

In the spirit of *Bayanihan*: Disaster Recovery from Typhoon Yolanda  
in Eastern Visayas

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## **Abstract**

Canadian humanitarian interventions have been used to consolidate the country's imperialist interests in the times of humanitarian crises (Razack, 2007; Barry-Shaw and Jay, 2012; Albo, 2014). On the aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda (english name: Haiyan) in the Philippines, the strongest typhoon ever recorded to hit landfall on November 8, 2013, Canada was one of the countries to respond through the deployment of troops, disbursing aid through iNGOs, and temporarily expediting immigration applications from typhoon-struck areas. Canadian humanitarian interventions in post-Yolanda disaster recovery and rehabilitation signal attempts to strengthen its pre-existing geohistorical connections in the Philippines, namely labour migration, resource extraction and militarization. However, local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and People's Organizations (POs) in Eastern Visayas have found ways to assert agency over their own disaster recovery. Drawing from interviews, institutional mapping and review of news articles and reports, this paper documents how local organizations navigate the contradictions in the humanitarian aid industry by exercising prudence when selecting which iNGOs to partner with, specifically only collaborating with ones that respect their autonomy and working on joint projects that complement the priorities of the POs they work with. The POs, mainly in the form of peasant associations, and local NGOs, the Leyte Centre for Development (LCDE) and Eastern Visayas Rural Assistance Program (EVRAP), aim to foster local development through disaster recovery and rehabilitation projects, ultimately undermining neoliberal approaches to development. The spirit of *bayanihan*, meaning community unity, is evoked as a consistent motif in this paper: first, as the name of the counterinsurgency program that subjects POs and NGOs to military violence; second, as an Indigenous practice of labour exchange and communal farming that peasants return to, as a form of disaster recovery; third, as a virtue evoked through the humanitarian cooperation of iNGOs, local NGOs and POs in disaster recovery. This very

unity with iNGOs that LCDE and its partner POs are able to establish, is what undermines the consolidation of Canadian imperialism in their region in the aftermath of typhoon Yolanda. The research reveals how disaster survivors can act as active actors in recovering from not only from disasters caused by natural hazards, but from poverty and inequity that have made their communities vulnerable to disasters in the first place.

## **Foreword: Relationship of Paper to Plan of Study**

The Area of Concentration in my Plan of Study are settler colonialism and politics of immigration, gendered labour migration and the Filipina/o Diaspora, environmental justice and disaster imperialism. These include developing insights into how the character of settler colonialism can deepen my understanding of the racial-colonial formations in Canada. Further, I examined the specific ways im/migration processes are located within Canadian imperialist and settler colonial logics. And lastly, I examined what social movements can reveal about the political and cultural consciousness of Filipinos in Canada and in the Philippines. Environmental justice as a form of social movement was paid attention to. The learning objectives outlined in the Plan of Study are as follows:

*Learning Objective 1.1: to study settler colonialism and the different ways it is theorized in the fields of Critical Race Studies, Feminist Studies, Environmental Studies, Native/Indigenous Studies.*

*Learning Objective 1.2: to gain analytical and theoretical tools to understand racial-colonial formations and national identity formation in Canada.*

*Learning Objective 2.1: to study the development of racialized domestic work in Canada, specifically through specific labour importation programs such as the Foreign Domestic Movement and the Live-in Caregiver Program.*

*Learning Objective 2.2: to develop theoretical tools to locate gendered labour and feminized migration within legacies of settler colonialism and imperialism.*

*Learning Objective 3.1: To gain a general understanding of the various ways and processes Filipinos in Canada and the Philippines engage with social movements.*

*Learning Objective 3.2: To develop analytical and theoretical tools to be able to analyze social movements in within specific historical contexts of the Philippines and Canada.*

The Major Research Paper – which aims to examine how the Canada consolidates imperialist relations through disaster recovery and rehabilitation in the Philippines - fits well into my Area of Concentration. The paper serves as a culmination of the theoretical and analytical skills I have acquired while fulfilling the learning objectives of my Plan of Study. Settler colonialism has laid the foundation for the establishment of Canadian imperialism in the Philippines (Learning Objectives 1.1 and 1.2). This is most apparent through the history of racialized domestic work in Canada (Learning Objectives 2.1 and 2.2). While my learning objectives focused on labour migration, the theoretical skills I have learned from my coursework led me to in-depth study of other geohistoric connections between the Philippines and Canada. This resulted to the inclusion of resource extraction, militarization and humanitarian aid intervention as sites of inquiry in my research. Finally, this research documents how social movements in the Philippines, through local People’s Organizations and Non-Governmental Organization, navigates and resists the consolidation of Canadian imperialism by using humanitarian aid in fulfilling the economic priorities of local communities (Learning Objectives 3.1 and 3.2). The paper demonstrates the application of the theoretical and analytical tools I have learned all throughout my studies. The major research paper fits into the overarching themes of humanitarian aid, disaster recovery, Canadian imperialism and social movements to reveal how survivors can act as active actors in recovering from not only from disasters caused by natural hazards, but from poverty and inequity caused by centuries of colonialism and imperialism.

## **Glossary of abbreviations**

ABBAYT - Aliyansa ng mga Biktima ng Bayong Yolanda sa Tacloban  
ADB - Asian Development Bank  
AFP - Armed Forces of the Philippines  
CARHRIHL - Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights & International Humanitarian Law  
CBDM - Community Based Disaster Management  
CDRC - Citizens' Disaster Response Centre  
CDRN - Citizens' Disaster Response Network  
CMO - Civil-Military Operations  
COIN - Counterinsurgency  
CPA - Cordillera Peoples Alliance  
CPP - Community Party of the Philippines  
CRA - Canada Revenue Agency  
CSO - Civil Society Organization  
DART - Disaster Response Assistance Team  
DI - Devonshire Initiative  
DSWD - Department of Social and Welfare Development  
EDCA - Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement  
EVRAP - Eastern Visayas Rural Assistance Program  
GRP - Government of the Republic of the Philippines  
ICRC - International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC)  
iNGO - International Non-governmental Organization  
LCDE - Leyte Centre for Development  
LDC - Less Developed Country  
LGU - Local Government Unit  
NAFCON - National Alliance for Filipino Concerns  
NBZ - No Building Zone  
NEDA- National Economic and Development Authority  
ND - National Democratic  
NDF - National Democratic Front  
NDZ - No Dwelling Zone  
NGO - Non-governmental Organization  
NPA - New People's Army  
OCCCI - Metro Ormoc Community Multi-Purpose Cooperative  
PASAR - Philippine Associated Smelting and Refining Corporation  
PISTON - Pinagkaisang Samahan ng mga Tsuper at Operator Nationwide  
PO - People's Organization  
SAGUPA - Samahan han Gudti nga Parag-uma ha Sinirangan Bisayas (Alliance of Peasants in Eastern Visayas)  
SAP - Structural Adjustment Program  
TVI - Toronto Ventures Incorporated  
WB – World Bank



## Introduction

*“Binalonan will be flooded tonight,” my father said. “The rice in Binalonan will be destroyed tonight.”*

*“Do you think so, Father?” Amado said.*

*But he knew that my father spoke wisely. Amado was only making conversation.*

Carlos Bulosan, *America is in the Heart*

*“And then typhoons come and everyone says they never see it coming.”*

Patricia Evangelista, *journalist*

While waiting on the subway platform, the most recent death toll from a landslide in Luzon flashed on the screen. My friend looked away, exasperated, “the only time we make it to the news is when there is a disaster.” I remained silent and watched as the next news flashed. *It is true*, I thought to myself. For days, images of the damage would fill primetime news: women mourning for their children buried under soil and rubble, politicians doing photo ops, and the heroism of foreign military troops.

The coverage of the aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda (English name: Haiyan) signalled to me how very little control our communities have over how the country is being reported about. In organizing circles, at dinner tables, and in Facebook posts, we would discuss the politics of the typhoon, climate change, and which organizations we should send money to. A Filipina journalist, then working for the Vancouver Observer, Krystle Alarcon, regularly published articles that highlighted the sociological dimensions of the disaster. One article for instance, discussed the contradictions and implications of the international and local media coverage of the disaster (Alarcon, 2013). Another discussed how Canada’s extractive industry contributed to the makings of a supertyphoon such as Yolanda, and covering the activism of disaster survivors in Eastern Visayas (Alarcon, 2013). But her critical perspectives were dominated by the usual images of a Third World disaster.

Before I started the MES program, I was invited to speak at an Accessibility Community Engagement (ACE) Seminar Series event on March 11, 2014. The seminar was entitled ‘Health, Disablement, Environmental Racism and State Violence’. Here, I shared how the survivors of Typhoons Pablo and Yolanda organized and conducted recovery projects for their own communities. While talking about disasters with a smile on my face, I understood then the importance of, to put it simply, showing the *other side of the story*. I ended the presentation with a song from Saturnino, a remote *sitio* in Compostella Valley where communities successfully recovered from the damages wrought by Typhoon Pablo using self-directed initiatives:

*Pablo thought, Pablo thought  
This ugly typhoon  
Despite its ugliness  
Could be a thing of beauty*

Growing up in an urban centre like Manila has limited my understanding of the effects of typhoons on the rural areas of the Philippines. City infrastructure can usually withstand heavy rainfall, and my relatives in the countryside did not live in areas vulnerable to flash floods and landslides. In high school, I volunteered to assemble relief packaged for typhoon victims funded by big companies such as the national television station, ABS/CBN. Such projects further reinforced the class division between the ‘safe’ middle class and ‘victims’ of disaster. Inactive from social movements at that time, I did not know of any disaster relief efforts outside of charitable or state-funded ones.

When Yolanda struck in November 2013, international news coverage of the typhoon was mired in discourses of victimhood and helping impulses. Anderson Cooper blamed the Philippine government of incompetence, while images of Canadian relief efforts depicted the competence and expertise of military personnel. Since migrating to Toronto in 2005, I experienced Yolanda through the dozens of fundraising events organized by members of the

Filipino diaspora. The community, including the left, was caught up in ongoing debates about which organizations ‘deserve’ the money. But because of Canada’s pledge to match donations to Canadian charities, many fundraising proceeds ended up going directly to international NGOs.

Having read several critical analyses of Hurricane Katrina, I was more aware of the complexity of Typhoon Yolanda as a phenomena. It was not hard to problematize the heavy emphasis on the deployment of the Canadian Armed Forces on the ground, the dependence on NGOs for conducting humanitarian assistance, and the focus on strengthening Philippine economic trade agreements with Canada as a form of disaster rehabilitation. Living in Canada, the state responsible for building and sending the “trojan horses of neoliberalism” as David Harvey would describe NGOs (2005, p. 177), allowed me to witness how the state has discursively and materially created a disaster and a humanitarian crisis out of the typhoon.

While I have not been substantially affected by typhoons in the Philippines, I identify the Filipino community’s experiences, including my own, as shaped by the sites of interaction that characterize the Philippine-Canada relationship. In a community event in 2015, the Secretary-General of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA), Abigail Anongos, expressed the CPA’s need for people to conduct research that will be useful for their communities. In particular, because mining companies are strategically subsidiaries of larger transnational companies, the movement finds it difficult to identify which mining industries are Canadian-owned. They request that students and researchers in Canada interrogate the role of the state in enabling these mining companies, as well as support Indigenous communities here in their struggle against the encroachment of their territories. Her request compelled me to intentionally examine what the role of the Canadian state in post-Yolanda disaster efforts. But as a researcher coming from a middle-class background, Tagalog-speaking, working with NGO workers, PO organizers and community members from

different class, and ethno-linguist background, I had to be aware of my own social location and positionality. I was confronted with my position as an outsider on April 7<sup>th</sup>, my first full day in Tacloban City. I visited one of the temporary shelters for disaster survivors in Tacloban City. More commonly called bunkhouses, the residents used to live from different parts of the province whose homes were damaged from the typhoon. They have been living in these “substandard and undersized” houses for three years now, while the construction and distribution of permanent shelters were severely delayed (IBON Foundation, 2015, p 12). The residents shared with me how the poor ventilation and overcrowding worsened residents’ health conditions. Electricity and water supplies were not consistent. Worse, they were far away from their former sources of livelihood.

The residents of the bunkhouse, some of them members of People’s Surge, a region-wide alliance of disaster survivors, were eager to chat. They were willing to share their conditions, their lives before and after Yolanda, and what they think should be done. Most of what they shared are already documented in a few reports and news articles, most thorough is the report *Disaster Upon Disaster*, produced by the research institute IBON Foundation. The residents asked me *kung pwede sila naman ang magtanong sa akin* [if they can ask me a question in return]. They asked, “*anong maggagawa mo para sa amin?* [What can you do for us?].” Several of them said that this year alone, two other researchers came to visit them and interview them. Many researchers have asked them to retell traumatic stories. Some of them expressed how they would prefer not to retell some stories, but they do it anyway hoping that one day, help would come and their lives would improve. “*Pero wala naman ngayayari* [Nothing comes out of it].”

I return to the question that the editors of the Philippine Sociological Review raises, was I one of the researchers who have become part of the disaster industrial complex that “commoditize affected communities?” (Curato & Ong, 2015, p. 17). After the conversation

with the residents of the bunkhouses, I had to ask myself again, why am I here? what do I need to do here? Tuhiwai-Smith (1999) argues that while researchers conduct research with Indigenous communities may have learned to acknowledge their problematic roles as outsiders, she asks the “larger set of judgements on criteria that a researcher cannot prepare for, such as: Is her spirit clear? [...] Are they useful to us? Can they fix up our generator? Can you do anything for us?” These questions serve as the moral compass guiding the rest of my fieldwork and writing.

### *Setting the framework: concurrents in disaster scholarship*

The very definition of *disaster* remains a contested term within the realm of critical scholarship (Quarantelli, 1998). As scholars are confronted with shifting meanings of disaster mobilized by various institutions, governments, transnational entities, and international NGOs, the instability of its meaning was compelling enough for disasters to be examined as a social condition. Gilbert (1998) outlines the transformation from the ‘paradigm of war approach,’ that is agent-specific, to the two paradigms, namely: ‘disaster as social vulnerability,’ and ‘disaster as uncertainty’ (p. 12-16). The departure from the paradigm of viewing physical agents and extreme events, including typhoons, earthquakes, chemical explosions and armed conflict, as the problem of disaster research (Hewitt, 1998; Gilbert, 1998) has created more room to rather interrogate disaster as a social construct. Hewitt further defines disaster as “(loss of) control -- meaning control, within a particular kind of public control,” at a time when “science and administrative technologies have been deployed by modern states in the fields of disaster reduction and emergency measures” (p. 90). The debunking of the myth of the ‘natural’ disasters have resulted in multiple social approaches to disaster. Most notable are the overlaps and differences in the use of the *vulnerability* concept.

*At Risk: Natural hazards, people's vulnerability and disasters* (2004), begins with reiterating how inadequate the focus on the *naturalness* of disasters in correctly approaching disasters in research and practice (Wisner et al). In particular, they emphasize how other events that have affected a greater portion of the world's population, such as violent conflict, illness and hunger, are largely under researched within the realm of disaster inquiry. Such events are the everyday realities of less developed countries (LDCs). This tendency, they note, is apparent in the UN declaration of the 1990s the UN International Decade of *Natural Disaster Reduction*. The book offers alternative approach that has emerged in disaster studies in the last 30 years, does not deny the factor of natural hazards as 'trigger events' but focuses on how social factors "operate to generate disasters by making people vulnerable" (p. 10).

The authors also reminds us that analysing disaster "allows us to show why they should not be segregated from everyday living, and to show how risks involved in disasters must be connected with the *vulnerability* created for many people through the normal existence" (p. 4). While they celebrate the move from interrogating disasters from the 'natural' to the 'social,' they note the 'reluctance' in addressing the social causes of disasters. In most cases, it is more 'politically expedient' to address the technical aspects of disaster risk reduction, than dealing with the root causes of vulnerability. Long-term and protracted, this work requires "placing the genesis of disaster in a longer time frame," (p. 9) that inevitably raises debates on the sustainability of trends in development and globalization. Such transformation of societal and economic conditions can be met with political opposition, such as land reform, and investment in public services. They offer a definition of *vulnerability* as: "the characteristics of a person our group and their situation that influenced the capacity to dissipate, cope with, persist and recover from the impact of a natural hazard" (p. 11).

