

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL



Solidarity and Crisis-Derived Identities in  
Samar and Leyte, Philippines,  
1565 to Present

being a dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements for the Degree of

PhD

in the University of Hull

by

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April 2019

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the following for the help they extended to me before and during the writing of this thesis: The University of Hull for providing me with an International Fees Bursary that allowed me to pursue a PhD programme and a collegial environment in which to study and do research; The University of San Carlos for granting me a paid study leave period to pursue my PhD studies and for welcoming me back as a faculty member; My supervisors, Prof. Greg Bankoff and Prof. Robin Pearson, for their patience, rigorous feedback, and determination to see my thesis through to completion; Prof. Vicente L. Rafael and Dr. Jane E. Rowling, my external and internal examiners, respectively, for their corrections, comments, and suggestions that went into the final draft of this thesis. (All remaining errors are, of course, my own.); Dr. Bernardita Reyes Churchill, for her guidance and support, from my early years as a history instructor over a decade ago until the present, for providing academic venues in which to present various research papers (Annual Conference on Local and National History, International Conference on Philippine Studies), and for the help in my PhD application; Prof. Jojin Pascual, for providing me with the opportunity to join academia as a junior instructor at the History Department of the University of San Carlos in 2007, and for the help in my PhD application; Dr. Cristina Juan, for invitations to participate in several colloquia on Philippine Studies in the UK (Philippine Studies in the UK Workshop, Vicente Rafael Masterclass, Haiyan/Yolanda at 5 Colloquium) where I presented early versions of the sections that went into the thesis; Prof. Gloria Melencio, for helping me with interviews and site visits in Quezon City; Ma'am Rose Mendoza, for guiding me through the materials found in the Philippine National Archives, and to the staff of the archives and libraries I visited for their assistance; The interview respondents, who generously lent their time to answer my questions; My relatives, friends and colleagues in Tacloban City, Jaro (Leyte), Naval (Biliran), Cebu City, the University of San Carlos, the University of Hull, the city of Kingston-Upon-Hull, and many other places, for their support, encouragement, and camaraderie, whether in person or online; Esther Velthoen, for welcoming me to Hull and, along with Greg and Jenna, to their home for Christmas Eve dinners; Auntie Gwen Blardony, for the additional financial support for my stay in the UK; My parents, Jane and Rolando (Rolly), for their unfailing support and encouragement; and Nanay Felo, our second mother, for helping to raise me and my brother Frederick. This thesis is dedicated to the memories of Auntie Iloy and Lolo Gonor (Papalo), who both passed on as I was writing this thesis, and of all who perished during the onslaught of Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda.

## Abstract

The study sheds light on local responses to 2013's Super Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda, then the strongest storm to make landfall, by examining the local history and culture of the people of Samar and Leyte, Philippines, the area worst affected by the storm's strong winds and storm surges. It linked contemporary responses to the typhoon with the ways people in the region had historically coped with frequent adversity in one of the most environmentally-hazardous countries in the world and one that had also experienced centuries of foreign occupations and internal social conflict.

Through a historical and cultural analysis of various written and oral sources, the study identifies local concepts and practices that helped to generate what has been called "community resilience" against various forms of crises across several generations. Previous studies in Philippine history have mainly focused on the emergence of Filipino nationalism from centuries of colonial rule while ethnographic studies on the Philippines have mainly concentrated on local practices and beliefs without establishing their historicity. As a result, little headway has been gained in understanding the cultural tenacity of various Philippine ethnolinguistic groups in the face of frequent crises. This study sought to bridge this gap by linking the two fields to explore people's responses to social and environmental adversity.

The study argues that people in Samar and Leyte coped with frequent hardship in part by appropriating the colonial (*Bisaya-Christiano*), national (*Filipino*) and migrant (*Waray*) identities imposed on them by outsiders. These labels evoked local solidarities that, although transformed by factors such as colonialism and outmigration, gave them several rallying points for collective action. The study ultimately suggests that understanding resilience cannot be achieved through quantitative methods alone but should be complemented with qualitative approaches that take into account the local history, culture, and environment of the study area/s under consideration.

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## Glossary

- adversity, *n.* adverse fate, hardship, pain ("*suhi nga kapalaran, kakurian, kasakitan*") (Makabenta and Makabenta 2004, 162).
- Bisayá, "a pleasant and happy person" (Alcina, *Historia...1668*); a slave (Tausug, Maranao) (Baumgartner 1974); "*n.* Visayan, the language group of the languages of the central Philippines viz. Waray, Cebuano and Hiligaynon" (Tramp 1995, 52).
- crisis, *n.* difficulty, the last time to suffer pain because better times are about to start ("*kakurian, katapusan nga pagkuri han sakit kay matikang na an pagtikaupay*") (Makabenta and Makabenta 2004, 210).
- Dios-Dios, "*dyosdyós, n.* (Sp) *dios* demigod; false god; idol; fanaticism; band of fanatics" (Tramp 1995, 144).
- christian, "*adj. & n.* kristyanos, binunyagan" (Christians, baptised) (Makabenta and Makabenta 2004, 196).
- guinhaopan, A term originally applied to the *datu* (warrior chief) and *haop* (following) relationship of pre-colonial times. "*Haop. uc. f. on. Agregado de vasallos* [Aggregate of vassals]. *Nahaop aco can coan* [I follow so-and-so]. *Soy su vasallo, de su barangay, siya an acon guinhaopan* [I am his vassal, of his *barangay*, he is the one I follow]. *Si coan an aton paghahaopan* [We will follow so-and-so]" (Sanchez 1711, Vol II, 225b). The term is now used to refer to elected village leaders: "*ginhaupan, n.* chief of a *barangay*" (Makabenta and Makabenta 2004, 54).
- kaupáyan, "*n.* good (anything); benefice; benefit; commonweal; good events; good fortune; good luck; good news; good things; happiness; improvement; pleasure; welfare. *a.* advantageous; fortunate; pleasant" (Tramp 1995, 101).
- katarágman, "*n.* advertence; alarm; chance; danger; hazard; jeopardy; risk; menace" (Tramp 1995, 99).
- kakurian, "*n.* difficult times, complication of affairs" (Makabenta and Makabenta 2004, 42).
- kuri, "*v.* suffer hardship or difficulty, find oneself in a difficult situation" (Makabenta and Makabenta 1979/2004, 42).
- unong, "*a.* heedless; steadfast. *v.* to adhere; to die for a cause; to entangle; to implicate; to incriminate; to involve; to meet one's fate; to risk dangers together with companions. *v. stat.* to be involved or entangled" (Tramp 1995, 466).

Pilipinhon, "*n.pl.* Filipinos" (Tramp 1995, 356).

Puláhan, "*n.* Filipino Army that fought against Spain and the United States; Redshirt" (Tramp 1995, 367).

resilient, *adj.* a thing that returns to its original appearance even if folded, tightened, or pressed down/clamped tightly between two objects; (of a person) enduring of adversity and could easily to return to wellness ("*butang nga na balik ha una nga dagway bisan kun pinipilo, hinuhugtan, o iniipit; (of a person) mailob ha kakurian ngan madali makabalik ha kaupayan*") (Makabenta and Makabenta 2004, 327).

sákit, "*n.* hardship; penitence; retribution; sorrow. *vt.* to aggrieve. *vi.* to sorrow. *v.stat.* to sorrow" (Tramp 1995, 380).

sakit, "*n.* ache; ail; ailment; illness; infirmity; malady; pain; pest; sickness. *v.* to hurt. *v.stat.* to become sick" (Tramp 1995, 380).

susumáton, "*n.* anecdote; early poetry; narration; recital; recitation; story; *v.f.pass.* will be told. see *sarita* [*n.* early poetry, narrative poems on mythology or history of the gods and heroes and women of beauty' (p. 391)]." (Makabenta and Makabenta 2004, 411)

waray, "*adv.* nothing, none, no more, gone" (Makabenta and Makabenta 2004, 156)

waraywaráy là, "*a.* carefree; devil-may-care; happy-go-luck" (Tramp 1995, 478)

Waraywaráy, "*n.* (synonyms: Binisayâ; Sinumar ug Litinyo; Winaray) [properly] East Visayan." (Tramp 1995, 478)

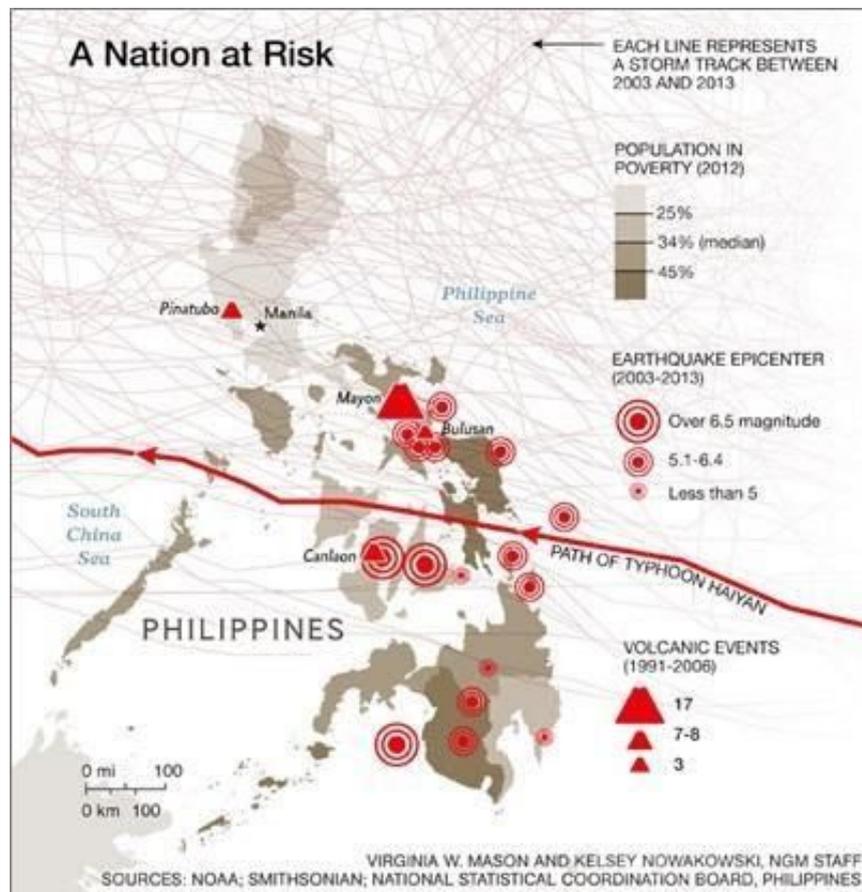


Figure 1. Poverty and hazard map of the Philippines, including the path of 2013's Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda

# INTRODUCTION

With growing global anxiety over the threat posed by climate change upon an increasingly risk-ridden and unequal world, concerned groups have emphasized the need for more case studies that document and learn from various forms of adaptation to adverse circumstances such as poverty, violent conflict and natural hazards across the world (World Disasters Report 2014). The accumulated knowledge of adaptive practices to different natural environments and social conditions could then help strengthen disaster risk reduction (DRR) policies and practices in the countries most vulnerable to the worst effects of extreme events. Obtaining this knowledge has in part required a closer look at the historical experiences of various peoples in dealing with different kinds of social and environmental adversity from which could be drawn useful examples and models of action (Ibid.).<sup>1</sup>

This study focuses on a particular group of people in the Philippines whose very identities (or at least the labels applied to them by outsiders) have become inextricably linked to the myriad risks, hazards, and adverse social conditions they have collectively faced across the centuries. Among hazard-prone countries, the Philippines has consistently ranked high on lists of the most affected by disaster-related events (Bankoff 2003). In fact, the Global Climate Risk Index 2015 saw the Philippines climb from the number 2 spot in 2012 (below Haiti and above Pakistan) to number 1 in 2013 (above Cambodia and India) for countries that suffered the most from extreme “weather-related loss events (storms, floods, heat waves etc.)” (Global Climate Risk Index 2015, Global Climate Risk Index 2014). This was due largely to the devastation wrought that year by Typhoon Haiyan (locally named Super Typhoon Yolanda),

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<sup>1</sup> *Disaster-Conflict Interface: Comparative Experiences*, United Nations Development Programme: Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery. Available online: <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/crisis%20prevention/DisasterConflict72p.pdf> (Accessed: 18 September 2018)

“the strongest tropical cyclone on record to hit land” (Ibid.), which killed over 6,000 people and devastated large swathes of the central Philippines.<sup>2</sup>

Since this high-profile event, various academic studies have been published and presented which draw important scientific and sociological lessons from the disaster and humanitarian responses to it. However, the response of local people afflicted by the typhoon as well as its historical and socio-cultural contexts has, for the most part, either been neglected or misunderstood in these studies. This might be due in part to the lack of readily available scholarship on the areas most affected by the typhoon that could help bring the local response and people’s inherent capabilities in facing the disaster into proper historical and cross-cultural perspectives.<sup>3</sup>

This thesis aims to help fill in this gap by documenting the historical and cultural processes that bring about what has come to be called “community resilience” in the face of adversity in the Eastern Visayas (Samar and Leyte) region of the Philippines, the area worst-hit by Typhoon Haiyan’s strong winds and storm surges. Using a historical and ethnographic approach to documentary and oral sources on episodes of resilience and vulnerability in Eastern Visayan history will make evident that Typhoon Haiyan was not the first (or perhaps even strongest) typhoon of its kind to have hit the region. Its people have also often had to face various other natural hazards alongside recurrent social tensions and conflict, both in their home region and in migrant communities outside of it. Furthermore, people’s perceptions of social and environmental events and their collective responses to them have also been closely interlinked across time through changing notions of group identity. The study will thus demonstrate how frequent environmental risks along with a long

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<sup>2</sup> Hoarau, K., Lander, M., De Guzman, R., Guard, C. and Barba, R. (2017) Did Typhoon Haiyan have a new record-minimum pressure? *Weather*, 72 (10), 291-295. Online: <https://rmets.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/wea.3045> (Accessed: 19 September 2018)

<sup>3</sup> For examples of works that help to bridge this gap, see Bankoff, G. (2003) *Cultures of disaster: Society and natural hazard in the Philippines*. Routledge; Gaillard, J. (2015) *People’s response to disasters in the Philippines: vulnerability, capacities, and resilience*. Springer.

political history of colonial subjugation under three imperial powers preceding today's contentious post-colonial "dynastic politics" have shaped and continue to reshape local society and its responses to such challenges.

## Typhoon Yolanda and the Eastern Visayas

Although Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda affected a wide swath of the central Philippines in 2013, media coverage and subsequent scholarship on the impact of the typhoon have thus far focused on the Philippines' Eastern Visayas Region where the typhoon's "eye wall," a typhoon/cyclone/hurricane system's "most devastating region," hit the southern coast of Samar and the northern half of Leyte at peak strength.<sup>4</sup> Tacloban City, the regional capital, also took the greatest toll in terms of destruction and casualties and subsequently came to be known as "Ground Zero" of the disaster event.<sup>5</sup> The high-profile visits of celebrity humanitarians and world leaders to Tacloban City and different parts of Samar and Leyte after the typhoon only served to highlight the region's new position in the front line of climate change impacts.<sup>6</sup>

Various factors lay behind the region's vulnerability to a super storm such as Haiyan/Yolanda. In recent decades, the region and its provinces have frequently ranked high in lists of the poorest areas of the Philippines, leaving families and communities without adequate economic resources to cope with

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<sup>4</sup> Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) - Satellite Imagery Timelapse (Nov 4-10, 2013), [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTXy-Gg\\_zl4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTXy-Gg_zl4) (Accessed: 19 September 2018); [http://ww2010.atmos.uiuc.edu/\(Gh\)/guides/mtr/hurr/stages/cane/wall.xml](http://ww2010.atmos.uiuc.edu/(Gh)/guides/mtr/hurr/stages/cane/wall.xml) (Accessed: 22 September 2018)

<sup>5</sup> In this study, "Samar and Leyte," or "Samar y Leyte" in later Spanish period and revolutionary period sources, refers to Samar Island (3rd largest in the Philippine archipelago) and Leyte Island (6th largest), and the smaller islands associated with both (with Biliran Island, now a separate island province, having traditionally been considered a satellite of Leyte from which it is separated by a narrow channel). Tacloban City (a highly-urbanized city [HUC]) and the provinces of Northern Samar, Samar, Eastern Samar, Biliran, Leyte, Southern Leyte form part of the administrative region known as Eastern Visayas (Region VIII).

<sup>6</sup> These high-profile visitors included David Beckham, Justin Bieber, Al Gore, Pope Francis, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon, French President François Hollande, and King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden (Curato 2019, 145).

the devastation wrought by the typhoon.<sup>7</sup> The vulnerability of a “highly-urbanized city” such as Tacloban has also been attributed to recent transformations such as urbanisation and migration that has seen an influx of impoverished families from rural areas of the region who came to settle in precarious communities in urban centres that are exposed to natural hazards such as storm surges, flooding, and landslides, among others.<sup>8</sup> Distressing images<sup>9</sup> of washed-out coastal communities, cargo ships washed inland, the looting of stores by hungry survivors, and uncollected dead bodies lined up in Tacloban City’s streets in the aftermath of the storm triggered national outrage not only over what was considered the sluggish response of the national government, but also, in subsequent debates, over the lack of popular historical knowledge of similar events in the past that might have made

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<sup>7</sup> When Haiyan/Yolanda struck, the Eastern Visayas was listed as the 3rd poorest among the country’s 17 regions: “The first region to be affected – and likely to be the worst hit – is Eastern Visayas. It is composed of two main islands, Leyte and Samar, as well as Biliran Island, and consists of six provinces and seven cities. The total population is 4,101,322 (2010 census)...Eastern Visayas is the third poorest region (among 17) in the Philippines according to the National Statistical Coordination Board. Its poverty rate has risen to 37 percent of families, about 10 percentage points higher than the national average...About 16 percent of families in Eastern Visayas experienced hunger according to the 2011 Annual Poverty Indicator Survey, compared with a national average of six percent...The high incidence of poverty means one in three families in the region are especially vulnerable to loss of livelihoods, with little or no savings or assets to fall back on.” Hufstader, Chris. Typhoon “Haiyan slams most impoverished regions of Philippines,” November 9, 2013 Online: <https://firstperson.oxfamamerica.org/2013/11/typhoon-haiyan-slams-most-impoverished-regions-of-philippines/> (Accessed: 27 September 2018). This widespread poverty has also been seen as a factor in the continuing vitality of the communist insurgency in the region despite the decline in the number of its fighters throughout the country since the movement’s peak during the administration of President Ferdinand Marcos. W. N. Holden, “The Never Ending War in the Wounded Land: The New People’s Army on Samar,” *Journal of Geography and Geology*, v.5, n.4; 2013, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/jgg.v5n4p29>

<sup>8</sup> Associated Press, “Humans to blame for scale of devastation caused by Typhoon Haiyan, say experts,” South China Morning Post, Available online: <https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/article/1354758/human-factors-played-part-haiyan-tragedy-philippines-say-experts> (Accessed: 19 September 2018)

<sup>9</sup> The New York Times, “Pictures of Typhoon Haiyan’s Wrath,” 11 November 2013, Available online: <http://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/11/11/world/asia/typhoon-haiyan-photos.html> (Accessed: 22 September 2018)

pre-typhoon warnings of an impending "storm surge" more understandable and helped expedite the evacuation of exposed coastal areas.<sup>10</sup>

Much attention and scrutiny has been given to the typhoon responses of national and international agencies, especially with regard to what was seen as the inadequate pre-typhoon preparations and the sluggish post-typhoon relief, recovery, and rehabilitation efforts of the national and local governments. Problems were also noted in coordinating the distribution of the enormous amount of aid that poured in from the rest of the country and the world by both the government and humanitarian agencies.

On the other hand, the response of local civilians has remained little studied and understood. Despite problems in the aid distribution, observers noted the relatively quick recovery of communities hardest hit by Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda. Two months after the typhoon hit the region, Yuri Afanasiev, senior recovery coordinator of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), would remark that:

"We have never seen a recovery happen so quick (sic). And many of us have been in many different disasters...[The affected communities were] matter-of-factly getting on with the recovery on their own, frequently in a self-organized fashion, without anybody else organizing them."<sup>11</sup>

These and similar statements by other humanitarian responders suggest that, although local populations were vulnerable to natural hazards due to adverse socio-economic conditions and the lack of adequate preparation and clear warning before the typhoon, they had inherent local capabilities that, in the

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<sup>10</sup> Antonio Montalvan, "El Observatorio de Manila and the Specious Filipino Amnesia for Typhoons," no date. Available online: [https://www.academia.edu/9039986/El\\_Observatorio\\_de\\_Manila\\_and\\_the\\_Specious\\_Filipino\\_Amnesia\\_for\\_Typhoons](https://www.academia.edu/9039986/El_Observatorio_de_Manila_and_the_Specious_Filipino_Amnesia_for_Typhoons) (Accessed: 18 March 2018)

<sup>11</sup> Quismundo, Tarra. "Fast 'Yolanda' recovery impresses UNDP exec," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 01:33 AM January 12, 2014, Online: <http://globalnation.inquirer.net/96379/fast-yolanda-recovery-impresses-undp-exec> (Accessed: 22 September 2018)

years after Haiyan/Yolanda, disaster scholars have found difficult to measure and understand. This study suggests that verifying and putting the above observation into context will require not only studies that account for the vitality of local civil society shortly before the storm but ones that trace the deeper historical and cultural roots of local recovery practices. Such studies also need to look beyond “resilience” portrayals that mask local socio-economic inequalities and which can be appropriated by profit-seeking political families.<sup>12</sup> However, the continuing lack of background materials for a history of local resilience would be the first hurdle such studies would face. This lack of specific historical knowledge on the Eastern Visayas, moreover, reflects its status as a national “backwater”<sup>13</sup> in contemporary national affairs as well as in national historiography.

As late as 1974, the late priest-historian and co-translator of the Alcina manuscripts, Father Cantius J. Kobak, OFM, in his “search of publications pertaining to the Islands of Samar and Leyte” at the Philippine National Library, would find “absolutely nothing concerning Samar” where he had served as a Franciscan missionary for nearly a decade in the 1960s and found only a battered and incomplete copy of a general history of Leyte province by Leyte-born writer Manuel Artigas y Cuerva (who had at one point been curator of the national library’s Filipiniana division) that was published in 1914.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Eadie, P. (2019) Typhoon Yolanda and post-disaster resilience: Problems and challenges. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* (Special Issue: The Production and Contestation of Exemplary Centres in Southeast Asia), Volume 60, Issue 1, pp. 94-107; Eadie, P. and Su, Y. (2018) Post-disaster social capital: Trust, equity, *bayanihan* and typhoon Yolanda, *Disaster Prevention and Management* 27( 3): 334– 345.

<sup>13</sup> Couttie, B. (2004) *Hang the Dogs: The True Tragic History of the Balangiga Massacre*. Quezon City: New Day Publishers, p. 81.

<sup>14</sup> Borrinaga and Kobak 2006, p. x. The paucity of materials on Samar and Leyte in the national library by the 1970s can in part be explained by heavy damage it sustained during the Second World War. The country’s long colonial experience under three different regimes has meant that many other materials that might have bearing on the region are to be found in archives and libraries abroad. But with the rise of the digital humanities, previously difficult to access materials from the Spanish, American, and Japanese colonial periods have been digitized from different collections outside the Philippines. However, the fact that few Philippine-based scholars and readers are proficient in the Spanish language as well as the Japanese language

The available national historiography, furthermore, presents little material on environmental adaptation that could help provide a better understanding of the vulnerabilities and resilience brought to light by the typhoon. Given a framework that focuses on the trajectory from far-flung colony to independent nation, and on personalities, events, and institutions centred in and around the national capital of Manila, nationalist historical narratives typically associate the Eastern Visayas region with topics pertaining to the country's long colonial period and the resistance movements against colonial rule as well as post-colonial national politics and governance.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the personal motivations and collective action of historical agents from this part of the contemporary Philippines are often seen in light of this grand narrative of the long path to freedom and independence, which was in keeping with the freedom-seeking struggles of various other groups in the former colony.<sup>16</sup> In terms of society and culture, other Filipinos without much familiarity with the region might associate it with the "Waray-Waray" ethnolinguistic label for the people who speak the majority language in Samar and Leyte as well as a folksong and 1954 movie of

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and its scripts constitutes another set of hurdles to the accessibility of historical knowledge on the region from the Spanish and Japanese colonial periods (see bne.es and archive.org for Spanish and English language materials). The English-language *Leyte-Samar Studies* journal started publication in 1967 and was based in the Leyte-Samar Museum and Library (at the Divine Word University in Tacloban City) which Father Kobak had helped co-found while he was still based at the Christ the King College in Calbayog City, Samar. For a list of secondary materials on Samar and Leyte available to an American scholar doing his PhD in the early 1970s, see Cruikshank, Bruce. Regional History and Historical Perspective: A View from Samar. *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (June 1990), pp. 97-117.

<sup>15</sup> Such events and personalities include: Spanish period events related to the "discovery" and evangelization of the Philippines (first sighting by the Magellan expedition in 1521, first recorded mass on Philippine soil), colonial period revolts and their leaders (Bankaw and Sumuroy Revolts), liberators (American General Douglas MacArthur's Leyte Landing), or personalities from the region who grew to national or international prominence (e.g., First Lady Imelda Marcos). See, for example, Agoncillo, T. A. (1990) *History of the Filipino People*. 8th Edition. Quezon City: Garotech Publishing. For lesser-known themes in Samar-Leyte history, see the essays in Vilches, M. L. C. (1979) *Readings in Leyte-Samar History*. Tacloban City: Divine Word University of Tacloban, and Borrinaga, R. O. (2008) *Leyte-Samar Shadows: Essays on the History of the Eastern Visayas*. Quezon City: New Day Publishers.

<sup>16</sup> Trino-Molenkamp, I. (2005) Whose nation? The illusion of national unity in the Philippines. IIAS Newsletter | #37 | June 2005 Online: [https://iias.asia/sites/default/files/IIAS\\_NL37\\_13.pdf](https://iias.asia/sites/default/files/IIAS_NL37_13.pdf) (Accessed: 26 September 2018)

the same name (see Chapter 3). Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda's devastation brought Samar and Leyte back to the fore of national consciousness,<sup>17</sup> along with the realization that Haiyan/Yolanda was "not the first" storm of its kind to have lashed Tacloban and the Eastern Visayas with devastating storm surges.<sup>18</sup>

## Frequent Disasters

Media reports from after Typhoon Haiyan emphasized historical precedents such as an 1897 typhoon and another in 1912 that both followed a similar track as Typhoon Yolanda and left behind a similar scale of death and destruction, primarily through storm surges that affected many of the same areas as the 2013 typhoon.<sup>19</sup> Apart from Typhoon Yolanda and its 1897 and 1912 precedents, events that still register in national historical memory include the Ormoc Flood of 1991 (which killed thousands and was caused by a slow-moving tropical storm and deforestation) and the 2006 Guinsaugon

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<sup>17</sup> Ongpin, M. (2013) "We owe Leyte and Samar," *Manila Times*, 26 December 2013, Available online: <https://www.manilatimes.net/we-owe-leyte-and-samar/63387/> (Accessed: 28 April 2019). As Ongpin wrote in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda: "Leyte and Samar on my mind. I have seen a lot of the Philippines but not enough of Leyte and Samar. Sometimes they seemed too far away, too far from the national byways...Much history that we are not acquainted with too well has taken place here...I know we are still a poor country, but Leyte and Samar are exceptionally poor. That Yolanda raked her scythe on these two islands with such apocalyptic results is just the culmination of suffering in a land of suffering...The world is ready to help, we [i.e., fellow Filipinos] should be ready to let the help get through meaningfully and substantially, adding our own cooperation, our own goodwill, our own concern for fellow citizens who have been left to fend for themselves too long against the elements, against indifference, against inclusion into the national discourse, national progress, the national identity. A new and substantial identity has to be created for Leyte and Samar beyond the poverty and neglect that they have suffered all these centuries. This country owes it to them."

<sup>18</sup> <https://news.abs-cbn.com/lifestyle/12/04/13/map-typhoon-hit-areas-esquire-cover> (Accessed: 18 September 2018); Ambeth R. Ocampo, "Tacloban, not once but thrice," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 19 November 2013, Online: <https://opinion.inquirer.net/65685/tacloban-not-once-but-thrice> (Accessed: 25 April 2019); Antonio Montalvan II, "Samar-Leyte more than thrice," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 29 December 2013, Online: <https://opinion.inquirer.net/68409/samar-leyte-more-than-thrice> (Accessed: 25 April 2019).

<sup>19</sup> The Jesuit meteorologist Fr. Jose Algue, who visited the region a few weeks after the storm, referred to this phenomenon in his report on the 1897 typhoon as an "ola de huracan" (i.e., hurricane wave). In the case of Typhoon Yolanda, this was called a "storm surge," seawater pushed inland by the force of the winds which caused an estimated 94% of deaths from the disaster (Bankoff and Borrinaga 2016, p. 57).

Landslide in St. Bernard, Southern Leyte (caused by incessant rains and falling on an eroded mountainside which collapsed on a village).<sup>20</sup> However, national awareness of disaster events in the region does not extend to the period before the 1991 flash flood and the 2006 mountainside collapse.

Although hazard mapping of environmentally risk-prone areas have improved and become more easily available to local disaster risk reduction units,<sup>21</sup> less is known about the historical and cultural responses to the risks and hazards posed by these environments. As this study suggests, clues on how people in the region have collectively faced risk and adversity might be found in the region's social history and the various social movements that have occurred and are still ongoing in the islands.<sup>22</sup> As mentioned earlier, these movements have been subsumed under the framework of the emergence of the "Filipino" people from the "dark" days of colonialism to the birth of their own independent nation-state. But accounting for the role of the Philippine Archipelago's diverse physical environments in this national narrative would require an alternative approach that regard these movements not just as peripheral episodes in the story of the "birth of the nation" but as important ways of responding and adapting to social and environmental adversity whose agents possessed their own notions of identity and selfhood.

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<sup>20</sup> Veuthey, Justin A. "Social capital and Natural Hazards: Trust and Cohesion in the Eastern Visayas of the Philippines." PhD Thesis, University of Montreal (2016).  
<http://hdl.handle.net/1866/13595>

<sup>21</sup> Sarmiento, A. G. (2017) "VSU turns over flood hazard, resource maps to Eastern Visayas towns," *Rappler.com*, 11 June 2017, Available online:  
<https://www.rappler.com/move-ph/issues/disasters/172586-vs-u-flood-hazard-maps-eastern-visayas-towns> (Accessed: 28 April 2019)

<sup>22</sup> These movements include: Some of the earliest rebellions against Spanish religious and colonial authority in the 17th century (Bankaw, Sumuroy) (see Chapter 1); A lesser known indigenous Christian movement that emerged in the aftermath of the Jesuit Expulsions from the Philippines in 1768-1769 that caused difficulties for the transfer of parishes to the newly arrived Franciscan and Augustinian missionaries (see Chapter 1); A politico-religious movement that resisted American rule (Pulahan Movement), suggesting the strong influence of the by-then centuries old presence of the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines (see Chapter 2); and the long-running and still ongoing post-independence communist insurgency (see Conclusion).

This study posits a link between local social mobilizations and various social identities that provide various means of coping with frequent and various kinds of adversity and crises in Samar and Leyte. To understand this link requires an analysis that shifts its focus from the national center to various localities in Samar and Leyte and beyond from which various group labels and identifications emerged. This is necessitated by the fact that in addition to the often enigmatic social movements recorded in the region's history, another curious feature of local society in the region is the lack of a consensus on a single cultural identity label appropriate for its people. The majority language has variously been called "Binisaya," "Lineyte-Samarnon," "Waray-Waray," but debates have frequently erupted over the acceptability of "Waray-Waray" and "Waray" as names for its majority language and its speakers. This is due in part to the stigma associated with a label that has negative connotations of poverty, violence, and criminality, and the fact that "Waray" literally means "nothing" in that language. What this study tries to show is that these seemingly separate phenomena and irresolvable debates (frequent natural disasters/exposure to risks and hazards, recurrent social movements spread out but inter-linked across time, lack of a fixed label for the people of the region and the languages that they speak) in fact form part of an interrelated process that, although tension-filled and seemingly paradoxical, provides the people of Samar and Leyte with the means to cope with frequent adversity in an environmentally hazard-prone and historically conflict-ridden country.

The study thus aims to give insights into the links between community resilience and group identity at the local and regional levels in Samar and Leyte that could in turn help in understanding similar processes in other parts of the country and the world. Such findings could serve as contributions to ongoing discussions about how to support societies most at risk from various social and environmental hazards but which nevertheless have inherent coping capacities that are, to observers, often little known or "difficult to measure and

understand.<sup>23</sup> Strengthening these inherent capabilities would help these communities prepare for the worst impacts of climate change and address the socio-economic factors behind their vulnerability to various risks and hazards.

## QUESTIONS AND ARGUMENTS

The study mainly seeks to answer the following question: How was 'community resilience' conceptualised and practiced in response to frequent adversity in Samar and Leyte? Associated with this main question are four sub-problems: (1) What kinds of everyday and extraordinary adversities did people have to face in the history of Samar and Leyte? (2) What social relationships and collective practices did people cultivate to cope with these adversities? (3) How and why did they maintain or transform these environmentally-adaptive practices in the face of voluntary or enforced social change? (4) What role did collective self-representations play in generating such practices and vice versa? (5) How did the remembrances of past responses to adversity shape the responses to newer ones?

