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DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND LOCAL OWNERSHIP

The effect of political competition, patronage and armed conflict on the local ownership of disaster risk reduction in the Philippines

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1. Introduction

Although natural disasters are on the rise globally, they remain a very local challenge. During the last decade, the international community has emphasized the importance of "local ownership" of disaster risk reduction (DRR). Local governments and local communities have increasingly been considered as key actors for disaster risk reduction (DRR). Academics and policy makers have both acknowledged the importance of supporting local actors to better manage natural disasters, as they are seen as closer to the needs of the people and better aware of the environmental risks the community is facing. They are also the first to respond to natural disasters and are key players in coordinating the international response. During the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2005, the importance of strengthening the capacity of the local government was stressed. More recently, Ban Ki-Moon called for "the need of world leaders to address climate change and reduce the increasing risk of disasters - and world leaders must include mayors, townships and community leaders"[1]. Finally, the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) aims at developing specific mechanisms to engage the active participation and ownership of relevant stakeholders, including communities, in disaster risk reduction"[2]. In this context, the concept of "local ownership" has become central to many DRR policies. Developing a sense of ownership of the DRR policies among the community makes the communities responsible for their own safety, placing them in a position to "take charge".

While "local ownership" is seen as a precondition for effective and sustainable DRR, there is little research on what factors determine DRR local ownership. Indeed, local ownership is not always automatic, especially in situations of armed violence where there are many other pressing issues. There are instances when local governments and communities do not "own" DRR measures; sometimes considering it as an useless set of policies and a waste of money. A high level of local ownership would avoid situations where people do not take seriously evacuations orders or early warnings. The recent case of Typhoon Haiyan in November 2013 provides an interesting variation in the level of local ownership of DRR. While the mayor of Tacloban did not seriously took into consideration the typhoon warning, staying on his beach house the night of the typhoon[3], the mayor of Bantayan municipality ordered mass evacuation, which was followed by the citizens and limited the number of deaths to 15 people out of 90,000 inhabitants[4]. A similar example of successful early warnings and evacuations happened in Bicol region[5]. From those examples, it seems that the conditions under which local populations "own" DRR vary, even though the establishment of long-term DRR initiatives depends on the local populations as they are the end-users of such initiatives. The resources and willingness of the international donors to engage and finance DRR are limited and the task of managing and developing further DRR measures ultimately fall on

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[1] http://www.unisdr.org/we/campaign/cities (accessed November 20, 2013)

[2] http://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/hfa (accessed November 15, 2013)

[3] http://www.rappler.com/move-ph/issues/disasters/typhoon-yolanda/43875-haiyan-aftermath-shock (accessed November 20, 2013)

[4] http://www.unisdr.org/archive/35652 (accessed December 2, 2013)

[5] http://manilatimes.net/afp-enforces-massive-evacuation-in-bicol/51195/ (accessed December 2, 2013)

local authorities and populations. Therefore, this study tries to understand what determines and/or limit the local ownership of the main DRR components. The central question of this study is: "what critical factors limit the uptake of disaster risk reduction policies at the local level?" In doing so, it first conceptualizes "local ownership" and then proceeds to the examinations of the factors that are likely to limit local ownership and explore them through a case study in the Philippines after typhoon Bopha in 2012, complemented with some anecdotal evidence from typhoon Haiyan in 2013.

2. What do we know about local ownership and disaster risk reduction?

What does local leadership mean? The notion of "local ownership" has been *en vogue* among both practitioners and academics in the field of development and peacebuilding since the late 1990s, when the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) asserted that development should be "locally owned"[6]. Local ownership is seen as a precondition for effective and sustainable DRR, as it should be a national and local priority (HFA 2004). The idea of local ownership is hardly new; for example Karanci and Aksit argue in 2000 that "for the sustainability of disaster management plans, it is essential to develop local ownership and to activate mechanisms that will sustain these efforts" (2000:406). In addition, the level of local ownership will determine the mobilization of the population during preparedness or disaster drills. More recently, the UN Development program asserted that "to be successful, DRR programmes must be comprehensive, long term, locally driven and nationally-led (UNDP 2013). While the concept of "local ownership" lacks a definition and remains a contested notion among academics and practitioners, it is acknowledged as essential for effective and sustainable DRR. According to Killick:

