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Coping after typhoon Pepeng

A case study of indigenous practices and external aid in the Cordillera, Philippines

Floor Leeftink

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A case study of indigenous practices and external aid in the Cordillera, Philippines

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F.M. Leeftink
MSc student International Development Studies
Specialisation Rural Development Sociology & Disaster Studies

Supervisor: Professor Dorothea Hilhorst

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Abstract

Contemporary global and local pressures tend to increase the vulnerability of indigenous peoples, while at the same time natural hazards occur more frequently. There is, however, not much literature on indigenous responses to disaster and how these are changing in a modernising world. We respond to this gap by studying coping strategies of indigenous peoples and the way they deal with outside interventions for disaster mitigation. Using first-hand stories of aid recipients and providers, this thesis looks into typhoon Pepeng (Parma) that hit the indigenous communities of Northern Luzon in 2009. Three years later, this is the first thorough evaluation of the disastrous landslides and the relief, reconstruction and preparedness efforts that were taken afterwards. Through this case we explore (1) different indigenous coping mechanisms and their dynamics, (2) the interface with external aid providers and (3) the everyday practices, struggles and politics of coping after disaster. It furthermore provides important contextual information on the indigenous worldview of the *Igorots* and Philippine disaster management in historical perspective. The main finding is that the phase of reconstruction, more specifically the rebuilding of houses and recovery of livelihoods, is most challenging. The reason for this is the deficiency and mismanaging of external aid and decreasing social cohesion within the communities. Better alignment between local and external parties and greater understanding of indigenous coping strategies is recommended to overcome these issues – especially in a country that faces so many natural hazards.

Keywords: *Disaster, indigenous coping, interface, typhoon Pepeng/Parma, landslides, Philippines, Igorot*

About this research

This thesis is the result of qualitative research based on four months of fieldwork in the Cordillera Administrative Region (Northern Luzon, the Philippines). It has been conducted in partial fulfilment of the master program 'International Development Studies' of Wageningen University and Research centre in The Netherlands. This research is supervised by Professor Dorothea Hilhorst, head of the Disaster Studies chair-group under the Rural Development Sociology chair, in association with doctor Gemma van der Haar. Local support was provided by 'Tebtebba Foundation: Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education', under the direction of Victoria Tauli-Corpuz. A comparable research has been conducted in the Northern Provinces of Thailand by fellow MSc student Judith Baart, hosted by the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact.

Contact: floor.leeftink@gmail.com

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List of abbreviations

DRRMC	Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council
CorDis RDS	Cordillera Disaster Response and Development Services (Formerly known as Montanosa Relief and Rehabilitation Services (MRRS))
CPA	Cordillera Peoples Alliance
DOST	Department of Science and Technology
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
ICM	Indigenous coping mechanisms
IP(s)	Indigenous people(s)
NDRRMC	National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (formerly known as National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC)
OCD-CAR	Office of Civil Defense-Cordillera Adminstrative Region
PAGASA	Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration
e.g.	exempli gratia= for example
i.a.	inter alia= among other things
i.e	id est= in other words
ibid	ibidem= see last reference

Glossary

Baguio	City in Northern Luzon that servers as centre of business and education in the region – also the base for this research
Barangay	Term for village or smallest administrative division in the Philippines, commonly translated as neighborhood
Bayanihan	Helping each other; mutual assistance
Bokod	A municipality in Benguet province, one of the research sites
Daw-es	Traditional Igorot cleansing rituals after accidents (Kankana-ey term)
Ibaloi	One of the seven ethno-linguistic groups of the Cordillera
Igorot	Collective name for the different ethno-linguistic groups inhabiting the Cordillera Administrative Region, often translated as 'mountain people'
Kabunian	The supreme deity and the creator of the Igorots
Kankana-ey	One of the seven ethno-linguistic groups of the Cordillera
Kapangan	A municipality in Benguet province, one of the research sites
Ondoy	Name of the typhoon that stroke right before Pepeng (international name Ketsana)
Pepeng	Name of the typhoon that hit the Philippines in 2009 (international name Parma)
Sitio	Territorial enclave inside a 'barangay'
Tadian	A municipality in Mountain Province, one of the research sites
Tublay	A municipality in Benguet province, one of the research sites
Ub-ubbo	See 'bayanihan'

Foreword and acknowledgements

> *"I have tried to be objective. I do not claim to be detached"*
> Sociologist Charles Wright Mills

July 22, 2012 I took a plane to the Philippines. Not yet aware of all the kind people I was about to meet, the things I would learn and the beautiful places I would visit. It was the first of 140 days on the Philippine archipelago. I went there, assuming to do an internship at Tebtebba, but things worked out differently, and instead I ended up collecting data for this thesis. I could not have conducted this research without the help of so many kind people.

First of all, I would like to thank Vicky and Bong and all the other colleagues at Tebtebba Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education. Tebtebba provided me a pleasant workplace and fed me well (more than well). I felt welcome from the start and soon became a member of the team. A special thanks to Jo Ann who joined me on numerous interviews and 'mentored' me at Tebtebba, and even shared her free time with me.

Secondly, I want to show gratitude to Professor Thea Hilhorst for supervising this thesis. She asked me to conduct this research in the first place and 'made my bed' in Baguio. Moreover, during the past years at Wageningen University, she raised my interest in the sociology of disasters, by preaching that disasters and humanitarian aid are inseparable with notions of power, politics and agency. This scientific perspective naturally fitted my personal beliefs about development and aid, and has played a significant role in the course of my studies.

Next to the Tebtebba office, I have spent much of my Baguio time at the compound of the Carling family. *Manang* Flora was so kind to take me in and the Carling family provided me a home away from home. They have introduced me to the Filipino customs and culture, for example when we were celebrating family birthdays or All Saints Day. Mary invited me to their family house in Sagada and interviewed me about the research for her radio program. I want to thank all of them for their warm hospitality.

I would further like to express my appreciation to the kind brothers and sisters form Beta Sigma Fraternity of Saint Louis University Baguio, whom I joined on one of their medical/dental/legal missions in a far away, rural community. This is when I first met the beauty *and* the distressing conditions of the Cordillera. It did not only teach me about community life and why such missions are needed, it also illustrated how the students and alumni make an effort to give something back to their indigenous communities. They have further been so kind to invite me to some of their gatherings and celebrations. These were not only great fun, but also showed how traditional indigenous and modern Filipino cultures merge.

Particularly useful for this research was the assistance of Padma Perez, Marian Sanches, Randy Arandia, Marie Balangue, Gladys Alumit, Dave Leprozo and Ignacio Ngagan. They selflessly and

voluntarily helped me by providing their insights; introduce me to other people; or patiently translated my questions during the interviews. I want to deeply thank them for their time and effort and I appreciate the interest they showed in the research topic.

Of course this research would not mean anything without the interviewees: the mayors, DSWD officers, OCD staff, *barangay* officials, CPA, CorDis RDS, Red Cross, volunteers, and most importantly the people who were directly affected by typhoon Pepeng. Them who shared their stories with me. Them who cried in front of me, because my question brought back so many painful memories. And them who always offered me a coffee and *mirienda.* I am particularly grateful to the families who hosted me and offered me a bed, food and interesting stories. Thank you.

My friends and family showed great interest in the research and actively followed me online while I was in the Philippines, which I appreciated a lot. A special super big mega thanks to Bart, my steadfast support. Even at 20,000 kilometres distance (he was in Trinidad for his research) he encouraged me. And later, when we were both writing our thesis in the same room in Wageningen, he helped me when things got hard. Because, even though I loved my time in the Philippines and I enjoyed doing this research, the writing process was challenging at times. Lastly, I want to thank my parents for their unconditional support and faith in me. I have become the person and researcher I am today because of them.

Now, more than a year after my arrival in the Philippines, this thesis is finally finished. I hope you enjoy reading it and find the topic just as interesting as I do. Writing this thesis has been fun, informative and difficult. But one thing is for sure, this research goes straight to my heart: I do not claim to be detached.

Floor Leeftink

Teaching a class about framing disasters at the University of the Philippines, Baguio

Transportation Cordillera style

Traditional dancing

Interviewing governor Fongwang

Group interview in Kapangan

Thank you for making this happen. Maraming salamat po!

More interviewing

Participate at Asia Indigenous Womens' Network conference

Radyo Sagada interview

Presenting the research in Baguio

Enjoying local food

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1. Introduction

Most disaster-related writings about the Philippines begin with explaining how disaster prone the country is. This made me assume that the Philippine citizens are used to disasters, do not panic and are prepared when disaster strikes. However, some disasters are worse than others. The disastrous landslides triggered by typhoon Pepeng in October 2009, came unexpected and hit hard. People say they have never experienced anything like it before.

More than three years have passed since the Philippine archipelago was hit by typhoon Pepeng. The impact was tremendous: nationwide 4,478,284 people were affected; 61,869 houses were damaged; leaving 465 people dead. The estimated costs of damage to infrastructure and agriculture was phP27.297 Billion (over 500 billion euro at the time) (NDCC(a) 2009). Where people in the lowlands suffered floods from the heavy rains, the inhabitants of the mountainous Cordillera Administrative Region (in short 'CAR' or just 'Cordillera') in the northern part of the country suffered many deadly and damaging landslides. This region was hit hardest during the typhoon: out of the 456 fatal victims in the entire country, 346 were from the Cordillera – over 74%. The heavy, continuous rains led to raging rivers and massive landslides, washing away houses, rice fields, roads, bridges and even entire neighbourhoods. Leaving behind damaged and isolated communities, see figure 1.1. Among this region, Benguet province was the most affected area in terms of casualties (300 deadly victims), followed by Mountain province (42 fatalities) (NDCC(a) 2009; NDCC(b) 2009).

Figure 1.1: Damaged car and houses in Benguet

Pictures provided by Marie Balangue

The Cordillera Administrative Region also happens to be the home of different indigenous tribes, together referred to as 'Igorots' - freely translated as 'highlanders' or 'mountain people'. The Igorots, who are composed of various ethnic groups, total about 1.5 million in population (Cariño 2012). Traditionally, they live in rural, upland areas where they are engaged in subsistence farming. They are relatively isolated from the lowlands because of bad infrastructure and by choice. Holden and Jacobson speak of

“indigenous retreat” in upland areas from colonial powers (Holden and Jacobson 2012: 114). However, most authors from the region itself would argue that the Cordillera *is* the ancestral territory of the indigenous people. Due to its richness in natural resources – e.g. minerals, forest and rivers – there have been on-going attempts to exploit the region and its people. This started as early as Spanish colonisation in 1572 with the first military gold hunting expeditions. These were fiercely combatted by the Igorot. More successful were the American colonisers (1898), who intruded the region in the name of ‘development’. They introduced civil law, education, Christianity and cash crops. After World War II, agriculture in the region was further intensified under the influence of Chinese businessmen and the neo-liberal Philippine government. This has, and still does induce landlordism and wage-labour, replacing subsistence agriculture (Tauli 2009). The improvement of infrastructure and communication, as well as in- and outmigration have further altered the character of the Cordillera.

These external forces and influences do not just impact the way of farming, but reach much further and alter the indigenous culture (Weygan 2002; Carling 2004). Even though the Igorots are composed of seven distinct major ethno-linguistic groups with their own specific traits, they also share some important cultural features. First of all, nature is very important to the Igorots as they are highly dependent on it, according to them: ‘*land is life’*. They share the same holistic concept of land and nature. They believe that nature was created for everyone and humans are an integrated part of nature. Land is thus, not to be exploited or dominated by people. This value of collectivism is under great pressure because of the introduction of modern values like privatisation and capitalism, which have brought along the issue of land rights and ownership. Secondly, they share a strong expression of union with ancestral land and their ancestors. However, the belief in spirits and use of rituals has to large extent been adapted to or replaced by Christianity. And thirdly, the Igorots share the same sort of socio-political institutions that are based on community consensus and prioritise the community e*lders*. But the introduction of state law greatly impacted their customary law. In retrospect, the Igorots share a certain worldview that is based on collective self-discipline (in which *respect*, *dignity* and *caring* is highly valued). However, this worldview and the shared cultural features seem to be under threat because of the external impacts (Ibid).

How does the indigenous worldview of the Igorots influence the way they respond to disaster? This study aims to learn from the experiences of those who were directly affected by the landslides triggered by typhoon Pepeng. Are there typical indigenous coping mechanisms? And how are these indigenous practices changing – with regards to tendencies described above? The second aim is to map out and evaluate the external assistance that was provided during this disaster. Not from reports presenting costs and results, but from grass roots stories. Who were important aid providers and who should have been more important? How does the daily practice of coping with disaster look like? What are the main issues and hardships that people came across?

In order to improve disaster management, it is important to learn how indigenous peoples respond to disaster and how they utilise and value the external aid that is being provided to them**.** This case study aims to generate specific knowledge about the coping practices of the Igorots. It provides information on how they traditionally cope, but also about modern ways of coping, using the help of external parties. As

this is – according to my interviewees – the first serious evaluation of the aid that has, or has not been offered after typhoon Pepeng, this study brings to light the everyday practices and politics of disaster management these people face. These grassroots stories have the potential to improve humanitarian aid and disaster preparedness, as indigenous areas and peoples elsewhere in the world are often similarly prone to disaster. Therefore, this research also aims to contribute to knowledge about disaster management and indigenous peoples more in general.

According to Hewitt, this is lacking in many studies: "there is often little awareness of, even resistance to, the idea that socio-cultural issues are key aspects of risk and disaster" (Hewitt 2012: 85). This study prioritises the inclusion of social and cultural aspects in disaster research and management. Especially as indigenous knowledge and practices are an integral part of socio-cultural aspects. In disaster science, there is some literature on participatory methods using indigenous knowledge to identify disaster risk. And there are many debates about the 'vulnerability' of indigenous peoples. Moreover, it is believed that "contemporary global pressures such as urbanisation, climate change, deforestation and globalisation [...] are tending to increase the vulnerability of indigenous communities to disaster" (Kelman, Mercer et al. 2012: 14). However, not much has been written about how indigenous people respond to disaster, and how this is changing in a modernizing world. With this thesis, I wish to pay attention to this knowledge gap. This is very much needed as many disaster-experts agree that natural hazards are happening ever more frequently. It is time to learn more about disaster management from the indigenous perspective.

What follows is a description of the main concepts, theoretical background and the research implications in chapter two. After the theoretical framework, the methodology of this research will be explained. Then, in chapter four the most important contextual factors will be provided, these will increase understanding of the results in the chapters thereafter. Chapter five gives an overview of the most important indigenous coping mechanisms of Igorot communities. Thereafter in chapter six the role and appreciation of external aid will be addressed by looking at the interface between aid providers and recipients. Followed by a chapter on the everyday practices and politics of disaster management that provides insights in the hardships and hidden aspects to coping with disaster. To end with the main findings, conclusions and recommendations of this research in chapter eight.

2. Theoretical framework

For all research counts the importance of consensus and clarity between the author and reader. That is what I will try to accomplish in this chapter. I will first clarify the key concepts of this thesis. These are adapted from definitions in the literature, but interpreted in the context of this particular research and according to my personal bias. What follows is a description of the theoretical framework and research paradigm. They lay the foundation for subsequently described research assumptions and research questions. The theoretical approach explained in this chapter follows from my academic perspective and forms the foundation of this research.

2.1 Concepts

Indigenous

Already quite a few concepts came up in the short introduction to this thesis. One of them, and probably the most difficult one to define, is the concept of indigenous. There are plentiful definitions of this concept, most of them referring to (1) pre-colonial geographical belongingness and/or (2) cultural distinction from the majority – See for example textbox 2.1. It is however impossible to capture the rich diversity of indigenous peoples in one single definition that still means something. One should also be careful doing so, as this external ascription might serve as a tool for distinction or even discrimination. There is great diversity among and within indigenous groups. And even though indigenous groups share distinct cultural traits that are different from the majority of their fellow countrymen, they also have a lot in common with their non-indigenous compatriots. For example, many of the (indigenous) interviewees, are devoted Christians.

> Textbox 2.1: Who are indigenous peoples? UN working definition
>
> "Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems."
>
> *Martínez Cobo in (UNDG 2009:8)*

In this research, indigenous peoples (IPs) refers to those people living in the Cordillera and who label *themselves* as being indigenous or Igorot. During fieldwork it turned out that the interviewees uphold quite a broad definition of being indigenous. Some would refer to their roots or blood lines, saying: "I am pure Igorot" or "I am FBI: Full Blood Igorot". Where others denote to the community they belong to or the place they (now) call home, for example those who migrated from the lowlands to the Cordillera.

Disaster

The UN defines disaster as "a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts that exceed the ability of

the affected community or society to cope using its own resources" (UNISDR 2009: 9). Disaster management or mitigation is "any action taken to minimise the extent of a disaster or potential disaster. Mitigation can take place before, during or after a disaster" (Twigg 2001: 6). The disaster studied in this research concerns multiple landslides, triggered by tropical storms. A landslide or mass movement is a "downslope rock, sediment and/ or soil movement, occurring from the surface of rupture [...] under the direct influence of gravity" (Glade and Crozier 2005 in Hadmoko and Mauro 2012: 297). Landslides result from slope failure, but are triggered by (1) intense vibrations – caused by earthquakes and nuclear detonations, or (2) an uneven weight distribution – caused by added or removed mateterial and rainfall (Hadmoko and Mauro 2012), which was the case during the disastrrous events in October 2009.

Lately disasters are more and more seen in the light of social processes instead of mere natural occurrences. Therefore, disaster risk is often described as the occurrence of natural and man-made *hazards* in combination with the *vulnerability* of the affected population. Vulnerability refers to the characteristics of a person or group influencing the differential impact by hazards and the ability to cope with them (Wisner, Blaikie et al. 2004; Wisner, Gaillard et al. 2012). Key variables in defining ones vulnerability are: "class/wealth, occupation, ethnicity, health status/ disabilities, gender, age, immigrant status and the nature and extent of social networks" (adapted from Wisner, Blaikie et al. 2004: 11) – i.e. one's social status. Root causes of vulnerability stem from historical, political, economic, environmental and demographic factors.

There are many different actors involved in disaster management, ranging from government departments, to service providers, aid agencies or local institutions. Some example of disaster management actors are:

- Governmental officials; politicians, the office of civil defense, the police
- Humanitarian and developmental NGOs and POs; the Red Cross, CorDis RDS, CPA
- Multilateral institutions; the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), the United Nations or the Disaster Management Facility (DMF) as pillar of the World Bank
- Scientific bodies; also the UN, disaster science (sociology, economics, anthropology, communication, nature science)
- Private sector; the insurance and financial industry, donating companies
- Local or foreign individuals and groups; individuals, associations, churches
- The ones who are directly affected by the disaster; the survivors, victims or aid recipients

For analytical purposes, these actors can be loosely grouped in different domains of disaster management. Domains are defined as areas of social life with common values and ideas, which are organised around their function (Hilhorst 2004). But, "although the notion of social domains imply a shared repertoire of practices and languages, it is emphasised that contradictions, conflict and negotiation takes place within the domain as much as in interactions with other domains" (Ibid: 53). They are thus far from homogenous (in chapter six, about the interface of aid, this will become more clear). Nevertheless, throughout this thesis I will refer to different domains – scientists, government officials, NGOs, civic society and disaster-affected people - as these actor categories help to classify and denote groups of people and their actions.

Coping mechanisms

This research wishes to gain knowledge on how indigenous peoples 'cope' with disaster. Coping can be seen as dealing with "unusual, abnormal and adverse conditions of a disaster phenomenon or process" by using "existing resources" (Gaillard 2010: 220). Thus, coping is not limited to disaster response, but happens throughout the various stages of disaster. And the 'existing resources' can be both material (e.g. shovels and a food stock) as well as non-material (e.g. knowledge and social networks). According to Bankoff, coping mechanisms are (1) *strategies* adopted by communities to reduce the impact of hazard or avoid the occurrence of disasters and (2) *cognitive or behavioural responses* designed to reduce or eliminate psychological distress or stressful situations (Bankoff 2003: 166-167). This implies that coping can refer to strategic actions as well as unconscious, automatic responses and a mixture of them.

One objective of this research is to find out how the indigenous peoples of the Cordillera cope with disaster using their own resources. Therefore I will use the term indigenous coping mechanisms (ICM) which is defined here as: disaster-related practices that are transmitted from one generation to the other and are connected to the local culture and customs. Of course, this does not mean that these practices are not changing or adapting to modern life. The other research objective is to find out how people cope with disaster using external resources. How they make use of help from outsiders in reducing disaster impacts. When talking about ICM, there is an implicit assumption that IP's have 'special' knowledge on disasters and coping with disaster. This is discussed in the next section on research implications.

Disaster phases

In this thesis I will make a distinction between three phases of disaster management: (1) prevention and preparedness; (2) response and relief; and (3) reconstruction and recovery – illustrated in figure 2.1 on the next page. This partition of disaster derives from the disaster management cycle, a well-known tool to break up a complex disaster event into several sequential phases. It "includes sum total of all activities, programmes and measures which can be taken up before, during and after a disaster with the purpose to avoid a disaster, reduce its impact or recover from its losses" (Vasilescu, Khan et al. 2008: 46). Note that these phases are not clear cut or static, but they are messy and overlapping. The transition from one phase into the other is vague and does not happen uniformly for all aspects of disaster response. However, looking at disaster management from this perspective, does help to analyse disasters. It makes it easier to understand policy, classify aid activities and recognise how a disaster event evolves over time. And, at a practical level, the different phases help to structure the interviews and the generated data.

Another advantage of this cyclic approach is that it helps to look at changes between the same phases during different disasters. For example, you can ask how people would prepare themselves for possible threats before Pepeng and compare this with the way they do it after Pepeng. What have they learned from the disaster? What are the changes in the minds of the affected people? What are changes in policy?

Figure 2.1: Different phases in disaster management

There are many models of the disaster management cycle, some of them distinguishing up to eight different phases. Because of the indistinctness of the different phases described above, I have chosen for a simple structure with only three phases:

1. Preparedness and prevention
   What sort of measures do people take to harm themselves or others against possible disaster? This, among many things, could include building disaster proof houses and prepare emergency kits with food, gas, candles, band-aid, etcetera. It also includes the policy and programs of governmental and non-governmental aid providers. How do they prepare for disaster or try to reduce risks and vulnerabilities? For example, the government trying to prevent the impact of landslide by anti-erosion measures like planting of trees and the construction of irrigation systems and stonewalls. As well as conducting proper risk assessments. It can also contain communication and early warning systems and awareness and capability trainings.
2. Response and relief
   This phase is about the first reactions after the disaster. What do people do, where do they go, how do they organise themselves? It also entails humanitarian assistance from external parties. Some examples of activities in this phase are rescue and retrieval operations, evacuation, clearing roads and pathways and the distribution of relief goods and food.
3. Rehabilitation and recovery
   After a while the emergency situation stabilises somewhat and there is gradual a shift from immediate response and relief to rehabilitation and recovery. This phase is characterised by the rebuilding of damaged houses and public property. As well as the recovery of livelihoods and psychological well-being.

2.2 Theoretical background

During the past four years at Wageningen University the most important lessons that I have been taught, is that situations are complex and context specific. *Complexity* means that something consists of several interconnected parts (HarperCollins-Publishers 2008). *Context* refers to the relation between events and the background in which they take place (Ibid). These principles seem obvious, but are too often neglected in research. Generalisation and simplification is inevitable and helps us to understand the world. However, we must start form the assumption that we actively shape and perceive the world in our own way to reduce complexity. I would like to illustrate this with a quote from Anthony Giddens in a review of the work of Marx:

> "Human consciousness is conditioned in a dialectical interplay between subject and object, in which man actively shapes the world he lives in at the same time as it shapes him"
> (Giddens 1971: 21).

This quote reflects the two paradigms that lay the foundation for this research: constructivism and the actor-oriented approach.

Constructivism:

The theory of constructivism, as developed by Kant, is based on the assumption that reality is constructed through perception and interpretation (Jonassen 1991). As Giddens wrote: "man actively shapes the world he lives in". This does not mean that there is no real world, but it means that we always interpret our surrounding. And we interpret it differently, as our "mind is instrumental and essential in interpreting events, objects, and perspectives on the real world, and that those interpretations comprise a knowledge base that is personal and individualistic" (Jonassen 1991: 10). We thus filter some aspect that are important in creating our personal story. That is why doing (sociological) research is not simply gathering facts, but it is about interpretation. According to Peacock, the researcher and the natives together create the data (Peacock 2001). Thus, there is no single truth, there are only versions of the truth.

This feeds into social constructions. You can question what a disaster is and who we define as victims or as 'indigenous'. Erving Goffman wrote: "The normal and the stigmatized are not persons, but rather perspectives" (Goffman 1963: 138). That is why I have chosen to define IPs as those who ascribe *themselves* as Igorot or indigenous. These social constructs do not stand alone, they come with expectations and prejudices. For example that IPs are a marginalised group, vulnerable to disaster threat. Or with the assumption that they know how to deal with disaster. Or that there needs to be special policy and advocacy groups for IPs. And the same goes for *victims*, which we often assume to be passive, non-responsible and helpless (Hendrie 1997; Cole 2011).

This is all very much linked to discourse. A discourse defines what can be said, who can speak, when, where and with what authority (Ball 1990). Foucault has taught us that a discourse is a formation that provides a language for talking about a particular topic at a particular historical moment with real,

practical consequences. It is a way of (re)presenting knowledge and power (Hall 2007). Discourses are on the one hand structures that shape human action, but on the other hand a tool to shape these structures - Hilhorst calls this the "duality of discourse" (Hilhorst 2003: 216). In short, discourse is both the medium and the mediator of social practice (Foucault 1980) – and therefore important in sociological research. In disaster management there are numerous overlapping, contesting and amplifying discourses. These define how the different actors think of disaster and speak about it. It determines what meaning is being given to disaster and disaster management.

Being sensitive to discourse and looking at disaster from the point of constructivism helps to understand and study the multiple realities of disaster management. It reflects the power relations at play in the everyday practice of dealing with disasters – the so called 'politics of disaster'.

Actor-oriented approach:

The second research paradigm is the actor-oriented approach which has been developed and promoted by Norman Long. At the heart of this theory lies the notion of agency, which Long describes as "the capacity to process social experience and to devise ways of coping with life" in all circumstances (Long 1989: 223). Social actors are knowledgeable and capable in solving problems – i.e. they *actively* shape the world they live in. According to Giddens, all actors exercise some kind of power (Giddens in Long 1989). Thus, they are not "powerlessly constrained by the larger structures within which they operate, but their actions influence and modify these larger structures" (Bakewell 2000). That is why Giddens speaks of a "dialectical interplay".

Translated to the world of disaster management, this means that all actors - policy makers, aid providers and victims – exercise some sort of power. Hilhorst and Jansen (2010) have compared humanitarian aid with an arena. This depictive comparisons illustrates how actors negotiate with each other over aid using any kind of strategy (Hilhorst and Jansen 2010). Thus, aid recipients are not passive victims who undergo outside help. Instead, aid must be seen as the outcome of the interaction between different actors (Bakewell 2000).

Adopting the actor-oriented approach, enables to study the interface of aid. An interface is when different lifeworlds or discourses encounter (Hilhorst 2003). For example when negotiation between different actors takes place. It is the moment when structures shape and are being shaped. It integrates the small-scale level of individual decision-making and the large-scale level of institutional and social structures. Actions do not take place in a vacuum, instead they are the result of the encounter of different life worlds of social actors (Bakewell 2000)– that explains why context plays such an important role (more about this in chapter four). Focusing on agency helps to understand these complex "intermediate structures, such as social networks" (Long 1989: 226).

The actor-oriented approach also creates a window for studying the agency of indigenous peoples. In what way are they 'knowledgeable' and 'capable' to cope with disaster? As mentioned earlier, people use existing resources to cope with disaster. These resources are not necessarily material. Moreover, according to Dynes, social capital (a virtual resource) serves as primary base for community response

during disaster (Dynes 2002). How do indigenous peoples make use of their social skills and networks to overcome disaster? There is no undisputed definition of social capital. Authors like Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam all define social capital differently, but they share the idea that *relations* are at the heart of this theory (Mathbor 2007; Patulny and Svendsen 2007; CAPRi 2008). Important features are shared values, trust, reciprocity and networks - these facilitate coordination and cooperation and thus contribute to personal or communal benefit. Social capital, in the context of this research then, is explained as utilizing social networks and skills to cope with disaster. It is a form of increasing human agency.

Further, social capital theory is useful in understanding the *interface* of aid as much focus lies on structures and relations (Woolcock 2002). There are three categories of social capital facilitating agency:

- *Bonding social capital:* ties between immediate family members, neighbours, close friends, and business associates sharing similar demographic characteristics
- *Bridging social capital:* ties among people from different ethnic, geographical, and occupational backgrounds but with similar economic status and political influence
- *Linking social capital:* ties between civilians or community members and those in positions of influence in formal organisations such as banks, agricultural extension offices, schools, housing authorities, or the police. These relations are characterised by hierarchical economic and political statuses.

Adapted from (Woolcock 2002; Nakagawa and Shaw 2004; Mathbor 2007). These categories are helpful in understanding what happen inside the aid arena. It shows how people have different sorts of strategic relations. An example of bonding social capital is neighbours helping each other. Linking social capital is more about hierarchical relations between people - about the encounter of people with different lifeworlds. For example affected farmers who have ties with government officials at the municipality. These people can utilise their social skills and networks to attract aid. Hilhorst refers to them as interface experts or development brokers. They are able to speak the language of 'the other' (Hilhorst 2003).

2.3 Research implications

Research assumptions

Thus, constructivism and the actor-oriented approach form the theoretical foundation of this research. These paradigms imply the following research assumptions or premises: (1) disasters are social processes and (2) indigenous peoples have agency.

1. Disasters are social processes

-Disasters are interwoven with power, politic, discourse and change

-Everyday practices, context and social relations/interface are important

Disaster impact shapes - and gets shaped by - human behaviour. They should not be seen as mere natural, isolated crisis events, but as complex processes. Disaster management therefore is never neutral or apolitical, but is embedded in local to international power structures and politics. Disaster impact reflects the social status of a certain society – i.e. the vulnerability of the affected people (Wisner,

Gaillard et al. 2012). Just as it creates instability and room for reorganisation of social relations – i.e. disasters “open space for renegotiation in the values and structures of society” (Pelling and Dill 2010: 27). Thus, disaster research should be sensitive to power, politics and discourse, and includes multiple social actors. Olson emphasises that since disaster are political you should ask critical questions: What happened? Why is the impact so big? And what will happen now? (Olson 2000). Seeing disasters as social processes requires a holistic approach, meaning that the background to which the disaster is happening matters – e.g. what has created vulnerabilities and what structural measures or policy is in place to reduce disaster risk? It also means that all phases of disaster management should be taken into account, including prevention and preparedness. And attention should be paid to the everyday practices since “the importance of culture in risk and disaster lies, especially, in the way it is woven into the fabric of everyday life” (Hewitt 2012: 94).

2. Indigenous people have agency and distinct knowledge to cope with disaster

-IPs might be vulnerable, but also knowledgeable and capable

-IPs have distinct indigenous coping mechanisms

-IPs negotiate over aid in discursive interface

After the tsunami of December 26, 2004 in South East Asia, the world was shocked by the magnitude of destruction and suffering broadcasted on television. It showed humans’ vulnerability to natural violence, despite our modern technologies and communication systems. At the same time, hopeful anecdotes about indigenous groups gained attention. These group were believed to be able to put themselves in safety by ‘reading’ the signs of nature, based on knowledge handed down from one generation to the next. These stories of indigenous survivors came to be icons of the value of indigenous knowledge with regards to disaster mitigation. This was put in contrast with the limits of modern, Western technology – which has been dominant in the development and humanitarian sector for so many years (Bankoff 2001). These anecdotes were noticed by the international community and gained quite some interest. The 2008 UNISDR report for example, plead for greater recognition of indigenous knowledge in disaster risk reduction and resilience by writing that the “communities’ use of indigenous knowledge to reduce risk, cope and survive recent natural disasters provides many lessons for practitioners and policy makers on the value of indigenous knowledge for disaster risk reduction” (UNISDR 2008: p. viii). This agenda on indigenous knowledge was in line with the trend towards community-based disaster management and inclusive models of disaster coordination reflected in the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005).

The focus on the *resilience* of indigenous groups juxtaposed the emphasis on indigenous *vulnerability.* A new discourse was born. However, the resilience discourse did not replace the vulnerability discourse, instead they exist next to each other. Exposure to threats and the capacity to cope with them (or not) of indigenous peoples is framed in two ways: *(1) the vulnerable indigenous who needs to be protected* and *(2) the resilient indigenous who needs to be heard.*

Within the first frame, many academics believe that indigenous peoples are vulnerable to disaster risk, because they live in close interaction with nature and have limited economic and political power in the ‘modern world’. Displacement from their places of origin, poverty, marginalisation, ecological

degradation and modernisation (leading to abandonment of traditional agro-ecological production systems, increasing monetisation of local economies, education and changing value systems) make IP's very susceptible to natural hazards and limits their capacities to recover from disasters. And, as stated in the introduction, there is a growing concern for the increased vulnerability of indigenous communities because of contemporary global pressures such as urbanization, climate change, deforestation and globalization (Kelman, Mercer et al. 2012). In this discourse, IP's are mostly framed as victims of modernisation, who need to be protected against the effects of climate change or their own governments. However, within the other frame - the resilient indigenous who needs to be heard - it is emphasised that because of the intimate relation with nature and inter-generational knowledge exchange, IPs are more knowledgeable and capable to cope with disaster than others (Kelman, Mercer et al. 2012 and UNISDR 2008). They are believed to use their time-tested knowledge to predict and overcome disaster. Taking both discourses in account, this research evaluates both the vulnerabilities as well as the capacities of the Igorots.

As explained above, from the actor-oriented approach all actors are considered to have agency and some kind of power (after Giddens and Long). Moreover, I assume that the indigenous peoples of the Cordillera have distinct coping mechanisms, because they live and have lived in such a disaster prone region - so this is in line with the resilience discourse. However, I do not expect to find static coping mechanisms, I do believe that they are being developed and adjusted over time. Nor do I expect homogeneous communities and practices. Since different actors – within and between societies - hold multiple worldviews, causing a divergent perception of disaster that leads to different ways of managing them (Bankoff and Hilhorst 2009). Since disaster management is regarded here as a complex social process, much importance is being put on the interface of aid, the moment when internal and external practices and actors meet. These encounters do not just take place in planned meetings, but find their way in everyday practices as well and are deeply interwoven with discourse.

3. Disaster risk is comprised of several factors

The above shows that disaster risk entails a lot more than natural threats. In this research, disasters are assumed to be complex and context specific processes. Meaning that disaster events are (1) made up of various interconnected parts and (2) are interwoven with the conditions of the environment in which they take place. The following formula (adapted from Wisner, Gaillard et al. 2012: 24) reflects how disasters are approached in this thesis. And shows the different elements that comprises disaster risk.

Disaster risk = H x [(V/C) – M]

H= Natural and man-made *hazards*

V= *Vulnerability* defined by social status

C= Individual or local *capacity* protecting from- and coping with disaster (i.e agency)

M= Structural *mitigation* and prevention of disaster (e.g. national/international policy)

Note that this formula serves as mnemonic or heuristic, rather than a mathematical equation (Ibid) - because how do you apply exact weight to concepts like vulnerability, capacity and mitigation? The different elements are further explained in chapter 4.

Research questions

The research assumptions have helped to formulate the following research questions:

How did the indigenous peoples of the Cordillera Administrative Region (Philippines) cope with the disastrous events in the aftermath of typhoon Pepeng?

Sub-questions about the context:

-*Who are the indigenous peoples of the Cordillera?*
-*What is the history of (natural) disasters in the Cordillera?*
-*What is the government policy on disaster mitigation?*
-*What was the perceived impact of typhoon Pepeng?*
→ *How vulnerable are indigenous communities?*

Sub-questions about indigenous coping:

-*How is indigenous knowledge used to deal with disaster?*
-*What are typical indigenous practices related to disaster?*
-*How are indigenous coping mechanisms changing?*
-*How do indigenous coping mechanism contribute to overcome disaster?*
→ *How resilient are indigenous communities?*

Sub-questions about the external aid:

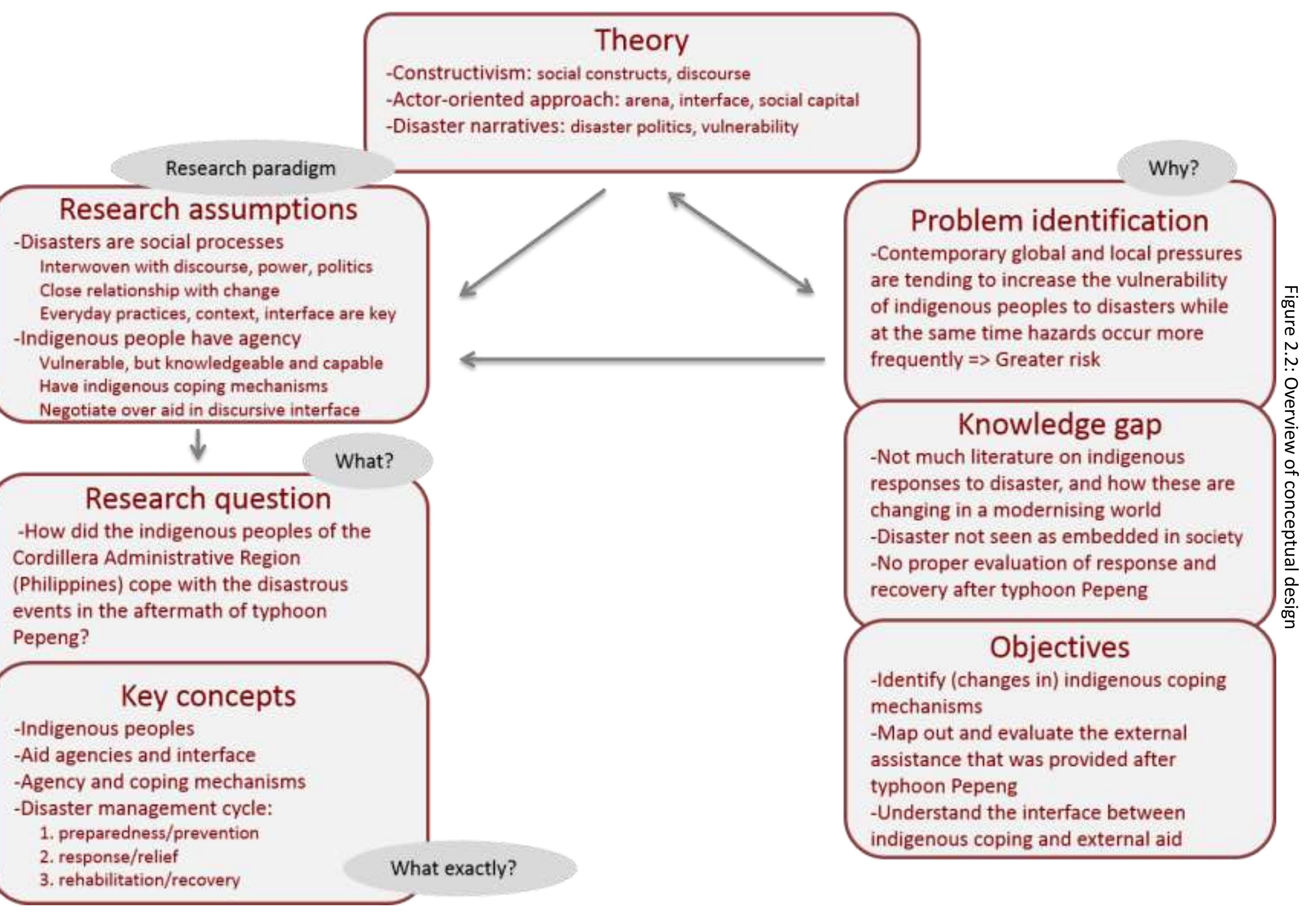
-*What sort of assistance was provided and by who (government, NGOs and civic society)?*
-*How does this external aid interact with indigenous coping mechanisms?*
-*How was the assistance perceived and negotiated over?*
-*How dependent are indigenous peoples on external assistance?*
→ *How do relationships between indigenous communities and external parties influence assistance after disaster and vice versa?*

These are the question I wish to answer in this thesis. The next chapter will show *how* these questions will be answered.

Conceptual design

A summary of the conceptual design of this research is shown in figure 2.2 on the next page.

Figure 2.2: Overview of conceptual design



3. Methodology

In the previous chapters I have introduced *why* this research is needed and *what* will be studied. This chapter is about *how* the research has been carried out. This methodological chapter first shows the strategy and methods that have been used. Followed by an overview of the selected research sites and the interviewees. To conclude with a reflection on the methodology.

3.1 Strategy and methods

The case study

In the initial stage of the research I was going around town (Baguio) to speak with as many people as possible and build a network of (potential) respondents. In this explorative stage I intended to:

1. Get a feel of disasters in this particular area; history, policy, current risk, important actors
2. Get a feel of the Philippines- and especially Igorot culture and history; (changing) worldview and relation to disaster
3. Narrow down the research scope; define topics to be covered, participants and research sites

Along the way, it became clear that typhoon Pepeng has been the most recent major disaster in the Cordillera. Even though three years have passed, people would often refer to Pepeng when talking about disasters. This particular event induced such a big impact that it is still fresh in most people's mind, thus I chose to do a case study on typhoon Pepeng. A case study helps to narrow down the scope and research sites – which is needed as there is only limited research time and the Cordillera Administrative Region is very big and diverse. Moreover, this strategy benefits the research approach, because "the case study allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (Yin 1984: 14). It enables to (1) investigate a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, (2) when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and (3) in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin 1984: 23). It is thus the perfect strategy to study disaster, from the viewpoint that disasters are complex social processes. It is a suitable strategy for answering 'how' and 'why' questions and meets the objectives of this explorative research.

Furthermore, the case study is particularly appropriate in evaluation studies. Its four applications help to evaluate typhoon Pepeng (adapted from Yin 1984: 25):

- *Explain complex causal links in real-life interventions;* How does disaster influence culture? And how does culture influence disaster management (both indigenous coping and external aid)?
- *Describe real life context in which intervention takes place;* what is the historical, social, political, economic and geographical background of the research area? For example, how does the worldview of the Igorots and their social position influence disaster management?
- *Describe the intervention itself;* Look at typhoon Pepeng, what happened? How did people respond, where did they go, what did they do, what kind of help did they receive?
- *Explore situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, or single set of outcomes;* as this is an explorative study the outcome(s) cannot be predicted on forehand.

Thus, given the features of case studies, this strategy enables to evaluate typhoon Pepeng in itself and its longer-term impacts, as well as responses to this disaster by the multiple actors - all within the social and geographical context of the Cordillera and the Igorots.