Meanwhile *Cultures of Disaster* (Bankoff, 2003), discusses how the *vulnerability* concept makes a distinction between natural hazards and disasters. Drawing from disaster scholars Hewitt, Wisner and Watts, Bankoff defines ‘vulnerable populations’ as “those at risk, not simply because they're exposed to hazard, but as a result of her marginality, in turn, as determined by the combination of the set of variables such as class gender age electricity and disability that affects people's entitlement and empowerment, are there command over basic necessities and rights as broadly defined" (p. 12). While vulnerability as a concept and disaster studies has improved sociological methods in approaching disasters and societies, Hewitt argues that the hazards and vulnerability paradigms constitute disaster as a “regime of mechanism and control” that has a discursive character (p. 78). Bankoff further adds that the discourse continued to uphold the paradigm that developing countries are is essentially “spaces of vulnerability” and seen as *zones of misrule*. And that the cure for this condition is “the transfer and application of Western expertise” (p. 14). It is important to note that the survivors of large-scaled disasters, and consequently, the subject of disaster research, over the past decade live in the Third World. Hence, the relationships amongst research, language, race and imperialism cannot be ignored. The paradigm in fact reduces people, communities and their lives to “mass collective units, statistically distributed data points, and functions of abstract dimension” (Hewitt, p.79).

Such a problematic interpretation of *vulnerability* did not result in the publication of a scholarship that examine the conditions that makes populations *vulnerable*, and consequently did not result in changing these conditions as the focus of disaster risk reduction. In fact, Bankoff observes that scholarship within this framework, the *vulnerable* Third World is reinforced as inherently undeveloped and incapable of developing on their own. The assumption of inferiority and lack of agency did not arise from the emergence of the concept of vulnerability itself. Rather, Bankoff argues that the assumptions are the continuation of

ideologies that can be traced back from colonial times. Bankoff returns to the work of Edward Said to emphasize how that the infantilization of Third World peoples is rooted and the "western cultural hegemony" that dominates an array of thinking not just in literary imaginations, but also in our understandings of disaster and society. Such logics manifest in the forms of Western intervention that reflect the characteristics assigned to the Third World in specific historical contexts. For example, Bankoff identifies how the post-WWII development discourse resulted in the emergence of 'aid.' While from the 1990s, the UN-declared Decade of Natural Disaster Reduction, *vulnerability* was responded 'relief' (p. 14). Furthermore, Bankoff reminds the readers that Western intervention in the forms of aid and relief must be understood as a product of the legacy of Cold war, and the Western world's "unremitting struggle against Communism" (p. 15).

Similar to vulnerability, *human security* as a concept and an approach has been circulating in the international humanitarian arena as a framework in approaching disasters. In the edited volume *Human Security and Natural Disasters*, various scholars and policy analysts review in the most recent large-scale disasters such as the Indian Ocean tsunami, the earthquake in Haiti and Hurricane Katrina. The editors recognize the human security approach departs from "the traditional prioritization of state security, and instead identifies the individual as the primary benefit of security" (Hobson et al, 2014, p. i). Similar to the vulnerability concept, the human security approach emerged from an overt move away from the paradigm that disasters arise from purely natural phenomena, which the editors recognize as robbing populations of human agency. The human security approach recognizes that insecurity can be mitigated when there preparation before the natural hazard. The framework aims to "identify and respond to the underlying causes of human insecurity" (p. 7). Similar to Bankoff's critique of *vulnerability*, Hobson (2014) discusses how the human security approach to natural disasters have failed to demonstrate a proficient and "clear casual"



understanding of “human insecurity is created” (p. 25). Extending Bankoff’s observations on how colonial logics continue to disaster discourse, I argue that the human security approach ultimately fails because it remains to be trapped within the logic that insecure populations live in *zones of misrule*. In a discussion on the socio-economic context in which created the Haitian earthquake a major disaster, Hobson himself cites “history of misrule and violence” as what subjected Haitians to “acute vulnerability” (p. 27).

While cognizant to problematic tendencies in disaster scholarship, *At Risk: Natural hazards, people’s vulnerability and disasters* offers the concept of ‘social production of vulnerability’ to analyse how vulnerabilities of populations to disasters. The concept highlights the need to situate disasters within historical and political contexts to reveal the root cause of vulnerabilities. The social production of vulnerability is outlined as follows: *root causes*, generating *dynamic pressures*, which then results in the production of *unsafe conditions*. The *root causes* of vulnerability, is regarded as the first chain of the progression of vulnerability. It is defined as “the interrelated set of widespread and general processes within a society in the world economy” (p. 52), naming economic, demographic, political processes are regarded as the most important causes of vulnerability. An analysis of history, to understand current distribution of power in society, is emphasized as extremely important in uncovering the connection between economic systems and the function of states, in relation to disaster vulnerability. The focus on *root causes* offers a framework that can potentially counter the narrative that human vulnerabilities are generated from *zones of misrule*.

Meanwhile *dynamic pressures* are immediate or contemporary “processes and activities that ‘translate’ the conditions of root causes both temporally and spatially into unsafe conditions” (p. 53). For example, Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) imposed on LDCs during the late 1970s and 1980s, as a form of consolidation of capitalism (root

causes), economic and ideological system at least 500 years old. SAPs have contributed to intensifying rural–urban migration (dynamic pressure), resulting from massive dispossession of farming land. Out-migration, as the authors suggest may lead to the loss of local knowledges that may aid in disaster prevention and recovery. Other few dynamic pressures named were urbanization, natural resource degradation, and livelihood diversification. On the other hand, *unsafe conditions* are “the specific forms in which the vulnerability of population is expressing time and space in conjunction with the hazard” (p. 55). Access to sound infrastructure, sustainable livelihood, and efforts of support are a few examples.

E.L. Quarantelli, a leading disaster studies scholar, proposes that a new paradigm for disaster research must emerge from using non-Western frameworks. Even though studies on disaster studies have started interrogating disaster as a social construct, the frames of thinking still heavily relies on Western ideas. Thus, current theoretical frameworks are still dependent on concepts of vulnerability, hazards and culture. The research methods employed by disaster studies scholars both reflect and reinforce colonial knowledges. So while other scholars, such as Quarantelli (1998), have envisioned that the future of disaster studies must come from non-Eurocentric epistemologies, some scholars demand a decolonial shift in the methodology used by researchers who study disasters.

I find Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s work (2002) on decolonial methodologies particularly useful. She explains that a researcher’s choice of theory is important because it “contains within it a method or methods for selecting and arranging, for prioritising what we see and do... and enables us to deal with contradictions and uncertainties. Perhaps more significantly, it gives us space to plan, to strategize, and to take greater control over our resistances” (p. 38). Exploring the contradictions and uncertainties in particular contexts is a task I have taken up in this essay. If there is anything I have learned in my own journey as a researcher and community organizer, nothing is as simple as it seems. Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s classic and

relevant work *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (1999), asserts how ‘research is “inextricably linked with European imperialism and colonialism” (p. 1). She traces this epistemological violence to the very conception of History itself, which is the story of a people who came to be known as Human, and in opposition to the Other/non-Human. Denise Ferriera Da Silva (2007) further argues that the Human vs. non-Human binary is intrinsic to modern thought, and how the ontological differences assigned on non-humans mark the chronology of Human Time that starts with life and ends with death. I read the assignment of *vulnerability* and *insecurity* to bodies, as well as the assignment of *zones of misrule* to developing nations, as ontological differences that trap subjects of disaster research along the *horizon of death* (Da Silva, 2007).

*Indigenous Knowledge and Disaster Risk Reduction: From Practice to Policy* (Shaw et al, 2009) states that during disaster recovery, Indigenous Knowledge (IK) “has been an effective to protect the lives in properties of people and communities.” Coping mechanisms and regions that are prone to natural disasters are considered by the authors as forms of Indigenous Knowledge. They assert that indigenous knowledge it is important in disaster risk reduction. IK is given broad definition: community or local practices representations and interactions with each other and their natural environment (p. 5).

Philippine Indigenous Knowledges are dynamic and are products “of people's process of acquisition and integration of their experiences overtime” (Cutabac, 2009, p. 181). Named as an “acquisition–integration process,” oral history it is regarded as tradition that can reveal relevant and practical ecological lessons. In their study of Manobo groups, they identified the massive loading operations of their ancestral lands increase their vulnerability to environmental hazards such as El Niño droughts (p. 182). Meanwhile, Noralene Uy and Rajib Shaw’s study (2009) of the Ivatans in the Batanes islands, demonstrated how IKs help them prepare for calamities. They argue the Ivatans as well as other indigenous communities in the

Philippines, demonstrate the value of indigenous knowledges in disaster risk reduction, and that ultimately, policy makers must “recognize indigenous knowledge as valid and legitimate given the values and benefits its use and work towards its integration in disaster risk reduction practice and policy” (2009, p. 193). Natural hazards, coping and adaptation as entrenched in our local systems of thought speak to how Philippine society develops with the ever changing physical environment. In an interview with Greg Bankoff, he explains how “some societies like the Philippines natural hazards occur with such historical frequency that the constant threat of them has been integrated the schema of daily life” to what he calls cultures of disaster (Curato and Corpus Ong, 2015, p. 208). A simple study of old and modern maps of the Philippines reveal how a several towns and villages have moved around over time to avoid anticipated perils from natural hazards such as, in the case of his example of Lake Taal, inland tsunamis and volcanic eruptions. The exposure to frequent hazards inevitable shape Philippine society, especially Indigenous Knowledges.

Setting the appropriate theoretical and methodological framework to examine Yolanda is a critical step. *Disaster* remains to be dynamic concept yet increasingly becoming a popular subject of inquiry especially at the age of climate change. From the conceptualization to the writing the research project, the dynamism of *disaster* as a concept and a phenomenon have required me to carefully study and evaluate several theories from various disciplines in order to find the framework that is not only the most adequate, but ultimately the one that will honour the stories and the analysis that the interviewees themselves advanced. Taking up the challenge posed by Curato and Corpus Ong, I place a crucial emphasis on the important insights of the disaster survivors themselves to convey their perspectives on disaster and Yolanda recovery.

I find Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s work (2002) on decolonial methodologies particularly useful. She explains that a researcher’s choice of theory is important because it “contains

within it a method or methods for selecting and arranging, for prioritising what we see and do... and enables us to deal with contradictions and uncertainties. Perhaps more significantly, it gives us space to plan, to strategize, and to take greater control over our resistances” (p. 38). Exploring the contradictions and uncertainties in particular contexts is a task I have taken up in this essay. If there is anything I have learned in my own journey as a researcher and community organizer, nothing is as simple as it seems. Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s classic and relevant work *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (1999), asserts how ‘research is “inextricably linked with European imperialism and colonialism” (p. 1). She traces this epistemological violence to the very conception of History itself, which is the story of a people who came to be known as Human, and in opposition to the Other/non-Human. Denise Ferriera Da Silva (2007) further argues that the Human vs non-Human binary is intrinsic to modern thought, and how the ontological differences assigned on non-humans mark the chronology of Human Time that starts with life and ends with death. I read the assignment of *vulnerability* and *insecurity* to bodies, as well as the assignment of *zones of misrule* (Bankoff, 2003) to developing nations, as ontological differences that largely trap subjects of disaster research along the *horizon of death* (Da Silva, 2007).

Reflecting on the currents within sociology and disaster studies, the editors of the special issue of the *Philippine Sociological Review* (2015) on the “Sociology of Disasters” ask: “have sociologists become part of the so-called Disaster Industrial Complex?” Noting how like journalists and humanitarian aid workers, sociologists “join the company of professionals that parachute in and out of disaster zones, either as part of professional responsibilities, sheer curiosity or genuine desire to help” (Curato and Corpus Ong, 2015, p. 17). They call on researchers to reflect the role we play, whose interests are we serving and suggests two propositions for scholars: first, is to use sociological theory and methods to serve as “myth busters.” The proper use of empirical data can rectify oppressive assumptions

about disaster survivors. For example, as I mentioned earlier, one harmful assumption that certain population are *vulnerable* due to living in *zones of misrule* can be a task of critical researchers. Second, the editors ask “sociological disaster studies should also, in the end, serve the interest of the discipline itself” (p. 18). Citing Robert Stallings, he notes how “we [sociologists] have failed to consistently use disaster research to challenge and advance central theories and dominant paradigms in sociology... What we need to do, in other words, is to integrate insights from our research with the core concerns of the discipline” (2006, p. 5). Taking up the challenge posed by Curato and Corpus Ong, I integrate the important insights of the disaster survivors themselves to guide me how I utilize to compile, write and present data.

### *Methodology*

The primary site of this inquiry is the Eastern Visayas Region in the Philippines. The selection criteria for the site are as follows: first, the site where the most affected populations by the typhoon are located; second, where international NGOs that have received funding from the Canadian government that operate; and third, where existing local NGOs and POs are engaged in typhoon response and recovery initiatives. Africa (2013) defines NGOs in reference to non-governmental non-profit orgs regardless of ideological orientation and funding resource. Meanwhile POs are membership-based organizations that advance a common interest along class or sectoral lines.

I reviewed secondary sources to situate the humanitarian aid intervention within the three sites of interaction between Canada and the Philippines. First, I compiled a brief history of the Philippines, and the emergence of NGOs alongside the development of social movements and anti-colonial resistance. The geohistorical context in which the humanitarian aid intervention emerges from. Then, I examined academic and activist scholarship that discuss the relationship between Canadian foreign policy and international NGOs. A good

grasp of the debates on the role of NGOs allowed me to understand the operations of these organizations more comprehensively and dialectically. Third, I reviewed relevant scholarship on the sociology of disaster. My aim was to understand how history, institutions, political economy and discourses constitute disasters.

I also conducted a critical discourse analysis of public statements and reports issued by the Government of Canada about what they called as the “humanitarian crisis in the Philippines.” As Foucault (1972) suggests that “nothing has any meaning outside of discourse,” and discourses are deeply imbued in power. I aim to reveal how typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) is discursively constituted as a disaster and a crisis, and a specific discursive field. In this paper, I choose to use the Philippine name Yolanda. I intend to employ a method of discourse analysis that uses the “dialectical theory of discourse,” as Norman Fairclough (2001) proposes. This theory suggests that discourse has a dialectical relationship with “other elements of social practice.” I took illustrative (see Appendices B-H) photos during my fieldwork in the Philippines as a way of documenting and presenting the state of disaster relief and rehabilitation operations of the aftermath of typhoon Haiyan, recognizing that most coverage is through the lens of military reports, NGOs and international media.

I conducted in-depth interviews with NGO workers and PO organizers in Leyte, Eastern Visayas. All interviews were completed during during my month-long stay in the Philippines in April 2016. I spent time in Quezon City, where met with researchers of IBON Foundation, as well as PO organizers based in the capital region. Then, I went to the Leyte province. I was mostly based in Tacloban City, the most densely populated area in the region. The eye of the storm passed by area, leaving 90-95% of the city damaged (Win, 2013). I spent time at the Makabayan campaign office where I some members of People’s Surge, an alliance of disaster survivors in EV. I also conducted field visits in temporary and permanent shelter villages. I also visited Palo, a town right beside Tacloban City. I spent time with the

staff of the Leyte Centre for Development (LCDE) and the Eastern Visayas Rural Assistance Program (EVRAP). In Tanauan, I observed a community meetings conducted by People's Surge. In Ormoc City, I visited the Makabayan campaign office and met members of Gabriela Women's partylist, and Anakpawis, a worker-peasant partylist (see Appendix A). I initially proposed to interview a former employee from Plan Internationale, but I was not able to get a hold of her during my stay in the Philippines. I decided to interview a former employee of CARE Canada, which ended up being more appropriate as the areas where its projects were conducted were the towns I had access to. I conducted a five formal, semi-structured interviews, with a total of eight individuals in Leyte. But my analysis is also built upon informal conversations with organizers, disaster survivors and from the forums and meetings I attended.

The inferences made in this paper draws from the triangulation of multiple data sources, thick description of accounts from research participants who convey multiple perspectives on humanitarian aid intervention and recovery in the context of the Yolanda disaster in Eastern Visayas. I used pseudonyms to protect research participant' identity and confidentiality, except for the LCDE Executive Director, Minet Jerusalem.

### *Structure of Paper*

Following this introduction, this paper is divided into two three chapters. The first chapter situates Eastern Visayas within a larger historical, geographical and economic context. One of the poorest regions in the Philippines, Eastern Visayas is also a site of a dynamic social movement through the formation of NGOs and People's Organizations (POs). The chapter locates the disaster and recovery efforts in the region within this frame. The second chapter focuses on the ways Canadian humanitarian interventions attempts to consolidate its pre-existing imperialist interests in the Philippines, namely the Philippines as:



the top source of immigrants since 2014; as a site of resource extraction operations; and as a country of geostrategic interests given Canada's participation in the 'global war on terror.' The third chapter documents how, through the strong collaboration between local POs and NGOs, navigate the humanitarian aid industry during disaster recovery and rehabilitation efforts. I discuss the methods they employ to assert agency over foreign-funded projects and focus the priority towards local development and empowerment. I analyse how their strategic partnerships with iNGOs and even government units subvert neoliberal approaches to development that have historically characterized Canadian disaster response in less developed countries such as the Philippines. I conclude the paper with a discussion on the potential of the peace negotiations between the established state, the Republic of the Government of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front (NDF) in boosting the efforts of local agents in disaster recovery and risk reduction in Eastern Visayas. I also discuss the lessons can the humanitarian aid industry draw from the methods of NGOs and POs in the Philippines employ, in order to effectively respond to and prevent future disasters from happening.