The study argues that community resilience in response to frequent adversity in Samar and Leyte were generated through appeals to group names that reminded people of collective values and mutual help practices that had allowed them to face past challenges and hindrances to their pursuit of well-being. The study will show that, in the Eastern Visayas, contested cultural identity labels are often indicators of its people's continuous and collective struggles against various and recurrent forms of risks, hazards, and crises such as frequent natural disasters, successive foreign occupation, chronic poverty, and violent conflict across several generations. These labels, although often imposed by outsiders, have come to serve as repositories for people's collective memories of their frequent engagement with, and survival from, a hazardous natural environment and conflict-ridden history.

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<sup>23</sup> Eadie, P. (2017) *Typhoon Yolanda and the 'Tyranny' of Resilience*. Available online: <http://theasiadialogue.com/2017/10/30/typhoon-yolanda-and-the-tyranny-of-resilience/> (Accessed: 17 November 2017)

In a major crisis such as the devastating aftermath of Super Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda, various calls to action invoked these different labels as reminders of this long history of mutual help and cooperation against past forms of adversity and of the deeply-held cultural values needed to overcome them. Solidarity is thus often generated through appeals to appropriated labels that people identify with and which enables group mobilization against collective threats to the community. Furthermore, acts of identification help generate cooperative practices and social movements meant to mitigate the adverse effects of crises or extreme events. The memory of these past responses to adversity were subsequently preserved primarily through various oral (and more recently written) narrative traditions that could be called upon and remembered when responding to new crises. However, the outcomes of these crises can in turn transform the social and conceptual bases (e.g., family, neighbourhood/town, ethnicity, religion, nation, etc.) for these identifications, thereby changing the character of responses to subsequent crises.

The study provides new insights into how a people often classified as “vulnerable” in Western disaster risk reduction (DRR) discourse have developed local, historically-rooted collective capacities and idealized self-representations to deal with various forms of adversity in the face of a conflict-ridden history and a hazard-prone environment. These ideas and practices have allowed them to withstand extreme events that have become “frequent life experiences” (Bankoff 2003) through collective actions that are grounded in how they have defined or redefined themselves in relation to their and their ancestors’ engagements with frequent crises in the past.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed an interdisciplinary approach that borrowed concepts and methodologies from related disciplines in the social sciences (psychology, sociology, anthropology, human geography, among others) to analyze data collated from historical sources such as manuscripts, reports, chronicles,

dictionaries, ethnographies, and oral history interviews. Archives and libraries in the Philippines and the United Kingdom as well as various other online repositories, provided sources on natural hazards/disasters, anti-colonial rebellions, mutual aid associations, and related topics. Oral history interviews served as sources for local narratives on more recent phenomena that can be compared with older vernacular texts in order to reveal nuances in language and meaning that were otherwise not easily translatable to languages such as English. The focus on oral tradition (including those preserved in written texts) greatly helped in recovering local knowledge from a society with a high literacy rate but where local knowledge and memory are still primarily transmitted orally. The use of an interdisciplinary analysis allowed one to look at historical phenomena from various angles without being constrained by the conventions of any one field or discipline.

In particular, the study looked at concepts and terms linked to local notions of community, group sympathy and cooperation, danger and adversity, and welfare and well-being in the languages spoken in Samar and Leyte. It explored how their meanings are linked to collective practices and have been transformed across time, especially from the colonial period to contemporary times. Moreover, it also examined how these meanings and customs have been influenced by the universalizing discourses of colonial powers and indigenous elites that have either been accepted and appropriated to suit basic needs, or contested from above, below, and within local society when seen as harmful to community well-being and cohesion.

In selecting periods and case studies to focus on, the study followed the historiographer Peter Burke's suggestion that "a case may be selected for study precisely because it is exceptional and shows social mechanisms failing to work... Open conflicts may reveal social tensions which are present all the time but only visible on occasion" (Burke 1992, 42). In a similar manner, disasters such as that caused by Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda has been portrayed as events that "lift veils" over local social mechanisms that are otherwise

difficult to scrutinise in more mundane times.<sup>24</sup> For this study, wars, natural disasters, epidemics, and economic crises, among others, are seen as periods of crisis that may equally reveal both social tension and social solidarity that might in turn lead to the consolidation of old identities or the creation of new ones. A mixing of historical and ethnographic approaches in this study is necessary to understand the complex transformations that occur in people's identities due to the frequency of hazards that have an impact on local society. E. P. Thompson argues for the importance of a dialogue between the two fields (and of a shift from a structural to a historical approach to the study of social phenomena) when he writes that, "history is a discipline of context and of process: every meaning is a meaning-in-context, and structures change while old forms may express new functions or old functions may find expression in new forms."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Curato, N. and J.C. Ong (2015) Disasters can lift veils: Five issues for sociological disaster studies, *Philippine Sociological Review* 63: 1–26.

<sup>25</sup> Thompson, E. P. (1979) *Folklore, anthropology and social history* (Brighton: John L. Noyce. Reprinted from the *Indian Historical Review*, vol. 3, no. 2, January 1978), p 12. See also Thomas, K. (1963) History and anthropology. *Past & Present*, (24), 3-24.



Figure 2. Map of the dominant ethnolinguistic groups of the Philippines.  
 Source: Wikimedia Commons.  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Phillanguages.jpg>  
 (Accessed: 28 April 2019)

## APPROACHES

This study followed three qualitative research methods that facilitated the gathering of relevant data; namely, applied history, discourse analysis, and grounded theory. In what follows, I will define each of these approaches and relate them to their theoretical and philosophical bases, and explain the significance of their basic concepts.

### Applied History

In the field of disaster risk reduction (DRR), the study of the history of the Philippines, rather than being studied for its own sake, can provide models that can be replicated in other parts of the world in a research method Bankoff has called “applied history” (Bankoff 2012). As one of the most “hazard-prone” countries in the world, he argues that the people living in the Philippines have become accustomed to the numerous hazards (typhoons, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, etc.) that constantly threaten the archipelago, and that these have become “frequent life experiences” that have duly shaped the history and culture of the Filipinos. However, this long experience in dealing with natural hazards and disasters is something that hasn’t yet been accounted for in Philippine historiography which has heretofore focused more on the political/colonial history of the islands (Bankoff 2003). Taking into consideration the growing clamour from disaster scholars and humanitarian agencies for the need to document alternative models of coping with human-induced and environmental crises,<sup>26</sup> the long experience the Filipino people have had with crises and disasters has the potential of providing case studies which can help in disaster risk reduction.

### Discourse Analysis

A culture-specific history of resilience requires a framework and method that is attentive to words and names, their changing meanings and their corresponding effects on people’s behaviour. This would entail an examination

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<sup>26</sup> World Disasters Report 2014; Wisner et al. 2012; Bankoff 2003, 152ff.

of various kinds of sources from which such narratives and their associated actions could be drawn and brought together (from written and oral sources, or from archives/libraries as well as from field interviews) to form a coherent description of how resilience works in the Philippines' Samar-Leyte region, an area of the country whose people and locale are associated with certain events, hazards, and traits (e.g., the "discovery" of the Philippines by the Spaniards in 1521, frequent natural disasters, people's *tapang* [bravery]) in national discourses but about which not much is written in historical and ethnographic literature on the Philippines.

Discourse analysis was popularised by philosophers like Michel Foucault who sought "an understanding of the conditions for the emergence of particular forms of knowledge, for the grammar which allows those using the concepts to recognise what they are saying as being true or false" (Weeks 1982, 111). According to Weeks, the significance of Foucault's contribution to how we approach knowledge (teleological vs. open-ended, etc.) is in the way he demonstrated how, "[s]ocial relations are inescapably the effect of language and the ceaseless workings of power, and there can be no escape from discourse nor any ending of power. What political struggle is inevitably about, therefore, is 'reversed discourses', radically different definitions, different organisations of power relations" (Weeks 1982, 118). A discursive approach to examining the links between power, language, and social relations in the Eastern Visayas can help generate insights into how its people have dealt with various social and spiritual/environmental forces.

Language, in a multi-ethnic country like the Philippines, must also be seen through the lens of local cultures that have adapted to distinct island environments that can be both beneficial and hazardous to their inhabitants. Moreover, the impact of centuries of colonial rule on these multi-cultural groups must likewise be taken into account. In the case of the Visayas island region, recent works on its cultural history point to alternative ways of analysing cultures with a long history of "exposure" to the West. In *Waiting for Mariang*

*Makiling*, Mojares (2002), for example, traced the process through which foreign/colonial/elite discourses could be appropriated and localised to suit local needs in essays that treat various aspects of the cultural history of the Central Visayas, a region adjacent and closely connected culturally and economically to the Eastern Visayas (Samar and Leyte).

In *Contracting Colonialism*, Rafael (1988) traced a similar process of localisation at work in his study of early Spanish period *Tagalog* language texts. In particular, this study will apply Rafael's notions of "listening-as-fishing" and "remembering-as-haunting" (p. 12), whereby Tagalogs selectively appropriated words and signs from Spanish colonial discourse and salvation history for their own purposes and where native struggles for freedom and liberation from colonial rule involved the participation of the souls of past exemplary leaders, to various local discourses and collective mobilizations across several periods of crisis in Eastern Visayan history. This approach will help make better sense of a historical process that has allowed small communities in Samar and Leyte and beyond to adapt to gradual changes and withstand violent disruption to people's life-ways and livelihoods across several generations through a recurrent pattern of self-referencing and self-redefining collective mobilizations.

## Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is a qualitative research method, the main thrust of which is,

"...to generate theories regarding social phenomena: that is, to develop higher level understanding that is 'grounded' in, or derived from, a systematic analysis of data. Grounded theory is appropriate when the study of social interactions or experiences aims to explain a process, not to test or verify an existing theory. Researchers approach the question with disciplinary interests, background assumptions (sometimes called 'sensitising concepts') and an acquaintance with the literature in the domain, but they neither develop nor test hypotheses. Rather, the theory emerges through a close and careful analysis of the

data...Key features of grounded theory are its iterative study design, theoretical (purposive) sampling, and system of analysis." (Lingard et al. 2008, 459)

Grounded theory employs an "iterative study design" that "entails cycles of simultaneous data collection and analysis, where analysis informs the next cycle of data collection" (Lingard et al. 2008, 459). For my study, the data collection and analysis cycle followed a sequence of adjustable blocks of historical periods based on the assumption that the interplay of various social phenomena led to transformations that produced new or modified ideas that proved to be significant to people's actions in subsequent time periods. For "sensitising concepts," my study will employ five categories in making comparisons across different time periods in the history of Samar and Leyte. These interrelated concepts are "crisis," "solidarity," "identity," "social memory," and "well-being," which are discussed further below.

## SOURCES

For political, socioeconomic, and environmental contexts to selected periods, the study examined colonial-period reports and chronicles to reconstruct events such as wars/conflict, natural disasters, epidemic disease, economic crises, and the political and socio-economic structures which prevailed during these periods of crises. For Chapter 1, one of the key sources that was used was the Jesuit missionary Pedro Chirino's chronicles of Jesuit evangelization efforts in the Philippines at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which includes, aside from the usual religious and political history of the early Spanish period, the effects of typhoons and other natural hazards, native responses to the imposition of Spanish rule, and the early problems that Spanish colonisation faced in the Philippine islands (Chirino 2010). Another key source is the 55-volume *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, a collection of official decrees, chronicles, and other documents from the Philippines' Spanish colonial period that were translated to English from the mainly Spanish originals by Emma H.

Blair and James A. Robertson and published in the first decade of the 20th century (Blair and Robertson 1903-1909, B&R from hereon). For the American colonial period covered in Chapter 2, the study will draw on the *Annual Reports of the Philippine Commission* (RPC from hereon), which contains various official data on the administration of the islands during the early years of the American colonial government in the Philippines.

For all of the chapters, published ethnographies on the people of Samar and Leyte were examined to look at local practices and beliefs, and past perception of extreme events. The most comprehensive of these ethnographic accounts is the *Historia de Las Islas e Indios de Bisayas...1668*, a set of ethnographic and historical manuscripts in two parts and nine books written by Fr. Francisco Ignacio Alcina (1610-1674), a Jesuit missionary stationed in various towns in Samar and Leyte between 1634 and 1668.<sup>27</sup> What makes Alcina's account indispensable in an analysis of Eastern Visayan society and culture in the early Spanish period, apart from its comprehensiveness, was how Alcina also described people's practices, beliefs, and outlooks in their own words, and provides his prospective Spanish/European readers with points of comparison with their own culture. This study follows a similar comparative approach<sup>28</sup> to local, national, and Western perspectives on crisis, solidarity, and identity.

For Chapters 2-4, an important source of historical and cultural data were the *Historical Data Papers* (1952-1953) found in the Philippine National Library which is a compilation of local histories written by schoolteachers in the early 1950s. They document village customs and beliefs as well as the local impacts

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<sup>27</sup> Father Cantius Kobak, who searched for all extant copies of the Alcina's manuscripts for translation to (and annotation in) English, describes Alcina's chronicle as "the most detailed, most extensive cultural and evangelization histories among any of the regional group in the entire Philippines" (p. 402). Kobak, C. J., OFM (1978) Ignacio Francisco Alzina : The Great Samar-Leyte Bisayan Missionary of the 17th Century. *Philippiniana Sacra* 13(39): 401-429. Alcina's manuscripts, although ready for publication by 1672, would not begin to see print until the 20th century. Two books from Part II remain unaccounted for in the archives.

<sup>28</sup> Bloch, M. (1928) *Toward a Comparative History of European Societies*. In Lane, F.C. ed., 1953. *Enterprise and Secular Change: Readings in Economic History*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.

of and people's responses to larger events such as natural disasters, wars, and other crises that continued to be remembered at the village level in the mid-20th century. They also include vernacular folk songs and oral narratives (*susumaton*) that reflect local perspectives on these said events. These viewpoints help shed light on local identities at the turn of the 20th century.

The changing meaning of words will be surveyed through dictionaries and grammar books from the colonial period to the present. Dictionaries by Sanchez (1711), Sanchez de la Rosa (1895), Makabenta and Makabenta (1979/2004), and Tramp (1995) allow for the examination of the transformations in word definitions across time and the inclusion of new words to local society. This attentiveness to words allows one to get a sense of the continuities and changes in culture, practices and beliefs that might have bearing on local notions of crisis, solidarity and identity.

For archival materials found in the *Philippine National Archives* (PNA), information on local responses to calamities, and especially of the rebellions which erupted in their wake, were gathered from bundles such as the *Asuntos de Anting-Anting* (AA), *Expedientes Gubernativos* (EG), *Sediciones y Rebeliones* (SR). For more recent phenomena and events such as post-war outmigration and Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda, oral interviews were conducted to glean how these events were perceived and how people responded to them and the changes they brought. Social media and traditional media sources were mined for identity/community discourses and people's perceptions of more recent natural disasters such as earthquakes and typhoons.

## MAIN THEMES

This section elaborates further on the main “sensitising concepts” (crisis, solidarity, and identity) to be found in the study through a review of the available literature on these themes. Due to the preponderance of secondary materials on these concepts, the selection of reviewed works is primarily focused on those where crises, solidarity, and identity are closely interconnected. It aims to identify the links between these three themes and the gaps that exist in this body of literature. This study hopes to identify and address these gaps in the scholarship on crises, solidarity, and identity by introducing examples from the history of Samar and Leyte in the Philippines that could help in the task of strengthening the resilience of communities around the world through a community-based risk reduction framework.

### Risk and Crisis

This study considers risk and crisis as an integral component of an active process of change. Rather than a condition that is ideally avoided (risk-aversion) to prevent harm to individuals and groups, the study shows how, among a people accustomed to frequent adversity,<sup>29</sup> they have also been seen as catalysts of change. Each period of adversity that endangers and harms people and communities become milestones and reference points for subsequent social transformation. These transformations involve both continuities and changes in how local societies are organised and how they subsequently refer to themselves. Dangerous events engender unity based on shared beliefs and practices. However, they also generate disunity when people disagree about what actions to collectively take to move forward. In this study, lines of social division are often evident in the reception of labels applied to different groups of people by outsiders (i.e., acceptance or rejection) and the meanings ascribed to these names. Moreover, these labels tell us something about the kinds of adversities that different groups of people have historically

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<sup>29</sup> Bankoff, G. (2016). Hazardousness of place: a new comparative approach to the Filipino past. *Philippine Studies: Historical & Ethnographic Viewpoints*, 64(3-4), 335-357.

experienced. Understanding the role of these events and how people perceive and respond to them therefore require an analysis that is attuned to the historical and cultural contexts to group action.

This study argues that contesting identifications in Samar and Leyte are part and parcel of its hazardous environment and conflict-ridden history. Disagreements over the appropriateness or applicability of group labels seen as derogatory by some but acceptable and even pride-worthy by others (e.g., *Waray/Waray-Waray* label, see Chapter 3) bring to the fore the contested meanings behind these names. This study suggests that putting into context both the negative and positive connotations ascribed to labels such as *Waray*, *Pulahan*, and *Bisaya* can be helpful in uncovering the kinds of dangers and adversities people have faced in the past. The meanings they are associated with can be regarded as clues to past social conflict and crises that involved clashing solidarities and divergent means of dealing with a hazard-prone environment. Moreover, such solidarities, which are formed in everyday social interactions and which persist in different forms across generations, often went unnoticed until they clashed with each other, with government forces, or mobilised to face extreme events. Understanding how different groups of people construe and deal with risks and crises are thus key to gaining greater knowledge about the role of group identities in generating unity.

What counts as a danger or risk to individuals and societies has for a number of years been the subject of academic debates involving several schools of thought. Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens, and others who support the “risk society” position often talk of the multiplication of objective dangers in a modern, “post-traditional society” where the advances of modernity (among them capitalism, science and technology) over traditional society (which attributed risks to fate or divine agency), instead of creating a more secure world, have led to more “manufactured” risks, including those that cause environmental/climatic change and its associated hazards. To avert the catastrophes that modernity has made possible, a shift to a “reflexive

modernization” was needed to reorganize society and establish new forms of solidarity that will allow it to better face new forms of risk (Denney 2005).

If the “risk society” perspective focuses on the multiplication of objective risks that can be mitigated through social reform, those who advocate a “cultural theory of risk perception” argue that risk is a social construction, part of a “social process” in which societies are structured and maintained by the way they debate over, select, and attribute blame for the sets of dangers they see as threats to their existence as much as these societies produce the risks that endanger them (Douglas and Wildavsky 1983: 6-8; Denney 2005). The attribution of responsibility for natural disasters, for example, is seen as “a normal strategy for protecting a particular set of values belonging to a particular way of life” (Douglas and Wildavsky 1983: 8). Thus, for Mary Douglas, one of the main proponents of risk perception theory, “each environment [is] a mask and support for a certain kind of society” (Douglas 1975: 217). From this “risk culture” point of view, contending ways of defining and mitigating risk, rather than leading to knowledge and control of risk and uncertainty (which are ultimately “conceptually uncontrollable”), merely “provide individuals and organisations with an illusion of security” (Douglas and Wildavsky 1983; Denney 2005, 21). A closer look at different environments reveals contestations between contradictory values and lifestyles vying for primacy.

The “governmentality” position constitutes a third school in risk studies which draws on the work of Michel Foucault and which sees risk as a means by which people can be “governed” and their behaviour regulated. To mitigate against the myriad dangers people are faced with, the transformations in European thought and institutions—including the rise of liberalism/individualism, the shift to the probabilistic calculation of chance, the emergence of the modern state, and the establishment of social security and insurance systems—have resulted in modern technologies and practices that socializes risk and provides mechanisms for monetary compensation in case of loss, harm, or death (Ewald

1991; Donzelot 1991). However, the seemingly scientific and technical way of identifying, assessing and categorising risk (e.g., “high-risk”/vulnerable countries or populations) in the contemporary risk management industry belies the highly political and culture-based character of these assessments and calculations. The industry’s identification of danger areas or risky behaviour, for instance, are often rooted in cultural taboos and exclusionary prejudices and stereotypes that came to acquire scientific and commercial acceptability.<sup>30</sup> They normalise people’s behaviour by regulating what to do or where to go.

From the above, it can be argued that risk, aside from referring to external dangers that threaten individuals and societies, is also a means by which to define the self and society (in relation to dangerous activities, environments, and peoples) and to secure against future uncertainty. Wilkinson sees the concept of risk as “the key organising principle of society, the overwhelming preoccupation of core institutional formations, a major co-ordinate of personal identity and the mode of discourse that, above all others, enables us to grasp the magnitude of the world problems we face” (Wilkinson 2007, 583).

In light of the concern for the effects of climate change, there has been a corresponding increase in the academic literature on the impact of natural hazards upon different societies and cultures that are most “at risk” from the dangers posed by worsening floods, droughts, storms, and other meteorological events (WDR 2014; Wisner et al. 2012). In terms of environmental risks, “disasters” are defined as events where vulnerable populations without enough resources are overwhelmed by a hazard (Bankoff 2003). However, “vulnerability” as a Western discourse tends to overlook the built-in “capacities” or “resilience” of the cultures it talks about.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Douglas, M., & Wildavsky, A. (1983). *Risk and culture: An essay on the selection of technological and environmental dangers*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ of California Press; Douglas, M. (2003). *Purity and danger: An analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo*. Routledge.

<sup>31</sup> Bankoff, G. (2001) Rendering the world unsafe: ‘vulnerability’ as western discourse. *Disasters*, 25(1), 19-35.

“Crisis” is a related term that perhaps better encapsulates many of the phenomena and processes associated with or which emerge from frequent and recurrent risks, hazards, and dangers. As a concept, crisis “has been employed by political, economic, social, and cultural historians in order to analyze the weakening or breakdown of established systems, institutions, social relations, norms and values. Crises are periods of rapid change and upheaval, which generate a variety of options that should not be interpreted in hindsight as fixed outcomes but rather should be viewed as open-ended processes.”<sup>32</sup> This definition of crisis dovetails with the view of environmental disasters as “triggers of cultural change,” “catalysts of regenerative processes,” or “normal events that can benefit ecosystems” (Janku et al. 2012: 3).

Crisis has also been linked to identity, which, as argued above, is in turn linked to solidarity. Identity, according to one line of argument, “only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty” (Quoted in Weedon 2004, 1). In this study, wars and conflicts, natural disasters (i.e., manifestations of climatic/geologic hazards), epidemic disease, and economic crises, among others, will be examined as periods of human-induced and environmental crisis that form part of the “frequent life experience” (Bankoff 2003) of people who self-identify as Filipinos. As such, these events may all equally reveal the operations of collective coping processes that destabilizes and transforms Filipino identity and its local counterparts.

The people in this study who had to deal with these events had different names for adverse events: *kakurian* (Waray) or *kalisdanan* (Cebuano), times of need, hunger, hardship, etc. and *kasakitan* (Waray, root: *sakit*) or *kasakit* (Cebuano), i.e., pain, distress, affliction, etc. These terms were used both in the context of everyday adversity and during longer or more acute periods of crisis. The latter is often denoted by the word *kataragman* (Waray) or *katalagman* (Cebuano),

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<sup>32</sup> “Crisis and Solidarity in European History,” 2015

i.e., catastrophe, risks, dangers, hazards, etc. whose root word, *tagam*, is a verb that in English means, "beware, be on guard, watch out." (Makabenta and Makabenta 2004, p. 136) Moreover, the examples given in this study show how people's experiences of past crises often informed people's perceptions of, and responses to, future risk. Given this range of local meanings, "crisis" could thus encompass "risk," "hazard," and "disaster" when analyzing "coping mechanisms" as part of on-going processes that feed into subsequent events. It also allows for the inclusion of various other periods of uncertainty such as "economic crisis" and "political crisis" which could be interlinked as factors that engender group solidarities and shape collective identities. To understand how solidarity is generated in times of adversity, the study focuses on the identities that are called upon or debated in the face of crisis and the kinds of collective mobilisation that emerge to resolve that crisis.

## Solidarity

"Solidarity" as a concept has a long discursive history that can be traced back to the ancient Greeks and the French Revolution but which gained academic currency with the work of Émile Durkheim, in particular via his doctoral dissertation and book, *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893). In it, Durkheim makes a distinction between two types of solidarity. "Mechanical" solidarity is "based on the similarity of [an organization's] members' situations, which gives rise to a sentiment of common identity." "Organic" solidarity "arises from similarities with the interdependence created by the increasing division of labor and the resulting tendency for people to identify themselves as individuals" (Donzelot 1991, 171-172). Donzelot argues that, in the case of France, concepts such as "solidarity" are implicated in political debates about the proper relations between the "state" and "society" (Donzelot 1991).

Solidarity has also been defined as "shared practices reflecting a collective commitment to carry 'costs' (financial, social, emotional, or otherwise) to assist others" with whom "a person recognizes sameness or similarity in at least one relevant respect" (Prainsack and Buyx 2011, 46-47). In light of this, Prainsack

and Buyx (2011) emphasize how solidarity should be understood “as a practice and not merely as an inner sentiment or an abstract value. As such, it requires actions. Motivations, feelings such as empathy etc. are not sufficient to satisfy this understanding of solidarity, unless they manifest themselves in acts” (p. xiv). This emphasis on practice is key to this study’s focus on people’s responses to risk and crisis.

### Risk-aversion and Risk-taking

Examining people’s responses to crises generated by the manifestations of various risks and hazards is perhaps the best means of observing social engagement and solidarity in action. It has been argued that societies faced with risks and natural hazard always try to maintain a cost-benefit balance when collectively mobilising against adversity (Janku et al. 2012). Furthermore, Denney (2005) distinguishes between positive (risk-taking) and negative (danger/hazard) forces of risk that shape people’s decisions and actions (Denney 2005, 21). On the other hand, Douglas saw the choice between risk-taking and risk-aversion of an individual as contingent upon the social interactions between members of a community. She argued that, “the self is risk-taking or risk[-]averse according to a predictable pattern of dealings between the person and others in the community. Both emerge, the community and the person’s self, as ready for particular risks or as averse to them, in the course of their interactions. The person who never thought of himself as a risk-taker, in the unfolding of the drama of his personal life, and under the threat of the community’s censure, finds himself declaring a commitment to high risk.”<sup>33</sup>

The frequency of risky and hazardous events in the history of the Eastern Visayas provides ample occasion to observe the workings of risk-induced collective action and how decisions for risk-taking or risk-aversion are shaped by pre-existing interpersonal relationships. The unfolding narrative “drama”

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<sup>33</sup> Douglas, M. (1992) *Risk and blame: essays in cultural theory*. Routledge., p. 102.

that influenced such choices were also examined to understand how persons and communities defined themselves in the face of frequent crises where people often had to choose between risk-taking and risk-aversion as part of larger communities. I will argue that people in Samar and Leyte saw their responses to risk as part of ongoing narratives about their identities (i.e., about “who they are”) that become shareable as examples of collective action both to a wider global community and to future generations. Risk-responses thus contribute to personal and collective self-representations that are often key to generating solidarity in times of crisis.

### Identity and Identification

“Identity” has been defined as a collection of meanings defining persons, groups, and societies. It is “the set of meanings that define who one is” and “a concept that links both the individual and society.” It can “come in multiple forms whose meanings are shaped by members of society” (Burke and Stets, 3).<sup>34</sup> Collective identities, on the other hand, “are defined as representations containing normative appeals to potential respondents and providing them with the means of understanding themselves, or being understood, as members of a larger category or assemblage of persons” (Donahoe et al. 2009).

Identities are nevertheless not restricted to defining one’s place in society, or a society’s place in a wider world. They shape the actions of individuals and groups and are actively redefined by these agents in the course of their everyday affairs. And whereas previous eras conceived of larger identities based on commonalities such as shared religion, nationality, or class, the emergence of smaller solidarities based on other shared attributes and experiences have led to re-evaluations of “identity” itself as a concept. Stuart Hall has argued that, since its “decentering” by various intellectual revolutions (psychoanalysis, feminism, postmodernism, etc.) in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we can no longer speak of a unitary, fixed “identity”—i.e., “a recognition of some

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<sup>34</sup> Burke, P. J. and Stets, J. E. (2009) *Identity theory*. Oxford University Press.

common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation"—in designating "who we are." Hall suggests instead that we use the term "identification" to underscore an individual's choice in choosing their identity (Hall 1996). Hall sees "identification" not as a "naturally-constituted unity" (a fixed, homogenous entity with essential roots) but as "a construction, a process never completed - always 'in process.'" Moreover, identification is "constituted within, not outside, representation." (Ibid., 2, 4).

The rise of various identifications has also been shaped by new social movements that represent different ways of being and becoming. Hall further noted how, "Increasingly, the political landscapes of the modern world are fractured in this way by competing and dislocating identifications - arising, especially, from the erosion of the "master identity" of class and the emerging identities belonging to the new political ground defined by the new social movements: feminism, black struggles, national liberation, anti-nuclear, and ecological movements" (Hall, *Modernity...*, p.601). "Social class" as a "master identity" (Ibid.) has thus given way to a politics of difference where "each movement appealed to the social identity of its supporters. Thus feminism appealed to women, sexual politics to gays and lesbians, racial struggles to blacks, anti-war to peaceniks, and so on. This is the historical birth of what came to be known as identity politics--one identity per movement" (Hall, n.d.).

Collective action is thus a key factor driving diverse processes of self-representation. Identification in this sense has been defined as "all varieties of behavior for which collective identities provide a greater or lesser degree of orientation." (Donahoe et al. 2009, 3) Acting in accordance to certain orientations is part of an identification process "in which actors respond to or engage with the appeals inherent in collective identities and to the combined effects of such responses or engagement" (Donahoe et al. 2009, 1). This new emphasis on active agency in defining one's self and chosen community has

allowed for the acknowledgment of how personal and collective behaviour are reflections of certain lifestyles, values, and shared experiences. However, the identifications they come to represent can also come into tension or conflict with other orientations, preferences, and self-representations.

Exactly how collective identities help shape action can perhaps be better understood by examining how people respond to the names and labels applied to them by others. In Geertz's study of Balinese culture, he argued that Balinese styles of action are closely associated with the naming of groups and persons that are categorised according to local notions of time and the cosmos.<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, Johnson applies this view of culture-specific person-definitions and identifications to strife-torn Southern Philippines where seemingly fixed ethno-religious categories such as "Muslim Tausug" has been and continues to be "reconstituted in relation not only to gender/sexuality, wealth and power, family origin, occupation and residential location, but also to a variety of real and imagined translocal and transnational worlds" (Johnson 1997, 47-48). Each of these worlds "carries a symbolic load in the ongoing construction and struggle over local identities and identifications, part of a field of contested meanings which informs, as it has been informed by, the wider contingencies and conflicts of local, regional and global political and economic history" (Ibid.). Johnson's work thus points to the need to critique wider identifications such as those at the national level from local vantage points where the conflicts in collective identities become much clearer. This study's focus on a particular group of islands in the central Philippines and how the naming of its inhabitants by others and by themselves have been shaped by people's experiences with risks and hazard requires a similar lens to trace the links between risk, solidarity and identity. The formation of a national category such as "Filipino" that groups such as the "Tausug" and other ethnolinguistic groups in the Philippines have contested (the former through armed rebellion

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<sup>35</sup> Geertz, C. (1966) *Person, time and conduct in Bali*. Yale University Southeast Asia Studies.

and other forms of resistance) has a long history that continues to be widely debated across several academic disciplines.

Perhaps the most well-known definition of the nation is that by Benedict Anderson (1983) who proposed that a nation is an “imagined political community” that is “imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.” (p. 6) Anderson’s formulation, with its focus on how advances in communications technologies in the modern period led to the breakup of larger religious solidarities into smaller language-based secular states, provoked critiques that identified important gaps in Anderson’s argument. Among them is the role that colonial history played in replicating historical oppressions that are still to be seen in post-colonial nation-states. Chatterjee (1993) argues that, since the structures by which the colonized could imagine a nation were put in place by the colonizer, anti-colonial nationalism “could only be imagined through cultural processes and practices” (Hague 2011, p. 20) that imitated colonial ones. Narayan further suggests that the process of exclusion introduced by colonialism was inherited by anti-colonial nationalism: “Colonial history is the terrain where the project of ‘Western’ culture’s self-definition became a project heavily dependent upon its ‘difference’ from its ‘Others’ both internal and external. The contemporary self-definition of many Third-World cultures and communities are also in profound ways political responses to this history.” (Narayan 1997: 80) As will be seen in this study, some of the tensions between ethno-linguistic groups in the contemporary Philippines are brought about by stereotypes with roots traceable back to the colonial and pre-colonial eras. But it was during the colonial period that many of these groups’ labels, representations, and cultural identities started to be formed through the colonization and conversion processes.

A further critique of Anderson’s work pertains to its lack of attention to collective practices that are key to collective self-definitions. Mitchell argues that in addition to *imagining* communities, attention must also be given to “the *practices* and exercises of power through which these bonds are produced and

reproduced. The questions this raises are ones about who defines the nation, how it is defined, how that definition is reproduced and contested, and, crucially, how the nation has developed and changed over time...The question is not what common imagination *exists*, but what common imagination is *forged*" (Quoted in Hague 2011, 23). Moreover, Anderson's critics saw "a need to explore power relations inherent in the processes Anderson describes and in their material impacts, whether these are founded on gender, racial, ethnic, class, sexual or other aspect of individual identity" (*Ibid.*).

