am referring to Max Weber's distinction between class and status, where the former refers to a stratification based on production and property, and the latter to consumption of goods and style of living (Weber, 1946).
[18] I would like to refer to *Class and Status Relations in a Central Luzon Village* by Benedict J.Tria Kerkvliet (2013) for a thorough treatment of class and status differences in the Philippines.

by my informants of people with good jobs having to pay for their unemployed family, even ending up with a house loan just to support their family. The next example shows both the sharing and some of its downsides:

> "My cousin [who works as a teacher] took huge state loans on her salary to feed her five siblings. But when my cousin got extra money, she bought a laptop instead of paying down her loan." Quote Marilyn. --Field notes Tagbilaran 24.08.15.

Some other of informants describes this downside of sharing as "*crab mentality*" and "*the downside of sharing*". The term crab mentality describes how crabs tend to try climb out of a pot of boiling water, by grabbing the crab above itself. The crab that almost gets out then has to drag all the other crabs out of the same pot, and most of the time it ends with collapse, with all of the crabs falling back into the pot again and no one escapes the boiling water.

I have already discussed the strong in-group, which is a part of these leveling mechanisms. It is within these networks that people cope with disaster through sharing, most of the time of their own will but also against it, as a result of peer pressure. All this sharing means that resources become distributed, and I will argue that the result is my observation on that most people inside a "web" of family and *barkada* have the same social and/or economic background, with few exceptions. The sharing in-group further implies that resources like money, jobs and the like stay within family and friends within the in-group as discussed in the chapter on sharing/bayanihan as a coping mechanism. The groups are therefore somehow internally egalitarian. This goes for all the people within the house I stayed at in Tagbilaran, all being middle class, as well as the group of people I was training and hanging out with in both Tagbilaran and Bohol.

In sum, I will argue that the strong in-group as well as the preference for and pressure to share resources inside the group, known as the *crab mentality*, makes individual accumulation of capital quite difficult.

Utang ng loob as leveling mechanism

Another principle treated in the theory section, *Utang ng loob* or *Utang na loob,* loosely translated as *debt of gratitude,* makes settling as equals quite hard even when an eventual monetary debt is paid off. Examples that may lead to *Utang ng loob* can be saving someone's life, taking someone through college, giving someone food or other resources when in need. Repayments might be to serve in weddings or help with household chores. The principle exists in western societies as well. The main difference is how it is employed, how it is

actually invoked, and how it may last through generations. Mary Hollnsteiner describes how serving in other people's weddings, making food when necessary and giving jobs and other services long after an eventual monetary debt has been paid off can be ways of honoring ones debt of gratitude (Hollnsteiner 1973).

According to my informants, one does not necessarily become equal to a potential benefactor even if one is more successful in terms of wealth if *Utang ng loob* is in play. It also makes individual class mobility difficult, as *Utang ng loob* can lead to some sort of patron-client relationship where one has the upper hand and the potential client goes to potential patrons for help in exchange for being put in debt of gratitude. This is supported by Kerkvliet, who even argues that giving help, being charitable and being the creditor for *Utang ng loob* is used by benefactors to keep social unrest at a minimum and to diminish unity among individuals of the same class or status group: "*By extending help and showing consideration in various ways and degrees, bettor-off people are in effect subduing tensions that would otherwise explode"* (Kerkvliet 2013).

I have argued so far that people mostly distribute their resources within their own group and the groups are egalitarian in economic status, partly due to leveling mechanisms within. I believe this leads to a continuation of the poor people only trading with the poor and the rich only trading with the rich, with a middle class dealing with themselves in between. Resources like money, jobs, contracts and property do not leave the upper classes (or at least the in-groups with access to such resources), and the lower classes (or at least the in-groups without access to economical resources) have to make do with the resources they already have in circulation, without gaining access to external resources. In other words, money, resources, contracts, and jobs circulate within the same socioeconomic class, or at least within strong in-groups on top of the socioeconomic ladder, keeping and reinforcing the existing class differences in the Philippines.