## Chapter One – Situating Eastern Visayas

### *Eastern Visayas*

In this section, I will give a geographical sketch, economic situation and a brief history of Eastern Visayas. This framing will situate the post-Yolanda humanitarian aid intervention and disaster recovery efforts in a political and historical context of the region. Eastern Visayas is an administrative region in the Philippines — Region VIII. Located in the central-east section of the Philippines, it is composed of three main islands - Leyte, Samar and Biliran. The region faces the Pacific Ocean and covers an area of 21,562.9 square kilometers. Eastern Visayas has a flat terrain along the coast with mountainous areas in the interior of the two main islands, Samar and Leyte (Rappler.com, 2014). The Waray-waray people inhabit the majority of the region. In 1521, Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese sailor, ‘first-sighted’ Samar during a journey to the West in search of spices in the name of the Spanish Crown. He first arrived in Guiuan Island.

Around 52% of Eastern Visayas is forestland. Mineral deposits in the region include chromite, nickel, clay, coal, limestone, pyrite, sand and gravel. It is surrounded by rich seawater and has an abundance of inland waters, a source of bountiful sea and freshwater fish. Eastern Visayas is mostly agricultural, with major crops of corn, coconut, *palay* [rice], sugarcane and banana (see Appendix B). Before Yolanda, it used to be the 2<sup>nd</sup> top producer of coconut in the country. The total population of the region is 3,880,148, with Tacloban City being the most densely populated town. The region is divided into six provinces, twelve districts, seven cities, one hundred and thirty six municipalities, and four thousand three hundred and ninety *barangays*. Each *barangay* is composed of a number of *sitios* (villages).

The Philippines is ranked as one of the top five countries affected by natural disasters (Montenegro, 2015). It is considered one of the world’s natural hazard ‘hotspots,’ both geophysically and meteorologically (Holden, 2013). Situated along the Pacific ring of fire,

the country is home to many dormant and active volcanoes. The eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in 1991, was the second largest volcanic eruption of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Faint *lindol* (earthquakes) are experienced in the country at least five times a day (Holden, 2003). Tropical cyclones or *bagyo*, numbering 20 to 30 each year, most of which form over warm currents of the Pacific Ocean visit the islands between June and November. The archipelago has been dubbed the ‘most storm-exposed country on Earth’ (Brown, 2013). Secondary hazards such as tsunamis and storm surges or tidal waves, which are caused by the influx of sea or lake water pushed by strong winds, usually result in storms. Active seismic activity has also made the region prone to frequent tsunamis. A storm surge in 1987 claimed up to 1,500 lives in Eastern Visayas (Holden, 2003).

Before Yolanda, a strong typhoon and tidal wave reached Tacloban City, Leyte, in October 12, 1897. An archive of an Australian newspaper reported an “estimated that 400 Europeans and 6000 natives lost their lives, many being drowned by the rush of water, while others were killed by the violence of the wind. Several towns have been swept or blown away” (Luces, 2013). Another typhoon in 1912 left an estimated 15,000 people wounded and dead in Leyte and Capiz, a province in Western Visayas region.

Before Yolanda struck Eastern Visayas, the region was the second poorest region in the Philippines, next to the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). It is now the poorest region in the Philippines (Jerusalem, personal communication, 2016; Fernandez 2016). Citing a report released by the Philippine Statistical Authority, the economic output of the region declined due to damage caused by Typhoon Yolanda in 2013 and subsequent typhoons in 2014 (Fernandez, 2016). By 2016, the minimum wage in the entire region is P260 per day. But as Tala, an organizer with People’s Surge points out, it is only mostly in the cities where waged jobs exist. And even then, not all employers pay the full P260. “*Pamasaha pa nga lang duon sa ibang manggagawa nauubos na ang pera nia. Paano ka pa*

*makapagipon. Kung kontraktwal din yan.* [In transportation costs alone, their money is gone. What more for savings? The jobs are also mostly contractual]" (Tala, personal interview, 2016).

As in the rest of the archipelago, feudalism characterizes the economic and political condition of Eastern Visayas. The principal forces of production are the farmers who produce the majority of the agricultural output of the region on tracks of land owned by big landlords (Guerrero, 2005). In Samar alone, 40 landowning families own and control 50% of total agricultural land (Holden, 2013; Castañeda, 2005). While feudal relations between farmers and landlords have been identified as one of the key reasons for the continued impoverishment of majority of peasants in the Philippines, particularly in Eastern Visayas, land reform in the region has not materialized. The conditions of landless peasants are dire. From the interview with Marya and from my informal conversations with residents, many peasants are forced to work on sugarcane *haciendas* (plantations) for a meager P100-120 a day, "*wala pa yong libreng pagkain* [that does not include free food" (personal interview, 2016). Many peasants who have land to toil struggled to bounce back after Yolanda. "*Umuutang sila, naubos na ang paninda nila, pero wala paring kita* [They borrow money, but even when they have sold all their yield, there is still no money left for them]" (Marya, personal interview, 2016).

### *Eastern Visayas as a site of ongoing resistance*

Given the sociopolitical sketch of Eastern Visayas in the previous section, I will outline here how the community works to respond to their material conditions. The discussion of resistance outlined here will frame the findings in the following chapters on community-based responses to Yolanda. Holden (2013) quotes De Belder and Vanobberghen (1999, p. 89) acknowledging, "as one of the poorest regions of the Philippines, Samar has been one of the bulwarks of the Philippine revolution". The Communist Party of the

Philippines (CPP) nationwide 'genuine land reform agenda' seeks to "increase tenants' share in production," a major difference from the government's Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program which "aims to redistribute land" (Santos and Santos, 2010, p. 48). Indeed, this platform, as CPP claims, has succeeded in "cultivating deep roots in the countryside," where peasants themselves make up majority of the NPA fighters (Ang Bayan, 2013).

Since 2001, suspected members and supporters of the NPA have been targets of assassination by the AFP (Holden, 2013). The series of counterinsurgency programs dubbed Samar as a 'killing field' due to relatively high rates of extrajudicial killings, military harassment, forced disappearances, and illegal arrests (Carceller, 2000; Holden, 2014). In 2005, many community organizers were victims of extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances perpetrated under AFP General Jovito Palparan's leadership (Marya, personal interview, 2016; Holden, 2013). Referred to as the "Palparan era," 2005 marked the height of the violence against the civilian population (Acosta, 2011; Holden, 2013). In Eastern Visayas, disaster workers and leaders of People's Organizations (POs), are also victims of extrajudicial killings post-Yolanda. The armed conflict in the region and its impacts to communities were extremely evident, making it imperative to examine how the counterinsurgency program in Eastern Visayas effected disaster recovery efforts.

Palparan's service in the military was known to head the special Philippine envoy in Iraq from 2003 to 2004. Former political prisoner Ericson Acosta regards the assignment of Palparan, infamously known as "the butcher" as part of the *Oplan Bantay Laya II* (Operation Freedom Watch II), the counterinsurgency program during the Arroyo regime (Acosta, 2011). Its first incarnation, Operation Freedom Watch I, was launched by the Philippine government as part of the U.S.-initiated global "War on Terror." According to Lucas and Shahshahani (2014), the counterinsurgency program "made no distinction between armed combatants and civilians." Between February 28 - April 20, 2005, as the chief of 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry

Division in Samar and Leyte, Palparan was linked to the murder of five people, two frustrated murders, five abductions, five harassments, two incidents of destruction of property, five illegal arrests, four aerial bombings, and a food blockade (Santos and Santos, 2010). Hustisya (2014), a human rights organization reported up to nine victims of extrajudicial killings, twelve victims of enforced disappearances and twenty-five victims of torture between February and August 2005. Furthermore, Palparan's victims are leaders and member of POs labelled as fronts of the NPA. Unfortunately, the extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances did not cease after Palparan was assigned to another region. The atrocities of the counterinsurgency program from Arroyo's time continued and intensified under her successor, Ninoy Aquino III (Teodoro, 2014, xiii). Yolanda survivors and organizers involved in disaster recovery work were thus amongst the victims of the new counterinsurgency program, *Oplan Bayanihan*.

According to key informants, POs, specifically farmers associations and NGOs, such as organizations under the Citizen Disaster Response Network (CDRN), have been targets of the counterinsurgency operations. LCDE is a development local NGO that conducts disaster recovery work in Eastern Visayas. One of their activities is to conduct 'Disaster Preparedness' trainings with POs in the region. In LCDE's training, military threat is included by the communities themselves as a human-induced hazard, especially in upland areas. "Even yesterday, a PO in a barangay texted me and said there is military in our community and asking individuals that we have a list of names that this persons are allegedly involved in the communists. But actually they're not, because they're just farmers" (Makaryo, personal interview, 2016). The residents report that the military does not allow them to go to their farms. "They are labelled as supporting the rebels, the NPA." An evacuation plan to a neighbouring barangay or municipality is part of the counter-disaster plan in the event of military threat or encounter. The interviewees used the term "red-

tagging” to describe the behaviour of military in accusing organizers and NGO workers as part of the NPA. LCDE works with the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) and Katungod, a local human rights organization, to monitor human rights violations perpetrated by the military. Makaryo and Perla, two of the LCDE staff who conduct the Disaster Preparedness training in the region point out:

**Makaryo:** *Sometimes they [ICRC and Katungod] are also red-tagged!*

**Perla:** *Even us!*

**Makaryo:** *Most of the time we approach ICRC, because last year, November and December, we have our former beneficiary, taken to the camp of the military because they are the accused as supporters. We approached ICRC and they went to the camp. They got to person back to the farm. No warrant. Just on their list.*

**Perla:** *They just picked them up, no due process.*

Based from the formal integration of NGOs in the counterinsurgency operations, PO organizers are weary of the NGO presence in the region. Furthermore, IBON foundation notes the large number of NGOs, local and international, that functioned as “charity or service providers” during the emergency and recovery stages in the aftermath of Yolanda, that tend to “undermine accumulated social capital and painstaking community organizing and politicization efforts” (2015, p. 7). At a community forum where Tala was invited to conduct a voters’ education training, a number of representatives from NGOs involved in disaster recovery projects spoke and asked residents to help them create profiles of different areas. The inquiries included information such as population, number of houses, etc. But one question that struck her the most is “*may mga NPA ba dito?* [Are there NPA forces here?]” (Tala, personal interview, 2016).

It appears that during the rehabilitation stage, the military required security clearances to all organizations who were delivering goods to typhoon-struck areas. In doing so, the military was preventing ‘red-tagged’ organization, which they are themselves composed of residence and survivors of Yolanda (Teodoro, xii, 2013). The organizations concerned with development and disaster response under the CDRN, “were fast becoming targets of military

harassments illegal arrest and killings" (Lacorte, 2013 p.17). Balsa Mindanao, a development organization based in Mindanao, was in the region after Yolanda to lend support in conducting recovery projects (see Appendix D). According to the IBON Foundation (2015), the group was questioned by the Local Government Unit on their choice of villages to supply with relief goods. Delivering relief goods to remote areas was suspected as collaborating with the NPA. There are many documented killings, military harassments and illegal arrest of disaster and development workers, not only in Eastern Visayas, but across other regions in the Philippines. In the view of Marya, a peasant organizer, PO members in Albura were not informed by barangay officials that there was relief to be delivered in the area. They were told that they can only receive "*kung may sobra* [if there was extra]" (Marya, personal interview, 2016).

Based on public records and community accounts, Jefferson Custodio, a 25 year old LCDE volunteer, was murdered in August 22, 2014. Custodio volunteered as a *bantay* [guard] of the warehouse where relief goods were stored and helped LCDE in identifying beneficiaries of projects (Lydia, personal interview, 2016). He was shot by alleged military elements of the 19<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion of the AFP while delivering donated farm tools to upland communities in Carigara (Manila Today, 2014). His father was an officer of Municipal Farmers Association of Carigara at that time (Lydia, personal interview, 2016). Known to people as Jeff, he was victim to a "series of harassment and threats he received from the Military Intelligence Group and the 19th Infantry Battalion" (Manila Today, 2014). But Custodio's case is not the only extrajudicial killing that occurred in the aftermath of Yolanda. Just a few months before Custodio's death, PO leader Rodolfo Basada was killed on June 29 in Pinabacdao, Samar. Then on September 1, 2014, Nelson Mercader, a town councilor of Las Navas, Northern Samar was also murdered. A week before I arrived in Leyte, a mayoral candidate's assistant was killed by a masked individual on the side of a



highway in broad daylight. Community members suspect that the mayoral candidate is a target of military harassment, as he agreed to sign the People's Agenda that People's Surge was presenting to candidates during the 2016 Elections. During the campaign period, People's Surge was also actively engaging its members through providing voters education workshops (see Appendix E)

Residents of Tacloban in fact, report that the first sign of national government presence was when the military and police forces were deployed to respond to the looting happening in neighbourhoods (IBON, 2015, p. 63). The military was also present to provide security for businesses from prisoners who broke out of jail during the typhoon. Residents also noticed that foreign military personnel outnumbered local military in the disaster struck areas. As part of the U.S. directed *Oplan Damayan*, 13,000 US troops were stationed in Eastern Visayas to support emergency and rehabilitation efforts, and 6,250 more in the Gulf of Leyte. There were also military forces from Australia, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Brunei, Thailand and New Zealand. The aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda was known to be the most militarized disaster response in the Philippines. To this day, red-tagged PO organizers and NGO workers are prevented from entering some of the upland areas to conduct disaster recovery work. Marya, a PO organizer and Artemio, an NGO worker, shared that some barangays have a CCTV set up by the military to surveil communities. They both shared that militarization makes it difficult for upland communities to self-organize (personal interview, 2016).

The research findings exposed the intense militarization in Eastern Visayas during disaster recovery, where development workers and volunteers themselves are targets of military harassment. Prior to Typhoon Yolanda, the counterinsurgency program forced POs to become inactive or abandon their Indigenous practices, specifically communal farming. State attacks function to stifle locally-initiated efforts which address the root causes of the

community's vulnerability to disasters. Military harassment also functions as a barrier for communities to have the proper level of organization required for a Disaster Response Committee, which is discussed in more detail in Chapter three. However, the residents of Eastern Visayas, through their local NGOs, are unable to conduct their disaster recovery work without becoming collateral damage in the government counterinsurgency program. In spite of unceasing cases of extrajudicial killings and military harassment, the people of Eastern Visayas continue to organize and support other communities to re-start POs. The case of Eastern Visayas also illuminates the multiple forms of recovery, community agency, and recovery mechanisms through the collective spirit of *bayanihan*.

The complexity of causes of vulnerability is apparent in the approaches of POs and local NGOs to recovery where community efforts to address the root causes of their vulnerability make them targets of the counterinsurgency program. Because POs and NGOs inevitably have to be critical of the ineffective band-aid approaches of the national government, they are in turn, branded as supporters of the CPP-NPA. Despite the risks that organizers, NGO workers and even human rights advocates face amidst intense 'red-tagging,' they continue to jointly conduct disaster recovery work in the region. One of the PO organizers I interviewed, Nanay Lydia, shared that she wanted to continue the work that Jefferson Custodio did in his honour. While the extrajudicial killings and military harassments were intended to "dismantling the political backbone of the place or left-wing sympathies" (Tingcungco, 2014), many instead reaffirm their commitment to continue organizing. Yolanda showed the harsh reality that the prolonged persistence of feudalism and landlessness have contributed to the death of almost 18,000 people in the region. For many organizers and NGO workers, they have accepted the unfortunate possibility of their names being added to the long list of EJK's in the Philippines, resolved with the faith that, one day, their work will prevent future disasters from happening.

As shown in the inquiry, recovery in the context of EV was not limited to the aftermath of Yolanda. It was the interviewees themselves who began to discuss *recovery* from the impacts of counterinsurgency. For them, recovery from the supertyphoon was not separate from reorganizing their respective communities and returning to their traditional means of livelihood. *Tiklos* is practiced in all scales of recovery — from the practice of communal farming, to the collaborations between POs, NGOs, iNGOs, and human rights organizations. The methods of disaster recovery that have been applied and developed in the particular context of Eastern Visayas are becoming entrenched in their culture. Following Bankoff's (2004) concept of *cultures of disaster*, the comprehensive and complex web of networks that are involved in disaster recovery work in the region is part of that culture.