Data collection: Desk study, interviews, observations and PRA

-Desk study

Data has been derived from secondary sources via a desk study. A literature review was done to gain more knowledge on the research topic and to get a picture of the local situation. As stated in the introduction, there is a knowledge gap in disaster science with regards to indigenous strategies and evaluation, especially for the Cordillera region. Therefore, I have searched for articles covering all topics concerning this thesis and combined them to gain the specific knowledge that was needed. In addition to scientific sources, I have also looked at policy reports, evaluation documents and newspaper articles. The World Wide Web has provided lots of information about the Philippine government and active NGOs in the region. Online discussions, videos and photographs have helped to picture the terrible events of October 2009 and the reactions to them. These diverse sources of media also helped to understand how different parties talk and think of disaster and humanitarian assistance in the region.

The desk study was used throughout the research: initially to familiarise myself with the themes and area, and later to broaden and deepen my knowledge, as well as to verify findings. But, stories cannot be heard from behind a desk, so most of the data derives from first hand *observations*, *interviews* and *Participatory Rural Appraisal* (PRA).

-Interviews

Especially in the beginning of the fieldwork, I have conducted many unstructured interviews. This form of interviewing looks much like a normal conversation, but the interviewees know they are being interviewed and notes are written openly. This method aims to get the interviewees to open up and express themselves in their own terms. There is minimum control over the response as the interviewer asks open questions about certain topics (Southwold 2010). Later on, as I gained more knowledge on the local context and topic, I started to conduct more semi-structured interviews. This method shares most of its characteristic with unstructured interviews, the only difference is that it includes the use of an interview guide – not to be confused with a survey. This is a list of questions or specific topics that are to be covered during the interview. The advantages of this is that (1) the interviewees still have the freedom to express themselves in their own terms, (2) the interviewer can follow up any leads that arise during the interview and (3) the data from the interviews is comparable, as the same topics are covered in each interview (Ibid).

Due to the American colonisation, many Filipino’s master the English language. However, as this highly depends on peoples’ education level and their confidence to speak English (in groups or in interviews), I always brought an interpreter with me. Some interviews were carried out in English without having to use an interpreter at all, some were completely translated and others were a mixture of both.

-Observations

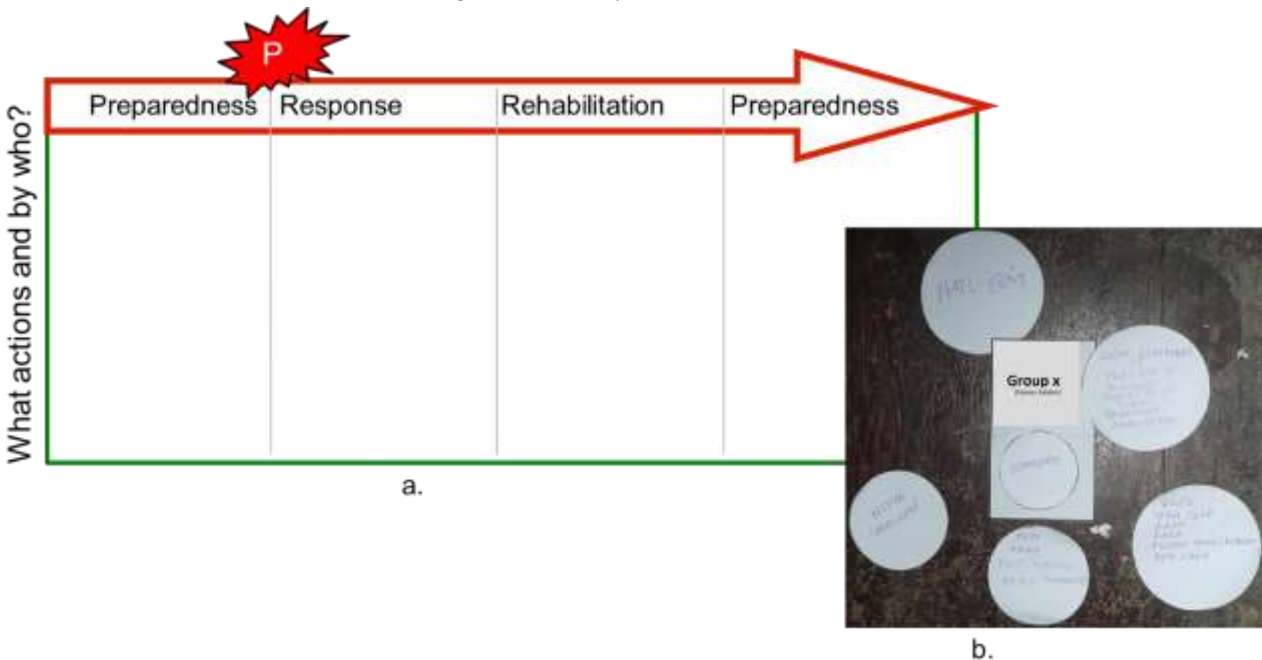
Observations have been made as outsider as well as participant. As soon as I touched ground, one typhoon after the other hit the Philippines. And even though, luckily, they did not result into major disasters, I did experience some of their impacts. For instance how the people of Baguio are being informed by their government and what measures are taken – e.g. the suspension of classes and the advice to stay at home. I have witnessed how bad the road conditions can get, especially in rural areas. And saw how much water can come down from the sky, resulting in floods and (minor) slides. Inside observations have also been made of indigenous practices and customs, as I have engaged in rituals, native dancing, eating *penikpikan*, riding on top of the *jeepney*, etcetera. These are all examples of participant observation, when the researcher "joins the study population" and gains "additional insight through experiencing the phenomena for themselves" (Ritchie and Lewis 2003: 35). I was able to make these, as I was a temporal member of the society - a participant of my own research population.

As a researcher I was also able to constantly engage in outsider observation. For the interviews I have visited the offices of OCD, disaster councils, the regional Red Cross and many others. Observations were made at local calamity storages, at relocation sites and at an operational evacuation centre. And most impressively, I have seen the remnants of the damages done by Pepeng and the emotional impact it caused and still causes on the affected population.

-PRA

Additionally, knowledge was accumulated through 'Participatory Rural Appraisal' in one of the communities. PRA "include the idea that local people can and should conduct their own appraisal and analysis" (Chambers 1994: 1253). Thus, I facilitated certain exercises to stimulate the appraisal and analysis of the responses to typhoon Pepeng. For the first exercise, the participants divided themselves into three groups. Per group they wrote down what actions were taken (based on the disaster cycle) and by who - see figure 3.1.a on the next page. This was a nice warming-up and helped to freshen up the memory. Afterwards we compared the results and discussed about them. The second exercise was about the importance of different actors – i.e. actor mapping - see figure 3.1.b. Again per group, the participants distinguished which actors were involved after typhoon Pepeng. They could show the *importance* of the actor by choosing different sizes of rounds and its *closeness* by placing the rounds further or closer to their group (the square). First, I asked them to do this for the actual situation as they remembered it. Then I asked them to do this exercise again, but now based on what the roles of the different actors *should* have been in their opinion. This gives insight into the perceived responsibility of disaster management actors. What followed was a discussion of the differences between the two situations. Lastly, we held a focus group discussion in which we evaluated the role of external aid as well as the communities' role during Pepeng. We also talked about current perceived risk and future perspectives.

Figure 3.1: Example PRA exercises



PRA exercises, and especially the visual analysis, are ways to hand over control from the researcher to the participants, as the latter has more freedom than in interviews to “determine the agenda, categories and detail” (Chambers 1994: 1263). The role of the researcher is limited to facilitating and initiating a process of internal presentation and analysis (Ibid) – i.e. gathering data independently and as objective as possible. Next to facilitating, I also observed the PRA-process. The exercises were explained by me and translated and clarified by an interpreter who is familiar with the community. Since my role was limited, the participants had much freedom to express themselves. This method perfectly suits the research ideology and objectives, as both the process and the results of the PRA give insight in the allocation of power, responsibilities and organisational structures.

Data processing

All the semi-structured and some unstructured interviews have been recorded. Afterwards I have transcribed these, which means literally typing them out. Transcribing is very labour intensive – as an hour of interview easily takes up 15 pages of transcribed text – but it enables the researcher to do a proper analysis. It offers the possibility of not only studying what people say, but also *how* they say it, as you see the interviewees’ choice of words and when they leave a pause or giggle for example. All the transcriptions, the summaries of interviews and the field notes were uploaded in ‘Dedoose’, a software programme for analysing qualitative data. For each interview I added descriptors, which tell something about the interview setting (e.g. the place and whether it was translated and recorded, etcetera) and about the interviewee (e.g. actor category, age, ethnicity, etcetera). I then created a codes system that covers all the sub-topics of the research. These codes were then applied to small selections of texts, for instance a paragraph or sentence. The software makes it possible to make a cross analysis of the codes and combination of codes. By selecting certain descriptors you can further specify the analysis. Let me give an example. If you want to know how the use of rituals are changing over time in Bokod (one of the research sites), you select the code ‘Rituals’ and ‘Change’ and the descriptor ‘Bokod’, then only the

descriptions with both codes are shown. Or if you want to compare how certain actors talk about reconstruction you select the codes 'Reconstruction' and 'Evaluation' for the descriptors of actor categories 'Government' and 'Survivors'. This systems thus enables to efficiently browse through the interviews and field notes and compare the data.

Output

While still in Baguio, I have done the analysis and summarised the main findings in a presentation (November 19th 2012). For this presentation I invited my colleagues from Tebtebba, the interpreters and some of the government officials, NGO employees, volunteer aid providers and academics that I already interviewed. I also invited representatives from all the affected communities. The purpose of this presentation was to show my interviewees what I have done with their stories and present my findings, this way I could give something back to them. At the same time I could validate my results and get a discussion going about the research outcomes. I was delighted to see many people from the affected communities in the audience, especially as some of them have travelled over seven hours by bus to attend my presentation (and seven hours back!). This shows that this research and the topic in general is very important to them. Sadly, not many of the government, NGO and academic representatives joined the presentation. However, with the people present we still managed to have interesting discussions and the results were approved upon. The discussions were taken up in this thesis. The thesis was presented and defended in a colloquium at Wageningen University (October 25th 2013).

The research has further been presented at the *5th Southeast Asia Update* in Wageningen (June 21st 2013). This conference was organised by the Rural Development Sociology Group of Wageningen University and co-organised by the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV) and the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS). It was also presented during the "Expert Consultation on Land Tenure and Disaster and its Social and Gender Impact" organised by the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) & Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) in Bangkok (November 14-15 2013). For this expert consultation a paper was written that will be published in a book by AIT and FAO. In addition, a comparison between this study and a comparable study in Thailand resulted in the article: "Is disaster 'normal' for indigenous people? Indigenous knowledge in coping practice" to be published in the journal 'Disaster Prevention and Management'. The articles are attached, see appendix 4 and 5.

3.2 Site selection and participants

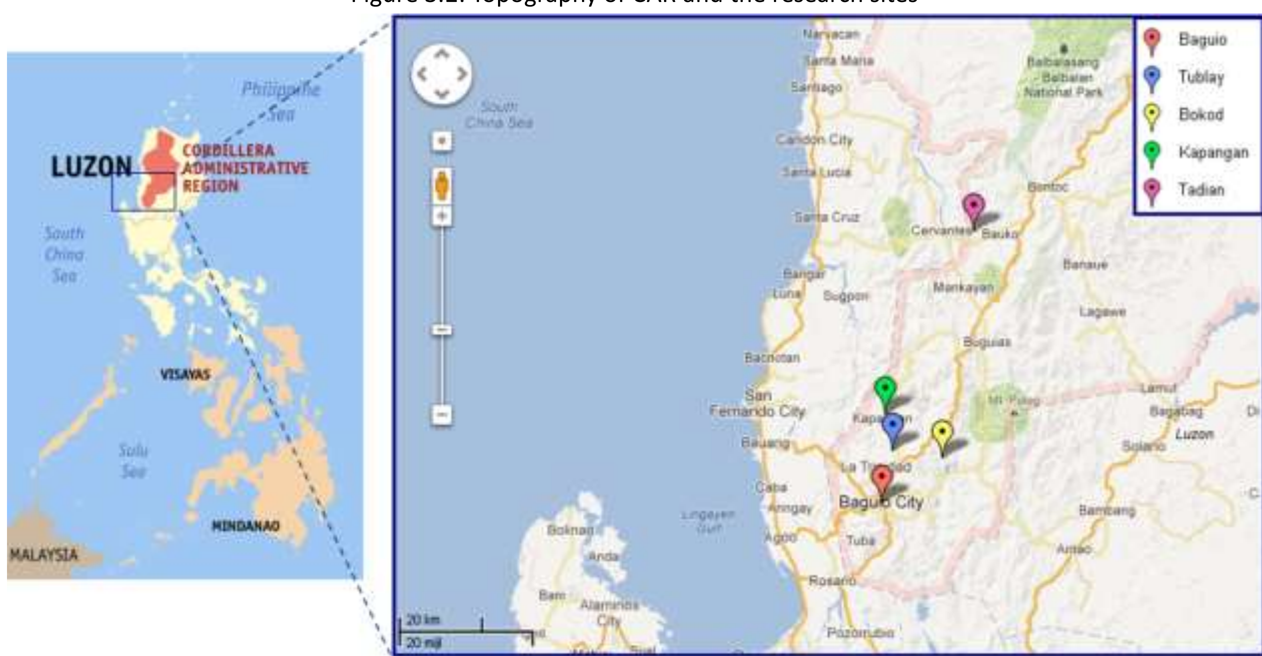
The case: typhoon Pepeng and affected communities

One of the countries' biggest enemies are the numerous tropical cyclones. The islands are hunted by approximately twenty storms per year, of which seven to eight making landfall (Yumul, Cruz et al. 2011). One of these storms was typhoon Pepeng. However, Pepeng was not a 'normal' typhoon. It arrived only three days after typhoon Ondoy exited the Philippines. And even though Ondoy did not cross the Cordillera directly, it did cause lots of rain. So, when Pepeng arrived, the soil was already saturated and rivers had grown big. Then, typhoon Pepeng came and brought even more rain. Two times, it looked like the typhoon was leaving the country for good, but it came back. Pepeng made three landfalls and the

third one, on October 8th of 2009, eventually sparked the disastrous events in the Cordillera. For an illustration see appendix 1: ‘Philippines: Major Typhoon Tracks from 26 sept to 31 October 2009’.

The storms induced a few weeks of heavy, continuous rain that caused floods and triggered landslides, with devastating and far-reaching consequences (as explained in the introduction). Based on the impact of typhoon Pepeng, I have selected four badly, but in various ways, affected communities. The research was based in *Baguio City* and from here I have selected research sites in the municipalities of *Tublay*, *Bokod* and *Kapangan* in the province of Benguet and in the municipality of *Tadian* in Mountain Province[1]. Figure 3.2 below shows the topography of the Cordillera Administrative Region and the research sites.

Figure 3.2: Topography of CAR and the research sites



Adapted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cordillera_Administrative_Region and https://maps.google.com

-Baguio City

The agglomeration of Baguio City and its four surrounding municipalities La Trinidad[2], Itogon, Sablan, and Tuba, form a major metropolitan area in the northern part of the Philippines. Located at 1500 meters above sea level with its cool climate, Baguio was turned into a military mountain retreat during American colonisation. Under their influence, Baguio has developed itself into the ‘summer capital’ of the Philippines. This booming city with over 300.000 inhabitants, has become the centre of business and

[1] To ensure my participants’ privacy and anonymity, I will only name the municipalities I have visited and not the exact *barangay*, *sitio*, community or family. Please do bear in mind, that my statements only account for the people I have spoken to and thus not the entire municipality.

[2] Pepeng caused over a hundred fatalities in the municipality of La Trinidad, but has not been selected as research site. Instead I chose more remote communities, because I wanted to see how these interact with external aid. Also, because I believe that disaster impact can be expressed in many other ways than just mortality rates. If there would have been more time, though, I would have conducted interviews in La Trinidad as well, in order to see the differences in coping between a rural and an urban setting. Nevertheless, I have visited the biggest accident site in La Trinidad, spoke to some officials and read many news reports about it, so the case is familiar.

education in Northern Luzon. It houses the government of the Cordillera Administrative Region, as well as many non-governmental organisations. Since Tebtebba Foundation is located at this administrative and economic hub as well, Baguio was the base of the research and my hometown for four months. Here, I have spoken to many government officials, professional and volunteer aid providers and academics. The city itself was not really affected by Pepeng, but does play an important role in the Cordilleran disaster management and certainly also in the aftermath of typhoon Pepeng. From Baguio, I concurred the bumpy mountain roads further into the Cordillera to visit the affected communities.

-Bokod (in the province of Benguet)

Bokod was selected because of its victim association led by one of the local women. This case gives insight in 'modern' forms of organisation and the interaction with external aid providers. In the part of Bokod that I visited, some houses were partially or completely damaged by landslides. Luckily, there were no causalities, but Pepeng did change the place completely. According to the inhabitants Bokod was like "paradise" before; the river used to be a rich source of income as many gardens, greenhouses and fish ponds were situated along its banks. Also the communities' basketball court (which is 'sacred' in the Philippines and serves as communal rendezvous) resided right next to the river. All these were washed away. The picture below – see figure 3.3 - shows how dramatically the landscape has changed under the influence of the typhoon. The small, resourceful river, changed into a pebble beach cutting through the village. In the left corner at the bottom of the picture, you can still distinguish the remnants of a destroyed building. Typhoon Pepeng not just changed the outlook of the place, but also negatively affected the livelihoods of the people.

Figure 3.3: Changed landscape and livelihoods in Bokod

Picture taken by author, August 2012

-Tublay (in the province of Benguet)

Relatively close to Baguio lies the municipality of Tublay. Here, visited one particular *sitio* that was hit by several landslides. The mud avalanches did not only take the lives of nine people, but also destroyed the

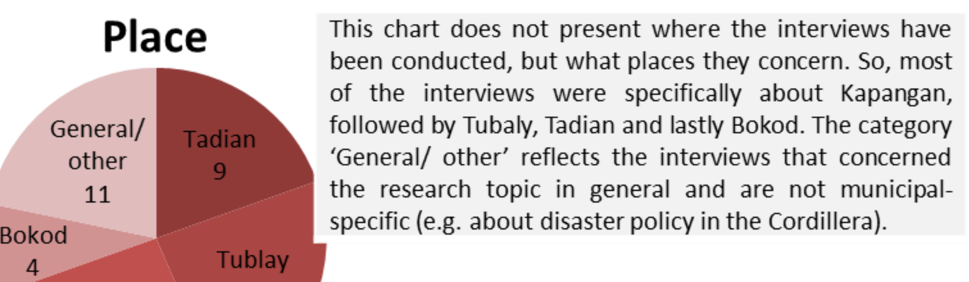
fields and houses of many more. Further threat was caused by the river that runs through the village, as it broke its banks due to the huge amounts of rain. The community was quite isolated and could only be reached by foot, because the access road was blocked. Thus, the effects of Pepeng were heavily felt in this community. Another reason for choosing this particular site is because a fascinating volunteer project was conducted here. This gives more insight into civic and private aid initiatives in the region – see chapter six. Furthermore, this place has an interesting (political) history to it, as it is a former migrant and mining community. This teaches us more about factors of vulnerability, dependency, self-organisation and the politics of aid – which will be explained in chapter seven.

-Kapangan (in the province of Benguet)
The municipality of Kapangan, which relies heavily on its agriculture, was hard hit by Pepeng. At least eighteen houses were completely destroyed because of landslides, but miraculously, everyone survived. The economic impact of Pepeng was great as (1) many plantations and rice fields were damaged by landslides and (2) the products could not be transported to the markets, because the road conditions were really bad and the access bridge was washed away. Of the places I visited, Kapangan was the most isolated of all; up to almost two months after Pepeng, some communities in Kapangan were still inaccessible by road and cut off from electricity. I wanted to learn how this isolation impacted disaster response. Especially as there were no fatal victims, do aid providers still come? And how does this inaccessibility impact local coping mechanisms and the dependency on external aid? In Kapangan I visited several families in different barangays.

-Tadian (in Mountain Province)
When looking at mortality rates, Benguet was definitely the most affected province by Pepeng. But one big landslide caused a huge tragedy in the municipality of Tadian in Mountain Province. In one of the barangays, an entire inhabited mountain slope came down, killing 39 people. As this community consists of only around 200 households, the impact was greatly felt. Thus, Tadian has been selected as research site as it proportionally suffered such a great loss. But, also because it appeared that there was a strong sense of communal assistance and solidarity right after Pepeng. This helps to understand indigenous coping mechanisms, self-help and forms of organisation. Furthermore, I was eager to visit more than one province to be able to notice and understand possible differences between provinces – e.g. to make comparisons in indigenous practices and local government between Benguet and Mountain Province.

Thus, the fieldwork was conducted in metropolitan Baguio and four rural municipalities. Depending on the size and density of the different municipalities, as well as my local connections, I have either visited multiple or single *barangays* or *sitios* – from now on, I will simply refer to them as affected *communities*. Figure 3.4 below, shows the allocation of interviews concerning the different research sites.

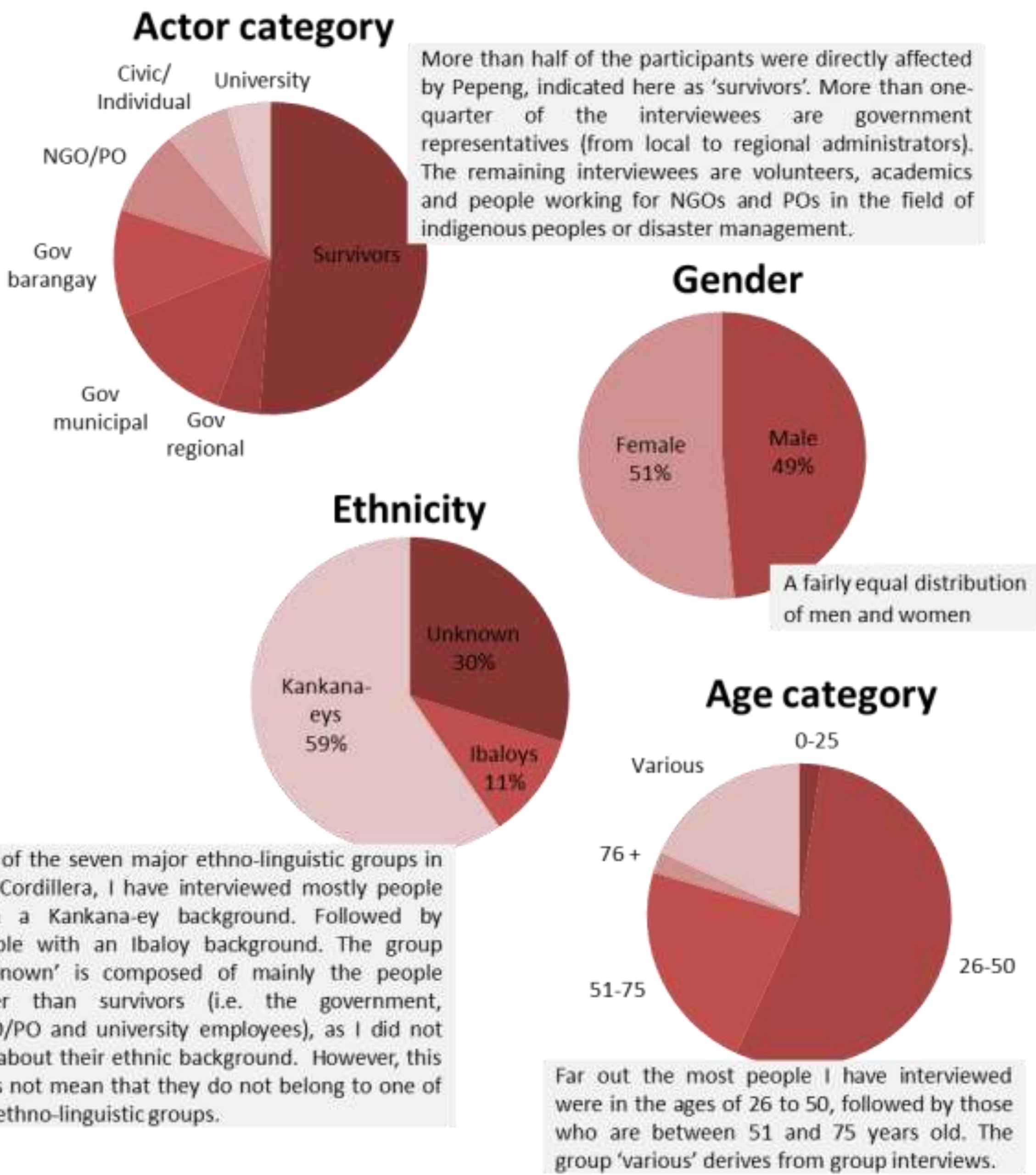
Figure 3.4: The allocation of interviews concerning the research sites



Interviewees

For this research I have spoken with 61 people in 49 interviews (highly varying in time, not including informal conversations). With qualitative research, the selection and definition of the research population is not *as* important as with quantitative research, because it does not involve statistical analysis. However, it is still important to get an idea of who are representing this research. Therefore, figure 3.5 below shows an overview of some of the key characteristics of the people I have interviewed.

Figure 3.5: Research representation: interviewee descriptors



Some interviewees have been selected on the basis of their expertise on the subject or because of their social or employment position. In the affected communities, the interpreters and the local situation played an important role in the selection of the interview participants. For the different research sites, I have been working together with different interpreters who reside or have worked in the area. Furthermore, they are - somehow and to different degrees - experienced in the field of disasters or indigeneity. This is beneficial as they (1) are familiar with the local situation and customs, (2) established a network of contacts and (3) have some prior knowledge about the topic. Together, and often upon arrival at the research location, we decided who to interview. Usually, the participants consisted of: official and customary local leaders, people who have played a distinctive role during Pepeng and those who were (badly) affected. As these are small communities, often local leaders were also directly affected themselves. These interviews thus covered how they have experienced Pepeng as a victim and as a community leader for example.

3.3 Reflection on methodology

Research limitations

This thesis is a compulsory part of my study program with the weight of 39 credits in the European Credit Transfer System, which equals 1092 study hours in total - or in other words, eight months of fulltime workload. This means that there was only limited time to work on this research, influencing its scale and scope. A longer period of time would have allowed me to gather even more information. Another limitation is the fact that English is not my mother tongue, so please forgive me for any mistakes in this report. As I do not speak Tagalog (the national Filipino language), Ilocano (the regional dialect) or any of the local/ tribal languages, the interviews were carried out in English. An interpreter was used when needed. All these back and forth translations by non-native English speakers might have caused misunderstanding and the loss of data. Another challenge is the fact that this is my first independently conducted research. And even though Tebtebba Foundation has got extended knowledge on indigenous peoples, this topic is new to me, and so is the Philippine and Cordilleran culture. This outsiders' perspective shines a new light on the situation, but might passes by some cultural finesse. Finally, as this is a qualitative research, my personal bias (explained in the previous chapter) plays an important role in the interpretation of the stories. Despite these limitations, I still believe this research to be of value – especially as this is the first overview of coping practices and external aid in the Cordillera. I think this research complies with its initial explorative objective and provides a window for further discussion.

Research validation

"Validity refers to accuracy and trustworthiness [...], nothing in research is more important than validity" (Bernard 1999: 46). Internal validity can be described as the *local* and *pragmatically* (as opposed to theoretical) accuracy and trustworthiness of the research (Campbell 1986). Discussions with my colleagues at Tebtebba and friends from Baguio suggest that I have picked up on the most important cultural and social understandings of the Filipino's and Igorots. I have immersed myself in the Filipino culture: work, eat, live and play like Filipino's, with Filipino's. At Tebtebba I have learned a lot about the lifeworlds and struggles of the indigenous peoples of the Cordillera, but also about indigenous groups in

other parts of the world. This local embeddedness, combined with the studious and extensive fieldwork and data processing, underwrites the internal validation. Also, I believe that the chosen research strategy and methods are in line with the theoretical foundation and initial objectives. Moreover, at the research presentation mentioned on page 18, the validation has been explicitly confirmed. According to the audience (local representatives from all five research sites) I did a great job in interpreting their stories and drawing conclusions from them - the biggest compliment a researcher can get. Internal validity could be increased by conducting even more interviews and PRA exercises – e.g. in more provinces and municipalities throughout the Cordillera.

As with all case-studies, it is harder to make claims about the external validation, because there is little proof for generalisation. However, this depends on the definition of external validation. According to Campbell (1986), external validation involves *theory*, which differs from empirical reality. Or in other words: "case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes" (Yin 1984: 21). Thus, I do assume accuracy for the theoretical aspect. Which, in this case, means that the topic of disaster in relation to indigenous peoples, very well can be studied from the constructivist and actor-oriented approach. But, this research is not an accurate standard to predict coping mechanisms of other indigenous populations – which is also not the intention of this research. The external validation could be further increased by conducting multiple-case studies with this same approach in other settings.

To summarise, I assume accuracy and trustworthiness for the local reality of the selected research sites (i.e. internal validation) and for the theoretical propositions (i.e. external validation). In this chapter and the previous one, I have tried to explain the line of reasoning and the research process as good as possible to increase the validity. The following chapter deals with to most important contextual features which help to understand the research results in the three chapters thereafter.

4. Contextual account

As stated in the theoretical chapter; context matters. According to the dictionary, context is the interwoven conditions and circumstances that are relevant to an event (HarperCollins-Publishers 2008). The event (Pepeng) is thus closely related to the environment in which it takes place – e.g. the social, economic, politically and natural background. With this chapter, I hope to provide a frame of reference in which typhoon Pepeng, and the reactions to it, took place. As a guideline, I will use the formula from chapter two which reflects the different elements of disaster risk: H x [(V/C) – M]

H= Natural and man-made *hazards*

V= *Vulnerability* defined by social status

C= Individual or local *capacity* protecting from- and coping with disaster

M= Structural *mitigation* and prevention of disaster

I will first provide some background information on the numerous *hazards* that plague the Philippines and how the government *mitigates* these and their impact. This feeds into the *vulnerability* of the Philippine population and the Igorots in particular. The local *capacity* to cope with disaster will be mentioned briefly, before I will turn to the role of NGOs in disaster *mitigation* and reducing *vulnerability*.

4.1 Hazards and national policy

The Republic of the Philippines is one of the most hazard prone countries in the world. Because of its meteorological and geological setting, the archipelago gets frequently plagued by natural hazards. The most influential among these are earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and tropical cyclones – see table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Natural hazards in the Philippines (1980-2011)

Hazards 1980-2011	Frequency*	Deaths*	Explanation**
Earthquakes	13	2.540	The country is situated at the Circum-Pacific seismic belt where the major active plates of the Pacific and Eurasian meet, causing frequent earthquakes.
Volcanic eruptions	16	719	Being in the ‘Pacific Ring of Fire’ there are over 200 volcanoes distributed among the country, of which some are active.
Tropical cyclones **-Floods** **-Mass movements (wet)**	209 -109 -27	26.055 -2.396 -2.218	Located between the south China Sea and the Pacific Ocean the country is in the pathway of severe storms. These storms contribute to floods and landslides.
Total	374	33928	

* The numbers present the total *reported* occurrences and deaths between 1980 and 2011. The data has been derived from www.emdat.be – The Belgium-based Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) (February 2013).

** This information derives from the article by “Luna, E. M. (2001). "Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness: The Case of NGOs in the Philippines." Disasters 25(3): 216-226” and “Yumul et al. (2011). "Extreme weather events and related disasters in the Philippines, 2004–08: a sign of what climate change will mean?" Disasters 35(2): 362-382”.

The table shows that yearly, over a thousand people die because of natural hazards, of which tropical storms are the greatest contributors. These and other natural hazards are compounded by man-made hazards and complex conflicts. This continuous threat, in addition to socially, economically and politically fragility makes the population of the Philippines extremely vulnerable to disaster (Delfin and Gaillard 2008; Bankoff and Hilhorst 2009; Yumul, Cruz et al. 2011). Bankoff explains this vulnerability in terms of "the vagaries of over 380 years of colonial misappropriation, and then the much more ruthless exploitation of international market forces" (Bankoff 2007: 328). Whereas Luna blames "the dictatorship and widespread violation of human rights prevalent during the Marcos regime in the 1970s" (Luna 2001: 216). Both processes have contributed to a socially constituted vulnerability of the Philippine population.

The disaster vulnerability discussed above has not been adequately addressed by the government (Delfin and Gaillard 2008; Bankoff and Hilhorst 2009). In 2009, when Pepeng struck, national disaster policy primarily focussed on immediate response rather than disaster prevention and preparedness. This has to do with the national disaster paradigm. On the one hand, disasters are seen as natural phenomena belonging to the countries' hazard prone location. There is thus a paradigm of simply adjusting to disaster (Delfin and Gaillard 2008). This could be described as a passive form of disaster preparedness. On the other hand, the government addresses disasters also as abnormal crisis events that requires the restoration of normalcy (Bankoff and Hilhorst 2009). Although, these two paradigms look contradictory, they both place disaster outside of human reach - perceiving them as unavoidable catastrophic event. This conservative approach has been translated into an extremely reactive disaster policy, not addressing the long-term underpinning factors of vulnerability. Local calamity funds for instance, could only be released *after* an official declaration of being in a state of calamity. This shows that relief is prioritised over disaster risk reduction, prevention and mitigation (Delfin and Gaillard 2008).

<u>Towards a holistic and proactive approach</u>

Even though regularised state disaster management exists relatively long in the Philippines, only recently it shifts towards a more holistic and proactive programme. For long the "disaster-focused institutions were controlled by the military through their civil defence arms and included top-down, command-and-control institutional machineries that focussed on disaster relief" (Lavell, Gaillard et al. 2012: 619). The table presented on the next page summarises some of the most important enactments in national disaster management – see table 4.2 on the next page.

The table shows that the year 2010 was a huge turning point in the Philippine policy on disasters. Both the Strategic National Action Plan (SNAP) on Disaster Risk Reduction and the enactment of the Republic Act has laid the foundation for a paradigm shift to disaster risk reduction and management (DILG 2011). According to law, up to 70% of the local calamity fund can now be used for pre-disaster activities. In other words, there is no need to wait for a calamity to release funds (Fernandez, Uy et al. 2012). Even though the transition from a reactive to proactive approach might not be completed, at least attention has shifted from merely response and passive preparedness to mitigation and prevention. The government focuses more on identifying hazard-prone areas and root causes of vulnerability (DILG 2011). According to the government, they aim to "build the disaster resilience of communities and to institutionalise arrangements and measures for reducing disaster risks, including projected climate risks and enhancing

disaster preparedness and response capabilities at all levels" (DILG 2011: 5). Note, however, that this is *after* typhoon Pepeng visited the country. So, at the time of the disastrous events in the Cordillera, the main focus was still on response.

Table 4.2: Cornerstones in Philippine disaster management*

Year	Instrument	Title / Description
1954	Republic Act 1190	*'An Act to Provide for the Civil Defense in Time of War of Other National Emergency, Creating a National Civil Defense Administration, and for Other Purposes'*
	This act meant the establishment of a National Civil Defense Administration, later reformulated as Office of Civil Defense (OCD). It was mandated to provide protection and welfare to the civilian population. OCD is the operating arm that is executing and monitoring the implementation of the policies and programs.	
1978	Presidential Decree 1566	*'Strengthening the Philippine Disaster Control, Capability and Establishing the National Program on Community Disaster Preparedness'*
	This decree established the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) as the highest national policy body on matters of disaster. It meant a centralised coordination at all government levels. It has later been changed into National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC).	
1991	Republic Act 7160	*Local Calamity Fund under the 'Local Government Code'*
	This code formalised the role of LGU's within disaster management at the level of province, city, municipality and barangay. It mandates a calamity fund of 5% of the annual revenue of the LGU that can be released after a 'state of calamity' has been declared officially.	
1999	Executive Order 137	*'Declaring the Month of July of Every Year a National Disaster Consciousness Month and Institutionalizing the Civil Defense Deputization Program'*
	The *National Disaster Consciousness Month* has been created to raise awareness and consciousness on disaster management in the Philippines under the influence of the 'UN International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction 1990-2000**'.	
2010	Executive Order 888	*'Strategic National Action Plan (SNAP) on Disaster Risk Reduction 2009-2019'*
	SNAP is a road map indicating the vision and strategic objectives of the Philippines for the next 10 years based on the Hyogo Framework for Action*** to build the resilience of communities to disasters. There are two guiding principles: (1) DRR is directly linked to poverty alleviation and sustainable development and (2) DRR entails the participation of various stakeholders in order to mainstream DRR in relevant sectors in the society.	
2010	Republic Act 10121	*'Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010'*
	This act should strengthen the Philippine disaster risk reduction and management system. It adopts a holistic, comprehensive, integrated, and proactive DRR approach in lessening the socio-economic and environmental impacts of disasters. It promotes involvement and participation of all sectors and all stakeholders concerned, at all levels, especially the local community.	

* Data sources: (Carlos 2001) and (DILG 2011)

** The 'International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction 1990-2000' was launched by the UN to reduce disaster impact (especially in developing countries) through concerted international action.

*** The Hyogo Framework for Action is the first internationally accepted framework for disaster risk reduction. It was developed and agreed on (in 2005) with the many partners needed to reduce disaster risk, bringing them into a common system of coordination. It has also been signed by the Philippines.

Being a developing country, the inability to reduce disaster risk can also be explained by a lack of resources (Yumul, Cruz et al. 2011). Luna speaks of "inadequate institutional capacity due to insufficient funding, inadequate skills and inappropriate processes" (Luna 2001: 224). According to Delfin and Gaillard, much emphasis has been placed on the Local Government Units (LGUs) in taking the lead during disaster. And even though decentralisation is not a bad thing - especially not in a country composed of 7107 islands – the coordination between the local councils is often poor. Moreover, data suggest that some of these councils are not even operational and only exists on paper (Delfin and Gaillard 2008). A third problem is the lack of technical and financial resources, especially at the lowest level of governance: at the barangay councils (Ibid). Notwithstanding developments in policy, in practice the government fails to reduce vulnerability and to structurally mitigate in the various stages of disasters (from prevention and preparedness to relief en reconstruction).

Government failure can further be explained by a lack of political *will*. For example the will to adequately implement the laws that support disaster risk reduction. As some authors state that the neo-liberal government tends to prioritise economic growth at the expense of human safety (Luna 2001; Heijmans 2012) – e.g. supportive policy on mega hydrological dams and large-scale mining and logging. Following from this you could argue, that the national polity not only fails to adequately address disaster risk, but also *creates* and increases vulnerability.

4.2 Vulnerability and capacity of the Igorots

This leads to topic of indigenous marginalisation. Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman wrote: "Occupying the bottom end of the inequality ladder, and becoming a 'collateral victim' of a human action or a natural disaster, interact the way the opposite poles of magnets do: they tend to gravitate towards each other" (Bauman 2011: 5). Is this a coincidence? Anthony Oliver-Smith would argue it is not. He sees disasters as 'totalising events' which are deeply rooted in the societies' social, economic, and environmental history. In his writing about the 500-year earthquake in Peru he stresses the saying: "First the earthquake, then the disaster" (Oliver-Smith 1994: 46). This explicitly refers to the malfunctioning of the reconstruction assistance, but implicitly refers to the structure of society which is 'disastrous' in itself. Oliver-Smith describes the devastating impact of the earthquake as a product of historical processes (Ibid). Historical processes are also important to keep in mind when studying typhoon Pepeng: contemporary struggles of the Igorots must be placed within the history of external intrusion due to colonisation and modernisation (as explained in the introduction).

Societies' history does not only help to understand disasters, it also works the other way round: "the impact of disaster mirrors the everyday condition of the affected society" (Gaillard 2012:460). The ability of ethnic groups to face natural hazards reflects their position within the larger society. Those groups with little social, economic and political power often live in hazard prone areas and do not have the means to reduce disaster impact. Consequently, disaster detrimentally affects marginalised groups within the society (Ibid). Thus, poor and marginalised communities – especially agrarian and migrant communities - are awfully vulnerable to disaster risk (Bankoff 2007). Within the Philippines, this means

that the indigenous communities are particularly vulnerable to disasters, as they are “the most marginalized of the marginalized” (Holden and Jacobson 2012: 112) and live in close interaction with nature.

According to Carling, the indigenous peoples of the Cordillera have long been oppressed by their national government. The Cordillera Administrative Region serves as natural resource extraction area, essential for the countries’ development, but the Igorots are paying the price (Carling 2004). The indigenous community as well as their land is being exploited for the sake of ‘progress’ and modernisation. Cariño endorses this view stating: “The Cordillera region, where 99 per cent of the population is indigenous, is one of the poorest regions in the country with the lowest budget allotment despite its large contribution to the national wealth” (Cariño 2012: 7). She further states that four out of six provinces in the Cordillera are among the country’s poorest provinces. And that the health situation and education levels of indigenous people are generally lower than the national average (Ibid). This could explain why the impact of typhoon Pepeng was so hardly felt throughout the Cordillera.

Not just marginalisation, but also changing practices and worldviews of the Igorots themselves alter both their vulnerability and capacity towards disasters. The long years of colonial rule and the increasing influence by the larger and mainstream Philippine society gradually changed the indigenous way of life. The worldviews and characteristics of the Igorots (as described in the introduction) that are naturally shaped to cope with disaster, have changed a lot under a varying degree of outside influence (Camacho, Combalicer et al. 2012). These cultures are subjected to change because of modernisation –e.g. the introduction of Christianity, the cash economy and technological progress (Kelman, Mercer et al. 2012). However, this does not necessarily mean that all these changes have been forced upon the Igorots against their will, nor does it mean that these changes only have a negative impact.

Structural marginalisation and modernisation might have increased the vulnerability of the Igorots, and thus enhanced disaster risk. But, as shown in the theoretical chapter, disaster risk is not only comprised of the occurrence of hazards multiplied by peoples’ vulnerability, local capacity is another component. This capacity is composed of traditional coping, as well as modern adaptation strategies to natural hazards. For example, Kelman and Mercer do not only describe the vulnerabilities of indigenous peoples, but also acknowledge their capacities in coping with disasters based on years of experience (Ibid). Krishna (2011) states that customary law and environmental knowledge helps indigenous peoples to adapt to current issues such as climate change. She further celebrates the weather forecasting capabilities of IPs and their capacity to strengthen social and economic ties between different groups of peoples in times of crisis (Krishna 2011). In addition to ‘traditional knowledge’ or indigenous practices, the indigenous peoples have adopted modern strategies as well – e.g. using the indigenous identity to attract help from overseas Igorots via the internet. Thus, here, the Igorots are not simply seen as a marginalised minority, but also as powerful actors who employ agency. The following chapters will describe how this capacity looks like in practice and will give manifold examples. The most important point here, is that both typhoon Pepeng and contemporary disaster risk must be seen within the context of current and historically context of the Igorots.