> [Local] ownership is important (a) because it raises the probability that reforms will be tailored to local circumstances, priorities and political realities, (b) because those who have to decide upon and implement the reforms are more likely to perceive the changes as being in their own, or their country's interests, and (c) reforms are more likely to be perceived by the public as legitimate than when measures are viewed as having been forced on the government from outside through the exercise of financial leverage. (cited in Donais 2012:3)

In sum, the importance of local ownership and its prominence in policy documents is not matched by a corresponding depth of analysis, explanation, and scrutiny. The fact that local ownership has not been properly operationalized is directly linked to its absence of definition and indicators. "The operationalization of local ownership depends on who is counted among the owners. The heterogeneity of local actors – and potential owners – points to the complexity of achieving a local owned process." (Bendix and Stanley 2010). Conceptualizing

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[6] http://www.oecd.org/dac/2508761.pdf (accessed November 15, 2013)

better local ownership of DRR allows us to identify the sidelining of civil society, marginalized groups or other actors from DRR.

"Local ownership" implies a relationship between an 'outsider' – an international NGOs, a United Nations agencies, a national or local government trying to implement a programme—and an 'insider' – most often a specific community or a village, which are the recipient of the programme. The main point of the concept of local ownership is that when the outsider leaves, the community will "own" the project and sustain the programme or the skills learned. The concept was developed as a response to the growing dependency of communities on foreign NGOs and local government programmes. Therefore, local ownership implies that the "owner appreciates the benefits of the policies and to accept responsibility for them" (Bendix and Stanley 2010).

In this study, local ownership of DRR is defined as the extent to which local communities understand and get engaged in DRR. This is operationalized through an assessment of their understanding of risks and level of preparedness. Community is defined in this study as the population of a specific village, a *baranguay* in the case of the Philippines. Local leaders refer to the politicians in office (the mayor and its team and the baranguay captain[7]) and the local politicians outside the local government.

Previous research has demonstrated that a recent experience of natural disasters is a strong predicament of "local ownership". Communities recently affected by natural disasters tend to get more involved in DRR. This has been considered as a determinant factor to the prompt evacuation of the people and the very low level of casualties in the recent tropical storm that affected the region of Odisha, in Eastern India in 2013[8]. The region was affected by a very strong storm in 1998 that killed up to 10000 people. This traumatic experience was the main factor that made local government and communities to "own" DRR.[9] This factor seems to be also important in the case of the Philippines. For example, the region of Bicol has become one of the most DRR proof regions in the country due to the number of natural hazards in the regions, such as typhoon and volcanic eruption. Therefore, to explore new factors, it is important to compare regions with similar levels of exposure to natural disaster. Having said that, there is still a great variation in how communities prepare for natural disaster, even if they are similarly exposed to natural disasters. Why?

This study argues that communities are moved by the interest and alliances of political actors and their informal network. Previous research has overlooked to examine the role of politics and informal network when studying local ownership. In non-western countries, civil-society forces may be constituted differently and previous research have shown the importance of kinship, around ethnicity or family, not so visible to Western donors in DRR. According to Blaikie (2006:1951), "taking local politics and local technical knowledge seriously are emphatically not what such professionals are currently trained for". Political patronage, political competition and the existence of conflict seem to determine to a large

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[7] In the Philippines a municipality is composed of various baranguays, or village, which are headed by a barangay captain, who has to report to the mayor.

[8] http://www.unisdr.org/archive/35120 (accessed November 20)

[9] http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2013/10/17/india-cyclone-phailin-destruction-preparation (accessed November 1, 2013)

extent if national or regional DRR policies will be "owned" by the communities. Examining closer those political dynamics is the principal objective of this paper, as they can both increase or decrease the local ownership of DRR. The interactions between communities and local actors in charge of implement DRR policies take place in a political context, sometimes characterized by competition and armed violence. Examining this political context may help to understand better what defines local ownership.

3. Patronage, political competition and armed conflict

3.1   Patronage politics

Local state officials hold positions which are formally defined. However, in many new democracies state officials tend to exercise those powers to fulfil their private interests.