In addition to the lack of focus on the collective practices that help constitute nations, another key aspect overlooked by Anderson's focus on selected media that made possible the imagination of the nation<sup>36</sup> is the role of collective memory in such imaginings. The grand narratives that define a nation, given its fixation with certain tropes and national "traits," run the risk of excluding groups who have distinct historical experiences and cultural values that are shaped by their own traditions of remembering.<sup>37</sup> Weedon argues that the creation of a shared sense of national identity is necessarily based on the construction of essentialist narratives that is teleological, "with everything in past history leading inexorably up to a triumphal conclusion." They are also reductive, involving "a selective and simplified account of a complex history" that runs the danger of excluding certain groups and individuals who then find themselves "without a place from which to belong." (Weedon 2004, 30). Furthermore, Parekh suggests that the purpose of national historiography "is not to give an accurate historical account but to enable individuals to position their personal life-stories within the larger, more significant national story. Identification not knowledge is its *raison d'être*. It allows individuals to identify with something outside, and greater than, personal experience. It binds

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<sup>36</sup> Primarily newspapers and novels, although a chapter on censuses, maps, and museums was added to the 1991 revised and extended edition.

<sup>37</sup> Llobera, J. R. (1996) *The Role of Historical Memory in (Ethno)Nation-Building*. Goldsmiths Sociology Papers. London: Goldsmiths College, University of London.

individuals into a broader interdependence with others in the nation-building project.” (Parekh: 2000: 16–17)

A more inclusive account of the nation would thus require closer attention to local historical experiences that do not necessarily fit easily into established national frameworks. The Philippines in this case presents a challenging example in which historical contradictions and exclusions that continue to play out in the present tend to be left out of a grand narrative of a national unity forged out of centuries of anti-colonial struggle.<sup>38</sup> The historical, cultural, and environmental complexities of the country (e.g., ethno-linguistic and religious diversity, a history of multiple colonialisms, multiple natural hazards and frequent disasters) present difficulties in forming a coherent narrative about “Filipino” national identity.<sup>39</sup> This study suggests that any analysis of “Filipino” nationality needs to take into account the processes involved in self- and community-definitions that respond to events within and outside various localities around the country and not just those seen from the vantage point of national centres such as Manila. Furthermore, the fact that media forms such as newspapers and novels (e.g., Jose Rizal’s novels which Anderson saw as important texts that influenced Filipino nationalism) had limited circulation in places such as the Eastern Visayas where “Filipino” came to be accepted as a self-label at the turn of the 20th century suggests alternative ways by which people in the region came to imagine themselves as belonging to a distinct “Filipino” nation. A regional history attuned to localised social memory and collective practices is thus indispensable in understanding national self-definitions at the grassroots level.

In following a “bottom-up” approach to self-identifications, this study thus seeks to problematise the prevalent notions of Filipino identity derived from

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<sup>38</sup> Aguilar, F. V., Jr. (1998) A Failure of Imagination? The Nation in Narratives of the 1896 Philippine Revolution. *Pilipinas: A Journal of Philippine Studies* 31, 31-45.

<sup>39</sup> Mojares, R. B. (2002) “Time, Memory, and the Birth of the Nation.” In *Waiting for Mariang Makiling: Essays in Philippine Cultural History*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

current historical narratives by pointing to alternative causes of solidarity and identity that might contradict or complement wider claims of “Filipino”-ness and its origins. This study argues that local notions of being “Filipino” have various meanings shaped by divergences and variations in people’s responses to what are considered “national” historical events and by their responses to local risks and crises. Furthermore, understanding how one group of “Filipinos” conduct themselves in the face of dangers in a particular region of the Philippines requires an analytical sensitivity to the meanings ascribed to various other names and labels (whether imposed, appropriated, or modified) that are invoked during periods of adversity and crisis. Accounting for these experiences and self-representations will provide local historical context to the meanings that underpin people’s identifications (i.e., their choice of collective identities) that not only include “Filipino” but many other names and labels that represent distinct historical experiences.

The anthropologist David L. Szanton suggests that the collective experience of people in the Philippines in dealing with various natural and social disasters (and not just the collective struggle for national freedom that is the focus of nationalist historiography)<sup>40</sup> are key to understanding “Filipino” self-creation and the “resilience” that is attributed to them. Reflecting on an anecdote told to Szanton by an American friend about the openness of her Filipino friends to discussing personal loss (as opposed to what she reported as the converse attitude of her American friends) and how this exemplified what he referred to as the “Filipinos’ frank approach of life and death,” he writes:

“I suspect this honesty and realism of her Filipino friends at least partly accounts for the extraordinary resilience of most Filipinos. That is, despite frequently great suffering, Filipinos have an amazing capacity to bounce back from, and rebuild, after the natural and social disasters that so often inflict this country: the typhoons, tsunamis, mudslides,

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<sup>40</sup> Mojares, “Time, Memory, and the Birth of the Nation;” Aguilar, “Failure of Imagination.”

volcanoes, *lahars*, earthquakes, colonial regimes, wars, and repressive politics...I found this combination of realism and resilience quite extraordinary, and suspect it is a major source of the pride in being Filipino, both in the Philippines, and across the globalized transnational society that Filipinos have created." (Szanton, p. 9)<sup>41</sup>

Unpacking the historical experiences that inform this sense of pride in a national label as well as understanding how this helps generate "resilience" against frequent adversity would require numerous localised studies that draw on various disciplines to examine diverse phenomena. Connecting people's memories of these experiences would also require a longer analytical timeframe to understand continuities and changes in people's self-understandings that enable resilience.

### Social Memory and Resilience

In this study, what has come to be called "social memory" is regarded as vital linchpin between community and national consciousness. It provides a collective "sense of the past" as a community and as a nation that are based on older local and official narratives while also serving as an easily accessible repository of local knowledge of recent, less well-known experiences that are unique to a particular group of people. This knowledge of a collective past could then serve as models of action in the present. Assmann defines "cultural memory" as "a collective concept for all knowledge that directs behavior and experience in the interactive framework of a society and one that obtains through generations in repeated societal practice and initiation." (Assmann 1995, 126) The social aspect of knowledge of the past becomes evident in how, "Every individual memory constitutes itself in communication with others. These 'others,' however, are not just any set of people, rather they are groups who conceive their unity and peculiarity through a common image of their past." These groups include "families, neighborhood and professional groups,

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<sup>41</sup> Szanton, D. L. (2017) The Continuing Question: Quo Vadis, Philippines? *FILIPINAS: Journal of the Philippine Studies Association, Inc.*, Volume 1, 7-15.

political parties, associations, etc., up to and including nations. Every individual belongs to numerous such groups and therefore entertains numerous collective self-images and memories.” (Assmann 1995, 127) This study examines how such collective images and memories are linked to local notions of resilience.

Resilience is a term with roots in the hard sciences and ecology that has recently become widely used in the social sciences (Norris et al. 2008). In individual psychological terms, it refers to “the ability to successfully adapt to stressors, maintaining psychological well-being in the face of adversity” (Haglund et al. 2007). At the interpersonal level, “community resilience” is “a process linking a network of adaptive capacities (resources with dynamic attributes) to adaptation after a disturbance or adversity” (Norris et al. 2008; Klein et al. 2003). The kinds of adversities persons and communities withstand and recover from can range from personal trauma to “economic stress, influenza pandemic, [and] man-made or natural disasters” (Cyrulnik 2011; Chandra et al. 2011, iii). Disaster resilience has thus far generated increasing attention owing to the perceived growing threat of climate change and the need for societies to better adapt to the increase in the scale and destructiveness of the natural hazards and disasters that this brings about (World Disasters Report 2014).

There are a number of approaches by which to study how people respond to such traumatic events and how such events change individuals and societies. However, some scholars have pointed out how the historical impact of the natural environment (especially of its extreme manifestations) upon human societies has thus far been little studied. Janku et al. (2012), for instance, have noted how the “more subtle and often cumulative impact disasters can have on human societies and the ways they develop in the long-term is more often than not neglected in favor of what are considered to be more important events of a more clear-cut social, economic, or political character” (Janku et al. 2012, 4).<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> More recent studies have emphasized the importance of taking into account interrelated historiographical, historical, cultural, and political contexts behind people's responses to disasters. Dahlberg points out that catastrophic events, even though they pose as a threat to

A more balanced approach to the historical roles of both human action and environmental hazards in the shaping of societies and their environments is thus needed to better understand social resilience.

Resilience studies also point to the importance of feedback mechanisms based on the collective/social memory of past extreme events as a key element in better community and government preparations for future catastrophes (Colten and Sumpter 2009; Tidball et al. 2010). These collective memories, which “often form when groups encounter significant threats and adverse events or victories over adversity that get imprinted on the collective consciousness of a group”, lead to the creation of common values that shape how these memories are subsequently represented. The values generated by these selective remembrances in turn serve as “collective conscience” that help in “forming, maintaining, or reinforcing group identity” (Tidball et al. 2010, 594). Overall, these processes contribute to SES (social-ecological system) resilience by being

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historical sources, can also help generate new data "because sudden disruptions of physical and social structures typically create a lot of data to be subjected to analysis later." Dahlberg, R. (2015). Cracks in the past: historical approaches to disaster research. In *Disaster research: Multidisciplinary and international perspectives*. Routledge, 35-47. However, such information must be situated within their local historical and cultural milieu. Button and Schuller (2016, 10) argue that disaster events have local meanings “that are often expressed in the narrative accounts of local residents” and that “these multiple and varied meanings” are “always rooted in local cosmologies, histories, political structures, gender ideologies, economies, and lived experiences.” Button and Schuller, “Introduction,” in *Contextualizing Disaster*, New York: Berghahn Books. Across several generations, they are responded to by people with changing notions of community and whose cultural values were shaped by their environment and the changing social systems in the area. Raška, P. (2019). Contextualizing community-based landslide risk reduction: an evolutionary perspective. *Landslides*, 16(9), 1747-1762. Bankoff, G., & Oven, K. (2019). From nomadic communitarianism to civil socialism: Searching for the roots of civil society in rural Kazakhstan. *Journal of Civil Society*, 1-19. Moreover, these events play a role in the maintenance or overturning of these social orders across history. Izdebski, A., Mordechai, L., & White, S. (2018). The social burden of resilience: a historical perspective. *Human ecology*, 46(3), 291-303. Because of the diverse meanings, values, and socio-historical impacts brought about by these catastrophic events in global history, disaster historians thus need to be attuned to various local and global contexts in their analysis of the “vulnerability,” “resilience,” and “adaptation” (historical discourses with origins in the West) of different societies across time and space. Bankoff, G. (2019). Remaking the world in our own image: vulnerability, resilience and adaptation as historical discourses. *Disasters*, 43(2), 221-239. As the case of Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda illustrates, “resilience” and “vulnerability” can have divergent meanings from the perspectives of the developed and developing world that can be politicized in ongoing disputes at the local, national, and global levels. Bankoff, G., & Borrinaga, G. E. (2016). Whithering the storm: the twin natures of typhoons Haiyan and Yolanda. In *Contextualizing Disaster*. New York: Berghahn Books, 44-65.

part of "a kind of feedback between remembering, learning, and enhancing individual, social, and environmental well-being" (Tidball et al. 2010, 591).

Forgetting the lessons of past adversity, on the other hand, can have catastrophic consequences. Colten and Sumpter (2009), for example, in their analysis of how "inadequate preservation and appreciation of past events and a failure to incorporate historical understanding into hazards management plans" factored into the Hurricane Katrina disaster in New Orleans, asserts that "resilience resides, in part, in the ability to draw on past experiences and is inherently historical—both in formal and informal terms." They suggest that "deliberate and professional attempts to include and preserve portions of the reservoir of social memory are just as critical to successful and resilient plans as their future-oriented elements" (Colten and Sumpter 2009, 357).

In the case of the Philippines, local coping practices and past local knowledge of disaster experiences (Bankoff 2012) tend to be left out from recent disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) plans. Studies have found that Philippine cultures have adaptive practices (ranging from flexible house architecture to dispersed landholding arrangements) that may at first glance be seen as indicators of vulnerability from a Western developmental perspective but are actually intended to cope with the adverse effects of a hazard-prone environment (Bankoff 2012). But apart from house design and livelihood practices that mitigate loss from various forms of risks and hazards, local societies have also developed various practices that facilitate risk responses and disaster recovery. Often, they are based on cooperative practices that are regularly applied in their everyday affairs. The beliefs and local knowledge that inform these practices must also be taken into account in light of what they can tell us about the distinct ways people view their adaptation to different social and natural environments and how they come to remember these responses as historical experiences.

## Well-Being and the Good Future

A final element in the coping process that this study examines are changing notions of a “good future.” In all the periods to be examined in the chapters to follow, expressed-hopes for the attainment or recovery of “well-being” and “good fortune” (*kaopayan, suwerte*, etc) often recur in narratives about adversity and crisis. This juxtaposition of present hardship and aspirations of future happiness is often meant to assure prospective participants in risky group endeavours of future divinely-provided reward for withstanding difficulties through mutual help and cooperation. Moreover, the collective “sacrifice for an ideal”<sup>43</sup> undergone by members of various kinds of organizations are often explained by these participants/agents as practiced or done for the sake of their family or loved ones<sup>44</sup> and for future generations.

In a 1984 speech given just over a year before the fall of the Marcos regime in 1986, the late statesman and human-rights lawyer Jose W. Diokno even argued that this attitude towards the present and the future formed part of a distinct “Filipino Dream:”

“There is one dream that all Filipinos share: that our children may have a better life than we have had. So there is one vision that is distinctly Filipino: the vision to make this country, our country, a nation for our children.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> McCoy, A. W. (1982). *Baylan*: animist religion and Philippine peasant ideology. *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, 10(3), 141-194.

<sup>44</sup> Borchgrevink, A. (2003). Ideas of power in the Philippines: Amulets and sacrifice. *Cultural Dynamics*, 15(1), 41-69.

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Robin Broad, with John Cavanagh, *Plundering Paradise: The Struggle for the Environment in the Philippines* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1993), caption for the photo section between pp. 89-90. Full text also available online: <http://diokno.org/post/3499678968/a-nation-for-our-children> (Accessed: 22 July 2018)

Although it bears similarities with the “American Dream”<sup>46</sup> and other national aspirations, such a hope for the future is nevertheless indicative of a difficult environment and history whose combined effects a majority of “Filipinos” have had to struggle against on a daily basis.

Crises thus bring groups of people together in pursuit of an ideal future that eventually comes after enduring/experiencing adversity. However, the changing definitions of “well-being” in the narratives introduced by outside agents have continually transformed the forms of solidarity that it generates. Changing notions of crisis and forms of solidarity have also helped to change, transform, or add to the group names or labels that can be called upon for mass mobilisation when responding to adversity. An image that perhaps best represents how community resilience is imagined in Samar and Leyte is a piece of graffiti art that appeared along a wall separating a Tacloban City cemetery (El Reposo) from a major thoroughfare leading into the city (Real Street) after Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda devastated that city (See Figure 3).



Figure 3. Post-Yolanda graffiti along Real Street, Tacloban City  
(Photo by George Borrinaga, 23 December 2013)

As an expression of hope amidst crisis, the artwork highlights the link between future well-being and the need for united cooperation against adversity. Its

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<sup>46</sup> Roth, J. K. (1976). *American Dreams: Meditations on Life in the United States*. San Francisco: Chandler & Sharp Publishers, Inc.

allusions to the present situation people were then facing and the need for unified action to recover from the disaster would not have escaped many of the typhoon survivors going into and out of the city in the uncertain days after the super typhoon struck on 8 November 2013. This researcher, who was born and raised in Tacloban, arrived in the city on the second day after the typhoon to check on family and initially missed the significance of the above image that I captured on camera over a month after the typhoon, perhaps on the assumption that it had been there prior to the typhoon and was thus unrelated to the text next to it which directly referred to the event (“Yolanda Nov. 8 2k13 Super Typhooooon”).

It was not until 2016, in the course of doing interviews for the chapter on Typhoon Yolanda that I chanced upon the person who made the image: the Tacloban City-based artist Randolph Cayanong. In my interview with him (about the typhoon and an inspirational message written by his artist father on a billboard that generated attention from national and international media; see discussion on Cesar Cayanong’s billboard in Chapter 4), he mentioned a graffiti piece he did in almost-total darkness sometime after the disaster that he created as an instinctive response to the event.<sup>47</sup> The sketch he made on my notebook of what the piece looked like matched that of the picture I took of the graffiti art along the cemetery wall (See Figure 15).

Seen in hindsight, the themes in Cayanong’s image closely parallels the dissertation title I submitted for consideration just a few months after witnessing first-hand the devastation wrought by the typhoon as well as the local responses to it: “*Onong* [solidarity], *Kataragman* [dangers/catastrophe], and the Sacrifice for *Kaopayan* [(future) well-being and good fortune].” This thesis thus aims to provide historical and cultural context to Cayanong’s representation of solidarity and collective resilience.

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<sup>47</sup> Queries made by journalists about the message and authorship of the graffiti piece along the cemetery walls in turn inspired Cayanong’s father to create a series of inspirational and critical billboards that appeared in subsequent months as post-typhoon activity in the city transitioned from relief to rehabilitation and recovery operations.

## Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 discusses the conditions behind the emergence of early Spanish period identifications such as *Bisaya*, *Cristiano*, and *Pintados*, the kinds of solidarities generated through these labels, and the meanings ascribed to them by both the Spaniards and the people of Samar and Leyte. The chapter will argue that people responded to the crises engendered by the Spanish “spiritual conquest” based on how they saw the condition of the reciprocal relationships they had established with their new Christian spiritual patrons and their mediums. However, those advocating for cosmological/societal return/change in the aftermath of these crises took on gendered leadership roles and appealed to unifying identity labels that, although imagined as hearkening back to a glorious past, were in fact Spanish-period impositions that had come to be internalized in local culture. These labels also acquired meanings that reflected the hybrid culture that emerged in the Eastern Visayas after three centuries of Spanish rule.

Chapter 2 demonstrates the applicability of the identity-based coping process discussed in the first chapter by examining the local perceptions of and responses to a series of health, environmental, and social crises running up to the dawn of the 20th Century that were seen as divinely-ordained. It argues that the Philippine Revolution introduced a “Filipino” national identity based on love for a “motherland” symbolized by the Virgin Mary and looked after by a new set of both national and local hero(in)es, including the martyred Dr. Jose Rizal. These exemplars of action helped communities navigate the last waves of imperial occupation in their pursuit of a divinely-promised but long-withheld “independence” dreamt of at the family and village levels. Moreover, the dismissive labels applied to peasant-based movements during this period, took on meanings reflecting piousness, militancy, and marginality, characteristics which became a source of empowerment for groups who may have seen themselves as the most oppressed in the local society of the time.

Chapter 3 looks at the emergence and localization of the interrelated post-Second World War group labels by which the people speaking the major language in the Eastern Visayas were called by others and by themselves in an independent Philippines. It traces how, despite opposition from the local intelligentsia, the process of appropriating and transforming the often negative and stereotypic meanings attributed to these appellations were shaped by the hardships and crises people had to cope with, both in their home region of Samar and Leyte and in the new destinations they moved to in search of better opportunities.

Chapter 4 shows how the group labels and associated meanings discussed in previous chapters were called upon to generate solidarity and collective mobilisation in the aftermath of the most devastating natural disaster of the post-independence period, caused by Super Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda in 2013. It will argue that the survivor's new self-regard that came out of their disaster experience was only the latest iteration in a longer and repeated process that memorialised crisis experiences and people's (modified) collective survival practices through new or transformed group labels (e.g., *Yolanda Survivor*, *Waraynon*, *Waray-Waray*, *Filipino*, *Bisaya*, *Cristiano*, *Pintados*, etc.).

Together, these chapters underscore a historical and cultural process whereby communities are brought together in times of hardship by the various names that they have come to assimilate through their past experiences in dealing with frequent adversity. They examine various group labels that, although often the subjects of debates over their applicability or acceptability, are nevertheless instructive of how people in Samar and Leyte and beyond have coped with uncertainty across generations. It shows how these contested names should instead be regarded as windows toward a greater understanding of the histories and environments in which people are situated and from where they will continue to hope, fear, and prepare for what the future brings.



Figure 4. Illustrations of Bisayan *principales* and slaves from Alcina's *Historia de Las Islas e Indios de Bisayas...* 1668 (Alcina, *Historia...* 1668, Parte I, Lib. I, Cap. 2)

## CHAPTER 1

### Spiritual Conquest, Religious Conversion, and the Localisation of *Bisaya-Christiano* Identity, 1580-1880

This chapter provides an overview of changing notions of local identity brought about by the colonial processes of “Christianization” and “Hispanization” in Samar and Leyte from the early- to late-Spanish colonial period and traces their link to community responses to various forms of risks and crises. It will first discuss how the Spanish conquest transformed local identities through the introduction to the indigenous cosmology of the notion of an omnipotent God who, through successive early-Spanish period crises, was shown to be more powerful than the environmental gods and ancestral spirits which had traditionally provided for the health, security and well-being of autonomous communities in the islands. This power was proven to the indigenous population by the apparent ability of the early Jesuit missionaries to cure the sick (especially during a smallpox epidemic), protect their crops and provide good harvest, and overpower the indigenous gods and spirits in armed revolts seen as part of a cosmic struggle between the old gods of the pre-colonial animistic religion and new Christian deities. Although the missionaries tasked with teaching Christian doctrine to the islanders would gradually gain more converts calling themselves “Bisayans” and “Christians,” who were attracted by the idea of a more powerful being that could provide for their needs through European spirit-mediumship, the natural/human crises people continued to face from the 17th to the 19th centuries would nevertheless give rise to social movements that appropriated these new identity labels. They first sought to revive their ancient culture and religion (i.e., a return to the fold of the old gods/spirits or “*diwata*”) and later sought to transform local society and religion through alternative “Christian” leaders (native “priests/priestesses” and “kings”) who could continue to channel God’s power for community good and well-being.

The chapter will argue that these Spanish-period crises were interpreted in the light of people's assessments of the beneficiality of the reciprocal relationship they had established with the Spaniards and the Christian God. Moreover, those advocating for cosmological/societal change in the aftermath of these crises appealed to unifying identity labels that, although imagined as hearkening back to a glorious past, were actually Spanish-period impositions that had come to be internalized in local culture. Understanding how initially clashing ideas (e.g., indigenous gods vs Christian God) could eventually be reconciled in local culture and result in hybrid practices and beliefs that in many ways persist up to the present requires a comparison with how other religious systems were reconciled in other parts of the world through a process of syncretism. As the global historian Bentley had observed in his wide-ranging study about similar cultural interactions across the world, "By no means...did efforts at cultural expansion result in the replication of a given tradition in a new region; when crossing cultural boundaries, beliefs and values necessarily adapted and made accommodations to the political, social, and economic, as well as cultural traditions of different peoples. Thus, when it occurred on a large scale, cross-cultural conversion followed a process of syncretism rather than wholesale cultural transformation, or the refashioning of one people according to the cultural standards of another."<sup>48</sup> In the examples that follow, it will be shown how both Christian practices and anti-colonial movements came to exhibit survivals of old practices and beliefs, and the selective appropriation of new influences from outsider agents. What these transformations have in common, despite difficulties in distinguishing between which aspects are "indigenous" or "colonial" in origin, are attempts by groups of people at forging unity under different leaders and identifications in the face of frequent risks and hazards that continually threatened small communities in Samar and Leyte.

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<sup>48</sup> Jerry H. Bentley, *Old World Encounters*, p. 110.

## EARLY SPANISH PERIOD CRISES AND EMERGING CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITIES

A recurring theme in the chronicles of the conversion process in the Eastern Visayas was how the natives (i.e., *naturales* in Father Francisco Ignacio Alcina's terminology), whether converted to Christianity or not, saw various extreme events such as disease, typhoons, and human conflict as part of a running conflict between the God introduced to the islands by the Europeans and the ancient/ancestral gods the natives had worshipped in pre-colonial times. The resolution of this cosmic conflict was dependent on the ability of their respective spirit-mediums to interpret and respond to crises (both human-induced and environmental) and to heal disease or display prowess in combat. Phenomena such as locust plagues, epidemic disease and natural disasters, for instance, could be attributed by indigenous spirit-mediums to the agency of ancestral deities angered by the intrusion of the European missionaries and who were thus punishing converts for their acceptance of Christian teachings. But examples from the chronicles also saw the missionaries later interpreting such events as caused by the Christian God to punish non-believers. People's collective responses to the environmental and social crises of the early Spanish period in the Eastern Visayas were thus contingent on the words and actions of indigenous and European spirit-mediums vying for supremacy in a time of conquest and its consequent transformations.

### Epidemic Disease and Religious Conversion

Accounts about the Jesuits in Leyte and Samar suggest that environmental and human-induced crises played crucial roles in helping the missionaries convert the indigenous population:

"In time of pestilence they minister to the sick and the dying; and they gain great influence among all classes. They secure the good-will of

hostile natives, quell a threatened revolt among those of Leyte, and reclaim certain outlaws and bandits."<sup>49</sup>

The first Jesuits to arrive in Leyte in 1595 came at a time of simmering tensions between the *encomenderos* (territorial trustees) and the indigenous population. As Father Pedro Chirino (leader of the first batch of Jesuits who arrived in Leyte and writer of the first detailed account of the Jesuit missions in the Philippines) noted about his and his colleagues earliest visits to Leyte towns, most of these *encomenderos* did not dare to travel beyond the territories under their control and Chirino hints at widespread unrest in the island between Spaniards and the local population.<sup>50</sup>

The Jesuit method of evangelization in the Eastern Visayas involved befriending local leaders (the *datu*) who afterwards accompanied the missionaries to the different settlements of his followers. The Jesuits also established boarding schools in the *doctrinas* (mission stations) for the sons of indigenous elites of the *encomiendas* (territorial trusteeships) covered by each *doctrina*. Owing to their shortage in manpower, the missionaries expected these boys to teach people the catechism and doctrine they had learned in school upon their return to their villages (Chirino 2010, 88-89; B&R 13, 15). Mastery of the vernacular language appears to have been the key means by which the Jesuits were able to effect the rapid evangelization of Leyte and Samar in their first decade in the islands. For instance, the inhabitants of the town of Catubig (in northern Samar) who warmly welcomed the first Jesuit priest and lay-brother to reach them in 1597 "were very happy and greatly surprised to hear the new priest address and speak to them in their own

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<sup>49</sup> Blair & Roberston 13, p. 9.

<sup>50</sup> Chirino, P. (2010). *History of the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus: Volume 2*. As Newson notes about the early years of the Jesuits in Leyte and Samar: "The initial establishment of the missions [in Leyte and Samar] in 1596 and 1597 was delayed by a major epidemic and in Leyte by the need to proceed slowly due to native unrest provoked by ill treatment by *encomenderos*" (Linda A. Newson, *Conquest and pestilence in the early Spanish Philippine*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2011, p. 89).

language."<sup>51</sup> Linguistic proficiency would have easily facilitated the translation and introduction of new concepts which would transform local beliefs and practices pertaining to the present world and the afterlife.

The curative powers attributed to priests and church objects such as religious icons, holy water (which in several instances are noted to have attracted new converts because of its healing power) and church rituals served to attract communities to the new teachings brought by the early Jesuit missionaries. In 1596, for instance, the good health and good rice harvest enjoyed by the people of Dulag, Leyte that year was attributed to the presence of the first two Jesuit missionaries who had arrived the year before (Chirino 2010, 90). Father Chirino's chronicle also cites numerous instances of initially hostile and evasive natives (e.g., Palo, Leyte; Tinago, Samar) eventually approaching and befriending the priests and later converting after demonstrating their ability to heal previously unknown diseases (such as the smallpox which the Spaniards had brought to the islands) or through their re-interpretation of the hazards which threatened the community (such as the locusts/pests God sent to one village to punish those who had two wives) (Chirino in B&R, Vol. 13, 53). The "reduction" of scattered settlements into mission villages in subsequent years thus seemed to have been based in part on the voluntary relocation of converts who were attracted by the prospect of being closer to the presence of powerful priests and sacred icons that could provide them with supernatural protection, good fortune and healing (B&R 13, 17, 19).

But an important precipitating factor to these developments from the locals' tense interactions with Spanish *encomenderos* to friendly relations with the Jesuits seem to be the outbreak of what seemed to have been a smallpox

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<sup>51</sup> Quoted in Kobak and Fernandez, Alcina in *Philippiniana Sacra*, no. 41, 1979, p. 411, note 20; Chirino 2010, 120

epidemic that ravaged the colony around the time the Jesuits were still establishing themselves in the area:<sup>52</sup>

“In 1596 there broke out in Palu [now Palo, Leyte] an epidemic that terrified many of its inhabitants, and Father [Cristobal] Ximenez had observed the spread of this illness from its beginnings. He cooperated with the more famous herbalists and with some herbs that were provided freely by the neighborhood, they were able to achieve a good number of cures. In exchange for the charity induced from this [curing act], [and] to look for the protection from that religious, [the inhabitants] took advantage of very good joint [effort] by facilitating the water of baptism to enough people.”<sup>53</sup>

This account thus suggests a successful early case of mutual help between European missionaries and their local counterparts (famous [women?] herbalists) who had local knowledge of medicine plants in the island. In turn, people who flocked to Palo to observe the healing rituals performed by the Jesuits were convinced to seek help from these foreign curers who, instead of charging for their services like the *bayan/asog* of old, instead only sought their help in getting people to be baptized into the Christian faith (see “From Balianes to Maestras” section below on the Christian conversion of local priestesses).

In Samar, on the other hand, the spread of the infectious disease had been interpreted in light of the people’s apparent strained relationship with Makapatag, the ancient Bisayan war god who the people of Ibabao called the “Great Leveller” or “Great Equalizer,” possibly due to his ability to cause phenomena such as fierce typhoons. Makapatag was “the Son of Malaon [who] lived on [Homonhon] island and is considered the greatest of the Diwatas -- like

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<sup>52</sup> Newson, L.A., (2009) *Conquest and pestilence in the early Spanish Philippines*. University of Hawaii Press.

<sup>53</sup> Chirino, P. (2009) *History of the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus: Volume 2*.

Jupiter for the Romans" (Alcina 1668). The natives seemed to have regarded Spanish-brought smallpox as Makapatag's punishment for people's acceptance of Jesuit teachings:

"When the first [Jesuit] Fathers arrive[d in] these towns [c.1596-1597], on this entire coast [of *Ibabao*, now Northern Samar and Eastern Samar provinces] as far as Catarman (there was a plague with high mortality). The natives attributed it to Makapat[a]g. They said that he had gone around the coastlines and infected the atmosphere. In order to obtain health, they offered many *pag-anitos* [rituals] to him. The Fathers expended no little toil and later even more (for they were not so well-versed in the language) so as to make them aware of this error, which still endures to this day [c. 1668] among the more unlettered ones." (Alcina, *Historia... 1668*, Part II, Book 3, Chapter 25)

What these local interpretation of events of the early Jesuit years in Leyte and Samar suggest is a prevailing view at that time of a developing conflict between the ancient deities of the natives and the new Christian deity introduced by the Jesuits.

### Natural Hazards and Cosmic Conflict

Environmental hazards also informed indigenous perceptions about how Jesuit attempts at religious conversion figured in a greater cosmic conflict between indigenous and Christian deities. In pre-Christian times, various unseen deities were seen as responsible for observable environmental features and phenomena such as rain, rivers, etc. (Scott 1994). During extreme events such as floods and storms, spirit mediums such as the *baylan* were thus important in appeasing angry deities through ritual sacrifice. Although natural hazards would later be interpreted among Christianized lowland groups in the Philippines as punishment for sin, early Spanish-period indigenous priest(esse)s who continued to oppose the Jesuit presence attributed these phenomena to

the continuing cosmic conflict between the indigenous gods and the God introduced by the missionaries.

The passing of typhoons would also be powerful and destructive events which would inform native interpretations of the changes brought about by Spanish rule. Alcina noted how, "This type of hurricane is a very strong tempest, so many and so strong hitting these islands that neither Virgil nor Ovid nor any other poet I have read can describe its destructive power. These occur very often and we suffer so much, that even after experiencing them, it is difficult to believe these can happen." (Alcina...1668) A furious typhoon (*huracán*) which struck the Jesuits' Leyte missions around October or November 1601 destroyed the towns and left churches and houses in ruins.<sup>54</sup> The destruction of plantations, fields, crops, fruit trees, vegetables and other sources of food also caused a general famine and the outbreak of disease. In the aftermath of the disaster, a woman priestess (*babáyan*) preached to the people that the *Diwáta* (the native god) was furious at what the (Jesuit) Fathers were teaching and brought about punishment and destruction through these typhoons (*Ibid.*).