## **Chapter Two – Affect of Benevolence: Humanitarianism as consolidating and subverting Canadian imperialism**

On April 4, 2014, Christian Paradis the Minister of International Development and La Francophonie issued a statement entitled, “Statement by Minister Paradis on Canadians' donations of more than \$85 million to Typhoon Haiyan relief efforts” (DFATD, 2014). The statement was issued four months after Typhoon Yolanda struck the Philippines. The statement opened by calling Typhoon Yolanda a “tragedy of unimaginable proportions, even for a country accustomed to dealing with tropical storms.” Altruism through humanitarian intervention is central to Canadian national identity (Razack, 2007). Paradis expressed pride, “as a Canadian” himself, of “our response to the typhoon” (DFATD, 2014). He is referring to the ‘Typhoon Haiyan Relief Fund’ launched by the Government of Canada one day after Yolanda hit the Philippines. Through the Fund, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Development pledged to match all individual donations to registered Canadian charities involved in Yolanda relief efforts. The fundraising initiatives, described as “collective efforts,” were nation-building exercises that made a “difference to the lives of Filipinos” (DFATD, 2014). The Fund was distributed to government-selected iNGOs, many of which were part of the Devonshire Initiative (DI), a consortium of mining companies and development iNGOs.

There has been a large critique of Canadian humanitarian interventions around the world, most recently the post-earthquake interventions in Haiti as well as peacekeeping efforts in Somalia (Razack, 2007) and in Afghanistan (Albo, 2014). The contradictions of Canadian humanitarianism have compelled me to examine Canadian humanitarian intervention in the Philippines in the aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda. Canada’s history with the Philippines pre-existed before Yolanda, and certainly not limited to humanitarian aid. First, the Philippines has been Canada’s top source of migrant labour since 2014

(Government of Canada, 2014). Second, there is a significant flow of Canadian capital to the Philippines, most of which is through mining operations (Holden and Jacobson, 2012). Third, the Philippines a site of Canadian military interest particularly in the era of ‘Global War on Terror.’ This geohistorical context that Philippine-Canadian relations are situated in compel to ask if humanitarian iNGOs function as what Harvey (2009) describe as the ‘trojan horses’ of imperialism.

In this chapter, I interrogate how Canadian humanitarian aid intervention in the aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines consolidates processes of labour migration, resource extraction and military cooperation. The chapter, drawing from the multiple data sources, will convey perspectives on Canadian humanitarian intervention. It will be divided into four sub-sections: first, I situate temporary measures to expedite migration applications to Canada from typhoon-struck areas within a longer history of Philippine labour migration to Canada. I briefly discuss how neoliberal approaches to development have encouraged the out-migration of Filipinos as workers vis-a-vis the absence of national industries that can absorb the country’s workforce. Foreign-owned companies dominate one of the major industries in the Philippines — resource extraction. The Canadian-owned mining industry has placed Canada as the top foreign country in the Philippines with the highest number of mining tenements and largest cumulative tenement area. This has resulted in an ever-growing opposition against foreign-owned large-scale mining operations, which at times expressed as military offensive attacks from the New People’s Army (NPA), the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines. Third, I discuss Canada’s strategic military interests on the Philippines with the intention of protecting its investments in the country. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Philippines and Canada is analysed within Canada specific interest in advancing the counterinsurgency program against the NPA. NGOs and iNGOs have been formalized as partners of Canadian mining companies and the

counterinsurgency program, *Oplan Bayanihan*, and the Devonshire Initiative (DI), a consortium between mining companies and iNGOs. However, I argue that while iNGOs and NGOs could serve to advance neoliberalism during disasters, local NGOs and people's organizations (POs) have employed strategies to navigate the contradictions of the humanitarian aid industry. In the last section, I trace the emergence of a faction of 'progressive' local NGOs from the long history of anti-imperialist and pro-national sovereignty movements in the Philippines (Africa, 2013). While sharing the popular sentiment against neoliberal approaches to development, the informants I interviewed revealed how local NGOs in Eastern Visayas have collaborated with CARE International - a Canadian-funded iNGO which is also a member of DI. Through centering the role of POs as active actors in disaster recovery, local NGOs have found ways to not only utilize Canadian humanitarian aid towards disaster recovery, but also to strengthen self-reliance and stimulate local economies. Through strong partnerships between local NGOs and POs, disaster survivors at the Eastern Visayas region are subverting the consolidation of Canadian imperialism in the aftermath of the Haiyan disaster.

### *Labour migration*

On November 13, 2016, the federal government announced that Citizenship and Immigration Canada would "prioritize the processing of applications on request from Filipinos who were significantly and personally affected by Typhoon Haiyan" (DFATD, 2015). It was reported that as of April 1, 2014, there were 245 applications to the Temporary Foreign Workers Program (TFWP), including the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP), and 852 for Permanent Resident applications, which includes family sponsorship from workers who completed the requirement of the LCP. Immigration advocates have questioned if the 'facilitative measure' was used by the Canadian government, then under Harper, as a publicity stunt (Dempsey, 2014). Filipino activist groups in Canada contend that the measure

is intended to expand and justify TFWP and LCP. Both programs hire foreign labour mostly from LCDs to perform various jobs deemed unfillable by the Canadian population under precarious working conditions. The promise to expedite applications occurred in the midst of the same government adding restrictions on temporary foreign workers to be eligible for permanent residency.

Labour migration, specifically the migration of Filipinas as domestic workers in Canada, has been well documented. Macklin (1992) traces the history of domestic work in Canada from the early 1800s, following the importation of immigrants from "non-preferred nations" such as Poland, Romania, the Soviet Union and Hungary to work as servants for upper and middle class British women. Macklin, and also Agnes Calliste (1989) document the shift of the importation of domestic workers from the Global South between 1910 and 1966, particularly from the Caribbean. Macklin continues to document this transformation in the movement from of the Foreign Domestic Schemes to the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP). Furthermore, Stasiulis and Bakan (2005) identify the following main political, economic and cultural conditions that changed the primary source of domestic workers from the Caribbean to the Philippines: the strength of the militant feminist organizing of Caribbean domestic workers; anti-Black racism on the part of employment agencies; and the formalization of the Labour Export Policy in the Philippines as one of the World Bank-imposed Structural Adjustment Policies. More recent academics researching the LCP focus on the impacts of the program to families and the community. Roselyn Salvador's thesis (2015) explores the reconfiguration of elder care in the Philippines whose care is financed by remittances of caregivers in Victoria, BC. Meanwhile, Pratt (2012) documents the ramifications of the LCP to children through prolonged the family separation, as well the reunification that mediated by the unique to the phenomenon of Filipina labour migration.

Presenting TFWP and LCP as a viable option to escape the aftermath of the disaster is consistent with the logics behind the Labour Export Policy (LEP) of the Philippines. Passed during the Marcos era, LEP intensified the out-migration of Filipinos all over the world, as the policy restructured the Philippines into a *labour brokerage state* that "actively prepares, mobilizes, and regulates its citizens for migrant work abroad" (Rodriguez, 2010, p. 1). The LEP is praised as *sagot sa kahirapan* [a solution to poverty], as remittances from over 10 million Filipinos working abroad keep the economy afloat. The LEP has also been criticized as a measure to quell social unrest and as a counterinsurgency strategy (Gonzalez, 2004; Rodriguez, 2010). Regardless, Haiyan's significant impact on people's livelihood made migration to Canada an even more desirable option (Dempsey, 2014), given the high rates of unemployment and underemployment in the Philippines.

### *Resource Extraction*

In the Philippines, Canada is not only known for the 'land with greener pastures.' It is also known for its expansive mining operations in the Philippines. The lack of stable livelihood has been linked to the stifled national industry due to the hegemony of foreign-owned industries in the Philippines (Guerrero, 2005; Rodriguez, 2010; IBON Foundation, 2014). Resource extraction is an industry largely dominated by foreign companies. The passage of the Mining Act of 1995 allowed for full foreign ownership over projects, legalized displacement of communities in mining sites, and granting of access to water and timber-rights (Rural Missionaries of the Philippines, 2014; Holden, 2015). The resource extraction industry can be located within the mining-based development paradigm that the Philippine state deploys. Academics, environmental advocates, local NGOs and POs assert that the Mining Act is unconstitutional, and have sustained a campaign to revoke it (Rural Missionaries of the Philippines, 2014).



Holden and Jacobson (2012) reveal the one of the contradictions of the mining-based development paradigm by exposing how large-scale mining intensifies the impact of natural hazards an already disaster-prone country. The instability of mining tailings dams from heavy rainfall is identified as the main risk posed by typhoons, exemplified by the 1996 Marcopper spillage in Marinduque and the Philex Mining Corporation 2012 spill in Benguet (IBON, 2012). Marcopper Mining and Philex Mining Corporation are fully and partly Canadian-owned. Despite massive opposition to the Mining Act and the well-documented environmental impacts of large-scale foreign mining operations, the Philippines' neoliberal approach to development continues to open up the country to more foreign-operated resource extraction projects.

As of May 2014, Canadian-owned companies, both fully and partially, made Canada the top foreign country in the Philippines with the highest number of mining tenements (operational or not), at 19 tenements (IBON Foundation, 2015). Canada also has the largest cumulative tenement area, at 62,660 hectares (IBON Foundation, 2015). Canada's economic and political investment in the continuation of the Philippines Mining Act of 1995 cannot be denied. As a result of typhoon Yolanda, two Canadian resource extraction companies incurred damages to infrastructure. Glencore Xstrata that operates the PASAR (Philippine Associated Smelting and Refining Corporation) plant— a copper smelter and refinery in Isabela, Leyte, incurred “heavy structural damage” from Yolanda. The company has donated US\$2 million in funds through the Pasar Foundation (Tarikh, 2013; Glencore Xstrata, 2013), the CSR arm of the PASAR plant (Glencore Xstrata, 2013; IBON Foundation, 2015). Mindoro Resources Ltd site in Panay, west of Eastern Visayas, incurred some damages to camp facilities from typhoon Yolanda (Mindoro Resources Ltd, 2013). The company is in a joint venture on nickel mining with TVI Pacific, a Canadian mining company. TVI Pacific currently has mining exploration applications over the largest surface area in the Philippines.

The location of the Mindoro / TVI Pacific Agata Project is located in the province of Agusan del Norte, a province in Mindanao also incurred damages, mainly to roads. Both TVI Pacific and Mindoro Resources Ltd conducted disaster relief operations in the area post-Yolanda. Canadian mining companies, such as OceanaGold, B2Gold, Besra Gold, BHP Billiton, and Canpotex are reported to have donated funds towards disaster recovery efforts (Tarikh, 2013; IBON Foundation, 2015).

While the No Dwelling Zone (NDZ) policy has prohibited communities to return to their homes by the shore, mining companies are still allowed to operate (Tala, personal interview, 2016). In the town of MacArthur, Leyte, RT Mining Corp has a black sand mining operation (Salarda, 2014). RT Mining Corp has been linked to RT Minerals Corp, a Canadian-based company. “*Simula sa MacArthur pero pinatigil sa pagpprotesta ng mga mamamayan* [It started at MacArthur, but it was stopped due to people’s protest],” explains Tala (personal interview, 2016).

Mining operations in the Philippines escalate the conflict between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the armed wing of the CPP, the New People’s Army (NPA). Holden and Jacobson, quoting 2007 reports from the United States Army and United States Marine Corps, identify that the threats large-scale mining poses to the “poor and marginalized” have acted as a “grievance mechanism” that “drives people to the NPA” (2012, p. 205). They note the increased militarization of mountainous regions of the Philippines where most NPA base areas are located, where Indigenous peoples live, and where large-scale mining corporations operate. Many of these mining companies are mostly either Australian or Canadian, and hire their own paramilitary groups to support the counterinsurgency efforts of the AFP. The NPA has launched various tactical offensives against large-scale mining companies all throughout the country, some of which are Canadian-owned (Holden and Jacobson, 2012; IBON Foundation, 2015). Lumads, the

Indigenous peoples of Mindanao, declared a *pangayaw* [tribal war] against firms encroaching on their ancestral domains (IBON Foundation, 2015; Rural Missionaries of the Philippines, 2014). In Eastern Visayas, the NPA has gained considerable strength that they were reportedly able to demand ‘revolutionary taxes’ from mining companies (Holden, 2013).

The current counterinsurgency program in the Philippines, *Oplan Bayanihan*, incorporated ‘peace and development programs’ as an effective approach to undercut support for the NPA. In a public forum in Toronto on November 7, 2015, members of Cordillera Peoples’ Alliance (CPA), an Indigenous alliance from Luzon, identify how the approach of *Oplan Bayanihan* compliments that of the Devonshire Initiative (DI). DI is a consortium of Canadian mining companies and iNGOs that allows the creation of formalized networks between the two seemingly incompatible industries, under the banner of international development. CPA contends that similar to local NGOs, iNGOs serve communities surrounding mining sites to temporarily mitigate the brutal impacts of resource extraction, as well as increase surveillance to prevent the NPA from conducting agitation work and community programs. Eligible donations to Canada’s Typhoon Haiyan fund had to be made to charities that are registered with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). Annual financial audits, general meetings, submission of the names of board members are only a few of the several requirements that organizations have to fulfill to be registered with CRA. Meanwhile, the matched donation from the Government allocated it to “experienced Canadian and international organizations responding to the crisis.” Many of the “experienced” iNGOs that Canada distributed the funds to are members of the Devonshire Initiative, such as World Vision, Plan Canada and Care Canada.

### *Militarization and the role of NGOs*

The on-going civil war between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the NPA and its threat to foreign investments in the Philippines have made the

country a site of geostrategic relevance to the world. Recently named as one the most disaster-prone countries in the world, scholars have emphasized that an examination of disasters in the Philippines must exercise important consideration of on-going armed conflicts (Bankoff, 2003; Holden, 2011; Walch, 2014; Holden and Jacobson, 2012). More Developed Countries such as Canada and the US are invested in the defeat of the NPA, as the Party's pro-nationalist platform aims to severely limit foreign-owned operations in the country.

With the onslaught of the US-led 'Global War on Terror,' the US and Canada added the NPA to their respective 'terrorist' lists, consolidating both countries' security and military support for Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP). The GRP has a long-standing Mutual Defense Treaty with the US, strengthened via the recent passing of the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) in 2014. Meanwhile, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Canada and the Philippines formalizes the 'defense training cooperation program' between the two countries. One of the stated objectives of both the MoU and EDCA is to improve disaster response support from Canadian and US military forces. But People's Surge, an alliance of disaster survivors in Eastern Visayas, "express anger of the use of their pain to expedite the passage of EDCA" (Tala, personal interview, 2016).

The EDCA was signed in April 28, 2014, only several months after Yolanda. An agreement between US President Barack Obama, and the Aquino government, supporters of EDCA argue that no senate approval was needed because it merely serves as an "enhancement" of the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty between the US and the Philippines. Meanwhile, several NGOs, government officials, academics argue that EDCA legalizes the restoration of US bases in the Philippines and threatens Philippine national sovereignty. Organizers from People's Surge and journalists are concerned that Yolanda was used to expedite the passing of EDCA (Salamat 2014; Tala, personal interview, 2016; IBON, 2015),

raising suspicion around the inclusion of “desiring enhance the cooperative capacities in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief” as one of the aims of EDCA. Women rights groups like Gabriela and the Centre for Women’s Resource contend that EDCA will only increase the frequency of violence against women perpetrated by US military troops, referring to the recent killing of transwoman Jennifer Laude by US Marine Joseph Scott Pemberton (Centre for Women’s Resources, 2014).