"In many political system, citizen-politician linkages are based on direct material inducements targeted to individuals and small groups of citizens whom politicians know to be highly responsive to such side-payments and willing to surrender their vote for the right price" (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2006:2)

Patronage politics is based on the reciprocal relations between patrons and clients. "The patron is a person who uses his influence to assist and protect some other person who then becomes his "client", and in return provides certain services for his patron…" (Weingrod 1968). In such a system, the competence of the political leader is only partially based on successes in delivering public goods, such as economic growth or jobs. Instead, political leaders' survival depends on their ability to sustain their clientelistic linkages. "The system as a whole is held together by the oath of loyalty, or by kinship ties rather than by a hierarchy of administrative grades and functions" (Clapham 1986:48). As result, the mayor becomes a central actor in driving the policies at the local level. "If he is reluctant to make decisions, the entire system sinks into torpor from which it may only be rescued by his overthrow and replacement by a new boss who rapidly gets things under way (Clapham 1986:48)".This creates a system of governance in which "personalized rule coexists with modern bureaucracy" (Raleigh 2010:73), leading to different level of effectiveness depending if the leader embraces personally the policies or not and if he/she has good relationship among local communities.

This patron-client relationship has been considered as problematic for DRR (c.f Williams 2011). Indeed, DRR may imply political cost, for example the declaration of no-build zones may go against the interest of the supporter of the mayors (Williams 2011:16). Political interest in DRR will at the end depends on the strategies used by power holders to win, use and remain in their positions, and on their calculations as to whether disaster risk reduction will contribute to these aims (Williams 2011:16). Often, disaster response is distributed by the local government according to the political weight of the communities (Raleigh 2010). According to Scarrit and Mozaffer, there are "politically relevant" and "politically irrelevant" communities in reference to political decision (1999). Communities become relevant when they can provide support to the local leader or when they are identified as supporting a competitor. Communities become irrelevant when they do not represent any important

position in the political calculus of the national or local government. This geography of interest tends to result in the marginalization of some communities.

3.2   Political competition

When DRR is part of the political debate, political competition can have positive effects on DRR as the political leaders may compete to show that they have the best programme in DRR. Some leaders have used DRR to improve their political profile and image. For example, Joey Salceda, ex-mayor of Legazpi city in the Philippines and now governor of the province of Albay was elected one of the best governors in the Philippines, and became, at the international level, the UN Green Fund Board chairman in 2013.[10]

Most of the time however, DRR is rarely an important point for the political debate and in most of the cases the political competition at the local level limits the extent and the sustainability of DRR measure. Indeed, local leaders do not want to implement policies formulated by their competitor. When the political landscape is fragmented, the mayor cannot count on local power brokers and other 'clients' to implement DRR at the local level. As members of communities relate to each other through multiple networks, the mayor needs to have some trusting contacts in the community. And to increase local ownership of DRR, there is a need to reach these networks. Often, outsiders trying to promote DRR may not have the connections to engage directly with the communities and may focus on only few spheres of interaction that directly relate to the outsider concerns (Turner 2004).

The mayor can come from a different elite or ruling family that have only few contacts with some of the communities. Pre-existing distrust towards the local government - which could have been created previously by the local government itself if the provision of public goods has not been equally distributed-- does not evaporate quickly. Pelling and Dill (2008) argue that how government responds to disasters is dependent on the kind of political relationship that existed before the crisis. Political relationships have the same importance for DRR at the local level.

Mayors need intermediaries that can help to find and mobilize potential followers for their policies. Mayors that have good relations with civil society organizations are more likely to mobilize the population around their objectives in DRR. Civil society organizations could serve as intermediaries between the leader´s agenda for DRR and the broader population. These intermediaries are expected to mobilize communities around the priorities set by the local government and build the capacity for collective action; ensure adequate representation and participation (Mansuri and Rao 2013:97). However, when political competition in the region is fierce, for example when the mayor is from a different political family than the governor or the barangay captain, it is unlikely that the mayor can rely on local leaders to implement DRR at the local level, and vice versa. To understand under what conditions local ownership is more likely to happen, this study distinguishes two zones of mayor' influence: full influence and contested influence. In the mayor's full influence zone, the local government has the control and the contact to properly implement DRR measures. A

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[10] http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/505035/albay-governor-elected-chair-of-un-green-climate-fund-board (accessed December 18, 2013)

contested region is where other political parties or leaders have an equal influence on the populations. In those regions, DRR may become a contested policies related to a competitor. Local ownership of the same municipal DRR measure becomes then less likely. In addition, contested regions are also affected by armed violence.