4.3 The role of NGOs

Baguio City is often referred to as 'summer capital', but some rather call it the 'NGO capital' of the Philippines, because of the plentiful non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and peoples organisations (POs) that are based here. Located in a region that is predominantly inhabited by indigenous peoples, many of these organisations advocate for the rights of IPs, or more specifically, the proper implantation of these rights. These organisations thus help to reduce the vulnerability of Igorots described above and enhance their capacity to cope with disaster. Moreover, in times of disaster, for example during Pepeng and during the 1990 earthquake, all these organisations put down their regular work and engage in disaster relief. So they are both directly and indirectly involved in disaster management. In addition to this, there are also NGOs that are specialised in disaster management and work in this sector on a day-to-day basis – e.g. the regional Red Cross and CorDis RDS[3]. How have these organisations evolved? And how come the Philippine archipelago is known to have one of the worlds' most dynamic and dense NGO/PO network (Aldaba, Antezana et al. 2000; Hilhorst 2003).

The origins of organisations involved in disaster management can be traced back to the colonial period when mutual assistance associations, religious brotherhoods and traditional groupings were formed (Luna 2001; Bankoff 2007). They pioneered the provision of welfare services in the Philippines. This was reinforced after the Second World War when civic groups took up the responsibility of reconstructing war-damaged communities. They stood at the basis of *relief-oriented* organisations (Luna 2001). The multiple disasters that plagued the country has further stimulated the formation of civil organisations (Bankoff 2007; Heijmans 2012). Simultaneously, growing inequality and discontent among the Philippine population led to the rise of politically motivated groups – i.a. trade unions, student activists and peasant organisations. Throughout the 1970s when the country was under Marcos' martial law, the suppression of freedom and violation of human rights led to the rise of radical volunteer organisations. They formed a strong network of coalitions and alliances, despite their varying ideological motives (Luna 2001). After the People Power Revolution of 1986 - which meant the end of the Marcos regime – most of the political organisations turned into formal civil society organisations, in particular *development-oriented* NGOs (Aldaba, Antezana et al. 2000; Luna 2001).

Under the new democratic government of Corazon Aquino, the NGOs were mainstreamed in national polity. However, after their common enemy (Marcos) was beaten, the organisations started to show fragmentation based on ideological differences and their positioning in relation to the government[4] (Luna 2001). Diversification took place in the NGO sector. Since the 1990s many NGOs have specialised in disaster-related activities (Bankoff and Hilhorst 2009). Luna (2001) has defined two trends:

1. Relief-oriented organisations, thus those already involved in disasters, that later integrated mitigation and preparedness in their programs.
2. Politically motivated and development-oriented organisations that started their disaster work as an add on or a vehicle to their political engagement.

[3] CorDis RDS stands for Cordillera Disaster Response and Development Services

[4] For a detailed study of this, see: "The Real World of NGOs: Discourses, Diversity and Development" (2003) by Hilhorst.

These trends can be explained by the governments' inability to successfully mitigate disasters and address root causes of vulnerability (as described above). Bankoff and Hilhorst state that is why "local and national NGOs have come to fill such an important role in disaster response in the Philippines" (Bankoff and Hilhorst 2009: 391). Another factor is of course the manifold hazards that occurred – i.e. there is a *market* for disaster management and the *need* to do something. This is probably also related to the UN 'International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction 1990-2000', as it raised awareness - and accordingly funds - for disaster management.

<u>NGOs in a wider context</u>

Most NGOs engaged in disaster management have adopted a *community-based* approach[5] (Luna 2001; Bankoff and Hilhorst 2009; Heijmans 2012). From the 1970s onwards, the international community - and the UN particularly - has pushed for participatory development projects. In addition to this, the Philippine NGO-community also emphasised participation and people's empowerment after the Marcos regime (Luna 2001). This, combined with criticism on dependency-creating assistance and 'development aggression' (Heijmans 2004), led to community-based approaches in development and disaster management. This approach was adopted by the government at the end of the 1990s (Luna 2001; Heijmans 2012), but as Bankoff and Hilhorst point out: a common discourse does not necessarily reflect common disaster response. In fact, it might hide the real differences in disaster perception (Bankoff and Hilhorst 2009). However, with the 2010 Republic Act, policy and discourse seem to come closer together.
Nowadays, the relationship with the government differs strongly among the NGOs: some are in close partnership with the government, while others retain a very critical stance and refuse to collaborate. Points of critique are: the governments' reactive policy; the inadequately implementation of laws and even corruption in times of disaster; too many bureaucratic procedures; and the prioritising of economic growth over safety (Luna 2001).

The relationships with international partners (or funders) also varies greatly. A few remarks to put NGOs in perspective:

- The fact that many NGOs arose out of government deficiencies, does not mean that all these organisations are flawless and necessarily do a better job than the government.
- Nor does it mean that NGOs are homogeneous, they form a highly diverse sector; varying in scale, resources, orientation, scope and attributes of their services and projects (Luna 2001; Bankoff and Hilhorst 2009).
- The focus here has mainly been on local or national NGOs, but there are also many international NGOs active in the Cordillera – some of them will be mentioned in the following chapters.
- Even though the NGOs play a significant role in disaster management, the 'civil society' is larger than just those organisations (Bankoff 2007). In the following chapters it will become clear that also religious institutions, social movements/ POs, academe, the media, businesses, individuals, clans and neighbourhood associations play a crucial role in relief and reconstruction.

[5] For a more elaborate explanation of community-based disaster management in the Philippines, see Heijmans' thesis in the fulfilment of the degree of doctor: "Risky encounters: institutions and interventions in response to recurrent disasters and conflict" (2012).

With that said, NGOs nevertheless play a significant role in reducing disaster risk by: structural and spontaneous mitigation; the reduction of indigenous vulnerability; and the enhancement of local capacity. Moreover, the recent shift towards more pro-active, holistic and participatory disaster polity by the national government is believed to be fostered by the non-governmental sector (Luna 2001; Delfin and Gaillard 2008; Bankoff and Hilhorst 2009; Polack, Luna et al. 2010).

In short, today's NGOs involved in disaster management should be understood within the historical context of responding to the numerous disaster events (Luna 2001; Bankoff 2007), as well as the oppositional politics (Aldaba, Antezana et al. 2000; Luna 2001; Heijmans 2012). Which also explains why the Philippines have such a dense network of non-governmental organisations. And even though most of these organisations have adopted a community-based approach, this does not mean that they are homogenous in their intentions or their relations with other segments of society.

4.4 Recapitulation

In this chapter I have described the disaster risk to which the indigenous peoples of the Cordillera are exposed to. This is defined by the following elements:

- Natural and man-made *hazard:*
  Due to its location and natural resource management, the Philippine archipelago is one of the most hazard prone countries in the world. On a yearly basis, over a thousand people die because of natural hazards. Tropical storms, like typhoon Pepeng in 2009, contribute the most to this number.
- *Vulnerability* defined by social status:
  The natural threats are enhanced by the vulnerability of the Philippine population and the Igorots in particular. Years of marginalisation by the colonisers and later the Philippine government, in combination with a rapid changing society, has increased this vulnerability.
- Individual or local *capacity* protecting from- and coping with disaster:
  The Igorots are not just a marginalised minority, they are also powerful actors who employ agency. In other words, they have the capacity to cope with disaster using both traditional and modern strategies.
- Structural *mitigation* and prevention of disaster:
  The threat to disaster has not been adequately addressed by the Philippine government. But, the good news is that as of 2010 (with the new 'Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act') the policy approach is more integrated and proactive. Supplementary, there is a dense network of NGOs and POs who are trying to decrease the vulnerabilities and to enhance coping capacities of the Igorots. Quite a few of them are specialised in humanitarian aid and reconstruction projects.

Current disaster risk must be seen in the historical context of struggles and the development of disaster management in the Cordillera. This chapter showed the importance of context and provided important background information for the chapters hereafter.

The context presented here, will help to better understand the results of the case study of typhoon Pepeng, which are presented in the following three chapters. First a description of *indigenous coping mechanism* in chapter five. Then the *interface* of local and external practices and parties in chapter six. And finally the *everyday practices and politics* of disaster management in chapter seven.

5. Indigenous coping mechanisms

Indigenous peoples expert Victoria Tauli-Corpuz wrote the following about the reaction of indigenous communities in response to typhoon Ondoy and Pepeng:

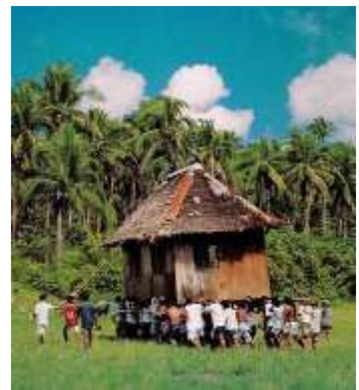
> *"Igorot communities near the disaster areas quickly responded with rescue and rehabilitation operations [...]. Our traditional values, ethics and practice of solidarity, mutual aid and reciprocity, collectivity and support for the weakest and most vulnerable came into full play"*
> (Tauli-Corpuz 2010: 144)

So, how exactly did the Igorot engage in rescue en rehabilitation operations? What are traditional responses? And how do cultural features, contribute to indigenous coping? This chapter gives an overview of indigenous coping mechanisms (ICM) in the Cordillera for the various stages of disaster. These strategies were mentioned during the interviews in relation to typhoon Pepeng, but are not limited to that particular typhoon. Looking at this specific event enables to distinguish changes in ICM: I have asked my interviewees how they reacted to the storm in 2009 and how this might be similar or different from how they *think* their forefathers and offspring would react in a comparable situation. Note that this is not 'measurable' change, it reflects the peoples' perception of change in dealing with disaster - partially hypothetically and partially based on stories and their own experience. This perception is supported by the observations of professionals in the sector of indigenous advocacy as well as disaster mitigation.

The traditional practices that were mentioned, can be grouped into three categories of indigenous coping mechanisms. For each mechanism I will explain what practices it entails, what the relation is with the indigenous culture and how it is subjected to change. I will first describe the mechanism of *helping each other* in times of disaster. I will then look at *rituals and religion* as a coping mechanism. And end with a description of how the Igorots predict oncoming danger by using *early warning systems.*

5.1. Helping each other

Figure 5.1: Bayanihan



Picture retrieved from: http://openanthcoop.ning.com/

During the interviews, *bayanihan* was often mentioned as the most important indigenous coping mechanism. It is a Tagalog term that refers to 'cooperative endeavour' or 'mutual assistance'[6]. According to the stories, bayanihan derives from moving house, literally. Community members gather to carry the house to its new location – see figure 5.1. Afterwards the house-owner hosts a small fiesta to thank the volunteers. Bayanihan is a common practice in the Philippines and can be seen as national ethos - see textbox 5.1 on the next page. It is especially found in agriculture: people go from one field to the other to help each other with the labour intensive processes in the agricultural

[6] There are many terms for the practice of helping each other. However, Bayanihan is the most common term. That is why I am using this term, even though at the different research locations the interviewees used various terms to describe this phenomena.

cycle. But, it is not limited to farming, bayanihan also applies to the construction works and during important life events –e.g. weddings, funerals and in case of emergency. The community helps the family in need by either providing manpower or a small donation, for example when one of the community members needs to be hospitalised or buried.

Textbox 5.1: Quote from Gorospe (1966) about bayanihan

"It is the true spirit of *pakikisama* [=belongingness and loyalty to one's group] that has given us one of the eighth wonders of the world, the rice terraces of Banawe. It is interesting to note that the great pyramids of Egypt were built at the expense of human dignity and freedom. Hundreds of thousands of slaves worked and died in order to satisfy the selfish ambition of the Pharaos. But the Banawe rice terraces will not only main a wonder of the world but a lasting monument to human dignity and freedom since they were built so that human beings could be free from hunger and want and maintain their dignity and creativity. It is the spirit of bayanihan that gave us our native songs and folk dances" (Gorospe 1966: 220-221).

The 2000 year old rice terraces of Banaue/Banawe, Ifugao
Picture taken by author, October 2012

If bayanihan is a national conception, then why do I call this an indigenous coping mechanism of the Igorots? I believe that this national trait has been better preserved in the Cordillera than in the lowlands. This is manifested in times of emergency. According to the observations of a university teacher in Baguio City, the situation in the evacuation centres in Manila in the aftermath of typhoon Pepeng was very chaotic and hostile; people were fiercely competing with each other and there were food riots and complaints about the government services. While in the Cordillera, the people would patiently wait for their food, organise themselves and just bear with the situation. According to this teacher, this is because in Manila "there is no community spirit, it is every man for itself. They don't care about the rest". I am sure that the situation on the ground is a bit more complex, but this is the general opinion of most people in the Cordillera. The majority of my interviewees perceive bayanihan as typically Igorot and

question whether it is still being practiced in the lowlands. In fact, they have adopted bayanihan as cultural characteristic and seem very proud of this.

> *"No because the Manila people is Filipino, they are not Cordilleran. We do not know if they have bayanihan in Manila... Haha"*
> An unofficial (female) community leader from Bokod

<u>Help within and between communities after Pepeng</u>

How did people help each other after Pepeng? First of all, *within* the communities, people directly engaged in rescue and retrieval operations, the clearing of important access roads and intra-communal evacuations. Physically strong people conquered the muddy mountain paths to nearby towns to ask for help or collect food and materials. Or they engaged in heavy digging during retrieval operations and road clearing. While others prepared food for the rescuers and victims. Carpenters made coffins, teachers organised the local evacuation centres and so on. Thus, the community members showed great responsibility towards each other and their community. In the municipality of Tublay for example, a Red Cross employee was upset and astonished to find no men in the evacuation centre. Despite the danger of going out, people kept leaving the centre. When asked for an explanation, the women said: "Well, you can't expect our men to just sit here and do nothing when there are landslides to be cleared and there are still people missing in our community!" (Personal communication 2012). In the meantime, the women themselves prepared food and gathered donations via their networks.

It is striking that this practice of helping each other is automatic and voluntary. People do not need to be asked to help, they come of oneself. With regards to bayanihan, I often heard that "everyone did their part" or "everyone did what he or she could". I read two things in this: (1) that the contribution is not equal, but equivalent. Everyone contributed, but not in the same way or to the same degree. People helped to the extent that they were capable of. And (2) that some contribution is socially demanded. It is sort of expected from the community that you will do whatever you can. So it is not completely voluntary. The latter is founded in traditional cultural traits and values of the Igorots. Weygan describes the importance of "collective self-discipline" in the indigenous cultures, and their "distinct way of looking at dignity" (Weygan 2002: 17). Some keywords that she describes in relation to this are: *guilt*, *caring*, *respect*, *shame* and *cooperation*. Thus, the norm is to show responsible behaviour for the collective good. These characteristics are vital to the worldview of the Igorots and form the basis of social behaviour – feeding into disaster response.

> *"It is in your consciousness. If you feel you want to be part of the community, you will join the bandwagon, you go with the system. We have that attitude, it is very shameful if you not go"*
> A 47-year-old victim of the land slide in Tublay

Secondly, bayanihan was also shown *between* different communities. Tadian is a great example. According to its inhabitants, right after Pepeng, many people from neighbouring municipalities came to help. For instance, the guides from touristy *Sagada* (approximately 45 kilometres from Tadian) helped with the retrieval of victims. And so did the miners from *Mankayan*, who brought their manpower and

tools - which was very much needed during those seven days of search and rescue. Others delivered relief goods and food for the victims and the rescuers.

> *"There are so many people from the Mountain Province to help. From the government, NGOs, churches, civilians... Everybody is helping. [...] That is how you can see that all people help each other in time of disasters. From other places they come, they give us food, clothing, basic needs"*
> A 43-year-old female from Tadian who has lost her house due to the landslide

This was also observed by the Baguio-based NGO CorDis RDS (Cordillera Disaster Response and Development Services). According to them, the impact of Pepeng outreached the local capacity to cope with the disaster, as a response the neighbouring municipalities of Tadian voluntarily provided assistance. The fact that Tadian was very much affected and was the only place in Mountain Province that suffered such a great loss contributed a lot to the neighbourly help. Plus, compared to Benguet, the road conditions were relatively good, so that explains why so many people were able to come down to offer a helping hand. A municipal employee in Tadian expressed that they were overwhelmed by the huge amount of volunteers: "The numbers of people who come here, we could not control the crowd, everybody wants to help. They just came and then all attacked the site, without any... any strategy" (Personal communication 2012). Nevertheless, the people from Tadian are, still, very grateful for all the help they received. Figure 5.2 illustrates the crowdedness at the rescue and retrieval operation in Tadian.

Figure 5.2: Help from neighbours - Crowds at rescue and retrieval operation in Tadian

Picture provided by Marie Balangue, 2009

Other expressions of help between communities after Pepeng were found in Baguio City. Many people closely followed the disastrous events and demonstrated their sympathy by donating money, food and relief items. Like after the 1990 killer quake, the NGOs and POs all put down their regular tasks and

worked around the clock to facilitate relief operations. They formed one big relief network based on volunteers and active civilians. For example the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA) – a federation of POs among indigenous communities in the Cordillera - sent out an alert through e-mail, phone and face-to-face contact to which many people responded. They received money and goods from households, businesses, schools, convents, different local associations, the media and overseas Cordillerans. Moreover, people also donated their time; many students and medics volunteered in relief and rescue operations. There was thus wide support from the civic society. According to the CPA, this has to do with traditional values among the Cordillerans; the practice of collective response and cooperation in times of emergency. Many other great examples of civic initiatives prove the practice of bayanihan after Pepeng (I will provide another remarkable example in the next chapter).

To summarise, working together and helping each other, is hardwired in the indigenous culture. Therefore, it is automatic, immediate and voluntary, but also somehow expected and socially desired. Hence, bayanihan can also be considered a powerful local institution that enforces compliance in social ways and contributes to community resilience.

Diminishing help

This practice of helping each other was most visible during the first phase of disaster; during relief and direct response. However, as time went by, the mutual help strongly diminished. This was observed for help within the community, as well as for outside assistance. Due to this, most people experienced the phase of reconstruction and recovery as very difficult and challenging. It is understandable that outside attention and assistance declines after a while as people return to their normal daily activities – 'live goes on'. More striking, however, is that the help within communities also faded. There are two explanations for this. The first is very practical: everyone in the community was busy rebuilding their own house or restoring their livelihood, so they simply could not help each other. The impact of Pepeng was that severe, that most community members directly felt the effect and had to secure a daily income for themselves first. For example, whereas people would normally help each other with the construction of houses, they were now unable to do so. The second explanation has to do with the deterioration of social cohesion. A community worker in Tublay observed that during emergencies people were very unified, but "when things stabilised, the cohesion started to fall and people started to compete with each other" (Personal communication 2012). This was also experienced by the community members themselves. Competition over aid, was not manifested right after Pepeng, but did emerge after a while. There were, for example, complaints about some people benefitting from livelihood recovery projects while others did not.

> *"In times of disaster we really help each other, but in good times we try to kill each other"*
> Stated by a young attorney from Baguio with an indigenous background

The quote above beautifully illustrates the role of bayanihan in the contemporary indigenous communities. With 'killing' the attorney does not refer to the old cultural practice of headhunting, but to increased competition and jealousy among community members due to modernity. For example, competition over property and diploma's. He stated that before, the rich and the poor could not be

distinguished from each other. But nowadays, there is much competition of who has the biggest house and who can send his kids to the best schools, etcetera. You could say, that modernity has brought new wants to the communities, which in turn have their influence on social dimensions (this will be explained later on). This general trend is also evident in disaster recovery. Maybe, these 'new wants' affect the expectations of victims about external assistance; assuming sufficient aid to restore or reach a certain level of welfare. This could be an explanation for increasing competition over aid in later stages of disaster recovery. Thus, in times of crisis bayanihan is manifold, but it diminishes as time passes by and makes place for competitiveness within communities.

Change over time

Building on the above, another explanation can be found in the more general trend that bayanihan at large is declining. Most of the interviewees distinguish bayanihan as important indigenous coping mechanism for dealing with disaster, however, they also stressed that it is not limited to disaster response. Likewise, the practice of helping each other normally occurs in agricultural activities and with construction works. Yet, those sort collaborations are less commonly practiced nowadays. Most people feel that bayanihan was much stronger before. Underlying causes are the integration in the modern economy as opposed to subsistence farming, as people can now hire labour and are thus less dependent on their neighbours. Secondly, increased migration and intermarriages induce more contact between highlanders and lowlanders, and thus the exchange of cultural practices. And thirdly, modern values simply adjust or replace traditional values and practices, so some see bayanihan as 'old-fashioned'.

"I'm not from Bokod and I got married here. So I have my own culture and practices from my place. I am culturally shocked they are still practicing bayanihan here. In the lowlands they are no longer interested with the system of the community, the interest of the community"

A female respondent with the age of 47

Thus, bayanihan, as important community institution is declining, however, *not* in times of disaster. Moreover, some think that typhoon Pepeng has enhanced the communities' togetherness and boosted bayanihan – which was explicitly mentioned by some people from Kapangan. This shows how disasters can positively influence social tendencies, they do not happen in a vacuum. With regards to future perspectives, people are *hopeful* of the continuation of the practice of bayanihan in the Cordillera. They see it as an inherited practice that they grew up with, as well as a traditional value. However, due to the dynamics mentioned above, people are not sure about the persistence of helping each other. They think it is crucial that parents teach their children about this values.

Floor: In 100 years from now, do you think that people will still help each other?
R.44: I hope! [...] It is being inherited, the children are looking at what we are doing
Floor: Do you teach your grandchildren about it?
R.44: They are relating to what we are doing. Old people should tell the story to the younger ones, so that they will know. It is their fault if they not tell the stories.

An 82-year-old woman from Tadian

Linguistic nuances

As noted before, there are several terms for the practice of helping each other. This variation cannot just be explained by different local languages or dialects, some variations reflect differences in the meaning of those terms. According to some of the interviewees, the terms *ub-ubbo* (in Kankana-ey) and *aduyon* (in Ibaloi) refer to the reciprocity of help: you help me, so I help you. This is based on the principle that work goes faster when you join forces. This is the sort of help you see in the (re)construction of houses. The terms *badang* and *binnadang* on the other hand, refer to non-reciprocal help. It is 'helping from the heart', which is voluntary, direct and automatically. This is the sort of help you see in search and rescue operations. Thus, there are different forms of helping each other, which are reflected by different terms. However, not everyone is making this distinction when talking about help and these terms are not universally used among the community members.

5.2 Rituals and religion

"Religions of the world have a deep appreciation for the often painful nature of human condition. Even more important though, religious traditions articulate how we should respond to these conditions" (Pargament 1997: 3) – i.e. religion provide guidance in times of crisis. This could be both at an individual and at a group level. Moreover, religion also helps to understand and accept the things that are out of our own control (Ibid) - such as natural hazards. It might help to alleviate suffering and restore personal strength and optimism. Furthermore, the performance of rituals and religious practices have the potential to improve the social ties among community members, as has been observed in several Asian-Pacific countries (UNISDR 2008). Thus, spirituality plays a vital role in coping with disaster. Logically, many of the interviewees distinguish rituals and religion as indigenous coping mechanism. First, attention will be paid to the traditional belief system of the Igorots and how this has been subjected to change. Followed by an analyses of the use of spirituality in times of disaster in the selected research sites.

From Animism to Christianity

The indigenous Igorot rituals are rooted in animism and the belief in sacred beings. *Kabunian* (or in some tribal languages *Lumawig*) is the supreme deity and creator of all. Other members of the sacred community are (1) natural deities like the sun, moon and stars, (2) spirits who reside in nature, such as oceans, rivers, lakes, caves, rocks, trees, mountains and in the ground, and (3) ancestors who remain members of the family (Oblas 2003; Taray 2008; Leo 2011). The Igorots believe that these sacred beings can bring them prosperity, health, fecundity and other positive things. But, when neglected or offended they have the power to bring misfortune, illness and death. Therefore, it is important for the Igorots to live in peace in harmony with their surroundings, both the visible and the invisible (Taray 2008). This explains why respect for nature and all its elements plays such an important role in the Igorot culture. It also helps to understand why, traditionally, the Cordillerans have little notion of ownership, as they believe that it is the spirits and deities who own the land (Oblas 2003).

Fortunately, the sacred beings can be 'manipulated' by man to his advantage through prayers and material offers in rituals (Oblas 2003). These rituals serve to affirm the relationship between man and the

sacred beings. Often, blessings are asked for having good, wealthy and long lives or for community prosperity (Taray 2008). In return, rice wine and animals are being offered, such as (native) chickens, pigs, caribou's and sometimes dogs. Elders (influential, older community leaders) and native priest can bridge the communication between the person(s) performing the ritual and the sacred beings (Oblas 2003). Rituals thus play a vital role, but equally important is to treat the environment and other people well, as "humanity is seen as part of the bigger community of deities, ancestors, spirits, and nature" (Taray 2008: 68). Altogether, the animist beliefs and practices are ingrained in the Igorot culture and the way they treat their environment. But, a lot has changed.

During Spanish colonisation (in the late 1500s), the first attempts were made to evangelise the Philippine population. Largely, this did not succeed in the Cordillera as the Igorots firmly resisted, however the Spaniards were able to convert most people in the lowlands (Taray 2008). For the Igorots, this started the process of becoming a minority in the Philippine society. The indigenous beliefs and practices were and are often stereotyped as 'pagan', 'superstitious', 'exotic', 'backward', and 'static' (Taray 2008: 61). They play an important role in distinguishing 'the wild highlanders' from the civilised Westerners and lowlanders. The American colonisation (late 1800s) further reinforced the minority-majority classification as, in the 20th century, the American and Belgian missionaries took up the responsibility of Christianising the Igorots and went to the remote villages throughout the Cordillera (Ibid). Their attempt proved more successful since many Igorots have become devoted Christians ever since. Christian churches can be found all over Benguet and Mountain Province – see for example picture 5.3 below. This does not mean that the pre-colonial beliefs and traditions have completely disappeared.

Figure 5.3: Episcopal (protestant) church in Kapangan

Picture taken by author, September 2012

Traditional rituals as ICM

As written above, rituals play an important role in the indigenous culture of the Igorots. Therefore, it is not surprising to find also rituals that are specifically related to the handling of disasters. The rituals that were mentioned as ICM for typhoon Pepeng, can be grouped in three categories (there are more variations though):

1. Preventing rituals - local terms: *pak-de*, *sumang*, *atang*
2. Cleansing/ healing rituals - local terms: *daw-es*, *sabusab*, *sumang*, *lawit*
3. Thanksgiving rituals - local term: *pan-iyaman*

The *preventing rituals* contain the blessing of communities, houses of persons to drive away bad spirits in order to prevent future harm. Someone from Tublay explained that they perform this ritual at night. They butcher an animal and then eat and pray together. Of course, the sacred beings also get their share of food, drinks and attention. Afterwards, the leftovers are equally divided among the participants. They either perform this ritual in order to prevent any future harm or specifically to ask for good harvest. A woman from Tadian told me, that she survived the 2009 landslide because her house was blessed before she moved in. Since she has been good to the spirits and ancestors and asked for their blessing, they have saved her live. And a victim from Kapangan whose house was completely damaged by the slide, said that he wanted to have his new house blessed to avoid a repetition of what happened in 2009.

The most common rituals, related to disaster, are the *cleansing or healing rituals* (often referred to as *daw-es*). This set of rituals serves to cleanse a person or a place from any bad spirits, memories and other bad omen. These rituals can contain multiple elements and purposes: (1) praying for the spirits or souls that were separated to regain strength, (2) blessing the spirits of the dead, (3) to avoid the tragedy to happen again and (4) asking for the general improved health of the community and prosperity. The cleansing rituals can be performed to purify places or people related to the accident. When someone dies an unnatural death, he or she needs to be cleansed both physical and spiritual. This needs to be done before the deceased person can be taken inside the house for the wake or the burial ceremony. See textbox 5.2 for a story about the healing of spirit and soul.

Textbox 5.2: Healing spirits and souls

A 52-year old male from Tublay with a Kankana-ey background shared his story with me about the ritual they performed for his deceased family member. His nephew passed away because of typhoon Pepeng. As they carried his body home, they were surprised by a sudden increase of the river. The body was taken by the water and was never found. So, they went to the place of the accident with a native chicken and a bamboo stick with a handkerchief. The purpose was to call his spirit and ask him to go with them. The soul can hold onto the handkerchief, so it can come home and will not be left at the accident area. After 40 days the family performed another ritual: *patapos*. This ritual marks the end of a mourning period in which the family members are not supposed to travel or attend any feasts. During this ritual they offered money, a blanket and clothes. Both rituals were to prevent the boys' soul from wandering around and to reconnect and heal the broken spirit and soul.

Daw-es is mainly performed for those who have experienced the sudden loss of a loved one – to take away grief and pain. After Pepeng, many relatives and rescuers participated in daw-es rituals in order to protect them from nightmares and any form of misfortune. Besides many rituals at the accident site, the municipal employees of Tadian and some of the volunteers commonly executed such a ritual for example. Note that these rituals are not

necessarily performed together with the entire community, it can also be a family or an individual affair. A survivor from Kapangan, for example, told me that he performed a ritual together with the local priest at the site of his destroyed house.

Lastly, the *thanksgiving rituals* are a way of expressing thankfulness for surviving a disaster to *Kabunian* and the other sacred beings. At several points in time, the community in Tublay performed rituals to express thankfulness and avoid future harm: after the road reconstruction; when the evacuees returned home; and one year after the slide. By offering native pigs, the community thanked the spirits for surviving the tragedy and commemorating those who did not.

For some people, the Igorot rituals are very much alive, but others have forgotten them.

> *Floor:* *Can you think of any other indigenous practices related to disaster?*
> *Translator:* *She is thinking of what the elders are usually doing, the rituals of the Igorot. But which she does not know, because she is not attending the rituals. It is the older ones who are doing it.*
> *Floor:* *The older ones?! [She is 82!]*
>
> An 82-year-old Christian follower from Tadian

<u>Christian coping</u>

Described above are the traditional rituals that were mentioned in relation to typhoon Pepeng throughout the four different research sites. However, many of the people I have interviewed are devoted Christians. So they coped with Pepeng through praying to the Christian god and attending mass. In Bokod, for example, the interviewees stressed that there are many ways to express thankfulness after surviving a disaster, depending on personal preferences. Some do it with the community, some with the family and some do it in church (without having to butcher and sacrifice an animal). In the aftermath of the typhoon, many church services were organised to process the tragedy and memorialise the victims.

Noteworthy is that people would often emphasise the fact that they are Christian when talking about rituals. Among the Christian Igorots I found generally three different attitudes towards the traditional rituals and the indigenous beliefs. Firstly, a group of people who strongly emphasise that they are Christian now and, thus, do not engage in any traditional rituals. Someone from Kapangan for example told me that the Roman Catholics organised a mass at the accident site. When I asked her whether they also butchered an animal, she said: "No, they just serve coffee" (Personal Communication 2012). This attitude might be the result of years of negative stereotyping of Igorot beliefs as described above.

Secondly, there is a group of people who also stress their Christianity, but at the same time engage in traditional rituals. It could be, that this group seems to deny their participation in ancient rituals for the same reason given above. But maybe they simply do not see the rituals – e.g. the butchering animals - as animist practice anymore, but just as part of local culture. A repeatedly heard phrase from this group is that they perform rituals "as a Christian" or "in the Christian way". And lastly, there are those people who

smoothly combine Christian faith with indigenous animist practices. For example, people who regularly join church services, but also have their houses traditionally blessed. For them it is not problematic to combine the Bible with the world of spirits and ancestors. This group appears to be proud of their rich tradition of rituals.

Pepeng and the role of religion

When it comes to coping with disater, do people rely more on traditional or modern beliefs? And how does that vary between people? I did not find big differences between tribes; the Ibaloi and Kankana-ey testimonies broadly correspond with each other (except for linguistic dissimilarities). But between the different research sites I have found slight differences. Table 5.1 below roughly shows to what degree pre-colonial versus Christian religious practices were of importance for the different research site after Pepeng.

Table 5.1: Traditional (pre-colonial) versus modern (Christian) rituals after Pepeng*

Site	Rituals after Pepeng
Tublay	**A combination of traditional and modern rituals and prayers**
	• "Our community elder suggested to do a ritual" • "They butchered a pig and prayed to their ancestors and god. The Christians prayed to their own god" • "The barangay captain held a *daw-es* which was attended by many people. It is not typical Kankana-ey, also the Ibaloi barangay members joined"
Bokod	**Christianity has mostly replaced the traditional rituals**
	• "It depends on the person, but I don't butcher an animal. I can give thanks to the lord everyday" • "I don't perform any rituals because I intend to follow the bible. It is more wise to follow the bible" • "Rituals seldom happen nowadays"
Kapangan	**Most of the rituals are replaced by or adjusted to Christian practices**
	• "I think the belief of our grandparents is slowly diminishing due to Christianisation" • "Some of the churches organised a special mass after Pepeng, because we have so many sects here, Lutheran, Catholic, and other" • "They just went to mass after. But after the building of the house, they again have this blessed. But no ritual, as a Christian"
Tadian	**Most people perform traditional rituals, but in a Christian way as they have forgotten how they were performed before**
	• "My grandfather butchered pigs before we moved into the house as a blessing, maybe that is why we survived Pepeng!" • "We invited Elders from other municipalities to perform the rituals, because we had forgotten" • "During the time of the Belgians, they said 'You have to forget your practices'. But the Igorot priest said we have to recall our good practices, our rituals, and we have to preserve that"

* These results are only true with regards to the people I have talked to, and not necessarily for the entire municipalities of Tubaly, Bokod, Kapangan and Tadian. There are, of course, differences between and even within barangays. These quotes are selected from the interviews in a way that they reflect the local situation according to my observation.

The table is a general analysis, but, there were (of course) very diverse stories within the communities. Even though the Christians strongly profile their belief, it seems like there is mutual tolerance between different practices and beliefs. It looks like religious practices mainly follow personal preference. These preferences are nevertheless influenced by someone's environment. Differences between localities might be the result of variances in exposure to migrants, missionaries and religious development projects as well as spiritual preferences of important community members and local leaders.

How does the practice of (traditional or modern) rituals foster the coping process? One of its functions is to support psychological recovery after tragedy. As written above, religion offers guidance for emergency situations and alleviates feelings of uncertainty and grieve. In this sense, spirituality can be beneficial both at an individual level as well as at the community level. Another very important function of practicing religion together is that it enhances social ties among the practitioners. It is a way of boosting social cohesion and bonding after disaster, because people come together and organise things together. As Oblas writes: "In cases of [traditional] death rituals, relatives, neighbours and friends are ready to give a helping hand. They sacrifice their time and effort without compensation" (Oblas 2003: 24). Taray describes the role of ancestors, saying: "Ancestors play a major role in fortifying and maintaining their solidarity as a kin group and as an indigenous community. During ritual performance people are expected to let go of their individual preoccupations in order to join the community in honouring, remembering and reconnecting with their ancestors" (Taray 2008"69). But of course, the same is true for modern religious practices. Performing religion together is thus a way of reinforcing social cohesion, which can be translated in social capital or bayanihan, which on its turn contributes to faster recovery after disaster. Christian fate adds another – more practical - function to coping after disaster, as many of the church buildings served as evacuation centres and there have been numerous church-related aid projects.

Thus, religion has several functions in the aftermath of disasters. The traditional rituals and practices of the Igorots have been subjected to change, due to the introduction of Christianity. But everybody still knows about the traditional beliefs and rituals, and they have not been largely abandoned. Choosing for one religion or the other (or both) and the performance of traditional rituals greatly dependents on personal preferences. From my personal observation, many of the animist values and some rituals are still part of the lives of very devoted Christians, because they are deeply rooted in the Igorot daily culture.

5.3 Early warning systems

In disaster terminology, early warning systems refer to "the set of capacities needed to generate and disseminate timely and meaningful warning information to enable individuals, communities and organisations threatened by a hazard to prepare and to act appropriately and in sufficient time to reduce the possibility of harm or loss" (UNISDR 2009: 9). Effective warning systems entail good forecasting, monitoring and analysis of hazards, as well as proper communication means to disseminate information about possible threats (Ibid). Effective early warning systems can really make a difference between life and death. And, as they keep improving, they increasingly reduce disaster mortality rates worldwide (Rogers and Tsirkunov 2011).

Warning systems work at many different levels, from the international to the very local. Since the Philippine archipelago is so prone to hazards, I was expecting to find highly developed local warning systems. Especially in indigenous communities where people live close to nature and have years of experience and knowledge on the environment and its threats. Surprisingly, people hardly ever mentioned any traditional warning systems as indigenous coping mechanism. Maybe people do not use traditional warning systems, or it is so embedded in their culture and practices that they do not distinguish them as such. However, after asking about early warning systems as ICM, most interviewees do recall the use of traditional methods. Thus, the warning methods are part of indigenous coping, but due to developments in communication and technology, they do not play an important role anymore.

R.27: They observe the ants.
Floor: During Pepeng?
R.27: No before, in the old days. It is more ignored [now] because of the technology. It was before the electricity was here. The radio now serves as an early warning device.
Translator for a 42-year-old farmer from Kapangan

Traditional and modern warning methods

In each community people told stories about a cat or a dog saving its owners life in the onset of the landslides in 2009. At first it looked like a frequently used warning method. However, it was usually just one case per community which everyone referred to. So, these occurrences are actually pretty rare and almost mythical - nevertheless listed as a traditional warning device. When it comes to the *prediction* of disasters, quite some methods were brought up. The most important one, is the observation of animals. Cattle, birds, dogs, snakes and insects show abnormal behaviour in the prospect of natural hazards, indicating danger. For example, when chickens sit closely together, there might be a storm coming. And ants are also a good indicator for upcoming storms; if they build their nests on tree tops there will probably be no typhoon, but if they make it underground there might be bad weather on the way. In relation to earthquakes, the behaviour of snakes, ants, worms and other underground species serve as warning, because they usually come out before earthquakes take place. In fact, in Tadian, people observed flamingo's one day before the disastrous landslide in 2009 happened, which is very unusual. Other traditional methods to forecast danger are: interpreting dreams; analysing the first summer rain; watching flowers; and observing the moon or sun – i.e. "phenological markers" (Krishna 2011: 36). The latter two are mostly used to predict misadventure – such as drought, rat infestations or pest - in relation to the harvest rather than hazardous events. People react to this by diversifying their crops and optimise their irrigation systems or water flow in the area to maximise their production.

Nowadays, people trust PAGASA: the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration. The institution was established in 1972 and currently falls under the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). Pagasa (or pag-asa) is a Tagalog term for the English word 'hope' – which fits the (former) fatalistic national disaster paradigm (as described in chapter four). Nevertheless, their mandate is very ambitious: "provide protection against natural calamities and utilise scientific knowledge as an effective instrument to insure the safety, well-being and economic security of all the people, and

for promotion of national progress" (PAGASA-DOST 2013). In practice, this means they are responsible for the public weather forecasting and advisories; typhoon and flood warnings; and meteorological, climatological and astronomical research (Ibid). They work closely together with the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) and the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Councils (DRRMC). Their advisories are communicated through new media, such as mobile phones and the internet – see figure 5.4.

Figure 5.4: Modern warning devices – OCD/CDRRMC going digital

The internet plays an important role in modern warning systems. For example, the regional Office of Civil Defense (OCD-CAR) and the City DRMMC have a Facebook-page[7] on which they update the people about weather conditions and advice how to respond. Figure 5.4.a is a print screen of the OCD-CAR Facebook page taken on August 2012. It shows there is a 'red alert' weather situation in the Cordillera region, with the possibilities of having heavy rains, landslides, rough seas and storm surges and (flash) floods. It furthermore shows a weather map and an update on typhoon Gener, which was causing the bad weather conditions at that time. This new medium allows people to respond to these messages and ask questions. Moreover, the public can even upload pictures and stories themselves. It is thus a new and very

[7] Facebook is an online social networking site that allows people to make personal profiles and connect to others. It has gained much popularity since its foundation in 2004 and serves as important communication and information medium.

interactive way of warning each other for oncoming danger. However, as not everyone has access to internet - especially not in rural communities – messages through television, radio and mobile phones also play an important role in communicating warnings. Figure 5.4.b is a text message from the city DRRMC – also during typhoon Gener - that was forwarded to me by a Baguio resident. It tells that all classes are suspended and people are advised to stay at home and listen to updates on the radio.

In the very remote places, people are updated by their barangay or sitio councils which are in direct contact with the municipal, regional and national DRRMCs. Hence, warnings are provided by PAGASA and communicated through the different Disaster Risk Reduction Management Councils via all sorts of ways of communication. The biggest difference with traditional warning systems is thus, (1) that people are trusting on the government (an external party) instead of their own observation. And (2) the use of complicated technology instead of their direct environment. In Tublay, for example, a rain gauge was placed after Pepeng to avoid future landslides. Locally, the people are responsible for measuring the rainfall, but they send the results to PAGASA where they are being interpreted.

<u>The shift to modern methods</u>

Since the traditional warning methods were hardly mentioned as ICM, I asked whether people do not use them anymore. The standard answer was: "only the old folks do it" – even when the interviewees were well stricken in years themselves. People nevertheless still believe in these traditional ways of predicting hazards. Yet, the modern warning systems have taken over. Because, first of all, with the traditional methods it is hard to predict *when* disaster will strike. In Tadian, for example, someone has dreamt of a big landslide, but that was years ago. And the dream did not explain when the disaster would take place. It could happen within a week, within a year or in ten years from now. Also, the unusual crossing of flamingos was noted, but people were not sure about the meaning of it. So, PAGASA offers more detailed information than the traditional warning methods.

Secondly, when we relate the traditional warning system with the indigenous (animist) beliefs of the Igorot, it becomes clear that it entails much more than just observing nature. Instead the indicators of threat – animals, dreams, nature and the sun and moon – are all part of the sacred community. In fact, the people are warned by the deities, spirits and ancestors. As Taray puts it: "When in need, certain recurring events, dreams or other means like "spirit-possession" are considered valid ways by which the dead communicate their wishes to the living" (Taray 2008: 68). Since the Christian mentality has increasingly gained importance in the Cordillera, it is understandable that the traditional warning methods are losing ground.

And thirdly, people explained to me that the traditional predictive methods are accurate, but no longer accountable in the fast changing environment. For instance because typhoons are not following the predictions due to climate change. They occur outside the regular typhoon season or they take irregular paths and are much stronger than foreseen. It is also harder to read the animals' behaviour because there is a decline in wild life in the Cordillera due to deforestation and population increase.

R.28: The prediction is correct, but due to climate change not hundred percent. For example, in the early days, they can tell exactly: 'When this kind of bird will appear, 8 days of straight rain'. It is accurate before, but now I think it is no longer applicable.

Floor: Why not?

R.28: Perhaps the climate changes, the global warming, denuding of the forest, like that. The wildlife has already fast becoming extinct. Nowadays even birds has disappeared, because their sanctuary has been destroyed.