EDCA was to further involve the US military, with the support of the Canadian state, in the counterinsurgency program against the CPP-NPA-NDF. While the Philippine Liberal Party was in power, a formal alliance was made with Akbayan Party which was formed by various NGO leaders. The alliance between the established state and reformist NGOs culminated in a new version of the counterinsurgency program called *Oplan Bayanihan* [Operation Community Unity]. One key feature of the program is a “People-Centered Security/Human Security Approach” which tasks the AFP to “maximize the utilization of non-combat operations such as civil-military operations (CMO) and development-oriented activities” (AFP, 2011). In a presentation in 2013, Satur Ocampo explained how *Oplan Bayanihan* “establishes a direct correlation or kinship with the 2009 U.S. Counterinsurgency Guide.” Also called the ‘COIN guide,’ this document was issued in 2009 jointly by the then US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, and USAID Administrator Henrietta Fore to guide the US counterinsurgency campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. Civil Society Organizations (CSO) are outlined as partners in implementing community development programs in armed conflict areas. Such approach is a departure from the previous administration's all-out military offensive strategy against the NPA. The World Bank donated \$216 million towards the implementation of community programs. International NGOs were one of the largest contributors of emergency funding used in relief and rehabilitation in Eastern Visayas, the region that suffered the most damage from the

disaster (IBON, 2015). Now the poorest region in the Philippines, scholars and activists have argued that Yolanda must be recognized as not a unique ‘event,’ but rather as a continuation of the socio-economic and political conditions of the region (Porteria, 2015). An examination of the operations of international and local NGOs in the region reveals how humanitarian aid can not only stop the consolidation, but in fact subvert, Canadian imperialist presence.

Disaster rehabilitation and recovery, most especially in Less Developed Countries (LCDs), have been critiqued as a process that further consolidates the neoliberalization of economies (Klein, 2007; Barry-Shaw and Jay, 2012; Porteria, 2015). Recovery initiatives have mobilized international communities, from the level of state, CSOs and ordinary citizens to respond to the needs of disaster survivors. International aid, in the form of funding, direct provision of services, or donation of goods, have been used as political tools. Hatem Bazian argues that humanitarian aid is part of a larger project of “outside interests attempting to shape a liberation struggle in a way that supports imperial forces” (Smith, 2007, p. 176).

Canada, known for its generosity in providing humanitarian aid to several LCDs around the world, has been the subject of criticism for its use of humanitarian aid to advance its economic and political interests in different parts of the world such as Haiti. Scholar-activists Barry-Shaw and Jay (2012) extensively document literature critiquing “Canada’s foundational myth of international benevolence” that NGOs have come to epitomize (p. 1). Canada’s intentions behind international humanitarian aid, they argue, has multiple functions that they illustrate using various examples documented in the literature. Mike Davis, a prominent Marxist geographer whose work Barry-Shaw and Jay draw upon, notes that local NGOs, with the support of international NGOs, “have proven brilliant at co-opting local leadership as well as hegemonizing the social space traditionally occupied by the Left” (Barry-Shaw and Jay , 2006, p. 76).

In the Philippines, not all CSOs are ‘co-opted’ contrary to Davis’ (2006) thesis. In fact, the country has a dynamic and rich history of CSOs that developed through waves social movements (Africa, 2013; Bourdeau, 2004). While international and local CSOs have been argued to be extensions of imperialist interventions in LCDs, the emergence of ‘progressive’ CSOs in the Philippines have become a significant force in opposition to neoliberalization. These CSOs, many of them conduct disaster relief and recovery projects, have been the targets of counterinsurgency operations of the state.

Africa (2013) traces the history of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and their dual character in relation to social movements in the Philippines. The first community-oriented development NGOs, which were under influence of American Jesuits and anti-communist in character, were set up in Communist-influence areas in Central Luzon and in two other neighbouring regions. These organizations provided basic services such as health and education and to undermine the community engagement of the armed struggle. Despite the efforts to counter the National Democratic (ND) movement through CSOs, the movement gained further strength with the reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines in 1968 (Guerrero, 2005). A party of a ‘new type’ adapted the Mao-Tsetung thought and adapted the strategy of ‘protracted people’s war’ (Africa, 2013) to advance an anti-imperialist, national democratic revolution. The sustained strength of the revolutionary movement, with a more consolidated armed wing called the New People’s Army (NPA), and the alliance of sector-based organizations, the National Democratic Front (NDF) started to destabilize the status quo.

In response to the strengthening of National Democratic forces all over the country, President Marcos declared the country under Martial Law in 1972, and NDF organizations were outlawed. During the Martial Law era, which lasted until 1986, the first formal Internal Security Plan was launched, *Oplan Katatagan* [Operation Strength]. The operations of the

counterinsurgency program in the countryside, where NPA forces are concentrated, intensified (Boudreau, 2004). A subsection of NGOs then emerged, who distinguished themselves from most NGOs that were welfare-oriented and non-activist in nature. Boudreau (2004) characterizes these CSOs as “open and semi-legal anti-dictatorship organizations” (p. 176). While these new NGOs implemented development-oriented and welfare projects, they also organized alongside POs against the fascist Marcos regime. Africa (2013) defines NGOs in reference to non-governmental non-profit orgs regardless of ideological orientation and funding resource. Meanwhile POs are membership-based organizations that advance a common interest along class or sectoral lines. While the NGO sector in the Philippines is relatively large compared to other countries, only a minority of organizations are actively engaged with POs. These left-leaning NGOs and POs situated themselves within a larger struggle of social transformation which “injected an activist dynamism and degree of counter-hegemonic ideology unto generally conservative civil-society and the public in general” (Africa, 2013, p. 120). Marcos then, also targeted state repression towards legal formations and civilian organizers, citing the deaths of several activists during a protest in 1983, as well as the military’s harassment and intimidation of organizations (Boudreau, 2004). Meanwhile, the AFP’s Home Defense Program “carried out literacy projects and livelihood programs” to win over NPA’s mass base (Hernandez, 2006). The 1986 People Power uprising, which ousted Marcos and brought the liberal Aquino government to power, caused a split among the left forces. On one side were people who upheld that NGOs and POs must work towards the advancement of a national democratic revolution and saw the regime change as merely a continuation of a ‘puppet government’ that supports US dominance over Philippine sovereignty. The other side considered the end of the fascist regime as a signal of the nation’s transformation towards democracy, in which they resolved to engage with the government to slowly implement reforms. The post-Marcos government



began to lay the foundation for a framework for “NGOs to engage and participate in, rather than contest the state” (Africa, 2013, p. 121). The global trend towards utilizing NGOs as a force in implementing development programs was reflected in the foreign policies of the UN and international financial institutions. In particular the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank administered aid through funding CSOs that implemented “poverty reduction programs” (Africa, 2013). Since the late 1980s to the present, foreign agencies remain to be the primary funders of Philippine NGOs (Africa, 2013). Subsequent post-Marcos administrations continued to establish frameworks for NGOs to participate in governance at different levels. For example NGOs and POs that are given positions in education, law enforcement, and health boards are offered avenues to participate in governance. Despite the deliberate inclusion of NGOs in governance, ‘left’ NGOs continued to face repression. The end of the open repression era during the Marcos dictatorship translated to an increase of subversive methods such as “dropped, secret and extra-judicial killings” (Africa, 2013, p. 145).

### *Humanitarianism: Perspectives from International and Local NGOs*

The strength of local NGOs, such as LCDE, suggests a much more positive landscape than the available documentation of the post-earthquake recovery in Haiti. LCDE demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of how iNGOs and humanitarian aid have been used to consolidate imperialist presence in the Philippines, such as their complicity in the current counterinsurgency program. LCDE makes it clear to their donors and partner iNGOs that they cannot intervene with LCDE’s vision and mandate, nor conduct projects that are not in line with the priorities of POs. In fact in the past, LCDE has declined funding from OXFAM and USAID. OXFAM asked questions about the ‘rebels’ in the areas that LCDE serves, raising concerns about collusion with military forces to use recovery projects to advance counterinsurgency operations in the region.

However, there are organizations which LCDE has sustained partnerships with, including Hope Bridge Korea, German iNGO Diakonie Katastrophenhelfie, National Alliance for Filipino Concerns (NAFCON), and CARE Canada. CARE Canada is one of the recipients of the Typhoon Haiyan Fund and also a member of the Devonshire Initiative (DI). While its membership to DI first alerted me to suspect that CARE projects easily advance Canadian corporate and military interests, its collaboration with LCDE demonstrates otherwise.

CARE Canada received \$1M from the Typhoon Haiyan Relief Fund for an Emergency Shelter Program for an estimated 4,000 households, between 2013 and 2015. CARE “then decided to partner with LCDE for a Shelter Repair Kit Distribution program in Ormoc City and in the municipality of Albuera” (Artemio, personal interview, 2016). Another project with CARE involved a second local partner, Metro Ormoc Community Multi-Purpose Cooperative (OCCCI). OCCCI was a partner because they had access to a van able to securely transport cash assistance to beneficiaries (Lorena, personal interview, 2016). In sitio Cambabang in Barangay Cogon in Basey, the individual beneficiaries received P3,000 cash towards livelihood assistance. A previously established farmers PO, Cambabang Farmers Association, urged the beneficiaries to give P2000 to the farmers’ association fund. The organization then formed three groups among its members and divided the fund equally amongst the groups, who then determined “viable projects suited to their needs” (Solidargo, 2014). Two groups bought land tractors for land preparation of rice fields, while the third group invested the fund in swine raising (Solidargo, 2014). Lorena recalled how CARE was impressed by the level of organization the residents of sitio Cambabang exemplified (personal communication, 2016). Similarly, the Mabini Farmers Association, based in Barangay Mabini, also pooled their funds to help another sitio start a cooperative store (Solidargo, 2014).

Because LCDE maintains its connection with local POs as the vital force of their recovery work, it is able “to ensure that the joint CARE/LCDE project meets the genuine needs of the communities they serve” (Artemio, personal interview, 2016). LCDE applies a Community-Based Disaster Management (CBDM) approach to its recovery and rehabilitation initiatives, where beneficiaries of the projects are active actors in their recovery from disasters. The focus on development-oriented recovery is also intended as an effective way to reduce social vulnerability to disasters. LCDE in particular, facilitates and helps sustain POs efforts to return to Indigenous practices of production such as communal farming. The fostering of local development has profound consequences to the sociopolitical context of the communities. The strengthening of the local agricultural industry for instance, makes labour migration not the only option to survive. In addition, stronger self-reliant economies also empower citizens to not only rely on large-scale, foreign-owned mining companies to generate jobs. LCDE Executive Director Minet Jerusalem asserts that their organization establishes “unity with iNGOs under the general humanitarian principle” (personal interview, 2016). This very unity with iNGOs that LCDE and its partner POs are able to establish, is what undermines the consolidation of Canadian imperialism in their region in the aftermath of typhoon Haiyan.

### *Conclusion*

Canada's economy is highly dependent on the labour and resources of less developed countries like the Philippines. This dependency is evident from the sheer number of Filipinos working in Canada as temporary foreign workers, live-in caregivers and as skilled workers. Meanwhile, Canada's economic dependence on the extractive industry is not only limited to conducting operations on originally Indigenous territories in Canada. The industry also extends to the Philippines, with Canada as the top foreign country to have the most number of mining tenements and largest mining tenement area in the archipelago. Many of these

companies employ paramilitary groups to enforce land displacement, most notably the case of TVI Pacific in Mount Balabag, Zamboanga del Sur. However, Canadian imperialist expansion is not met without resistance. Indigenous, peasant, and environmental organizations have resisted Canadian mining operations in the country. In Canada and in the Philippines, migrant justice organizations have critiqued not only the precarious conditions of migrant workers, but also the underdevelopment that pushes workers out of their home countries.

In the aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda, Canada was quick in its response to send military personnel as the disaster response team, set up the Typhoon Haiyan Fund and make promises to expedite immigration applications from typhoon-struck areas. The recipients of the Typhoon Haiyan Fund are mostly organizations listed in the Devonshire Initiative, a consortium of mining companies and development iNGOs. This prompted me to assume that the recovery operations of iNGOs in Eastern Visayas were in fact, to undermine the social movements in the region. As discussed, Eastern Visayas is a site of on-going-armed conflict, where counterinsurgency operations materialize in the form of military violence and 'peace and development' programs conducted by NGOs. A few months after the typhoon, Canada and the Philippines signed a MoU legalizing regular joint military training, also signalling Canada's use of disaster relief operations to increase its presence in the Philippines.

The local NGOs, such as LCDE, act as local partners of the iNGOs that received humanitarian aid to conduct disaster relief operations. While some iNGOs partnered with NGOs that aligned themselves with the neoliberal, or at best, counterinsurgency interests of the established state, a few, like CARE Canada, partnered with more community-based NGOs such as LCDE. LCDE, who takes their direction from people's organizations, have demonstrated an awareness of how the humanitarian aid industry is used to undermine communities' agency. LCDE carefully chooses whom to partner with and allows POs to also

exercise agency on how the recovery projects are implemented. By prioritizing local development that builds self-reliance of POs, LCDE's recovery projects ultimately undermines Canadian imperialism. In fact, POs have learned to utilize aid that could potentially result in less reliance on labour migration and foreign-owned mining operations. My fieldwork in Eastern Visayas has revealed that while Canada attempts to advance its political and economic interests through humanitarian aid intervention in the Philippines, NGOs and POs undermine, or at best, subvert Canadian imperialism.

### Chapter 3 - Recovery through Recovery: The spirit of *Bayanihan*

As the most eastern region of the archipelago, Eastern Visayas has welcomed countless tropical typhoons since time immemorial. Typhoon Yolanda was not the first, and certainly not the last, super typhoon to visit the region. It is a site where natural hazards have inevitably shaped its history and culture. Bankoff (2003) considers how Filipino values such as *bayahinan* have emerged as coping mechanisms that constitute what he calls *cultures of disaster*. He defines coping mechanisms as “strategies adopted by communities to reduce the impact of hazard or avoid the occurrence of disasters... and are based on the assumption that what has happened in the past is likely to repeat itself following a familiar pattern” (Bankoff, 2003, p. 166). Although I concur that practices such as *bayanihan* indeed reduce impact of hazards, I do think that the term ‘coping mechanism’ is not enough to capture the depth of term. The word *bayan*, means nation, people or community. *Bayanihan*, or *tiklos* in Waray-waray, is the manifestation of the will to survive collectively with the ever-changing environment. It celebrates life that is beyond anthropocentrism, as it honours the land and waters that nourish the community in all of its forms and processes. For instance, the practice of communal farming connotes how collective approaches to production have been engrained in our culture. The practice of collectively moving a house, also signals the impermanence of settlements, perhaps to adapt to changing environments and social conditions. *Tiklos*, is also a community dance, performed before and in between collectively working in the fields.

The spirit of *bayanihan*, guides this chapter, and is a key finding in this inquiry. Several times throughout my research, *bayanihan* came up through interviews both as the counterinsurgency program, and as a local concept to refer to cooperation people exude during recovery efforts. Limited resources and relentless military violence have made disaster risk reduction work challenging for local NGOs and POs, but they continue to serve their communities in innovative and creative ways. The true spirit of *tiklos* or *bayanihan* manifests

in their application of Community-Based Disaster Response/Management in conducting disaster recovery and rehabilitation work.

This chapter discusses the efforts conducted with POs and NGOs in Eastern Visayas towards not only recovering from Yolanda, but ultimately from the root causes that generated their vulnerability to disasters — chronic poverty and landlessness. Based on their accounts, I do not limit ‘recovery’ in terms of recovery from disasters, but the communities I spent time with also referred to ‘recovery’ as recovery from the impacts of counterinsurgency. The chapter begins with a brief history of the Leyte Development Centre, the local NGO that conducts disaster recovery and rehabilitation work in Eastern Visayas. The rest is divided into seven more sections, under the different, but interrelated, work that POs and NGOs engage in. All of these types of work are part of disaster recovery work, as POs and NGOs have a general understanding that: first, disaster survivors must actively be involved in recovery; second, recovery work is inseparable from addressing the root causes that makes their communities vulnerable to disasters to begin with; and third, that disaster recovery is a long-term process and requires a strong network of support. These principles guide their approaches to their work.

### *Responding to the needs of the region*

*“Mmm may formula kami diyan! Risk with high vulnerability plus low capacity equals disaster. Kung mataas ang vulnerability, tapos low ang capacity to rise, disaster yon. Pero if [yung bagyo] will strike on a community na mataas ang capacity, walang disaster.”* [We have a formula for that! Risk with high vulnerability plus low capacity equals disaster. If the vulnerability is high, and [the community] has a low capacity to rise, that’s a disaster. But if [a typhoon] will strike a community that has high capacity, then there would be no disaster] (Perla, personal communication 2016).

The Leyte Centre for Development (LCDE) uses the Community-Based Disaster Management (CBDM) approach, which is centred in the belief that “communities themselves can reduce the effects of disaster” (Jerusalem, personal communication, 2016). LCDE is a

regional partner of the national organization Citizens' Disaster Response Centre (CDRC). Rosalinda Tablang, the Executive Director of CDRC refers to CBDM as an organization that "raises the capacity of the people and the communities so they themselves to respond whenever they are faced with the danger of disaster. The organization defines vulnerability of communities during disasters are "brought about by their political and economic conditions" (Citizens' Disaster Response Centre, 2008). According to Tablang, having this definition of vulnerability is what makes the work of CDRC, and I add their regional partners as well, in disaster management "different and important" (Citizens' Disaster Response Centre, 2008). Similarly, Community Based Disaster Preparedness, is defined as a series of approaches that "emphasise community self-reliance, raising awareness of vulnerability and the root causes of disasters and developing practical problem solving skills" (Allen, 2006).