3.3   Local leader's relationship with rebel groups

A recent body of literature has started to study how confict impacts upon DRR (c.f Harris *et al.* 2013). The effects of civil conflict on DRR are multiple and contingent on how violence is employed and territory controlled (Kalyvas 2006). While developing countries affected by civil conflict are fundamentally different than peaceful ones, they are not are black boxes characterized by collapse of order and governance (Justino 2009). Often, many actors tend to substitute the state in providing public goods, justice and security as well as social norms (Mampilly 2009), "wartime political orders" are established (Staniland, 2012). Therefore, rebel groups become important actors to take into consideration in DRR policies, as they may have an influence on the local population and control a certain part of the territory. To a large extent rebels become *de facto* political leaders and major actors in the informal economy, especially in the mining and logging industry, two important fields for DRR. In this vein, active militants groups can influence positively or negatively the local ownership of DRR, depending if they see the local leaders - governor, mayor, barangay captain - as enemies or as friends. While it is clear that rebel groups cannot compete with the state over service provision, they can still interfere in the DRR efforts if they feel that the local government is not treating its supporters in an equal way. Moreover, some parts of the civil society organization, could be excluded from participating in the DRR activities because they are considered as rebel group supporters. However, when local leaders are not totally hostile to the rebels or have indirect links with them, it is more likely that the rebels will cooperate instead of limiting DRR efforts. Therefore, the good informal relationship between the rebel group and mayor or other leaders can increase the local ownership of DRR policies. Indeed, some rebel groups create strong network of supporters that could be used to relay DRR at the local level. Indeed, sustaining a rebel group requires the development of a social network of people involved politically, financially and logistically in the rebellion, which create quotidian relations and a certain type of social capital (Parkinson 2013). Hence, key stakeholders in remote communities are sometimes rebel leaders as well. If the mayor has good relations with the armed group, it is more likely that DRR will be "locally owned" in the regions under rebel groups influence.

4. Methodology

This study follows a political ecology perspective, illuminating the complex relationship between political interests and disaster risk reduction. It does so by borrowing from the literature on patronage politics and political ecology. Political ecology provides insights on the divergent interests, powers and vulnerabilities of different social groups (Turner 2004) and therefore can help to shed light on the factors that define the local ownership of DRR. Political ecology has developed as a critique towards the apolitical perspective and

depoliticising effects of mainstream environmental developmental research and practice (Le Billon 2001). It creates a theoretical foundation for analysing complex social, economic and political relations in the management of the environment (Neumann 2009). The paper traces the political dimension of DRR at the local level and attempts to understand which factors are likely to limit local ownership.

The study uses a qualitative methodology - focusing on the case of the Philippines - to explore factors that may determine the likelihood that DRR will be locally owned. Case studies are well suited for capturing the context-specific and micro-level dynamics as well as for developing new theories (George and Bennett 2005, Gerring 2004).

This study is based on 5 weeks of field research in the Philippines during November and December 2013. Around 30 interviews have been done with local government officials, NGOs, and local communities' members in New Bataan, a post-typhoon Bopha municipality. Being in the Philippines during typhoon Haiyan, some anecdotal evidence has been added to the study (see box1 and box 2). For confidentiality reasons the respondents in this study have been anonymized.

5. The case of the Philippines

The Philippines is one of the countries in the world most affected by natural disasters. The Philippines is ranked as the world´s third-highest disaster risk country according to the WorldRiskReport 2012[11]. Most of the Philippines disasters are linked to storms and typhoons, followed by floods, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions (CRED 2011). At the same time, the Philippines have been affected by internal armed conflict for more than 40 years. The south of the country (Mindanao Island) is the most affected by the armed conflict opposing the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), New People´s Army (NPA) and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). The overlap between natural disasters, patronage politics and armed violence in the Philippines provides a suitable setting to explore how local ownership of DRR plays out in such a context.