My suggestion is consistent with the relative stability of the percentage of people subsisting below the poverty line, which has been around 20% for the last 20 years. The GDP (which may not necessarily be the best single indicator for how the whole economy is doing when used in isolation) has on the other hand increased steadily (The World Bank Group 2016). Whether or not the rise in GDP is debt-driven, driven by foreign capital, driven by an actual growing economy or any other factors, it does not necessarily benefit the people beneath the poverty line. More research is needed on this lead.

Corruption

I would like to talk about corruption briefly here, as many of my informants have stressed corruption as one of the main reason for dysfunctions in the Philippine society. I would like to suggest an alternative or additional angle to understand corruption, which is one of relationism, collectivism, and peer pressure.

Corruption has several definitions, but "misuse of office for personal gain" is the one that I found the most satisfying for this purpose (Arce 2001, p. 1). Corruption is considered dysfunctional both for being an attack on the society and its values, as well as on practical grounds, since it diminishes and impedes efficiency and development. In the year 2000, the Philippines ranked 69th among 99 countries according to Transparency International (Arce 2001).

There are only a couple of families filling out the major political elite in the Philippines, and according to some of my informants, major contracts mostly stay inside the realm of their peer group, money was given under- and sometimes even over-the-table as bribes. People in strong positions were often observed with brand new sports cars when entrepreneurs tried to secure permissions or contracts. Historically, President Marcos was the second most self-enriching leader in the world in the late 1900s according to Transparency International (2004).

Preference for the known and the peer group is exemplified among my informants in earlier chapters[19], as through the travel agency and MLM which my informants participated in. What I would like to suggest is that corruption might (partly) be just a prolonged variant of collectivism, sharing and especially the preference of doing business within the peer group, only taken to the extremes and into illegal territory. If collectivism, sharing, and reciprocity is imperative in the Philippine culture, if only to get by and survive, then the difference between sharing among the poor and the rich might only be in respect of what kind of resources are being shared and whether or not one can expect someone to fulfill their obligations. Sharing food every day and giving jobs and money even to distant relatives when asked might be the result of the same cultural imperatives across class memberships. Sharing is rational on relational grounds, and actors might end up sharing or making transactions against the law, ultimately being corrupt. For the actors involved, it might take the form of battle between the close, relational imperatives and ethics on one side and more far-off economical and juridical

[19] See especially the section on collectivism in chapter 4 and Sharing/Bayanihan in Chapter 5.

imperatives and ethics on the other hand. Actors can sometimes find themselves ending up taking actions that are corruption by law, but justified in the minds of the actors involved.

Changing input variables and the possible effects on social form

Barth argues that the generative process analysis used in this thesis should demonstrate that if input is changed sufficiently, then the output or social form should change too. If this cannot be demonstrated, then the whole point of using such a model falls away because the model becomes purely descriptive (Barth 1994). This section and the next chapter attempts to prove this part.

I would like to mention that even if this thesis has its dark sides to it, certain important steps have been taken to avoid such disasters again. Those steps can be looked at as changing the variables in Barth's model, and especially the unhelpful state seems to be a changeable factor. Crucially, the PAGASA (Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration), a governmental agency, has improved their weather forecast and public warning system. One year after Yolanda, the smaller typhoon Ruby/Hagupit came over Tacloban, and according to my informants, the weather forecast, public warning systems and evacuation routines actually worked. As an effect, the death tolls were in the low double digits and zero for Tacloban, as opposed to the official 6,300 casualties after Yolanda (Atenzia, Eadie and Tan-Mullins 2016). There have also been plans for a new and improved sea wall for places at risk (though its effect and cost/effect-ratio is locally debated).

Some of my informants told me that they have restored a little trust in the government when it comes to forecasting disasters, implicitly giving them the opportunity to not employ the disaster coping mechanisms on the same level as before. As a result, I believe that the pressure on sharing in-group falls ever so slightly, and the accumulation of capital for the individual becomes a little bit easier. In other words, the constraint of the perception of the unhelpful state and the dangers a natural disaster represents were both alleviated a little bit, making the pressure to share within the group a little bit lighter. This changes the social form ever-so slightly by giving individuals a little more leeway to use resources on other things.

Another example of changing input which then changes the social form is the resettlement in Tacloban. This case is among other things also a demonstration of how governmental agencies might overlook the local decision-making process in a way that gives results one

might not have wanted. This case will be presented in the next chapter, as it is too big to be a part of this chapter.