A barangay captain from Kapangan

In 2009, most people did not foresee the disaster that was about to happen, they were caught unaware. This surprised me, given the fact that the Igorots and their ancestors faced close encounters with Mother Nature in all her facets for years. Why do they live on dangerous mountain slopes and why are they unable to predict oncoming danger? Most people explained that they have experienced many storms, but "Pepeng was not like anything before" (Personal communication 2012). They claim that the intensity of the storm was very high. And, since Pepeng made three landfalls - as explained in chapter three - people were very much surprised by Pepeng's return. This makes you wonder whether the prediction and handling of disaster really is something you can learn from one generation to the other, as it is being explained here as a once in a life-time experience.

The modern warning techniques were, apparently, *also* not sufficient enough to caution people on time for typhoon Pepeng. This has to do with the fact that PAGASA and the DOST were not as popular back then as they are now. And after Pepeng, risk assessment and communication underwent great improvements – this relates to the general progress in Philippine disaster management as explained in chapter four. Whether or not Pepeng has contributed to this is unsure. But, Pepeng has definitely increased the want for better warning systems among those who experienced the dreadful event. And they seem to rely on the modern warning systems more than their traditional methods.

5.4 Recapitulation

In this chapter the traditional coping strategies of the Igorots have been explored. Special attention was paid to how these practices are changing.

- The first, and most important indigenous coping mechanism (ICM), is the *system of mutual assistance* - i.e. people helping each other. The Tagalog term for this is bayanihan. This is a national trait, but is believed to be better preserved in the Cordillera than in the lowlands. Moreover, most of the (indigenous) interviewees distinguish bayanihan as typically Igorot. The practice of working together and helping each other, is deeply ingrained in the indigenous culture and explains many of the Igorot values and behaviour. Helping each other is automatic, immediate and voluntary, but is also somehow expected and socially desired. Examples have been given of help within, but also between communities. An important observations is that

bayanihan is strongest right after disaster and diminishes over time. Moreover, bayanihan in general is declining under the influence of modernisation, but people are hopeful that the practice will endure. Note that most people emphasised that bayanihan is not restricted to emergency periods only, but does revive in times of disaster.

- The second ICM is the use of *rituals and religion*, as they guide behaviour, support psychological recovery and reinforce social ties. The section provides a description of the traditional animist beliefs and the increasing turn towards Christianity. When it comes to coping with disaster, performing one religion or the other (or a combination of them) greatly depends on personal preferences. Traditional rituals have not been forgotten as they are rooted in the Igorot daily culture, they are even combined with Christian faith.
- The third ICM is about *early warning and predicting risk*. Even though people still believe in the traditional ways of predicting hazards (e.g. by observing animals; interpreting dreams; analysing the first summer rain; watching flowers; and observing the moon or sun), nobody seems to practice them anymore. Instead, they listen to the radio or use other upcoming information sources such as the internet (e.g. Facebook) and text messages. So, the biggest change is (1) that people nowadays trust an external party (their government and the national weather station) instead of their own observation and (2) make use of technology instead of their direct environment.

Despite changing values and new ways of coping with disaster, the 'old' practices have not been forgotten. In fact, people stress their indigenous capacity when coping with disaster – see the discussion below. The next chapter investigates how the indigenous strategies described in this chapter are supplemented or replaced by external assistance.

Discussion: Are the indigenous coping mechanisms not so indigenous after all?

There are two interesting aspects to the indigenous coping mechanisms. First of all they are not *designed* to cope with disaster. They have evolved out of everyday normal behaviour. Especially behaviour related to agricultural practices: helping each other in the field, asking the spirits for good harvest and predict dry or wet periods. This is in compliance with the findings of Gaillard and Pangilinan et al, who write: "It is noteworthy that strategies to cope with floods are anchored in daily life. Most are adjustments in everyday activities of the flood-affected people rather than extraordinary measures adopted to face extreme and rare natural events" (Gaillard, Pangilinan et al. 2008: 391). Similarly, coping strategies are not always *strategically* thought of. Moreover, they are often not even recognised as special behaviour, because they are to such extent integrated in everyday life. However these strategies do contribute to better coping after disaster – i.e. they have real effects.

Secondly, I wonder how 'special' or how 'indigenous' the coping mechanism that I have described are. In the Cordillera, I have found a pattern of strong solidarity and much help right after disaster strikes, which then diminishes over time. But this seems to be the normal pattern for other disasters in other places as well. In the field of social psychology, Krzysztof and Norris have written the following about this: "The literature distinguishes explicitly among several post impact stages: The salient heroic phase, with its

therapeutic features of increased cohesiveness and altruism, is soon replaced by the disillusionment and reconstruction phases. It is then that the victims discover that the need for assistance far exceeds the availability of resources and realise that the increased sense of benevolence was short-lived" (Krzysztof and Norris 1995: 95). A few years later, Sweet argues the same: "Findings indicate that social cohesion increases in the immediate aftermath of the disaster. However, one month after the disaster, perceptions of the community return to pre-disaster levels" (Sweet 1998: 321). So, can you distinguish bayanihan as an indigenous coping mechanism to disaster or is it 'normal' human behaviour? It does seem like people in the Cordillera really go above and beyond to help each other, but to which extent this is indigenous is debatable.

However, whether or not the coping mechanisms of the Igorots are typically indigenous or whether or not they have been designed to cope with disaster, is not the issue here. What is key here, is that people value them as important coping mechanisms of indigenous peoples. People are very proud to state that they helped each other after Pepeng and that this is thanks to the indigenous culture. This is also the image that local media and indigenous advocacies sketch – as will be shown in chapter seven. Thus, this articulation in itself already improves trust in recovery after disaster. Moreover, it also helps to revive some of the indigenous practices. Thus, the ICMs that are described in this research might not be very special, but the articulation of indigneity in coping with disaster is really special.

6. Interface with external aid providers

The previous chapter has introduced the indigenous coping mechanisms of the Igorots and shows how these are transforming in a changing society. One of the biggest changes is the increasing integration of previously remote highland villages with the larger Philippine and even international society. This also affects disaster management. This chapter focusses on the contact, or interface, between the affected communities and external aid providers (from the perspective of the beneficiaries). It will address (1) the different parties that have played a significant role after Pepeng, (2) the dependency on external aid and (3) features of interaction, negotiation and organisation. But, first I would like to share a remarkable example in the textbox below. This case is a leading thread in this chapter and will be often referred to. However, the analysis and findings of the chapter are based on all four research sites.

Textbox 6.1: Cafe by the Ruins - An example of agency and collaboration

Café by the Ruins is a special restaurant in Baguio. After the 1990 earthquake that affected countless people throughout Central- and Northern Luzon and destroyed most of Baguio, Cafe by the Ruins was converted into a soup kitchen. The restaurant served meals to more than thousand evacuees in Baguio per day. Nineteen years later, when Pepeng struck, 'Team Cafe' again started a soup kitchen. However, this time the situation was different, as most victims were residing in evacuation centres outside of Baguio and the volunteers found that near Baguio and La Trinidad "each evacuation centre was taken care of by a politician or a government official" (Personal communication 2012). They thus decided to reach further out and deliver food in more isolated places. They ended up bringing meals to communities in the municipalities of Tuba and Tublay, for the greater part by foot as large parts of the roads were washed out by the storm.

Through e-mail and text messages, Team Cafe raised funding for the relief operation. Apparently, people were passing their messages on as many donations poured in from all over Baguio, Manila and from overseas Philippine contract workers. After a while they also started to receive other relief items, like clothing and blankets which they distributed in some of the more remote areas. It started as a small operation with only a few volunteers, but they were nevertheless able to feed around three hundred people, three meals a day. In turn, the beneficiaries did not rest either. After some weeks of receiving relief, a community in Tublay organised themselves and planned a meeting for all people who have been helping them until up then. They said: "This is where we are, we would like to move on. We have been in the evacuation centres for too long, how can you help us?". They were very good in keeping track of who had helped them and who could be of any help. Clan relations have much value in the Cordillera, and the Tublay community smartly used them to attract more help. They approached government officials, NGOs, churches, universities - and establishing an entire network.

As the donations kept coming in, Team Cafe decided to move on from doing relief work to doing rehabilitation work with this active community in Tublay. Together with an NGO they distributed piglets for livelihood recovery. The beneficiaries had to pay a contribution of thousand pesos, which was used for a communal disaster fund. Team Cafe also started a bakery project for eighty women to generate income by selling their products in neighboring municipalities. Together with a young scientist from the Department of Science and Technology they organised a risk assessment workshop and they got the department to donate a rain gauge. In addition, seminars on disaster preparedness were held, including the purchasing of a first aid kit and spine-board. Finally, a *sitio* Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council was founded and trained for future hazards, partially with money from the local government that could be released after the Republic Act of 2010.

In retrospect, the role of Cafe by the Ruins was finding the right people who had something special to contribute to the community to help them to move forward. They started with doling out food, together with quite some volunteers and ended up doing recovery and preparedness activities, with only two people. They were guided by the explicit requests from the community, who was very pro-active in seeking help and expressing their needs.

6.1 Aid agencies: from the government, to NGOs and civil initiatives

The story above touches upon many aspects of disaster management and the interface of aid providers and aid beneficiaries in particular. First of all, it shows that many parties are involved, and not just formal aid providers. In fact, the informal actor from the example played a very important and substantial role. It also shows how several parties work together and that the boundaries between different aid agencies are not that clear.

Professional assistance

In order to better understand how the affected communities have been assisted after Pepeng, I will first give a modest overview of professional organisations that have contributed to relief and recovery after the typhoon. Table 6.1 shows the governmental aid providers that were mentioned in the interviews. Thereafter, table 6.2 displays some of the non-governmental organisations.

Table 6.1: Governmental aid providers and their main activities

Governmental aid providers*	Level**	Main activity
Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)	Mun.	-Immediate relief -Evacuation -Rehabilitation (H&L)***
Department of Agriculture (DA)	Reg.	-Recovery of livelihoods (subsidies & seed distribution)
Department of Science and Technology (DOST) & Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA)	Reg.	-Warnings and predictions -Preparedness (donation of rain gauge & research)
Office of Civil Defense (OCD) & Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council (DRRMC)	Nat. Reg. Mun.	-Warnings -Emergency commander -Preparedness & DRR- trainings
Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)	Reg.	-Rehabilitation of infrastructure
Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) & Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)	Reg.	-Risk assessment and relocation
National Housing Authority (NHA)	Nat.	-Recovery of housing (offering loans)
Army, Philippine National Police (PNP), fire commanders	Mun.	-Rescue and retrieval
Barangay officials	Mun.	-Damage assessments and reportage -Mediation/ communication

* This table reflects the actors and actions that were mentioned during the interviews, so this is not a complete overview of all governmental aid in the region.

** This column reflects on what level the actor is active: Mun.= municipal, Reg.= regional, Nat.= national

*** Rehabilitation projects on both housing and livelihoods

Table 6.2: Non-governmental organisations and their main activities

Non-governmental organisations*	Level**	Main activity
Cordillera Disaster Response and Development Service (CorDis RDS)	Reg.	-Preparedness & DRR- trainings -Immediate relief -Rehabilitation (H&L)***
Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA) together with the Serve the People Brigade	Reg.	-Immediate relief -Reducing vulnerabilities (advocate IP-rights)
Philippine Red Cross	Nat. Reg.	-Immediate relief -Semi-permanent housing (donating construction materials)
UN World Food Program (UN-WFP)	Int.	-Donated relief items (tents and food) -DRR-project with Kapangan
Habitat for Humanity	Int.	-Recovery of housing (donating construction materials)
CARE NL	Int.	-Semi-permanent housing (donating construction materials)
UNICEF	Int.	-Immediate relief -children's healing project
Community Family Services Incorporated (CFSI)	Nat.	-Livelihood recovery (distribution of piglets)
Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines - National Secretariat for Social Action-Justice & Peace (CBCP-NASSA)	Nat.	-Recovery of housing (donating construction materials)
Alay sa Kapwa (AKAP) Foundation	Reg.	-Immediate relief -Preparedness & DRR- trainings
Christian Children's Fund (CCF)	Int.	-Recovery of housing (donating construction materials)

* This table reflects the organisation and their main activities that were mentioned during the interviews, so this is not a complete overview of all non-governmental aid in the region.

** This column reflects on what level the actor is active: Reg.= regional, Nat.= national, Int.= international

*** Rehabilitation projects on both housing and livelihoods

The tables indicate that quite some parties were involved in relief and recovery operations after typhoon Pepeng. They also show that few of them were involved in risk reduction and disaster preparedness. From these tables it might look like the Philippine state hardly received any support from the international community. But, both governmental and non-governmental programs were often supported by international donors – either in the form of money or in the form of relief items. The NDCC situation report mentions big international donors such as the World Health Organisation, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the European Commission and the United Nations, as well as individual countries (NDCC(b) 2009). In supporting non-governmental organisations, the United States and Germany were often mentioned as important donors. Please not that these tables only reflect the

aid providers and their actions, as mentioned in the interviews. So, this is not a complete overview of all external assistance after Pepeng. It could very well be that vital donors and organisations who were less visible are not shown here. In fact, quite often people were unaware of where aid was coming from – as will be explained later on in this chapter. Concrete examples of external assistance will be given in the following chapter.

Informal, civil initiatives

What really surprised me during this research, were all the beautiful stories of civilians who contributed to the relief and recovery after Pepeng. Whether or not these are part of bayanihan, they are great examples of how people can help each other after disaster. In addition to the story described above, there are many more examples. When Pepeng hit, the office of the CPA and many other NGOs flooded with donations (food, blankets, clothing, as well as money). Apparently the Baguio *citizens* and local associations, such as sports clubs, all wanted to contribute. The active network of the Philippine *overseas contract workers* was also utilised to gather donations. The NGO-employees themselves worked around the clock to re-pack the items and deliver them to the affected communities. *Businesses* were also involved, especially water providers, bakeries and telephone companies. Some donated money, others donated goods. Also international enterprises were involved – e.g. K-Water from Korea donated bottled water in Kapangan. There was furthermore an active role for all sorts of *associations*. Both the Rotary Club and Lions International donated some of their time and money to help the victims of Pepeng. Just like the alumni of many fraternities and student organisations. Another example is the youth organisation 'Sangguniang Kabataan' that worked closely together with Team Cafe in Tublay. Universities contributed by sending their *students* to deliver relief goods in affected areas. *Churches* played an important role during the evacuation, as many of them immediately provided shelter. But also later on, as they financially supported their affected followers with the reconstruction of houses.

And lastly there are some *individuals*, who have played crucial roles. To me, Randy from Kapangan is one of those persons. After Pepeng hit, he was in harness for days, together with his team 'HEART for Cordillera' - the Highland Emergency Action and Response Team. This group of friends have followed rescue and emergency medical service trainings. Therefore they were able to contribute largely to the rescue and retrieval operations after Pepeng. In addition to rescue, they also helped with the distribution of food that was delivered by helicopter. In the picture below, Randy (in the bright green shirt), is discussing with the helicopter pilots, military personal and local administrators – see figure 6.1 on the next page. When this picture was taken, he was actually mediating in an argument about which areas should be prioritised. He also accompanied the pilots on their flight to pinpoint some drop-off points. His experience as tourist guide and active citizen of Kapangan was priceless, as he knows many people in the area has extensive knowledge of the region. HEART also organises trainings in firefighting, rappelling and CPR. Randy was trained by, and volunteers for the Red Cross Benguet.

To me, the picture and story of Randy illustrates that informal aid providers can play a vital role in external assistance. Other individuals that really stood out, where the two volunteers from Team Cafe who supported the affected community in Tublay all the way to the end and put so much effort into it. However, when looking closely, many more of these important individuals can be distinguished.

Figure 6.1: Randy mediating in a conflict during a relief operation in Kapangan*

*Picture retrieved from the 'HEART Cordillera' Facebook page, with permission from Randy (in green shirt)

Valuing external assistance

A critique on this research could be that it does not provide a complete overview of all the different aid deliverers or the amounts of aid that was provided after Pepeng. Nor does it calculate whether this proportion of aid was sufficient, given the damage done. First of all, it is very difficult to estimate how much aid has been offered or to compare this with other regions in the Philippines. I have looked at several reports, but most of them show contradictory data. In addition, as shown above, much informal aid has been provided. But, more importantly, it is also not the aim of this research. My objective is to present the opinion of the affected communities, *their* perspective on the external assistance. This might differ from factual data about aid projects or opinions by other actors.

Overall, people were satisfied with the help in the phase of relief. But not so much about the assistance in the recovery and rehabilitation phase. Strikingly, they hardly ever commented on assistance in the phase of preparedness and prevention. The next chapter will look into the everyday challenges that people faced after Pepeng - an important part of this is what sort of aid they did, or did not, receive. When it comes to the appreciation of the different aid agencies, it is hard to make any claims. In general, people showed gratitude towards all aid providers. But there were at the same time also many complaints about certain projects or ways of working. In general, opinions differentiated largely and contradictions were found between and even within affected persons. Moreover, people often did not know who had helped them. There was lots of confusion about where aid was coming from. The main reason for this, is that

different aid agencies often worked together. A nice illustration is the Training-Seminar on Community-Based Rain-Induced Landslide Disaster Mitigation at Tublay in 2010. The investors of this project are: Community Family Services Incorporated (NGO), Team Café by the Ruins, Alay sa Kapwa Foundation and the local government of Tublay. The training was given by a scientist who is affiliated with the Kalinga Apayao State College and the Department of Science and Technology. So, this is a wide collaboration between formal and informal actors with governmental or independent backgrounds. Thus, it is understandable that confusion about the source of aid arises. Moreover, the domains that are described here (governmental, non-governmental, non-professional), overlap in reality. As Hilhorst puts it: "Domains overlap partly because of the simple reason that some people belong to more than one domain or because they travel between domains" (Hilhorst 2004: 63). For example a government official who previously worked at an NGO and grew up in an indigenous community. Or the barangay captain in Tadian, who was at the same time one of Pepengs' victims. The section hereafter will look at who *should* be responsible for helping affected communities.

6.2 Dependency on aid and the responsibility of delivering it

Another aspect the story in the textbox touches upon, is about dependency on aid and the responsibility of assisting disaster affected communities. After hearing the story, I wondered why Team Cafe played such a big role in the recovery. Could the community not overcome Pepeng themselves? And what was the role of the professionals; the government and NGOs? Who is responsible for recovery after disaster anyway?

<u>Dependency on aid</u>

An often articulated character trait of the Igorots is that they are independent and self-reliant; a 'true' Cordilleran is someone who survives on its own. So, how come that external help was needed in the aftermath of Pepeng? Were the indigenous coping strategies not sufficient enough? The answer lies in the definition of disaster (as given in chapter two): 'A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts that *exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources*' (UNISDR 2009: 09). In other words, Pepeng could not be dealt with alone. This, however, does not mean that the affected communities helplessly waited for external parties to rescue them.

> *"They utilised their own resources first, like the system of ub-ubbo [Kankanay-ey term for bayanihan], but it is not enough, so they needed extra help. But they didn't wait for help, they started right away."*
> Planning officer for the municipality of Tadian

Articulating the resilient capacities and self-reliance of the Igorots, or indigenous peoples in general, could endorse self-help, as people believe in their own capacity to cope with disaster. On the other hand, there is a danger of outside ignorance and neglect, since help does not seem that pressing – i.e. it could function as an excuse for not interfering. I find it difficult to say whether this is the case in practice. For

example, CorDis RDS (Cordillera Disaster Response and Development Services) does recognise and acknowledge typical Igorot traits - such as independence and self-reliance - but are very committed to improve disaster management (at all stages) of indigenous communities. Perhaps an extensive quantitative study on humanitarian aid and recovery projects could reveal disparities between indigenous and non-indigenous communities or regions.

Levels of self-reliance varied greatly among the researched communities and within them. For one, this is dependent on the impact of Pepeng on the community – i.e. the damage done and the number of casualties. Tadian, for example, suffered much more casualties than the other research locations. And the municipality of Kapangan experienced great economic impact. But these are not the only determinants for dependency on outside help; the *perceived* impact also plays an important role. And so does the personal socio-economic situation – which explains differences within communities. It is thus a combination of different situations and different opinions. For instance, some victims said: “We were in shock, we didn’t know what to do” or “We need help for our food and livelihoods”. While others claimed: “We are not depending on the outside help. It is extra, but when it comes, we are more thankful” (Personal communication 2012). This dependency might correlate with many other factors as well – e.g. levels of community organisation, differences in tribal or provincial background, the physical and perceived distance to the city and a history of coping with disasters (with or without external aid). Also cultural differences and change in general might play a role – e.g. changing cultural practices such as diminishing bayanihan. See also textbox 6.2 on the right.

> <u>Textbox 6.2: Differences between Benguet and Mountain province in coping and dependency?</u>
>
> It would, for instance, be interesting to find out whether people in Benguet are more or less dependent on external assistance in times of disaster than people in Mountain Province. In the latter, there used to be more tribal conflicts, leading to compact villages of community members working together to combat outsiders. Whereas the houses in Benguet are more scattered and there is less communal organisation. Also here, more econmic changes took place, as this region serves as vegetable garden of the Philippines. How do these contextual factors influence coping and dependency on outside help after disaster?

Another point of interest is feelings of dependency on external aid *over time*. So, I asked whether people think they have become more or less dependent on external aid compared to earlier generations. In general, most people think that their dependency has increased over time. I found three main reasons for this. First of all, dependency on services. There has been a great shift in which the peoples of the Cordillera have become less self-sufficient and more modern. At least, the people I spoke to, told me that they increasingly rely on local grocery shops, electricity and government services (such as humanitarian aid). In times of disaster this shows by a run on the local stores to buy gas and consumption products. When these are sold out – as happened quite quickly in Kapangan for example – people are dependent on food donations from outside of their community. While in earlier years, people grew more food for personal consumption and barter with neighbours. Also, they were used to not having electricity for lighting or communication purposes. In this sense, disaster impact is much more felt than before. Plus, people have more access to information and aid, so they rely more on external assistance.

Secondly, dependency on external parties. As elaborated in the previous chapter, Igorot traditions and cultures are slowly but gradually changing. This affects - among other things - the system of helping fellow community members and increases the reliance on external parties. And lastly, dependency on cash and the modern economy. Subsistence agriculture is no longer sufficient, as people have become part of the modern economy. This change also impacts coping and recovery after disaster. Disasters are very costly events - also at the household level – so people need help overcoming them. Especially as the Cordillera is a relatively poor region and most people do not have savings or insurances. To illustrate; before, the reconstruction of houses was a matter of neighbourly labour exchange, now labour needs to be hired. Most of the times this is too expensive, so people have to rely on external donations and aid programmes. In addition, not just the circumstances have changed, along with them also the 'needs' and 'wants' have changed. People want to send their kids to school and buy mobile phones to be able to communicate with each other – i.e. standards are changing, making recovery more extensive and people more dependent on outside help.

> *"Before people were helping each other. But we are now at the age of technology and it is sometimes negative, because we have come dependent on technology.*
> 40-year-old female from Tublay with both a Kankana-ey and Ibaloi background

> *"Time changes our values. First there was no aid, people survived on their own. Now they have access to aid. In a way this develops dependency... on... but they should not keep on asking, they should learn to stand for their own."*
> The head of the DSWD in Kapangan

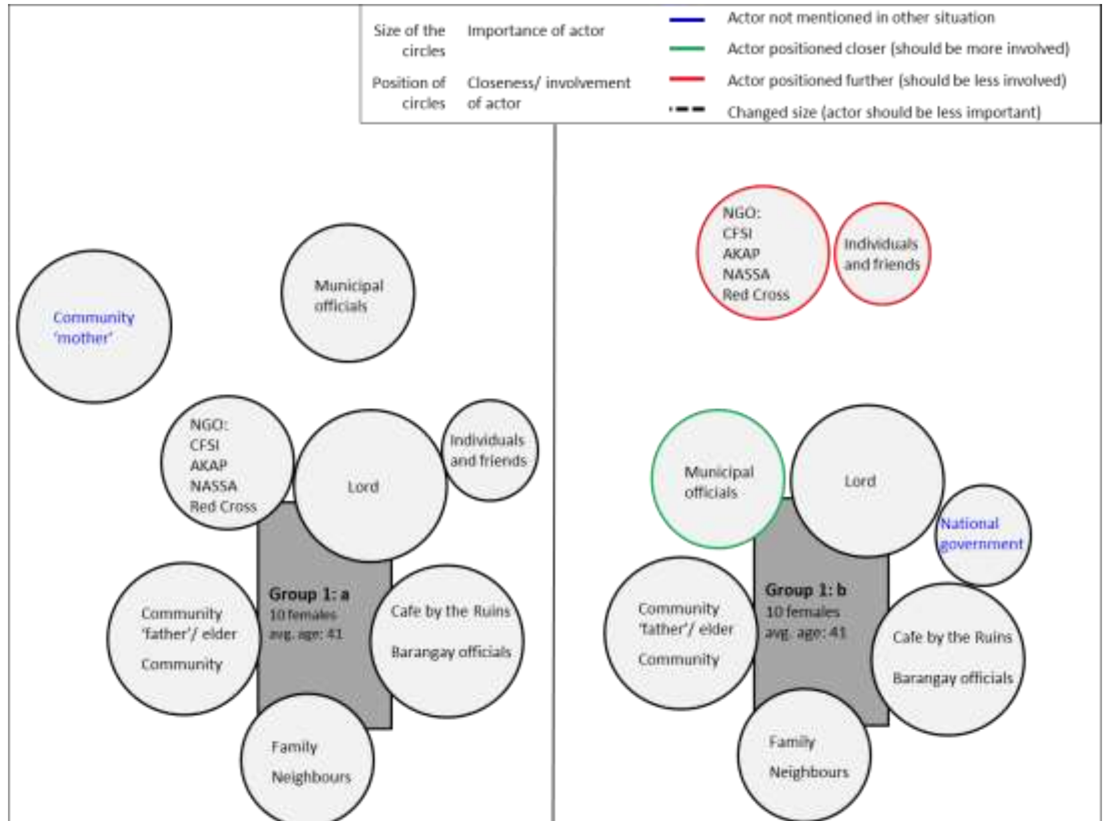
Thus, dependency on community members and personal coping capacity has shifted towards extra-communal structures. Both during the stage of relief and recovery, people feel dependent on external assistance. Most people felt they were sufficiently supported right after Pepeng, because lots of aid was mobilised and because of the strong structures of solidarity and help among citizens. However, during the phase of recovery, less assistance was available, even though people still needed help with the rehabilitation of housing and livelihoods. There was thus a gap in the demand and supply of aid. On the one hand this is because typhoon Pepeng was such a massive disaster. On the other hand, it raises questions about who should be responsible for supporting recovery after disaster.

Who is or should be responsible for (indigenous) recovery?

One way of finding out who were responsible actors in providing assistance after Pepeng, is by asking what sort of help people received and how they appraised it. Another way is to directly ask: "Who were important people or organisations that helped you after typhoon Pepeng?". I did both. To the direct question, most people explained that the family and community members were very important. Also the barangay council and other governmental bodies - for example the DSWD - were indicated as important actors. In general, the interviewees did not mention NGOs, civic initiatives and churches a lot. This is surprising considering that exactly these parties were often mentioned when describing who had helped significantly after Pepeng. I believe this partially has to do with the indistinctness of knowing who did what, but also with the *perceived* responsibility of delivering aid.

In Tublay, I have been able to conduct an 'actor mapping' exercises part of the participatory rural appraisal (for an explanation see page 17 and 18). This is yet another way to explore dependency and responsibility-relationships. It is furthermore the perfect tool to visualise the engagement of different actors. For the exercise I asked the three participant groups to write down the different actors on larger or smaller pieces of paper, indicating the importance of the actors. Thereafter I asked them to position these in such a way that it indicates the closeness or involvement of the actor. This was first done for the actual situation as the participants remembered it – i.e. a visualisation of the aid agencies that helped them in the aftermath of Pepeng. After that, I asked them to do this exercise again, but now for their ideal situation – i.e. a visualisation of who *should* have been helping them. Unfortunately, I have only been able to perform this exercise in one of the research sites. But, at least, for this place it shows clear results – see figure 6.2 below.

Figure 6.2: Actor mapping in Tublay: The situation after Pepeng (a) and the ideal situation (b)*



* These images are digitalised versions the actual results of the actor mapping (Tublay, October 2012) in order to improve the readability and secure the privacy of the participants (as names have been removed).

Figure 6.2 continued

Governor of Benguet
Family
Community 'father'/ elder
Neighbours
Group 2: a
7 females
avg. age: 40
God
Community
World Food Program
Barangay officials
NGOs Team Cafe AKAP
Mayor

Governor of Benguet
Family
Community 'father'/ elder
Neighbours
Group 2: b
7 females
avg. age: 40
God
Community
World Food Program
Barangay officials
Mayor
NGOs Team Cafe AKAP

Group 3: a
9 males
avg. age: 49
Community
Com. father
NGOs Team Cafe AKAP NASSA Aloyon Pakdi Red Cros
Local government of -province -municipality -barangay
Tublay police Benguet army
Media (Midland)

National government
Group 3: b
9 males
avg. age: 49
Local government of -province -municipality -barangay
Community
Media (Midland)
Tublay police Benguet army
NGOs Team Cafe AKAP NASSA Aloyon Pakdi Red Cros

Size of the circles	Importance of actor	(blue)	Actor not mentioned in other situation
		(green)	Actor positioned closer (should be more involved)
Position of circles	Closeness of actor	(red)	Actor positioned further (should be less involved)
		(dashed)	Changed size (actor should be less important)

How to interpret the figure above? According to the first group, the national government was not involved after Pepeng at all, but in their ideal situation the group thinks they should have been involved. Also they placed the actors 'NGOs' and 'Individuals and friends' further away in the ideal situation, indicating that it should not have been their responsibility to play such a big role in the recovery after Pepeng. The municipal officials, however, should have been more involved. The image of the second group shows that the mayor is positioned very far from the group, apparently this group was not satisfied with his performance. In their ideal situation they place the non-governmental actors a bit further and the mayor a lot closer. Lastly, the image of the third group, also shows that the national government should have been more involved – just like the first group indicated. They furthermore would have liked to see a bigger role for the media; the police and army; and the local government. Less so for the NGOs and other civil initiatives, such as Team Cafe. Two out of the three groups, show that the role of important community figures should not be that big. In fact, the textbox example from the beginning of this chapter shows that people started to organise themselves and arranged a meeting with aid providers, this was partially because the community was frustrated about the slow response by the government.

The most important conclusion from these results is thus that the national and local government should have taken more responsibility in helping the community to cope with typhoon Pepeng, instead of the community members, NGOs and other civil actors. This conclusion corresponds with the findings from the interviews in the other research locations as well. People mainly complained that there was not enough assistance in the stage of recovery. In this phase, infrastructure and public places were prioritised by the government over the recovery of livelihoods and the reconstruction of houses – which is exactly what the non-governmental parties focused on. It thus seems that people expect a lot from the government and not too much from the other actors. Note that not all affected people were critical about the role of the government, quite a few were very content with their functioning. So, some of the affected people were happy about the governments' performances after Pepeng, others were very critical, but the majority agrees that providing assistance after disaster is mainly the responsibility of the government. The government officials themselves agree with this. In fact, many of them expressed that they wanted to take more action in disaster mitigation – mainly when it comes to preparedness and recovery - but lack decisive power and sufficient budget. The biggest problem is that the lower administrative levels are highly dependent on authorisation and money from above – this will be further explained in chapter seven.

6.3 Interaction and organisation

Finally, the example from the textbox in the beginning of this chapter shows that there is communication or negotiation about humanitarian assistance between the different parties. How do indigenous communities go about communicating and organising themselves in order to ensure a quick recovery?

<u>Interface: bridging the gap to mobilise resources</u>

The story of Cafe by the Ruins is an example of both 'citizenry-based' and 'community-based' disaster

management. According to Heijmans, citizenry-based refers to the “moral duty and solidarity among citizens to help each other, recognizing that local people have agency and capacities to deal with crisis and to overcome it” (Heijmans 2012: 87) – we could even call it bayanihan. What distinguishes it from community-based action, is the “partnership between the vulnerable and less vulnerable sectors, [who] are able to contribute resources like finances, leadership, technical skills, intellectual thinking and material resources” (Ibid). The Team Cafe volunteers helped this particular sitio in Tublay, as they themselves were not directly affected and were in the position to mobilise resources to offer help, using money from other engaged Philippine citizens.

However, the community itself actively sought help for their recovery from Pepeng. That is an example of ‘community-based’ action – which “refers to the agency and capacities of the neediest, deprived, least served and poorest segments in a village, whose socio-economic conditions make them highly vulnerable to hazards and disasters” (Heijmans 2012: 88). Thus, the community in Tublay was highly vulnerable after Pepeng hit their village, as the impact was great and resources limited, but they nevertheless deployed their agency. It is in fact a very nice illustration of social capital. This community showed not only lots of bonding social capital (see page 11 for the explanation of this concept) in helping each other in road clearing etcetera. They also utilised strategic relationships of community members. One of the influential community elders for example has been in politics, so he used his connections to talk to the provincial government. Others approached NGOs, churches, universities and businesses (like the restaurant). One cannot get a better example of linking social capital. These people not only have the right connections, but also the ability to communicate across hierarchical relations and statuses, they can speak the ‘language’ of the other. Exactly this space, where different lifeworlds meet, where people communicate and negotiate about assistance, is the interface of aid. And in the aftermath of Pepeng, these key people in the community functioned as interface experts – see page 10. It seems that they themselves are aware of this. They might not call themselves ‘interface experts’, but they did handle very strategically.

<u>Organisation</u>

Other strategic action was found in the way people organised themselves after Pepeng. In Kapangan an example was given of aid beneficiaries who rented a vehicle together to collect the reconstruction materials which were provided in another municipality. A different example is of a group volunteering community members who repaired an important footbridge together. These are both illustrations of community-based action. Not only performed by community members, but also initiated by them. Traditionally the community elders are the impellers and leaders of such activities. However, as explained on page 3, their role is slowly but gradually diminishing. Nowadays ‘the elite’ – educated and wealthy community members – and the barangay council replaces the role of the elders. Another current trend, is that aid providers – both governmental and non-governmental – often request the establishment of victim community associations. Three such associations or committees are:

- Neighbourhood Association for Shelter Assistance (Tadian)
- Solidarity of Ambassador Victims and Evacuee (Tublay)
- Labey Indigenous People Community Association (Bokod)

They are made up of the more influential community members. Thus, organisation structures are becoming more formal and externally arranged.

The victim associations are to represent the aid beneficiaries and channel the communication with the aid providers. But their responsibilities reaches beyond this. The association in Tadian, for example, was responsible for purchasing the construction materials in the DSWD semi-permanent housing project. And the association in Bokod was responsible for selecting the twenty-five households that could participate in the shelter and livelihood recovery project by CARE NL and CorDis RDS. In the latter situation, one of the members of the association became a beneficiary, because her house was located in a hazardous area. However, this was quite contested as her objectivity was questioned by other community members who also wanted to benefit. Participation is always celebrated, but here you see that the shifting of responsibility from the aid providers towards community members can also inflict friction or even conflict. Moreover, these newly formed associations are additional to already existing structures. If there are already active community associations, why not use those? The researched community in Tublay is quite small (approximately hundred households) and there they have a community association, a sitio Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council, the victim association and of course the barangay council – which seems quite redundant. In fact, when I went to Bokod for fieldwork, people were at first worried that I was another community organiser.

Lyons (2009) explains how the establishment of local committees reflects the participatory ambitions of aid projects. Moreover, she argues that these committees are not necessarily created to organise communities, but to improve communication with and increase accountability of the aid provider. She writes: "The development of local committees and their involvement in every stage of the construction process makes such villages better equipped to debate and prioritise aims, deal with authorities and development organisations, and demand accountability from representatives and agents" (Lyons 2009: 394). But why not communicate with already existing committees? Maybe because the aid providers would like to have a say in which people are representing the community. Vervisch and Titeca highlight the negative aspects of such a 'social engineering' approach (Vervisch and Titeca 2010).

6.4 Recapitulation

In this chapter, the matter of external aid has been discussed from the perspective of the affected families.

- The first section shows that many *different parties* have been involved in providing aid after Pepeng. It also teaches that informal aid organisations or individuals (with little resources) can have a very big impact on the recovery process. People found it hard to make a distinction between them and were often unaware of who was actually helping them. This is caused by the fact that there was much collaboration between NGOs, local governments, churches and civil initiatives – as well as overlap between the actor domains.
- The second section addressed the *dependency on aid and the responsibility of delivering it*. The Igorots are known for their independence and self-reliance, however, when disasters are too big to handle (as per the definition of a disaster), people need outside help. But they do not passively wait for help to come. The (perceived) level of dependency on external aid varied highly between and within communities. But in general dependency increases. This is because Igorot

communities are gradually becoming more modern, resulting in (1) greater dependency on stores, electricity and government services; (2) deteriorating traditional practices such as bayanihan and (3) integration in the cash system, leading to more expensive recovery and new wants. Opinions on the governments' performance after typhoon Pepeng varied quite a lot, but most people agreed that the government is most responsible for the assistance of recovery after disaster. The affected people do not hold local NGOs or the international community responsible for their recovery.

- The last section looked at *interaction and organisation structures*. In 'community-based' action there are key people who have the right connections as well as skills to communicate with (potential) aid providers – an example of agency and linking social capital. On the other hand, aid providers often requested the establishment of victim associations/ committees. These are not necessarily meant to organise the community but to channel the communication and increase accountability. However, these often supplement already existing organisation structures, causing tension. In general organisation structures are becoming more formal and externally arranged.

In short, this chapter provided more insight into the perceived assistance after typhoon Pepeng. It also discussed, who should be responsible for humanitarian assistance after disaster. The most important lesson is that informal actors can be very influential and that different aid agencies work together. The next chapter will address some of the struggles in coping after disaster in depth.

7. Everyday practices and politics

The previous two chapters displayed indigenous coping mechanisms and the interface with external aid, hereby focussing on trends and changes in how the Igorots handle disasters. In this chapter the focus lies more on specific, tangible issues by looking at *everyday practices and politics* of dealing with typhoon Pepeng. Thus, diving even deeper into the experiences of the typhoon victims. According to Hilhorst "everyday practices of disaster management may substantially diverge from official policy" (Hilhorst 2003: 45) – later on, we will see that this case proves so. For each disaster phase, certain challenges repeatedly came up, these will be covered in this chapter. And attention will be paid to the politics of disaster. But, first I would like to address a general issue that influences the whole of disaster management in the Cordillera and which seems inherent to the area itself, namely its poor infrastructure.

Due to the rough mountainous area it is hard to establish satisfactory infrastructure. This regional weakness particularly shows in times of disaster, because people are increasingly dependent on infrastructure while at the same time the infrastructure itself is badly affected. The first major infrastructural problem is transportation - see figure 7.1 for an impression. Many of the local roads are unpaved, so they get extremely muddy or flooded in times of heavy rain - making them less accessible or even completely impassable. In addition, heavy rains can trigger minor landslides on steep slopes near roads and sometimes the sinking of soil. These cause lots of damage to the roads and block them entirely. Important bridges are being washed away and traffic flows are furthermore hindered by trees and rubbish that are blown onto the roads by strong winds.

Figure 7.1: Bad road conditions near Tublay after typhoon Pepeng*

a.

b.

c.

* a. Severe damages along the Halsema Highway
Retrieved from http://digitaljournal.com/image/58107
b. Pushing the *jeepney* out of the sand
Retrieved from http://digitaljournal.com/image/58107
c. Ambulance surprised by a mud flow
Retrieved from http://www.flickr.com/photos/40468493@N02/4000253367/in/set-72157622560770448

The map in appendix 2 displays the Philippine road conditions on November 1, 2009 – it shows that the primary road in the Cordillera was impassable at several points after typhoons Ondoy and Pepeng. This, in combination with destroyed local routes, paralysed the transportation in the Cordillera. The already poor road conditions are worsened during typhoon season. This makes it difficult to organise rapid evacuations, deliver relief and transport victims. Since the road blockages are not fixed overnight, they also influence recovery after disaster. It is for example, very difficult to distribute construction materials, slowing down the reconstruction process of houses and other destroyed buildings. And, since many people in the Cordillera are engaged in agriculture, they are extremely dependent upon access to markets to sell their goods. Reduced transportation means less access and thus less income, making it even harder for them to secure and recover their livelihoods.

The second infrastructural problem is communications. Due to low population density and the rough environment, it is difficult to connect everyone with telephone lines, television, internet or even power to start with - regardless of interfering hazards. So, when disaster strikes, warning people or communicating about needed relief is extremely challenging in the more remote places, especially as typhoons easily destroy entire electricity networks. After Pepeng, people communicated with each other using their mobile phones. However, the batteries did not last longer than a couple of days and in some places it took several weeks to restore electricity. Hence, communication with relatives or outside assistance proved to be very difficult.

> *"The cell phone was used for barely a week for texting, then it was low battery. No more communication"*
> Translator for an affected community member from Kapangan

Thus, throughout the Cordillera and at all stages of disaster, people had to confront infrastructural difficulties and deal with reduced or absent transportation and communication means. As a consequence many communities have been isolated to various degrees and time-spans. What follows is a description of tangible hardships in the everyday practices of coping with disaster, ordered by disaster phase. I will first look at challenges in disaster preparedness for both the pre- and post-Pepeng situation. Thereafter, I will describe issues with aid distribution and the selection of beneficiaries for the phase of response and relief. Thirdly, the hardships in the phase of rehabilitation and recovery will be discussed. This phase is by far the most challenging for disaster victims. I will describe the manifold difficulties in the reconstruction of housing and the recovery of livelihoods. The fourth and final section of this chapter, looks into the everyday politics of disaster management throughout the various stages.

7.1 Preparedness and prevention

In 2009, hardly any measures were taken to prevent disasters or prepare for them. In fact, people did not expect any danger and were caught unaware when Pepeng struck. They expected a 'normal' typhoon, one like they had experienced many times before. So, from the individual level to the regional level, people were surprised and unprepared. A health worker from Tublay, mentioned that the impact of

Pepeng could have been reduced or prevented. She blamed the provincial government for not trying hard enough and wished that the politicians helped the community *before* the typhoon came. Strikingly, she was the only one of all the interviewees who mentioned this. This reflects how deeply rooted the reactive disaster approach was in the Philippine society and governance.

However, at various administrative levels there have been improvements in policy concerning preparedness and prevention. As written in chapter four, the national Philippine disaster management underwent a paradigm shift from disaster response to disaster risk reduction (DRR). This was marked by the adoption of the '2009-2019 Strategic National Action Plan' and the 2010 'Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act'. The government is trying to mainstream disaster management in policy plans at all levels. One of the biggest steps forward is the change in releasing emergency funds. Before, funds could only be released after the declaration of a disaster. Whereas nowadays, 5% of the total budget of the local government units *should* be spent on disaster mitigation. From this fund, 30% has to be saved for emergencies, which means that up to 70% may be used for disaster risk reduction.