The Philippines has a set of laws which establish formal policies for strengthening DRR in the country. The main law is the Presidential Decree 1566 issued in 1978 and completed in 1991 by the Local Government Code of the Philippines (Republic Act 7160), which set up a hierarchical administrative system from the national to the local level for disaster risk reduction and disaster response. In 2010, the Philippines Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act (Republic Act 10121)[12] was passed and created the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, the head governmental organisation for DRR and emergency response, placed under the Department of National Defense. It leads and serves as a principal guide to DRR efforts in the country at all levels of governance; at the provincial level through the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (PDRRMC), at the municipality level through the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

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[11] http://www.ehs.unu.edu/article/read/worldriskreport-2012 (accessed November 15, 2013)

[12] http://www.gov.ph/2010/05/27/republic-act-no-10121/ (accessed December 15, 2013)

Council (MDRRMC) and at the *Barangay* level, the Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (BDRRMC). The study mainly focuses on the municipal and *barangay* level.

5.1   Local ownership of DRR in the municipality of New Bataan

The region of Eastern Mindanao was affected in 2012 by Typhoon Bopha (locally known as Pablo) which killed 1,146 (with 834 people still missing) and displaced 925,412 people.[13] Today, there are still 8,925 people staying in temporary shelters (See Picture 1). New Bataan lies in Compostella valley, a region that was devastated by typhoon Bopha (see map below). In addition, the region is a stronghold for the National People's Army, a 40 years old communist rebel group.

Image 1: Barangay Tatayan, one year after typhoon Bopha, New Bataan municipality, 4 December 2013. (Picture: Colin Walch)

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[13] http://reliefweb.int/disaster/tc-2012-000197-phl (accessed December 12, 2013)
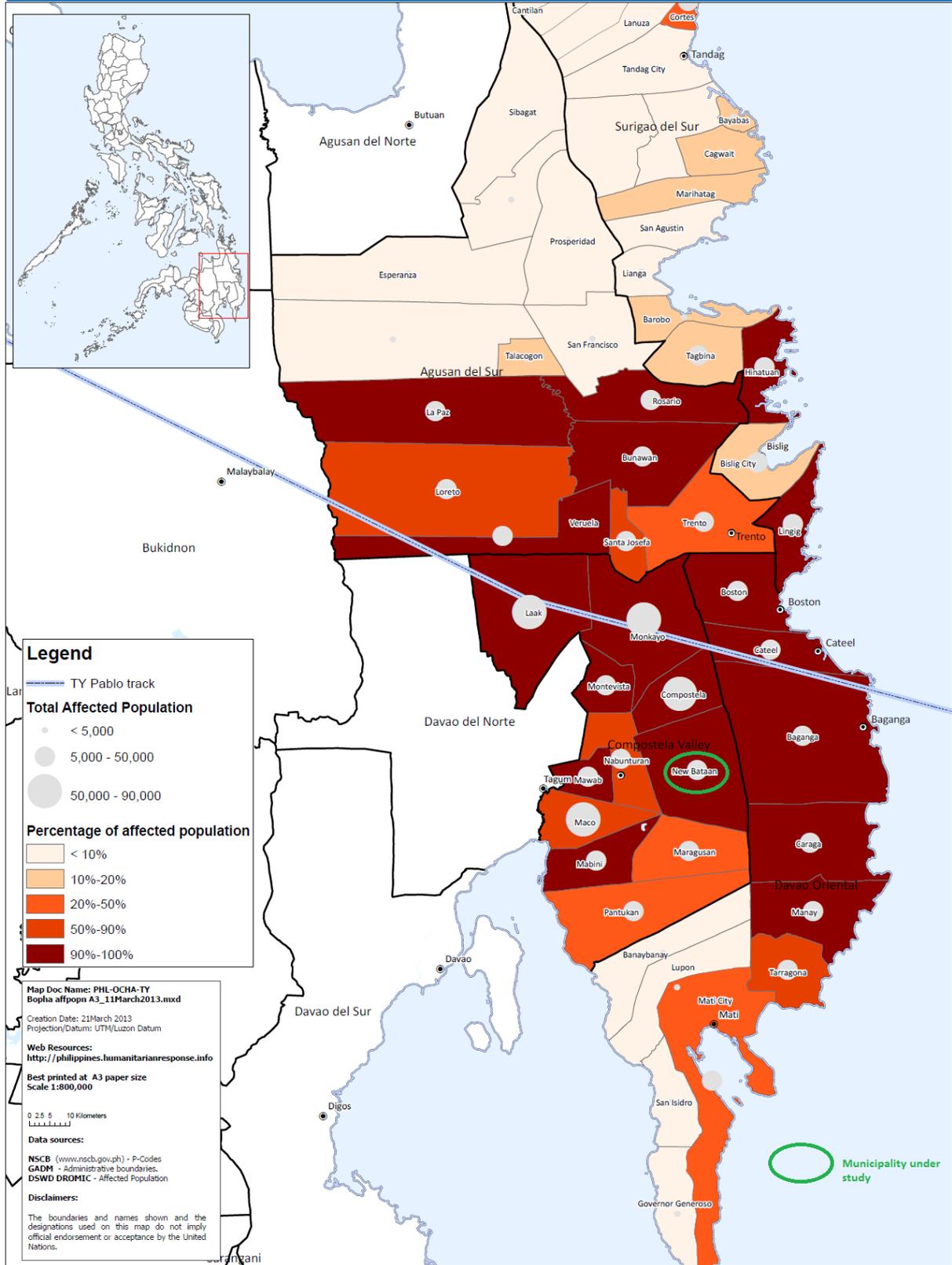
Map 1 : Municipality under study (Adapted from OCHA 2013[14])