Frequent seismic activity also damaged or destroyed churches and convents that symbolized the power of the church. Such destruction of new Christian settlements caused by earthquakes were likewise interpreted by the ancient spirit mediums as signs of disapproval of the ancient Bisayan gods for the European presence and their growing influence on the native population. After a 1608 earthquake that had its epicentre near the important Dulag mission in Leyte (the location of a boarding school for the children of the island's chiefs), an elderly priestess (i.e., a *babaylan*) told the people that the diwata of old was angered by the lies spread by the Jesuits and that the present calamity would be followed by more destructive ones if people did not renounce their new

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<sup>54</sup> Colin-Pastells 1900, Bk. III, Ch. IX, 137

faith. She added that the doctrines taught by the priests were nothing but a mere invention of the Spanish King to extend his kingdom.<sup>55</sup>

Similar to how the natives interpreted disease and typhoons as manifestations of the wrath of indigenous *diwata* gods, human conflict was likewise seen as a test of wills between the contending gods represented by warring parties. In Alcina's chronicle, the case of an impending military confrontation during the Tamblot Revolt between the Spanish pacification forces and the rebel groups became a testing ground for the power contest between the Christian God and an unidentified *diwata* (native god) in Bohol Island.<sup>56</sup> The former's defeat would have signaled the weakness of the Jesuit Fathers and the patron saints, the two main focal points of Christian power and identification in the *reducciones*, and the ease with which *diwata*-empowered apostates and their *balian/diwatahan* leaders could overthrow Spanish rule. But an opposite outcome would have proven the Christian God's power over the *diwatas* and the falsity of the claims made through their *balian/diwatahan* intermediaries. Undecided communities therefore adopted what might be called a "wait-and-see" attitude before committing to a course of action. As Father Alcina relates of the sentiment of a Jesuit colleague assigned to Loboc, Bohol during the 1621-1622 uprisings:

"The Father was full of anxiety about the undertaking of our Spaniards; for he knew that they had already set out for it, but [they] did not take into consideration the possible consequences. He was even much more concerned in seeing the tendencies of the natives who standing, as they say, on one foot like the cranes, were only waiting for some news, either in favor or against the Spaniards, so that they may declare themselves accordingly for one side or the other. And, as I heard him say a number of times, he saw them greatly inclined to side with the insurgents. They

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<sup>55</sup> *Cross over Candaya*, p. 50.

<sup>56</sup> According to Newson (*Conquest and Pestilence*, p. 84): "In 1621 there was an uprising in Bohol inspired by a *diwata*, a spirit, which allegedly encouraged significant numbers to flee with promises of food in abundance and escape from the burdens of tribute and forced labor."

were so over-confident in the false promises of their *diwata* that the arrival of some unfavorable news for the Father, to fall upon him and kill him and pillage the *cabecera* would have been one and the same thing, etc.” (Alcina...1668 in *Philippiniana Sacra* 42, p. 517)

The rebellion’s defeat in both Bohol and Leyte by 1622 seemed to have put an end to perceptions of *diwata* participation in local social movements. References to the indigenous gods no longer appear in Spanish chronicles about subsequent revolts in the Eastern Visayas, although *babaylan* spirit mediums continue to be mentioned by European missionaries even after the 1768-1769 expulsion of the Jesuits.<sup>57</sup>

### Moro Raids, Mutual Protection, and Retribution

The slave raids by groups who had previously been targeted by pre-Hispanic communities in Samar and Leyte became a recurrent problem for communities which had been disarmed as a consequence of their Christian conversion. The problem of community security, which would not be properly addressed by the Spanish colonial government until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, would serve as one important factor in generating doubts about the wisdom of remaining under the colonial fold during the early Spanish period.<sup>58</sup>

It was in one of the earliest raids on Leyte (in the more than century-long history of raids from southern groups) that the vulnerability of its Christianised communities would be pointed out to the local *datu* leaders by Datu Buisan, then the sultan of Maguindanao (1597–1619). When Buisan and his fleet raided Dulag on 29 October 1603, he called upon its Christianised chiefs to forge an

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<sup>57</sup> As Aguilar (*Clash of Spirits*, p. 41) notes: “With the unremitting success of Friar Power, the *anito* and *diwata* began to lose their abilities to cause as well as heal illnesses and, in general, to affect the course of human existence. Symbolic of the destruction of the islanders’ precolonial identity and world of meaning, the indigenous deities eventually vanished. In their place today are found Hispanic spirits who, interestingly, exhibit the same behavior as the preconquest gods [i.e., the *encantos*].”

<sup>58</sup> Warren, J. F. (1981) *The Sulu Zone, 1768-1898*. Singapore: Singapore University Press.

alliance with him in order to successfully overthrow the Spaniards who had failed to provide the protection they had promised the natives upon their conversion (Borrinaga 2009). The 1603 raid on Dulag was done in retaliation for the failed Spanish expedition of 1596 for the conquest of Mindanao in which Fr. Juan del Campo, formerly of the Dulag mission, had served as chaplain. Fr. del Campo, as in similar expeditions,<sup>59</sup> had possibly brought along with him Bisayan auxiliaries from the Dulag mission for the Figueroa expedition. The Maguindanao raiders of 1603 were able to destroy the churches and other houses of ten Leyte pueblos covered by the Dulag mission, including those of Dagami and Burauen in the island's interior.<sup>60</sup> The Maguindanao leader Datu Buisan's offer of assistance to local leaders, formalized through the *sandugo* [blood compact] ritual, also apparently helped trigger an early 1600s revolt in the Dulag area which necessitated harsh punishments through hanging in order to quell unrest.<sup>61</sup> The growth of these Christianized towns in the Visayas, along with the lack of an effective defense system against Moro Raids (the natives had been disarmed and could no longer fight back or conduct counter-raids as in pre-Hispanic times), seem to have encouraged and attracted further Moro raids upon these communities.<sup>62</sup>

In addition to the security crisis brought about by Christianization and community reduction, the frequent raids on Christianized communities also

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<sup>59</sup> See Alcina, *PSacra* 41, p. 389 for a later example of 2000 Bisayan auxiliaries which accompanied 200 Spanish soldiers in the expedition led by General Don Juan Manuel de la Vega and chaplained by Fr. Roman, the Manila-based Procurator of the [Philippine] Jesuit Province, and Fr. Pascual de Acuña, who as rector of the Dagami *cabecera* had been captured in a 1613 *Caragan* raid on the Dagami *visita* of Palo and reinstated to his old post after being ransomed in 1614.

<sup>60</sup> Colin-Pastells 1900, Bk. III, Ch. XXVIII, 379. The inhabitants of the affected towns were still trying to recover from the impact of this raid three years later.

<sup>61</sup> See Alcina...1668 on the saying "Han Pedraza pa bitay pa." (During Pedraza's time, it was death by hanging). The 1603 Buisan raid provides the earliest instance of a recurring theme in the colonial history of Samar and Leyte: i.e, of perceived/promised outsider support against the colonizer (See discussion on the "stranger king" phenomenon in Chapter 2).

<sup>62</sup> Alcina, *Historia*...1668 in *Philippiniana Sacra*, no. 41, p. 377.

reveal a crisis in leadership as pre-colonial warrior *datu*s were replaced by Europeans as focal points of community security. Missionaries such as Alcina complained of the practice of natives assigned to face the marauders of falling back and resorting to ambush tactics rather than directly facing their adversaries which had been a common practice in pre-colonial times. (Alcina 1668; Scott 1994)<sup>63</sup> Other episodes in Alcina's account would suggest that it was not so much cowardice on the part of the natives that dissuaded them from confronting the raiders but their being forced to fight under unfamiliar Spanish military leaders who (despite the praise given to them by Alcina and other chroniclers) were unproven to the natives in terms of their preternatural and martial prowess. In a 17th century raid on Carigara, for instance, the native defenders retreated just as the raiders landed on shore, abandoning their two arquebus-armed Spanish commanders on the beach. As possessors of protective supernatural power, it was instead the Jesuit missionaries, especially the more active ones, who the islanders seemed to have considered to be viable military leaders around which the Bisayan converts could rally in order to counteract the Moro threat. Like Father del Campo before him, another Jesuit priest, Father de Acuña seemed to have been seen as such during the circa 1609 de la Vega expedition sent to conquer the *Caragans*: "The presence and participation of Father Pascual de Acuña was extremely important for the morale of the native auxiliaries, who were mostly Bisayans and who were familiar with the said Father." (Alcina in *Philippiniana Sacra* 41, 389).<sup>64</sup> In this case, Father Pascual de Acuña could have been seen as an alternative to pre-colonial *datu* chiefs who led their men in retaliatory raids, the non-performance of which could warrant punishment from un-avenged ancestral souls. Participation in Spanish military expeditions were thus one way

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<sup>63</sup> The ancient *Pintados* did practice frontal attacks but this was using their *karakoa* warships to sail out and confront the approaching enemy ships before these vessels could fall upon their communities (Scott 1994).

<sup>64</sup> See also Madigan, F.C., 1963. The early history of Cagayan de Oro. *Philippine Studies*, 11(1), pp.76-130.

of seeking continuities with older customs when responding to a threat such as slave raids.

In terms of Christian religious rituals, the seeking of divine protection through ritualized devotion (just as the ancient Bisayans did when seeking help from indigenous gods and ancestors) became an important practice for Christianized communities that were vulnerable to seasonal raids from various Moro raiding groups. Despite the lack of an effective community-based defense against raids and the rarity of the powerful presence of fighting priests who led the defense against slave raids in the 18th and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Cruikshank 1985), the early Christian converts could pin their hopes on religious icons for divine intervention. In Samar for instance, it became a Saturday custom "to have a Solemn Mass in honour of the Most Holy Virgin [*Virgen Santísima*]; the reason for this practice was that She might protect these natives from these enemies [*garde de enemigos a estos naturales*]." <sup>65</sup> In his classic work *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, de la Costa could thus argue that the Moro raids played an important role in deepening and strengthening the new faith of the Visayans. <sup>66</sup>

However, other examples suggest that religious devotion as a result of slave raids did not equate to relocation to exposed coastal or lowland areas where Christian settlements had been established. Although the raids could help strengthen people's identification with Christianity, settlement patterns could remain dispersed when people decided to keep their distance from vulnerable settlements. These so-called *remontados* or *cimarrones* sought not only to escape the dangers of slave raids but also the various impositions (tribute, conscription, compulsory labor) demanded upon Christianized inhabitants of the *reducciones* by the colonial state. Samar's hilly interior and Leyte's central mountain range became a haven for many such *remontado* communities

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<sup>65</sup> Alcina, *Historia...1668* in *Philippiniana Sacra*, no. 42, pp. 528-529.

<sup>66</sup> Cited in William Larousse, "A Local Church Living for Dialogue: Muslim-Christian Relations in Mindanao," p. 69.

(Cruikshank 1985). Samar's highly dispersed settlement pattern was due in part to the preponderance of rivers on the island (alongside which settlements were often established) and safer locations in the interior.<sup>67</sup> Marchando notes as follows on the sentiments of many people in Samar about the Spanish colonial government after the 1768-1769 Jesuit Expulsions as reported by Franciscan missionaries who replaced the Jesuits: "In another order of things, the absence of an armada to clean up the shores of Samar of the pirates caused the Samareños not to feel much attached to a government that did not bother to protect them. This was the case of the inhabitants of Calviga [Calviga], visita of Humauas, which counted in addition to its 200 tributes, with other 500 of *cimarrones* (people living in the wild) who refused to pay it [i.e., tribute], as long as there are no armadas from Manila to scare off the Moros. The fact is that, according to the testimony of Fray Joaquín José, many of them heard mass and all came to defend the pueblo when produced at the entry of the pirates."<sup>68</sup> This example suggests that the loyalty of so-called *cimarrones* to the priest in Calviga and their adherence to Christian teachings did not necessarily extend to a civil government without a visible presence in their locale. The principle of mutual aid is nevertheless evident in their reasons for their non-payment of tribute (due to the lack of a security apparatus to deter attacks) and the assistance they gave to the Catholic priests when raids did occur (presumably to repay the priest for the material and spiritual well-being his presence gave to the community).

On the other hand, the "Moros" and "Bisayans" seem to have shared similar motivations in embracing the monotheistic religions that had recently been introduced to the region. For the raiders, who had embraced the Islamic faith

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<sup>67</sup> Cruikshank 1985.

<sup>68</sup> Marchando, Marta Maria. Consecuencias de la expulsión de los jesuitas: Filipinas. Madrid: Fundacion Ignacio Larramendi, 2011. E-book at <http://www.larramendi.es/i18n/consulta/registro.do?id=1214> (Accessed: 30 July 2016)

only decades before those of the inhabitants of the northern islands converted to Christianity,<sup>69</sup> health and well-being as provided by Allah through the Prophet also seemed to have been a key pre-occupation that drove them to target the supernaturally powerful Jesuits and their church icons. Father Cristobal de Lara, in a 3 July 1636 letter reporting the capture and death of Fr. Bilancio (who figured in the Bankaw Revolt discussed below), writes:

These latter came forth this year with intent to kill all the fathers that should fall into their hands, on account of a vow which they made to their false god Mahoma that, if he would give them health, they would pursue the fathers who are teaching a religion different from their own. Sanô, their infamous king, complied with this vow, and brought out his army of cruel savages to attack the villages of the Society. They wrought havoc worse than can be told, sparing no one. When they learned that the fathers had fled to the mountains, they sent out dogs to capture them and get them in their power—in the meantime burning houses and churches and outraging the images. They overtook the good father Juan del Carpio, whom they cut into pieces and killed with inhuman and unheard-of cruelty. Before this they had captured our good old man and father, Domingo Vilanzio, a holy man who died from the ill-treatment which they inflicted upon him.<sup>70</sup>

The imposition of new religions therefore did not lead to total cultural transformation in an archipelago which shared older historical and cultural ties as well as physical environments in which people dealt with frequent social and environmental adversity.

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<sup>69</sup> Reid, A., 1993. Islamization and Christianization in Southeast Asia: the critical phase, 1550-1650. *Southeast Asia in the early modern era: trade, power, and belief*, pp.151-79.

<sup>70</sup> B&R, vol. 26, 266; see also B&R, vol. 25, 93 which identifies the "Mahometan [king of] Jolo" as the captor of "father Juan Dominico Bilançio."

## The Hispano-Dutch War

The Spanish need to counter the Dutch threat also added to the burdens of Christian life.<sup>71</sup> The Netherlands was then a colony of Spain under the Habsburg Dynasty and as part of their resistance they sought to dislodge the Spaniards from their hold on the Philippines. During the conflict, a series of raiding expeditions were sent to the colony (Olivier van Noort in 1600, Francois de Wittert in 1609-1610, and Joris van Speilbergen in 1616-1617) culminating during its last phase in the Battles of La Naval de Manila in 1646 and the Dutch bombardment of Manila in 1647.<sup>72</sup> The Treaty of Westphalia was signed in 1648, marking the end of the Thirty Years' War. However, news of the peace agreement would not reach the Philippines until the following year, just a few months after the Sumuroy Rebellion in Samar, whose leaders had hoped for Dutch assistance in fighting the Spaniards, sparked a series of uprisings throughout much of the Philippines.<sup>73</sup> Before then, the Spanish colonial government required personnel and materiel to protect the Christian missions and the trading port in Manila from Dutch incursions. Among the grievances which touched off the Sumuroy uprising had been the impending plan to send Bisayan laborers to the Cavite shipyards near Manila to build war vessels for the naval defense of the colony. This would have constituted a new threat to families whose loss of working age male members would have signified a threat to food security and household security, especially in the face of frequent slave raids.

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<sup>71</sup> Bankoff, Greg. "Wood for War: The Legacy of Human Conflict on the Forests of the Philippines, 1565–1946", in Charles E. Closmann, ed., *War and the Environment: Military Destruction in the Modern Age* (College Station, Tex.: Texas A&M University Press, 2009), pp. 32-48.

<sup>72</sup> Historical Atlas of the Republic 2016, p. 75.

<sup>73</sup> Kobak, "The Sumuroy Rebellion"

## ANTI-COLONIAL SOLIDARITIES AND APPROPRIATED IDENTITIES

The impact of the above-described transformations in indigenous beliefs, practices and identities as a result of the Spanish conquest is evident in the social movements which challenged Spanish control over the islands. Spanish accounts of the development and suppression of revolts in Samar and Leyte before 1880 provide interesting insights into the transformations in early Spanish-period identifications and how communities were mobilized to respond to the crises of the times through appeals to these identities. Just as conversion often meant establishing ties with the missionaries and/or relocating near Christian icons and churches, apostasy and rebellion in 17th century Samar and Leyte often involved the targeting of priests, the destruction of Christian places of worship, and the return to what rebel leaders and followers saw as a return to ancient ways. But a closer look at the movements which rose up against the Jesuits in Bohol, Leyte, and Samar in 1621-1622 and 1649-1650, and the more notable movements of the mid-18th and mid-19th centuries, suggests that although their participants might have framed their actions in terms of a return to traditional practices and beliefs, the identifications through which they mobilized (to a leader or group through which people could unite) were actually derived from the structures and identifications introduced and defined by the Spaniards themselves.

Syncretism and local appropriation in the Christianization and Hispanization processes can be seen in the examples provided below in terms of transformations in leadership, old and new forms of social organization, and the introduction of new ideas of social change. These hybrid forms of leadership, social organization, and notions of social change drew on both pre-colonial tradition and European influences. Another recurrent pattern in the following movements are the persistence of small communities as distinct social units which anti-colonial leaders each had to appeal to generate support

for their causes. On the other hand, attempts by the Spaniard authorities to consolidate dispersed settlements for protection and mobilization against threats from groups such as the Moros and the Dutch often failed or only saw partial success owing to the entrenched character of people's tendency to live in dispersed and small communities.

Signs of this persistent preference for relatively egalitarian relations between small communities will re-emerge in community responses to crisis periods such as the Revolution, post-war outmigration, and the response to Super Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda (see next chapters). Although seemingly absolutist leaders such as native "Kings" and "Popes" would emerge in the region as appropriated titles for the leaders of local "churches" and "kingdoms/cities" during periods of adversity, closer scrutiny of these local movements suggest that their modes of organization continued to be loosely structured and to be dependent on the agency of small communities that could decide to join or withdraw from these social movements. The following sections will discuss the syncretic characteristics of the earlier anti-colonial movements of the Spanish period and highlight certain hybrid colonial/indigenous elements for each case that would recur in subsequent movements.

### **The Bankaw Revolt and the Rise of Male Religious Leaders**

The Tamblot and Bankaw Revolts of 1621-1622 are often regarded as the first major uprisings in the eastern half of the Visayan Islands during the early Spanish period. These movements sought a return to the old gods and the ancient religion. However, they also saw the rise of male spirit-mediumship which, before the arrival of the European missionaries in the islands, was not part of the tradition of indigenous mediumship. Abinales and Amoroso writes that the spirit-mediums of the pre-colonial period were either female or effeminate males which was reflective of the indigenous gendering of the cosmos: "The spirit ritualist, *baylan* in Visayan and *catalonan* in Tagalog, was typically an elderly woman of high status or a male transvestite (therefore female by gender), who learned her profession from her mother or other

female relatives. She cultivated contacts among the friendlier spirits who possessed her in a trance as she interceded for the community, family, or individual who sought her services. In many cases, spirit power itself was gendered female, as with the Visayan divinity Laon, who was worshipped at harvest time.<sup>74</sup>

The twin revolts in Bohol and Leyte in 1621-1622 are mainly associated with its two leaders (Tamblot, who has recently been theorized to have been a male transvestite; and Bankaw, an old chief of Leyte whose family had been instrumental in welcoming the early Spanish explorers to the islands, and one of whose sons had studied under the Jesuits at the boarding school in Dulag) who sought to rally people into overthrowing their Spanish overlords and returning to their old religion. Father Alcina, who was then serving in the Leyte-Samar area and would have been acquainted with several of the personalities involved in the Leyte revolt, identified two types of leaders in the related uprisings: the traditional mostly-women *balian* ritualists and a new type of religious leader in the form of *diwatahan* male leaders who had served as assistants or sacristans to the Jesuits.<sup>75</sup> In the circa 1614 dictionary compiled by the Jesuit Fr. Mateo Sanchez, the word *diwatahan* referred to the priestesses who continued to practice in the name of the *diwata* (native gods). In one passage, *diwatahan* was considered synonymous to a sinner (*macasasala*). These priestesses were also called *balian* or *daitan* which, in turn, means a person befriended and assisted by the *diwata*.<sup>76</sup>

The Jesuit reports on the Bankaw Revolt highlight the role of the security crisis brought about by the Moro Raids as a precipitating factor in triggering the uprising. Bankaw, the chief of Limasawa Island who seemed to have rajah-like status over other chiefs in Leyte, had been instrumental in the conversion of

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<sup>74</sup> Abinales and Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines*, p.28.

<sup>75</sup> Alcina, *Historia...*1668, Part I, Lib. 3, cap. 13; Alcina in *P. Sacra* no. 41, p. 414, note 10.

<sup>76</sup> Sanchez 1711.

many people in the mainland. Dubbed a “petty king” by the Jesuits, he had at first stubbornly resisted the attempts by the missionaries to baptise him as a Christian. His conversion was thus considered a milestone in the Jesuit evangelical efforts in Leyte due to Bankaw’s high stature and influence over other chiefs in the island. However, a Jesuit report from after the 1622 revolt suggests that Bankaw had had a change of heart after witnessing the lack of protection given by the Spanish regime against the Moro Raids on Leyte and he subsequently relocated his family to mainland Leyte from Limasawa for greater security from the raids.<sup>77</sup>

Another aspect of the movement which would recur in subsequent movements is how it imitated the Catholic church introduced by the Jesuits as a model of local organization. Bankaw had become convinced that the Spanish hold on the island was due mainly to the efforts of the Jesuits, who did not seem to have received enough support from the Spanish colonial government to protect Leyte from the Moro Raids. At some point, Bankaw consulted with relatives in Bohol where groups under Tamblot were preparing to rise against the Spaniards. At the same time, he allowed two sons to study in the Jesuit boarding school in the town of Dulag. Bankaw had reportedly come to see the Christian religion taught by the Jesuits as an effective instrument of rule and sought to draw on its strengths in his plan to start a movement that would effect a return to the old religion. His son Pagali, a favourite student of his Jesuit teachers at the Dulag school, would later become the chief priest of this short-lived movement in 1622, which appears to have engulfed the whole island of Leyte.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> *Leyte 400 Years of Evangelization: The Cross over Candaya* (Commemorative programme for the 400th anniversary of the Jesuit arrival in Leyte, [n.d., c. 1995]), pp. 52-58.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.* Standard accounts of the Bankaw revolt suggest that the revolt was confined to the northern coast of Leyte, where Bankaw set up a church which would rival those built under the leadership of the Jesuits (*Ibid.*). However, Father Alcina’s chronicle of the Jesuit missions in the Eastern Visayas indicate that several towns in Leyte’s southern coast, Bankaw’s original base before being moving north, rose up in revolt as well. (Alcina, *Historia...1668, Philippiniana Sacra*, no. 41)

Other features of the movement suggest both the appropriation of new roles (or at least new titles) such as kingship when Bankaw offered himself to the people of Leyte as an alternative king to the King of Spain and a reliance on older types of community leaders such as recalcitrant *babailanes* in the mountains who he asked to join the movement to re-establish the old animist religion. In terms of the general crisis people in Leyte were then suffering, Bankaw promised supporters protection from the Moro Raids which the Spaniards could not adequately respond to (Ibid.)

Bankaw's movement would set a precedent of island-wide movements led by local religious leaders with links to parallel movements in adjacent islands (cf. Padre Gaspar movement in response to slave raids and drought, Dios-Dios and Pulahan movements in response to the 1882-1883 and 1902-1903 cholera epidemics). As will be seen in the next chapter, anti-colonial movements in the Eastern Visayas and other parts of the Philippines would come to be led by male shamans,<sup>79</sup> although female spirit-mediums continued to be important leaders in these movements.

### The Sumuroy Rebellion and Autonomous Small Communities

On the other hand, the importance of small communities in anti-colonial mobilization is exemplified in Alcina's account of the biggest revolt faced by the Jesuits in the Philippines. It was in part a response to the governor-general's decree in 1649 that labor for the Cavite shipyard should come from the Visayan provinces, leading to wide-spread agitation among the natives and pressure on the *principalía* and the missionaries which had to enforce the demand. The Sumuroy Rebellion of 1649-1650, which had aspects of a nativistic movement, started in Palapag, Samar with the killing of a Jesuit friar by Agustin Sumuroy, a member of the town *principalía*, and trusted aide and navigator for the Jesuits and the Manila-Acapulco galleons which passed

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<sup>79</sup> McCoy, "Baylan"

through Palapag every year. From Samar, the revolt spread through parts of the Visayas, Mindanao and Southern Luzon before it was finally quelled.<sup>80</sup>

An appeal to a common identity was key to the instigators' attempts to spread the revolt. Alcina noted, for example, that in the 1649-1650 Sumuroy Revolt, "The insurgents went about spreading the news (and this was not a bad idea) by sending [messengers] stealthily into the towns announcing how they had not risen up against the Bisayans [*los bisayas*] nor do they have any intentions of harming them, but only to shake off, if they only could, the heavy yoke of the Spaniards [*los españoles*]. In fact, if they wished to take advantage of their help [in rising up against the Spaniards?...] they were ready there [in their mountain camp?]" (Alcina in *Philippiniana Sacra* 49, p.170-173).

As will be discussed further below (see Bisaya/Christiano section), the tagging by European missionaries of older customs as deplorable "Bisaya" practices in contrast to ideal "Christian" ways in books of conduct such as the *Lagda* (which was presumably preceded by the Jesuits' own verbalized translations of Christian doctrine and conduct to early converts) allowed hearers and readers to preserve and later to re-imagine what the pre-colonial life of the "Bisayans" were like, giving them an image of pre-colonial identities/subjectivities that they could aspire to return to when joining anti-colonial movements, even though the label used to identify indigenous culture had been introduced by the Spaniards themselves.

Other developments in the Sumuroy Rebellion as reported by Father Alcina suggests that this identification as "Bisaya" by the rebels continued to be bounded and centred around small communities, a social unit that persisted until the end of Spanish rule.<sup>81</sup> Although the rebel leaders seemed to have appealed to a common "Bisayan" identity in rallying against a common enemy

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<sup>80</sup> Cabardo 1997, 39-45.

<sup>81</sup> Cruikshank, *Samar: 1768-1898*.

(the Spaniards), the above statement made by the Palapag instigators of 1649-150 suggests that these risings relied heavily on the voluntary support of distinct and autonomous communities. Moreover, small, hinterland communities (often situated in the upstream areas or the *iraya*) that were administratively tied to the *reducciones* seem to have been the most active in these revolts. Alcina noted how, "The smaller ones [communities] and those which were more out of the way and exposed to such similar excesses (it was the smaller ones that have been more involved and guilty for the uprising) were joined to the larger ones."<sup>82</sup>

Small communities were often situated in the *iraya* (upstream or interior) and were usually found along rivers or streams that were "beyond the orbit of Spanish control and exactions." According to Cruikshank, the Spaniards "used the terms *remontados*, *cimarrones*, *infieles*, and *monteses* to describe and identify these hill-dwelling Samareños."<sup>83</sup> Even after the Jesuit Expulsion in 1768-1769, many upstream communities continued to evade Spanish attempts at concentrating small communities into bigger settlements (*reduccion*), preferring to keep a safe but convenient distance from centers of colonial authority which could nevertheless be easily be accessible for trade and other necessities. Marchando notes how, "The reduction of the population was a work that was far from being concluded [in the late 18th century when the Jesuits were expelled], and the Samareños...were [still] reluctant to live in the pueblos, hence the proliferation of small settlements along the banks of rivers, or in the mountains. This also explains the abundant number of *cimarrones* (runaway people) that abounded in the vicinity of the pueblos [big towns]. Thus, for example, Calvayog [Calbayog] had more than 300 tributes from *cimarrones*, most of whom lived less than an hour's walk from the pueblo in a place called Naga; another group remained along the banks of the Hibatang

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<sup>82</sup> Alcina, *Historia...1668* in *Philippiniana Sacra* 42, p. 519.

<sup>83</sup> Cruikshank *Samar: 1768-1898*, 129-131.

river...But most of the pueblos had scattered and uncontrolled people [i.e., dispersed settlements in the town peripheries]."<sup>84</sup>

The events of 1649-1650 thus suggests that unity in native desire to reject the Spanish rule and effect a return to an ancient way of life was achieved through appeals to a common Bisayan collective that was constituted of various small communities. What such an appropriation of this identification across various communities had in common was the shared threat of slave raids (the vulnerability to which had in part been exacerbated by Hispanization and Christian conversion) and excessive state demands that threatened the integrity of local clans, the basic social units which constituted these communities. Responding to adversity thus required the borrowing of a label and its associated practices through which they could generate solidarity and reduce vulnerability to risks and hazards.

### The Padre Gaspar Movement and Communal Organization

A religious movement from around 1765 to 1774 in Biliran Island off the northern coast of Leyte led by Fr. Gaspar Ignacio de Guevara, a secular priest born and raised in Paranas, Samar, would be cause for much consternation among the Augustinians and Franciscans who replaced the Jesuits in Leyte and Samar after the latter's expulsion from the Philippines in 1768-1769.<sup>85</sup> Emerging at a time of crisis which included the British invasion and occupation of Manila from 1762-1764 (as part of the Seven Years' War from 1756 to 1763), an increase in Moro Raids, and environmental crises such as drought, "Padre Gaspar," as he was known to his supporters, gained a large following mainly from the islands of Samar and Leyte (Ibid.).

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<sup>84</sup> Marchando, Marta Maria. *Consecuencias de la expulsión de los jesuitas: Filipinas*. Madrid: Fundacion Ignacio Larramendi, 2011. E-book at <http://www.larramendi.es/i18n/consulta/registro.do?id=1214> (Accessed: 30 July 2016)

<sup>85</sup> Kobak, Cantius J., OFM. "Don Gaspar de Guevara of Biliran Island, Leyte: A Legendary Figure or A Historical Personality?" *Leyte-Samar Studies* XIII: 2 (1979): 150-153.

The case of the Padre Gaspar movement, with its commune-style settlement pattern and a far-reaching “church” organization with appointed male and female religious leaders, signified a new development in the social movements of Leyte and Samar. As a medium of God’s power (as a new “Saint Peter”), Padre Gaspar would serve as an alternative point of identification for self-identifying Christians disaffected with Spanish religious and civil authorities. Although the Franciscan and Augustinian missionaries, who saw themselves as God’s official representatives on earth, dismissed Gaspar as the “deluded cura” of Biliran, oral tradition represents him as a legitimate and benevolent leader of a “Christian” community (e.g., “Christ [was] in their minds and hearts”) that was coming to terms with various natural and human-induced crises (drought, slave raids, etc.). Whereas previous rebellions such as those in 1621-1622 and 1649-1650 rejected the Catholic Church (and by extension the Christian identity it conferred on the natives) in favour of their old gods and what they believed to be their ancient lifeways, Padre Gaspar’s movement saw its followers continuing to self-identify as Christians but with the leadership of a priest regarded by his European peers as a heretic. For his followers, however, his legitimacy as a true representative of Christ was proven to his followers by his ability to redeem them from both human-induced and natural crises of the late 18th century. Moreover, Padre Gaspar’s appointing of women to high religious posts in his church also helped to maintain older religious practices in which old women and effeminate men served as primary spirit mediums. Perhaps because of Padre Gaspar’s identification of a new power centre (i.e., of Biliran Island as a safe refuge from the calamities of his time and of the future) and redefinition of Christian social life in light of older practices and beliefs that secured the well-being of communities, his memory continued to be a moving force behind subsequent challenges to civil and clerical authority in the region.

## The Benedicta Movement and the Persistence of Female Religious Leadership

Another apparent outcome of the melding of pre-colonial and Christian beliefs and practices was the persistence of women as focal points of village solidarity and identity in Samar and Leyte.<sup>86</sup> Instead of being displaced or isolated from the religious hierarchy,<sup>87</sup> women such as *mananabtan/mamaratbat* prayer leaders continued to perform an important social function because, as will be argued below, religious conversion and the adoption of a Christian identity for the people of Samar and Leyte meant a continued reliance on now heaven-bound ancestors. These ancestral souls acted as intermediaries with God in order to cope with a danger-prone environment. Moreover, although the case of Pagali in the 17th-century Bankaw Revolt and the 18th-century Padre Gaspar Movement indicate the emergence of a tradition of island-based or inter-island religious movements led by males (but ones which relied on recalcitrant *babaylanes* to rally support for their cause), the case of a 19th-century religious movement in Leyte led by a woman named Benedicta contradicts the seemingly male-oriented trend in the wider organizations that

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<sup>86</sup> Anthropologists studying different Philippine cultures have argued that, despite centuries of colonial rule and the influence of Western culture, aspects of pre-colonial gender relations appear to have survived up to the present. They argue that notions of "maleness" and "femaleness" in groups such as the Visayans and the Ilongots, instead of being hierarchical or derived from moral/immoral binaries and stereotypes, primarily emphasize sameness, parity, or complementarity in terms of tasks and subsistence practices. See Cristina Blanc-Szanton, "Collision of Cultures: Historical Reformulations of Gender in the Lowland Visayas, Philippines," in Jane Monnig Atkinson and Shelly Errington (eds.), *Power and difference: Gender in island Southeast Asia*, Stanford: Stanford University Press (1990): 345-383; and Rosaldo, M. Z., & Atkinson, J. M. (1975). Man the hunter and woman: Metaphors for the sexes in Ilongot magical spells. *The interpretation of symbolism*, 43-75. This might thus explain the persistence of bilateral kinship system (equal reckoning of descent and inheritance from both mother's and father's side of the family) and the continued high status of women despite their relegation from their predominant role in pre-colonial spirit mediumship as ritual priestesses. Aguilar Jr, F. V. (2015). The passing of rice spirits: cosmology, technology, and gender relations in the colonial Philippines. In *Early Modern Southeast Asia, 1350-1800*, 250-265. Such resilient features of local culture suggest the selective appropriation of colonial values in order to adapt to distinct environments and histories.