Summary

In this chapter, I have described parts of social form/the local society, and some of the effects the coping mechanisms presented in the earlier chapters have on the local society. Particularly, the choices made within the coping mechanism of *Sharing/Bayanihan* have an effect, since the sharing happens within a strong in-group consisting of family and friends. The effects seem similar to those of leveling mechanisms, mechanisms that keeps people on a somewhat egalitarian level and at the same time make individual accumulation of capital and class mobility hard to achieve.

Chapter 7: Local coping meets central masterplans

This is the first analysis chapter in the thesis where the scope is widened to the point that my informants on the ground are treated mostly as a group, and the coping mechanisms for disaster is no longer the sole focus for my analysis. The subject for this chapter is the aftermath of the typhoon Yolanda/Haiyan, and especially how people's local practice of coping mechanism meets governmental plans in Tacloban. First, I am going to present and discuss the main solution presented by the central and local government in rebuilding Tacloban post-disaster.

The Resettlements in Tacloban

The quote below shows one of my personal observations of the resettlements in Tacloban North, the result of a government plan to resettle people living in areas at risk for natural disasters.

> The event of the day was a trip around the island with my friend Father Al and a fellow friend of his. Another master student in social anthropology from Germany and a friend of mine from the NGO I was working with also joined us.
>
> Today I got to visit the main resettlements in Tacloban North. The resettlements are meant for people who lost their houses in the typhoon in 2013. All the sites we visited today consisted of rows upon rows of small bunk houses. The largest site was in Babatngon, with approx. 2,000 housing units and an official price tag of 500 million PHP (approx. 10.2 million USD or close to 85 million NOK). Father Al is preaching in the local church, and he told us about the lack of infrastructure, plans for livelihood and so on. He was worried about what would happen if people actually moved, as people would move into nothing. He noted that this was also a concern among members in his church, and that the infrastructural limits of the local community had already been met. --Field notes Tacloban 07.12.15.

Jago Boase explained the project quite well in the report "Learning from Tacloban", the result of a three-day workshop in Tacloban in late 2015 with relevant actors participating:

> In 2014, the city government decided to resettle the most 'at risk' coastal areas to Tacloban North, a new development located c. 15km to the north of the existing city centre. Tacloban North will eventually incorporate housing, city and state institutions, parks, commercial, industrial and agricultural zones. To date, little has been completed beyond a mixture of transitional and permanent housing. As of September this year [2015], a total of 839 permanent houses had been built, out of a target of 14,631. (Boase 2015)

Map over Tacloban (Google maps 2016). Most of the resettlements stretches from around the bridge on AH26 from Tacloban City, and all the way up to Babatngon.

The plan was to resettle the people living in the disaster risk zones, mostly people from the areas in and around Barangay Seaworld (the biggest slum of Tacloban) and the people in San Jose, the area hit worst by Yolanda/Haiyan. As of now, there is a government-issued 40 meter no-build zone at the sea line where no dwelling is allowed as long as the government can provide housing (Philstar 2013). According to the same report, the local government also made an effort to direct funding from humanitarian agencies to the settlements in Tacloban North by instructing them not to provide temporary shelter assistance in the high risk areas where people already lived (Boase 2015.).

Assessments were carried out by both NGOs and governmental agencies to make sure that the people most in need got help: those among the most vulnerable in the society, and those below the poverty line. According to National Economic and Development Authority, poverty was driven up between 2012 and 2015 because of the supertyphoon in 2013 (Metrocebu 2016). In addition, Region 8 (Eastern Visayas, including Tacloban) has one of the highest rate of poverty in the Philippines, with numbers ranging between 45.4% to 54.9% in 2014/15

depending on the method of the survey, with Leyte (the island where Tacloban is situated) being somewhat lower to the PSA 2012 statistics pre-Yolanda (Metrocebu 2016, PSA 2012).