[14]http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Philippines%20Typhoon%20Bopha%20Pablo%2C%20Affected%20
Population%20in%20Compostela%20Valley%2C%20Davao%20Oriental%2C%20Agusan%20del%20Sur%20and%20Surigao%

Composed of around 50 000 inhabitants, New Bataan was heavily affected by typhoon Bopha, where a total of 430 people died and 320 are still missing. The recent history of natural disasters has led the municipal government to promote DRR in the local communities. In addition, some NGOs that were present during the relief stayed with new projects to promote DRR in the region. Typhoon Bopha created a window of opportunity to step up DRR effort in the municipality and a large risk assessment was done by the local government which declared the majority of the city highly exposed to floods.[15] However, some communities (see image 1) still live in makeshifts camps that are extremely vulnerable to disaster. Many communities in New Bataan have still not fully recovered from the typhoon. Interviews and focus groups with those communities demonstrated that local ownership of DRR in these communities is low, especially in vulnerable and conflict-affected barangays.

In baranguay Taytayan, a conflict affected area, people do not see the point of DRR when they are still recovering for the impact of the typhoon. Many people believe that they already had their bad luck and a similar typhoon may only come back in 50 years.[16] Interestingly, recent experience of natural disaster did not directly increase DRR ownership. The community has still problems of food security, and DRR is not seen as a priority. What the community wants is livelihood supports such as seeds and tools, and access to drinking water.[17] While building back better by mainstreaming DRR at the local level is a priority internationally recognized in DRR, securing household livelihood should come first. In this context, improving household livelihood and resilience first includes innovations in sustainable agricultural techniques, diversification of crops and efficient management of the land. Food insecurity is an important underlying risk factor according to the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), as there is a need to "promote food security as an important factor in ensuring the resilience of communities to hazards, particularly in areas prone to drought, flood, cyclones and other hazards that can weaken agriculture-based livelihood".[18] While food security is actually part of DRR, local communities understand DRR as a something related to the mapping and prevention of hazards, which they don't see as relevant at the moment. The community awareness about risks and how they can act to reduce their exposure to hazards is limited. In other words, local ownership of DRR in Taytayan is extremely weak.