Leyte Centre for Development (LCDE) started in 1987 by church workers who are committed to social action. It was initially established in 1986 as the ILAW Resource Centre (IRC), aimed at "conscientizing people for self-reliance and empowerment through research and socio-economic services" (Citizens' Disaster Response Centre, 2014). Jerusalem expressed that it focused on examining the situation of marginalized communities in the province of Leyte (personal interview, 2016). In May 1988, it was registered with the Security and Exchange Commission under the name Leyte Centre for Development and Education, and became an affiliate of Citizens' Disaster Response Network (CDRN), a national formation of disaster response non-governmental development organizations. In response to the needs of the community, LCDE shifted its focus from "development education" to "sustainable economic community programs and disaster response/management" (Citizens' Disaster Response Centre, 2014). Such a shift was the realization of their extensive research and integration with local communities (Jerusalem, personal interview, 2016). The organization dropped 'education' from their name, but



maintained the acronym LCDE. In 1997, LCDE extended their area of service to the entire region to Samar, after it was selected to be the “caretaker” of the Centre for the Relief and Rehabilitation of Samar, also a member of CDRC” (Citizens’ Disaster Response Centre, 2014). In its operations, LCDE services the entire Eastern Visayas region.

### *Recovery from Counterinsurgency*

The “Palparan era” and subsequent counterinsurgency operations in the region have greatly impacted communities in the region as many informants suggest. As one of the poorest areas in the archipelago, the conditions of farmers in the interiors make them vulnerable, and are worsened by the frequency of natural hazards in the area. In this section, I discuss the efforts of community members, with the help of human rights organizations and LCDE, to recover from the impacts of military violence in their areas.

The intense periods of violence against organizers and development workers discouraged many community leaders to sustain their POs. Nanay Lydia, an organizer in the region noted how there were at times, only a few peasants were left with the determination to keep organizing, “*ilan lang kami nagkilos, konti lang kami nagkilos* [few of us were left to act]” (Lydia, personal interview, 2016). She further describes areas that have restarted farmers associations as ‘recovered.’ She regards the help of Katungod (meaning “rights” in Waray) a human rights organization, as instrumental in recovering the area. Katungod hosted educational sessions to residents that included how to properly document human rights violations and basic paralegal training. “*Para hindi matakot*” says Nanay Lydia, “*kung may nagtanong sa inyo sa sundalo, tanungin ninyo rin sila, anong unit kayo? Anong layunin ninyo? Pag tinanong kayo, tanungin mo rin sila.* [If you are asked by soldiers, ask them what unit are you part of? What do you want from us? If they ask you questions, ask them too]” (Lydia, personal interview, 2016). The farmers were also informed that they in fact, are not obliged to answer any questions, that they are allowed to take photos of any military

personnel, that no authority is allowed to enter their homes without a search warrant, and that search warrants are only valid for 12 days.

Katungod encouraged to report any incidences to other surrounding communities, specifically over the local radio station. Katungod upholds the Comprehensive Agreement in Human Rights. “*Ngayon palaban na sila* [now they have a fighting spirit and attitude],” asserts Nanay Lydia. She expresses pride over the organizing work she has done in a recovered area, and reminded me of the sacrifices she has made to be able to do this work, including leaving her child in her hometown. Since military threat and harassment is included as a community risk, Makaryo and Perla explain that the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) and human rights organization Katungod aid in the monitoring and documenting of human rights violations perpetrated by military personnel.

After helping Albuera re-start their farmers organizations, Marya has moved to the city to support the organizing efforts of urban dwellers. Before she arrived in Ormoc, she has assumed that the residents have stopped organizing since the Palparan era of continual EJKs and forced disappearances. But to her surprise, many residents revealed that “they have been secretly organizing POs for years - meeting and recruiting clandestinely” (Marya, personal interview, 2016). In her view, “recovery does not happen from the intentional efforts of outside forces, but the people themselves have the will and capacity to organize themselves” (Marya, personal interview, 2016).

In December 2015, she helped organize market and street vendors, many of them are from fisherfolks communities. Many of the women sell vegetables in the market while their partners are out fishing. Community organizing efforts have been continually met with challenges. For instance, jeepney drivers in Ormoc City who are members of PISTON, a partylist, have been kicked out of the jeepney terminal. They could no longer put PISTON stickers on the jeepneys anymore, or identify openly as members. But Marya said how the

jeepney drivers were still amongst the 4000 people who participated in a protest to demand the government for shelter assistance.

After Yolanda, two other major typhoons also brought damage to Eastern Visayas. People's Surge organically transformed as an alliance of survivors of not only Yolanda, but of all disasters, "natural or man-made" (Tala, personal interview, 2016). Militarization is considered a man-made disaster. Tala illustrates how militarization is more apparent in the areas where communities organize and where there are mining operations. While there is a specific organization for victims of militarization in Eastern Visayas, they are also part of the alliance of People's Surge. For People's Surge "*kung may militarisasyon, mga tao ay hindi nakakapag-hanap buhay* [When there is militarization, the people cannot work] (Tala, personal interview, 2016). Peasants report how the military step on their crops and harass them for information on the NPA. "*Natatakot na, hindi na sila pupunta sa sakahan. Naiiwan ng ilang araw. Calamity talaga sia. Paano makakakain, paano ang pagkain nila kung sirain at susunugin ang mga bahay at anihan?* [They get scared, they do not go to their fields. The crops are left unattended for days. It is definitely a calamity. How will they eat, how will there be food if their homes and crops are destroyed?]" (Tala, personal interview, 2016).

People's Surge was formed in January 25, 2014, when 12,000 people marched in Tacloban City to demand the government to grant the Yolanda survivors P40,000 financial assistance each (Tala, personal interview, 2016; Gabieta, 2014), and the scrapping of the 40-metre No Build Zone policy, later changed to No Dwelling Zone (see Appendix C). People's Surge is a coalition of organizations, alliances and individuals in Eastern Visayas who identify as disaster survivors, first inspired by ABBAYT - Aliyansa ng mga Biktima ng Bayong Yolanda sa Tacloban (Tala, personal interview, 2016). Before Yolanda, Tala was the barangay secretary in an interior town. "*Nasa bahay lang ako dati* [I was just at home before]" (Tala, personal interview, 2016). Her town was out of the 50KM radius covered by

Rehabilitation Assistance Yolanda, so the residents took it upon themselves to organize a campaign to demand that relief be extended to them. "*Totally damaged ang aming pananim*. [Our crops were totally damaged]" (Tala, personal interview, 2016). And so they started expressing their pleas over local radio. The SAGUPA chapter, a farmers' organization in their area joined People's Surge, and organized individuals to also join the alliance as well. Since then, she has been organizing full-time with People's Surge, leaving her 2 children behind with her mother. "*Para sa mga mamamayan* [For the people]" she explains (Tala, personal interview, 2016).

### *Building people's participation in disaster management*

Centering community participation in disaster management, the POs operate as the most basic level of community governance. The Disaster Training conducted by LCDE facilitates the generation of a disaster plan from the knowledge of the residents about the conditions, capacities and hazards that they are vulnerable to. Through that participatory process, the expertise and knowledge is passed on to POs. Established institutions such as LCDE are able to invest in the training and updating of the skills of their staff, most of whom come from peasant families. Through the formation of a Disaster Preparedness Committee, the training builds the organization capacity of the POs to gain agency over disaster management in their communities.

In fact, residents who were first hesitant to join POs eventually express interest when they see how successful the disaster recovery projects are in their area (Solidargo, 2014; Artemio, personal interview, 2016). Lorena recalls how when the *carabaos* [water buffalos] started coming, the residents who were first hesitant to join the POs said, "*Isali ninyo na ko diyan!* [Make a member now!]" (Lorena, personal interview, 2016) "*After Yolanda, marami ng gusto magpamiyembro ng mga PO, gaya ng Maguuma nga Nakaiusa sa Albuera* [After

Yolanda, many wanted to be member of POs, like the farmers association in Albuera]” (Marya, personal interview, 2016).

LCDE schedules the 3-day long Disaster Preparedness trainings in-between harvest seasons so the farmers can participate. The PO officers and members are participants of the training themselves. These people form a Disaster Preparedness Committee and take responsibility for disaster management in the community. The training of CBDM is an orientation of the “Philippine situation,” specifically what geographical, political and economic factors make the Philippines prone to disasters. This includes updated information about worsening hazards due to climate change. The second part of the training is a collective identification of hazards and risks in the area, as well as the resources in the community. Then the trainers facilitate the creation of a counter-disaster plan for before, during and after disaster. “[The participants] will identify the risks in their community, and they know the resources, and then they decide what to do” (Makaryo, personal interview, 2016). At the end, the participants consolidate their three distinct maps: the hazard map, the resource map and the area map. They also culminate the training with a ‘disaster community drill’. The draft of the counter-disaster plan is posted in a public place such as the barangay hall to allow the “community to assess the draft” (Makaryo, personal interview, 2016). While not everyone in the community is a PO member, everyone in the area is taken into account in the plan.

There are basic requirements that facilitators suggest to be included in the plan. For example, Perla explains that houses in the seashore are prioritized for evacuation at the event of a typhoon and/or a storm surge. Second, Persons with Disabilities (PWD), pregnant women, elderly and lactating mothers are identified “vulnerable” and therefore to be the first to be evacuated. Part of the counter-disaster plan is for the POs to conduct monthly assessments. Simultaneously, the LCDE also conducts weekly or monthly monitoring of the community that they currently have a project with. The assessments take in the form of a

public meeting with the community. Increase in capacity and self-reliance is evident in the communities where LCDE has conducted trainings, according to informants. Makaryo narrates how many of the evacuation sites assigned by the government are assessed by communities as not safe, such as government buildings, schools, churches, and barangay hall (personal interview, 2016). In Barangay MacArthur, Eastern Samar, the community decided to choose a resident's big concrete house as the evacuation site. "That's the beauty, they know what to do. Even without LCDE, they knew what to do during evacuation" (Perla, personal interview, 2016). One sitio in EV developed a disaster preparedness plan with the support of LCDE. The residents did not follow the government's order to evacuate to the nearest school building. Their assessment was correct. The roof of the school was blown off by Yolanda (Jerusalem, personal interview, 2016). In another sitio in Marabo, the community chose a *kweba* [cave] as their evacuation site as part of their plan. They pre-evaluated the site assigned of the government, which was a school with poor structure. The school sustained significant damage by the strong typhoon winds during typhoon Ruby.

The Disaster Management Training Team gave training to a PO in a barangay in Basey, Samar. "There is a human disaster in their community," describes Makaryo (personal interview, 2016). AFP is illegally camping inside the village, which is prohibited under the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights & International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL). In 2015, the New People's Army ambushed the military camp at 5AM:

"The members of the community, especially the children, they are still sleeping. And some of their families are in the farm. Some of the people in the community were still in the house to attend their children... They were organized. They have a warning committee. And she's a woman. And that woman, she was running around the community informing them that they have to make it to the plaza. They have to evacuate to the other barangay. If they individually evacuate, they might be targeted by military. Instead of going to the to the evacuation area one by one, they did it in groups. It is very dangerous to evacuate alone, because the military might think, 'oh you're an NPA...' The evacuation site... the other barangay was just walking distance." (Makaryo, personal interview, 2016)

### *People are empowered as active actors towards recovery*

In areas that have re-initiated POs, the farmers return to collective projects to improve local economies and build sustainable livelihoods. The peasants in Carigara reformed their farmers' association. Nanay Lydia reported that they have reintroduced the traditional practice called *tiklos*, where farmers "*ay tumutulong sa pag-aararo at pagtatanim* [help in ploughing and planting] each other's farms. LCDE accepts funding for projects, or designs the projects themselves, that centre the people's participation in recovery. Paired with the capacity-building trainings to POs, community-based efforts also allow POs to not be passive recipients of NGO and iNGO-funded projects implemented in their areas.

CARE funded, in partnership with LCDE, a shelter repair kit assistance program in January 2014. Artemio was hired to implement that project. Phase 1: Distributed shelter repair kits that gave them tools to repair their house and cash assistance worth P3000 to purchase wood for four months. There were two roving teams, composed of a mobilizer and two carpenters, to visit all Phase 1 beneficiaries' houses. The teams checked if the structures complied with the "Build Back Safer" standards. "*Sila na magpapantay ng bahay mismo*, [They will fix the alignment of the house themselves]" shared Artemio. Phase 2 started in June 2014, where they distributed P5000 cash assistance to build roof that was only available to half the number of beneficiaries from Phase 1. Artemio noted that they heard from other community residents that other people sold their shelter repair kits. LCDE conducted a house-to-house survey to evaluate if the shelter assistance kit was utilized properly.

Artemio, a graduate of BS Animal Science, now works on another project with EVRAP. He was not involved in development work before he joined the CARE project nor had an educational background directly related to disaster management. But Lorena explained how their workers come from various educational and professional backgrounds,

and someone like Artemio with an Animal Science degree is able to build communities' capacity towards livestock rearing (personal interview, 2016).

Another project with CARE, this time involved a second local partner, Metro Ormoc Community Multi-Purpose Cooperative (OCCCI). OCCCI was a partner because they had the security van to be able to securely transport cash assistance to beneficiaries. In sitio Cambabang in Barangay Cogon in Basey, the individual beneficiaries received P3,000 cash towards livelihood assistance. A previously established farmers PO, Cambabang Farmers Association, urged the beneficiaries to give P2000 to the organization's fund. The organization then formed three groups among its members and divided the fund equally amongst the groups, who then decided amongst themselves "viable projects suited to their needs" (Solidargo, 2014). Two groups bought land tractors for land preparation of rice fields, while the third group invested the fund in swine raising (Solidargo, 2014). Lorena recalled how CARE was impressed by the level of organization the residents of sitio Cambabang exemplified (personal communication, 2016). Similarly, the Mabini Farmers Association, based in Barangay Mabini, also pooled their funds to help another sitio start a cooperative store (Solidargo, 2014).

EVRAP also conducted a swine dispersal project where they distributed 10 piglets to Vigan Farmers Association, a local peasant organization. Five recipients, picked from a *bunután* [draw], received two piglets that they were required to rear and pass on two offspring to another association member. The NGOs also assisted in the formation of cooperative stores in various sitios, where goods are sold at a price cheaper than privately-owned stores. While membership is required to benefit the profits from the coop store, anyone can buy from the store (Lorena, personal interview, 2016). The existence of cooperative stores ensures that the prices of the merchandise are affordable post-typhoon, when commercial stores increase their prices to exploit low supply and high demand



(Solidargo, 2014). In a sitio in Eastern Samar, a transportation cooperative as granted one motorboat. The association itself owns the motorboat collectively (Artemio, personal communication, 2016).

Continued support is also extended even after the projects are completed. “Yung mga pinagkakaitaan dati na PO, binabalikan lang namin. [The POs that we worked with before, we return to them]” (Artemio, personal interview, 2016). After Disaster Preparedness Workshops, the facilitators also maintain communication with the POs (Makaryo, personal interview, 2016).

### *Community as active actors in social transformation*

The expansive network of existing multi sectoral organizations made the formation of People's Surge, an alliance of Yolanda disaster survivors, possible. "*Mga peasant, kabataan, fisherfolk, taong simbahan, lahat ng mga organisasyon na into sama-sama, kahit mga NGOs* [The peasants, youth, fisherfolk, church clergy, all organizations joined forces, even NGOs]" (Tala, personal interview, 2016). In February to March 2015, Tala was one of the delegates that went "*para kalampagin* [to shake up]" Manila (Tala, personal interview, 2016). They had three demands: first, for the government to grant P40K immediate cash relief; second, to scrap the NBZ policy; and third, to demand that relief efforts must be sustained and reverse the declaration of "State of Rehabilitation" in Eastern Visayas. Disaster survivors presented these demands to Malacanang and various government agencies (see Appendix F). The contingent was repeatedly refused by DSWD Secretary Dinky Soliman:

*“Gusto daw niya i-meet yung mga biktima. Ayaw pa niya kami paniwalaan, tinulak nanaman sia ng mga taga dito [sa Tacloban]. Gumastos kami para*

*makapunta duon. E andun kami, para kami ang makipag-usap. Sinalubong sila ng protesta dito! So pagbalik nila sa Manila, napilitan na sila kausapin kami.*

[She said she wanted to meet with the victims. She would not believe us, but the people here [in Tacloban] pushed them. We spent money to be there [in Manila]. We are there to have a dialogue. They were met with a protest here. So when they went back to Manila, they were forced to talk to us.]” (Tala, personal interview, 2016).