<sup>87</sup> Brewer, C. (2000). From Animist "Priestess" to Catholic Priest: The Re/gendering of Religious Roles in the Philippines, 1521-1685. *Other Pasts: Women, Gender and History in Early Modern Southeast Asia*, 69-85.

were formed to resist Spanish colonial rule. Women thus continued to be important ritualists both at the local level (in the form of prayer leaders for households and communities) and at the island-level when resistance movements emerged during times of crisis. The local appropriation of European forms of religious leadership in the local religious traditions of Samar and Leyte was selective since it did not completely adopt the former's primarily male-dominated religious hierarchy. Instead, it may even have appropriated Christian figures such as the Virgin Mary as both a symbol of divine authority<sup>88</sup> and, in place of deities such as Laon (the ancient Bisayan fertility goddess), provided former *babaylan* spirit-mediums who did not resist the spread of the Christian religion with a new spirit guide. These influential women took on new roles as *maestras* (catechists/teachers) and *paramatbat/mamaratbat* (prayer leaders for the dead) under Spanish rule.<sup>89</sup>

### From *Balianas* to *Maestras*

The early accommodation of women as catechists suggests Jesuit recognition of the powerful standing women had in the ceremonial life of the pre-colonial period as well as during the early period of Christianization. The women/effeminate male ritualists who had performed the more elaborate community rituals in pre-colonial times would be acknowledged by Jesuit chroniclers such as Father Alcina as equally important players with children and *datu* leaders in propagating the Christian doctrine. These *balianas* became *maestras* (teachers) in the Jesuit missions of Samar and Leyte:

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<sup>88</sup> Wendt, "Philippine Fiesta and Colonial Culture."

<sup>89</sup> "Batbat uc. Preceder en el canto, o rezo, y los que responden. Mamatbat como nga duha. Aco lamang, vel, cami ba lamang in mabatbat, mamaratbat. El que precede en el canto, o rezo. Mananabat. Los que responden. Mamatbat ca: cay mananabat cami. Pananabatan ca namun" (Sanchez 1617/1711, Vol. I, 70b). "PARAMATBAT, s. y adj. (en bisaya). Que acostumbra á responder en el rezo [Those who usually respond in prayer]" (Sanchez de la Rosa 1895, 177). See also Melencio, G. E. (2013) [The *babaylan/mamaratbat* tradition in Leyte and Samar: point of connection between indigenous culture and Christianity]; Bajado, J. C. (2018) The *panmatbat* and the women chanters for the dead in Eastern Samar: history, cultural aesthetics, and prospects. *39th National Conference on Local and National History*. Samar State University, Catbalogan City, Samar, 25-27 October 2018.

"[I]n truth, some of these women, *daetan*, *balian*, *catooran* who practiced their ancient art have rendered no little assistance to the Fathers in the teaching of the doctrine to their Bisayan fellowmen. They have been *maestras* as we call them here; they have been most useful in the easy conversion of many of the men and women here. They serve to enlighten better those who formerly were intermediaries of deceit and the deceivers."<sup>90</sup>

This recognition by the Jesuits of the strong community influence of women, especially in religious conversion, seemed to have its beginnings in the previously discussed case of the successful curing of the smallpox outbreak in the village of Palo in Leyte which would subsequently become an important staging ground and ritual centre for the conversion of people in both Leyte and Samar. The successful mutual effort between Fr. Ximenez and "famous herbalists" (local *baliana* priestesses?) against the terrifying illness seemed to have helped raise the profile of Palo and European missionaries with the surrounding communities and with one of the most renowned chiefs in the area:

"When the epidemic was over, Fr. Ximenez dedicated to the catechesis and this was when the Jesuits picked up the women fruits [influential priestesses-turned-maestras?] of their religious work. Then with their practical efforts, they achieved what made Palu a famous town at that time [c. 1598], when they pulled up the baptism of [*Datu*] Kanganga..."<sup>91</sup>

The healing prowess demonstrated by this Jesuit missionary and his willingness to cooperate with local counterparts in the face of a health crisis thus brought the Jesuits new converts seeking health, security, and well-being in an island where, before the epidemic, *encomenderos* had met with resistance in their attempts to establish control and to spread the new religion. (Ibid.) However, the prestige gained by the Jesuits because of this feat of healing would not

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<sup>90</sup> Alcina 1668, Part I, Book 3, Chapter 13. Alcina in *Philippiniana Sacra* 41, p. 413-414, note 9.

<sup>91</sup> Chirino, P., 2009. *History of the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus: Volume 2*.

have been possible without the help of local women healers who would subsequently help in Christian evangelization efforts.

### Person-Associated Revolution

Towards the end of Spanish rule in the Philippines, people's expectations of social change would see new changes in the syncretic beliefs that had characterized the imposition of Spanish rule and the introduction of Christianity three centuries earlier. An Enlightenment-period notion of "revolution" seems to have reached the Philippines and the Eastern Visayas but was localized and incorporated into the discourse of powerful indigenous leaders (e.g., the *Dios-Dios* sectarians to be discussed in the next chapter) who served as alternatives to the European priests. Frederic H. Sawyer, in explaining what he saw as the tendency of the natives to believe and spread false rumours during periods of crises, writes:

"To give a better idea of the credulity of the Tagals and other natives, I may say that in 1868 telegrams were received in Manila (*viâ* Hong Kong), which were made public in the islands, announcing the Spanish revolution of September, and the news, with stupendous exaggerations, reached the remotest villages and the most miserable huts. A general and indelible idea took possession of the minds of the natives that Revolution (they thought it was a new emperor or a great personage) had decreed that all were equal, that there should be no difference between Indians and Spaniards, that the latter had to return to Spain and Indians be substituted in all employments, and that the tribute would be greatly reduced. That there would be no conscription nor *corvée* (personal work), that the Pope would name several Indian bishops, and that the Spanish priests would return to the Peninsula. That a new captain-general would arrive who would marry a native lady, who would be made a princess, that their children would be kings and sovereigns of the Philippine Empire." (Sawyer 1900, 232)

Sawyer provides the above anecdote as a further example of how this “credulity” had “on occasion given way to outbursts of ferocity, involving death and destruction to numbers of innocent people” such as the French, Dutch, English and American victims of an 1820 massacre of foreigners in Manila in the wake of that year’s cholera epidemic. In their sermons, the friars had blamed foreign merchants for spreading the disease by poisoning the sources of drinking water (Sawyer 1900, 231; Aguilar 1998, 15-16).

The indigenous population’s association of “Revolution” with “a new emperor” or a “great personage” who would transform life in the Philippines brings to mind a similar phenomenon in other parts of Southeast Asia where a foreign group could be construed as a “stranger king” who served as a locus of unity for indigenous communities.<sup>92</sup> Similar beliefs seem to have emerged in the Eastern Visayas where local social movements at the turn of the 20th century predicted the outbreak of a cataclysmic revolution that would be followed by the reign of a powerful and benevolent ruler. But as early as 1873, the Spanish authorities in Samar had been ordered by higher authorities to investigate reports of subversive movements in the island which gained more members from the “ignorant masses.” (Talde 1999, 56) Their leaders promised a richer life for their followers and preached on “detachment of the present world and enjoined the people to work with fervor for the establishment of a better government to be led by a great ruler in the future” (Ibid.).

It would thus seem that from this point on, “revolution,” which was associated with the ascendance of a ruler around which people could rally rather than the

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<sup>92</sup> Hägerdal (2012) argues that: “Societies with a stateless or non-bureaucratic structure have often tended to refer to a ruler or a dynasty as an outsider, who purportedly comes from another geographical location, often associated with the sea. The stranger king is ideally accepted by a particular polity as a commanding force, whose foreignness puts him in a position to mediate and keep the various competitive elements of the polity in check.” (Hägerdal 2012, 6) The Dutch East India Company, for example, was “literally seen as a ‘prince’ (*usi*)” by colonial-period Timorese *rajas*, the “lords of the land,” who paid their deference to the European outsider, the “lord of the sea,” whilst “still having the means to wield power during negotiations” (Hägerdal 2012, 6).

establishment of representative or more direct democracies as envisioned by European revolutionaries, would become a key element in the discourse of subsequent social movements in the Eastern Visayas (see the next chapter for the re-emergence of revolutionary prophecy in the *Dios-Dios* Movement of c. 1884-1890). These movements continued to exhibit the leader-centered solidarities and identifications that characterized pre-colonial polities in the Philippines (Junker 1999) although these leaders' visions of the future came to acquire eschatological elements common among European popular movements from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern period and beyond.<sup>93</sup>

### SPANISH PERIOD GROUP LABELS AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

The following sections will discuss the meanings ascribed to group labels that were among the earliest forms of identifications introduced during the Spanish colonial period and which people from Samar and Leyte continue to identify with until today. They will show how missionaries, small communities, and Christianized survivors of the dead utilized these labels in relation to the needs of Christian conversion (i.e., distinguishing between true Christians and potentially back-sliding *Bisayans*), community security against slave raids (*Pintados*), and welfare provision from the afterlives of (heaven-bound, *Christian*) ancestral spirits. In all three cases, the syncretic character of subject formation continued to be evident. These subsections will suggest that these labels were important not only in collectively adjusting to new colonial realities in the present life but also to a transformed cosmos in which departed ancestors who had traditionally helped provide for their welfare from the afterlife now had a new source of power to approach for their living relatives' needs, i.e., the Christian God.

The new notion of a centralized power source would transform the islanders' sense of self and community. Inasmuch as people's identification had been

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<sup>93</sup> See Cohn, N. (1957) *The pursuit of the millennium: a history of popular religious and social movements in Europe from the eleventh to the sixteenth century*. London: Secker & Warburg.

towards leaders whose proven ability to protect and provide for their community was a sign supernatural favor and whose heroic memory as passed on through oral history after their deaths assured them of ancestor status and veneration by their descendants, the introduction of the story of Christ's self-sacrifice which became a means by which mankind could be saved from sin provided alternative models of ritual, leadership, solidarity, and identity, as well as a new way of perceiving history (Ileto 1979; Rafael 1988; Cannell 1995; Brewer 2001).<sup>94</sup>

Place names in the pre-Hispanic Philippines could be based on the geographic characteristics of the area or island. For instance, *Ibabao*, which meant "above, on top, high," referred to the old name for the northern and eastern coast of Samar Island.<sup>95</sup> On the other hand, Samar came from *samad*, a "wound or a hurt," in reference to the numerous rivers which crisscrossed the island.<sup>96</sup> Identifications could also be based on the local/regional leader. *Kan-kabatok*, the old name for Tacloban, for example, meant "The place of Kabatok's following." "Leyte" may have been derived from "Ila-ite" or "Ite and his followers' place."<sup>97</sup> Thus, community identity was primarily based on who the leader (*pono-an*) of a *haop* (following) was.

In place of the dispersed and autonomous or confederated small polities of the pre-colonial era, the evangelization effort in what became known as the Visayan Islands (or its earlier name of *Las Islas de Pintados*) helped define a new ethnic Bisayan identity in Samar and Leyte. Andaya (1999) argued that Spanish rule

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<sup>94</sup> Brewer, C. (2001) *Holy Confrontation: Religion, Gender, and Sexuality in the Philippines, 1521-1685*. C. Brewer and the Institute of Women's Studies, St. Scholastica's College; Brewer, C. (2004) *Shamanism, Catholicism, and Gender Relations in Colonial Philippines, 1521-1685*. Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate.

<sup>95</sup> Kobak and Gutiérrez, *Alcina's Historia... 1668*, Part 1, Book 1, Vol. 1, p. 93, footnote 14.

<sup>96</sup> Kobak and Gutiérrez, *Alcina's Historia... 1668*, Part 1, Book 1, Vol. 1, p. 92, footnote 10. The name of Luzon Island, is often believed to be derived from, *lusong*, a mortar for pounding rice, which resembles this island's shape. (Ibid., p. 82, footnote 2)

<sup>97</sup> Borrinaga, R. O. (2010). Disaster in Iti's Land: The Tragic Social History of the Datu Class in Leyte (1521-1622). *The Journal of History*, 56(1), 58-91.

itself played an important role in the emergence of contemporary ethno-linguistic groups in the Philippines.<sup>98</sup> He traced how communities that spoke a variety of interrelated languages in pre-colonial times were compartmentalized under Spanish rule and given their present form largely as a result of the concentration of the Galleon Trade on Manila (which resulted in limited trade contacts between neighbouring/adjacent regions such as those in the Visayas in favour of centralized trade with the colonial capital) and the partition of different parts of the archipelago among religious missionary orders (who standardized the languages in their assigned areas through texts, sermons and catechisms) to facilitate religious conversion.

In feasts which could last non-stop for several days, the long epic narratives of elite *datu* ancestors and their heroic feats were told in sung verses which, although intermixed with fictive parts, also suggested raids on communities in adjacent islands such as Luzon or Mindanao or as far as Southern China. Important events for the community were also retold in oarsmen songs which were transmitted from fathers to sons (Alcina 1668; Scott 1994).

The destruction of older forms of writing found by the missionaries, the gradual decline of the warrior tradition with the conversion to Christianity (which stopped their practice of slave-raiding and put on decline practices such as tattooing and the men's wearing of long hair), and the transformation of the occasions and rituals (boat-rowing, agricultural festivities, etc.) where the epic stories were told would have a debilitating impact on the telling of the heroic histories which had shaped pre-Hispanic community and identity in Samar and Leyte. In its place, religious texts emphasized a Christian history which relegated the pre-colonial period as a "dark age" when Christ's chosen representatives on earth had not yet reached its shores and preached his message of self-sacrifice (Ileto 1979; Novena histories).

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<sup>98</sup> Andaya, L. Y. (1999). Ethnicity in the Philippine Revolution. In *1898, España y el Pacífico: interpretación del pasado, realidad del presente*. Asociación Española de Estudios del Pacífico, 267-288.

The Christian identity which the islanders embraced would henceforth be modeled on the leadership and example given by Christ and his own sacrifice at the cross to save mankind from sin. The eager participation by new converts during Lent and Holy Week in penitential rituals such as self-flagellation is one way in which they ritually “identified” with an ancestral figure like Christ in order to access providential power.<sup>99</sup> Identification for the converts also involved distinguishing themselves from un-baptized groups. The elderly Bisayan converts Father Alcina asked in the course of his investigation about their origins referred to their Borneans, from which they believed they were descended, as *Yawa-pa* or those who were “still subjects of the demon, whom they call Yawa.”<sup>100</sup> The historical narrative of epic *isog* (fierce) heroes would therefore be joined by the narrative of a suffering and self-sacrificing Christ which would provide a new model for the leaders of subsequent movements.<sup>101</sup>

### *Bisaya/Christiano*

To understand how anti-colonial mobilizations could be launched by invoking the “Bisaya” label, it is perhaps necessary to examine how the “Christiano” label came to be applied to the inhabitants of Samar and Leyte in the first place. In defining the Christian subject, the Jesuits seemed to have relied on a constant juxtaposition between an ideal “Christian” lifestyle that stood in marked contrast to older customs, which they categorized under the new ethnic label “Bisaya,” which were seen as unfit for their new higher standing in the world as Christian converts. In the language of evangelization used by the missionaries, ancient customs and beliefs of the people in Samar and Leyte were designated under a “Bisaya” label that had been extended to the islands

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<sup>99</sup> Brewer, C. (2001). *Holy Confrontation: Religion, Gender, and Sexuality in the Philippines, 1521-1685*. C. Brewer and the Institute of Women's Studies, St. Scholastica's College; Cannell 1995; Ileto 1979.

<sup>100</sup> Alcina, Book I, p.75. Alcina notes elsewhere that this supernatural entity was the “lord of the forest” of pre-colonial Visayas (Quoted in Aguilar, *Clash of Spirits*, p. 161).

<sup>101</sup> Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution*.

as an ethnic label around the turn of the 16th century. As Nye, Beyer and Benitez has argued, "... the name 'Visayan' in the Philippines was first applied only to the natives of Panay and to their settlements eastward in the island of Negros and northward in the smaller islands now comprehended in the province of Romblon. In fact, even at the time when the Spaniards came they used the term 'Visayan' only for the areas just mentioned, while the people of Cebu, Bohol, and Leyte were for a long time known only as Pintados [a name given them because they were tattooed.] The name 'Visayan' was later extended to them because... their languages are closely allied to the Visayan dialect of Panay."<sup>102</sup>

Early usages of the Bisayan label as reflected in Father Sanchez's dictionary further highlights the close association made by the missionaries between Visayan-ness and ancient practices:

Bisaya. uc. s un. Idem. *Nabisaya na ako. Ya yo me he vuelto Bisaya* [I have already become Bisaya]. *An iyo ini pagcabisaya.* [This is your nature as Bisaya.] *Cabtang ini niyo sa manga bisaya [pa?] camo.* [This was your situation/condition [*kabutang*] when you [were?] Bisaya (i.e., not yet converted)]. *Bisayaun mo an imong pulong, ngan san visti.* [Bisayanize your language, and dress.] *Magbinisaya ca pamolong* [You speak Binisaya.]<sup>103</sup>

The paganistic "condition" of the ancient "Bisayans" suggested in the above dictionary entry is further elaborated in Fr. Sanchez's entry for *diwata*, the name given to pre-Hispanic gods:

"Divata, uc. f. un. et hun. God, but it is used for the false and abominable Gods of these deceived ones of the devil. *Manivata, vel. Magdivata*, Invoking the divata or making them, or repute them such

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<sup>102</sup> Steiger, G. Nye, H. Otley Beyer and Conrado Benitez, *A History of the Orient*. Ginn and Company. New York, 1926, pp. 122-23.

<sup>103</sup> Sanchez (c. 1617/1711) [174/403]

*Lonlon pagdivatahan san Bisaya, an buquir, an cahuy, an buaya* [the crocodiles], *an doron & c. Guindivata niyo nga tanan* [Everything [was] worshiped by the Bisayans, the mountains, the trees, the crocodiles, the locusts, etc. You invoked/made gods of all of them]" (Sanchez 1711, Vol. I, 179).

On the other hand, Christian conversion and identification necessitated a shift from the worship of ancestors and environmental spirits towards the new Christian deities and spirits. In Father Sanchez's dictionary entry for *araba* ("to invoke"), the people are discouraged from invoking or asking favors from the "devil" (i.e., the environmental/elemental gods and spirits) and from their *umalagad* (ancestor spirits) for good fortune, health, and well-being:

*Araba, uc. f. Arabahun, vel, pangarabahun, vel, arabhun.* [To invoke, to ask for favor.] *Naaraba/ Nangaraba aco sa Dios* [I am asking favor from God], *can Santa Maria &c.* [from Holy Mary, etc.]. *Agud aco tabangan, sining acun tuyo* [So that I would be helped, with this my purpose], *vel, bubuhaton ko* [I will do]. *Cun masaquit kita mangaraba sa Dios, cay siya in macacaopay sa atun* [If we get sick, ask favor from God, for He can cure us]. *Dita pangarabahun an yava, cun an vmalagad bisan mamatay quita, labi an pagcaayo datun san camatayon, san pangaraba dila* [Let us not seek favor from the devil (*yava/yawa*), nor from the ancestor-spirit even if we die, especially for our recovery from death, by invoking them (i.e., devil/ancestors)] (Sanchez 1711, Vol. I, 29).

As will be seen below and in the chapters that follow, such attempts at redirection of ancient practices categorized under the "Bisaya" label did not necessarily put to an end people's reliance on their ancestors or environmental spirits for health and well-being. Instead, many ancient practices were merely transformed and added to the new practices and redefined cosmos introduced by the European missionaries. Moreover, the "Bisayan" label they introduced in their attempts to mark off and eradicate ancient practices and beliefs came to

be normalized by people in the islands and given new meanings that signified their cultural identity.

By the time Alcina completed the writing of his *Historia* in 1668, his parishioners in Samar and Leyte had internalized this label and were unable to pinpoint its origins. Moreover, it had then come to acquire new meanings that, in the words of Alcina, may have served as “a sign of their way of life” since, “everything was so arranged [among the ‘Bisayans’] as to spend their life without any troubles or worries.” That is, “Bisaya” had become a cultural identity label that denoted a carefree and low-expectations lifestyle.<sup>104</sup> Alcina’s definition of Bisaya, which he seemed to have taken from his native informants from which he relied on much of the cultural history he records in his chronicle, had come to mean, “a pleasant and a happy person.”<sup>105</sup>

Moreover, as seen in the examples of anti-colonial movements which rallied people under the “Bisaya” label, it had served as a means of remembering the ancient practices and beliefs discouraged by the missionaries in their civilizing discourse which they could then aspire to return to in their attempts to apostatize.

### Heaven-bound *umalagad* ancestral souls

One important factor in embracing a Christian identification was the need to keep active ties with departed predecessors in a hazardous environment where such support were seen as key to perpetuating people’s lineages and securing

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<sup>104</sup> Alcina, *Historia...1668*, Part I, Book 1, Chapter 1 [Kobak and Gutierrez 2002, Vol. 1, pp. 71-72]. This meaning has been retained in expressions linked to the *Waray* identity label such as “waraywaráy là” (Tagalog: “wala lang”): “a. carefree; devil-may-care; happy-go-luck” (Tramp 1995, 478). (see Chapter 3)

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. However, shades of the negative European meanings ascribed to the “Bisaya” label remain up to the present: “In the [19]70s up to the [19]80s, and perhaps even today, bisaya is a term synonymous with cheap, crude, uncultured, low-brow. Someone might tell you, Kabisaya nimog polo, uy! Literally it means, ‘How Visayan your polo[shirt] is!’ but what he’s really saying is, ‘That’s an awful shirt you’re wearing!’ and impliedly, ‘What bad taste you have.’ When a person is described as bisaya, it means he is coarse, uncouth, unrefined, has poor taste” <https://merliemalunan.wordpress.com/2016/06/29/latitudes-of-intimacy-new-waray-writing-and-national-literature/> (Accessed: 23 February 2017).

the well-being of communities. Even up to present times, a key element in household and village Christian practices in Samar and Leyte is the maintenance of reciprocal ties with departed family and relatives.<sup>106</sup> The centrality of mortuary practices in Bisayan-Christian life can be traced back to the “re-invention of death” by European missionaries in the early Spanish period. Rafael (1988), for example analyzed how, for the Tagalogs, a re-conceptualization of the afterlife may have been an important factor in attracting new converts to the new faith. Although health and good fortune would come to be associated with the God-given powers of the newly-arrived European priests, people in Samar and Leyte also continued to look to their ancestors to provide for such needs from the afterlife. This is evident in certain rituals which retained elements of the ancestral worship practiced in pre-colonial communities that have since been given a Catholic overlay. In the 1950s, for instance, Donn and Harriett Hart, American anthropologists who comparably studied the Visayan cultures of Samar, Cebu, and Negros, had observed among the inhabitants of a Borongan, Eastern Samar village the following practices dedicated to their ancestors for which they were rewarded with well-being and good fortune:

“[Ancestral] [s]ouls that are properly respected by the living in deed and action and are honoured by these rituals reward their descendants with abundant harvests, healthy and multiplying children and farm animals (chickens, pigs, carabao, etc.) and general good fortune” (Hart 1978, 61-62).

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<sup>106</sup> In a study which drew in part on interviews with 20th century Bisayan migrants to Mindanao (many from the Eastern Visayas), McAndrew writes as follows about the wider applicability of this persistent form of ancestor worship among many Philippine ethnolinguistic groups: “Reciprocity and propriety are the moral attitudes expected in people’s relations with the spirits. The ideal relationship is one of kinship. This behavior stresses respect for elders in exchange for their aid and protection. Ancestors are expected to look after the interest and welfare of their descendants in exchange for the latter’s ritual offerings. The relationship between living descendants and dead ancestors is generalized to encompass other members of the spirit world” (McAndrew, *People of Power*, p. 40).

Moreover, these rituals had traditionally served a double purpose of promoting both community and family solidarity before 20th century changes (see Chapter 3 on ceremonial simplification):

“According to the barriofolk the rituals for these souls (usually a novena, i.e. nine consecutive evenings of prayer or a rosary) have two purposes. One is to remember the anniversaries of the deaths of all of one's ancestors; the other is to maintain a close, intimate relationship among living kinsmen. In pursuit of these two purposes the *katig-uban*<sup>107</sup> (*tig-ub*, to add), once popular but rarely held today, used to be organized by several families in memory of their deceased relatives. It was said that in the past, when Lalawigan was less populous, one *katig-uban* was held for the souls of all the deceased residents of the village. Today the more common ritual is the *katu-igan* (*tuig*, year, or 'yearly') held by a single family for its souls. Sometimes a *katu-igan* is started on the recommendation of a shaman when the cause of a family member's sickness is diagnosed as angered ancestral souls. In some instances the sickness may be traced to a particular soul. For example, the 'orphan soul' (*ilo nga kalag*) of a childless man or woman may sicken a sibling for neglect to perform rituals” (Hart 1978, 62).

The idea of a heaven where the departed found themselves in close proximity to God came to be incorporated into native conceptions of the afterlife that retained the idea of a continuing relationship between the living and the dead. In pre-colonial times, the people of the Visayas had believed that their departed ancestors went to another realm where, unless they died as babies or by drowning, “married couples were reunited to continue accustomed activities

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<sup>107</sup> *Katig-uban* is defined as follows in Tramp's Waray-English dictionary: “alliance; assembly; association; clique; company; confederation; fellowship; food offering to ancestral souls for medical reasons, etc; group; guild; league; organization; partnership; society; union.” Tramp, George Dewey Jr. (1995) *Waray-English Dictionary*, Kensington, Maryland, USA: Dunwoody Press, p. 99. Today, it continues to be used in the names of groups ranging from people's organizations to special-interest associations in the Eastern Visayas.

like farming, fishing, raiding, spinning, and weaving, but did not bear children.” This happened in a cycle of seven to nine lifetimes in which they were “reborn each time smaller than the last, until in their final reincarnation, they were buried in a coffin the size of a grain of rice” (Scott 1994, 93). The untitled and anonymously authored chronicle from the 1590s now called the Boxer Codex provides the additional detail that these ancestral spirits continued to interact with their living descendants: “They say that the souls who inhabit these places die seven times, and some others are resuscitated and undergo the same travail and miseries that they undergo in their bodies in this world; but they have the power to remove and give health, which they effect through the air; and for this reason they revere and ask of them for help by holding drinking feasts” (Jocano 1975, 206).<sup>108</sup>

Despite centuries of Christianity in the Philippines, however, more recent accounts of local practices and beliefs with regard to relations with the spirit world suggests certain continuities with their Spanish-contact counterparts. For instance, the inhabitants of Lalawigan (in present-day Borongan, Eastern Samar) explained to the Harts in the 1950s how ill health were caused either by disturbed or angered invisible environmental spirits (except for mental illness which are caused by friendly environmental spirits) or by angered or vengeful ancestral spirits for violating generally accepted values. Familial or societal infractions included disrespect for elders, neglect for sickly/aged parents, dishonesty, physical violence, incestuous marriages (such as marrying a first cousin), or failure to hold proper rituals for the dead. Even the inheritance of land, a concept introduced by the Spaniards, would also be re-interpreted in light of older notions of a continuing relationship with one's departed ancestors: “Rituals for the souls are regarded, in part, as 'rent' paid them for

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<sup>108</sup> Cf. Similar beliefs among the Moros who “also had their grandparents as gods, saying they are in the air always looking over them and that the illness they have are given or removed by their grandparents” and that through ritual sacrifices “they [could] ask their grandparents to give them health in their maladies” (Jocano 1975 [Quirino and Garcia 1961], 194).

the inherited land presently farmed by their descendants."<sup>109</sup> The mention of shamans and novenas (the latter led by women *parapamatbat* prayer leaders) in the Harts' study also suggests continuities with the pre-colonial animist (i.e., *ancestor-* and *diwata-*centered) religion and the central place of women in it. Saints could also be ritually approached in the case of more persistent maladies. As Nurge observed about religious practices in a Leyte village: "Incantation to spirits and prayer to Christian deities are used by all practitioners, and the *tambal[a]n* [healer] also observes a perpetual novena to an *encanto* [invisible spirit] ancestor; failure to observe daily devotions would cause him [the *tambalan* healer] to become ill. Occasionally, a lay person with a persistent malady will vow to a saint to make an offering or to perform a particular action if he is cured" (pp. 1166-1167; Italics added).

But in the redefined cosmos, it was ultimately God who had become the chief source of power in seeking health, well-being and security. The ability of departed ancestors to give or withhold health was attributed to the relationship now had with the ultimate source of all power: "Souls may punish their descendants since they can talk with God."<sup>110</sup> Bankoff (2004) argues that the configuration of the cosmos in the Filipino mind now places the Christian God at the top of a hierarchy of powerful beings who respond to the actions of the living:

"The Christian God has been incorporated into this worldview as the chief among spirits [i.e., and ancestral, environmental, and Christian], whom people relate to much as to a father. Like a parent, He has two facets to his character: He is the object of petition and gratitude when He grants favours but the object of anger and *tampo* [sulking] when He withholds them. In the Visayas, this is often represented in terms of *grasya*, the grace of the supernatural that abounds in the natural environment and that manifests itself in the bounty of Nature, and *gaba*,

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<sup>109</sup> Hart, "Disease Etiologies of Samarano Filipino Peasants," p.61.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

the curse or punishment of the same for unacceptable behaviour and that is often conceived of as a form of retribution for wrongdoings inflicted on others. In particular, natural hazards are typically depicted as forms of *gaba*, punishment for one's past actions or sins that fall on the innocent as well as the 'guilty' and that may cause a degree of suffering totally out of proportion to the transgression itself. Nor does *gaba* necessarily happen immediately; it may come gradually with time, as ultimately no one 'can escape the wrath of God'" (Bankoff 2004, 100).

As will be shown below and in subsequent chapters, the new configuration of the cosmos introduced to people in the Eastern Visayas during the 16th century would be embraced, challenged, and re-configured as new crises (both human-induced and environmental) arose and as people collectively came to grips with such crises through unifying identities. These identifications in turn came to denote people's relationships with more powerful beings (whether gods, saints, or ancestors) who could provide for their welfare when appeased or withhold it as punishment for wrongdoing.

### From *pag-anito* to self-sacrifice

An important transformation in the means of acquiring welfare-providing power involved a change in the character of ritual sacrifice. Traditionally known as the *pag-anito*, which in ancient Bisayan meant "to offer sacrifice" and where *anito* meant a sacrifice, the term also meant an idol or a god.<sup>111</sup> The small idols (*bata-bata*, *larawan*) and small huts where people left offerings (which the priests destroyed as soon as they chanced upon them; Chirino; Brewer) would be supplanted by the religious icons and churches which became the focus of community ritual life.<sup>112</sup> Like the pre-colonial icons representing ancestral spirits and environmental gods, rituals were performed in their presence to ask for protection from various dangers and for family and community welfare.

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<sup>111</sup> Sanchez, op.cit., fol. 52-25v.; Alcina in *Philippiniana Sacra* 41, p. 413, note 9.

<sup>112</sup> Arens, R. (1959) Religious rituals and their socioeconomic implications in Philippine society. *Philippine Sociological Review*, 7(1/2), pp.34-45.

Christian practices that were popular in Europe were also eagerly imitated by native converts who saw them as a means of coping with the dangers brought about by Christian conversion. Chirino, for instance, reported on the eagerness of both adult and child converts to perform self-flagellation (e.g., Chirino's example of mutual assistance between self-sacrificing penitents). Moreover, the height of the Moro Raids saw an increase in the number of flagellants who believed that such a practice could help in protecting them against these raids (Brewer 2001). This example could be seen as an early instance of a foreign practice being appropriated by people responding to an old form of risk for which they could no longer for the most part respond through customary means (e.g., retaliatory raids). However, what the new practice of self-flagellation retained was the older notion of reciprocity between the practitioner and the spirit world, which in older customs were mediated through sacrificial animals, slaves, or worldly possessions. This turn towards the sacrifice of the self persists up to the present in the belief among Visayans and Filipinos that the endurance of hardship as Christians would be rewarded with well-being, not just for one's self but for one's family and community (Borchgrevink 2003). As will be seen in the next chapters, the seeking of heavenly and worldly well-being by self-sacrificing *Bisayan-Christians* will also influence the actions of selfhood-seeking *Filipinos* and luck-seeking *Warays*.

### *Pintados*

The need to cope with Spanish-period crises also saw people associating old cultural values with new labels in order to foster group unity. The people of Samar and Leyte, for example, held on to ancient values such as ferocity (*isog*) to cope with constant dangers such as those posed by slave raids.<sup>113</sup> During his stop in the Philippines around 1696, the Italian traveler Gemelli Careri recorded the following observation about a favourite group label of the Bisayans that had originally been coined by the Spaniards:

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<sup>113</sup> Cruikshank, *Samar: 1768-1898*.