While the municipality had recently launched a new DRR plan to inform about the risk in the regions, the inhabitants of Taytayan feel that the municipal government has failed to involve them in their new DRR plans. The very simple fact that many dwellers of Taytayan are still waiting to be relocated in safer areas shows the little engagement of the local government in the community. The municipality argued that it was complicated to find any contractors to build new houses in the relocation areas because the margin of benefit for the construction companies was too low. Construction firms prefer to get contracts with NGOs or private foundation where they can get higher margin of benefit compared to governmental

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20del%20Sur%20as%20of%2011%20March%202013.pdf

[15] Personal interview with municipal official, New Bataan, 3.12.2013

[16] Personal interview with community members, New Bataan, 4.12.2013

[17] Personal interview with community members, New Bataan, 4.12.2013

[18] http://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/hfa (accessed November 15, 2013)

projects.[19] Municipal officials argue also that some communities that they visited were mostly preoccupied with their livelihood activities, which often limit their participation in DRR and community development activities.

Others claim that this lack of interest is due to the fact that the barangay captain is not a political ally of the mayor. Therefore, promoting DRR and providing relocation houses for the disaster-displaced communities become less of a priority for the mayor. This relates directly to the issue of patrimonial politics in the Philippines that tends to limit the implementation of project, especially when the political landscape is fragmented. Tatayan Barangay leader would like to do more to improve the livelihood of the community but they lack the resources from the municipal government.[20]

Taytayan, is a "red zone" according to the military, that is an area influence by the National People's Army. Unsurprisingly, the Barangay captain of Taytayan is seen as close to the National People's Army. This has created reluctance among the municipality officials to actively engage with the community for their DRR project because of security concerns. A project manager of an international NGOs working in DRR in the region told that security was the main concern when choosing where their DRR projects will take place.

Some community members said the rebel group allowed their combatants (without their weapons) to go down the hills and help their families. Most of them are still in the community and will come back to the armed group only when their families will be able to sustain themselves.[21] According to the military, the conflict has been dormant since typhoon Bopha. They claim that they are aware that some rebels are in this community, but as long as they do not carry their weapons, they cannot arrest them. Therefore, the level of violence has been really low, and there is a sort of implicit truce between the military and the rebel to allow communities to recover.[22] However the local government and some NGOs are still reluctant to implement their project in those areas. In contested regions, the local government knows that a majority of the people may not vote for them, which reduces the incentives to properly implement development project in this community. Popular unrest or the increase of armed conflict following the natural disasters did not take place contrary to what previous literature would have predicted. The citizen pressure for DRR was rather weak in the aftermaths of the typhoon. This did not lead to increased pressure on the local government to drive drastic policy change in terms of DRR. Instead, the pressure on the local government came from the international community and the national government. International NGOs that stayed after the relief operations are strong advocates for DRR. Most of their currents projects aim at strengthening existing municipal and barangay DRR councils by providing training to their staff. They also advocate for mainstreaming DRR into barangay and municipal development programs and for a better coordination between these two levels of governance. However, patronage, political competition, and conflict are hampering the effective implementation of the project. According to an INGO program manager, there is discontinuity in the project when new leaders are elected and come up

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[19] Personal interview with municipal official, New Bataan, 3.12.2013

[20] Personal interview with Taytayan Barangay captain, New Bataan, 4.12.2013

[21] Personal interview with Taytayan rebel leader, New Bataan 4 .13.2013.

[22] Personal interview with captain in Armed forces of the Philippines, 2.12.2013

with new programs linked to their constituencies.[23] It is easier to implement programs in a region where there is a clear control from one political force, especially when the barangay captain and the mayor are from the same political family. When this is not the case – when there is competition between the mayor and the barangay captain – it is unlikely that municipal projects are properly implemented at the barangay level. In addition, mayor may be upset when NGOs work with barangay captain who are political enemies.[24] For most INGOs, security is the number one priority and it plays an important role in the selection of the communities. However, when the municipal and barangay levels have connections with the National People's Army, security is usually better. "In red zones, having links with the rebel group is useful for security reasons but also for the sustainability of the program as rebel leaders can organize the community around the project."[25] While there is no doubt that armed conflict is an underlying risk and a main factor of vunerability (Wisner et al. 2005), conflict affected communities may also develop strong social capital that can be used for DRR.