The cost for the resettlements is, according to some local news agencies, 61.252 billion PHP (approx. 1.3 Billion USD or 10 Billion NOK), with 26.996 Billion PHP (approx.0.5 Billion USD or 4.7 Billion NOK) being released as of October 2015, with several NGOs being critical to the implementation (Sunstar 2015). The quote below is long, but I believe that it is worth it to explain the context in depth instead of just including a short summary:

> The masterplan was developed largely around the land already owned by the City Government and the National Housing Authority. This has led to it being somewhat fragmented and there were questions as to whether the plan makes best use of assets such as the new University of the Philippines campus. Another aspect of the masterplan that was questioned was the extent to which the residential zones were residential only: no space has been left for livelihoods within the permanent housing developments. This is despite the widespread tendency in Tacloban for people to combine their business and their home. This is discussed in more detail in Livelihoods and Housing Design and Strategies [main strategies proposed by the government agencies in the same report was agriculture/agritourism and revenue raising e.g. traffic enforcement, the latter was questioned by participants due to lack of sustainability].
>
> The site visits made clear that there is a long way to go before Tacloban North becomes anything more than a number of isolated housing developments. The following day, Mariya Lagman from the City Housing and Development Office, presented the masterplan for Tacloban North and the progress to date. Representatives from the City Livelihoods cluster presented the city government's plans for providing employment in the area. From the visits and the presentations, it was clear that two main problems facing Tacloban North right now are lack of water and lack of livelihoods. However, further issues will emerge once these are resolved; for example, sanitation or community cohesion.
>
> These issues highlighted the need for an integrated resettlement action plan. At the moment there is an impression that problems are being addressed one by one as and when they arrive. In short, there is a lack of foresight. For example, the lack of water in Tacloban North was known even before Yolanda but only now, two years into the relocation process, is it being actively addressed. This has an immediate knock on effect in that businesses will not move to Tacloban North until there is available water [accessible earliest in May 2017] (Boase 2015).

By my last visit in December 2015, water was still brought to the people inside the resettlements with trucks, and some places did not have electricity. I know my informants have raised concerns about the lack of other types of infrastructures and necessities, such as schools, roads to take the increased traffic, making sure that the local city hall in Babatngon

was prepared for the influx of people both economically and capacity-wise and so on. It follows that these decisions were not necessarily driven forward with the beneficiaries of the project in mind, and the writers of the report found uncertainty among the beneficiaries:

> The importance of genuine community engagement came up at every stage during the workshop. The site visits emphasised the need to understand people and communities. Many of the problems that we saw can be traced back, at least in part, to a lack of community engagement. For example, the negativity we met at the New Kawayan Transitional Houses clearly derived from a sense, perhaps unjustified, among the community that they were neither in control of their own lives and nor were they being listened to by the city government (Boase 2015)

My own data supports these concerns, and the people I talked to felt ambivalence towards the idea of resettling. According to some informants, one of the resettlements close to Tagpuro (Tacloban North) was built by some European NGO to benefit the people of Tacloban after Yolanda, but was now reserved strictly by the local government for Police officers and the Military. The NGO appears to have withdrawn from the project. The report concludes:

> If there is one key lesson that can be learnt from this workshop, it is the importance of not compromising the long-term development by rushing into far-reaching decisions during the relief phase. Many of the problems identified during the site visits, from the squalor of the bunkhouses to the lack of an integrated relocation plan, stem directly from a lack of foresight and coordination. (…) Infrastructure, services and livelihoods must be integrated into the resettlement strategy; they cannot be treated as secondary to housing. There should be no relocation without an integrated resettlement action plan.
>
> The relief phase should work towards long term development goals. Key to achieving this is not to allow the pressure of the relief phase to compromise far-reaching development decisions. (…) Transitional housing should be located either where the community is from, or where they are being permanently resettled. The bunkhouses show the damage that can be caused by breaking up communities and housing people somewhere that is neither long-term nor familiar. (…) Genuine community engagement is crucial. The community knows best what they need and should be empowered to take control of their own lives;
> Innovative/experimental housing 'solutions' should not be imposed on communities from outside (Boase 2015).