> *"Before 2009 there was no disaster preparedness [...] we would wait until the area is eroded and the calamity is being declared in order to use funds"*
> The mayor of Tadian

So, there has been a great shift in the national disaster policy. I am not sure whether or not this change was caused by the disastrous experience after typhoon Ondoy and Pepeng. But, I do know for sure that Pepeng has changed the mind-sets of the local administrators in the Cordillera, and of course of those who were directly affected. The municipal employees claim to have learned from Pepeng and now give more importance to disaster prevention and preparedness. The municipality of Kapangan for instance is working together with the World Food Program on a DRR-program that should cover every single household. Across the different research sites, the following preparedness and prevention measures at municipal level were mentioned:

- Organise and train the barangay councils
    - -Trainings on first aid, rescue, monitoring, damage-reporting and communication
    - -The establishment of Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction Management Councils (BDRRMC)
    - -The formulation of barangay calamity guidelines
- Improve communications within the municipality and with higher and lower administrative levels
- Purchase equipment: i.a. stretchers, shovels, pick-ups, walkie-talkies and power generators
- Stock food and operate 24/7 disaster centres in times of typhoon signals
- Prevent erosion by planting (vetiver) grass and fruit trees
- Improve road conditions by constructing stone walls and drainage systems

This is a major improvement compared with the situation before Pepeng. But is it enough?

<u>Post-Pepeng disaster preparedness</u>

At the time of the fieldwork (August – November 2012) there were still some flaws in the preparedness efforts. At the individual level, it looked like there was discrepancy between what people said and what they actually did. The people who were directly or indirectly affected by Pepeng, argued that they are

more prepared now than before, saying that “Pepeng served as an eye-opener” and that they “have learned from Pepeng” (Personal communication 2012). But, when asked about details of this preparation, it turned out there were hardly any measures taken. Of course, you can question whether it is possible to prepare yourself for a landslide. After all, how is an emergency kit or stocked food going to help when your house is being washed away? But, it is of course, possible to prepare yourself for when your community gets isolated: e.g. stock water, food, candles, batteries and cooking gas. In practice, people hardly had such supply stocks.

Thus, even though Pepeng raised awareness of the importance of disaster preparedness, it did not really show in the everyday life of individuals. In my observation, this was because people rely a great deal on local stores and electricity in fulfilling their main necessities. Back in the days when people where more self-sufficient and did not rely on power companies or grocery stores, they were much less affected by isolations such as after Pepeng. In this sense, people increasingly became, more dependent on these external amenities which made them less prepared – as explained in the previous chapter. Another explanation that was given by many interviewees, was that they simply could not afford to buy extra provisions. Many of the people I talked to lost (a part of) their income due to Pepeng, because their plantation or rice field was destroyed or because they could not transport their products to the markets. As they struggled to pay for their normal expenses, they do not plan ahead to buy extras.

Awareness also drastically increased at the *barangay* level after Pepeng and some improvements occurred. As said, the barangay councils received trainings and seminars about disaster risk management. As a result the barangays are more organised now and have written emergency guidelines. However, there are still many complaints about resources. The barangays lack proper equipment for evacuation and rescue operations. And stocks of food, gas and the like are absent or very limited. According to the barangay officials, this has to do with a lack of budget, as the barangay income depends on funding from the local government units, the municipalities. Apparently, this is not enough to purchase the needed materials for sufficient disaster preparedness, despite the changes in calamity funds. What furthermore struck me, is that of all the barangays I visited, only the ones that suffered human losses received a rain gauge from the DOST. The communities that only suffered material damage, were still not equipped with this preventive measure. This could hint at the persistence of reactive rather than pro-active disaster management, regardless of the changed paradigm and policy plans.

At the municipal level, especially in Benguet, the biggest obstacle for proper preparedness is that the communities and houses are very scattered. People live together with their family on their own parcels, often as far away from others as possible. This makes it really hard to communicate with people and to organise them when needed. Even though the municipalities are trying to improve local communication and organisation, there are some challenges – which corresponds with the more general picture.

To conclude, Pepeng has probably increased the interest in preparedness and prevention, but at a practical level there are still many hindrances to overcome. Having a DRR-discourse alone, is definitely not enough.

Discussion: Could the disaster of Pepeng have been prevented?
In 2009 there was a paradigm shift from disaster response to disaster risk reduction (DRR). If this paradigm shift took place ten or twenty years earlier, could the disastrous events in 2009 have been prevented? Maybe better typhoon forecasting and a quicker response could have spared many lives. Maybe the building of typhoon-proof housing and the instituting of proper risk assessment could have saved some homes. Maybe the government could have enabled faster and smoother rehabilitation. That is a lot of 'maybes'. Surely, the typhoon could not have been prevented, but I think that its impact could have been reduced drastically. On the other hand, Japan is known as one of the worlds most experienced and best prepared countries when it comes to disaster, but it was still extremely impacted by the earthquake and subsequent tsunami in March 2011 (Mimura, Yasuhara et al. 2011; Kingston 2012). Can a country really be prepared for disaster? Probably not. But since nature cannot be controlled or organised, it is even more important to organise society in such a way that she is ready when nature strikes. That is why Mimura et al. – and so many other authors – argue that "single academic fields cannot resolve a real world problem. Rather, multi-disciplinary approaches are necessary to meet the challenges facing society" (Mimura, Yasuhara et al. 2011: 817).

7.2 Response and relief

Distribution of relief

In general, people were pretty satisfied with the immediate response and relief operations after Pepeng. As shown in the previous chapter, many different parties provided assistance. In Tadian and Bokod people told me they received much assistance right after Pepeng. One of the interviewees from Bokod said: "So many donations poured into our community, we were rich before!" (Personal communication 2012). This was however not the case for all researched communities. Especially in Kapangan and to a lesser extent in Tublay, there was not sufficient relief, therefore, I will share some of the hardships people in those communities came across.

One of the affected families from Kapangan shamefully told me they ate the seeds that were distributed as part of a livelihood recovery project, because they were out of rice. They were warned beforehand that the seeds were treated with chemicals and thus do not serve consumption purposes, but due to the food shortage they cooked them anyway. I think this is a very striking and painful example of poverty and insufficient relief distribution. Yet another example from Kapangan, there was a great initiative by the Rotary Club, an association that brings together business and professional leaders who engage in humanitarian services. They donated 'shelter-boxes', these are survival sets containing a tent, blankets, mats, kitchen wares and a toolkit. Yet, the problem was that there were eighteen families with completely destroyed houses and only fifteen boxes. So, the content of these boxes was divided randomly among those eighteen beneficiaries. But some items were more appreciated than others - especially the toolkits were very popular – and the several people who were not recipients of the toolkits were disappointed.

Shortage of aid was not the only problem. There were also some flaws in the *logistics of distribution* of relief goods. The greater part of relief items was distributed at the municipality or barangay halls. But in Kapangan these can be far from where people actually live. It was hard for some people to gather their donations as the distribution point was (too) far away, especially with the worsened road conditions. In addition, the relief items were distributed in several batches. Someone told me that he had to take up to five trips to get all the relief items.

Thus, in Bokod and Tadian, there was abundance of relief, while the affected communities in Kapangan and Tublay did not receive that much assistance. So, at the regional level, it was more an issue of fair distribution than shortage of relief. Part of this can be explained by the accessibility of some communities, and the fact that houses are very scattered even within municipalities. This complicates the delivery and distribution of relief items. But Bokod and Tublay are comparably hard to excess. So, much of this has to with the politics of aid. In Tublay some people expressed worries about the *fairness* of aid distribution. They wondered whether all items were distributed in the first place. And secondly whether they were distributed equally, as they saw many relief items pass by to other areas. There were some hints towards mismanaging of aid and even corruption. In the final section of this chapter I will go deeper into the politics of aid.

<u>The selection of beneficiaries and needs assessments</u>

Right after Pepeng struck, the barangay councils were responsible for the damage reportage. They were assigned to pinpoint whose houses were partially or totally damaged in their district. This was then reported to the municipal Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), who reported it to the provincial chapter, up to the national level. Most of the governmental assistance – both in the relief and the rehabilitation phase – was based on these lists. Proper damage reporting was thus crucial, as it functioned as the local needs assessment and as a ticket to aid. In general, people were satisfied with the damage assessment by the barangays, but some mistakes were made. There were a few cases in which families with a damaged house did not make it to the list. The reason for this was unclear, but it was most likely that they were accidently overlooked. This could be the result of the tight schedule in which the damage had to be reported. The national government rushed to get an indication of the total damage and therefore required the lower administrative bodies to meet reportage deadlines – something both the barangay and municipal officials complained about.

> *"Forgive me if I'm wrong, but as my personal observation, the house of one of my neighbours was critical, but she was not included in the list."*
> A community member in Tublay

Some NGOs also selected the beneficiaries for their programmes according to the government damage assessment, while others conducted their own needs assessment. In both cases miscommunication occurred. Confusion about the selection criteria for certain programs, caused anger, jealousy and doubts among community members. Was the aid intended for people with totally damaged houses, or also for the partially damaged, and what about affected livelihoods? For example, in Tublay an NGO had budgeted to assist 55 families whose houses got damaged during Pepeng, but as there were not that

many damaged houses in the selected community, they decided to complete the list with households who lost part of their livelihoods. However, this was clearly communicated towards the beneficiaries and other community members. So, the women who told me this story received all sorts of angry looks from her neighbours. She was selected on the basis of her damaged livelihood, but people thought that only those families with damaged houses had the right to be on that list. So, she was seen as an unjustified beneficiary by the others, a fraud.

I believe that better and more extensive needs assessments could have predicted many of the problems in the recovery phase (which are described hereafter). Just reporting the damaged houses or rice fields does not provide a full picture of the local needs after disaster. It does not tell how the lives of people are affected by the disaster or what sort of assistance people would like receive. This shows in the results of the assistance that has been provided – especially in the recovery phase. According to my interviewees, in some cases there were no needs assessments conducted at all. For example in Bokod and Tadian lots of relief arrived right after Pepeng. Even though this goes against all current humanitarian and development recommendations, it did not seem to be problematic for the beneficiaries.

> *Floor:* *Were you able to express your needs to the people who helped you?*
> *R.43:* *Uhm no. Because they give us, they knew the basic needs, so there is no need to... They knew what we needed.*
>
> A 43-year-old community member from Tadian

7.3 Rehabilitation and recovery

<u>Reconstruction of houses</u>

With over 60,000 damaged houses, there was a lot to reconstruct after Pepeng. People mostly received assistance in the form of construction materials or money to buy these materials. This compensation approximately ranged from php10,000 to php150,000 (respectively 180 to 2,700 euro) per household. The beneficiaries were responsible for the construction work, this was seen as the 'counter-part'. Several parties operated such reconstruction and relocation projects:

- The government: DSWD;
- NGOs: CorDis RDS, the Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, CARE NL, Caritas Filipinas Foundation, Children Christian Fund;
- Volunteers: local churches and Camp John Hay Golf Club.

Now, three years later, it turned out that the rehabilitation of housing has brought about several hardships for the landslide victims. The issues are categorised in three themes: (1) relocations issues, (2) problems with finishing or finishing on time and (3) problems with the delivery of materials.

1. Relocation projects for people with damaged and at risk houses

As written above, typhoon Pepeng served as an eye-opener for prevention and preparedness importance. A crucial factor in this was to ensure a safe living environment. After Pepeng, both the government (the DSWD together with the Mines and Geosciences Bureau) and some NGOs started

relocation programs for families with 'completely or partially damaged houses' and 'houses at risk'. The latter were located in hazard prone areas, for example houses located on steep slopes, weak soil or close to flood-prone waterways. However, three years later, the relocation sites are largely uninhabited. Most families with damaged houses have either repaired them, stay with relatives or have moved away completely. The families who were selected because they were living in risky areas, still do. Only a few houses are inhabited permanently. The cause of this is the unattractiveness of the relocation areas and the houses in themselves. See figure 7.2 below, a picture of relocation sites in Bokod and in Tadian.

Figure 7.2: Relocation site in (a) Bokod and (b) Tadian

Pictures taken by author in (a) August 2012 and (b) October 2012

The relocation site in Bokod (a) is located on top of a steep mountain. This reduces the risk to flooding or soil avalanches, but is also very unpractical. The relocation site can only be reached by a steep climb per foot of about thirty minutes. So people cannot quickly go to a shop, church or the barangay hall. And for elderly and handicapped people it is very hard if not at all impossible to access. There is furthermore no running water or electricity. The relocation site in Tadian (b) is located beside an important road and is thus easier to access, but it does not fall under one particular barangay. The land was donated by two neighbouring barangays and is located in between them, about 3 kilometres from the original home. So, the people there cannot benefit from any barangay services. Nor are there any other facilities (yet), like a shop, school, church or medical clinic. The idea is to improve the relocation site and develop a new attractive living area, maybe even a new barangay. But it is uncertain when this will happen.

Thus, the relocation sites may be safe (as risk assessments have been done), but they are often located in a different area than the original home. This is problematic for a couple of reasons. In the first place, people live further away from their rice fields, plantations or flower gardens, so they either lose their source of income or need to travel a lot more than before. Secondly, people move away from their relatives within the community. This is inconvenient because most people in the communities have close ties with their clan members and other villagers on which they depend in daily activities – e.g. for farming or baby-sitting. And lastly, most of these relocation sites have to be built from scratch: there are no schools, shops or other facilities. Some even lack basic infrastructure like a drainage system, proper access roads and electricity.

Another thing that might be clear from the pictures, is that the houses are very small. They are around 20-30 square meters and do not include a bathroom. It is thus not very attractive to live there with an entire family. Note that these houses are called ‘semi-permanent shelters’, ‘core shelters’ or ‘transitional housing’. They are thus not necessarily meant for permanent stay, but people have the freedom to expand and improve the houses. But why would someone invest in a house that is located in an undesirable location? And do the beneficiaries have the means to do so in the first place?

Altogether, it is no wonder that only a few houses in the relocation sites are inhabited. The relocation sites are only used for shelter in case of strong rain or impeding danger. But, hazards often come unexpectedly, so these people are still at risk, and the relocation sites only offer a false sense of safety. In my opinion, these projects are a waste of money, time and other resources as most of the houses at the relocation sites are empty most of the time. Yet other issues are: Who to select for these relocation programs? When is a house at risk? Despite the uninviting conditions at the relocation sites, people still want to participate. Maybe because they feel their house is at risk or maybe because the extra, free house adds to their personal capital.

Discussion: Participatory relocation projects

In Bokod, out of the twenty-five houses, only eight are being inhabited permanently (August 2012). This is even more striking, considering that the beneficiaries themselves have chosen the location. The shelter project was initiated by three NGOs (Care NL, ACCORD and CorDis RDS) and financed by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department. According to the beneficiaries, they

selected the place with the help of the local NGO CorDis RDS. As the land of the relocation site in Tadian was donated by the barangays, there was less of a choice for the beneficiaries. But the DSWD, who funded the project, organised several meetings to discuss the project with the beneficiaries. So, both projects seem participatory.

The strange thing is that the people took part in the decision-making process, but do not seem eager to move now that the houses are (more or less) finished. This makes me wonder how big their influence really was. According to the UN ‘‘the key to success ultimately lies in the participation of the local community—the survivors—in reconstruction’’ (UNDRO 1982 cited in Davidson, Johnson et al. 2007: 112). Or as El-Masri and Kellett put it: “Top–down approaches to reconstruction too often ignore the complexity of the built environment, the local conditions, and users’ needs and potentials. Consequently, the outcomes of such ‘symbolic schemes’ rarely go beyond producing expensive and alien housing units, and frequently result in abandonment or alterations to the dwellings” (El-Masri and Kellett 2001: 536). To what degree was the post-Pepeng reconstruction of houses really participatory? In the article ‘Truths and myths about community participation in post-disaster housing projects’ Davidson et al. describe that there are various degrees of participation. They illustrate this with the “ladder of community participation” (adapted from Arnstein 1969 and Choguill 1996) – see figure 7.3 below. This ladder reflects a continuum of approaches of community involvement in housing projects (Davidson, Johnson et al. 2007).

Figure 7.3: Community Participation ladder in in post-disaster housing projects

Figure retrieved from Davidson, Johnson et al. 2007

One of the beneficiaries from Tadian explained that they were reluctant to move to the relocation site at first because of the reasons given above. But in the end they approved to transfer as the DSWD insisted they should move there collectively, promising: “If you will go there, we will build a school for you there, we will bring your needs there” (Personal communication 2012). The beneficiary said that after all, they were ‘willing’ and ‘happy’ to move to the new location, however, he has not yet moved himself. So, in retrospect I wonder to which extent this really was the wish of the beneficiaries. One issue is, that you must wonder to what extent projects are really participatory? Also, on the basis of what kind of information do people decide? Were all the elements taken into account or was there a sense of manipulation in emphasising the advantages and back-grounding disadvantages? Were promises made

that were not delivered? After all, how does participation influences the outcome of projects? Were there alternatives or was there a 'take it or leave it' situation? Yes, the community members were involved, but it seems that they only had a minor voice in the decision-making process. This hints more towards the bottom end of Davidsons' participation ladder and not real empowerment. The relocation project in Bokod seems to be more controlled by the community. But why are the results of that project also disappointing then? The main point is, that you must wonder to what extent projects are really participatory and how this influences the outcome of projects and satisfaction among the recipients.

2. Problems with finishing or finishing on time

Generally, Igorots spend a large amount of time and money building nice homes for themselves. This requires early planning and savings, however, typhoons come unexpected. That explains why many victims of Pepeng were and are struggling to rebuild their houses. Some of them still - more than three years later – stay at relatives or camp out at public buildings. Others have managed to build a new home, but thereby also build up huge amounts of debt. Despite external assistance, people thus encountered great difficulties in the reconstruction of their homes. As explained above, the beneficiaries of housing projects received building materials or money to buy materials. Some also received small amounts to spend on the construction, but for the greater part, the beneficiaries were responsible for the construction. The problem with this counterpart is that people often lacked the time to rebuild their home, as they were busy trying to secure a daily income – as has been explained in chapter five. Nor did people have time to help each other. Traditionally, bayanihan is an important mechanism in construction works, but this is declining in general. And after Pepeng there were simply too many houses that needed to be constructed and too many livelihoods that needed to be recovered. So, the regular (indigenous) mechanism was not utilised fully. Instead of relying on neighbours, the families that lacked the time or the skills to reconstruct their house, needed to hire carpenters. This is of course very costly. As a result some people simply did not rebuild and others have gotten themselves into huge debt – both causing lots of stress.

> *"They hired the labour, because they needed skilled workers: carpenters, muscles. The debts got higher and higher [...] to be able to finish the house. There are so many borrowings. So that is how it has finally completed. So, even though they have debts, she is praying for a longer life, to be able to pay back the debts"*
> Translator for an 82-year-old lady who received construction materials form church

Even more stressful was the time-frame that was set by some of the donors. The beneficiaries of the relocation project in Bokod (figure 7.2.a) were given five months to finish, while the DSWD project in Tadian (figure 7.2.a) requested a time-frame of only two months. The regional Red Cross who provided materials for the rebuilding of twohundred houses throughout the Cordillera, wanted the houses to be rebuild within only one month. Another requirement of the Red Cross was that people provided proof of land ownership and pictures of the damaged property. The beneficiaries said they found it very hard to collect the right documents. Moreover, they did not understand why these documents were needed, as the barangay already prepared a list of damaged houses. Complying with the time-frame did not prove hard, but impossible. Given the circumstances and the way the Cordillerans like to build their houses, it is

simply not achievable. The people were told that they had to finish the construction in one month, otherwise the materials would be taken back. Obviously, people struggled with this. I went to the regional office of the Red Cross to ask about their side of the story. The officer said that they were aware of the difficulties and therefore extended the time-frame to six months, saying "we were not so strict ma'am" (Personal communication 2012). According to the officer it was also not a big issue for the Suisse and German donors who funded the project.

But apparently they did not communicate this clearly to their beneficiaries, because they still thought they had to finish within a month. Some of the interviewees even got scared when I arrived in their villages, because they thought I was going to inspect the reconstruction progress. People from Bokod and Kapangang told me that after about half a year, a team came to monitor the progress, but I have not heard of any instances where people really had to return the materials because they did not finish on time. The 'evaluation' by the Red Cross, however, did not go any further than taking some pictures and checking whether the houses were rebuild.

3. Problems with the delivery of materials

Issues with the delivery of the construction materials made it even more difficult to comply with the time-frame. For example, some materials did not arrive on time, or they arrived in the wrong order - some people said that they received the roof first and times later the materials for the foundation and walls. In Kapangan I spoke to a group of people who got selected for the housing project by the Red Cross, they experienced difficulties with the hauling of materials. Some of it was not delivered in Kapangan, so they all contributed some money and hired a car to collect the remaining materials themselves. This is a nice example of agency and cooperation, but it was born out of necessity. Sometimes the wrong materials were delivered. And lastly, there were some complaints about not receiving enough materials. Some people either felt that they did not get materials really worth the amount that was promised. Or they felt it was not enough to build a complete house. However, the reason for this could be that the donors speak of temporal housing. People are free to purchase more materials and extend the house (e.g. build a comfort room, kitchen or extra rooms), but for many of the affected people this is too expensive.

The Red Cross was aware of the problems regarding the delivery of materials. They were struggling themselves to collect and transport all the materials on time. The regional officer said that "the Cordillera is not like the lowlands", the houses are scattered over the mountains and the typhoon had demolished most roads. Another issue was that they had limited resources and manpower at the time. Their income depends on donations and they tried to spend as much as possible on the reconstruction projects instead on "interns structures" (Personal communication 2012). They purchased the materials in Manila and from there transported them to different parts in the Cordillera. One important lesson they have learned for the future, is to purchase the materials locally or give the money directly to the beneficiaries.

From the interviews it became clear that the whole housing issue has put a great burden on the landslide victims. Altogether, lots of worries and tears were shed over the reconstruction of housing: from finding the right relocation area; to struggles with the construction works; to huge debts. The very short time-

span required by some of the donors put an extra (unnecessary) burden on them.

> *Floor: Is it difficult to finish the house?*
> *R.43: Yes, of course, because we don't have any income. It is very difficult, because we didn't plan it, we didn't have savings.*
> *Floor: Because you need to hire a carpenter?*
> *R.43: Yes, everything. It is really hard. We are doing what we can, we want to finish it. [Starts to cry]*
>
> A 43-year-old women from Tadian, who is still staying at the house of relatives together with her very aged mother (October 2012)

Discussion: Who is responsible for the reconstruction of houses after (natural) disaster?

When looking at the difficulties in the reconstruction of houses, the following question comes to mind: Who is responsible for the rehabilitation after a (natural) disaster? Is it the government? The international community? Local NGOs and POs? Or the disaster victims themselves?

In the 1990s, human rights entered the development and humanitarian sector, starting a 'rights-based approach' to assistance (Hilhorst 2002). Important in this movement was the 'Sphere project', this handbook describes five standards that should be met in order to improve the quality of assistance for disaster affected people – one of them being: Shelter, Settlement and Non-food Items (Dufour, de Geoffroy et al. 2004). Thus, according to the rights-based approach, people should be assisted so they can settle after disaster. The problem with this approach is however the practical implementation of it, because it still does not say who should ensure these rights. The approach has more normative than practical power (Yamin, Rahman et al. 2005). So, while many NGOs have included humanitarian rights in their mission statements, they often clash with other principles when it comes to practice (Dufour, de Geoffroy et al. 2004). And what about the role of the state? Is it not the governments' responsibility to comply with the rights of its citizens? It is even debatable whether states should be held responsible and accountable for the prevention of disasters (see for example the book chapter 'The Prevention of Natural and Man-Made Disasters: What Duties for States?' (Nicoletti 2012)). Is it possible to prosecute a state for exposing its citizens to disaster risk?

Thus, maybe, the external help that was offered, was not enough. Maybe there should have been more assistance in the construction process. But, one could also argue that the affected people, the victims, should have utilised their bayanihan system better – i.e. exploit their capacity and agency to the fullest to reconstruct their homes. This brings us back to the debate about participation. According to Davidson et al. "when user participation occurs at late stages (either as sweat labour for constructing standardized houses or assuming responsibility—without guidance—for construction procurement, financial management and contracting), there are frequent problems with the project process"(Davidson, Johnson et al. 2007: 112). Instead, the beneficiaries should be integrated right from the beginning, so "they can have an important impact on the project with long-term advantages to them and to the other stakeholders" (Ibid). This corresponds with Lyons' view, who pleas for owner-driven (as opposed to donor-driven) reconstruction of houses (Lyons 2009). It is thus wrong to just donate some materials and

then abandon people and let them sort it out themselves. The aid providers should have included the beneficiaries right from the beginning and guided them throughout the reconstruction process. My recommendation is that external aid providers should help the local community to utilise its own capacities. Thus look at local customs and traditions and see how their program can fit these. In this way, assistance can benefit from indigenous or local practices, such as bayanihan. That could bring out much more successful reconstruction. This is however, only possible when aid providers know about the local organisational structures and are flexible enough to adjust their programs.

The local government and other local aid providers (CorDis RDS, CPA and volunteer organisations) do know the organisational structures in the communities and are familiar with the local customs and practices, because they take part in the (Igorot) culture themselves. But it seems like they did not translate this knowledge into practice. This could be, because they work with formal structures, for which they have to account to their donors - for example, many of the reconstruction projects were funded by international donors (also the DSWD-projects). On the other hand, it is also possible that since these agents are familiar with the local context, they took them for granted. Thus thinking: "People here traditionally help each other in the construction of their houses, so we only have to provide the materials and they can do the rest themselves". Thus, knowing the local context is not enough. Aid providers need to look at ways to make use of the capacities the locality has to offer.

One could also argue that the victims should settle for simple houses. For example, the house of the 82-year-old lady quoted above about having huge debts, is gigantic and quite luxurious. Of course, it is not up to me to judge how someone should rebuild his or her home, but it does make you wonder. However, let us not forget that in the current Igorot culture, a house reflects someone's status and is therefore important. And that most of the reconstructed houses are not luxurious at all, but really basic (too basic since they do not even contain a toilet). Are these transitional houses a fitting solution? Maybe they are too much in between a tent and a real house. An explanation can be found in the article by Kennedy et al., stating that "traditionally, post-disaster shelter has been part of non-food item distribution rather than an on-going exercise in supporting livelihoods, health, and security needs" (Kennedy, Ashmore et al. 2008: 25) – i.e. as an emergency solution. In reaction to this – and in response to the 2004 tsunami – the focus has shifted to 'building back better' (BBB), that refers to building sustainable communities after disaster, and not re-creating or exacerbating existing vulnerabilities (Kennedy, Ashmore et al. 2008).

But, as Kennedy et al. rightly wonder: What is better? Safer houses or more modern houses? (Ibid). According to the authors BBB, or reconstruction in general, is dealing with five, interwoven topics: materials, construction, community participation, standards, and grants – these comply with the findings in this study. A house is more than just the construction materials. Another finding we had in common is that reconstruction is often rushed. The authors state that: "the situation becomes 'build back faster' rather than 'build back better'" (Kennedy, Ashmore et al. 2008: 28). BBB in itself, holds a lot of promises for good reconstruction (it is participatory, sustainable, etcetera), but again, very difficult in practice. To avoid more empty shelter-houses in the future, it is recommended to do a proper needs assessment. What do the beneficiaries see as better housing? How do they picture the construction process? And where do they want to live? And so on. Only then is it possible to build (back) sustainable communities.

For NGOs the biggest issue is to spend time (and thus money) to include proper needs assessments and *real* participation of the community into their programs. Since their existence largely depends on their donors, they are expected to be transparent and accountable about their programs and actions. This makes it hard for organisations to (1) properly investigate local customs and needs and (2) to be flexible and adapt to the local circumstances, as many of the donations are "earmarked" for certain ends (Kennedy, Ashmore et al. 2008: 31). Frerks and Goldeweijk call this the "bookkeepers logic" of NGOs: "results-based planning and associated accountancy practices" (Frerks and Goldeweijk 2007: 55). They need to account for what they do and who they help, so yes, that requires the right documentation from the beneficiaries. And they need to report about their 'successes' in order to secure future funding, so that explains why they set a tight time-frame for the reconstruction process. There is thus a complex dependency relation between donors, project leaders and victims – which is sometimes not beneficial for humanitarian help and result in empty shelters and unfinished houses.

Recovery of livelihoods

When it comes to the rehabilitation of livelihoods, there were several governmental and non-governmental initiatives, such as the distribution of animals or seeds and investments in starting-up local cooperatives. This was needed, as many rice fields, vegetable plantations and fish ponds were destroyed by typhoon Pepeng. Damages to the roads also impacted livelihoods as it was hard to go to work or transport goods to the markets. The recovery of livelihoods was – just like the reconstruction of houses – not flawless.

For short-term earnings, people could engage in 'Food for Work' or 'Cash for Work' projects initiated by the government. This way of earning a livelihood fits the traditional system of bayanihan, as people jointly worked together to repair public works - such as roads, bridges, irrigation canals and public buildings. The only difference is that an external party (the government) rewarded the work with food or cash. The distribution of animals was a popular method for long-term livelihood recovery, often facilitated by NGOs. In most cases the beneficiaries received piglets to breed, thus it was intended as a long-term, sustainable solution to generate income. However, as written above, most people were struggling to secure a daily income, so there was often no second generation of animals. Because of urgent needs most of the animals were eaten or sold right away. In some other cases people were not able to keep animals because there was no money to feed them, or they did not have the space for it – e.g. because some families have lost their home due to Pepeng. So, the distribution of animals was in the end not successful as livelihood rehabilitation, but only provided immediate relief.

A few months after Pepeng, the Department of Agriculture subsidised fertilisers and distributed seeds for cash crops in Kapangan. However, there was not enough for everyone, so they randomly choose beneficiaries, like a lottery. Thus some people simply did not benefit from this project. For the others it is questionable whether they really did benefit, as most people complained that the seeds did not produce a lot. There were several explanations given: some thought that the seeds were expired; that they required lots of fertilisers; or that the seed variety was not fit for the Kapangan soil and climate. And even

if they would have distributed the right seeds, then still many people would not have been able to profit from them, as many rice fields and vegetable plantations were destroyed by Pepeng. So people needed tools to repair their plots before they could sow anyway, but these were not provided. Overall, this project failed in many ways.

Floor: What did they do with the seeds?
Translator: Because of the shortage of rice, they cooked it. They were told it should not be cooked, because it was treated with chemicals.
[Some laughter about eating the seeds, maybe shame?]
Translator: Those who have tried it said that the seeds need fertilizer and the product is very low.
They say: 'why do you give rice seeds, while we need tools'.
Translator for a family living in a peripheral part of Kapangan

Floor: Have they repaired the rice field?
Translator: They didn't repair. The rice field was not given importance.
But the clearing of the roads was given more importance.
Translator for a 42-year-old farmer from Kapangan

Other projects involved the granting of loans or credit to start cooperatives. In Bokod and Tublay this was used to start a rice co-op, and in Tadian a grant was processed to start a grocery store. The project in Tadian failed tremendously. The beneficiaries, recognised victims of the landslide, signed for receiving php1,100. This was funded by the NGO CARE Netherlands and handled through the local DSWD. It was however not communicated to the beneficiaries that this money was intended for a cooperative. A total of php100,000 was used to open the store which was located near the municipality hall, as the DSWD wanted to monitor the process. But, the beneficiaries are from another barangay so it was not convenient for them, and the shop did not do well. The store closed and the beneficiaries have no idea where the money went and whether all had been spent. According to one of the beneficiaries: “Now, nobody is talking” (Personal communication 2012). However, they again remember the project, and the beneficiaries want to call for a meeting to see what really happened.

One of the barangay captains in Kapangan said that they have many ideas for livelihood projects. But since Kapangan is one the poorest municipalities in the Philippines it is hard to finance them.

R.28: The barangay has many plans about livelihood, but the problem is where to get the money. So we only make resolutions or we request.
Floor: So, do you present those plans to the municipality? What do they say?
R.28: We submit and they include in their plans also, and they submit to the province. From province to region, from region to national.
A *barangay* official from Kapangan

7.4 Everyday politics of disaster management

"Disasters constitute "exogenous shocks" to which modern political systems must respond, so it should not come as a surprise therefore that literally within minutes after any major impact, disasters start becoming political" (Olson 2000: 154). Note that, 'politics' in this sense is more than government actions. It is about negotiation, power structures, discourse and all sorts of social action. In this research, disasters are seen as social processes (see the end of chapter two). The politics of disaster gets more evident during the phase of rehabilitation and recovery, but manifests throughout the entire disaster management cycle: "The politicization of the event [...] increases as the affected community, or at times an entire society, moves from emergency response through the recovery and reconstruction phases" (Olson 2000: 154). I will first look at disaster management as political exercise. Then I will address disasters as opportunities of change. And end with a general description of specific roles that were ascribed to different actors of disaster (either by themselves or by others).

Who gets what, when, how, why?

Here, the 'politics of disaster' thus means that disasters are not merely natural occurrences, instead they are social, political events. Therefore, disaster management or aid is also not neutral, impartial or apolitical, even though these are established as the core principles of humanitarian assistance (Hilhorst and Jansen 2010). Therefore, Olson argues that disaster and response to disaster should be critically investigated, trying to answer questions like: How could this disaster happen? What is the impact? What is the response? Who is accountable? Olson cites Lasswell (1936) who defines politics as: "Who Gets What, When, How" (Olson 2000:154-155). These are important elements in disaster management, as well as the evaluation of it. Personally, I would like to add: "Why" also – e.g. why do certain people receive (more) help from certain aid providers? These are the sort of questions that helped me to evaluate the external aid that was being offered after typhoon Pepeng.

Vital for most people is whether they were "on the list" or not, because much of the assistance was based on it, both for housing and livelihood recovery projects. Apart from whether the assessment was fair or well conducted, it created tension between community members, because those who are on the list say: "They claimed help, but they are no victim" – about community members not on the list. But then the people not on the list say: "They prioritised the ones on the list, but we are also victims". Now, let us not forget that the assessment was only based on damage to the houses. But almost all community members were affected, because Pepeng influenced most of the livelihoods. Crucial in this are the questions: (1) who is a victim and (2) who decides who is a victim?

> *"It too difficult to be a DSWD official during that disaster. Thank the lord that we are not a victim. But still, it was very hard to handle the people. Meet different values... Victims... Hard to manage all people during disaster. You cannot please everybody. If you give food assistance to a victim, then others also want. There was hatred towards me, behind my back."*
> Quote by a local head of the Department of Social Welfare and Development

Also between different communities there were questions about fair distribution of aid. In Tublay some people thought that other neighbourhoods (sitios) received more support than theirs, but I must note that this opinion was not shared by everyone in the community. A second example was in the boundary area between Tublay and Bokod, some people wondered why so much aid was passing through their district towards the neighbours. It is hard to explain to people in need that aid is being 'earmarked'.

> *"The people from Tublay complained, because we are passing through so many, so many reliefs, and they are just watching. They are bringing it to Bokod. But they cannot do anything, because it is the order of the giver. It is written there and you should put it there, you cannot just put it anywhere."*
> A planning officer of Tublay municipality

As seen in the previous chapter, most people hold the government responsible for providing assistance after disasters. But the people often heard: "We want to help, but we do not have enough budget" and then were directed to the higher administrative body. So there was a lot of shifting responsibilities and pointing from the barangay to the, municipality, to the province, to the region to the national levels of government. In the end, who will take responsibility?

Pepeng, a window of opportunity for change?

Another side of the 'politics of disaster' is that disaster can provoke social change. This idea derives from Pelling and Dill (2010) who argue that at critical moments, such as disasters, the claiming or denying of rights can be tipping points for political change. These "political impacts of disaster unfold at multiple scales from individual questions of citizenship and rights claims, through local social organisation, to questions of state legitimacy and international diplomacy" (Pelling and Dill 2010: 34). Either the event itself can drastically change a society, or people can *use* disaster events in trying to provoke social change. After Kingdon (1995), Birkmann et al. have introduced the idea that disasters provide "windows of opportunity for change" (Birkmann, Buckle et al. 2010). In their case study on the 2004 tsunami in Sri Lanka they have identified changes in the political/ legal, organisational, economic, social and environmental domains. Just like Pelling and Dill, Birkmann et al. recognises that change can be formal or informal and can take place at different levels (Ibid). Also important, to me, is to note that opportunities of change are not necessarily positive or negative. Let us look at some examples of Pepeng as opportunities of change.

A positive example came from one of the interviewees, who told me that her husband, a carpenter, had lots of work after Pepeng, because so many people needed to rebuild their house. Apparently it is true; one man's loss is another man's gain. This is a quite literal example of a window of opportunity at the individual level, often they are a bit harder to uncover. I found that the typhoon also served to consolidate traditional practices. As written before, some interviewees mentioned that in general bayanihan diminishes, but Pepeng boosted this traditional helping system. In the media, Pepeng was used to articulate the beauty of the indigenous culture and practices. I read many personal online blogs about indigenous responses and the resilience of the Igorots (for privacy reason I do not want to include them here, but many can be found). This articulation also took place in the formal media, in regional

newspapers. For example the articles titled: "'Pepeng' draws out best in Igorot culture" (Philippine Daily Inquirer, published 27-10-2009) and "Cooperation leads to landslide victim's quick recovery" (Northern Dispatch Weekly, published 17-10-2010). Thus, here you can see how a disruption in a changing society (from traditional to modern) can reverse the direction of change – at least temporarily.

Disaster response is the perfect moment to show good leadership, this holds for both official and unofficial leaders. In Tublay for example, most people mentioned that one of their community elders played an important role after Pepeng. His house was used as temporary shelter right after the slide. And he was also one of the people who went to ask for government support after Pepeng (the interface expert). He also suggested to do a cleansing ritual when the evacuees returned to the village. Altogether, his influence was quite big and not left unnoticed. Disasters are of course also an opportunity for the official leaders, the government, to affirm legitimacy. But it can also work the other way around, for example when people are not satisfied with the emergency assistance or the recovery process. Since I heard very contradictory opinions about the government's performance, it is unclear whether Pepeng has weakened or affirmed the position of local leaders. But I have been told that many indigenous communities vote together, as a block, so it is thinkable that the politicians or local leaders who have responded well to Pepeng, gained a number of voters. During the participatory rural appraisal (PRA) exercise in Tublay, we discussed the role and responsibilities of the local government. See the quotes below.

Floor:	*What do you expect from the local government?*
Male participant:	*The government are our official, they should raise funds for the community, because they have the power to do so. But of course, I don't say that they did not help us.*
Female participant:	*I remember that time, we were requesting for the equipment that we are going to use for the road. It seems difficult to lend us, it supposed to be that we are not the priority. I think because of some political reasons. Because that time of election, the votes here too little.*
Floor:	*So because you didn't vote for him, he didn't want to give you the equipment?*
Female participant:	*Maybe*
Male participant:	*I don't agree! That is her opinion.*

Discussing the role of the local government during participatory rural appraisal

In the same trend, disasters also provide an opportunity for NGOs and POs (whether or not specialised in disasters) to affirm their position within society. For instance when they may show that they have a quicker and better response than the government. Secondly, disasters may come in handy to advocate for the organisations' ideology, for example by highlighting the marginal position of the Igorots in the struggle for Regional Autonomy, or by stating that mining causes natural hazards in advocating against the mining industry and policy. This advocating is not just directed at the public or the government, but also directly at the beneficiaries of aid programs. The CPA and CorDis RDS have tried to raise climate change awareness as well as the importance of disaster risk reduction and prevention among affected

communities. This all comes together in figure 7.4 on the next page, which is a part of a press release of 'Serve the People Brigade: Cordillera disaster response network' (under the umbrella of the CPA). The article starts by stating how many people have been helped and thus showing the impact of the organisation, a way of reaffirmation. Most interesting is the last paragraph that shows two examples of advocating: (1) for understanding the causes of natural disasters and climate change and (2) for indigenous practices.

Figure 7.4: Pepeng, an opportunity to promote organisations and ideologies

SERVE THE PEOPLE BRIGADE

CORDILLERA DISASTER RESPONSE NETWORK

October 22, 2009

Serve the People Brigade Reaches Out to isolated communities in Bokod and Mankayan in Benguet;
Relief and Rehab Needed In Abra, Mountain Province

BAGUIO CITY— This week, the Serve the People Brigade Cordillera Disaster Response Network trekked dangerous roadcuts and landslides to reach Labey in Bokod municipality to distribute relief goods and conduct monitoring and documentation. **250 families from the communities of Labey, Minac, Lebeng, Banao, Adonot and Sombrero** (October 21) benefited from the relief goods generated through the solidarity and generosity of various institutions, organizations, families and individuals who donated through the Brigade. Meanwhile, **51 individuals benefited from the Brigade's medical mission** with the Community Health, Education, Services and Training in the Cordillera or CHESTCORE on October 19 in Abatan, Buguias, and a total of **171 families** were given relief goods in the areas of Paco and Suyoc in Mankayan on October 20th. Earlier on October 18, 70 families were given relief goods in Twin Peaks, Tuba. Food-for-work was also donated in Paco and Suyoc, Mankayan; Lebeng, Bokod and Twin Peaks, Tuba. As of this writing, your donations and hard-earned money has benefited a **total of 977 families in Itogon, Tublay, Tuba, Mankayan and Bokod; and 403 families in Baguio City.**

Mudslide at Twin Peaks, Tuba, Benguet

In all the relief missions the Brigade undertakes, it is made a point to discuss to the community the causes of the environmental disasters besetting the world for a greater understanding of climate change. Also, **what is notable in the Cordillera is the practice of indigenous systems of disaster/emergency response such as the *ub-obfo* and *mabtad*. Part of the processing and debriefing of the volunteers for instance in Tadian included the cleansing rituals.**

Source: http://www.cpaphils.org/campaigns/October%2023_STPB%20Update.pdf (retrieved June 2013)

More contested is the press release by the oppositional Green Party in which they directly blame the government of being ignorant on addressing disaster risk – see appendix 3: 'Press release by the 'Kalikasan People's Network for the environment'.

Thus disasters are used to reaffirm the position of institutions, as well as combat opponent parties.

However, note that NGOs/ POs and the government have also worked closely together in the aftermath of Pepeng, especially in providing direct response and relief. It is particularly in the later stages of disaster management that the different actors tried to turn the event into a personal benefit. This is of course not a bad thing, as long as it is not at the expense of the outcomes and the ones in need.