Box.1 How did the National People's Army react to typhoon Haiyan?

The region of Samar is one of the strongholds of the New People's Army. A few days after the typhoon, NPA combatants allegedly attacked some aid convoys and many cases of looting were reported. The NPA justified its attack saying that the relief convoy was used by the military for counter-insurgency purposes in its region and for advancing military objectives. While the NPA declared a one month ceasefire from November 14 for facilitating disaster relief, and ordered to its troops to provide aid, it will be vigilant to "hostile movement" of the military within the "territory of the people's democratic government". In addition, the NPA also denounced the intervention of US armed forces in disaster relief as a move to increase their presence in the Philippines. At the same time, they are accounts that the NPA getting involved in the disaster response by providing food and shelter to the communities around their zones of operations in Samar.

Box.2 Political competition at a higher level: the response to typhoon Haiyan in November 2013

The slow and cumbersome response to typhoon Haiyan in November 2013 provides a vivid illustration of the political competition between political families and personalities at the national level. The mayor of Tacloban Alfred Romualdez belongs to a family who was involved in the assassination of the current president's father. The Aquino and the Romualdez are some of the most important political clans in the Philippines, and they are definitely not political allies. The region of Leyte has always been a political stronghold of the Romualdez family linked to the former dictator Marcos. These political animosities hampered the preparedness efforts to the coming typhoon and greatly slowed down the disaster relief, as not much coordination was made between the national and local agencies. The national government blamed the local government for its low level of preparedness – threatening to investigate Romualdez for allegedly failing to adequately prepare his city ahead of the disaster – while the local government claimed that they did not receive any support from the government until very late. This politically-underpinned blame game demonstrates how political competition can be a substantial hindrance for effective disaster preparedness and response.

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[23] Personal interview with INGO working in New Bataan, Tagum city, 3.12.2013

[24] Personal interview with INGO working in New Bataan, Tagum city, 3.12.2013

[25] Personal interview with INGO working in New Bataan, Tagum city, 3.12.2013

6. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated the challenges of creating local ownership of DRR in communities still recovering from the effect of a natural disaster, especially in "politically irrelevant" communities. Political patronage, political competition and armed conflict represent many challenges for efficient implementation of DRR policies.

- **Political patronage** can have both positive and negative effects on DRR at the local level. Political patronage directly creates politically relevant or irrelevant communities. The incentive to implement a DRR program in a community where the political leader does not have any "client" might not be very high. By contrast, politically relevant communities are likely to be prioritized for DRR. For example, tourist destinations or wealthy areas are usually more disaster proof than marginalized communities.

- **Political competition** represents an important challenge for the continuity of DRR at the local level, especially when DRR become "personal" or related to a specific leader. While this creates discontinuity when there is a change of leader, it also creates problems when the political landscape is fragmented inside the municipality. When the barangay captain and the mayor are rivals, it is unlikely that a policies coming from the mayor will be properly implemented.

- **Armed violence** adds further challenges to DRR by increasing insecurity and by placing DRR lower in the list of priorities. In addition, armed violence illustrates also the existence of inequalities and political malaise in the society, which are important underlying risk factors. At the same time, armed conflict can sometimes increase collaboration inside the community creating a strong social capital. For example, some indigenous communities in the Philippines uses the same early warning system to both warn communities of coming storms and armed incidents between the military and rebel groups.

To explore how these three factors play out at the local level, this study has explored them through the case of the Philippines. The political context in the Philippines is rather unique and patronage politics, political competition and conflict may not be similar to other countries in the world. What is certain however is that many DRR policies take for granted that democratic governments are responsive to the needs of their citizen in an equal manner. However, strong clientelistic relations tend to distort how DRR is implemented at the local level. Those political dynamics need further scrutiny in future research on DRR.

This paper has demonstrated the importance of examining the root cause of vulnerability at the local level, as "politically irrelevant" communities have shown lower level of DRR ownership. Previous research on local ownership has neglected to properly take into account "politics" at the local level. In the absence of a strong and responsible state, patron-clients relations become a type of social network that can limit or improve local ownership of DRR. This study hopes to have provided a deeper understanding on how local politics influence DRR.

7. References

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