In the case of Tacloban, my findings indicate that the resettlement plan is not driven with the needs of the beneficiaries in mind. Actors with different agendas and different rationalities collide. On one side one can find the Aid-apparatus consisting of the UN, international NGOs and foreign departments of other countries, which places enormous pressure on those

ostensibly responsible to come up with a solution, as the availability of aid and money is limited and coming in at a fast rate. This adds to the urgency of the situation with people in need under extreme circumstances, as well as pressure to provide housing for the people dwelling inside the government-issued no-build-zone, a 40-meter zone at the sea-line where no dwelling is allowed as long as the government can provide assistance (Philstar 2013).

The local city government of Tacloban did the best they could, according to some of my informants with first-hand knowledge to the situation. They adapted to the fact that funding and resources come from above in a certain time window, and with certain conditions. The local political scene, with its own corruption problems and other issues felt the largest squeeze seen in a long time. The result of this squeeze was the creation of a large 'masterplan' which overlooked beneficiaries and their practices, only accounted (at best) for the first chain of consequences, and therefore might make huge and probably irreversible steps if executed as planned.

Update on the Tacloban resettlements

I left Tacloban in late 2015, not too long after the resettlements in Tacloban North had started. Several things have happened since then, and a short summary from some of my informants might give further insights and provide grounds for future research focal points. The updates below are from September 2016.

According to my informants, the local infrastructure has not been improved and the local city government has stopped resettling people, as the capacity for driving water by trucks out to the resettlements has been reached. Some of the permanent resettlements have started to deteriorate with roofs leaking, and some houses have slid into drainage trenches. As several of the resettlements have banned pets, other resettlements are now overflowing with cats and dogs. Few of the resettlement sites have taken public space into consideration, and only a few sites have more than just rows of houses. Fishermen moving into the resettlements have discovered that there are already too many fishermen in the area and the market for selling fish has been saturated.

An obligatory value reformation program has been enforced at some of the resettlement sites. Restrictions as a consequence of the values formation are unclear, but people are supposedly not allowed to drink, take off t-shirts, or have pets, pigs or chickens. People are practically not allowed to keep the resources pets and household animals represent.

According to my informant, some of the people that have been resettled have started moving back, and some are using the bunkhouse at the resettlement as a weekend home or just storage. Especially fishermen are moving back, as they find better chances for livelihood other places.

According to the NGO Oxfam, only 13 % of the total 14 000 families has been resettled as of September 2016. Their press release confirms lack of water, sanitation and inadequate livelihood options, and the lack of water inhibits households to send children to school and people from going to work (Oxfam 2016).

The mismatch between local practices and bigger actors

I would now like to discuss the mismatch between the coping mechanisms from Chapters 4-6, and the resettlements in Tacloban North presented above. The three main points underneath are presented as separate, but they are all connected.

Lack of basic resources

First, there are problems with resettling 40-60,000 people to a relatively small geographical area without possibilities for any livelihood, nor access to proper infrastructure or most important, water. This is not a culture-contextual phenomena specific for the Philippines. Without basic resources, any resettlement of any kind is rather inexcusable anywhere in the world. It is important to repeat that most people that are resettled are people struggling underneath or just above the poverty line. The people being resettled have limited access to resources, and will not experience much relief by losing their livelihood. I doubt that the beneficiaries will experience relief if they have to spend a lot of money and/or time commuting to engage in their former livelihood. The government has raised two suggestions for livelihood: their first suggestion is to hire people to raise revenue like traffic police; their second suggestion is to employ people in ecological agriculture. The first suggestion does not seem very sustainable to me, as the need for traffic police are logically limited. The second suggestion on agriculture seems a bit better at first glance. However, it will still take time– years at worst—before such an industry is self-sustainable. Without water, agriculture seems even more far-fetched.

Most of the current and future beneficiaries did not or will not have any real choice other than to accept being resettled, since their current home will no longer be a legal place to stay. Taken into account that, according to my observation, most of the people resettled are the

most vulnerable in society, the risk for creating a *slum or ghetto* with huge social problems is definitely there, especially with no livelihood or water available.