The legitimacy of People’s Surge as representatives of Yolanda survivors was questioned by Soliman, which I argue is derived from the same logic where the practice of red-tagging also stems from. The condemnation of POs and NGOs as associated with the NPA not only makes civilians targets of military violence, but ultimately undermines their work. The logic of ‘red-tagging’ sets up a convenient narrative for the AFP that organizers and development workers have hidden agendas behind the work that they are engaged in. Specifically, Soliman questioning Tala’s legitimacy as a Yolanda survivor as aims to discredit her identity as a disaster survivor, and disregards the fact that disaster survivors themselves have the will and capacity to organize themselves.

Two other PO organizers, Marya and Nanay Lydia themselves come from the ranks of the peasant class and gained experience out of their own organizing efforts. Despite the long history of extrajudicial killings and harassment in Eastern Visayas, they both continue to volunteer to share those skills and knowledge with neighbouring communities. Organizers dedicate their lives to doing this work without compensation while facing many risks.

LCDE Executive Director Minnette Jerusalem was in Manila at the time of Yolanda, where she and her colleagues at Citizen Disaster Response Centre worked double time to submit funding proposals to iNGOs as quickly as possible. Jerusalem, the Executive Director of LCDE since 2000, has been working in and with different POs and NGOs for the past 36 years (personal interview, 2016). Jerusalem arrived in Leyte a few days after Yolanda, and with her were representatives and volunteers from various iNGOs. She recalls how LCDE’s “knowledge of people and mastery of the community were key factors” in strengthening

partnerships with iNGOs in immediate post-Yolanda emergency response (Jerusalem, personal interview, 2016).

LCDE was nationally recognized in 2007 as the “Most outstanding NGO in Aid and Disaster Response,” winning against World Vision. LCDE is also a member of National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) committees, Department of Services and Welfare Development (DSWD) and the National Anti-Poverty Commission. While LCDE continues to criticize the government for its inadequacy in addressing the conditions that increase the regions’ vulnerability to disasters, Jerusalem asserts that they maintain a good relationship with both the local and national government (personal interview, 2016). In many ways LCDE has even filled the role of LGUs. LCDE has noted that on a few occasions, the LGUs takes credit for what NGOs like LCDE have accomplished (Makaryo and Rosaryo, personal interviews, 2016). As I’ve discussed in the previous chapter, LCDE’s relationship with the POs is the vital force of their disaster recovery work.

Following LCDE and also CDRC’s approach in deepening cooperation between local NGO’s, iNGOs and governments reveals the role NGOs can play in improving governance in relation to recovery work. First, LCDE collaborates with POs that respect and recognize their organization and autonomy. Second, LCDE acts as the institutional bridge between iNGOs and local communities. It acts as a platform for iNGOs to take direction from local POs. Third, LCDE acts as an institutional bridge between local governments and its citizens. It acts as a platform for citizens to influence policies and resource allocation, as well as a platform for LGUs to remain accountable to its citizens.

### *Empowering POs as legitimate organs of governance*

The Leyte Centre for Development owes its stability over the years from its ability to adapt and respond to the ever changing needs of the communities it serves. As an institution

that has the organizational capacity to relate to, and coordinate with various funding bodies, LCDE facilitates the full participation of POs, mostly made of farmers associations, in disaster management projects.

The collaboration with POs can begin even during the proposal stages. LCDE, in direct consultation with the POs, prepare the proposals, design the project and propose a budget plan. “LCDE will help, but the idea will come from the POs.. The design, their needs. They would say, ‘for our organization, we need rice mills’” (Lorena, personal interview, 2016). In some cases, the PO itself will write the proposal and submit it directly to the funders. LCDE would function as a resource and support to help the PO implement their project successfully. “*Yung purpose namin dito para sila mismo yung magmaneho. [Our purpose here is for the POs to take the driver’s seat]*” (Artemio, personal communication, 2016). Lorena and Artemio outline the work that is done during the proposal stage:

**Lorena:** “First we do base-line data gathering. Yung community, we ask them what they need. And then from those data, that's the time we make the proposal. We also do canvassing for the motorboat, how much is the machine, how much is paggawa ng bangka. And even diba? The project that we're doing right now, we also do base-line data gathering. In the project area, we ask the people, even if its a farming community, the needs of the farmers vary place to place. They see we need like this like that. That's what we really reflect on the proposal”

**Artemio:** “*Kunwari yung ano kailangan ng POs, kung ano kailangan nila, sinasubmit namin sa opisina. Tapos pinag-uusapan namin kung anong mas magandang strategy o quality na binibigay namin sa PO. Tapos balik kami sa community tapos yun, ang PO naman mismo ang kwan, mag-approve na eto yung ibibigay namin sa inyo. So anong may mga troubleshoot sa farming tools, kami yung mismong tutulong sa kanila. Kung may mga livestock na ibibigay, kami rin ung mag-aaassist. Parang give and take ba.*”

[For example, what the POs need, we [in Eastern Visayas Rural Assistance Program] submit [the list] to the office. And then we discuss which strategies and what quality of work we can provide the POs. We report the project we come up with back to the PO, and the POs will approve themselves what we present to them. So if there is anything to troubleshoot with farming tools, we will be the ones who will support them. If there is livestock donated to them, we will also assist them. It’s like give and take]” (Artemio, personal communication, 2016).

LCDE and EVRAP do not only provide institutional support to POs, but also encourage and strengthen POs themselves. “*Ang purpose ng EVRAP to pagkakaiisa ng mga tao, hindi mag-kanya kanya [The purpose of EVRAP is to unite people, and [for them] not to*

live their lives individually],” explained by Artemio (personal interview, 2016). The NGOs seek the permission of the barangay captain to call for an assembly in a public area such as the barangay hall. There, they introduce EVRAP and LCDE, and explain that they could potentially support a project in the barangay. During the assembly, they try to document the needs are in the community and gauge their interest. In many cases, pre-existing POs are present in these assemblies. If there are no POs in the barangay, EVRAP encourages them to form one, such as farmers associations.

### *Providing institutional support to facilitate between POs and iNGOs*

International NGOs were one of the largest contributors of emergency funding used in relief and rehabilitation post-Yolanda. However, the trend towards greater reliance of CSOs and NGOs to administer public services resulted in the increase of administrative bureaucracy that NGOs have to keep up with. Jerusalem recalls the relative ease for NGOs to operate in the 1980s, when reporting was much more lenient (personal interview, 2016). Nowadays, donors require not only detailed proposals, but also paperwork for reporting purposes. Donor agencies require extensive documentation of activities and detailed accounting of expenses incurred during the implementation of a project. To prepare such reports can only be accomplished by having dedicated and skilled staff. The expertise to keep up with the demands of the administrative labour required from NGOs one of the reasons that make NGOs such as LCDE valuable to POs, even if the POs themselves can apply for the funding directly.

LCDE’s goal is to “maximize iNGO money to the poorest communities without compromising our principles” (Jerusalem, personal interview, 2016). However, the organization makes it clear that their donors and partner iNGOs cannot intervene with their vision mission and mandate. LCDE remains vigilant to the contradictory roles that iNGOs

and NGOs play in the civil society. Varying roles of NGOs are demonstrated in the history of different political and ideological lines that CSOs in the Philippine emerged from, as discussed in earlier chapters. Cognizant of the contradictions in the humanitarian aid industry and iNGOs, Jerusalem asserts that LCDE has “unity with iNGO’s under the general humanitarian principle” (personal interview, 2016). One example is LCDE’s collaboration with CARE International. CARE’s work with LCDE as a local partner begins with the conceptualization of the project itself — they discuss together, share feedback and agree on the project together. As local partners, LCDE and EVRAP are the ones that troubleshoot any problems that may arise during project implementation, as opposed to the funding iNGO.

Despite LCDE’s commitment to utilize all available resources for community-based work, they still maintain strict criteria as to which projects to take on and which organizations to collaborate with. LCDE has declined funding offers from OXFAM and USAID. They recalled how OXFAM USA “kept asking” LCDE staff about “rebels,” which made them uneasy given the longstanding impacts of the counterinsurgency program in the region. Meanwhile, USAID offered funding to conduct a reproductive health program, which entailed selling contraceptives to target communities. LCDE declined the offer as the program does not correspond with their priorities. Making contraceptives available for purchase, for instance, was not identified as an immediate nor long-term need of the communities with regards to reducing disaster risk.

### *Strengthening partnerships between government and CSOs*

Community-based disaster management advocates holistic approaches to disaster risk reduction and recognize the importance of cooperation between CSOs and government units. Such partnerships are based on the assumption that while CSOs may have the will to innovate disaster management strategies, they more often than not, lack the capacity and resources. On

the other hand, government agencies have capacity and resources, and can be prompted to innovate through enough community pressure (Allen, 2006, p. 94). While collaborations can mimic neoliberal strategies of “multi-stakeholder alliances or civil society–government partnership arrangements,” Allen (2006) further discusses how such partnerships may serve as a deflection from the government to take responsibility over recovery work, and in turn, also increase regulation of CSOs (p. 94). But on the other hand, such collaborative partnerships may actually provide the platform to maximize resources to achieve the ‘reversal’ of vulnerabilities. “CDBP institutions are particularly vulnerable to cooption by external actors where initiatives have focused on working with single, isolated communities. Therefore, formal incorporation into a wider network of CDBP institutions may help to dissipate clientelistic ties and promote more effective civil society mobilisation.” (Allen, 2006, p. 95). One example of these formalized network of institutions using the community-based approach is the Asian-Pacific Alliance for Disaster Management (A-PAD).

(A-PAD) Philippines, a national formation that outlines how “resources can be shared” amongst NGOs, private companies and the government in emergency disaster response, was established in March 3, 2016 (Citizens’ Disaster Response Centre, 2016). CDRC’s membership to A-PAD demonstrates how institutions can utilize partnerships to actually create innovation in disaster management practices. A-PAD also presents a more nuanced understanding on how NGOs like CDRC and LCDE can position themselves in age of increasing reliance on private-public partnerships (PPP) in providing basic services to society. In fact, CDRC was one of the two founding organizations of A-PAD, along with Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF), the country’s “major private sector vehicle for disaster management” (Citizens’ Disaster Response Centre, 2016). CDRC (2016) called A-PAD a “tripartite collaboration on disaster management”, maximizing their role in

disaster management in the Philippines. CDRC's membership in A-PAD ensures that it can play as a key facilitator in disaster management efforts.

Since the recent inception of A-PAD Philippines, an MoU has been signed amongst LGU officials, CDRC, academic institutions, media groups and businesses that "formalized an agreement to work together for disaster risk reduction and emergency response" in the Bicol region, north of Eastern Visayas (Stakeholders sign MOU on disaster management, n.d.). The MoU reveals the nature of CDRC as a bridge in linking up stakeholder in DRR work, as well as illustrates its potential in improving DRR in Eastern Visayas if a similar MoU is signed in the region.

"Each party also defined its specific role in the platform. The Metro Naga Development Council (MNDC), for instance, will mainstream policies, plans, and advocates to the LGUs, while the City Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office (CDRRMO) will harmonize policies, plans, and programs and come up with a synchronized mechanism within Metro Naga. Furthermore, the Metro Naga Chamber of Commerce and Industry will work on the business continuity plan of small and medium enterprises and ensure price stabilization during disaster. The media group, on the other hand, vowed to provide timely information and disaster warning before and during an emergency. The academe and the CSOs, for their part, agreed to focus on trainings, awareness raising, and research." (Stakeholders sign MOU on disaster management, n.d.).

CDRC's mandate and unique approach is manifested in the MoU. First, it was able to clearly define the specific roles of each stakeholder. The clarity and consolidation of tasks in one is discussed in Chapter 2. In fact, it highlights the stability of local economies as crucial in effective Disaster Recovery. Third, the eagerness of the LGU in forging a formal relationship with CDRC emphasizes the fact that it is in the best interest of the government to utilize the expertise of CDRC. The article in the CDRC website refers the partnership "drawn from the *bayanihan* spirit" (CDRC, 2016). CDRC shows effectiveness in acting as a bridge not just between LGUs and POs, but also between LGU and the private sector.

Government units and iNGOs tend to be reactive to disasters, notes Jerusalem (personal interview, 2016). But LCDE is hopeful that A-PAD can encourage the government



and the private sector to adapt CBDM approach and methods in disaster management, specifically addressing the root causes of vulnerabilities (Jerusalem, personal interview, 2016). In defining LCDE's relationship with the private sector, Jerusalem asserts, "we criticize them, but we seek unity with them in common issues" (Jerusalem, personal interview, 2016). A-PAD then sets a framework for NGOs like CDRC and LCDE to define their "unity" with private sector and LGUs in DRR work. In particular, A-PAD has given LCDE an opportunity to work with the small and medium business in EV to pre-position imperishable goods to be ready to be released in case of a major natural hazard. Jerusalem gave the example of a large-scale rice producer who has pledged rice donations, and another business committed delivery trucks to be used for relief delivery to communities even before typhoon hits.

The Disaster Preparedness Training Team of LCDE not only conducts trainings to POs, but also to LGUs. LCDE helped an LGU in the province of Samar form a Disaster Risk Reduction Committee. Makaryo narrated how some municipalities have a Barangay Action Risk Committee in place, but were not functional because of lack of knowledge and training.

**Makaryo:** *We invite them to join or participate in our training.*

**Kim:** *How does that go?*

**Perla:** *They just thank us! They are very grateful that we do the first move.*

**Makaryo:** *Especially in the upland communities*

**Rosaryo:** *The members of the POs are [in many occasions] members of the barangay council. So they are part of the LGU... We also encourage the PO to coordinate with the LGU. It is their primary resource. We [LCDE] are only there for mostly support.*

The barangay chairman is invited to the committee meetings, and the committee members actually play a role in governance. LCDE regards CBDM as also involving higher government units like the municipal government and other government agencies. "We coordinate with them in all our activities," Rosaryo explains (Rosaryo, personal interview, 2016).

Overall, given the continuing conflict between CPP-NPA-NDF and the GRP, the tendency for government units is to not recognize the legitimacy of POs as organs of local governance. The ‘red-tagging’ of PO organizers that turn them into targets of EJKs and military harassment, speak to how the counterinsurgency program created a climate of mistrust amongst stakeholders that should otherwise work together towards effective disaster risk reduction. However, the reality of how POs operate amidst the armed conflict demonstrates a degree of nuance in the ways local governance is organized in various areas. In some instances, the difference between barangay leadership and POs are blurry. As Rosaryo points out, some of the PO members sit on the barangay council. The Disaster Plan created by the PO and executed by the Disaster Preparedness Committee, applies to all residents of the barangay, whether or not they are members of the PO. Furthermore, as discussed in earlier chapters, the POs have allowed disaster survivors to be active recipients of recovery projects, allowing them to make collective decisions over how to manage resources, and have the opportunity to apply for funding directly from iNGOs.

The close partnership between POs and NGOs, like LCDE and EVRAP, fosters the building of organization capacity of the populations that are most vulnerable to disasters. As Artemio, an EVRAP staff emphasized, “*ang purpose ng EVRAP to pagkakaisa ng mga tao, hindi mag-kanya kanya* [The purpose of EVRAP is to unite people, and [for them] not to live their lives individually]” (Artemio, personal interview, 2016). In the spirit of *bayanihan*, the full participation of people is central to disaster risk reduction, as dominant approaches have proved to be ineffective, or worse, further enhancing people’s vulnerabilities to disaster.

POs and NGOs in Eastern Visayas continue to conduct recovery work despite the risk the hazards of militarization and super typhoons. But even more notable is the fact that they conduct work to recover not only what was lost before Yolanda, but ultimately take back what was rightfully theirs. Centuries of colonization, feudal relations, militarization, and poor

governance have prohibited communities to engage in sustainable sources of livelihood. NGOs in this context functions as institutions that facilitate the creation of a web of network that enable a multi-sectoral approach to disaster recovery and rehabilitation. Drawing from the experiences of POs and NGOs in Eastern Visayas, it is apparent that disaster risk reduction, vis-à-vis societal change does not happen overnight. It is a long, painstaking process, which require a revival of our indigenous ways of living while creative adapting to the rapidly changing political and physical worlds we live in.