This was very debatable in the case of relocation issues in Tubaly. Due to the landslides and flood that ravaged one of the sitios in Tublay, the people were evacuated to a school a few kilometres away. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the evacuation centre was very well organised, but of course the people wanted to return as quick as possible. However the government declared their village unsafe and proposed to relocate the entire community. This provoked an issue, because the people wanted to go back to their vegetable and flower gardens which was their main source of income. So they disregarded the advice of the government and went back anyway. With the help of a scientist and funds from Cafe by the Ruins the area was re-assessed and it turned out that only some parts of the village were unsafe, but other parts were perfectly habitable. This was seen as quite a victory for the community. This case is so controversial, because at the centre of the community lies a former open-pit mine. The community did not trust the first risk assessment that was done by the government, as it thought that they might propose the relocation in order to re-open the mine. However, one of the volunteers working in the community acknowledged that she also could not imagine that people could make a living again in that village, as it was sincerely devastated. After all, did the government propose to relocate the community for safety reasons or did they see Pepeng as an opportunity to re-open the mine? This is not sure, but it is suspicious that the first risk assessment was done by engineers from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau which is the primary government agency under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Finally, you can wonder whether the shift from reactive towards preventive disaster management was induced by typhoon Pepeng. The important 'Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010' was installed not long after Pepeng. But given the fact that the Philippines has been struck by many disasters before, it is doubtful whether this particular typhoon has made the difference. Typhoon Pepeng, has nevertheless helped a great deal with advocating for disaster risk reduction and preparedness at the local level.

Thus, has Pepeng really created a tipping point for social and political change? The examples above demonstrate that Pepeng has been used by people and organisations to serve their interest. And it did change the lives of those who directly experienced the storm and landslides. But, for me, it goes too far to say that Pepeng really impacted larger social and political structures - especially since the country experiences so many devastating disasters. But, maybe it is too early to tell, as it has only been three years. Anyway, the answer to this question goes beyond my expertise, as I do not know enough about the pre- and post-Pepeng Philippine society. And even if you would ask Philippine or Cordillera experts, the answer would probably differ depending on to whom you speak to. The lesson here, is that disasters (1) expose societal dynamics (such as discontent among citizens and vulnerabilities) and civic-state relationships and (2) provide opportunities to positively or negatively influence these relationships.

Actors and their roles

Thinking back at all the conversations, I started to see some patterns in the way the interviewees answered the questions as if they adopt a certain role within the whole disaster framework. This made me think of Goffman's "dramaturgical approach". In his influential writing 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life', the sociologist describes how people present themselves accordingly to the scene in which they are at that moment (Goffman 1959). Upon further research I found a very interesting article by Kreps and Bosworth, who not only recognised already twenty years ago that disasters are social phenomena, but also conducted research on how organisation and role enactment account for social change in disaster events (Kreps and Bosworth 1993). In the humanitarian-arena approach by Hilhorst and Jansen - where the humanitarian space is being seen as a (social or political) arena - there is also much attention for the different roles that actors take in shaping the outcome of aid (Hilhorst and Jansen 2010). Since I have not been focusing on this aspect of disaster management too much while doing research, I can only describe my general impression of the different roles that were taken up in the aftermath of Pepeng.

Those who were directly affected by Pepeng mostly expressed themselves as subdued, thankful victims: "Yes, we were/ are having a hard time, but we are not complaining. We are just grateful for the help that has been offered". This is logic, but behind this layer of resignation and thankfulness, there is also frustration about some of the issues described throughout this chapter. That explains why the hardships were usually not revealed right away, because the interviewees mostly expressed how thankful they were for any help they received. Typically, it was only after the interviews proceeded and sometimes not even before dinner that they came out. Apparently, it required the establishment of some level of trust between the interviewee and interviewer, as well as asking more in-depth questions. It is in the everyday practices that they show, transmitted through stories of first hand experiences.

The local leaders - mainly the barangay officials – position themselves as very willing to help, but lacking the needed resources. I belief this to be true, but it also functions as an effective way to shift responsibilities towards higher levels. At the higher administrative levels, the mayors, play the role of super-managers: "Yes, the rehabilitation after Pepeng was difficult, but my municipality managed to overcome Pepeng and is much more prepared now". It is interesting to see how easily they have adopted the language of disaster risk reduction. But when you ask the same question at lower levels, disaster preparedness is often better on paper than in practice – mostly because of lacking resources. One of the mayors told me that it took the inhabitants of his municipality about a year to fully recover. But at the time of the interviews, almost three years later, people said that they could still feel the effects of Pepeng, including one of the barangay captains. Thus, while presenting themselves as involved super-managers, their perception on recovery and preparedness differs from the stories on the ground.

While I was in Baguio there was a news item about a minor landslide, not far away, that caused some casualties. When we went to the provincial administrators to ask if we could go and have a look at the scene, we were told that there was no landslide. At first we were confused: was the news reporter all wrong? But later we felt that the administrator was simply advocating his good DRR practice, as he kept

emphasising the importance of warning systems and preparedness. According to him the government had evacuated the people on time, so there were no landslide victims. When we left we were still a bit confused, was he really just trying to show good governance, was he trying keep us away from the scene, or was he simply not yet informed about the slide? It furthermore was interesting to see that he blamed the national government for causing landslides. He thought that landslides and land subsidence are largely the result of mining. Because of the national mining act, he is unable to stop the big (international) companies responsible for large scale mining, despite how much he would want to[8].

Blaming the mining act is one thing the local governments and the NGOs/ POs have in common. As seen above, the organisations use disasters as opportunity to promote and advocate their programs. This is, conceivably, not how the organisations present themselves. They come about as providing unconditional support to the marginalised Igorots, being less clear about any personal benefits. The civil society (especially the volunteers) are represented as heroes; walking for hours to deliver food and other goods to isolated, damaged communities, going above and beyond. And I totally agree, most of them are true heroes, considering what they have done.

7.5 Recapitulation

This chapter addressed the everyday practices and challenges of coping with disaster, and highlighted the political aspect to them. Besides the cross cutting infrastructural problems that caused difficulties with transportation and communication, several issues for each disaster phase came about. These were described in the first part of this chapter:

- *Preparedness and prevention*: Before typhoon Pepeng preparedness and prevention measures were very limited. With adopting of the ‘2009-2019 Strategic National Action Plan’ and the 2010 ‘Philippines Disaster risk Reduction and Management Act’, policy shifted from disaster response to disaster risk reduction (DRR). However, at the municipal level, communications and organisation of residents was still difficult due to the dispersed distribution of houses. At the barangay level, there were great DRR ambitions, but due to the lack of resources these are not realised satisfactory. At the individual level, typhoon Pepeng raised awareness of the importance of preparedness and prevention, but hardly any measures were taken. This is because people lack the means to invest in these measures and landslides are difficult to prepare for.
- *Response and relief*: In Tadian and Bokod immediate relief after Pepeng was abundant, but in Kapangan and Tublay food and non-food items were scarce. The distribution of the goods was inconvenient as pick-up places were sometimes too far away and the aid came in several batches. The damage reports conducted by the barangay officials took place right after Pepeng and served as needs assessments. Some mistakes withhold people from receiving aid and miscommunication caused friction within communities.

[8] Note that at the local policy-making levels (from the barangay to the regional administrations) Igorots are quite well represented. Most struggles between IP-advocators and the government predominantly happen at the national level. This is also the case for disaster management. That might explain why the provincial administrator – who is indigenous himself – referred to the national mining act.

- *Rehabilitation and recovery*: This phase proved to be most difficult to Pepeng's victims. They felt that the government prioritised the rehabilitation of infrastructure over houses and livelihoods. Three main issues were distinguished for the reconstruction of houses: (1) Undesirable relocation sites, (2) difficulties of complying with the requirements of donors to finish the reconstruction on time and (3) problems with the delivery of reconstruction materials. These hardships were the result of lacking external assistance, combined with diminished bayanihan among community members. Livelihood recovery projects (such as animal breed programs, distribution of seeds and communal cooperatives) were not sustainable as they did not meet the immediate needs of the beneficiaries and due to communication failures.

The second part of the chapter looked into the politics of aid:

- *Who gets what, when, how, why?* - are crucial questions for disaster management and the evaluation of it. To be reported as official victim is important as it provides access to aid. After Pepeng, in the phase of reconstruction, there were worries and hidden conflicts about this. Key is to wonder: who is a victims? And who decides who is a victim?
- Secondly, I explored *Pepeng as a window of opportunity*. The event served to consolidate traditional practices, and to articulate these in the media. It furthermore provided an opportunity for formal and informal leaders to show good leadership. Since people expect a lot from their government in the aftermath of disaster, it was also a moment to gain or lose votes. In the same way, NGOs also affirmed their position in society and used Pepeng to advocate their beliefs. Lastly, Pepeng might have catalysed the paradigm shift from reactive to proactive disaster management. However, whether Pepeng was a real tipping point for social change is questionable, given the fact that it is one out of the numerous disasters in the Philippines.
- Finally, I looked at the *roles that actors adopt*. Victims presented themselves as being humble and grateful towards their donors. Barangay officials positioned themselves as meritorious and responsible, but restricted by lacking resources. Administrators at higher levels presented themselves as super managers, having complete control over the situation. The NGOs and POs highlighted their unconditional effort to improve the lives of the marginalised. And the volunteers were represented, mostly by others, as altruistic heroes.

This final chapter showed some of the hidden issues and politics of coping with disaster, which are hard to discover but impact the results significantly. What rests are the conclusions and recommendations based on the findings.

8. Conclusion: Pepeng three years after

One of the mayors told me: "The livelihoods of the people are recovered now, the people have adjusted. I think it took them about one year to fully recover" (Personal communication 2012). But, from what I have seen and heard in the villages, it took a little longer in reality. First of all, many of the affected people are still struggling to recover their livelihoods as typhoon Pepeng destroyed their greenhouses, fish ponds, rice fields and so forth – as well as other personal belongings. People spent their entire savings and more on replacing them, which leaves them with high debts. Secondly, not all families that lost their houses managed to rebuild a new home. Some of them stayed with relatives in the community still after three years and one family I met was still camping out at the dispensary building of the community. Some stay in temporary or transitional shelters, while others still live in landslide prone areas. Lastly, and probably the longest lasting effect of typhoon Pepeng, is the psychological impact. Understandably, many of the interviewees got very emotional recalling the events of 2009. Moreover, many are still afraid in times of heavy rainfall.

> *"The feeling is still in here [points to her chest]. Even now, when I'm talking about it, still remember the shouting, the asking for help. I remember all the things that happened"*
> A visibly emotional women from Tadian

> *"My family left the community, because we feel we are not safe there. But some of us they just say: 'Bahala na'.... [Means: 'Leave it up to God' or 'Come what may']"*
> A 50-year-old female from Tublay, who now lives in Baguio

Thus, even though you would say that people in the Philippines are used to be living in a disaster prone country, on the individual level, a disaster never habituates. Many of the interviewees emphasised that "Pepeng was not like anything before" and more than three years after, people are still recuperating. One of the barangay captains estimated that his barangay only recovered for 85% (September 2012) - ironically, this was in the same municipality where the mayor told me that his citizens had overcome the 2009 disaster.

8.1 Summary of main findings

The main question this qualitative research aimed to answer is: *How did the indigenous peoples of the Cordillera Administrative Region (Philippines) cope with the disastrous events in the aftermath of typhoon Pepeng?* – paying special attention to the vulnerability, resilience and relationship with external actors. After seven chapters, what are the lessons learned?

Following the introduction, theoretical framework and methodology in the first three chapters, the context of this case study was addressed in chapter four. Suffering from typhoons, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, the Philippines is extremely prone to natural hazards. In addition, poor disaster mitigation and marginalisation of indigenous groups within the country enhanced the vulnerability of Igorot communities to disaster. However, this research assumes agency of all involved actors and

therefore refuses to see indigenous people as purely marginalised or – and instead emphasises their capacities to cope with disaster risk. Recently, disaster mitigation in the Philippines has improved greatly, marked by the '2009-2019 Strategic National Action Plan' and the 2010 'Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act'. The policy approach is much more integrated and proactive than before. Because of the contested relationship between indigenous groups and the state, there is a dense network of NGOs and POs trying to decrease the vulnerabilities and to enhance coping capacities of the Igorots, of which some are specialised in humanitarian assistance. This chapter showed that current disaster risk must be seen in the historical and political context of struggles of Igorot communities and the development of disaster mitigation in the Cordillera.

Thereafter, in chapter five, the most important indigenous coping mechanisms have been described: (1) 'bayanihan', which means helping each other, (2) rituals and religion and (3) early warning systems. These mechanisms originate from everyday practices and cultural values. And, it turned out that these coping strategies are not that different from non-indigenous responses to disaster. For example, patterns of helping each other right after disaster which then declines, are found all over the world. Since the intimate relationship between indigenous peoples and nature and their 'special' local knowledge is often celebrated in literature, it was unexpected to find out that people were caught completely unaware by typhoon Pepeng. People nowadays trust the weather forecast on the radio instead of their own observations. Modernisation has greatly influenced the Igorot culture and therefore also Igorot coping practices. However, despite changing values and new ways of coping with disaster, the traditional practices have not been forgotten and they were often emphasised. In fact, typhoon Pepeng boosted traditional practices as they revived in the aftermath of the crisis. So, whether or not these coping mechanisms are typically indigenous or special, it is notable that people value them as important indigenous practices and part of their culture. This articulation of indigenousness in itself increased trust in recovery after disaster. Also it enhanced social cohesion and proved to be beneficial in raising funds and connecting to important aid providers. In this sense, Igorot communities showed much agency coping with disaster, but not in a way that is expected given the 'resilience indigenous' literature.

In addition to local coping mechanisms, people received help from external parties – as described in chapter six. It showed that many different actors were involved and often worked together, both state and non-state actors. For the beneficiaries it was often unclear who exactly provided help. In addition to professional aid providers, informal aid deliverers played an essential role in the recovery after Pepeng. These voluntary actions can be seen as 'bayanihan', the cultural practice of helping each other and, according to the interviewees, the most important indigenous coping mechanism. Actor mapping exercises and in depth interviews showed that people hold their government most responsible for their recovery. Given the historically contested relationship between Igorot communities and the government, this is quite remarkable. A 'true' Cordilleran is someone who survives on his own. However, the interviewees indicated that they have become more and more dependent on external parties, both in predicting disasters as well as in recovering from them. This increased dependency is blamed on modernisation as it has caused (1) greater dependency on stores, electricity and government services; (2) deteriorating traditional practices such as (re)building houses together and (3) integration in the cash system, leading to new wants and more expensive recovery. The good news is, that there are people

within the communities who played key roles in attracting external assistance. They had the power, connections and social skills to negotiate over help across hierarchical relations – a clear example of this was provided with the Tublay case (page 53). Besides these important figures, formal victim organisations were often demanded by the aid deliverers. These often complemented already existing community associations. In addition to the bayanihan system, the capacity of communities to organise themselves was also often articulated as a distinctive Igorot trait.

The final chapter looked into the everyday practices of coping with disaster and the associated challenges. In the Cordillera, the biggest challenge was and is the poor infrastructure and demolition during storms. This affects transportation and communication and hampers emergency assistance and recovery after disaster. Per disaster phase additional issues were found. With regards to *preparedness and prevention*, there is progressively better awareness, knowledge and enabling DRR-policies, but practice lacked behind at the municipal, barangay and household levels, mainly due to lacking resources. In the phase of *response and relief* I found that in Tadian and Bokod immediate relief after Pepeng was abundant, but in Kapangan and Tublay food and non-food items were scarce. Distribution of goods was often inconvenient and flaws in needs assessments were reported which obstructed people from receiving aid. The phase of *rehabilitation and recovery* proved to be most the difficult to Pepeng's victims, because there was not sufficient external assistance, combined with diminished bayanihan among community members. The reconstruction of houses was hindered by (1) undesirable relocation sites, (2) difficulties of complying with the requirements of donors to finish the reconstruction on time and (3) problems with the delivery of reconstruction materials. Livelihood recovery projects (such as animal breed programs, distribution of seeds and communal cooperatives) were not sustainable as they did not meet the immediate and long-term needs of the beneficiaries and due to communication failures. Figure 8.1 on the next page shows an overview of the most important findings per disaster phase.

Chapter 7 also explored the politics of aid and thereby the hidden issues of disaster management. It was found that during the phase of rehabilitation and recovery competition over aid started. A key issue was: who is a victims? And who decides who is a victim? Right after the typhoon the barangay officials assessed and reported the damage, these lists turned out to be tickets to aid – or not. Later on, this caused friction, as not everyone agreed with who was being included or excluded from help. Secondly, typhoon Pepeng proved to be a window of opportunity as the event served to consolidate traditional practices and to articulate these in the media. This celebration of indigenous practices and traits increases social cohesion amongst community member and help NGOs and POs to gain momentum in their advocacy programmes. It furthermore provided an opportunity for formal and informal leaders to show good leadership and gain power (or votes). Finally Pepeng might have catalysed the paradigm shift from reactive to proactive disaster management. However, given the fact that this was just one of the numerous disasters in the Philippines, it is questionable whether Pepeng was a real tipping point. Lastly, this chapter shows how different actors adopted different roles in the aftermath of the typhoon. Victims presented themselves as being humble and grateful towards their donors. Barangay officials positioned themselves as meritorious and responsible, but hampered by lacking resources. Administrators at higher levels presented themselves as super managers. The NGOs and POs highlighted their unconditional effort to improve the lives of the marginalised. And the volunteers were represented, mostly by others, as

altruistic heroes. These adopted roles were often, but not always in line with the described behaviours of the different actors, instead they represent an ideal image benefiting the goals and interests of the actors.

Typhoon Pepeng has left a deep scar in the Cordillera affecting so many people for such a long time, while at the same time, it was 'just' one out of many disasters that struck the country over the past years.

Figure 8.1: Summary of findings per disaster phase

- Improved mitigation: Towards proactive disaster policy
  -Resulting in improved preparedness and prevention
  -But, lacking resources at local levels
- After three years no full recovery:
  -Still reconstructing (safe/ permanent) houses
  -Reduced income and high debts
  -Psychological effects
  > Negative impact on capacity

Preparedness/ Prevention

- Pre-Pepeng context of risk:
  -Naturally hazards prone area
  -A vulnerable/ marginalised population
  -Local capacity to cope with disaster
  But meagre early warning system
  -Relatively poor structural mitigation
  Reactive disaster policy
  Supplemented by dense NGO network

Pepeng

Research question:
How did the indigenous peoples of the Cordillera Administrative Region cope with the disastrous events in the aftermath of typhoon Pepeng?

Assuming that:
1. *Disasters are social processes*
   Interwoven with discourse, power, politics
   Close relationship with change
   Everyday practices, context, interface are key
2. *Indigenous people have agency*
   Vulnerable, but knowledgeable and capable
   Have indigenous coping mechanism
   Negotiate over aid in discursive interface

Rehabilitation/ Recovery

Response/ Relief

- Most difficult phase:
  -Less bayanihan & less external assistance
  -Competion over aid: politics of disaster
- Difficulties with reconstruction of houses:
  -Undesirable relocation sites
  -Difficulties finishing construction works
  -Problems with delivery of materials
- Difficulties with livelihood recovery: not sustainable
  -Did not meet immediate need
  -Communication failures

- Indigenous coping revived
  -Much help/ bayanihan within communities
  -Strength from (adapted) rituals and religion
  -Using social capital: actively seek help
- Much external assistance (in some places)
  -Variety of formal and informal aid providers
  -Sometimes, inconvenient distribution of aid
  -Importance of proper needs assessment
  Being on the list means access to aid
- Both traditional and modern organisation

8.2 Conclusion

The resilient indigenous?

Despite a large national collective history with disasters, the interviewed individuals experienced typhoon Pepeng as an unforeseen and life-changing catastrophe. Even though societies or cultures might be experienced with disaster, this provides little support at the individual level. After all, you cannot prepare for your house to be buried under meters of mud, or for your family members to die. These high impact disasters are extra-ordinary events, and coping with those are not learned from one generation to the other. Thus, this brings some qualifications to the perspective of the 'resilient indigenous' (explained on page 11 and 12), were it is assumed that the intimate relation with Mother Nature and long traditions dealing with natural forces help communities to cope with disasters.

From the 'resilient indigenous' perspective and within the community-based risk reduction tradition, indigenous knowledge is often portrayed as collectively owned, homogeneous, and embedded in indigenous people's way of life. However, this study showed that people among and within communities reacted very differently to disaster threat and that their knowledge of indigenous coping practices varied highly. Also, the respondents did not rely on either Western or indigenous types of knowledge, but it was often a mix of different knowledge bases, where modern technology, especially radio, rapidly replaces 'old folks' knowledge. Thus, indigenous knowledge is neither completely local and traditional, nor homogenously shared. The celebration of indigenous knowledge must be seen in the light of disenchantment with development progress in the 1970s, countering the dominance of scientific, Western knowledge over locally generated knowledge. In addition, the 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia boosted the appreciation of indigenous knowledge by alleging almost mythical anecdotes of indigenous survival techniques in answer to the limitations of modern knowledge. However, those who celebrate this indigenous knowledge – both in academics and the NGO world - seem to overlook the fact that knowledge is not static or unilaterally shared among 'the indigenous'. From the actor-oriented perspective, people make rational (individual) choices, and obviously, these choices are influenced by the ever changing environment. Thus, this research challenges the often displayed view of indigenous knowledge particularly helping communities to survive disastrous events and cope with difficult environmental conditions (as the UNISDR 2008 report for example claims).

This by no means implies that indigenous people are not resilient at all. The coping mechanisms that were defined as indigenous by the respondents may not be that different from non-indigenous tactics, but they are effective. These tacit measures are embedded in local customs and culture, and have significance beyond disaster events, mostly in agricultural practices. In other words, these indigenous coping mechanisms were not designed for disaster mitigation, but are a natural responses to hazards given the long-lasting cultural practices and customary laws. Indigenous institutions, such as rotational agriculture and labour sharing, are part of everyday life and at the same time highly instrumental to disaster response, often without people realising it. Then, are those responses typically indigenous or Igrot? On the one hand, mutual help, spirituality and phenology are found in other cultures as well and are also used by non-indigenous disaster victims. But on the other hand, articulating these as typically Igorot – especially opposed to the non-indigenous low landers' responses to disaster - is quite

remarkable. This articulation of indigneity and togetherness builds the confidence to overcome disaster and enhances social cohesion amongst community members. But, mostly external actors really honour the Igorot traits in coping with disaster - for example the media, as well as volunteers or specific NGOs who emphasised indigenous bonds to attract help or raise funds.

The capacity to cope with disaster is also found in the way communities organise themselves. As was observed right after the landslides, when all community members contributed to clearing roads and the way this was coordinated. This might be an expression of indigenous, customary law and organisation within communities. But also new ways of coping were observed. Some communities proved to be very good in attracting external help, for example by using social media. And some made use of new technologies such as rain gauges, radio and the internet to predict hazards. Thus, both new and old methods and different types of knowledge were used to cope with disaster.

The vulnerable indigenous?

However, this resilience of the respondents must also be seen in the light of their vulnerabilities. As explained in chapter 4, Igorot communities faced years of oppression and marginalisation by colonial intruders and later their own government. The Cordillera is one of the poorest regions in the country with the lowest budget allotment despite its large contribution to the national wealth (Cariño 2012). This hampers recovery and rehabilitation greatly. In the communities where this research has been conducted – rural, mountainous areas – most people earn just enough to survive and maybe save a little bit, but they do not have enough capital to deal with the shock that disasters bring about. Nor do they have an insurance to fall back on in situations like this. Pre-disaster conditions also tremendously influence the success (or failure) of humanitarian assistance. As it was found that people did not have the resources to hire carpenters to rebuild their houses from the donated construction materials. And because people had urgent needs and struggled to secure a daily income, the livelihood recovery projects were not successful on the long run. This research has brought to light some of the many hardships in the phase of reconstruction and recovery after disaster, but poverty also stand in the way of good prevention and risk reduction. Both at the barangay and household people emphasised the importance of disaster risk reduction and prevent, but despite this awareness hardly any measures were taken as people said that they lacked the resources to do so.

To what extend does the perception of the 'vulnerable indigenous' holds? Within the vulnerability discourse, it is claimed that indigenous peoples are vulnerable to disasters because they are relatively poor, far away from modern state power centres and often live in hazard prone areas. Current pressures, such as ecological degradation, urbanisation and climate change threatens their habitat, whereas displacement from the place of origin and loss of traditional culture reduces their coping capacities. While ascribing the relative poor and marginalised situation of indigenous peoples in the Cordillera, the vulnerability perspective should be nuanced. First of all, not all indigenous people are vulnerable or equally vulnerable. Just like indigenous knowledge is not uniformly shared, indigenous vulnerability is neither. Levels of income vary greatly among and between indigenous groups and thereby influences coping capacities. Moreover, this research found that some people were extremely capable in using their social skills and connections to attract help, regardless of their economic capital. Within the Cordillera,

the Igorots are well represented in the regional to local government, so they are not averse modern state law but part of it (this is not the case for national politics). Just like there are Igorots with powerful positions in companies or NGOs. Therefore, this research contests the image of '*the* vulnerable indigenous'.

With regards to modernisation and its influence on traditional culture this research affirms that current trends increase the vulnerability of indigenous peoples, as the respondents indicated that they have become more dependent on external assistance than before. The tacit measures to deal with disasters are eroding as lifestyles are changing and customary law gets replaced by modern state law. The influx of cash into Igorot communities means that mutual assistance is increasingly complicated as an option for dealing with recovery after disaster. This showed in the difficulties of reconstructing houses and implies that more external assistance is required. Increased commoditisation of agriculture reduces self-reliance during crisis, as people have to buy food or rely on donations from others. Also the impact of typhoons and landslides are bigger, because they destroy yields and roads to access markets, and thus the livelihoods of people. In addition, with the new lifestyles, new wants and needs also came along. Money is much more important nowadays as it reflects a persons' status – e.g. in the form of a nice house or education opportunities for the children of the family. Thus, the transformation of livelihoods, cultural values and organisational structures have altered recovery tactics and requirements. People increasingly rely on stores, electricity and government services in daily life and in times of emergency. This mounting dependency on external assistance in the aftermath of disaster might indeed increase the vulnerability of indigenous peoples.

On the contrary, change does not necessarily imply augmented vulnerability. Maybe indigenous communities are more dependent on external assistance nowadays, but access to help has also improved a lot. And 'old' coping strategies are being replaced by 'new' ones. To illustrate, the traditional animist beliefs of the Igorots have been supplemented, altered and replaced by Christianity, but this changed spirituality still plays an important role in coping as the new form also guides behaviour, supports psychological recovery and reinforces social ties. Thus, this research found that, just like indigenous knowledge, vulnerability is not static, but constantly changes.

Negotiation and rearranging relationships

Above, it was mentioned how the pre-disaster situation of the affected society influences the ability to recover after disaster. But, as stated in chapter 2, disaster also create momentum for social change. Within communities disasters tremendously impact social cohesion, first they induce great solidarity among community members which – in this case study – went together with the revival of traditional practices. As time passes by this cohesion reduces and people start to compete over aid. This research found that it is crucial whether people are on the victim list or not, as this decided the amount of help they receive. This is all about 'Who gets what, when, how and why?'. And despite proudly emphasising the independence of the Igorots, the respondents also complained about not getting enough help from the government. Thus, experiences with disaster may be one of the arenas in which the value of indigenous knowledge and traditional ways of working, is negotiated, and where indigenous peoples seek a balance between claiming inclusive government services while maintaining their right to political and

cultural difference. And it is trough disaster that social dimension in society are being revealed. The celebration of Igorot independence and their capacity to cope with disaster is directly related to ideas about the indigenous and their position in wider society, and probably stem from the years of battling external intruders from colonial powers and the own liberal government.

Disasters thus not only provide opportunities to rearrange relationships within the community, but also between aid beneficiaries and providers. The directly affected respondents positioned themselves as humble and grateful victims in appreciation of any help that was offered, but in between the lines they complained about the aid and blamed the government for their slow recovery. This shows that they see themselves as Philippine citizens who should have the right and access to governmental services. Also the government does not differentiate between DRR policies for indigenous or non-indigenous people. While access to government services of indigenous peoples is on the agenda of NGOs, they also fight for regional autonomy and conservation of traditional culture, and discourse in instrumental in this. In the resilient and vulnerability discourses, indigenous people are placed outside the society by stressing their 'otherness' and labelling them as being different. By overly emphasising generalist indigenous aspects, NGOs and scientist use disasters to fulfil their own agendas – e.g. promote community-based DRR or advocate for autonomy. These are battles for and often by indigenous peoples, but are definitely not top priorities for disaster victims.

Rather than understanding indigenous experiences with disaster as simultaneously vulnerable or resilient, this thesis calls for a more comprehensively social approach to indigenous practices around disaster and the context in which they take place. This is not to deny or depreciate traditional ways of coping with disaster. In fact, the voluntary help that people provided each other after typhoon Pepeng was outstanding and I do believe that this an expression of indigenous coping. And celebrating this positive image of the indigenous way of life in relation to dealing with disaster proved to be beneficial for recovery. So, instead, this approach encourages a greater focus on the instrumental value of indigenous coping – i.e. to demystify indigenous knowledge and appreciate differences between individuals and dynamic dimensions. Nor do I wish to underplay the struggles and vulnerabilities that indigenous people face as I have seen the suffering of some of Pepeng's victims three years later. But a more comprehensive approach would help to see different levels of vulnerability and thereby also valuing the strengths people have. This would also provide an opportunity to address real causes of vulnerability instead of blaming modernisation or climate change. Such an approach would anchor disaster response in the specific contexts, lifestyles and politics of indigenous peoples, without dehumanising them.

8.3 Implications and recommendations

<u>Improve preparedness and prevention:</u>
The occurrence of hazards cannot be avoided, but the impact of disaster can be reduced, therefore preparedness and prevention is crucial.

- More support should be available for households to prepare themselves for disaster
    - People are aware of the importance of disaster preparedness, but simply do not have the

means to do so. Often emphasis is being put on awareness raising, but in settings where people have experienced disaster this is not needed, instead they should receive (financial or material) support in preparing for disaster.

- The (national) government focusses increasingly on disaster risk reduction, but in practice there is a significant lack of resources
    - At the local level (municipal and especially barangay) there is no sufficient budget to buy the required materials for proper preparedness – e.g. hauling materials and spine boards for rescue operations and stocks of food, camp beds, medicines and gas or an emergency power generator.
- The impact of hazards can be prevented or reduced by conducting risk assessments and improving anti-erosion structures. More attention should also be paid to warning systems, for example rain gauges and weather forecasting. In other words: improve the structural mitigation.

<u>Needs assessment for better rehabilitation:</u>
External assistance should be (more) sensitive to the local *vulnerabilities* and *capacities* to increase the efficiency of aid and improve recovery after disaster. This requires an extensive needs assessment that takes the local pre- and post-disaster context into account.

Vulnerabilities:

- Aid deliverers should conduct a proper assessment of short-term *and* long-term needs
    - E.g. Look at ways to build sustainable, permanent housing instead of transitional housing as these are not satisfactory on the long run.
    - E.g. Improved communication and participation could reduce project failures, such as the empty relocation sites and the distribution of unproductive seeds.
- Historical and socioeconomic factors should be included in the needs assessment
    - E.g. The Cordillera is a relatively poor region, so people do not have an economic buffer for unexpected shocks like disasters. Therefore, the immediate need should be taken into account with regards to livelihood recovery projects. This could have prevented failures in, for example the animal breed programs. This would also have shown that it is not enough to just provide construction materials for the recovery of housing. People need help with the reconstruction process as well, since they often cannot afford to hire carpenters or skip work to build themselves.
- Local, regional or national transitions and developments influence culture and coping, aid should respond to these changes
    - E.g. Some traditional practices, such as building houses together, are diminishing due to increasing engagement in the modern economy, therefore people need help with the reconstruction of their houses.
    - E.g. People are increasingly dependent on modernity's, such as electricity, stores and governmental services. This means that they require more or different assistance.
- Aid should be customised to the geographical and social dimensions of the area
    - E.g. In the case of the seed distribution for livelihood recovery, an assessment should have been made of what varieties are suitable for the environment and fit the local

preferences of beneficiaries. Moreover, a thorough assessment would have taught that people needed tools to repair their fields before they could plant seeds anyway.

Capacities:

- Local capacities should be utilised fully
    - Igorots are very good in organising themselves. Therefore it is recommended that instead of creating new victim associations, aid providers make use of organisation structures that are already there.
    - One of the great capacities of Igorots is that they are used to helping each other, this could be stimulated by introducing 'Cash4Work' or Cash4Food' recovery programs. This fits the traditional way of coping, but provides an extra incentive.
- New ways of coping with disaster should be supported
    - E.g. Supporting community members to use their social capital to raise funds, for example via new social media.
- Social bonding among community members should be reinforced
    - E.g. By providing the necessary facilitation for communal rituals or feasts.

<u>Representation and articulation:</u>

Disasters are social processes and provide opportunities for change, representation is an important aspect of this.

- Indigenous practices seems to revive in times of disaster, aid providers should make use of this
- The indigenous sentiment should be used to raise donations
    - Actively seek for support from overseas contract workers and indigenous protagonists.
- People highly value the involvement of their (local) administrations in the aftermath of disaster, the local administrators should take this into account
- Disasters provide opportunities for change and advocacy, this is something to be aware of and make use of for all parties involved
- Rather than understanding indigenous peoples as simultaneously vulnerable and resilient this research calls for a more comprehensive approach to indigenous knowledge and practices around disaster. Indigenous resilience and vulnerability is fragmented, dynamic and not homogenously shared.

<u>Recommendations for further research:</u>

During this explorative research, many more questions arose. It is recommended to study the following topics:

- The effectiveness and impact of newly established community (victim) organisations
    - E.g. How do they influence dynamics and relationships within communities?
    - E.g. Do associations reduce occurrences of elite capture and improve communication?
- The actual differences in responding to disaster for the Igorots compared to other Filipino's
    - E.g. Measure differences in recovery rates or social cohesion
- Look closer into the different roles that actors adopt
    - E.g. Which people are presenting themselves as victims and why?

- E.g. Which people can easily adopt the role of interface expert and why?
- E.g. What role do local administrators play? Why do they see themselves as powerless and dependent upon higher administrative bodies?
- E.g. How is role-play helpful for NGOs in image conforming and reaching personal goals?

➢ Investigate determining factors for greater or lesser dependency on external aid
- E.g. What defines differentiated dependency between communities? For example, looking at development paths of different communities, their distance to a city, organisational structure, relationships with the local government or NGOs, etcetera.
- E.g. What defines differentiated dependency within communities? For example, look at the role of education, health, connections and social capital.

> *"I don't write a book so that it will be the final word; I write a book so that other books are possible, not necessarily written by me"*
> Philosopher and sociologist Michel Foucault

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Appendices

Appendix 1: 'Philippines: Major Typhoon Tracks from 26 Sept to 31 October 2009' 1

Appendix 2: 'Philippines: Road conditions 01 November 2009' 2

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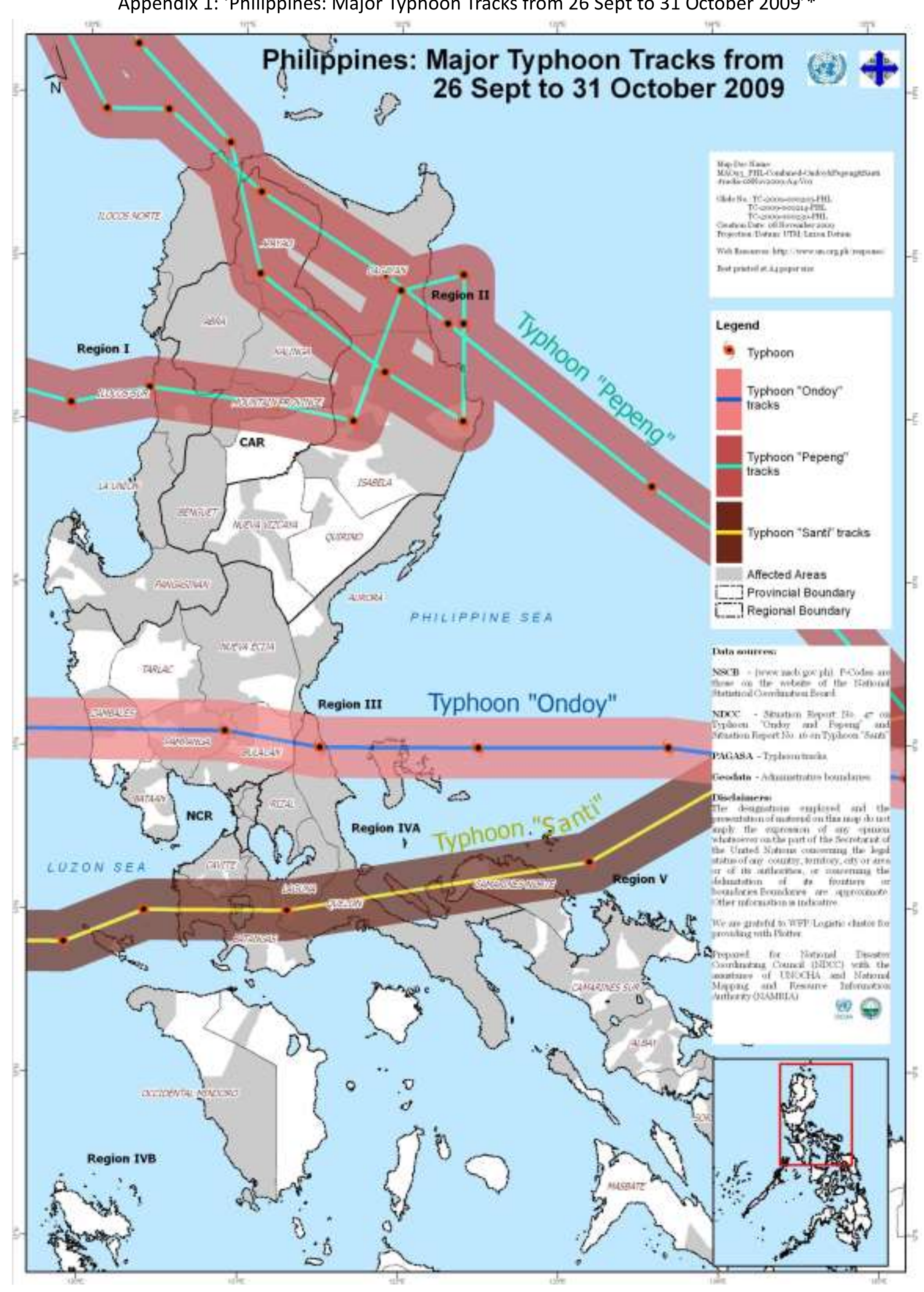
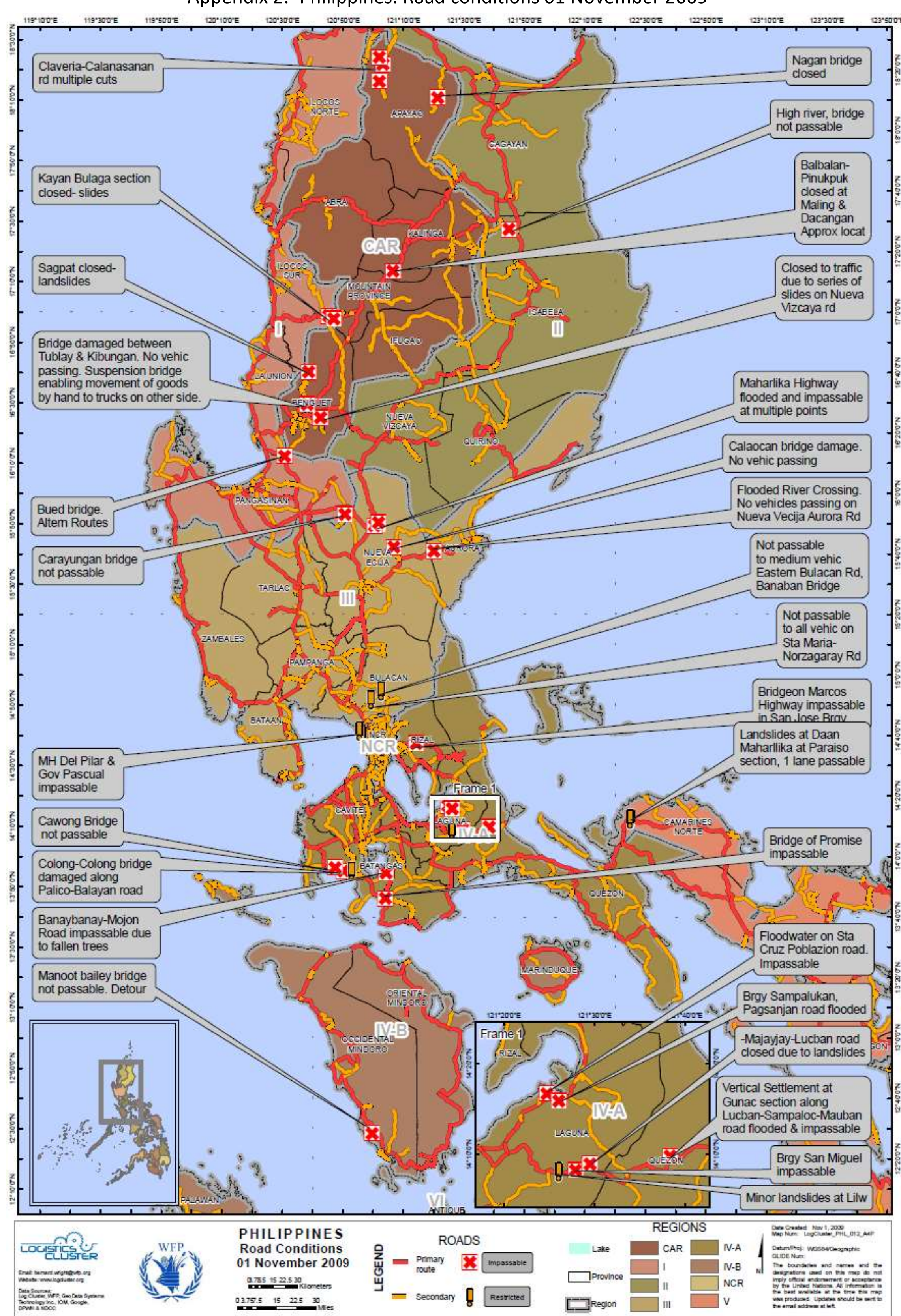
Appendix 1: 'Philippines: Major Typhoon Tracks from 26 Sept to 31 October 2009'*



*http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/793FD45BD6C94AEFC125766A003954F1-Map.pdf (retrieved June 2013)

Appendix 2: 'Philippines: Road conditions 01 November 2009'*



*http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2B67F372E489631985257662007E2523-map.pdf (retrieved June 2013)

Appendix 3: Press release by the 'Kalikasan People's Network for the environment'*

PNoy order to "blast communities" shows depth of ignorance on addressing disaster risk

-Written by Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment, August 14, 2012

Environmental groups under the Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment decried the orders of Pres. Benigno Aquino III to forcibly relocate some 195,000 families situated in waterways, and to "blast" their homes if needed.