Low participation among the beneficiaries and overlooking local practice

Second, and in line with the above, is that a masterplan which is designed with minimal engagement and participation from the (potential) beneficiaries is not to be recommended. It appears that the resettlements have a very low level of participation among their beneficiaries, as described earlier in the chapter. This is also supported by Atenzia, Eadie and Tan-Mullins, who is a part of a research group on poverty alleviation in post-disaster Tacloban. They state that the victim's views were not taken into consideration into the decision-making processes for shelters and they were not made aware of the selection criteria (Atenzia, Eadie and Tan-Mullins 2016). If change is implemented without looking for actual needs among the beneficiaries, the changes might then not help the beneficiaries, and in some case, exacerbate their situation. This plays back to the first point as well, as I am sure that a livelihood and water ranks high up on an imaginary list of needs among the beneficiaries.

Third, and this is where I believe that my contribution lies, is that a lot of the big actors involved in the resettlements have overlooked formal and informal local practices (Scott 1998). I did not find any proof that the masterplan and the resettlements had taken the local practice of coping as presented in Chapters 4-6 into consideration. As stated earlier, the masterplan does not have a high participation rate among its beneficiaries, indicating that the city government of Tacloban overlooked both the beneficiaries and their local practices. I do not know if this "overlooking" is a consequence of not having the (economic) opportunity to take such practices into consideration, or just ignorance. However, my data suggests that the oversight is of the first kind, because of the time limit and pressure the local city government was under when forging the plan. Also, several people working in aid and development had some knowledge about local practices, or at least expressed interest in it, and many of them is of Filipino origin.

The local practice and rationality of dealing with disasters is based on the coping mechanisms sharing, using fatalism as explanatory model and ecological adaptations. These coping mechanisms are based on collectivism, religious fatalism and a perceived need to minimize risk, as well as adaptations towards an unhelpful state, collectivism and natural disasters. With a higher level of participation among the beneficiaries, these local practices could have been picked up and used by governmental agencies, leading to a win-win situation.

By resettling people, one is disrupting the social networks that Filipinos are dependent upon to maneuver themselves through hardship. Former shop-owners and other people having enterprises will be taken geographically out of their former network and markets when resettled into another geographical area where there is no real market due to the lack of livelihood among their new peers. This is especially problematic in the Philippines, as taking away, or at least making their in-groups and/or networks less accessible is also taking away some of the most important coping mechanisms for disasters and hardships, namely sharing, depending on networks, and pooling resources within the same network.

I would like to discuss the mismatches presented above in light of some relevant theories in order to gain insight into what has happened and currently is still happening in Tacloban. The mismatches above are not unique to the Philippines, as gaps between local strategies and interventions made by governments or international actors have been described by anthropologists in many parts of the world. This is also reflected in the perspectives below, as none of them were developed specifically for the Philippines. The perspectives are of course different, but they are not mutually exclusive, and I believe all of them give some insights from different angles.

Problems with Masterplans

I believe that the low participation among beneficiaries and the overlooking of local practices can be explained by a common misstep treated by Scott in *Seeing like a State*, namely the standardization, homogenization and underestimation of beneficiaries in big plans. Beneficiaries often end up falsely standardized, or burdened with a false mono-function. This will then lead to overlooking both formal and informal practices. Scott also states that a product or institution is only as good as the quantity and quality of participation. (Scott 1998).

There are also inherent problems with the idea of a masterplan itself. According to Scott, there are numerous problems with big, overarching plans. The first is that the actors behind such plans sometimes believe that they are gods, or at least, pretend they have the confidence to be one. Without looking at both formal and informal practices, planners also underestimate the beneficiaries and their lack of homogeneity, standardizing them into abstractions that lack context and particularity. The planners also believe that they could account for more than the first chain of consequences, but Scott argues that they are not. Scott proposes the following to deal with the abovementioned problems: planners should opt for small steps and reversibility. They should also give space for surprises and plan on human inventiveness (Scott 1998).

I have found that in the case of Tacloban, the informal practices of coping mechanisms have been forgotten or ignored and the level of participation among the beneficiaries is low. This 'forgetting' and some hope is presented by Atenzia, Eadie and Tan-Mullins:

> Embedded social wisdom should not be ignored. There had been previous storm surges in Tacloban. It was noted that inter-generation wisdom had been passed down as regards the areas of the city that were safe to build on and evacuate during typhoons. This process of learning from previous experiences should be revived in addressing future problems. The success of this was evident during Typhoon Ruby in 2014 when no casualties were recorded (Atenzia, M.E., P. Eadie and M. Tan-Mullins 2016).