*"Quindi gli Spagnuoli dettero nome de los Pintados all'Isola abitata da' Bisay ; che maggiormente di ciò si diletavano, quasi in segno di nobiltà, e di valore."*

"[T]he Spaniards gave the island [sic] of Bisay [sic] the name of Pintados, those People delight-ing in this above the rest [i.e., other labels?], as if it betoken'd Valour and Nobility." (Gemelli Careri, c. 1696)<sup>114</sup>

Although it subsequently declined as a custom, Gemelli Careri's description of tattooing methods suggests that it was still practiced in the Visayas over a century after Christianity was introduced to its people. Given the new colonial context, the extension of the ancient meanings ascribed to tattoos to the *Pintados* label given by the Spaniards would thus have given the islanders a new symbol with which to identify common traits (e.g., bravery) which were key to collective responses to adversity even as older practices such as tattooing gave way to a transformed colonial culture. These challenges included the Moro Raids which would continue to pose as the foremost risk in the region until the mid-19th century (Cruikshank 1985) and subsequent crises where the *isog* value continued to be key to collective survival.

Labels such as *Cristiano*, *Pintados*, and *Bisaya*, which by most indications were initially applied by the Spaniards to the people of Samar and Leyte, thus came to acquire local meanings that included the continuity (or association with the label) of older ancestral worship, martial values (through the *Pintados* label), and ways of memorialising older notions of culture and identity (through the *Bisaya* label) despite the new customs and beliefs introduced by the Spaniards (through the *Christiano* label).

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<sup>114</sup> Gemelli Careri, Giovanni Francesco, 1651-1725, *Voyages around the world*. Vol V, 1700.

## Conclusion

The chapter has argued that, with the introduction by the Jesuits in the islands of Samar and Leyte of the concept of an omnipotent God as supreme being (for which their own feats against everyday and extraordinary adversity served as proof), the group solidarities required to respond to crises in the early Spanish-period Eastern Visayas necessitated a shift towards a new identity and way of life under the leadership of European priests who could channel divine power for community health and well-being. But the adaptation of newly introduced practices and beliefs did not constitute a complete break with the past but instead showed signs of continuity with older forms of behavior and perception in dealing with a conflict-prone and hazardous environment. Moreover, the natural and human-induced crises these communities continued to face under Spanish rule later triggered social movements seeking the healing/protective power of the old gods and a return to their old life. These movements nevertheless appealed for unity using localized identity labels which had been imposed by the Spanish colonizers and later internalized by an indigenous population. Like in pre-colonial times, this population continued to be organized primarily through autonomous small communities that had their own political and religious leaders. Although long exposed to the teachings and influence of European missionaries, by the 1880s these communities held practices and beliefs that mixed Spanish and pre-colonial elements. Aside from their reliance on Spanish-imposed identities in their calls for unity, the political/religious leaders advocating a return to the old religion and order were also heavily influenced by Spanish leadership structures in their attempts to generate a wider following for their anti-colonial movements although the spirit mediumship of women and transvestite males, the dominant forms in the pre-colonial era, continued in new forms.

By the 19th century, self-identifying Christians dissatisfied with Spanish rule could look to indigenous leaders also claiming to channel the Christian God's

power (rather than the power from the native *diwata* gods sought for by earlier movements) as alternative power sources for community protection and well-being, especially in the context of an expanding colonial state that encroached on the autonomy of small communities, a growing abaca industry that was vulnerable to price fluctuations in the global market, and new health hazards such as cholera which decimated families in the islands. By the late 19th century, people had also become receptive to localized model of revolution that was based on the expectations of the arrival in the near future of a powerful and benevolent ruler. As will be seen in the next chapter, Spanish rule would again be challenged in the aftermath of another period of crisis triggered by infectious disease, i.e., the 1882-1883 cholera epidemic. Native shamans seen as successful in saving families and communities from cholera launched anti-Spanish social movements through a religious/revolutionary discourse that sought unity through identifications with local churches/kingdoms. These localized institutions were prophesied as soon to be led by Bisayan Fathers and Kings who were to replace their European counterparts for the islands of Samar and Leyte. The confluence of risks and hazards at the turn of the 20th century would thereafter see a repeat of the coping process described in this chapter in which identification with religious and ethnic labels (Cristiano and Bisaya) would be joined by identification with a label that was itself derived from a colonial model, i.e., identification as "Filipino" nationals.

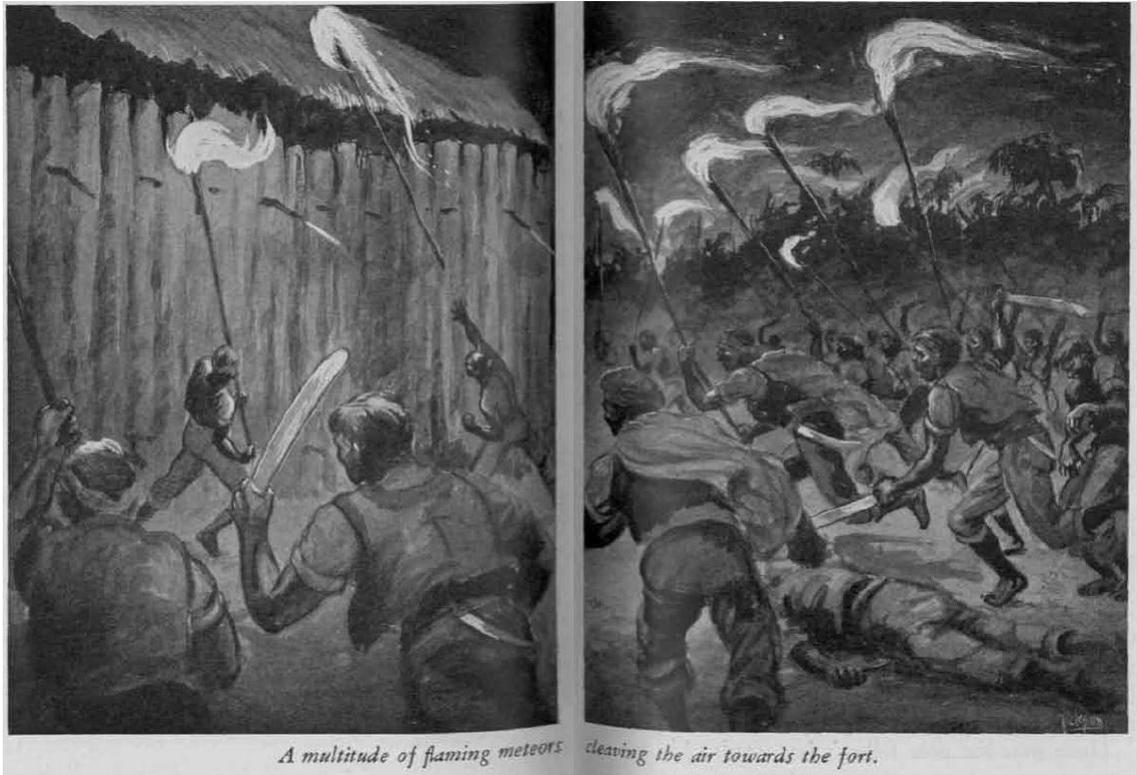


Figure 5. Illustration of a Pulahan attack on a Philippine Constabulary stockade in San Ramon (now Arteche), Samar, 1905.

## CHAPTER 2

### Cataclysmic Revolution, Local Associations, and the Quest for *Pilipinhon* Village Selfhood, 1884-1944

This chapter aims to demonstrate the applicability of the identity-based coping process discussed in the first chapter to subsequent periods in Samar-Leyte history by examining the local perceptions of and responses to a series of hardships and crises running up to the mid-20thC that were seen as divinely-ordained. It will examine how epidemic disease such as cholera and smallpox, Enlightenment-influenced revolution against Spain and the United States, American-period political uncertainty, and occupation by the Japanese Empire helped shape and reshape syncretic socio-religious-nationalist associations in Samar and Leyte exhibiting the localized leadership and identifications discussed in the previous chapter. In particular, it will analyse how a “Filipino” identity introduced to Eastern Visayan communities during the region’s revolutionary period (1898-1907) was adapted in the identity-expressions of association-led movements with late-Spanish-period origins that aimed to deal with the challenges wrought by the successive American and Japanese colonial orders and more regular environmental hazards. It argues that the prophesied Philippine Revolution introduced a national identification based on love for a “motherland” (*Iroy nga Tuna*) symbolized by the Virgin Mary and looked after by a new set of both national and local hero(in)es. These exemplars of action helped communities navigate the last waves of imperial occupation in their pursuit of a divinely-promised but long-withheld “independence” dreamt of at the family and village levels.

The events and discourses of the 1882-1944 period will first be analyzed in terms of the crises which affected communities, the groups that were formed to deal with these crises, the (clashing or complementary) expectations held by these groups and the contexts which shaped them, and how people and

communities acted on these expectations before and during the Revolution, the American colonial period, and the Japanese Occupation. The chapter will follow a sequence which examines four periods and the associated events and discourses for each timeframe. These periods will be divided into: (1) late 19th century crises and millenarian/revolutionary agitations, (2) the turn of the 20thC revolutionary period, (3) the period of “democratic tutelage” and “national formation” under American Rule, and (4) resistance and collaboration during the Japanese Occupation. To be examined for each period are: (a) their grand narratives and local adaptations, (b) the identity discourses which drew on these narratives to cope with crises and (c) the official or popular remembrances and expectations which shaped these identity narratives. The chapter will show that throughout these different periods, local associations drew on religious and nationalist identity narratives to cope with health/environmental hazards as well as the successive waves of colonial occupation by the Americans and Japanese which followed centuries of Spanish rule.

The chapter will argue that the Philippine Revolution’s main legacy in Samar and Leyte was the introduction of the discourse of national Filipino unity and identity in defining a new community spirit. However, the new leadership and identifications this offered in collectively dealing with crises and in seeking well-being continued to be bounded along extended-family or small-community lines through which people could better adapt to the confluence of human-induced and environmental crises in the region during this period of time. Further transformative innovations to localised Filipino identifications in Samar and Leyte came with the imposition of American education which seems to have heightened the sense of seeking *caopayan* by enduring hardship outside the community’s collective self, paving the way for the outmigration phenomenon that would become a dominant practice in the post-war/post-independence period (see next chapter).

A major barrier to understanding how the Bisayan-Christians (*Bisaya, Cristiano*) of Samar and Leyte came to call themselves Filipino (*Pilipinhon*) as an outcome of the Revolution and its related crises are the dominant representations of interrelated popular movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries by colonial authorities, local elites, and historians. This chapter thus further argues that a better understanding of these movements requires an examination of the environmental and historical contexts that influenced the emergence of often negative and feared labels such as “Dios-Dios,” “Pulahan,” or “Colorum.” Such an analysis would lead to a better appreciation of the creative ways in which people imagined and acted on new notions of unity and solidarity to survive this period of radical change that came with multiple risks and hazards to families and communities. By sifting through colonial/elite representations and the scattered and sometimes indirect evidence of the way participants of these movements saw and represented themselves, one could begin to trace a shift, as a response to what were seen as divinely-ordained dangers and in pursuit of village autonomy, from a primarily religious identification (as Christians) before the outbreak of the Revolution against Spain towards a nationalist identification (as Filipinos) by the time the United States granted the Philippines its independence on 4 July 1946 or a few months after the end of World War II.

## LOCAL INTERPRETATIONS OF HEALTH, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND POLITICAL CRISES

The turn of the 20th century was a time when a series of coincidental events, both human-induced and environmental, shaped the actions of individuals and groups due in part to the meanings people ascribed to these events. Before proceeding to examples of group mobilizations and identifications from the late 19th century to the Japanese Occupation of the Philippines during the Second World War, this section outlines some of the crises people faced in the region that could help put into context people’s actions and new self-conceptions.

## Cholera as biggest late-19th century health risk

As discussed previously, Moro raids and Dutch incursions had been the biggest security threats to the islands in the early years of Spanish rule. By the 19th century, however, improvements in maritime technology after the industrial revolution led to better interception of raiding fleets from the southern islands and the decline of the raids by the mid-1800s.<sup>115</sup> The integration of regional Philippine ports to the world economy after 1832 would thereafter lead to the exposure of Samar and Leyte communities to a new danger—the threat to health posed by epidemics, particularly cholera, which spread through human contact with bacteria that was transported to the region through ocean-going vessels and spread inland through water sources.<sup>116</sup> In addition to periodic seismic/climatic hazards, epidemic disease thus became a major hazard faced by communities that were increasingly dependent on the global market for their livelihood (e.g., growing cash crops such as abaca) and subsistence (e.g., rice from town merchants). In local religious practices, for instance, the replacement of slave raiding by disease as a primary danger faced by Christian communities was reflected in the petitions people made to the saints and ancestors people venerated. In local risk perceptions, epidemic disease as the foremost danger to well-being also registered in Bisayan vernacular languages (cf. in expressions such as “ay, colera!”) which, by the 20th and early 21st centuries, would in turn would be replaced by (natural) disasters (“kalamidad”) as the primary form of hazard.<sup>117</sup> In the late 19th century contests between healers of epidemic disease, the proliferation of religious texts authored by European priests with knowledge of the vernacular languages and indigenous

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<sup>115</sup> Cruikshank, B. (1985) *Samar: 1768-1898*; Warren, J. F. (1981) *The Sulu Zone, 1768-1898*.

<sup>116</sup> Worcester (1909) *Asiatic Cholera*; De Bevoise, K. (1995) *Agents of Apocalypse*.

<sup>117</sup> Jubilado, R. C., Ingilan, S., & Dumanig, F. P. (2015). Expressing profanity in Cebuano and Bahasa Sug. *JATI-Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 20, 136-157. On the 21st century social context for a saying such as “Kada adlaw baga hin kalamidad para ha mga pobre” (Every day is like a calamity for the poor) in post-Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda Tacloban City, see Su, Y., & Lim Mangada, L. (2018). A tide that does not lift all boats: the surge of remittances in post-disaster recovery in Tacloban City, Philippines. *Critical Asian Studies*, 50(1), 67-85.

medicine was another important development which, as will be seen shortly, helps to explain the close association made between priest-authors and written talismanic texts by their indigenous shaman rivals.

The anti-colonial element in late-19th-century *Dios-Dios* prophecies was only one aspect of a more complex phenomenon. Local healers claiming to channel the Christian God's power against new forms of crises had to first co-opt official channels to gain new adherents for their own movements (Cruikshank 1979). Examples of these attempts include proselytization in pilgrimage sites near Samar's west coast and the attempt to kill Fr. Antonio Sanchez de la Rosa in Borongan, a town in Samar's east coast. More than half a century later, the *Dios-Dios* would be remembered in folk memory as "an organization...the aim of which was to organize another religion aside from the [Roman] Catholic [Church]. They kneel anywhere and pray [to] God directly. They propagate that the diseases will never come, once [the people] believe[d] in them."<sup>118</sup> The emphasis on disease suggests that this was the single biggest threat to communities when the *Dios-Dios* emerged in the late 19th century.

### The Deluge and the Future Age

Regional identity labels that could be appealed to for mass mobilization were frequently referred to in religious prophecies about imminent catastrophes. For instance, the name "Samariño" in the *Dios-Dios* "King" Francisco Gonzalez's guideline (*Sediciones y Rebeliones*, Philippine National Archives) and its prophecies about the dawn of an imminent "Edad de Samariño" (Age of Samariño), might thus refer to the people of Samar Island, now spelled as "Samareño" in contemporary usage. The fact that Spanish authorities confiscated the *Dios-Dios* document in Leyte Island suggests that people there could also have identified with the label given how for a long time Samar and Leyte were part of a single province until 1777 (Cruikshank 1985). References to the future age in *Dios-Dios* texts refer to a time when people were to be free and sovereign. But like similar movements in the Spanish Philippines, such a

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<sup>118</sup> HDP, Jaro, Leyte, 1953.

future age were often framed as a return to a past “golden age” that had been lost.<sup>119</sup> Although it was given a range of meanings, such expectations expressed a common hope of a return to an ideal pre-colonial age that was shared by peasants<sup>120</sup> and elites alike.<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, sectarian predictions and fears about an imminent and supernaturally-ordained period of world transforming cataclysm that would spare only a faithful few from a largely corrupt society was not unique to the Philippines of the late 19th century. It nevertheless introduced to local traditions additional details and stages to past prophecies of extreme events such as Padre Gaspar’s prediction of a coming “lunop” (deluge) that would transform the world. A Spanish newspaper article on the *Dios-Dios* attacks on the Borongan poblacion in November 1884, for example, reports on *Dios-Dios* predictions of a coming flood that mirrored the prophecies made in Barrio Bonga earlier that year on the island’s opposite coast about an imminent flood:

A fact to judge these events. The first time, last year [i.e., 1884], when these religious [persons] mutinied, withdrawing to the highest of the mountains where they became strong, [they] were moved by their gods (*dioses*) who predicted they [the town populace?] would die between the waters of the sea that was going to flood the town.<sup>122</sup>

These fears were not necessarily held only by *Dios-Dios* sectarians but seemed to have been part of the risk perceptions of the wider population as well.

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<sup>119</sup> Iletto, R. C. (1988) "Outlines of a non-linear emplotment of Philippine history." In *Reflections on development in Southeast Asia*, pp.130-59.

<sup>120</sup> Iletto, R.C. (1979) *Pasyon and revolution: Popular movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910*. Love, R. S. (2004) *The Samahan of Papa God: Tradition and conversion in a Tagalog peasant religious movement*. Pasig City: Anvil.

<sup>121</sup> Iletto, "Outlines..." Aguilar, F.V., 2005. Tracing origins: Ilustrado nationalism and the racial science of migration waves. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 64(3), pp.605-637. Thomas, M.C., 2012. *Orientalists, propagandists, and ilustrados: Filipino scholarship and the end of Spanish colonialism*. University of Minnesota Press.

<sup>122</sup> *La Correspondencia de España*. 1 December 1885, no. 9,792. "Un dato para juzgar estos sucesos. La primera vez, el año pasado, cuando éstos religiosos se amotinaron retirándose á lo más alto de los montes donde se hicieron fuertes, fueron movidos por sus dioses que les vaticinaron morirían entre las aguas del mar que iban á inundar el pueblo."

Reports of natural hazards from around the time of the *Dios-Dios* unrest suggest that such predictions might have been based on pre-existing and widely-held views about the meaning of events such as earthquakes and typhoons. Just as seismic and meteorological phenomena and epidemic disease could be attributed to the activities or vengeance of indigenous gods at the Spanish contact, so too could these events in the late 19th century be linked in popular thought to supernatural agency. The timing of these events in what *Dios-Dios* prophets proclaimed to be a successive unfolding of a divine “mystery” could thus have exerted a significant influence on the actions of people experiencing and interpreting such phenomena in light of the colonial situation of the time. The simultaneous occurrence in December 1884 of earthquakes with epicentres in the Leyte and Samar region and Northeastern Mindanao as well as a slow-moving typhoon appear to have brought about mass panic and gave rise to rumours similar to that which *Dios-Dios* prophets proclaimed in the preceding months. A Leyte correspondent to a Manila newspaper is quoted in a Manila Observatory report thus:

On the 24th [December 1884] at 5h [a]m there was in this town and in several others a strong tremor of the earth with oscillation and trembling motion (*trepidación*), whose duration was calculated at some 80 [seconds?]; It is one of the longest I have felt during my long stay in this country...This phenomenon was repeated on the 25th at 0h 30m [12:30am?] [during] the *misa de gallo* [“Rooster’s Mass” or Christmas Eve Mass]; It was very short, but it could have had a disastrous effect because of the alarm it caused in the people who were in the Church and because of the haste with which they pounced on the doors. The tremor [was] repeated the same day twice between 7 and 8 p[m], then there were loud thunder from 10pm onwards.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Quoted in Saderra Masó, *La Seismología en Filipinas*, p. 93 [Decenio de Temblores [Decade of Tremors] 1880-89 chapter], Archives of the Manila Observatory, Ateneo de Manila University.

The correspondent also gave details about a storm and consequent flooding in the same days:

We are in the middle of the *colla del Sur*; We have taken on four days of strong winds from the S. and SW with torrential rains: the rivers leave their channel and the roads are destroyed. (Ibid.)

On the other hand, a correspondent from Samar wrote:

From the 20th until the morning of the 25th the earthquakes have not stopped; some have been quite strong and of long duration: there has been a day in which they have been perceived from 8 to 10, and the *fin de fiesta*<sup>124</sup> at 5 o'clock in the morning of the 24th was very strong and in addition on the 25th and 26th we had a *semi-baguio* [semi-typhoon] in which it rained like never before: there are rumors of floods and dragging of the rivers, etc. etc. (Ibid.)

These flood rumors suggest that environmental hazards such as earthquakes and typhoons that coincided with important religious celebrations such as Christmas could have been given special significance by local prophets at a time when the *Dios-Dios* Movement was at its height. Spanish colonial authorities were then still in pursuit of its various leaders who had spread out across Samar and were just about to spread their teachings to nearby Leyte where the movement would not be fully suppressed until around 1891.<sup>125</sup>

## The Coming Revolution

Classic accounts of the Philippine Revolution trace its beginnings to an uprising by a Manila-based secret society known as the *Katipunan* (Tagalog: "a gathering together," "association").<sup>126</sup> The Katipunan revolt is mainly seen as a

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<sup>124</sup> i.e., an "extraordinary performance that ends a show or celebration."

<sup>125</sup> See various reports in *Sediciones y Rebeliones*, Philippine National Archives; Arens 1959.

<sup>126</sup> Founded in Tondo, Manila on July 7, 1892, the society's longer name was *Kataastaasan Kagalang-galang Katipunan nang mga Anak nang Bayan* (Highest and Most Respectable Society of the Children of the Nation). *Katipunan* leaders portrayed the Revolution as a turning away of the "Tagalog" people from their false mother (i.e., separation from Spain) and a return to their true *Inang Bayan* (mother nation) (Ileto 1979). This mother-child representation would

secular, nationalist movement inspired by modern, liberal democratic ideals traceable back to the Enlightenment and first popularized in the colony by reformist secular priests and lawyers and later by Europe-educated writer-student-activists (Kalaw, Agoncillo, Schumacher, Fast and Richardson).

Later studies on the Revolution, especially Iletto's *Pasyon and Revolution* (1979), provide alternative perspectives which argue that the *Katipunan*, especially in some of their symbolism and the future expectations of a certain number of its members (e.g., native kingdom instead of nation-state), resembled more closely the millenarian movements that came before and after the organization was established in 1892 (Iletto 1979). The debates this view triggered about religious versus secular motivations (Guerrero vs. Iletto) and the class composition of the nationalist movement (Fast and Richardson) reflected the wariness of many historians over revisionist accounts about the Revolution, especially ones which suggest "backwardness" and "superstition" as opposed to prevalent views of the *Katipunan's* "rationality" and "modernity." This was due to the Revolution's importance as the "foundational event" of the nation-state from which state (elite politicians, etc.) and non-state actors (anti-government/rebel movements, etc.) can derive political legitimacy (Iletto, Mojares). What these linear and progressive accounts leave out, however, were the multiple interpretations that such events (launch of the Revolution, execution of Rizal, confluence of extreme events) would have engendered and how, given the transformed cosmic order of the Christianized natives, they were interpreted in light of mounting anti-Spanish sentiment and the expectations/anticipation of upheaval exhibited by colony-wide millenarian movements in the Philippines of the 1880s and 1890s.<sup>127</sup>

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be paralleled in Eastern Visayan religious movements which belatedly joined but ultimately broke away from elite-led forces during the Revolution's later republican phase under General Aguinaldo; <http://opmanong.ssc.hawaii.edu/filipino/katipunan.html> (Accessed: 20 November 2016).

<sup>127</sup> Rizal also tried to address these expectations in his second novel, *El Filibusterismo* (1891), which is a meditation on "the future" after his description of the present (*Noli Me Tangere*, 1887) and recovery of an obscured past (Morga annotated edition, 1890) in his previous books.

A travel account by an eyewitness to the first few days of the Revolution provides a captivating testimony describing indigenous perspectives about the cosmological forces set in motion by the Katipunan revolt. Such accounts are often omitted from standard narratives of the Revolution owing to their “fantastic” character:

“In addition, news reports and slogans that virtually spread by themselves assume the forms of legend in this country. Before the insurrection, it was rumored in Tondo that around six in the evening people would see the apparition of a woman whose head was crowned by serpents; everyone interpreted this vision to mean that the fatal hour was approaching. Another report had it that in Biak-na-bato<sup>128</sup> a woman had given birth to a child dressed in a general’s uniform—which meant that arms had been landed. These tales and apparitions over-excite the people’s imagination, which soon drops the supposedly hidden meaning and gets lost in pure fantasy. Someone has written that the Spanish conquest robbed the subdued peoples of their original poetic imagination and impoverished their souls. A time always comes when the spirit of a race is reborn and impatiently seeks to know life. The very earth nourishes it with fresh vigor. Today the Spaniards have not only peoples to contend with but also, and above all, the phantoms of the past, nature awakened from slumber, legends descending from the mountains, the dead rising from their graves. And that is why the soldier, overwhelmed by his task, fights indifferently while the insurgents go into

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<sup>128</sup> A cave in Biak-na-Bato became headquarters for Kawit, Cavite-native Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, who had replaced Tondo-native Andres Bonifacio as overall leader of the revolutionary forces and later president of the first Philippine Republic, prior to the December 1897 Pact of Biak-na-Bato that paved the way for the (ultimately temporary) cessation of hostilities and the self-exile to Hong Kong of Aguinaldo and his staff. On the role of caves in popular imagination during the Revolution, see Scalice thesis clarifying the reception of rumors about arms being distributed from a cave in San Mateo. See also the debate between Ileto and May on the meanings attributed to Bonifacio’s ascension to Mt. Tapusi and Pamitinan Cave and his call to revolution there.

battle with such courage that they actually have been observed, rushing, bolo in hand, across firing lines and returning to camp bloody but alive.”

[Quote from André Bellessort, *One Week in the Philippines* (November 1897), translated by E. Aguilar Cruz (Manila: National Historical Institute, 1987)] (pp. 52-53)<sup>129</sup>

The above testimony suggests an alternative interpretation of events that conform to traditional practices and beliefs shared by different cultural groups in the Spanish Philippines who experienced similar forms of human-made and environmental hazards.<sup>130</sup> The courage displayed by anti-Spanish rebels may thus have been reinforced by a perception of events in which colonized natives in this world and ancestral/environmental forces from the spirit world were seen as engaged in a cooperative effort to drive away the Spaniards.

The events of the Philippine Revolution also seemed to have been integrated into the local prophetic traditions of Samar and Leyte. Even before its outbreak

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<sup>129</sup> “[N]ature awakened from slumber:” possibly a reference to natural disasters of the time (see Manila Observatory documents); The reference to “legends descending from the mountains” is most likely an allusion to the Bernardo Carpio legend in Tagalog oral literature about a giant believed to be the cause of earthquakes and who would one day help to liberate the Tagalog people from colonial rule after a long period of captivity in the mountains behind Manila. See Iletto, *Pasyon and Revolution* (1979) and Iletto, *Filipinos and their Revolution* (1998) for links between the Bernardo Carpio legend and Carpio rumors during the Revolution (i.e., only one of Carpio’s feet remained chained, after which he could descend and help the natives fight the Spaniards). The story of Bernardo Carpio was also performed in Samar-Leyte *hadi-hadi*. Filipinas, C. C. (1991) *Lineyte-Samaron Zarzuela (1899-1977): History & Aesthetics*. Tacloban City: Divine Word University Publications. “One Week in the Philippines” is the last chapter of the book *From Ceylon to the Philippines*, published in 1910 by the Frenchman Andre Bellessort.

<sup>130</sup> As discussed in a previous chapter, communities in Samar and Leyte practiced localised forms of ancestor worship in pre-colonial times that adapted Christian teachings in order to maintain close ties with departed forebears. Environmental risks were also associated with various deities and/or ancestral giants that periodically cause phenomena such as typhoons and earthquakes. At the Spanish Contact, animist practices and beliefs were common to Visayan societies and adjacent groups throughout the Philippine Archipelago, including Mindanao and northern areas such as Manila where monotheistic Islam had started to spread (Scott 1994). Beliefs about environmental hazards that were caused by ancestor giants (such as the case of Maka-andog in Samar and Tigalhong in Leyte [Hart 1966]) also seem to have parallels in other regions. The 1863 Manila earthquake, for instance, was interpreted as a sign that Bernardo Carpio, the legendary giant and folk hero imprisoned inside a mountain outside Manila and who would one day return to free his people from colonial bondage, had managed to dislodge one of the chains that bound him (Iletto 1998).

in and around Manila in 1896, an imminent revolution had already been prophesied in at least one captured sectarian document in Leyte that had been distributed by a fugitive *Dios-Dios* leader from Samar. The following passage from “King” Francisco Gonzalez’s “guideline” blamed the Spaniards for actions that brought about divine punishment in the form of cholera and other impending catastrophes:

“And that in Cebu there is a great person (*una persona grande*) who will complain against the abuses of the Spaniards toward the poor (*los maltratos de los españoles a los pobres*), because they now beg to the Omnipotent to be moved away from the danger (*peligro*). And for some who leave to visit our Kingdom, wait until the month of February, because the following month will have a revolution (*revolucion*) in Manila [colonial capital of the Philippine Islands] and Cebu [religious and administrative capital of the Visayan Islands]. And all the Visayas Islands (*las Islas Visayas*) have nothing to fear (*temer*), because if they remain under the control of our enemy, they will not die in the War (*la Guerra*) that my daughter Petronila would lead.”<sup>131</sup>

The Spaniards were thus seen as sources of danger that could only be avoided by becoming Gonzalez’s royal subjects for protection from the events that were about to unfold. These documented examples suggest that more than one sectarian group in the Spanish Philippines had anticipated the outbreak of what would become known as the Philippine Revolution (1896-1898) and interpreted them as having links to other dangers and hazards of the time (e.g., natural disasters, epidemic disease).<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> “King” Francisco Gonzalez’s Guideline for the Province of Samar, *Sediciones y Rebeliones, 1889-1897* [SDS-10562], PNA.

<sup>132</sup> Cf. Sophia Marco, “*Dios-Dios* and other forms of resistance in the 1880s,” MA Thesis (March 2000); Sturtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines*; Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution* for parallel movements in the Spanish Philippines.

## Local Independence as Collective Aspiration

A key development in the Samar and Leyte theatre (1900-1902) of the Philippine-American War (1899-1902) was the localisation of an independence ideal among the highly dispersed communities of the region. The decentralised character of the response to the American occupation of the Eastern Visayas would later be noted in the local histories of its municipalities and barrios. The *Historical Data Papers* for Borongan, Samar, for instance, reports that the "American occupation of the Philippines [was] much against the wishes of the Filipino people not only in the important places of the Philippines but also in the barrios and sitios within."<sup>133</sup>

General Emilio Aguinaldo's republican officers had to find creative means of communicating abstract notions of nationalism and independence to communities in Samar and Leyte which were less socially-stratified than the plantation societies in Luzon and Visayan islands such as Negros. A significant portion of the population was also relatively mobile (especially in the islands' interiors) owing to the widely-practiced slash-and-burn (*kaingin*) farming method and the constant relocation of communities to adapt to a hazardous environment.<sup>134</sup> Persuading such a dispersed population to join the independence cause required the use of language that latched on to the desires and hopes of small communities. As Iletto notes, "In order for 'history' and 'nation' to make sense, popular ideas of community, of self and others, of the past and the future, and of the interaction of human and divine agency, needed to be articulated and translated into 'modern' yet localized discourses" (Iletto 2011, 250).<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Barrio Locso-on, *Historical Data of Borongan and Its Barrios, Selected and Compiled by Teachers, Borongan, Samar, c.1952-1953*, HDP, PNL, p. 110.

<sup>134</sup> See *Historical Data Papers* of various towns in Samar and Leyte.

<sup>135</sup> Reynaldo C. Iletto, "A Tagalog Awit of the 'Holy War' Against the United States, 1899-1902," in Keith Thor Carlson, Kristina Fagan, and Natalia Khanenko-Frieson (eds.), *Orality and Literacy: Reflections Across Disciplines* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011).

General Lukban's considerable reliance on small communities to generate support for the cause of Philippine independence in Samar and Leyte is evident in various general circulars and personalised letters addressed to all or to specific local chiefs (*jefe local*) of various villages and hamlets.<sup>136</sup> Lukban's letters suggest that he adapted local notions of mutual help to generate cooperation with republican forces. The first circular he distributed to the region, dated January 1, 1899, reminds his "fellow-citizens of Sámar and Leyte" of their lack of participation in Spain's defeat:

"We no longer are slaves exploited by the Spaniards; we no longer blush on account of our condition, because our beloved Filipinas has entered the concert of civilized nations, and bears upon her forehead the seal of achievement and honor. And you, children of Sámar and Leyte, participate in all this happiness, although you did not cooperate in the victory."<sup>137</sup>

Lukban is however silent on the possible reasons for the lack of cooperation from the people of Samar and Leyte during the Philippine Revolution (1896-1898) and he makes no mention of the region's being affected by the devastating 1897 typhoon later dubbed "El Baguio de Samar y Leyte" in a detailed report on the storm.<sup>138</sup> On the other hand, mutual aid is a key theme Lukban expounds on in his exhortation for the people of the region to keep up in their contributions in "lives and property" to the revolutionary cause now that the "dreamed-of Independence" of what he called "our new born

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<sup>136</sup> Taylor, *The Philippine Insurrection Against the United States*; Nabong-Cabardo, "The Philippine-American War in Samar: Letters and Orders, 1899-1901." These letters and circulars were addressed to community leaders (of *barrios*, *visitas*, etc.) in Samar and Leyte (in the case of the latter: before General Moxica took over from Lukban as Aguinaldo's appointed politico-military governor for Leyte in 1899 and after Moxica's surrender to the Americans in 1901).