### *Conclusion*

As shown in this chapter, all of the aforementioned types of work are part of disaster recovery work that stem from a few basic principles of LCDE and EVRAP: first, disaster survivors must actively be involved in recovery; second, that recovery work is inseparable from addressing the root causes that makes their communities vulnerable to disasters; and third, disaster recovery is a long-term process and requires a strong network of support from local and international actors. The very principles that mirror the spirit of *bayanihan/tiklos*, guide the approaches to LCDE and EVRAP's work.

Drawing on interviews, community accounts and secondary sources, I discussed how local actors take charge over their own recovery from the Yolanda disaster. POs and NGOs, as political entities, demonstrate a deep understanding of the political and economic conditions that increase their vulnerabilities to natural hazards such as typhoons. For instance, farmers associations employ a basic understanding that their poverty is a result of landlessness and the persistence of feudal relations, thus recovery initiatives entail return to communal farming practices. In the larger political scale, farmer associations and other organizations from fishing communities, urban dwellers and churches, formed an alliance to put direct pressure on the national government to improve recovery efforts. Through the unity of POs and NGOs, local communities in Eastern Visayas exercise agency over their own

recovery from disasters, as well as take charge of their local development. It is through POs and NGOs understanding of disasters, their ability to navigate the contradictions in the humanitarian aid industry, and their holistic approaches to disaster recovery, that prioritizes local development and self-empowerment, that contributes to the region's capacity to resist the consolidation of Canadian imperialism in their region.

## Conclusion

When Typhoon Yolanda struck the Philippines, the LCDE office was completely damaged. Eight of the LCDE staff members were staying in the office at that time. Outside of interviews, while talking over dinner, or in car rides, the staff would recall their experiences as survivors of Typhoon Yolanda. They described vivid images of how it was difficult to even walk without the wind knocking them off balance, how they sought refuge in a small structure while holding the roof to keep it from being blown away, and how they watched a newborn cry from a neighbour's rooftop. Jerusalem recalled how when she arrived in Palo, she drove past the office because it was beyond recognition. But the LCDE staff also remembered how their former project beneficiaries visited their office to check if they were still alive. Based on their account: "peasant leaders came to help, it was their way to pay us back," (Jerusalem, personal interview, 2016).

Most of the iNGOs have packed up and left. What remains are the huge letters that spelled USAID on convenient store signs, OXFAM on water tanks, UNICEF tarpaulins, European Union tents. I heard one of the NGO workers say, "*palakihan sila ng mga sign* [they tried to outcompete each other over the size of their signs]." The counterinsurgency program remains to be in effect. The number of AFP personnel on the roads of Leyte at night was astounding, as Yolanda survivors slept in cramped temporary shelters. POs express anxiety over the potential restoration of the former US base in Guiuan, an island south of Samar, however, the strengthening resolution of POs and NGO workers to rebuild their lives prevail, exuding the true spirit of *bayanihan*.

Initially, I traced how the Canadian government extended support in post-Yolanda disaster recovery and rehabilitation in the Philippines that signalled attempts to consolidate its imperialist presence in the country. The geohistorical connections between the two countries are multi-pronged and shaped by a triadic relation: first, the Philippines as the top

source of immigrants in Canada since 2014; second, Canadian companies, both fully or partly-owned, place Canada as the top country with most mining tenements and the largest tenement area; third, the two countries' military forces have a formalized MoU on joint military training. The first stage of my research exposed Canada's interest in the counterinsurgency programs, which on paper, are aimed at resolving the armed conflict between the established state, the Republic of the Philippines and the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), the New People's Army (NPA) and the National Democratic Front (NDF). Canada, in fact, has listed CPP-NPA as a 'foreign terrorist organization' since 2002. The most recent counterinsurgency plan, *Oplan Bayanihan*, utilizes NGOs to conduct programs that can undermine support for the armed struggle. This approach complements the Devonshire Initiative (DI), a consortium between mining companies and iNGOs. DI has been criticized by anti-mining groups as facilitating the use of iNGOs as the 'trojan horse of neoliberalism,' arguing that the iNGOs are used by the resource extractive industry to promote neoliberal approaches to development. In Eastern Visayas, civilians have also been targets of the counterinsurgency program, including people involved in post-Yolanda disaster recovery efforts. Jefferson Custodio, a volunteer of LCDE, was a victim of extrajudicial killings in 2004.

Eastern Visayas, the site of this research, was a region with a strong history of local organizing that manifested through the establishment of local NGOs, such as LCDE and EVRAP, and the proliferation of POs, especially amongst peasants in the interiors. While the first stage of the research revealed the various measures the Canadian public and private sectors have put in place that could potentially advance their interests in the region through disaster recovery and rehabilitation efforts, communities have found ways to resist, or even subvert Canadian imperialism in their region. As discussed in Chapter 2, POs actively organize to resist the expansion of mining corporations in their area. And as articulated in

both Chapter 2 and 3, the strong unity between local NGOs and POs demonstrate a basic understanding of how the humanitarian aid industry could be used to undermine their own communities' interests. As a result, LCDE exercises prudence when selecting which iNGOs to partner with, specifically only collaborating with ones that respect their autonomy and whose projects complement the priorities of the POs they work with.

Drawing from interviews, community accounts and secondary sources, I examined how local actors take charge of their own recovery from the Yolanda disaster. POs and NGOs, as political entities, demonstrate a deep understanding of the political and economic conditions that increase their vulnerabilities to natural hazards such as typhoons. For instance, farmers associations employ a basic understanding that their poverty is a result of landlessness and the persistence of feudal relations, thus recovery initiatives entail return to communal farming practices. In the larger political scale, farmers' associations and other organizations from fishing communities, urban dwellers and churches, formed an alliance to put direct pressure on the national government to improve recovery efforts.

Through the unity of POs and NGOs, local communities in Eastern Visayas exercise agency over their own recovery from disasters, as well as take charge of their local development. It is through POs and NGOs understanding of disasters, their ability to navigate the contradictions in the humanitarian aid industry, and their holistic approaches to disaster recovery, that prioritizes local development and self-empowerment, that contributes to the region's capacity to resist the consolidation of Canadian imperialism in their region.

### *Peace negotiations between GRP and CPP-NPA-NDF*

The summer of El Nino in the Philippines was also the summer of campaigning for the national elections. Rodrigo Duterte, the mayor of Davao City, was considered the 'maverick.' Once a student of Jose Maria Sison, one of the founding members of CPP, his tenure as a mayor earned him the label 'the Punisher,' due to his controversial approaches to

curb drug trafficking in the city. He ran under the platform of unity — through national industrialization, fighting graft and corruption, and the resumption of peace talks and upholding peace agreements with the CPP-NPA-NDF, the Moro National Liberation Front and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. A staunch nationalist and critic of US imperialist interventions in the Middle East, he won the devotion of many marginalized sectors who once thought that the elections were only an exercise of democracy for the rich. When I was in the Philippines, masses of people campaigned for Duterte out of their own initiative, printing posters, banners and flyers out of their own pockets. He won by a landslide victory on May 10, 2016. Since then, he has offered few seats on the Cabinet to the NDF, including the secretary position for the Department of Agrarian Reform.

The resumption of the peace negotiations could signal the end of the counterinsurgency programs and the beginning of systematic changes in the Philippines. During the Ramos presidency from 1992 to 1998, the National Unification Commission's 'Six Paths to Peace' was accepted, and remains to be the framework of the peace process. The "pursuit of social, economic, and political reforms aimed at addressing the root causes of armed struggle and social unrest" as listed as the first path (Ferrer, 2014, p. 83). However, the National Unification Commission recommendations have not materialized since the breakdown of the peace talks after 2002. CPP-NPA is again listed amongst the 58 "US Government Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations" in the most recent "Country Reports on Terrorism 2015." The implications of the 'global war on terror' to the negotiations remain to be one of the major concerns of peace advocates in the Philippines.

But what do the peace talks have to do with disaster recovery in Eastern Visayas? As discussed in detail in Chapter 1, the counterinsurgency program, aimed to defeat the CPP-NPA-NDF forces, have resulted instead in the increase of military violence directed at POs and NGOs. These have greatly impacted the work of POs and NGOs in Eastern Visayas to



properly carry out effective and timely disaster response and recovery projects. The end of the counterinsurgency programs could potentially ease the militarization of the region, and stop the tragedy of civilians as collateral damage of longest-running insurgency in Asia.

At the same time, the systemic economic and social reforms as possible outcomes of the peace negotiations can also have profound impacts on Eastern Visayas. Landlessness and poverty that has plagued the majority of the peasant population, compounded by their vulnerability to typhoons, have made EV now the poorest region in the Philippines. The return of land to peasants is one of the economic reforms on the peace negotiations table. If fulfilled, the efforts of peasant organizations of *balik-uma*, which is the act of reclaiming land from landlords, and *tiklos*, a form of mutual labour exchange in communal farming, could be further supported. The development of local economies result in an increase in self-reliance. And following the logic of Community-based Disaster Management employed by LCDE and EVRAP, economic reforms in the region will inevitably increase the communities' capacity to mitigate the impacts of future hazards, natural or human-induced.

### *Bayanihan through the international humanitarian aid industry*

Despite Yolanda being widely recognized as a product of climate change, the voice of Yolanda survivors were not present in the 2015 UN Climate Change Conference, or COP21. “*Inis na inis kami sa talks sa Paris* [We are angered by the talks in Paris],” shares Tala (personal interview, 2016). She emphasizes that capping the greenhouse emissions of developing countries like the Philippines, who contribute only a fraction of global emissions, will not prevent more super typhoons such as Yolanda from occurring. In fact, she argues “that developed and more industrialized countries should have a stronger commitment to reduce greenhouse emissions. The emission restriction on countries like the Philippines simply acts as another barrier towards industrialization.”

*“Kung hindi industrialized ang bansa, prone yuon sa disaster. Ang disaster nandyan dahil sa kahirapan. Hindi gawa ng diyos. Kaya ang ano natin diyan ay hayaang umunlad ang Pilipinas at ang mamamayang Pilipino, para naman sa panahon ng kalamidad ay kayang-kaya natin harapin ang mga apektado. Yung mga apektado yung mga vulnerable ay yung mga mahihirap... [If a country is not industrialized, that country is prone to disasters. Disasters are caused by poverty. It is not an act of god. What we want is for the development of the Philippines and its citizens, so at the times of calamity, we are able to support the ones affected]”* (Tala, personal interview, 2016).

Several critical scholars and activists have warned us of the role of NGOs, international and humanitarian aid in undermining liberation struggles (Davis 2006; Smith, 2007; Barry-Shaw and Jay, 2012). Yet the co-optation has never been a completed project. Liberation movements have also proven to be adaptable to the most dangerous of strategies of neoliberalism. In the case of NGOs involved in disaster recovery and rehabilitation in the Philippines, the conditions of the people compel them to not only employ neoliberal approaches to recovery. Ultimately, Yolanda was a harsh reminder that without investing in the long-term work of social transformation, marginalized sectors of the Philippines will remain to be the most vulnerable to intensifying natural hazards caused by climate change.

Exemplifying the true spirit of *bayanihan*, as demonstrated in this paper, local NGOs in Eastern Visayas, have learned to collaborate and create strong alliances with iNGOs and foreign donors to support their community-based disaster management efforts. Centring the active participation of POs, the experience of EV demonstrate that a comprehensive approach to disaster risk reduction is necessary, if not, the only viable solution. This enriches current theorizing and extends the body of work on disaster and recovery. The paper also calls for a sense of collective consciousness. Not only is it our collective responsibility to mitigate the effects of worsening conditions brought about by climate change, we also have a task to recover the planet from centuries of plunder and exploitation. Such is a duty we have to fulfil if the lives of future generations matter to all of us.

*Padayon!*

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## Appendix B

Eastern Visayas is mostly agricultural land. Here is a photo of the interior of Leyte province, taken from a tricycle.



(Source: Abis, 2016)

## Appendix C

Despite the mandated “No Dwelling Zone,” fishing communities still returned to their homes by the shore.



(Source: Abis, 2016)

## Appendix D

BALSA Mindanao, a grassroots disaster response organization from Mindanao, donated this post-harvest tool to Yolanda survivors

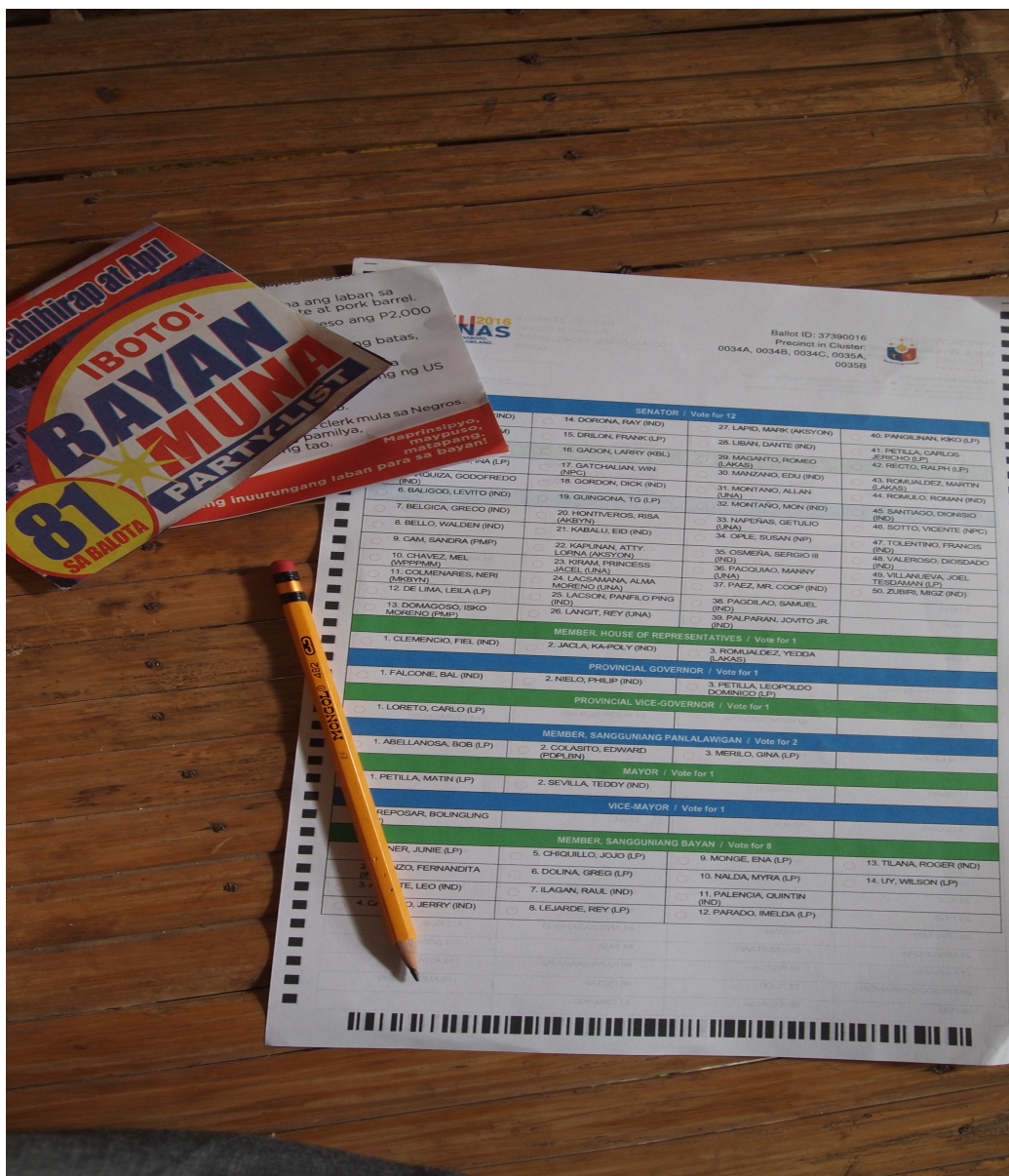


(Source: Abis, 2016)



# Appendix E

Materials from the People's Surge Voters Education.



(Source: Abis, 2016)

## Appendix F

People's Surge and other POs communicate their demands through street mobilizations. This photo was taken during the solidarity rally for Kidapawan farmers, on April 8, 2016.



(Source: Abis, 2016)

## **Appendix G**

### **List of Formal Interviews**

M. Jerusalem, Executive Director of LCDE, 6 April 2016

Tala, member of People's Surge, 7 April 2016

Lydia, peasant organizer, 8 April 2016

Marya, peasant organizer, 9 April 2016

Artemio, EVRAP staff, 11 April 2016

Lorena, LCDE staff, 11 April 2016

Makaryo, LCDE staff, 11 April 2016

Perla, LCDE staff, 11 April 2016