If the local practices is forgotten, the losing side will be the beneficiaries, as their world, rationality and (relational) way of dealing with disasters seems rather unimportant to the actors above the local level or at least above the implementing level.

When local practices are not taken into consideration, people lose alternatives for coping, and social form changes

Earlier in Chapter 6, I argued that if one changes the input variables (values or possibilities and constraints) in the model provided by Barth, the choices people can make and the social form will also change (Barth 1994). This can be applied to the coping mechanisms and the resettlements in Tacloban North as well, and add strength to the point Scott makes on the consequences of overlooking local informal practices.

If one looks at the resettlements through the lens of the generative process analysis by Barth, the government is changing the possibilities and constraints in Barth's model as shown in Chapters 4 and 5 by resettling a lot of people in order to move them away from hazard. Many people are forced to move away from their home, their network and livelihood, without getting much of a possibility to participate. This is very critical in the Philippines, as the change in the possibilities and constraints in this case means people cannot use the same coping mechanisms as before. The networks/groups people put their trust in to cope from day to day are disrupted as the old network is potentially far away, and their ability to diversify their efforts to get by is hampered by the lack of livelihood. This is supported by Atenzia, M.E., P. Eadie and M. Tan-Mullins:

> In the Philippines, some communities have very high social capital and members want to stay together even when they get relocated. This is important to account for when devising livelihood and poverty alleviation strategies. If relocation is done in a haphazard fashion then individuals may 'experience a net loss by relocation. External forces or conditions that

> pressure people into doing something that they do not want to do contribute to stress and vulnerability (Atenzia, M.E., P. Eadie and M. Tan-Mullins 2016).

The result is a social form where people are less able to cope with disasters and adversity, even when taking into consideration that the resettlements is less vulnerable for typhoons. In theory, the change in the available actions might again lead to changes within the value orientation of the actor, as well as the possibilities and constraints and the choice situation itself (Barth 1994).

It is too early to tell how the new social form of living in the resettlements will turn out with respect to people's choices, but the update-section above might give room for speculation. I will speculate that the fact that a lot of people have now abandoned the resettlements and moved back or to other places might indicate that the new social form with lack of basic resources, livelihood and fewer possibilities for coping with adversity was insufficient.

When designing solutions for dealing with disasters, battling economic inequality or class differences in the Philippines, policy-makers should take the local decision-making processes into account. One should consider both the factors playing into choices, the choices themselves, as well as the fact that there will be consequences on the level of social form. I believe that overlooking the local decision-making process does not help the beneficiaries.

When money and pressure speak, the beneficiaries lose.

Mark Schuller proposes that mismatches such as the ones above can be explained by following the way money goes. He proposes that aid coming into areas of disaster is oftentimes driven by budgets, budget conditions, and constraints and politics from international organizations and nation states (Schuller 2012).

The real needs of the beneficiaries and their own ways of dealing with hardships and disaster can easily be forgotten or ignored if the implementing aid agencies have too many budget conditions, constraints, and paranoid politicians hanging over their shoulders. The risk of forgetting beneficiaries does get higher especially if the budget conditions and constraints get tighter through layers of bureaucracy between the donor and the beneficiaries. A lot of money is also taken up by *quality control* in every layer.

Aid does carry connotations of imperialism according to Schuller. In some instances, local markets become drowned as aid-money and resources have flooded in. Sometimes, aid-money can be diverted to industries in other countries. The notion of imperialism is evoked especially

if the money given to a country ends up on foreign hands (or even in the same country donating the money), making the benefiting country some sort of geographically far-off market for existing corporations in the donor-country (Schuller 2012). This latter mechanism has been described by Schuller as Trickle-down Imperialism, and is exemplified by the fact that 90% of the money passed down from USA to Haiti through the UN came back to the USA again as salaries or payment for goods provided for in the USA (Schuller 2012). It is also supported by Alesina and Dollar (2000), who in both their literature review and own research states that former colonial ties are as big a predictor for donating money as the economic situation in the recipient country.

In the case of Tacloban, Mark Schuller's perspective can throw light on the immense pressure and the process that the Local City Government in Tacloban experienced in the weeks after Yolanda/Haiyan in 2013, and be enlightening to understand why the beneficiaries and their practices were forgotten or ignored

What will happen next?