"The depth of the President Aquino's ignorance regarding disaster risk reduction and community vulnerability is apparent in his proposed 'by hook or by crook' solution. The use of threat and force to relocate people as suggested by President Aquino clearly shows incomprehension and indifference to the real reasons why poor people risk living in dangerous and disaster-prone areas like waterways." said Clemente Bautista, national coordinator of Kalikasan PNE.

This was part of the Aquino government's master plan to clear water channels of all obstructions to address, once and for all, the perennial flooding in Metro Manila and other parts of Luzon. Early this year, Aquino also ordered the demolition of small-scale mining communities in Pantukan, Compostela Valley away from vulnerable areas.

"In their Marcosian approach, the Aquino government wants to remove these poor people yet providing no housing or livable resettlement areas, alternative livelihoods, and financial support. The Aquino administration is so ignorant to not know that the most-affected areas of the recent 'Habagat' flooding were resettlement areas like in Quezon City and Rizal province," said Bautista.

Various groups have earlier also decried PNoy's cancellation of 1.9 billion pesos worth of flood control projects prior to the storms brought by the typhoon-enhanced southwest monsoon rains.

"Why do we hear of PNoy's supposed master plan to address flood risks just now when the damage to communities has been done and the pending flood projects have been cancelled? We have long called for a community-based approach in building the capacities of communities to prepare and respond to disasters, and to engage in disaster mitigation and environmental management. But the communities are time and again perceived as nothing but 'obstructions' that can be cleared away," lamented Bautista.

"Ironically, PNoy has failed to put a stop to development aggression activities that further destroy watersheds and other ecosystems that regulate floods and other hydro-meteorological disasters. Large-scale mining corporations have been exempted from standing log bans, and mining applications that cover vast tracts of forests have been validated by the new mining executive order. Meanwhile, magnetite mining and reclamation projects further erode our coasts and destroy our mangroves and other natural buffers against storm surges," Bautista pointed out.

Kalikasan challenged the Aquino administration to refrain from anti-people rhetoric and to refocus their efforts and resources towards disaster preparedness and vulnerability reduction. "Channeling a huge budget allocation away from debt-servicing and towards livelihood-creation and effective flood-control projects is a sure formula to make communities and families resilient to flooding," Bautista said

* http://www.kalikasan.net/press-release/2012/08/15/pnoy-order-%E2%80%9Cblast-communities%E2%80%9D-shows-depth-ignorance-addressing-disaster (retrieved June 2013)

Appendix 4: Article: 'Is disaster 'normal' for indigenous people? Indigenous knowledge in coping practices' – forthcoming in 'Disaster Prevention and Management'.

Is disaster 'normal' for indigenous people? Indigenous knowledge in coping practices.

By Dorothea Hilhorst, Judith Baart, Gemma van der Haar and Floor Leeftink

Article forthcoming in 'Disaster Prevention and Management'

Purpose of this paper	This paper aims to contribute to debates on the value of indigenous knowledge for disaster risk reduction. Recent international policy papers advocate the importance of indigenous knowledge and calls for its recognition. The paper aims to explore these issues in the everyday practices of disaster response by indigenous peoples and surrounding actors.
Design/methodology/approach	The paper is based on a total of 7 months ethnographic research in indigenous communities in Thailand and the Philippines. The Thai communities had experienced minor disasters, whereas the Philippine communities were recently hit by a major killer typhoon.
Findings	In both countries we found that indigenous knowledge is neither completely local, nor homogenous, nor shared. Our findings caution against a view that indigenous knowledge is grounded in a long tradition of coping with disasters. Coping is embedded in social practice and responsive to change. Positive labelling of indigenous practices can help to render communities more resilient.
Research limitations/implications (if applicable)	The research was exploratory in nature and could be replicated and expanded in other indigenous peoples' communities.
Practical implications (if applicable)	Rather than understanding indigenous peoples as simultaneously vulnerable and resilient, and focusing, it calls for a more comprehensive approach to indigenous knowledge and practices around disaster.
Social implications	The limitations are shown of uncritically ascribing indigenous communities a close relation to nature. It may be unfounded and de-politicises indigenous struggles.
What is original/value of paper	This paper approaches indigenous knowledge issues from the point of view of indigenous communities themselves.

Introduction

The images of the tsunami of December 26, 2004, in South East Asia travelled the globe, reproducing the sense of awe about the magnitude of the destruction and suffering showing on the faces of people who saw the wave coming. With it travelled an intensified sense of human vulnerability: despite our modern technologies and communication systems, disasters of this magnitude apparently could not be predicted or prevented. In the midst of these narratives, some anecdotes provided a counter-point: wild animals had pre-sensed the onset of disaster and fled, and particular indigenous groups, who - relying on knowledge handed down from one generation to the next - had known how to read the signs of nature and had been able to put themselves in safety. These stories, about the Simeuluean people and the Moken, living off the coasts of Sumatra and Thailand respectively, came to be icons of the value of indigenous knowledge, contrasted with the limits of modern technology.

The anecdotes on these indigenous island dwellers have popped up in numerous accounts of the tsunami and are also taken up in the UN agenda on indigenous peoples and disasters, formulated in 2008 in the report *Indigenous knowledge for disaster risk reduction: good practices and lessons learned from experience sin the Asia-Pacific region* (UNISDR 2008). The anecdotes serve to make the case for a greater recognition of indigenous knowledge in disaster risk reduction and resilience. Citing the report: “While these two cases stole the limelight in recent years, there are many less conspicuous examples of communities who have also used indigenous knowledge to survive disastrous events and cope with difficult environmental conditions. These communities’ use of indigenous knowledge to reduce risk, cope and survive recent natural disasters provides many lessons for practitioners and policy makers on the value of indigenous knowledge for disaster risk reduction.”(UNISDR 2008: p. viii). This agenda on indigenous knowledge fitted in with the broader thinking on community-based disaster management and inclusive models of disaster coordination reflected in the Hyogo Framework for Action. The emphasis on indigenous *capacity* and *resilience* also provided a welcome complement for indigenous organizations to the emphasis on indigenous *vulnerability* in the emerging climate change debates. This does not mean that the concern with vulnerability was replaced; rather – as we will elaborate in more detail below- the ideas of the ‘resilient indigenous’ and the ‘vulnerable indigenous’ exist side-by-side.

To the background of this increasing attention to the value of indigenous knowledge for coping with disaster, this paper aims to explore the nature and role of indigenous knowledge in the responses of indigenous peoples to disasters in two different settings, in Thailand and the Philippines. It is based on three months of ethnographic fieldwork in Thailand and four in the Philippines in 2012, for a research on the everyday occurrence of disaster, as well as responses to a major disaster in the case of the Philippines (cyclone Parma, locally called Pepeng, which has taken place in 2009).

The cases show how different constructions of the indigenous (as marginalized, autonomous, or recognised; as vulnerable or resilient), play out in the local contexts and surface in local discourses. Relations between states and indigenous peoples are often strained. Both the indigenous peoples in Thailand and those in the Philippines have long been marginalized by their national governments. Indigenous peoples, as well as their lands, are being exploited while their livelihoods and living conditions are below national standards. The engagement with disasters provides an arena in which these issues may surface and where indigenous identities are reconsidered and, to a certain extent, re-negotiated within indigenous communities and between them and the state. With this research, we were interested to see how disasters may become sites of negotiation over knowledge and disasters, as well as over identity, citizenship and the relation between indigenous peoples and the state.

The paper asks how indigenous peoples in the case areas deal with disaster and what the nature and role is of indigenous knowledge. Advocates of indigenous knowledge claim that coping with disaster is a rather ‘normal’ routine for people living close to nature, and we want to explore if this is indeed the case. In this paper, we are thus not primarily concerned with the ‘normality’ of disasters, in the sense of everyday risks as opposed to large and exceptional events. We are interested in the attitudes towards disasters and practices in coping, and hence in the ‘normality’ of disasters in the sense of evoking customary, habitual and integrated responses. The normal and the exceptional, in this view, may not be seen as events, but rather as perspectives (paraphrased after Goffman 1963: 138).

In addition, we consider how external parties, the government and others respond to disasters and how they view the value of indigenous knowledge. The next section will elaborate on indigenous peoples and disasters and how indigenous knowledge is being incorporated in international disaster agendas. We will

then provide the methodology of the research, followed by the presentation of findings in the two case studies. We will end the paper with a discussion of the findings in relation to longer-standing debates regarding indigenous knowledge: debates on local knowledge and scientific knowledge, and debates on the so-called 'ecological Indian' which denoted the exclusive and sustainable relation indigenous peoples were supposed to have with nature.

Indigenous peoples and disasters: Indigenous knowledge on the agenda

Asia, and specifically Southeast Asia, has the highest number of fatalities due to natural disasters in the world. The Philippines and Thailand are two of the region's most vulnerable countries. Earthquakes, floods and storms top the statistics in Asia both for occurrence, amount of people killed and affected, and damage done. The numbers include both disasters of considerable magnitude, that take many lives and cause material destruction, but also concern the more mundane, everyday disasters.

The aftermath of the tsunami saw, as mentioned in the introduction, a steep rise in interest in indigenous knowledge and what it might have to offer to disaster risk reduction. We can understand this rise also in the context the Hyogo Framework for Action with its emphasis on local capacity and community-based disaster management. This provided a conducive policy condition for putting the potential contribution of indigenous knowledge on the agenda. In view of an expected increase in climate-related natural hazards and an increase in irregular weather patterns (given existing and possible growing climate variability), a reliance solely on expert-based and technology-intensive knowledge systems/solutions, would indeed seem unwise.

The agenda around indigenous knowledge crystallized in the 2008 UNISDR report *Indigenous knowledge for disaster risk reduction.* The ambitions of this report, and consequent actions, include a better recognition and mainstreaming of indigenous knowledge, but also better forms of knowledge exchange and dissemination, and a more effective linking between scientific and local knowledge. The disaster risk reduction community found a ready counterpart within the UN structure, in the form of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. A White Paper entitled *Engaging indigenous peoples in disaster risk reduction*, prepared by the Center for Public Service Communications (2013) addressed the Forum directly. It is the other key document (also provided in summary to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, Center for Public Service Communication, 2013), next to the UNISDR report, on which our analysis in this section is focused.

Recognition of indigenous knowledge- the resilient indigenous. A dominant theme in the UN White Paper is that of *recognition* of indigenous knowledge. The central argument is that indigenous communities hold time-tested knowledge and coping practices that could develop due to their intimate connection with their natural surroundings and that make them resilient to climate-related natural hazards and disasters. The argument runs that this knowledge has been unduly neglected in disaster management policies formulated by the state, due not only to the predominance of technocratic thinking, but also due to the lack of connections between mostly non-indigenous officials and engineers and the indigenous population.

The intimate relation between indigenous peoples and nature would form the foundation of indigenous people's resilience in the face of natural hazards. There are high expectations of local indigenous knowledge in this perspective, that has led "anthropologists working in the region to attribute people's survival to their traditional lore, passed down from generation to generation, which prepared them to deal with natural disasters" (Budjeryn 2005). Mercer et al (2010: 217) also emphasize the relation

between society and nature as formative of indigenous knowledge in saying that “indigenous knowledge is considered to be a body of knowledge existing within or acquired by local people over a period of time through accumulation of experiences, society-nature relationships, community practices and institutions, and by passing it down through generations”. UNISDR says that local knowledge is different because it “originates from the community, is disseminated through informal means, is collectively owned, subject to adaptation, and embedded in a community’s way of life as a means of survival” (UNISDR, 2008, vii).

The latter definition, from UNISDR, emphasizes the social embeddedness of indigenous knowledge as emanating in particular settings and cultures. This insight, however, gets increasingly lost in the current emphasis on recognition of indigenous knowledge. The UNISDR report treats indigenous knowledge from a ´best practices, lessons learned´ perspective, in which the interest is in valuable fragments of knowledge of the stock of knowledge harboured by indigenous communities, that can be formulated for use in different settings. Indigenous knowledge in this approach is to be made ´ready for consumption´ globally. There are obvious caveats to this, to which we will turn below. First, however, we turn to two other frames that we recognise in the language and concerns reflected in the reports cited.

Protection of indigenous knowledge- the vulnerable indigenous. The second frame is that of *protection* of indigenous populations and indigenous knowledge. This frame also departs from the idea of recognizing indigenous knowledge on hazards and disasters as a valuable addition to current scientific knowledge, but acknowledges that this knowledge is under threat. Displacement from their places of origin, poverty, ecological degradation, plus modernisation in all its guises (abandonment of traditional agro-ecological production systems, increasing monetarisation of local economies, education and changing value systems) may lead to a rapid loss of indigenous knowledge adding to the growing vulnerability of indigenous communities. This has, for example, been observed by Kelman et al who state that “contemporary global pressures such as urbanization, climate change, deforestation and globalization [...] are tending to increase the vulnerability of indigenous communities to disaster” (Kelman, Mercer et al. 2012: 14).

Indigenous access to knowledge- the excluded indigenous. The concern with the vulnerability of indigenous communities feeds into a related but different frame present in the current agendas around indigenous knowledge. This third frame stresses *inclusion* of indigenous communities into broader knowledge and information systems on disaster risk and disaster management from which they have been excluded. This view acknowledges the economic and political marginalisation of many indigenous populations, who are often confined to - or forced to move to- fragile ecosystems that are particularly vulnerable to the climatic variations, and who lack adequate representation in political arenas and policy-making. This frame underpins arguments for more visibility of and responsiveness to indigenous needs and for greater efforts by local and national governments to attune their disaster management and risk reduction measures to indigenous populations.

The views represented in the UNISDR paper and the white paper mentioned, seem to only partially take on board more recent developments that rise from innovative practice by amongst others Oxfam Australia, such as the proposal for hybrid models, that combine indigenous (local) and expert knowledge (Mercer year).

The combination of the recognition of indigenous strength with the call for special protection, mirrors longer standing politics of indigenous peoples themselves, which demand on the one hand the recognition of the right to difference, and on the other the right to inclusion and participation.

Indigenous struggles, in particular in Latin America, have oscillated between these seemingly contradicting sets of demands (Assies et al 2001).

Analytical frame and methodology

Departing from a perspective that disasters caused by natural hazards are largely social phenomena in the way they come about, get understood and get acted upon, the fieldwork aimed to map responses of different actors to disasters in indigenous areas, and the interfaces and interactions between them.

There are many different actors involved in disaster management, ranging from government departments, to service providers, aid agencies or local institutions. These actors can be loosely grouped in different domains of disaster management – areas of social life where ideas and practices concerning risk and disaster are exchanged, shared and more or less organized because of a certain proximity, physically of discursively, in the ways references are made to disaster and risk (Hilhorst 2003b). Disaster preparedness and response are seen as an arena where actors from these different domains socially negotiate the way disaster can be framed and acted upon (Artur and Hilhorst 2012). Pertinent questions that arise in these arenas and render the response to disaster inherently political are what happened, who is to blame, who will take responsibility for the response and what will happen in the future (cf Olson, 2000).

We forward the different domains of disaster response (such as people, government, and NGOs) as methodological entry-points into the arena of disaster preparedness and response. In reality, it should be noted that these domains partly overlap because some people belong to more than one domain. In addition, we also acknowledge that these domains are not homogenous. Among local people, we often find a clear demarcation between people who are central to the response and represent the community in their dealings with outsiders and other members of the community (so-called interface experts, Hilhorst 2003a). NGOs come in very different variations, and range for example from technocratic and specialized to generalized and political, from proxies to the government to autonomous and critical. Likewise, we often find differences between central government officials and local government bodies. Nonetheless, we find enough commonality in these domains to make them useful for our analysis.

The study of social domains allows us to focus on the everyday practices and movements of actors negotiating the conditions and effects of vulnerability and disaster. These negotiations simultaneously entail evaluations of local, indigenous knowledge, and of the place of the indigenous people in the broader national community. The fieldwork focused on a variety of methods to understand the responses of indigenous peoples, the government and NGOs to disaster and their interaction. Methods used ranged from literature studies to semi-structured interviews, participatory observation and Participatory Rural Appraisal exercises. This methodological variety was valuable in triangulating the information in order to achieve greater validity.

The paper builds on two case studies: Thailand and the Philippines. Both these countries are in South East Asia and particularly prone to disasters. The choice for the specific countries was mainly informed by the fact that the research was facilitated and hosted by indigenous peoples' organisations that are particularly active in these countries. In the case of Thailand, our main partner was the Asia Indigenous People's Pact, based in Chiang Mai and in the Philippines, this was Tebtebba, based in Baguio City. Although the research set out with an emphasis on everyday, smaller disasters that are a recurrent part of life in indigenous areas, they diverged in practice. The Thai case focused on villages that had not experienced major disasters, whereas the case in the Philippines focused – after consultation with the host organisation – on a major typhoon that hit the area and that despite its magnitude had never been

the subject of academic research. Hence, it was important for the organisation to know more of what happened in its aftermath. The case studies were conducted by students of Disaster Studies at Wageningen University. Judith Baart conducted the Thai case based on three months and Floor Leeftink the Philippine case on the basis of four months living and working with the NGOs and spending time in indigenous communities, in the summer and fall of 2012.

Disasters in the Lisu and Hmong communities in Thailand
The first case is Thailand, where research was done amongst Lisu and Hmong communities. Both peoples live in the northern part of Thailand, traditionally originating from the countries surrounding Thailand. The 'hill tribes', as they are called, originally moved into the mountains to farm opium. Now, cash crops dominate. Thailand counts almost 1 million registered indigenous people, with many more that have not been counted .

The research in Thailand covered two distinct communities. The Lisu are a cross-boundary ethnic group of which approximately 30,000 people reside in Thailand. The village of Ban Sai Ngam, studied for the research, started as a settlement in the early 1980s by several Lisu families. In 1986 the Thai government recognized the village and gave it its Thai name. The Hmong are a larger group of people, with the people in the Khek Noi village living and working on land that they rent from the government, situated in a national park. Most of the people in both the villages have a Thai identity card but they refer to themselves as Hmong or Lisu, rather than Thai. In Thailand, indigenous peoples have never fully integrated into the government administration and distance themselves from dominant Thai culture. They speak their own language and very few people master Thai as a second language.

Both communities of research had experienced recurrent smaller disasters, such as the flooding of the river, periods of drought, and landslides. In Ban Sai Ngam, the last disaster to take place was a flooding of the river in 2004. In Khek Noi, a small flood had taken place a year before the research. We entered the research expecting to find ancient traditional knowledge. However, when asked about coping methods in the face of disaster almost all respondents replied with a variant of "I don't know, we don't have that knowledge or technology". A variety of traditional methods were mentioned by each of the respondents, yet there were only few cases that more than one respondent named, implying that these coping methods were hardly shared throughout the community, nor were they still practiced. Examples of these are: watching for unusual animal activity, having the shaman predict the future for the coming year, blaming the spirits for any disasters that befalls them, and using the traditional calendar to tell when the rains would come. Also, some of the older respondents mentioned that when bad weather conditions had been predicted, the communities would react by moving their families to a different area.

On the other hand, a variety of coping methods were observed that none of the respondents thought worthy of mentioning, but in reality were practiced methods of bracing themselves for and coping with the aftermath of a disaster. Examples of this tacit knowledge are water tanks observed at various houses in Khek Noi, placed there in case of a future drought. Other examples are the practice of having fields at a variety of altitudes and practicing shifting cultivation, which result in the spreading of risks. Strong family and community relationships and mutual assistance help to reduce the impact of risks.

In interviews, the Lisu and Hmong expressed feelings of being incapable, of not knowing, and not being able to deal with natural hazards, with one respondent stating, "We [indigenous] don't know; we don't have that knowledge, we don't have that technology"; and a Hmong couple explaining, "if the leader dies, we also die. Because the leader has to prepare". The indigenous NGO working in these communities, also found in their trainings that people had a negative image of themselves in relation to

coping with disaster, even calling it 'an inferiority complex'. This may have partly reflected a conscious self-portrayal as needy in order to attract assistance, but the researcher had the impression that there was also a genuine sense of helplessness. People frequently referred to the need for information on hazards, to be provided by the government.

The government is a large player when it comes to external assistance to disaster-prone areas. In 2002, Thailand established a new government agency, the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) whose role it is to coordinate disaster risk management activities (Asian Disaster Reduction Center, 2009). Additionally, other government agencies are working on various stages of the disaster management process, such as the Meteorological Department that is working on early warning systems. The government aims very much to be the savior of the people after a disaster, and is closely involved in community based disaster risk reduction methods. It views disasters as "a natural hazard problem requiring technical fixes" (Manuta et al 2006, p. 20). The state is seen as the only actor capable to respond, and even community based disaster risk management projects seemed to be closely managed by the government, leaving little space for local input and understanding.

The Thai government aims to support indigenous peoples, giving them "full right to practice their religions and maintain their cultures as 'first-class', self-reliant Thai citizens"(Fujioka, 2002, p.5). Yet, at the same time, policies are influenced by rhetoric on highland peoples, which categorizes indigenous peoples as destroyers of the forest, involved in narcotics, and a threat to national security (Rickson, 2005), inherently thus blaming the hill tribes for causing climate-related natural disasters. Moreover, disaster management policies embody messages of assimilation. Information on the radio, for example, is provided in Thai. Additionally, indigenous peoples need Thai identity cards, and their village needs to be registered in Thailand under a Thai name, in order to be recognized as citizens by the government, and thus eligible for government services.

NGOs too, are present, yet most villagers are unaware of them. Rather than being directly involved in disaster assistance, they focus on mobilising government services for indigenous peoples, who might otherwise be neglected. This gives them a powerful position as interface experts – they translate and negotiate between the government and the indigenous people. There is thus no affirmation of indigenous rights and identity, as NGOs are needed as negotiators with the government.

Disaster in the Philippine Cordilleras

The second case is on the Philippines, one of the most hazard-prone countries in the world. Due to its meteorological and geological setting, the archipelago is frequently plagued by natural hazards. Yearly, over a thousand people die because of earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and tropical cyclones, causing floods and landslides (Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters 2013). Research was done in the Northern, mountainous part of the Philippines: the Cordillera Administrative Region. This region is home to several indigenous peoples, together referred to as 'Igorots' - freely translated as 'highlanders' or 'mountain people'. The Igorots are composed of seven ethno-linguistic groups and total about 1.5 million in population (Cariño 2012). Due to its richness in natural resources there have been on-going attempts to exploit the region. First by Spanish gold-hunting colonisers, later by the Americans who introduced civil law, education, Christianity and cash crops, and finally by the neo-liberal Philippine government (Tauli 2009). These developments have largely replaced subsistence agriculture and altered traditional practices. Recent trends such as the improvement of infrastructure and communication means, as well as increased migration, have further influenced the indigenous culture of Igorots (Weygan 2002; Carling 2004).

We investigated how these developments alter indigenous coping strategies by conducting a case study ona major typhoon that hit the region in October 2009, Typhoon ‘Pepeng’ (internationally named ‘Parma’) ravaged large parts of the Cordillera and caused over 350 casualties in the region (National Disaster Coordinating Council 2009). The fieldwork was conducted in Baguio City and four affected municipalities throughout Benguet and Mountain Province. In total, 61 people were interviewed of which about half of them were directly affected by Pepeng. The other interviewees represented the government (from local to regional administrators), volunteers, academics and NGO-employees.

Indigenous warning systems
With regards to indigenous warning systems, we found several methods to predict oncoming danger. For example observing animals; interpreting dreams; analysing the first summer rain; watching flowers; and observing the moon or sun. While people still refer to these “phenological markers” (Krishna 2011: 36), and may place a certain trust in them, none of the interviewees used them anymore. Most people said: “only the old folks do it” – even when the interviewees were old in years themselves. The 2009 disaster has increased the want for better warning systems among those who experienced the dreadful event. The interviewees seem to rely on modern warning systems more than their traditional methods. As a 42-year-old farmer explained it: “Before, in the old days people observed the ants. It is more ignored [now] because of the technology. It was before the electricity was here. The radio now serves as warning device”.

From the ‘resilient indigenous’ paradigm it was unexpected to find that most of the interviewees did not foresee the disaster that was about to happen. People explained that they have experienced many storms, but “Pepeng was not like anything before”. It is also striking that the IPs thus seem to trust an external party (their government) instead of their own observations and make use of technology instead of their direct environment to predict danger.

-Indigenous coping mechanisms
The most important indigenous coping mechanisms that we found are in the social organisation, in particular the system of mutual assistance - i.e. people helping each other. The Tagalog term for this is *bayanihan*. This is a national trait, but is believed to be better preserved in the Cordillera than in the lowlands. According to the observations of a university teacher in Baguio City, the situation in the evacuation centres in Manila in the aftermath of typhoon Pepeng was very chaotic and hostile; people were fiercely competing with each other and there were food riots and complaints about the government services. In the Cordillera, on the other hand, people would patiently wait for their food, organise themselves and just bear with the situation. According to this teacher, this is because in Manila “there is no community spirit, it is every man for itself. They don’t care about the rest”. The situation on the ground is of course a bit more complex, but this quote seems to reflect the general feeling of most people in the Cordillera who consider bayanihan as typically Igorot and question whether it is still being practiced in the lowlands. In fact, the majority of the interviewees adopted bayanihan as cultural characteristic and seem very proud of this.

Help from neighbours - Crowds at rescue and retrieval operation in Tadian

Picture provided by Marie Balangue, 2009

According to the interviewees, *bayanihan* is strongest right after disaster and diminishes as time passes by. This was confirmed by several aid recipients who stated that over time, the competition over aid grew and neighbourly help reduced. This corresponds with findings from social psychology showing that "social cohesion increases in the immediate aftermath of disasters, [but quickly] returns to pre-disaster levels" (Sweet 1998: 321) when "victims discover that the need for assistance far exceeds the availability of resources and realise that the increased sense of benevolence was short-lived" (Krzysztof and Norris 1995: 95)

Most of the interviewees emphasised that bayanihan is not only used in times of crisis, but also in everyday practises. At the same time they felt that this practice of helping each other declines under the influence of modernisation. Underlying causes that were mentioned are the integration in the modern economy as opposed to subsistence farming, as people can now hire labour and are thus less dependent on their neighbours. Secondly, increased migration and intermarriages induce more contact between highlanders and lowlanders, and thus the exchange of cultural practices. And thirdly, modern values simply adjust or replace traditional values and practices, so some see bayanihan as 'old-fashioned'.

However, people stressed that bayanihan revives in times of disaster. This is nicely illustrated with a quote by a young attorney from Baguio with an indigenous background who said: "In times of disaster we really help each other, but in good times we try to kill each other". In one of the research sites, some surviors form typhoon Pepeng mentioned that typhoon Pepeng has enhanced the communities' togetherness and boosted the system of mutual help. With regards to future perspectives, people are hopeful of the continuation of the practice of bayanihan in the Cordillera. They see it as an inherited practice that they grew up with, as well as a traditional value. However, due to the dynamics mentioned above, people are

not sure about the persistence of helping each other. They think it is crucial that parents teach their children about this values.

Another indigenous coping mechanism that we found is the use of rituals and religion, as it guides behaviour, supports psychological recovery and reinforces social ties. Even though Christianity has increasingly replaced, incorporated or adapted the traditional, animist beliefs, the old rituals have not been forgotten and seem to be rooted in Igorot daily culture.

-External assistance and dependency
In addition to indigenous coping, external assistance was of major importance in the aftermath of typhoon Pepeng. The long history of contested state-society relationships in the Philippines gave rise to an active and dense NGO-network in the Philippines and the Cordillera (Hilhorst 2003a). These NGOs immediately came to action when Pepeng struck, just like numerous volunteers from throughout the region. The study brought to light several examples in which informal organisations or individuals with little resources played a vital role during relief and recovery after the typhoon[1]. Both the NGOs and the volunteers teamed up with the government to ensure a quick response. For the aid beneficiaries it was often unclear who were helping them because the different parties worked closely together. However, the interviews as well as actor mapping exercises showed that the Igorot communities consider the government as being mainly responsible for immediate relief and recovery efforts.

The government, who was formerly blamed for inadequately mitigating the manifold natural hazards, recently shifted towards a more holistic, proactive and community-based disaster policy, largely fostered by the non-governmental sector (Luna 2001; Delfin and Gaillard 2008; Bankoff and Hilhorst 2009; Polack and Luna et al. 2010). This was operationalised in 2010 when the Strategic National Action Plan (SNAP) on Disaster Risk Reduction and the enactment of the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act were installed (DILG 2011). Even though the transition from a reactive to proactive approach might not be completed, at least attention has shifted from merely response and passive preparedness to mitigation and prevention.

The (perceived) level of dependency on external aid varied highly between and within communities for the various people that were interviewed. This mainly depended on whether there were key people in the communities with the right connections and skills to mobilize external resources. On the whole, we found a general increase of dependency on outside actors as was confirmed by both the indigenous interviewees, as well as the aid providers and academics. One 40-year old lady from Tublay (mixed Kankana-ey and Ibaloi), said in this respect: "Before people were helping each other. But we are now at the age of technology and it is sometimes negative, because we have come dependent on technology." A civil servant from Kapangan, who is also a member of the Igorot communities, states that "Time changes our values. First there was no aid, people survived on their own. Now they have access to aid. In a way this develops dependency… on… but they should not keep on asking, they should learn to stand for their own."

An explanation for the increased dependence on aid coming from the different interviews is that Igorot communities are gradually modernizing, resulting in (1) greater dependency on stores, electricity and government services; (2) deteriorating traditional practices such as *bayanihan* and (3) integration in the cash system, leading to more expensive recovery and new needs.

[1] See the complete thesis for these examples: "Coping after typhoon Pepeng: A case study of indigenous practices and external aid in the Cordillera, Philippines".

Overall we concluded that the coping strategies of the Igorots might not be that different from their fellow countrymen and most of the coping is engrained in everyday practices and culture. What is special, however, is the articulation of disaster response as typical for Igorot ways of dealing with life and dealing with disaster. This was the case within the communities, but also in media and among outside actors, who celebrated the indigenous culture for its sharing and resilience. The effect of labelling the coping practises as 'typically Igorot', not only had the instrumental effect that it raised attention and resources for recovery, but also increased the confidence of communities in being able to cope with disaster. Typhoon Pepeng seemed to boost traditional practices, which was noticeable even three years after the event. Even though interviewed Igorots view their government as the main responsible for their recovery, as they at the same time they maintain a perspective of their communities as 'truly Cordilleran'. This perspective thus contributed to a perceived – and hence real – sense of indigenous resilience.

It should, however, not be forgotten that most of the Igorot communities are relatively poor and thereby extra vulnerable to disaster risk. In the communities where this research has been conducted – rural, mountainous areas – most people earn just enough to survive and maybe save a little bit, but they do not have enough to deal with a disaster of this magnitude. This became especially clear in the period of recovery as people were struggling to rebuild their houses and rehabilitate their livelihoods, despite the external assistance that was provided. Three years after typhoon Pepeng hit the Philippines, the effects were still deeply felt in the affected communities, both emotionally and economically. It shows that even though people live in extremely hazard prone countries, it is impossible to be completely resilient or prepared when disaster strikes. This supports the paradigm of the 'vulnerable indigenous' and highlights the importance of good and effective external assistance in all stages of disaster. It took people more than three years to overcome the effects of typhoon Pepeng. So let alone the reconstruction efforts that are needed to overcome the recent super typhoon Haiyan that hit the Philippines November 2013, which caused more than ten times the amount of casualties.

Discussion

Policy papers like the UNISDR on community-based risk reduction, often display a view of indigenous knowledge as collectively owned, homogeneous, and embedded in indigenous people's way of life. But what do we find it to be in practice? In both countries we found that knowledge is not collectively owned: respondents varied in their knowledge of coping practices. We also found that respondents rely on a mix of different knowledge bases, where modern technology, especially radio, can rapidly replace 'old folks' knowledge. We also found that respondents did not always highly value their own knowledge, or the knowledge of past generations. Traditional knowledge is neither completely local, nor homogenous, nor shared.

Our findings caution against a view that indigenous knowledge is grounded in a long tradition of coping with disasters. We found this image far from applicable in our cases. Indigenous peoples in Thailand have only recently settled in communities where they encounter risks they are not familiar with. Disaster in their areas is not as frequent as may be assumed and there is little explicit knowledge of dealing with these disasters. There is no such thing as a shared, time-tested body of knowledge. In the Philippine case, indigenous peoples indeed have a lot of exposure to disasters, but that does not make hem prepared for the mega-disasters that – under influence of climate change – now increasingly plague their areas. Disasters are never normal. In the Philippines it was found that, despite a large collective history with disaster, households and individuals still experience each disaster as a catastrophe.

Rather than perceiving of indigenous knowledge as accumulated bits and pieces of ‘reading’ disaster signs, we concur with Gaillard et al. who state: “It is noteworthy that strategies to cope with floods are anchored in daily life. Most are adjustments in everyday activities of the flood-affected people rather than extraordinary measures adopted to face extreme and rare natural events. The capacity to adjust everyday activities, however, largely depends on the strength of people’s livelihoods” . We found indigenous institutions, such as rotational agriculture or labour sharing to be part of everyday life and at the same time highly instrumental to disaster response, often without people realizing it.

While indigenous coping capacities are largely embedded in their lifestyle, where they have significance beyond disaster events, these tacit measures are eroding as lifestyles are always subject to change. The grand processes that profoundly change the lives of indigenous peoples, such as the people in Thailand that are no longer allowed to move around due to villagization policies, or the increased commoditization of Philippino Igorot agriculture also effect the capacity to deal with disaster. Thai people can no longer move freely upland when they anticipate a flood, and the influx of cash into Philippine communities means that mutual assistance is increasingly complicated as an option for dealing with recovery after disaster. In situations where coping capacities are eroding, uncritical celebration of indigenous knowledge – while anchored in respect for their lifestyles - may effectively lead to neglect of mounting vulnerabilities.

While we found in both cases a similarity in dealing with disaster, especially through social institutions, the ways these were appreciated were radically different. In the studied villages in Thailand, people had strongly internalised a notion that they were not knowledgeable to deal with disaster, and were struggling with government’s allegations that they would be responsible for deforestation. In the Philippines, on the other hand, both affected people and surrounding actors had a positive image of the indigenous way of life in relation to dealing with disaster. The difference attests to different histories with indigenous politics. Where the Igorots have a long history of claiming their rights and have attained a certain autonomy before the law, Thai indigenous people were less vocal (especially in the Thai language) and were less explicit about their indigenous values.

The relationships between indigenous peoples and governments have historically been riddled with contradictions. Indigenous people seek to find a fine balance between claiming their lawful rights to services that can be provided by governments, while maintaining their identity, institutions and their exclusive relation with their lands. They may thus be suspicious of government programmes that seemingly address their vulnerabilities, including protection with disaster, but may come with ulterior motives or effects in further alienating them from their communal rights. Whether intended or not, the actions of government and other actors will be framed within these relations. In the Philippine case, for example, attempts of the government to resettle flood victims to higher areas were – rightly or wrongly – seen and acted upon as the prelude of (re-)opening profitable mining areas to further exploit the Cordillera riches. Amongst the Thai people the *politics of blame* that blame indigenous peoples for deforestation causing floods, have resulted in policies that prevent inhabitants from cutting trees or moving to other land, making them more vulnerable as they no longer have other land to take their crops when faced with upcoming floods.

Conclusion

Our findings bring about some qualifications to the UNISDR (2008) claim that “[..] there are many [..] examples of communities who have also used indigenous knowledge to survive disastrous events and cope with difficult environmental conditions”. Our findings emphasize that indigenous knowledge is fragmented, often considered redundant by the communities of research, and the social coping

mechanisms we found have either been eroded by broader socio-economic change increasing vulnerability to disaster, or not be very different from the practices in non-indigenous parts of the country. We did find, significantly, in the case of the Philippines, that the positive labelling of coping as indigenous heritage did have real effects in generating support and boosting local confidence.

The current argument for recognition of indigenous knowledge in disaster management could benefit from longer-standing academic debates on, on the one hand, local knowledge, and on the other, the idea of the ecological indian. We highlight the central critiques formulated in these debates to inform the current agenda.

Qualifying local knowledge

The current agenda on indigenous knowledge echoes the older interest in local knowledge that came up with a Disenchantment with development progress in the 1970s. Local knowledge was defined in juxtaposition to scientific or Western knowledge. It was considered to be context-specific rather than general, passed on through generations, and practice-based, i.e. derived from and related to the day-to-day practice and intimate acquaintance of resource users of their environment and ecosystems. Local knowledge was believed to be more suited to more fragile and marginal production environments and to provide an important complement to scientific knowledge (for an overview of the literature see e.g. Mercer et al 2010).

Ensuing debates attenuated the high hopes surrounding the potential of local knowledge as a driver to compensate for the limitations of scientific knowledge. Reservations were made that local knowledge cannot be represented as an accumulating and homogeneous community stock. It is often not shared and people in communities do not need to have the same ideas. There are always multiple knowledges in communities, partly distributed along gender, power or other relevant social categories, while people also adhere to different types of knowledge and use them according to the contingency of the situation. Secondly, it was realised that the embeddedness of local knowledge in a specific social and ecological context limit its transferability to other settings. Much is not discursive but routinised into practices, from which it cannot easily be disembedded. Finally, a fruitful combination of local and scientific knowledge which would build on the strengths of both, is complicated by the very different natures of these types of knowledge.

These issues have direct relevance to our findings on indigenous knowledge in disaster risk reduction and raise fundamental questions about the viability of a resilience agenda that aims to 'capture' indigenous best practices and transferring these to other contexts. Our cases especially bring out a certain fragility of local knowledge that can be lost over one generation when knowledge is considered irrelevant or undesirable under new circumstances.

De-mystifying the 'ecological Indian'.

The appreciation and use of indigenous knowledge is directly related to ideas about the indigenous and their position in wider society. In this respect, it is useful to briefly evoke the debates on the 'ecological Indian' that appeared in the 1970s as a new variation of the idea of the 'noble savage' of colonial days. The notion of the Indian as the 'champions of sustainability' captured the idea that indigenous populations live in close intimacy and harmony with their natural surroundings and that their societies have in-built mechanisms to avoid destruction of nature. This last point has given rise to considerable debate (e.g. Hames 2007). The idea that indigenous populations are by definition ecological heroes was hardly tenable, though there might be a range of arguments why they may act ecologically under given circumstances. Another critique was that in the struggle for recognition and indigenous rights, the

'ecological' rediscovery of the indigenous has had ambiguous effects. It led to an appreciation of indigenous primarily on the basis of their ecological quality, making them conditional subjects of rights (Assies 2000). We see a similar danger with the idea of the resilient indigenous peoples, which bears the risk of constructing the indigenous as de-politicised subjects.

As our cases show, understandings of what it means to be indigenous are not fixed in time, and are subject to social processes and interactions between indigenous communities and other actors, including the state or indigenous movements. Experiences with disaster and disaster response may be one of the arenas in which the value of indigenous knowledge and traditional ways of working, is negotiated, and where indigenous peoples seek a balance between claiming inclusive government services while maintaining their right to political and cultural difference. Rather than understanding indigenous experiences with disaster as simultaneously vulnerable and resilient, and focusing on the instrumental value of indigenous knowledge, this calls for a more comprehensively social approach to indigenous knowledge and practices around disaster. Such an approach would anchor disaster response in the specific contexts, lifestyles and politics of indigenous peoples.

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Appendix 5: Article & presentation: 'Coping after typhoon Pepeng: A case study on indigenous coping, gender and land tenure in the Cordillera, Philippines' - forthcoming in book by FAO and AIT

Expert Consultation on Land tenure and disaster and its social and gender impact
Asian Institute of Technology & Food and Agricultural Organization

Coping after typhoon Pepeng:

A case study on indigenous coping, gender and land tenure in the Cordillera, Philippines

By
Floor M. Leeftink
Student International Development Studies - Wageningen University, the Netherlands
Contact: floor.leeftink@gmail.com

And
Jo Ann Guillao
Researcher at Tebtebba Foundation for Indigenous Peoples - Baguio City, the Philippines
Contact: joann@tebtebba.org

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1. Introduction[2]

Contemporary global and local pressures - such as urbanisation, climate change, deforestation and globalisation - tend to increase the vulnerability of indigenous peoples (IPs) (Kelman, Mercer et al. 2012). There is, however, not much literature on indigenous responses to disaster and how these are changing in a modernising world. We respond to this gap by studying coping strategies of indigenous peoples and the way they deal with outside interventions. We do so by studying the case of typhoon Pepeng (internationally named Parma). that ravaged great parts of Northern Luzon, the Philippines in 2009. Using first-hand stories of aid recipients and aid providers, we explore (changing) indigenous responses to disaster with special attention to the topics of gender and land tenure.

[2] This paper is based on the MSc thesis: "Coping after typhoon Pepeng: A case study of indigenous practices and external aid in the Cordillera, Philippines" (2013) by Floor Leeftink. It has been conducted in partial fulfilment of the master program 'International Development Studies', Wageningen University in The Netherlands. The research was supervised Professor Dorothea Hilhorst, head of the Disaster Studies chair-group under the Rural Development Sociology chair. Local support was provided by 'Tebtebba Foundation: Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education', located in Baguio City, Philippines.

As – according to the interviewees – this was the first attempt to seriously evaluate the internal and external response to typhoon Pepeng, this study brings to light the everyday practices and hardships of disaster management. These grassroots stories have the potential to improve humanitarian aid and disaster preparedness, as indigenous areas and peoples elsewhere in the world are often similarly prone to disaster. It is time to learn more about disaster management from the people's perspective. Sadly, events like the recent super typhoon Haiyan/ Yolanda that hit the southern part of the country in November 2013, shows the relevance of studying these topics.

What follows is a brief description of the methodology and theoretical approach revealing the underlying assumptions of this research. Then, we elucidate the study context by describing disaster risk and management of the inhabitants of the Cordillera Administrative Region. Followed by an analyses of the findings with regards to (1) indigenous coping, (2) land tenure and (3) gender. In the conclusion we describe where these themes intersect and how they influence disaster risk. We end with some implications following from this study.

2. Methodology

2.1 Qualitative research

This research is based on four months of fieldwork in the Cordillera Administrative Region (Northern Luzon, the Philippines) during the months August – November 2012. A variety of qualitative methods were used throughout the research. First of all, a *desk study* to obtain secondary data from scientific literature, policy reports, evaluation documents, newspaper articles and online weblogs. Secondly, unstructured and semi-structured *interviews*: the data relies on the knowledge of 61 people shared in 49 interviews (not including informal conversations). About half of them were those people directly affected by typhoon Pepeng; a quarter were government officials at local to regional levels; and the remaining part represents NGO-employees, volunteers and academics. Thirdly, data has been collected through participant and outsider *observations*. And lastly through '*Participatory Rural Appraisal'* (PRA) exercises, a technique based on the idea that "local people can and should conduct their own appraisal and analysis" (Chambers 1994: 1253). The exercises included actor mapping and a focus group discussion.