<sup>137</sup> Taylor, *The Philippine Insurrection against the United States*, Vol. 2, p. 629.

<sup>138</sup> Algue, J., S.J. (1898) *El Baguio de Samar y Leyte, 12-13 de Octubre de 1897*. Manila: Foto-Tipog. de J. Marty. The typhoon devastated large swathes of the same area affected by Super Typhoon Yolanda in 2013 with strong winds and storm surges of similar (if not greater) strength and height. For comparisons, see Borrinaga, R. O. (2015) Supertyphoon Yolanda (Haiyan): The new milestone of our lives. *Journal of History* 61(1), 236–61.

Republic" was under threat from other powers that might replace the Spaniards and impose a return to "slavery and sufferings" (Ibid). In line with Lukban's approach of directly appealing to the leaders of small communities, one of Lukban's commanders promised the village head (*cabeza*) of Suba (then part of the revolutionary-period *pueblo* of Margin, which had Matuguinao as *población*) in an August 27, 1901 letter that, "this Suba I am only trying to make into a town (*guintatalingoja nga mahimo bongto*). That is why you have to try to farm (*pagoma*) in favor of those who have responsibilities [for the revolution] in that *visita*. While I am still captain (*capitan*) here [of the revolutionary forces], don't you worry because I will risk the dangers with you (*oonongan*; root: *onong* [solidarity; to risk the dangers together]) in the fulfillment of responsibilities (*catongdanan*) and for the other *barrios* who are fulfilling the orders (*sugo*) of our government, because it is what has been said by our chief patriot (*pono*<sup>139</sup> *nga patriotism*) [General Lukban?]."<sup>140</sup>

This and similar promises made to elevate the status of *barrios* and *visitas* (the smallest political units during the Spanish period) in exchange for support for the Revolution in terms of food and conscripts suggests that Lukban and his staff, who mostly came from Luzon, adapted the idea of independence to fit local conditions (i.e., highly decentralised and dispersed communities) by appealing for support from small communities seeking autonomy from bigger communities (*poblaciones* [municipal centres] and *barrios* [satellite villages of the *poblacion*]). This localised independence ideal continued to inform the activities of elites and peasants alike after US president Theodore Roosevelt declared the end of the "Philippine Insurrection" (as the Philippine-American War was known then) on 4 July 1902.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> "puno, *n.* trunk of tree, base, head, chief, leader, itch in the head" (Makabenta and Makabenta 2004, 118)

<sup>140</sup> Nabong-Cabardo, 2004, pp. 68, 86.

<sup>141</sup> With the decline of armed resistance to American rule following the defeat of the Pulahan movements in Samar (1902-1911) and Leyte (1902-1907) and the shift to a parliamentary means of gaining independence, local political elites based in more central settlements

## SOLIDARITY THROUGH RELIGIOUS ICONS, HEALER-LEADERS, AND MUTUAL AID

The following sections examine how turn-of-the-20th-century social movements generated the solidarity needed to cope with what were regarded as preordained events even as they were dismissed by colonial authorities through various labels that denoted religious fanaticism and violent savagery. I will argue that these groups should instead be seen as adaptive organizations that selectively drew on centuries of European Catholicism and culture for its symbolism and forms of leadership in order to give meaning to, and provide rallying points for, people's collective activities in the face of a confluence of extreme events that required group cooperation for survival. The turn of the 20th century in Samar and Leyte saw movements bearing similarities to how groups and communities in the early Spanish period gravitated towards new spirit mediums and sources of power in coping with the crises brought about by the Spanish conquest.

The symbolic centres (e.g., religious icons/objects, local churches, anti-colonial martyrs, etc.) and the ideals around which groups rallied in resisting colonial "others" such as the Spaniards, Americans, and Japanese were often derived from syncretic forms of power-acquisition, leadership, organization, and expectation that had taken root in the islands across three centuries. Examining these forms provide insights into how solidarity was generated by groups often dismissed in colonial and nationalist accounts as aberrations in the Philippines' steady march to progress.

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continued to express their pro-independence platforms with the aspirations of smaller communities in mind. For example, the *ilustrado* newspaper *El Heraldo de Leyte y Samar* (1908-1910) pledged in its maiden issue to adhere, while under "tutelage" from the Americans, to a more inclusive patriotic program which did not exploit the people's patriotism "in favor of certain communities and personalities" (i.e., bigger communities and more powerful and well-connected leaders/politicians) (Artigas 1914; Borrinaga and Kobak 2006, p. 269).

## The Virgin Mary and the Holy Family as Unifying Symbols

Christian icons played an important role in serving as unifying symbols around which sectarian and revolutionary forces could rally. Just as the *Dios-Dios* could win over recruits through references to the Virgin Mary as a source of power and as a unifying symbol, so too would republican forces during the Philippine-American War invoke the Virgin as symbol and power source for the Philippine nation-state.<sup>142</sup> Moreover, both *Dios-Dios* leaders and the *ilustrado* General Vicente Lukban cited the Holy Family (*Sagrada Familia*) in the documents they circulated to supporters.<sup>143</sup> These anti-colonial groups (both nationalist and sectarian) thus latched on to the importance of the Virgin Mary and the Holy Family as symbols of unity in Samar-Leyte societies in eliciting the support of entire families and communities for their causes.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> A British traveller writes as follows about the importance of the Virgin Mary to the *Dios-Dios* rebels which invaded Biliran Island in 1902: "Leyte has suffered much from its vicinity to Samar, the evil-doers on that island crossing over the San Juanico Strait to Leyte, when convenient, and carrying on successful depredations. The *dios-dios*, on the island of Biliran, were curious fanatics who killed every one who did not think link them. Their leader was supposed to pay nightly visits to Rome to confer with the Virgin Mary! As late as October, 1902, some hundreds of these *dios-dios* came over to Leyte and pillaged and killed until checked by the constabulary force. Even towns as large as Ormoc were attacked by these people" (A. Henry Savage Landor, *Gems of the East*, p. 450). The Leyte-born ex-revolutionary turned Philippine Assembly representative Miguel Romualdez referred to the Virgin Mary as "the Malay Virgin, that symbolizes the complete realization of our native ideals" (Artigas, 1914, 203; Borrinaga and Kobak, 2006, p. 260). The Virgin Mary continues to be the dominant icon in Christianized parts of the Philippines, and is seen as a leading figure over the other saints. It is believed that around seventy percent of religious icons in the Philippines are of the Virgin Mary in various guises. It is further argued that in the devotion to the Virgin Mary, local collective memory retained shades of the matrilineal pre-colonial religion and its *babaylan* priestesses who had similar roles as Mary's as intercessors with the spirit world. McAndrew, *People of Power*; Wendt, "Philippine Fiesta and Colonial Culture."

<sup>143</sup> Schumacher, *Revolutionary Clergy*; The aspirant *Dios-Dios* "King" Francisco Gonzalez's guideline also contains similar references to an indigenized holy family and makes frequent mention of Holy Mary (*Maria Santissima*), AA, S&R, PNA.

<sup>144</sup> Taylor, *Philippine Insurrection*; Nabong-Cabardo, "The Philippine-American War in Samar: Letters and Orders, 1899-1901." On the Virgin Mary's role in protecting Christianized communities from the Moro Raids, see previous chapter. For the centrality of Holy Mary (*Santa Maria*), Joseph, and the Holy Child in the vernacular prayers taught by the Jesuits, see de Estrada's *Lagda sa Camaligdong san Cabataan nga Bisaya...*[1746].

## Priests versus Shamans during the 1882-1883 Cholera Epidemic

Christian religious icons had, since the introduction of Christianity to the islands, been closely associated with spiritually-powerful European missionaries. However, the increasing number of epidemics and calamities toward the end of the 19th century provided another arena in which European and indigenous spirit-mediums could exhibit their healing/protective powers and retain or gain influence over the local population.<sup>145</sup> Although the rare modern doctor was already practicing in some of the important towns of the late 19th century Philippines, it was to the friar and *tambalan* to which most Samareños would have turned to during the 1882-1883 epidemics which ravaged Samar and many parts of the colony. Since there was only one licensed doctor (*medico titular*) based in Samar's provincial capital of Catbalogan at the time of the cholera epidemic, people from the rest of the island, where shamans outnumbered priests, would thus have had to rely on *mediquillos* and *cuacheros* employing traditional medicine for relief from the spread of the deadly disease.<sup>146</sup> As will be seen below, some of these healers would become key leaders in the *Dios-Dios* and *Pulahan* Movements.

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<sup>145</sup> Aguilar, *Clash of Spirits*. For a history of medical practices in the Philippines before the 19th century, see Joven, A. E. (2012). "Colonial Adaptations in Tropical Asia: Spanish Medicine in the Philippines in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries." *International Christian University Publications, 3-A, Asian Cultural Studies* 38: 171-186. As in the early Spanish period, local healers (locally known as *tambalan*) continued to have extensive knowledge of the vast array of medicinal plants available in the archipelago and religious missionaries often learned from these local practitioners while at the same time dismissing their supernatural invocations as superstition.

<sup>146</sup> *Memorias...Samar, PNA*. See Iletto, "Outlines of a Non-linear Emplotment of Philippine History," for the state of medicine in the late 19th century Philippines. An example of rivalries between friars and local shamans from the neighboring island of Panay less than a decade earlier can perhaps give insight into the possible motive behind the threat to Fr. Sanchez de la Rosa's life in 1884. Around 1877-1878, a deadly period of drought and famine in Panay became a test of skills/powers for the *babaylanes* and friars of the island. Unable to conjure rain, the local parish priest suggested to the native elite that they contact a local *babaylan* who succeeded in ending the drought after performing a ritual in the town center. Thereafter, the triumphant *babaylan* became a renowned figure among the shamans of Panay while the parish priest lost his influence among many natives (Aguilar 1998, 166).

## The Pulahan Movement and Mutual Aid

The negative representations of the region's social movements has resulted in a persistent lack of attention paid to how they were formed in the first place. From 1902 to 1907, Samar and Leyte again gained notoriety (after the events related to the 1901 Balangiga Massacre and the 1901-1902 American counterattack on Samar) because of the largely peasant-based resistance to American colonial control offered by the Pulahan Movement.<sup>147</sup> Although many previous studies on the Pulahan Movement attributed its outbreak to religious fanaticism, cultural backwardness, or retribution for the economic exploitation of highlanders by lowlanders (Arens 1959, Sturtevant 1976, Linn 1999), other sources would suggest that the movement in both islands were linked to the continued armed pursuit of village independence. For instance, the *Historical Data Papers* of Gandara (Samar), one of the hotbeds of Pulahan in the first half of the 20th century, noted how in the 1904-1907 conflict in Samar, the Pulahanes who "invad[ed] the barrios" had been "trying to overthrow the local government" and "were particularly after the Parish Priest,"<sup>148</sup> i.e., the most

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<sup>147</sup> The following passages from the American writer Vic Hurley are perhaps the most quoted descriptions of the Pulahanes: "These red-garbed mountaineers, with white flowing capes and crescent blades, were contributory to one of the most ferocious eras of guerrilla warfare that our arms were to experience. Not even the Indian campaigns of the old West, fought in open country, could compare with the rushing, jungle-shielded tactics of the *pulajans*. For ferocity in battle, possibly only the Moros were their equals (p. 129)...[The Pulahan] weapon was a heavy, crescent-shaped bolo with which they could decapitate a man at a blow. Their battle preparations consisted of bottles of holy oil, prayer books, consecrated *anting-antings* [amulets], and other religious paraphernalia. Their mode of attack was a massed bolo rush. Their battle cry was that dreadful '*Tad-Tad*' which means 'Chop to pieces,' and they moved into action behind waving banners...When the pulajans once got to close quarters with their great knives, massacre was the result. The men who have survived their charges write that never can they forget that scream of '*Tad-Tad*' and that patter of bare feet in the jungle that announced the beginning of a *pulajan* charge" (p. 132). Hurley, V. (1938) *Jungle Patrol: The Story of the Philippine Constabulary*. New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., Inc. These island-based Pulahan movements were led by local "Popes," e.g., *Papa* Pablo Bulan in Samar and *Papa* Faustino Ablen in Leyte, both of whom had links to the earlier anti-Spanish *Dios-Dios* Movement of the 1880s. Because of constant setbacks to American colonial forces between 1904 and 1906 and earlier, Samar came to be known as "Dark and Bloody Samar" (Hurley 1938) while in Leyte, the suppression of a 1906 Pulahan revolt served as a key prerequisite to the inauguration of the Philippine Assembly in 1907 (Borrinaga 2015).

<sup>148</sup> Salud B. Abella, "Historical Sketch of the Town of Gandara," Gandara, Samar, HDP, PNL, 1952-1953, p. 5.

powerful person in Christianized towns during the Spanish period. In Leyte, colonial forces had to resort to reconcentration and hamletting in towns such as Jaro for fear that “the families w[ould] [join] or collaborate with the [P]ulahanes” who “tried to resist the early American policies of government” and who “intended to overthrow the American government.”<sup>149</sup> Such entrenched family- and village-centred resistance, especially from smaller communities in the region’s periphery, would in turn result in one of the costliest anti-insurgency campaigns of the early American period (Linn 1999).<sup>150</sup>

Mutual help practices seemed to have been the cornerstone of Pulahan recruitment and mobilization. Father Arens’ (1959) study suggests that, like their *Dios-Dios* and nationalist predecessors, Pulahan leaders approached mutual assistance groups to attract simultaneous recruits into their movement:

"In 1939 the mountain people became restless again and formed in the mountains of the municipality of Wright [Samar] ‘Ticlos’ organizations, meaning a group of people working together on the farms for agricultural purposes. The P.C. [Philippine Constabulary] kept a close

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<sup>149</sup> “Historical Data of [Barrio] Hiagsam,” Jaro HDP, PNL, 1952-1953, pp. 2-3; “Historical Data of the Barrio [Zabala],” Jaro HDP, PNL, 1952-1953, [p. 1].

<sup>150</sup> Owing to political expediencies in the Philippines and upcoming general elections in the US, responsibility for the pacification of these recalcitrant insurgent forces had initially been left to colonial government forces such as the Philippine Constabulary (est. 1901, officered by Americans and manned by Filipinos) and the Philippine Scouts (est. 1901), a native Scouts unit under the US Army, instead of regular army forces. Sectarian victories over native colonial forces and the accession of guns and martial renown had gradually attracted more recruits to Pulahan calls for continued revolution against American rule (Arens 1959). The outbreak of a general uprising starting in Samar’s Gandara Valley in mid-1904 (which helped revitalize parallel Pulahan movements in adjacent Visayan islands such as Leyte, Cebu, Bohol, Negros, and Panay) required the sending of additional Constabulary and Scouts reinforcements to the island. Even though the Philippines had been officially at peace for over two years, American officials later had to authorize the participation of regular forces in the pacification of Samar’s northern and eastern coasts (the area known as *Ibabao* in ancient times) and the northern half of Leyte (Ibid.) due to the inability of the Constabulary and Scouts to suppress the Pulahan Movement by themselves. The colonial forces would also be assisted by *bolo*-armed local volunteers from various towns in Samar and Leyte who would prove crucial in the final drive against the remaining leaders and bands in 1906-1907 (Hurley 1938; Arens 1959; Linn 1999; Borrinaga 2015).

watch, because there were signs of unlawfulness, and connections with former Pulahan members." (Arens 1959, 333)

Arens further noted how,

"[T]he 'Ticlos system' is a revival of an experience the mountain people had in the Pulahan time. In the Pulahan movement communal efforts were misused and misdirected by doubtful leaders." (Arens 1959, 368)

Although Arens traces the *ticlos* practice back to Pulahan times at the turn of the 20th century, Bisayan dictionaries suggest that the practice had much older roots. Early Spanish-Bisayan dictionaries suggest that what Arens (writing in the late 1950s) believed to be communal practices developed by the Pulahanes earlier in the century had longer roots in local culture. In Father Sanchez's 1711 (but completed c. 1617) Bisayan dictionary, *ticlos* is defined as "Hacer todas a una, ayudarse unos a otros." (To do all to one, to help one another) (Sanchez 1711, 511). On the other hand, Scott defines the root word "alayon" of *ticlos'* synonym "nagaalayon" (*Ibid.*) as an ancient Bisayan custom in which "all fields were worked by exchange labor..., planting or harvesting each one's field in turn, the owner feeding all the workers" (Scott 1994, 37; an identical present-day description is found in Talde 2007, 189). Moreover, Father Sánchez de la Rosa's 1914 *Diccionario Bisaya-Español par alas Provincias de Sámar y Leyte* has the following entry for *ticlos*:

Ticlos. *v[erb]*. To get together enough people and to help each other in the planting of the palay [rice at any stage prior to husking] of their sowings or in the harvest, now working in the sowing of one, now in the other.—*n[oun]*. Meeting of enough people, who mutually help each other in their agricultural jobs.—Help.—*v[erb]*. To help another.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> "v. Reunirse bastante gente y ayudarse mutuamente en el plantio del palay de sus sementeras ó en la siega, ora trabajando en la sementera de uno, ora en la de otro.—s. Reunión de bastante gente, que mutuamente se ayuda en sus trabajos agrícolas.—Ayuda.—v. Ayudar á otro." (p. 351)

A more succinct recent definition is found in the Makabenta dictionary:

tiklos, *n.* a group of persons organized for cooperative work. (Makabenta and Makabenta 1979, p. 175)

In the case of the *Pulahanes* and the interior communities from which they recruited their following, this practice of mutual help through *tiklos* would have been key to the cultivation of subsistence crops such as rice and the preparation of hillside or riverside swiddens (*kaingin*) for abaca cultivation.<sup>152</sup> The case of the *Pulahanes* suggests that, like earlier movements, larger solidarities at the turn of the 20th century continued to depend on a confederation of smaller groups. These groups were linked through pre-existing mutual help practices that were important to successful adaptation to hazardous environments such as those of the interiors of Samar and Leyte.

## IDENTIFICATION AND MIS-IDENTIFICATION

The eventual shift to a wider Filipino identification in Samar and Leyte at the turn of the 20th century can be traced through the meanings given to the names of dissident groups that challenged the authority of the Spaniards, Filipino revolutionaries and nationalists, the Americans, and the Japanese. The negative labels (*Dios-Dios*, *Colorum*, etc.) and characterizations (fanaticism, etc.) ascribed to local religious associations by different colonial authorities often obscure local processes of adaptation in which new forms of organization and identification were appropriated and embraced by small communities in

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<sup>152</sup> Sanchez's c.1617 [1711] dictionary does not include the word *pintakasi* (see Introduction chapter), which in contemporary Eastern Visayan usage is considered synonymous with *ticlos*. However, *pintacasi* is listed in Fr. de San Buenaventura's 1613 *Vocabulario de la Lengua Tagala* (p. 687) where it is listed to mean both an *abogado* (attorney) and *intercesor* (a person who intervenes on behalf of another, especially by prayer). The "pintakasi system" is also frequently mentioned in the Historical Data Papers (Philippine National Library) of Samar and Leyte towns from the early 1950s. Sanchez de la Rosa (1895/1914) defines "pintacasi" as follows: "PINTACASI. s. Hacendera ó trabajo á que debe acudir todo ó parte del vecindario, por ser de utilidad común; concurso, reunión, asistencia ó ayuda de gente en trabajos comunales y de la iglesia, sin sueldo.—v. Concurrir, asistir á dichos trabajos" (Sánchez de la Rosa 1895, 183 [193/342] [Diccionario Bisaya-Español. Manila: Tipo-Litografía de Chofré y Comp.]; Sanchez de la Rosa 1914, pp. 247-248 [Diccionario Bisaya-Español par alas Provincias de Sámar y Leyte. Manila: Imp. y Lit. de Santos y Bernal]).

order to deal with a hazardous environment and frequent social conflict. From the perspective of their members, the associations and mutual aid groups formed in response to constant or recurrent crises became closely linked to these appropriated group labels. These labels were given new meanings that brought to mind past responses to adversity in order to collectively face present-day crises.

During the first half of the 20th century, these late-Spanish- and revolutionary-period labels further acquired both anti-colonial and pro-independence connotations that made them attractive rallying points for collective mobilisations against the American and Japanese colonial states. On the one hand, the proclamations of imminent salvation by sectarian prophets and the promises of localised independence by nationalists and imperialists referenced these labels to attract support for their respective causes and programs. Conversely, the negative connotations ascribed to these labels also ran the risk of excessive state violence upon groups that exhibited practices and beliefs similar to the militant associations encountered by Spanish and American colonial authorities in Samar and Leyte at the turn of the 20th century. The following cases of local identification with appropriated labels and institutions and the mis-identification of “dangerous” and “fanatical” groups by colonial authorities are illustrative of how independence-seeking groups who came to self-identify as “Filipinos” forged solidarities in the face of lingering colonialism and frequent hazard.

### *Dios-Dios Fanatics or Good Christians (Bien Cristianos)?*

In the late 19th century, the difficulties experienced by peasants facing environmental and economic hardship and who were caught in the middle of growing tensions between Spanish civil and ecclesiastical authorities would draw them to the proclamations made by sectarian healers and prophets in the so-called “Dios-Dios” Movement (i.e., “false God;” the label applied by the colonial authorities). Their leaders interpreted a confluence of environmental factors (cholera epidemic, floods, locusts, rat infestations, etc.) as the work of

supernatural agents (whether of good or evil) (Abejo 2010) and as signs of an impending cataclysm that was to herald a new age to replace the Spanish colonial order. However, the roots of these apocalyptic local sects' narratives can be traced to an official Church discourse of salvation (as reflected in printed texts, sermons, etc.) that sought to mould "good Christians" (a designation also mimicked by the *Dios-Dios*) loyal to God and Spain but which was itself characterized by apocalyptic themes.<sup>153</sup> Religious dissidents could thus oppose and challenge the colonial order through the mimicry of the colonial church structure, language, and material culture in their attempts to win local followings to their own organizations. This was exemplified by anti-colonial rebellions launched by local "churches" (*iglesia*) under the leadership of local holy men/healers after these heretofore peaceful groups were suppressed by the colonial authorities. Owing to their knowledge of a localised form of Latin, prospective followers could tap these leaders as alternative channels of God's power that the latter could dispense through prescribed magical prayers and talismanic texts/objects. The widespread appeal of supernaturally powerful leaders and the curative or protective prayers and amulets they could distribute could be attributed to the adverse impact of epidemic diseases on colonial society in the late 19th century Philippines.

In Samar and Leyte, the articulation of revolutionary prophecies in social movements featuring localized Christian leadership and identification became more pronounced in the aftermath of the devastating cholera epidemic of 1882-1883. Many survivors subsequently joined indigenous healers in anticipation of a series of cataclysmic events expected to transform the world. Indigenous healers/prophets predicted the appearance of magical

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<sup>153</sup> See, for example, *Coleccion de Platicas Morales..Leyte y Samar* (1885), a Franciscan book of sermons in the Samar-Leyte language for different times of the year whose discourse would be mirrored by *Dios-Dios* sectarian leaders. For the classic study on the impact of millenarian beliefs on medieval Europe, see Cohn, Norman. *The pursuit of the millennium: Revolutionary millenarians and mystical anarchists of the middle ages*. Random House, [1957] 2011. For Cohn's exploration of these same beliefs in ancient civilizations, see Cohn, Norman. *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come: The Ancient Roots of Apocalyptic Faith*. Yale University Press, [1993] 2001.

cities/kingdoms to which they were to be subject, the outbreak of a revolution, and the onslaught of an imminent flood that were to presage a new age. These events were to deliver them from their present life under the Spaniards [*los Españoles*] who, according to one sectarian solicitation letter, were “devouring our flesh and bones” (Marco 2000).

On the origins of the “Dios-Dios” label, Fr. Kobak wrote thus:

“Let us pause for a moment and make an attempt to discover how did that phrase Dios-Dios originate. The Diccionario (Cebuano) Bisaya-Espanol, composed by Fr. Juan Felix de la Encarnacion and printed in 1885 has an entry for: “*Dios-Dios* -- *Pasearse*. *Embaucar*, *fingirse* alguno santo, *iluminado*, *profeta*, etc. *V. Diwata*.” [p. 101].

“It is meant to be a description of an individual who acts like a ‘god-god’; one who strolls like a godlet; one who tends to deceive; pretends to have a god-like quality or a saintly put-on; one who is seemingly specially enlightened, like a prophet, etc. Hence, such messianic or millennial folks were called ‘dios-dios’ by others. They did not give themselves this name; it was others who did so, it seems...”<sup>154</sup>

Captured documents from the *Dios-Dios* Movement that emerged in the aftermath of the cholera epidemic of 1882-1883 are notable for the preponderance of protective objects that doubled as markers of Christian identity. Aside from the power of religious icons, Catholic priests and the official texts they wrote, locals seeking healing/protective power in the aftermath of the 1882-1883 epidemic also relied on non-Church-sanctioned talismanic objects issued by healer-leaders of politico-religious groups that could only have efficacy after paying a membership fee (various reports in S&R, PNA). These talismanic objects included protective and curative flags, pamphlets, booklets, and prayers written on slips of paper, among others. Their

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<sup>154</sup> Cantius Kobak, “Some Notes Concerning the Beginnings of the Dios-Dios and Pulahan Movements in Samar,” unpublished manuscript, n.d.

powers were believed to be efficacious for smaller groups (e.g., villages, households, individuals) and they served as identifying markers for their possessors (e.g., as subjects of a native king or future inhabitants of a magical city). These objects often reflected people's preoccupation with health hazards and environmental risks. A passage from a captured pamphlet, for instance, invokes the Holy Family for protection from epidemic disease:

"Jesus, Mary and Joseph who are in heaven, protect us from illness, deliver us from the Plague (*Peste*) of all evil (*de todo mal*) / ..(Viva) San Roque [a saint invoked against cholera/plague].../ ..Cheers to the [Dios-Dios?] Authorities"<sup>155</sup>

Such power objects signified solidarity and identity through a participant's possession of the item and their use in household and community rituals. For example, written instructions asked followers of groups such as those led by Fruto Sales to recite the oraciones every morning at 6:00 while clutching a white flag. Just as rituals were key to the formation of Christian subjects under the leadership of European missionaries, so too would Christian practices be key to maintaining a sense of community among new followers of *Dios-Dios* leaders. Objects that protected individuals, households, and communities from prophesied dangers such as disease, war, and a universal flood became symbols of Christian identity. That the followers of late 19th century dissident religious associations self-identified as Christians rather than the dismissive label of "Dios-Dios" is evident in the text written in another part of the above-mentioned flag stating that "to have this flag [bandera] is a sign of being a good Christian [bien Cristiano] together with the blessing of the Most Holy Mary" (Ibid.).<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> *Sediciones y Rebeliones*, Philippine National Archives.

<sup>156</sup> In addition to preserving its possessors from sickness, these and similar amulets were expected to provide protection from harm in coming dangers such as pestilence, revolution, and a flood "sent by God as a punishment for humanity's perversions" (Artigas, 1914, 357, 403-404; Marco, 2001, 54-56; Cruikshank, 1979, 15).

In the eastern Visayas, the revolt touched off by the dispersal of a peaceful gathering of pilgrims around such sectarian prophets in 1884 would lead to the further spread of the movement across the region and into the following decades as its prophecies, beliefs and practices were picked up and modified by different leaders to fit changing realities across different locales and time periods.<sup>157</sup> Even after the suppression of the armed revolts in Samar by 1886, the authorities maintained a vigilant stance towards new associations that formed in nearby islands such as Leyte owing to concerns about the eruption of a widespread revolt against the Spanish colonial state in the Philippines.<sup>158</sup> A local example of this concern over the possibility of a colony-wide rebellion (which had been a justification for the 1872 executions of Fathers Burgos, Gomez, and Zamora) was the interest expressed by the politico-military governor of the Visayas over prayer (*oraciones*) slips captured from Barugo, Leyte sectarians in 1889 that were recommended “for Father Burgos, so that the mystery (*el misterio*) is completed.”<sup>159</sup> The reference to Father Jose Burgos in sectarian prayers suggests awareness of events in the colonial capital by far-flung illicit associations seen as a threat to public order by Spanish officials.

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<sup>157</sup> A notable feature of the movement was the localized but interconnected character of the small sectarian associations which emerged through Samar, Leyte and adjacent islands and the appropriation of both new and old group labels in the proselytization efforts of local prophet-healers. They predicted the appearance of magical cities that were to be precursors to a cataclysmic transformation of the world and the coming new age of well-being for the faithful.

<sup>158</sup> See Rizal's novels *Noli Me Tangere* (1887) and *El Filibusterismo* (1891) for fictionalized accounts of the growing discontent in Manila and nearby provinces that preceded the launch of the Revolution in 1896.

<sup>159</sup> “Political-Military Governor of the Visayas Islands to the Most Exclusive Lord Governer-General of the Philippines, Cebu, 29 June 1889,” *Sediciones y Rebeliones*, Philippine National Archives. Fr. Jose Burgos, along with Mariano Gomez and Jacinto Zamora, are known in Philippine history as GOMBURZA, the three martyrs of Bagumbayan Field (later known as Luneta where the Philippine national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal, who cited the three priests' execution as a key motivation for his own activist activities, was also later executed). The three native secular priests are considered the touchstones for the subsequent reformist and revolutionary movements that culminated in the establishment of the Philippine Republic, the first of its kind in Asia which was subsequently toppled by American armed forces. See Schumacher, J. N. (1999) *Father Jose Burgos: A Documentary History*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

## *Pulahan* Soldiers of the Church

The Pulahanes, in their different 20th century guises, provide a good index of how independence hopes at more local levels continued to be sought after despite the surrender of the Aguinaldo-appointed generals and their local elite sub-lieutenants. These expressed hopes could also be key to understanding the kinds of crises people had to face at the turn of the 20th century and the ways they responded to these difficulties. The late 1800s and early 1900s was a time when the Philippines again saw massive upheavals in the political, social, and natural orders as three centuries of Spanish rule gave way to half a century of American rule after a brief revolutionary period that saw the declaration of a short-lived independent Philippine Republic. Coinciding with worldwide fin de siècle fears of a cataclysm that was to occur at the end of the 1800s, the devastation left by the war contributed to the emergence of numerous millenarian movements that continued to challenge American colonial authority across the colony well into the 20th century (Hurley 1938). In the Eastern Visayas, anti-American resistance was taken up by the Pulahanes, a millenarian group whose members were noted for wearing red articles of clothing (its root word *pula* means “red” in Visayan languages),<sup>160</sup> who waged guerrilla war from 1902, shortly after the region’s elite-led republican armies surrendered to the American colonial government, until 1907, when an elite-dominated native colonial legislature was established after the required pacification of the remaining recalcitrant peasant-based rebel groups had been met.

The “Pulahan” label<sup>161</sup> and cause was eventually embraced by many upland communities until their defeat in 1907 as the hardships of the post-1902 period (post-war economic crisis, cholera, rinderpest epidemic, new taxes, etc.) contributed to disaffection with the American colonial government which was then consolidating its power through local elites based in the town centres who

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<sup>160</sup> Cf. earlier white-wearing *Dios-Dios* adherents, who were waiting for an imminent cataclysm.

<sup>161</sup> According to previous studies, the label was either ascribed to the group by their enemies or a self-label originally used by one faction. See Arens, *Pulahan Movement*.

had been former revolutionaries and/or had held political power since the Spanish period. Starting in 1902, sectarian raids or levying of taxes upon coastal and lowland towns and settlements of Samar, Leyte, and Biliran Island became a frequent occurrence after several *Dios-Dios* bands refused to surrender along with revolutionary officers to American military authorities.

Most of the participants in the post-1902 movements in the Eastern Visayas had come from interior parts of Samar and Leyte which had been suffering acute stress since the late 19th century. These interior (or *iraya/upstream*) communities, many of which had just recently been formally converted to Catholicism by the Franciscans due in part to an expanding *abaca* (Manila hemp) industry (Huerta 1865), which had become a primary Philippine export crop along with sugar starting in the mid-19th century. They would also be affected by several other calamities such as the strong 1897 typhoon and accompanying storm surge which killed thousands; the elite-led 1900-1902 anti-American war which caused death, displacement, hunger, and disease; a 1902-1903 cholera epidemic which (although not as devastating as the one from 1882-1883) revived the apocalyptic fears and prophecies of the 1880s; and the death of the majority of water buffaloes (draft animals important for land cultivation and transportation) due to the war and a rinderpest epidemic, and the devastation of the *abaca* industry (on which a considerable number of peasants in Samar and Leyte had depended for their livelihood) as an outcome of the war and other environmental factors.<sup>162</sup> In their crusade to eliminate their perceived (native and foreign) oppressors in coastal and lowland (*ilawod*) towns and realize a better future, various upland groups joined *Dios-Dios* leaders in defending their indigenous church as “soldados militantes de la iglesia” (militant soldiers of the church) (Hurley 1938).