I will speculate in two possible future scenarios. The first one is that people do not move out to the resettlements as planned, or that they move back again shortly after. In this case, the aid-money spent on the resettlements is 'wasted', but people can have a livelihood and still employ their local practices of coping as before. This scenario is quite possible, judging by the updates from Tacloban above and my speculations in the section on low participation among the beneficiaries and overlooking local practice.

The second scenario is more uncertain. In this case, people moves out to the resettlements as planned. I will speculate that this can lead to the social problems mentioned in the first mismatch, with many poor people gathered over a small area without basic resources and livelihood creating a society similar to a slum or ghetto. In this scenario, the local practices for coping might no longer be viable, as the context is dramatically changed and the practices for coping and local decision-making processes have been overlooked.

I do not know the future. Chances are that both the scenarios above might happen at the same time in various degrees. I will urge both actors involved in 'rebuilding' Tacloban and people involved in similar situations in the future not to forget or ignore local practices for coping and local decision-making processes. I will also propose that empathy for the beneficiaries might help policy-designers to pick up both the local practices for coping and local decision-making processes. The assessment of the real needs of the beneficiaries can also be better this

way. Lastly, resettling people without a plan for covering basic needs like water, infrastructure and livelihood is never a good plan anywhere in the world.

Summary

In this chapter, I have argued that the local practices of coping with natural disasters collide with governmental agencies and actors in aid/development. I have used theories by Scott to argue that masterplans have overlooked local practices, and I have used Barth to show that the act of overlooking local practices has disturbed local decision making processes and robbed people of choices. The “trickle-down-imperialism”-theory by Mark Schuller has theorized how the resettlement plan came into practice and why the real needs of beneficiaries have been overlooked.

Chapter 8: End remarks and the road ahead

This thesis has aimed at showing how Filipinos cope with disasters, natural disasters in particular. I have used ethnographic data to argue that this coping can be explained by Barth's model of rational choice, and that the choices can be sorted in three main categories of coping mechanisms: *Using fatalism as explanatory model*, *Sharing/Bayanihan,* and *Pragmatic and Ecological adaptations.* These categories of choices are also founded upon certain *values* carried by the actor into these choice situations, and with *Possibilities and constraints* also play into shaping these choices as context.

I have also argued that the coping mechanisms have some effects on the local society. The effects I found seem to be similar to leveling mechanisms, as especially the *Sharing/bayanihan* in a context of strong groups of family and friends makes it hard to individually accumulate any kind of capital or achieve individual class mobility. Lastly, I have made an attempt to show an example of how these local practices of coping are overlooked when they meet masterplans made by a local governmental agency.

When I started my fieldwork, I had no idea of the amount of data that would fall into my lap. There are so many aspects that have been touched upon in this thesis that could very well end up as a thesis or a paper some other time. Some colleagues have remarked to me that the relation between the individual and the group shortly visited in Chapter 5 is the most interesting. Other colleagues have marked their preference for the effects choices has on the local society, and some informants believe that the last chapter with masterplans and resettlements are the most important, as it touches upon the destinies of thousands of people.

My personal experience of doing fieldwork and writing this thesis can be likened to the one of a young football player who plays football for fun in the low end divisions of the league system, who all off a sudden find himself somehow by chance or accident playing with the bigger players in the upper end of the league system. I feel humbled and the limits of my knowledge have never been clearer to me. On the other hand, the bigger players on the field are still bigger, but not as scary as when I started out several years ago.

The road ahead is hard to describe. I believe that the discourse on natural disasters will emerge even more than it currently has, as global climate changes make natural disasters more prevalent everywhere, including the Philippines. We do not know yet what the final consequences of typhoon Yolanda/Haiyan will be, and I am personally very interested in what might happen with the resettlements of Tacloban North. Matejowsky mentions that he has yet

to see ethnography done during or right after a natural disaster, at least in the Philippines (2012). I believe that more ethnography in Tacloban North would be a worthy endeavor, but natural disasters do not seem too picky when it comes to where to strike, and similar and important insights can be had other places, often even closer in time to the disasters.

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