The research was based in Baguio City, but from there four communities have been visited that were all badly, but in various ways, affected by typhoon Pepeng three years earlier. The communities were located in the municipalities of *Tublay*, *Bokod* and *Kapangan* in the province of Benguet and in the municipality of *Tadian* in Mountain Province.

2.2 Theoretical approach

Constructivism and the actor-oriented approach form the theoretical foundation of this qualitative research[3]. These paradigms imply the following approaches to the topic of disaster:

[3] For a thorough explanation of the paradigms and application, please see the original thesis

1. Disasters are social processes

-Disasters are interwoven with power, politic, discourse and change

-Everyday practices, context and social relations/interface are important

Disaster impact shapes - and gets shaped by - human behaviour. They are not mere natural, isolated crisis events, but should be viewed as complex social processes. Therefore, disaster management is never neutral or apolitical, but is embedded in local to international power structures and politics. Disaster impact reflects the social status of a certain society – i.e. the vulnerability of the affected people (Wisner, Gaillard et al. 2012). Just as it creates instability and room for reorganisation of social relations – i.e. disasters "open space for renegotiation in the values and structures of society" (Pelling and Dill 2010: 27). Thus, disaster research should be sensitive to power, politics and discourse, and include multiple social actors. Seeing disasters as social processes requires a holistic approach, meaning that the background to which the disaster is happening matters – e.g. what has created vulnerabilities and what structural measures or policies are in place to reduce disaster risk?

2. (Indigenous) people have agency

-People might be vulnerable, but also knowledgeable and capable

-People negotiate over aid in discursive interface

Many scientists believe that indigenous peoples are vulnerable to disaster risk, because they live in close interaction with nature and have limited economic and political power due to marginalisation. However, they should not be regarded as passive victims, as social actors are knowledgeable and capable in solving problems and exercise some kind of power (Giddens in Long 1989) – this is referred to as *agency*. Moreover, some believe that through years of experience, IPs are even more knowledgeable and capable to cope with disaster (Kelman, Mercer et al. 2012). However, these are not homogeneous communities, so practices differ from person to person. Different actors – within and between societies - hold multiple worldviews, causing a divergent perception of disaster that leads to different ways of managing disaster and negotiating over aid (Bankoff and Hilhorst 2009).

Thus, disasters and disaster management is made up of various interconnected parts and is interwoven with the conditions of the environment in which they take place i.e. complex and context specific. The following formula (adapted from Wisner, Gaillard et al. 2012: 24) reflects how disasters are approached in this research and shows the different elements that comprises disaster risk[4].

Disaster risk = H x [(V/C) – M]

H= Natural and man-made *hazards*

V= *Vulnerability* defined by social status

C= Individual or local *capacity* protecting from- and coping with disaster (i.e agency)

M= Structural *mitigation* and prevention of disaster (e.g. national/international policy)

[4] Wisner, Gaillard et al. emphasize that the formula serves as mnemonic or heuristic, rather than a mathematical equation - because how to apply exact weight to concepts like vulnerability, capacity and mitigation?

In this paper we mainly focus on the vulnerabilities and capacities of Cordilleran men and women related to land tenure. In the following section, we reflect upon these different elements of disaster risk by looking at the context in which typhoon Pepeng took place.

3. Context

3.1 Disaster risk in the Philippines

The Republic of the Philippines is one of the most hazard prone countries in the world. Because of its meteorological and geological setting, the archipelago gets frequently plagued by natural hazards. The most influential among these are earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and tropical cyclones – see table 1 below.

Table 1: Natural hazards in the Philippines (1980-2011)

Hazards 1980-2011	Frequency*	Deaths*	Explanation**
Earthquakes	13	2.540	The country is situated at the Circum-Pacific seismic belt where the major active plates of the Pacific and Eurasian meet, causing frequent earthquakes.
Volcanic eruptions	16	719	Being in the 'Pacific Ring of Fire' there are over 200 volcanoes distributed among the country, of which some are active.
Tropical cyclones	209	26.055	Located between the south China Sea and the Pacific Ocean the country is in the pathway of severe storms. These storms contribute to floods and landslides.
Total	374	33928	

* The numbers present the total *reported* occurrences and deaths between 1980 and 2011. The data has been derived from www.emdat.be – The Belgium-based Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) (February 2013).

** This information derives from the article by "Luna, E. M. (2001). "Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness: The Case of NGOs in the Philippines." Disasters 25(3): 216-226" and "Yumul et al. (2011). "Extreme weather events and related disasters in the Philippines, 2004–08: a sign of what climate change will mean?" Disasters 35(2): 362-382".

The table shows that yearly, over a thousand people die because of natural hazards, of which tropical storms are the greatest contributors. In addition, Philippine people face man-made hazards and complex conflicts. This continuous threat of hazards, is compounded by socially, economically and politically fragility, making the population of the Philippines extremely vulnerable to disaster (Delfin and Gaillard 2008; Bankoff and Hilhorst 2009; Yumul, Cruz et al. 2011). Bankoff explains this vulnerability in terms of "the vagaries of over 380 years of colonial misappropriation, and then the much more ruthless exploitation of international market forces" (Bankoff 2007: 328). Whereas Luna blames "the dictatorship and widespread violation of human rights prevalent during the Marcos regime in the 1970s" (Luna 2001: 216). Both processes have contributed to a socially constituted vulnerability of the Philippine population. However, as shown above, disaster risk is not only comprised of hazards and vulnerability: decreasing

factors are capacities protecting from- and coping with disaster and structural mitigation and prevention of disaster. These will be described later on, we will first provide some background information of the specific study area and population.

3.2 The Igorots: culture, gender, land tenure

The Cordillera Administrative Region was by far the most affected area by typhoon Pepeng. This region also happens to be the home of different indigenous tribes, together referred to as 'Igorots' - freely translated as 'highlanders' or 'mountain people'. The Igorots, who are composed of various ethnic groups, total about 1.5 million in population (Cariño 2012). Traditionally, they live in rural upland areas, relatively isolated from the lowland society. Holden and Jacobson speak of "indigenous retreat" in upland areas from colonial powers (Holden and Jacobson 2012: 114). However, most authors from the region itself would argue that the Cordillera *is* the ancestral territory of the indigenous people. Due to its richness in natural resources – e.g. minerals, forest and rivers – there have been on-going attempts to exploit the region and its people. This started as early as Spanish colonisation in 1572 with the first military gold hunting expeditions. These were fiercely combatted by the Igorot. More successful were the American colonisers (1898), who intruded the region in the name of 'development'. They introduced civil law, education, Christianity and cash crops. After World War II, agriculture in the region was further intensified under the influence of Chinese businessmen and the neo-liberal Philippine government. This has, and still does induce landlordism and wage-labour, replacing subsistence agriculture (Tauli 2009). The improvement of infrastructure and communication, as well as in- and outmigration have further altered the character of the Cordillera.

Even though the Igorots are composed of seven distinct major ethno-linguistic groups with their own specific traits, they share a certain worldview that is based on collective self-discipline in which *respect*, *dignity* and *caring* is highly valued. The external forces and influences described above, alter the indigenous culture (Weygan 2002; Carling 2004). First of all, nature is very important to the Igorots as they are highly dependent on it, according to them: '*land is life'*. Igorots share a holistic concept of land and nature in which they believe that nature was created for everyone and humans are an integrated part of nature. Land is thus, not to be exploited or dominated by people. This value of collectivism is under great pressure because of the introduction of modern values like privatisation and capitalism, which have brought along the issue of land rights and ownership. Secondly, they share a strong expression of union with ancestral land and their ancestors. However, the belief in spirits and use of rituals has to large extent been adapted to or replaced by Christianity. And thirdly, the Igorots share the same sort of socio-political institutions that are based on community consensus and prioritise the community e*lders* (usually men). But the introduction of state law greatly impacted their customary law (Ibid). What does this mean for disaster management?

4. Analysis

October 2009, the Philippine archipelago was hit by typhoon Pepeng. The impact was tremendous: nationwide 4,478,284 people were affected; 61,869 houses were damaged; leaving 465 people dead.

The estimated costs of damage to infrastructure and agriculture was PhP 27.297 Billion (over 500 billion euro at the time) (NDCC(a) 2009). Where people in the lowlands suffered floods from the heavy rains, the inhabitants of the mountainous Cordillera Administrative Region in the northern part of the country suffered many deadly and damaging landslides. This region was hit hardest during the typhoon: out of the 456 fatal victims in the entire country, 346 were from the Cordillera. The heavy, continuous rains led to raging rivers and massive landslides, washing away houses, rice fields, roads, bridges and even entire neighbourhoods. Leaving behind damaged and isolated communities (NDCC (b) 2009; NDCC(a) 2009).

How does the *modernisation of the Igorot culture* (described above) impact proneness to disaster risk? What is the effect on local vulnerabilities or capacities and how does this differ between men and women? Does this modernisation influence land tenure in such a way that it alters disaster risk? What follows is an analysis of changing disaster management, by learning from the experiences of those who were directly affected by typhoon Pepeng.

4.1 Indigenous coping

The most important indigenous coping mechanism that we found is the system of mutual assistance - i.e. people helping each other. The Tagalog term for this is *bayanihan*. This is a national trait, but is believed to be better preserved in the Cordillera than in the lowlands. An important observations was that bayanihan is strongest right after disaster and diminishes as time passes by. Moreover, bayanihan in general declines under the influence of modernisation, but it (temporarily) revives in times of disaster. The second important indigenous scoping mechanisms is the use of rituals and religion, as it guides behaviour, supports psychological recovery and reinforces social ties. Traditional thanksgiving and cleansing rituals help disaster survivors to recover from psychological trauma and to they 'appease' themselves with the situation and rebuild the relationship with their lands (see textbox 1 for an example). But also the (modern) Christian religion helps to cope with disaster. Even though Christianity has increasingly replaced or adapted the traditional animist belief, the old rituals have not been forgotten and seem to be rooted in Igorot daily culture. Both religions and sometimes a combination of them, were practiced after typhoon Pepeng struck, depending mostly on personal preferences.

Textbox 1: Indigenous ritual

A 52-year old male from Tublay with a *Kankana-ey* background shared his story about the ritual they performed for his deceased nephew. The boy drowned during typhoon Pepeng and his body was never found. Afterwards, his family went to the place of the accident to perform a ritual, they took with them a native chicken and a bamboo stick with a handkerchief. The purpose was to call the spirit of the nephew and ask him to go with them. The soul can hold onto the handkerchief, so it can come home and will not be left at the accident area. After 40 days the family performed another ritual: *patapos.* This ritual marks the end of a mourning period in which the family members are not supposed to travel or attend any feasts. During this ritual they offered money, a blanket and clothes. Both rituals were to prevent the boys' soul from wandering around and to reconnect and heal the broken spirit and soul. For the family members it is a way of grieving and coping with the loss.

Overall it seems like the coping strategies of the Igorots might not be that different from their fellow countrymen. What is special, however, is the articulation of disaster response as typical for Igorot ways of dealing with life and dealing with disaster. This was the case within the communities, but also in media

and among outside actors, who celebrated the indigenous culture for its communal response and resilience. This does not only enhance social cohesion among affected communities and increases the feeling of being able to cope with disaster, but is also beneficial in raising funds and connecting to important aid providers. The fact that typhoon Pepeng boosted traditional practices shows how catastrophic events can provide opportunities for change and advocacy.

The Igorots are known for their independence and self-reliance, however, when disasters are too big to handle (as per the definition of a disaster), people need outside help. But they do not passively wait for help to come. The (perceived) level of dependency on external aid varied highly between and within communities. But in general dependency increases. This is because Igorot communities are gradually becoming more modern, resulting in (1) greater dependency on stores, electricity and government services; (2) deteriorating traditional practices such as bayanihan and (3) integration in the cash system, leading to more expensive recovery and new wants. From the side of disaster mitigation, aid providers often request the establishment of victim associations. These are not necessarily meant to organise the community but to channel the communication and increase accountability. So, in general organisation structures are becoming more formal and externally arranged.

4.2. Land

The FAO determines land tenure not as mere physical possession, but refers to a “bundle of rights,” which includes access to land; the rights to use, control, and transfer land; and other associated responsibilities and restraints (FAO 2002). This bundle of rights is important for survival and mobility. This is certainly true for the Cordillerians, as ‘*Ti Daga ket Biag*’ (land is life): without land, life is impossible. Land is the very foundation of the community's identity, its livelihood, spirituality, and thus its survival. Consequently, land and disaster are connected to each other in several ways.

Firstly, perceiving land and nature was the most important method to predict approaching danger in the Igorot culture. For example observing animals; interpreting dreams; analysing the first summer rain; watching flowers; and observing the moon or sun. Even though people still believe in these phonological methods, nobody seems to practice them anymore. Instead, people listen to the radio or use other upcoming information sources such as the internet and text messages. Thus, people nowadays trust on external structures instead of their own observations, and make use of technology instead of their direct environment. This is a result of the changing relation between the Igorots and their land.

Secondly, there is correlation between the (mis)management of land and the occurrence of hazards. Because of the great dependency of the Igorots on their land, traditionally they take really good care of it. However, environmental exploitation, sometimes in the name of ‘development’, such as deforestation for cash crops, mines, roads or living area’s increases erosion with possible landslides in times of heavy rain. This is how man-made and natural hazards collide. However, because of awareness raising and disaster risk reduction programs, some communities have planted (vetiver) grass to stop erosion processes and build irrigation systems after Pepeng. So, this is another example showing that external are parties becoming more important in managing and interpreting nature.

Thirdly, typhoon Pepeng destroyed much land and thereby the livelihoods of so many people. Take for example Bokod, according to its inhabitants the place was like “paradise” before; the river used to be a rich source of income as many gardens, greenhouses and fish ponds were situated along its banks. Also the communities’ basketball court (which is ‘sacred’ in the Philippines and serves as communal rendezvous) resided right next to the river. All these were washed away. The picture below – see figure 1 - shows how dramatically the landscape has changed under the influence of the typhoon. The small, resourceful river, changed into a pebble beach cutting through the village. In the left corner at the bottom of the picture, you can still distinguish the remnants of a destroyed building. Typhoon Pepeng not just changed the outlook of the place, but also negatively affected the livelihoods of the people and the wellbeing of community-life. Thus, the condition of land is vital to both people’s vulnerability to disaster and the capacity to recover from it as it determines social and financial well-being. Therefore, having access to land is crucial.

Figure 1: Changed landscape and livelihoods in Bokod

Picture taken by authors, August 2012

This leads to the issue of land-rights and ownership. When not formally entitled to land, it is difficult to claim help after disaster, for example because aid providers require legal documentation of ownership for housing reconstruction projects. This basis of ownership without understanding the perspective of indigenous peoples' relationship to their land and environment is an outright disrespect of peoples right over their land and humanitarian assistance.

Especially with regards to relocation projects, land ownerships is crucial. Textbox 2 shows how disasters provide opportunities to redefine land use and land ownership.

Textbox 2: An example of struggle over land
Due to the landslides and flood that ravaged one of the communities in Tublay, the people were evacuated to a school a few kilometres away. The government declared their village unsafe and proposed to relocate the entire community. This provoked an issue, because the people wanted to go back to their vegetable and flower gardens which was their main source of income. Disregarded the advice of the government, they went back anyway. With the help of a scientist and funds from volunteers, the area was re-assessed. It turned out that only some parts of the village were unsafe, but other parts were perfectly habitable. This was seen as quite a victory for the community. This case is controversial, because at the centre of the community lies a former open-pit mine. The community did not trust the first risk assessment that was done by the government, since they might propose the relocation in order to re-open the mine. However, one of the volunteers working in the community acknowledged that she also could not imagine that people could make a living again in that village, as it was sincerely devastated. After all, did the government propose to relocate the community for safety reasons or did they see Pepeng as an opportunity to re-open the mine? This is not sure, but it is suspicious that the first risk assessment was done by engineers from the Mines and Geosciences

4.3. Gender

According to UN Women Watch: "Women are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change [i.e. disasters] than men — primarily as they constitute the majority of the world's poor and are more dependent for their livelihood on natural resources" (UN Women Watch 2009: 1). This is true to the extent that disaster impact reflects the social status of a certain society – i.e. the vulnerability of the affected people (Wisner, Gaillard et al. 2012). So, disaster detrimentally affects marginalised groups within the society (Gaillard 2012). But, how vulnerable are the Igorot women?

As stated above, access to land greatly defines ones' vulnerability and capacity to cope after disaster. In the Igorot culture, land is collectively owned and managed by an indigenous group or community based on inheritance - often referred to as ancestral lands. Acces to land is thus not necessarily based on gender. Conflict and struggle over land in the Cordillera is often between the government and indigenous peoples, and not between sexes. Under the influence of state modernisation, the government has passed laws that adheres to the "regalian doctrine[5]" and are thereby detrimental to recognizing the right of indigenous peoples to their lands and resources (Crisologo-Mendoza and Prill-Brett 2009). These however, equally affect Igort men and women.

Since disaster risk is not only comprised of vulnerabilities, women's capacities should also be addressed. As identified by Rikken, chairperson of the Philippine Commission on Women, there is a crucial link between disaster management and women's involvement: "A key to disaster management and preparedness is involving women in all aspects. We know women are adept in securing safe water and food for the family"[6], as has been proven in many development projects. We found that after typhoon Pepeng, women were really good in the organisational aspects, such as organizing donations, food

[5] Regalian doctrine is anchored on the principle that State owns all lands and waters of the public domain. The doctrine is the foundation of the principle of land ownership that all lands that have not been acquired by purchase or grant from the Government belong to the public domain.
[6] Quote derived form http://pcw.gov.ph/article/serve-womens-specific-needs-involve-women-disaster-management (November 2013).

provision and evacuation centers. In addition, many overseas working women sent great amounts of money home, playing a vital role in recovery after disaster (Hunter and David 2011).

When it comes to decisive power, the AIPP acknowledges that “some gender gaps still exist within the indigenous social systems such as the exclusion from, or inadequate representation of women in decision-making processes and leadership roles (traditional and state), and administrative justice mechanisms” (Asia Indigenous Peoples’ Pact 2010: 602). But it seems like under the influence of modern state law, Igorot women gain more decision-making power compared to customary law. What we observed in our case is that the practice of helping each other is automatic and voluntary. With regards to bayanihan, people claimed that “everyone did their part” or “everyone did what he or she could”. Implying that the contribution is not equal, but equivalent. Physically strong people conquered the muddy mountain paths to nearby towns to ask for help or collect food and materials. Or they engaged in heavy digging during retrieval operations and road clearing. While others prepared food for the rescuers and victims. Carpenters made coffins, teachers organised the local evacuation centres and so on.

In general, the men were mostly responsible for rescue and retrieval operations, and the women took care of organisational aspects and food provision. Thus, there was a task division between men and women in the aftermath of the typhoon, shaped by their roles at home. In the municipality of Tublay for example, a Red Cross employee was upset and astonished to find no men in the evacuation centre. Despite the danger of going out, people kept leaving the centre. When asked for an explanation, the women said: “Well, you can't expect our men to just sit here and do nothing when there are landslides to be cleared and there are still people missing in our community!” (Leeftink 2013: 36). In the meantime, the women prepared food and gathered donations via their networks. So, coping capacity of men and women was not the same, but equal.

We also saw that since there is a greater dependence on external assistance, decision-making in recovery is becoming more equal. Community members utilised their strategic relationships to connect to aid providers. One of the influential community elders for example has been in politics, so he used his connections to talk to the provincial government. Others approached NGOs, churches, universities and businesses. This is a great example of agency and ‘linking social capital’. These people not only have the right connections, but also the ability to communicate across hierarchical relations and statuses, they can speak the ‘language’ of the other. Exactly this space, where different lifeworlds meet, where people communicate and negotiate about assistance, is the interface of aid. These ‘interface experts’ are both male and female. Traditionally, the community *elders* (a small group of older men) play a decision-making role in customary law. However, the traditional institutions have evolved over time, due to modern state law and increased information sharing, resulting in gradually more decision-making power for women (Asia Indigenous Peoples’ Pact 2010). The ‘elite’ – educated and wealthy community members – and the barangay council[7] increasingly replaces the role of the elders. The fact that aid providers (both governmental and non-governmental) often request the establishment of victim community associations

[7] A barangay is the smallest administrative government body, comparable with a neighbourhood or parish.

to channel information and decision-making, further enhances the role of women as they are largely part of these associations. See textbox 3 for an example.

Textbox 3: An example of women's leadership
She is a wife, a mother and a community leader – let's call her ma'am B. After working as a house keeper abroad for some years, she decided to come home and attend to her duty as a mother and a wife. To augment the family income she and her husband open a small grocery store. Everything is going well, until November 2009, when typhoon Pepeng hits their community. The impact is great: fish ponds, fields, roads and houses are damaged. An organization provides aid by donating housing materials for 25 affected families. The organization requires a victim association to smoothen the communication with the community members. Ma'am B. becomes the chairperson for this association as she already plays an important role in the community and speaks very well English. The association makes sure that those families in need of shelter make it to the list. And together with the organization and the affected families they choose a safe place to build the transitional houses. It shows how women can play an important role in reconstruction projects and decision-making.

5. Conclusions and implications

5.1 Conclusions

The Philippines is a country in transition. Previously isolated regions – such as the Cordillera – are increasingly integrated in the Philippine society and modern, Western culture. The transformation in lifestyle, needs and organisational structures of Igorots has altered their ways of managing land and coping with disasters. Have Igorot men and women become more susceptible to disaster risk? And how do gender, land tenure and disaster intersect?

To answer these two questions and as a way of summarizing the previous sections, we refer back to the equation: Disaster risk = H x [(V/C) – M].

H= Natural and man-made hazards:

The occurrence of hazards is influenced by how people conserve and manage their land. Under the influence of modernisation, land has been exploited and mismanaged, indirectly increasing the occurrence of hazards. This contributes to higher disaster risk for Igorot men and women. It affects men and women equally.

V= Vulnerability defined by social status:

Years of marginalisation of the indigenous peoples of the Cordillera have resulted in high levels of vulnerability to disaster. As noted by AIPP, women are slightly more vulnerable than men, as they traditionally have less decisive power than men. Modern state law is in principle more egalitarian than customary law. So, the rise of modern institutes reduces the relative vulnerability of women towards men. But, it does not reduce the overall vulnerability of the Igorot since they are relatively poor and excluded. The ongoing struggles over land rights with the government further increases the vulnerability of Igorot communities. This is as much as a struggle for men as it is for women.

C= Individual or local capacity protecting from- and coping with disaster (i.e agency):
We found that men and women have comparable, but different capacities to cope with disaster. Men for example did the heavy work, while women were coordinating and preparing food. Therefore it is hard to say whether men or women are 'better' at coping, it is mostly a cooperative effort. Modernisation has altered traditional ways of coping and increased the dependency on external assistance in the aftermath of disaster. This has a positive effect on equal decision-making processes as women are more included through representation in victim associations which are required by the aid providers. Whether it makes them less susceptible to risk in general is the question. Again, access to land is crucial to coping with disaster, but not gender-specific.

M= Structural mitigation and prevention of disaster (e.g. national/international policy):
The structural mitigation of disasters influences how well the government or NGO's are able to prevent disasters or assist people afterwards. In the Philippines this is getting more institutionalised, reducing disaster risk. As explained above, this results in more equality between men and women with regards to disaster management. It has led Igorots to trust more on external structures, detriment of personal observations and knowledge with respect to their land in predicting, reducing and managing risks.

To conclude, Erving Goffman wrote: "The normal and the stigmatized are not persons, but rather perspectives" (Goffman 1963: 138). These social constructs do not stand alone, they come with expectations and prejudices. For example that IPs are a marginalised group, vulnerable to disaster threat. Or with the assumption that they know how to deal with disaster. With regards to the label of 'victims', we often assume them to be passive, non-responsible and helpless (Hendrie 1997; Cole 2011). Yet some other stigma's come with the concept of gender and the role of women, for example that they are a lot more vulnerable in times of disaster. Instead of taking this for granted, we plea for a thorough investigation of these assumption for each specific situation. When viewing disaster risk as being composed of hazards, vulnerabilities, capacities and mitigation, can you still claim that indigenous women are more at risk? Thus, we do advocate for gender specific disaster research as well as management, however not starting from the assumption that women are per se more by susceptible by disaster.

5.2 Implications
-External assistance should be (more) sensitive to local *vulnerabilities* and *capacities* to increase the efficiency of aid and improve recovery:

Vulnerabilities:

- Both short-term and long-term needs should be assessed;
- Historical and socioeconomic factors – such as the aspect of gender and access to land – should be taken into account;
- Local, regional or national transitions and developments should be studied on forehand.

Capacities:

- Local capacities should be utilised fully, e.g. support traditional coping strategies;
- New ways of coping with disaster should be supported;
- A gender sensitive approach to coping should apply;
- Coping capacity depends greatly upon the access to land. A recognition of customary ownership to land is a fundamental right that should be acknowledged by aid providers.

-Implications for further research:

A holistic approach to disasters is recommended, taking into account matters such as land rights, climate change, gender, policy and local to global patterns of change. All topics are being studied separately, but more interdisciplinary research is needed.

-Typhoon Haiyan:

It took people more than three years to overcome the effects of typhoon Pepeng (causing around 450 casualties). For this typhoon the reconstruction phase proved to be extremely challenging for those directly affected and three years later, people are still recovering. So, the challenges in overcoming the super typhoon Haiyan (with well over 5000 deaths and a huge national impact) are immense. Lots of help is needed, not just right after disaster, but also on a longer term with attention to sustainable recovery and future preparedness. We can only wonder how this is going to affect the countries' economy and the international debate on vulnerable states and climate change.

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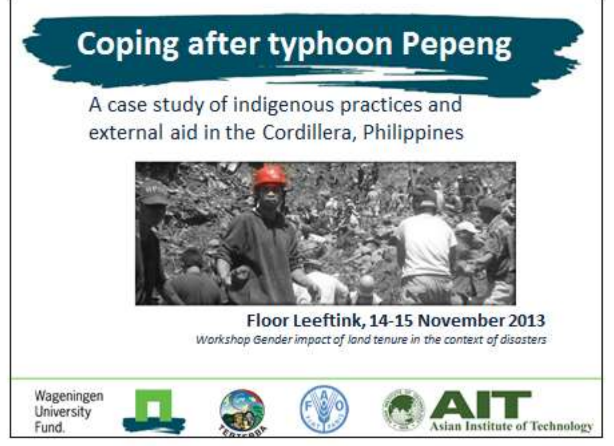

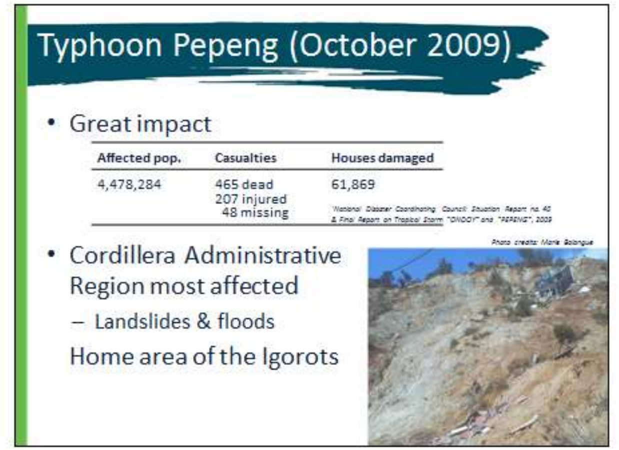

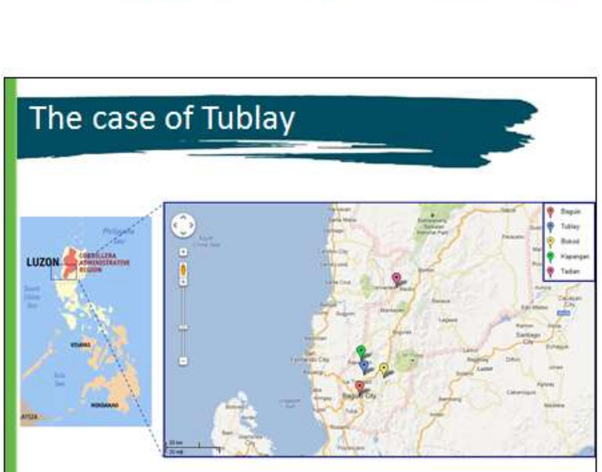

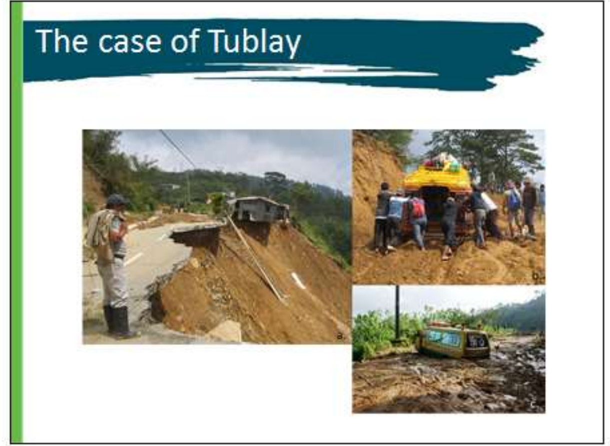

1

A striking case

- Evacuation centre is very well organised
- Meanwhile the men are clearing the village

"Well, you can't expect our men to just sit here and do nothing when there are landslides to be cleared and there are still people missing in our community!"

- Key people asking for outside assistance
- The community ensures resettlement

Lessons

1. Indigenous people have agency
   - Indigenous coping mechanism: *bayanihan*
   - Organisation & Strategic relations
   - Both men and women

   → Social capital

2. Disasters are social processes
   - Pepeng boosted (diminishing) indigenous practices
   - Opportunity for relocation?
     - Importance of land tenure

   → Politics of disaster

External assistance

- Housing materials
  - Counterpart
- Livelihood recovery projects
  - Animal breed project
  - Womens' bakery livelihood recovery project

But, infrastructure and public buildings prioritised

Pepeng three years after (2012)

Fully recovered?

- Issues with housing and livelihoods
  - Marginalised group, no surplus
  - External assistance does not utilise indigenous capacity

Floor: Is it difficult to finish the house?
R.43: Yes, of course, because we don't have any income. It is very difficult, because we didn't plan it, we didn't have savings.
Floor: Because you need to hire a carpenter?
R.43: Yes, everything. It is really hard. We are doing what we can, we want to finish it. [Starts to cry]

- Psychological recovery

"We left the community, because we feel we are not safe there. But some of us they just say: 'Bahala na'...."

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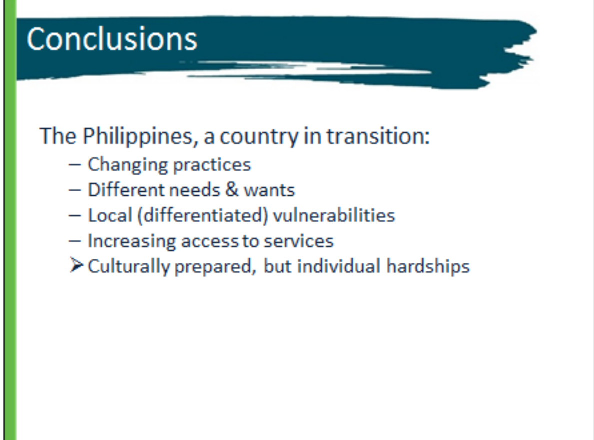
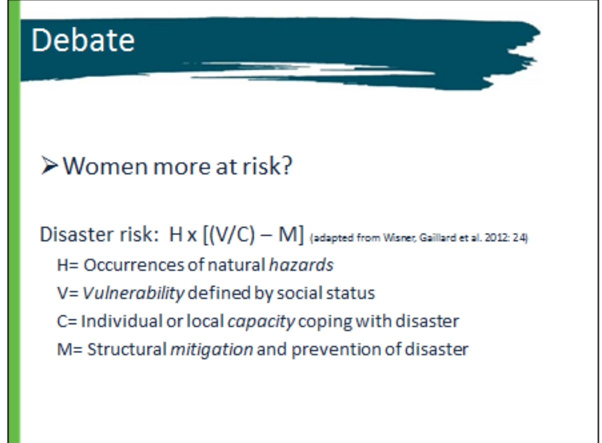


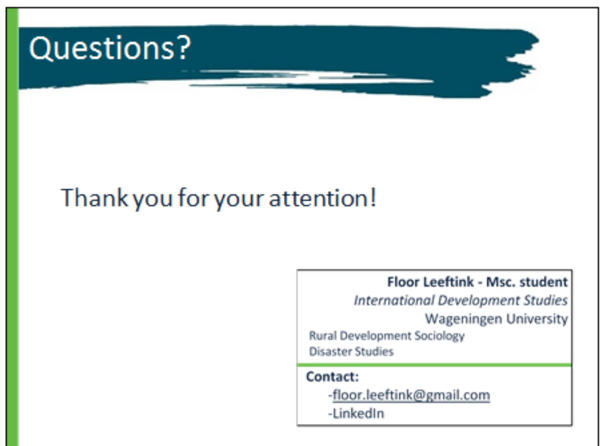
Recommendations

External assistance should be (more) sensitive to local *vulnerabilities* and *capacities* to increase the efficiency of aid and improve recovery

- Vulnerabilities:
  - -Short-term and long-term needs
  - -Historical and socioeconomic factors
  - -Local, regional or national transitions and developments
- Capacities:
  - -Local capacities should be utilised fully
    - E.g. 'Cash4Work'
  - -New ways of coping with disaster should be supported

-> With attention to gender!!!





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Appendix 6: Article: 'Let's apply the disaster recovery lessons already learned' by Janet Lau for DevEx

BUSINESS INSIGHT: URBAN PLANNING

Let's apply the disaster recovery lessons already learned[82471]

By Janet Lau on 09 December 2013

Reconstruction and rehabilitation will take time, but proper planning for recovery efforts should be instituted now. Photo by Edgar De Jesus, senior research officer at Devex, on-site in Tacloban on day 13 post-Haiyan.

A month after Typhoon Haiyan devastated parts of central Philippines, government officials, urban planners and development workers have begun to set in motion long-range rehabilitation plans.

Local Filipino planning professionals have not been idle. A group of volunteer urban and environmental planners, who are also members of the Philippine Institute of Environmental Planners, are providing on-the-ground technical assistance. The aim is to strengthen rehabilitation and coordination efforts between local and national government officials, nonprofits, private sector actors , and aid workers.

Mark de Castro, founder and president of environmental planning firm EnPraxis, told Devex that the volunteer group is working with organizations such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency, Asian Development Bank and U.N.-Habitat and with government agencies, including the Climate Change Commission and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, to build a central coordination and disaster-planning framework. These planners will be vital in assisting government officials and providing the necessary disaster, urban or environmental expertise to draw up long-term, sustainable recovery plans.

Fortunately, the Philippines has already learned some disaster recovery lessons that should help people on the ground in Eastern Visayas and stay relevant as the country faces future natural calamities.

The three R's: Rehabilitation, reconstruction and relocation

Following destructive typhoons Ketsana and Parma — known in the Philippines as Ondoy and Pepeng — the Institute of Philippine Culture conducted an analysis which determined that emergency relief and short-term financial assistance can cover essential basic household needs such as consumption, medical expenses and housing repairs, but they do not address the persistent lack of capital that would allow people to resume a profitable livelihood activity.

While international aid groups have determined effective ways to distribute aid immediately following a calamity, some systems encourage dependence over time. Andrea Fitrianto, an architect and planner who played an active role in the rehabilitation of Aceh, Indonesia, after the 2004 tsunami, contends that outside assistance should be limited to a period of two months following a large natural disaster and that issuance for a longer period of time could create dependency and harm social cohesion.

Rehabilitation requires getting people to work again, which will be a pressing challenge considering Haiyan caused more than 70 percent of farmers and fishermen in the central Philippines to lose their primary source of income. Here are a few livelihood lessons we have already learned and can be applied:

Livelihood training programs must be relevant within the local context and marketplace or they will not be useful. With the fishing industry incapacitated due to a major loss of boats and ports after Haiyan, a WorldFish Center report advocates diversifying coastal livelihoods to facilitate rehabilitation. Alternative livelihood options should be tested against social and technical capacities to confirm that they are realistic and sustainable after external aid ends.

Many aid experts endorse cash-for-work programs to address immediate income needs, but warn that beneficiaries should be made aware when such programs will end. Fitrianto and other experts stress that these types of programs require stringent supervision and control as they are susceptible to mismanagement and corruption.

Agriculture and livestock assistance should be carefully planned and distributed. For instance, before giving out seeds, give tools to repair agricultural fields. Distributing animals shortly after disaster may provide only immediate relief. In her on-the-ground research, "Coping After Typhoon Pepeng: A Case Study of Indigenous Practices and External Aid in the Cordillera, Philippines," Floor Leeftink of Wageningen University discovered that disaster victims were in such a dire situation they ended up eating or selling the animals, or they had neither money nor space to feed and house them.

Housing and reconstruction are other major concerns. Living conditions and access to services at temporary shelters tend to deteriorate, and the sooner permanent housing systems are set in place, the better. The following reconstruction tips could be useful as the post-Haiyan rebuilding effort progresses:

Purchase materials locally. Leeftink asserted that nongovernmental organizations should purchase housing materials from local sources or give money directly to beneficiaries instead of purchasing materials from aroff urban centers. Post-Pepeng, the Philippine Red Cross found purchasing materials from Manila and then transporting them to the Cordillera a logistical nightmare.

Decide who is responsible for the reconstruction of houses — the government, international or local NGOs, or disaster victims themselves. Leeftink encourages external aid providers to help the local community to utilize its own capacities, to build "bayanihan" — the spirit of communal unity and effort — and sense of ownership. Residents, however, should be given considerable time to rebuild their homes. Disaster victims who are too busy trying to recover their livelihoods may not be able to dedicate enough time to finish construction quickly.

If rebuilding homes and other structures in the same areas is unfeasible or undesirable, the government often resorts to resettlement. IPC researchers found that many communities were reluctant to move to areas outside their "barangay" or neighborhood for fear of not being able to find a suitable livelihood in a new resettlement area. They also feared losing their current social support mechanisms. Relocation sites without proper

infrastructure, community facilities or livelihood opportunities are unattractive and do not convince residents to move.

With resettlement arises the issue of land rights, tenure and access. In a post-calamity situation, the government is typically forced to create accommodating policy and laws to support victims who have lost their property title documents or were originally informal settlers.

Public participation is key

Nearly all disaster management and development experts agree that local leadership and community-based organizations are essential to long-term recovery. This is especially true in the Philippines — a country with a strong civil society and empowered local government. IPC researchers discovered that sites where residents were satisfied with recovery programs tended to have coordinated and involved barangay and municipal officers collaborating with community organizations.

Informal actors, such as local citizen volunteers, can also play an important role. Researchers stress that local residents can and should be involved in community mapping, housing design, livelihood planning, and more. Self-managed infrastructure construction is also a way to spur local economic activity while building social cohesion and empowerment.

Certain Haiyan-affected coastal areas have been identified by the national government to be “no-build zones” because of high vulnerability to future disaster. While this policy technically makes sense, implementation will prove challenging on the ground. Residents might not want to leave their home, property, community or livelihood (i.e., fishing) and be unwilling to move away from the coasts. Residents need to be involved because it is they who know what kind of life they can live, and what type of livelihood they are willing to engage in. “Unfortunately, donor driven or top-down reconstruction efforts too often do not comply with the immediate needs and capacities of aid beneficiaries, resulting in bad project outcomes,” Leeftink told Devex.

Without integrating a strong public process into relocation and reconstruction, the community may be less willing to take ownership of resettlement, resulting in abandonment of or alterations to the structures. This means wasted time and resources.

If planners are truly committed to a community decision-making process, the methodology behind empowering residents should be tested with certain considerations. In her case study, Leeftink posed questions that should be considered in such projects, including:
To what extent is the project really participatory?
On the basis of what kind of information do people decide?
How does participation influence the outcome of projects?
Are there alternatives or is it a take it or leave it situation?

‘Build back better’ with disaster risk reduction

In an ANC interview this past June, Albay Governor and U.N. Green Climate Fund co-Chairman Joey Salceda claimed that the months following a disaster are the “best chance” to use risk reduction funds. “In other words,” Salceda said, “it is rehabilitation but you inject immediately risk reduction.”

Disaster risk reduction is a systematic approach to reduce risks and vulnerabilities to natural disaster. Since Haiyan caused great damage to existing infrastructure, there is an open window after the debris clears to instate
environmentally friendly and disaster-resilient physical and land-use planning.

Typhoon-prone areas should require resilient buildings to be constructed under better design standards. The thousands of collapsed buildings or whole buildings without roofs in Eastern Visayas exposed construction flaws. Flood-prone areas — basically all of Tacloban — need better drainage canals and waterways. Even before Haiyan, Tacloban was plagued with frequent flooding.

DRR also involves well-planned, pre-disaster activities, including but not limited to acquisition of basic materials

and equipment for relief operations, implementation of disaster preparedness training to cover the broader community and not only local officials or community leaders, and putting in place a local system of relief and recovery operations.

“Some cities, such as Guiuan, had good disaster preparation — they had relief goods ready and had moved people to rehabilitation centers before the storm,” Lara de Castro commented. But other cities did not have these preventive measures in place. Felino Palafox, famed Filipino architect and president of the Philippine Institute for Environmental Planners, recently criticized Tacloban’s lack of preparedness.

Another small indicator of DRR success is the small island of San Francisco. Residents there had been doing disaster preparedness drills since 2010, which strengthened disaster awareness, information dissemination and empowerment of the community. Their efforts proved fruitful, as well-planned evacuation resulted in zero casualties during typhoon Haiyan.

DRR will help local communities become self-sufficient and strong, which is in the interest of international aid organizations and the country itself. Officials from San Francisco, Guiuan and Albay can meet and train other local officials in disaster-prone regions of the Philippines. It would be one of many steps toward building domestic expertise.

Only after Typhoon Pepeng did the central government enact the The Philippine Disaster Act of 2010, which allows local government units to use up to 70 percent of local calamity funds for disaster prevention and preparedness measures. Prior to that, calamity funds were tapped post-disasters as a response mechanism. The 2010 act has emboldened LGUs to embrace and take action on disaster readiness and risk reduction. However, barangays still need adequate support to invest in DRR, not just on paper. Materials for rescue operations, stocks of food, emergency power generators, medicines and gas, among others, are much required resources that the national government can facilitate.

More than a thousand people die yearly due to natural disasters in the Philippines, a country that experiences an average of 20 typhoons per year. With better disaster readiness, the next major natural disaster will hopefully not cost the thousands of lives that Haiyan took.

Janet Lau
As a development analyst, Janet contributes to Devex's analysis of global development business trends. At Devex, she can combine her passion for sustainable urban and social development with her business background. Her past experience includes urban sociological research, transportation planning, communication networks for global agricultural producers, education, finance and banking.