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<sup>162</sup> Worcester, *Asiatic Cholera*; (Cole letters, Alidio 1999); Raymund Arthur G. Abejo, “Mga Kalamidad at ang Rebelyong Dios-Dios sa Samar noong Dantaon 19” [Calamities and the Dios-Dios Rebellion of Samar in the 19th Century].

## *Pulahan* Self-Identification

Although the distinctive clothing worn by these rebels (red clothing, headscarves, or capes) has been widely accepted as the most likely source for the Pulahan moniker (Arens 1959, Linn 1999, Talde 1999), other historians have suggested alternative meanings for the label. Father Kobak (n.d.), for example, links Pulahan self-identification with crisis-period nourishment by arguing, through an entry from Fr. Sanchez's 1617/1711 Bisayan dictionary, that the name comes from a common root crop that peasants resorted to eating during periods of hunger or famine that accompanied events such as typhoons, drought, epidemics and war:

"Equally interesting is the word or term "pulahan". Mateo Sanchez's *Vocabulario de la lengua bisaya (Samar y Leyte)*, compiled and circulated in manuscript form since c. 1610 and printed only in 1711 has this entry offers this piece:"

"'Pulahan [uc.] cierta raiz genero de ubi. [C]ay mapula kun papar[o]tan. *En modandole la corteza, aparece morada la carne de encima.*' [Sanchez (c.1616/1711, vol. 3, 428v)] That is a certain species of ubi, an edible root; a poor individual's nourishment or cultivated and eaten during times of famine or extreme hunger. Of the numerous species of this root, this pulahan was the least of them all."<sup>163</sup>

Father Kobak wondered, "Did these individuals or groups take on this name to identify themselves as the very poor, oppressed and the lowliest in the ranks of humanity? Or were they given this name by others since they wore the poor red trousers and a red pudong [turban] around their head?" (Kobak, unpublished manuscript, n.d.). Another theory suggests that the name came from the species of *abaca*, the major crop grown in the interior parts of Samar and Leyte at the turn of the 20th century where the movement drew its largest

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<sup>163</sup> Cantius Kobak, "Some Notes Concerning the Beginnings of the Dios-Dios and Pulahan Movements in Samar," unpublished manuscript, n.d.

followings (Arens 1959). However, in lists of abaca varieties from the early 20th century the *pulajan* species appear as a varieties grown in Mindanao Island (where former Pulahanes emigrated in the early 1900s and where they became known as “Colorums”) but not as ones grown in the Eastern Visayas.

Whatever its actual origins, the label came to be embraced by the people of the *iraya* (upstream, highlands, mountains) from where most Pulahan recruits originated. It gave them a new name by which to distinguish themselves from people of the *ilawod* (downstream, lowlands, coastal areas, towns), with which they had long-standing enmities, even though they might not have participated in any action against colonial government forces or in raids on *ilawod* communities.<sup>164</sup> A senior Philippine Constabulary officer reported on how suspected *Pulahanes* overtaken or captured in the interior of Samar “unhesitatingly owned that they were *pulajanes*, because they said that all the people that live in the mountains were known by that name. Many confessed *pulajanes* may never have joined with any band, for to them the name meant nothing more than to designate them as mountain people” (RPC 1905, III, 89-90). Moreover, the pre-existing antagonism between lowlanders and highlanders and the latter’s identification with the name given to (or self-applied by?) interior-based militant religious sectarians made it difficult for the colonial authorities to contain the movement: “The line being quite distinctly drawn between the people of the towns and those of the mountains, information could not be obtained which would lead to the capture of the more important leaders” (Ibid.).

### The *Colorum* Scare

Whereas the Pulahan Movement can be seen as an amalgamation of localised institutional forms such as the church and animistic leadership (local “Popes,” local “Kings” imbued with special powers) in pursuit of an independence ideal that was sought at the village level, the so-called *Colorum* Movement can, on the other hand, be regarded as a local response to the stereotypes generated

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<sup>164</sup> Borrinaga, “Pulahan Movement in Samar,” p. 261.

by earlier groups such as the Pulahanes. In re-tracing the origins of the "Colorum" group that had been suppressed at Bucas Grande, one finds that they had been a group of families linked through a religious confraternity from southern Leyte who had been driven to migrate to other towns in Leyte and finally to Mindanao in response to environmental hazards and epidemic disease.

Local religious associations would re-emerge in Samar and Leyte in the 1920s and 1930s in conjunction with related groups in northern Mindanao where migrant families and communities had relocated as the government opened the island to home-seekers in an attempt to defuse agrarian unrest in Luzon and the Visayas. But by then exclusionary attitudes toward "bandit," "criminal," and "fanatical" groups were becoming more ingrained in a widening public sphere established through an increasingly popular American colonial education system that continued to extend its reach across the countryside.<sup>165</sup> The confluence of "bandit" and "fanatic" representations would converge on the figure of the "Colorum," a label repeatedly applied to groups involved in recurrent outbreaks of revolt during the American colonial period. The dismissive attitude towards localised sects by the authorities and other Filipinos is exemplified by this label with which such groups were called throughout the colony. Suggestive of what was seen as the "derivative" character of these politico-religious sects in a still predominantly Catholic colony, the "Colorum" label comes from a corruption of the last word of the term *in saecula saeculorum* (Unto ages of ages; eternity) or *per omnia saecula saeculorum* (World without end) by which many Latin prayers ended.<sup>166</sup> The

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<sup>165</sup> By the early 1960s, for example, the popularity of schools among villagers is suggested in the following observation: "Perhaps one of the best indices of the true situation in the barrios is supplied by the statistics on the enrolment in the public schools. It is said that during hard times, the people in the barrios exercise the bitterest economy in everything except two things,--celebrating their annual fiesta and sending their children to school." A. V. H. Hartendorp (1961). *History of Industry and Trade of the Philippines: The Magsaysay Administration: A critical assessment*. Manila: Philippine Education Company, p. 72.

<sup>166</sup> Sturtevant 1976, p. 94, n. 31; Guerrero 1967, p. 65. A *confradia* (confraternity) involved in the "revolt" of 1924, which crossed over to Mindanao from Maasin, Leyte, was branded a Colorum group ("unregistered organization") after refusing to get involved in a jurisdictional

label came to connote an “unregistered [religious] organization” and was first used to refer to another confraternity in the Southern Tagalog region in the early 1800s (Ileto 1979). In the first decades of the 20th century, it referred to religious organizations believed to have roots in earlier anti-American militant sects. As Constantino noted: “The biggest colorum groups were those of Samar and Leyte in eastern Visayas and Surigao and Agusan in northeastern Mindanao. Here [i.e., northeastern Mindanao] several colorum towns rose in revolt and the government had to send a US warship and Constabulary reinforcements to suppress the rebellion.”<sup>167</sup>

That American-sponsored public schools also became key battlegrounds in the transmission of social memory (which, in turn, served as the basis for national identity formation) is reflected in certain episodes of the Colorum Movement of the 1920s and 1930s. Post-colonial historiography would later view a hero like Jose Rizal as an “American-sponsored” hero who was supposedly chosen for memorialization by early American colonial administrators and conservative Filipino collaborators as a “safe” hero whose cosmopolitan image could be

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dispute between competing Catholic parishes in Bucas Grande Island. See Edelito Sangco, “Socorro: Its Historical Evolution,” <http://www.edsangco.com/blogs/my-life/my-community/socorro-history.html> (Accessed: 17 November 2016). Lantayog, who authorities believed was the leader of the 1924 Bucas Grande incident, was apprehended in Calbayog, Samar. See Zosimo P. Mahomoc, “The Colorum Uprising and Other Historical Facts of Pamosaingan” (1977) <http://omphaugustinians.weebly.com/newsletter/the-colorum-uprising> (Accessed: 17 November 2016). Milagros C. Guerrero, “The Colorum Uprisings: 1924-1931,” *Asian Studies* 5 (April 1967): 65-78; For Luzon Colorum groups, see also Kerkvliet, Benedict J. *The Huk rebellion: A study of peasant revolt in the Philippines*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977. For references to the Colorum black flag, see [http://www.watawat.net/colorum\\_movements.html](http://www.watawat.net/colorum_movements.html) (Accessed: 17 November 2016).

<sup>167</sup> Constantino, “Identity and Consciousness: The Philippine Experience.” Accounts on the 1924 events that draw on the testimonies of people from so-called “Colorum” communities (see the studies by Eleazar and Almeda below) suggest that strong-arm government response to sectarian activities precipitated a chain reaction of violence that provoked an attempted assault on Surigao’s provincial capital by a group of “Colorums” based in the Mindanao mainland, mass panic due to rumours of hundreds of “Colorums” on the warpath, and the use of excessive force by government forces (e.g., naval bombardment, assault, and burning of Barrio Socorro) upon island-based “Colorums” in Bucas Grande Island who were responding to high-hand treatment and espionage by the Philippine Constabulary. Cf. relative peacefulness in Leyte Province after the Surigao affair due to constant surveillance of identified Colorum adherents (Quezon Papers, Philippine National Library).

co-opted by the new regime to mobilize popular support for America's civilizing mission in the Philippines.<sup>168</sup> It was thus argued that Rizal's selection was meant to overshadow other heroes whose association with the revolution made them dangerous models for continued resistance against American rule. State response to the Colorum Movement suggests, however, that the memory of heroes like Jose Rizal (around which official justifications for the American education program and even for American colonial rule were based) continued to attract alternative interpretations linked to expectations of imminent independence for a Philippines to be ruled by a new king. The historian Renato Constantino noted how, "The governor general showed that he recognized the nationalistic spirit that animated the colorums when he prohibited the display of any pictures of Filipino heroes in the public schools of Mindanao... [The Colorums] worshipped Jose Rizal as a god<sup>169</sup> who would one day return to earth and rule the Philippines. When this happened, the property of all non-colorums would be confiscated and distributed among the members."<sup>170</sup> On the other hand, an open letter from suspected Colorum sectarians which threatened to kill schoolteachers in a barrio of Malitbog town in Leyte<sup>171</sup> around the time of the 1924 Bucas Grande "revolt" in north-eastern Mindanao suggests an alternative response (i.e., resistance) to an education system that aimed to promote American interpretations of Philippine history and the lives of its heroes.

The mobilizations of groups tagged with the generic "Colorum" label that took place in many parts of the Philippines during the American period reflected not only the socio-economic grievances identified in past studies (Sturtevant 1976; Kerkvliet 1977), they also exhibited egalitarian values and a propensity for

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<sup>168</sup> Constantino, "Veneration Without Understanding;" Ocampo, *Rizal without the Overcoat*.

<sup>169</sup> Iletto, "Rizal and the Underside of Philippine History."

<sup>170</sup> Constantino, *Identity and Consciousness: The Philippine Experience*.

<sup>171</sup> Annual Report, Provincial Government of Leyte, 14 September 1925, Manuel L. Quezon Papers, Philippine National Library.

smaller community configurations that might be linked to longer-term adaptation to frequent natural hazards and other forms of risks (such as slave raids). For example, the "Colorum" leader Francisco "Lantayug" Bernales' brushes with the law reveal prophecies containing elements adapted from earlier movements. He "had been arrested, at one time, with his mistress Eusebia Puyo for posing as the king and queen of the Philippines" (Almeda 1993, 240). Reminiscent of the miraculous waters of Padre Gaspar's commune, he moreover "had constructed at least four [bathing] tanks outside of Socorro, at Tubod, Mainit and Jabonga, Agusan del Norte" (Ibid.). Lantayug's calls for independence suggests that independence expectations (even those which diverged from its elite imaginings) continued to be held across all levels of Philippine colonial society. However, the various labels applied to this itinerant healer also began to reflect emerging secular views (which dismissed movements such as those by "Colorums" as mere "fanaticism") in the American colony:

"He was therefore, known to many people, in various places, in a number of ways: as colorum, madman, con-man, nonconformist, subversive (because he often castigated the government and called for complete Filipino independence), and faith healer" (Almeda 1993, 240).

In the case of the Colorums of Surigao (northeastern Mindanao), these expectations seem to have had strong continuities with those held by participants of earlier movements in Samar and Leyte: "For many of those who came from Leyte and Samar, memories of the red-shirted 'pulajanes' were part of the possessions that they brought along to Surigao." (Almeda 1993, 241)<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> This phenomenon is comparable to that of Filipino migrant workers to the plantations of Hawaii in the early 20th century who continued to ritually remember the Revolution. As Iletto argues, "[E]ven the [Filipino] plantation workers who came [to Hawai'i] earlier in this century brought with them memories or stories of those momentous years, 1896-1901, when the Philippines was in revolutionary turmoil. Rizal Day, commemorating the execution of the nationalist agitator Jose Rizal on December 30, 1896, used to be the biggest celebration in the plantation camps. Whether or not the Ilocanos, Visayans or Tagalogs understood its significance, the word 'revolution,' or at least 'revolt,' would not have been alien to their discourse" (Iletto 1999, 2). As Iletto further notes, many of these migrants would participate in protest movements for workers' rights in Hawaii. These activists included future Pangasinan

However, government fears of a revival of the protracted resistance of the early 20th century religious rebels seem to have informed their response to religious communities, whether in older locations or migrant destinations. The latter is exemplified by the emphasis placed in official reports on the regional and organizational origins of early 20th century migrants to northeastern Mindanao (e.g., migrant individuals/groups suspected of being former Pulahan members from Samar and Leyte).<sup>173</sup>

The case of the fate of a migrant confraternity (*confradia*) from southern Leyte that bore the brunt of government repression in the so-called "Colorum Uprising of Surigao" of 1924 is instructive of church and government response to unorthodox beliefs and practices. In Bucas Grande Island, these migrants engaged in resource extraction and sharecropping practices such as rattan pole cutting, the gathering of minor forest products, and the making of copra in trade agreements with local municipal leaders-cum-traders in exchange for settling in the island. They also engaged in subsistence practices such as deep-sea rattan trap fishing (Eleazar 1993).<sup>174</sup> Contrary to official portrayals of these groups as "unstable elements" drawn to Mindanao after the Pulahan defeat in Samar and Leyte by 1907 (Elarth 1949, p. 60), local historical accounts suggest that these victims of government military intervention in 1924 were migrants forced out of Leyte and other migrant destinations in Mindanao by a combination of epidemic disease (cholera and smallpox) and natural disasters (e.g., the strong 1912 typhoon) (Eleazar 1993). Moreover, many of their places

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Colorum leader Pedro Calosa, a veteran of the 1924 strike of Filipino workers who was subsequently banished from Hawaii for union organizing, whose peasant supporters launched a short-lived revolt in Tayug, Pangasinan on January 11, 1931 (Sturtevant 1976, 183ff).

<sup>173</sup> Regarding the origins of the groups that were implicated in the 1924 Bucas Grande "revolt," Arens echoes government reports in noting that, "These fanatics, largely immigrant from the nearby islands of Samar and Leyte, were members of the same sect as those whose nefarious activities had brought on the famous Pulahan campaigns of 1902-1907" (Arens, p.330-331).

<sup>174</sup> Eulogio V. Eleazar, "Exhuming the Colorum Affair in Surigao in 1924," Paper presented at the Philippine National Historical Society, Inc. (PNHS)'s 14th National Conference on Local and National History, University of Southern Mindanao, Kabacan (1993).

of origin in Leyte (e.g., towns such as Matalom and Maasin in southern Leyte<sup>175</sup>) were areas that were not heavily involved in *Dios-Dios* and *Pulahan* agitation in the late 1800s and early 1900s.<sup>176</sup> Local memories of the events on Bucas Grande Island that led up to the engagement with the Philippine Constabulary at Barrio Pamosaingan and the subsequent siege on adjacent Barrio Socorro by a combined force of Constabulary, US Navy, and US Marines make clear the extent of church and government overreaction to a migrant religious association caught in between the interests and fears of competing religious and political leaders.<sup>177</sup> Almeda suggests that it was primarily the fear of the Colorum “other” that led to the government suppression of religious associations in 1924 while at the same time ignoring some of the anxieties which drove individuals and communities to join indigenous religious leaders who continued to articulate hopes of well-being and independence after an imminent period of cataclysmic transformation:

“No matter how one looks at it, the upheaval was not caused by religious fanaticism. There was even no organized, general uprising. It was really a colorum scare, resulting from the indiscriminate interchanging of the terms colorum, criminal and fanatic, blown out of proportion” (Almeda 1993, 241).<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> “Data on the ‘Colorum’ Movement in Bohol, Leyte, and Surigao. From the records of the Bureau of Constabulary,” Bisaya Paper No. 195, H. Otley Beyer Ethnographic Collections, Philippine National Library, p. 6; Eleazar, “Exhuming the Colorum Affair...,” p. 2.

<sup>176</sup> Borrinaga, G.E.R. (2015) Seven Churches: The *Pulahan* Movement in Leyte, 1902-1907. *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, 43(1-2), pp. 1-139.

<sup>177</sup> Eleazar, “Exhuming the Colorum Affair in Surigao in 1924.” Some of these rival religious and colonial officials include: European parish priests vs. Aglipayans (Philippine Independent Church that broke away from the Catholic Church in the Philippines in 1902) and an itinerant faith-healer/prophet; American governor-general Leonard Wood vs. Filipino politicians lobbying for Philippine independence with the US Congress; rising Filipino officers and older American officers in previously American-dominated institutions such as the Philippine Constabulary; US military officials (US Navy and US Marines) intent on asserting American military might in the Asia Pacific region.

<sup>178</sup> Almeda, Fernando A. *Surigao Across the Years: Story of a Province*. Quezon City: Philippine National Historical Society and the Heritage Publishing House, 1993.

The “Colorum” label that was applied to various religious communities throughout the Philippine colony thus became a symbol that continued to justify the American project of colonial “uplift” through modernisation and education for a people seen as continually reverting to backward and superstitious ways. However, understanding Sturtevant’s (1976) observation about how these groups continued to exhibit and adhere to “a rude form of hamlet nationalism” (p. 157) throughout the American colonial years requires a wider context that is perhaps provided by how small-scale communities in general responded to the brief Japanese Occupation during World War II.

### *Pulahan Revivalism under Japanese Rule*

The Japanese Occupation of the Philippines from 1942 to 1945 constitutes another period of crisis in which the internal contradictions in Philippine society would again be laid bare. In particular, the question of Philippine independence became a central issue that served as justification for Japanese invasion, guerrilla resistance, and American counter-invasion. Interestingly, the period also saw the re-emergence of the “Pulahan” label and memories of the earlier resistance to American rule in the self-identifications and discourses of groups that were opposed to each other. This section examines how diverging Pulahan identifications were deployed to generate solidarity in response to Japanese occupation and guerrilla resistance. It will show how the differences in the meanings ascribed to these identities by small communities and guerrilla bands were shaped by the distinct trajectories of people’s experiences of and adaptation to American colonial rule and its decades-old project of Filipino subject formation. Moreover, it will be shown how local differences in using the “Pulahan” label were in part shaped by continued attempts at seeking village autonomy.

### *Japanese Liberation/Salvation*

Among the key objectives in countries occupied by Japan was to foster an “Asian” identification that would prepare countries like the Philippines to join a

community of nations dubbed the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere." However, the idea of Japan as a potentially beneficent foreign power was not new to Filipino consciousness since it had featured in revolutionary discourse in the Philippines since the early 20th century. While the *Dios-Dios* and other groups in the late 19th century had invoked German aid in agitating for separation from Spain, the narratives of early 20th century movements in the Philippines began to reference help from Japan in attempting to win support for their anti-colonial cause at a time when this modernizing Asian neighbor had gained worldwide prestige following their naval victory over Russia at the Battle of Tsushima Strait in 1905. This was an event which had "exploded a strong Western myth" and was seen by many Asian nationalists as "proof that Asian peoples possessed the capacity to defeat Western invaders."<sup>179</sup> Rafael (2000) notes how, "[T]hroughout the years of U.S. colonial rule, popular resistance movements in the Philippines were often characterized by their perennial invocation of Japanese aid, either in the form of arms or outright military intervention, that would bring independence to the country" (p.105).<sup>180</sup>

World War II's Pacific theatre became a staging ground not only for a test of military might between two powerful nations, it also served as a contested space in which competing self-definitions based on Eastern and Western identifications struggled for supremacy. Theodore Friend (1965) has characterised the Philippines in the run up to World War II as one that was caught "between two empires."<sup>181</sup> In justifying their occupation of the islands, both the Americans and the Japanese had promised eventual liberation for the

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<sup>179</sup> "[T]he Impact of the Russo-Japanese War in Asia". The American Forum for Global Education.  
<https://web.archive.org/web/20030106134152/http://www.globaled.org/vietnamandcambodia/lessons/russojapanesewar.php> (Accessed: 10 November 2016)

<sup>180</sup> Vicente L. Rafael, *White Love and Other Events in Philippine History* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000).

<sup>181</sup> Friend, T. (1965) *Between Two empires: The Ordeal of the Philippines, 1929-1946*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Filipinos. Whereas the Americans had to defer the promise of independence in favor of democratic tutelage/self-preparation under the guidance of a superior Western culture, the Japanese promised their fellow Asians liberation from the “white devils” who they regarded as exploiters of Oriental peoples. This in-between status would be played out down to the village level of Samar and Leyte, where survivors would liken their wartime experience to that of the cooking of the *bibingka*, a rice cake cooked with fire from above and below.<sup>182</sup>

Just as the Americans had waged war with Filipinos at a time when it was in the process of separating from Spain, so the Japanese had invaded at a time when the Philippines was transitioning from limited autonomy to full independence from the United States. And in justifying their occupation, the Japanese would also raise questions about the kind of independence that the Philippines was to be granted after the decade of preparation came to an end. Like their revolutionary and American predecessors, the Japanese emphasised the need for mutual help to achieve the Filipino’s long sought-after independence. A pamphlet released around the time of the inauguration of the Japanese-sponsored Second Republic under President Jose P. Laurel and written in what the document calls the “Samar-Leyte Bisaya” language provides a detailed justification for Japanese occupation as a precursor to eventual Philippine “independence.” This was a concept that the pamphlet itself problematizes by contrasting what they saw as the hollow “independence” promised by the Americans and the true “selfhood” offered by the Japanese. Its cover page contains the following exhortation:

*"I-ini Na An Aton Katalwasan! Ngatanan kita an mga Pilipino kaangayan magurusa, mag-guiturutambulig ug maningkamut basi an Republica*

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<sup>182</sup> Borrinaga, G.E.R., 2010. Human Bibingka: Leyteños under Japanese Rule (1942-1944). *The Journal of History*, 56(1), pp. 214-241.

*Independiente han Pilipinas maguing puy-anan hin mga tawo nga ma-inuswagon ug diri uripon.* <sup>183</sup>

Our freedom/salvation is here! All of us Filipinos ought to unite, help each other and strive so that the Independent Republic of the Philippines can become a home for people who are prosperous and not slaves. (Cover Page)<sup>184</sup>

The pamphlet's call to Filipino unity and solidarity also appealed to people's hopes for a brighter future. Japanese-sponsored independence was portrayed as a precious legacy and heirloom to be bequeathed to future generations which required the continued vigilance of the present generation to protect the fruit of their ancestors' past collective struggles for freedom and prevent a return to colonial "enslavement:"

*"Kun tinuud nga aton hinihigugma an aton katalwasan nga hin-unugan [hin-unungan?] hin damo nga bahandi, dugo ug kinabuhi han aton mga katigurangan [elders], ayaw naton pag palabya ini nga higayon, panhinganugunon naton an mga balhas ug kagul-anan han aton mga kag-anak, karauton naton hin waray pag ruhaduha ini nga katalwasan nga itinutubyan ha aton han Dako nga Imperio han Hapon ug pagmayuyu-on<sup>185</sup> naton sugad hin marahalon nga hiyas<sup>186</sup> nga aton*

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<sup>183</sup> *I-ini Na An Aton Katalwasan!* (Our freedom/salvation is here!), Bureau of Information and Public Security, Department of the Interior, Manila, c. 1943. "katalwas, *n.* deliverance; riddance; salvation.; katalwasan, *n.* liberty, freedom; redemption from bondage; emancipation." (Tramp 1995, 98); "katalwasan, *n.* liberty, freedom, free from bondage" (Makabenta and Makabenta 2004, 35)

<sup>184</sup> Cf. General Vicente Lukban on independence as heirloom for future generations: "bequeath to our successors, fame and honesty, those successors whom we have made happy with their independence" ("Hdqrs Samar and Leyte, Oct 6, 1901, Gen'l Vicente Lukban informs the Local Chiefs of the Balangiga massacre and directs them to follow the example," UP Diliman Library Microfilm Section)

<sup>185</sup> "mayúyo, *v.* to adore; to caress; to coddle; to love; to pamper." (Makabenta and Makabenta 2004, p. 271)

<sup>186</sup> "hiyás, *n.* adornment; ornament; gem; jewel." (Makabenta and Makabenta 2004, p. 193)

*ipapanunud han aton mga anak. Ayaw say ta igpasunud ha ira an pag ka uripon og pag-uripona hin iba nga kagamhanan."* (p. 9) or of "*gahum nga taga-tabuk*" (overseas power)<sup>187</sup>

If it is true that we love our salvation that involved a lot of riches, blood, and lives of our elders, let us not miss this opportunity, let us pity the sweat and toil of our parents, let us accept without second thoughts this salvation that is being offered to us by the Great Empire of Japan and let us coddle [it] like expensive jewelry that we are bequeathing to our children. Let us not leave to them the slavery and enslavement of another power (or power from across [the seas]).

However, this legacy was not to be given freely by the Japanese Empire to the Philippines but was to be strived for through mutual aid:

*"Kun ini nga mga tinguha unongan han iyo mga binuhatan, ma-abut ha kadagmitan an baraan nga adlaw nga pagtatanawon han iyo mga mata, tugub hin luha ha kalipay, nga, ha igbaw ha iyo mga kabalayan, kapatagan ug kabugkiran, an bandera han adlaw ug bituun, an bandera Pilipina, maglulupadlupad ug makinayabkayab, inugay han huyuhoy han hangin ug langit ha Sinirangan."*<sup>188</sup>

"If these aspirations are striven for (*unongan*, root: *onong*) by your actions, what will soon arrive will be the sacred day that will be seen by your eyes, full of tears and happiness, that, on top of your houses, plains and mountains, the flag of sun and stars, the Philippine flag, will fly and flutter/wave, cradled by the breeze of the wind and the sky/heaven in the East."

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<sup>187</sup> *I-ini Na An Aton Katalwasan!*, p. 9.

<sup>188</sup> *I-ini Na An Aton Katalwasan!*, p.15.

These passages highlight the importance of solidarity in finally realizing the independence (symbolized by the Philippine flag) which groups and communities had been seeking as “Filipinos” since the turn of the 20th century. They also remind people of the hardships that the previous generation had to go through to arrive at this point in time when people were at the cusp of independence with the help of the Japanese Empire. The independence narrative reflected in the above passages thus attempts to legitimize Japanese rule by plotting the trajectory of the Filipino people through a framework linking crisis, solidarity, and identity on the way to attaining an independence dreamed of by families and small communities. It inserts Japan into a discourse of Filipino becoming that remained incomplete when the new crisis of the Second World War broke out and which, through cooperation with Japan, the present generation could help realize and bequeath to future generations.

### *Pro-Independence Pulahan Remembrances*

This section shows how, despite the “Pulahan” label’s present-day connotations with “fanaticism,” which first emerged in colonial-period representations of its associated social movement, it nevertheless seemed to have retained its pro-independence connotations among much of the indigenous population throughout the first half of the 20th century until the new period of crisis posed by Japanese Occupation revealed diverging interpretations of Pulahan identity. These differences emerged among communities which had either been exposed to or relatively isolated from decades of American colonial rule and which then had to cope with the presence of a new foreign occupier.

### **Leyte**

In heavily-Americanized Leyte, the name of a guerrilla publication, “Voice of the Polahans,” and exhortations by a Leyte-based guerrilla leader for fellow guerrilla leaders to remember “the exploits of Polahan” suggest that the anti-Japanese guerrillas of the island considered themselves to be successors

to the turn-of-the-20th century rebels (Lear 1961, 82, 180) even though their resistance no longer expressed expectations of a violent and divinely-ordained world transformation which sectarian actions would help bring about.<sup>189</sup> Moreover, the Leyte guerrilla movement's attitude to the Americans were now the inverse to that of their acknowledged forerunners and, in their view, the Japanese occupation forces were the main hurdle to imminent independence. They pledged loyalty to the Philippine Commonwealth and anticipated the future return of the United States based on General Douglas MacArthur's promise to eventually return and liberate the Philippines before his escape from Corregidor Island in 1942. The very active guerrilla movement in Leyte would in part be shaped by the constant re-organization of Japanese troops and, by 1944, the concentration of garrison troops in Leyte to prepare for an anticipated major Allied invasion. This became a reality later that year with General MacArthur's return to the Philippines via Leyte on 20 October 1944.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Although seen from more secular lenses by historians focusing on the political aspects of the movement, the resistance movement against Japanese Occupation continued to exhibit some cultural continuities with earlier movements. For instance, the importance of amulets and talismans (*anting-anting*) for guerrilla fighters remained evident during the Second World War and, like in previous movements, a leader's possession of such powerful objects continued to be an important requirement to be able to attract a large following. As Arens (1982) notes, "It is said that no guerrilla leader could gain followers if he was not known to have a powerful *anting-anting*." Richard Arens, "The Uses of Amulets and Talismans in Leyte and Samar," in Gregorio C. Luangco (ed.), *Richard Arens: Folk Practices and Beliefs of Leyte and Samar*, 1982, p. 107.

<sup>190</sup> In Leyte, the guerrilla-sponsored education of the young, which recreated a semblance of the education-focused "peace-time" (the time before the war, especially the nostalgia-laden glory days of the American colonial period), also served to keep hopes alive among the guerrilla's civilian support-base of an impending Allied return and the promise of liberation with American help:

"[E]verywhere was the evidence that the Occupation Power was entrenching itself for an enduring stay while denouncing the defiant as outlaws. Japanese punitive squads harassed all suspected of abetting the guerrilla...Only by inspiring a definite belief in the invincibility of the Allied forces could the resistance leaders shore up a sagging morale. What better way to demonstrate a confidence in the future than by turning to the education of the younger generation? Parents would be reassured on seeing the teachers going about their appointed tasks." (Lear 1961, 193)

The promotion of such hopes of liberation through education during the Japanese Occupation had continuities with earlier American colonial period discourses of eventual Filipino independence and with the means of transmitting these narratives through public education.

## Samar

In Samar, enduring bitter memories of the 1900-1902 Philippine-American War and the 1904-1907 Pulahan Rebellion and a lingering anti-American sentiment would be preserved among *iraya*/upstream communities, perhaps due in part to the continued isolation of the interior from extensive American influence (Arens 1959). During the Japanese Occupation, the upstream-downstream

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American colonial authorities and schoolteachers saw public schools as central in the formation of a modern, English-speaking Filipino subject who, at a certain point in the future, would be deemed ready for self-government and independence. Racelis, M., & Ick, J. C. (2001). *Bearers of benevolence: The Thomasites and public education in the Philippines*. Pasig City: Anvil Publishing, Inc. Yet, at the same time, schools also served as a conduit through which Filipino nationalists could promote a Filipino identity that shared the same set of locally-derived symbols, images, heroes, and creative expressions. With the defeat of elite-led republican forces and armed sectarian movements by American colonial forces by 1907, Filipino intellectuals, writers, and artists (who paradoxically relied on the "material and mental infrastructures" provided by the American colonial government for the formation of a national culture) turned to a form of "civic nationalism" to promote vernacular languages and their poetic forms and to argue for "the primacy of the local language over English...as a way of resisting Americanization and asserting autonomy and selfhood" (p. 17). These initiatives in the realm of language, which sought to cultivate a "shared sense and sentiment of *being Filipino*" (p. 12, italics in original) through what advocates called *filipinismo* (p. 14), were mirrored in related fields such as music, dance, and pastoral art. Mojares, R. B. (2006). The formation of Filipino nationality under US colonial rule. *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, 34(1), 11-32. However, American-period and post-independence nationalist fears of total American or Anglo-Saxon cultural domination (through what was referred to as *americanismo* [Americanization] and *sajonismo* [Anglo-Saxonization]) would prove unfounded judging by how Filipino public school students, which grew from under 300,000 in 1903 (out of a Philippine population of 7,635,426 for that year) to 1,860,000 in 1940 (out of a population of 16,000,303 in 1939) (Ibid., p. 13), continued to hold on to their local languages despite decades of intensive English language education and how Filipinos in general "seem[ed] to find a way to make room for English alongside rather than on top of the vernacular" and to "translate its strangeness from a menace into a resource." Rafael, V. L. (2015). The war of translation: Colonial education, American English, and Tagalog slang in the Philippines. *Journal of Asian Studies*, 74(2), 283-302. *Filipino* (which was based mainly on the Tagalog language) would not be proclaimed as a national language until 1938 during the Philippine Commonwealth period (1935-1946). As will be seen in the next chapter, the vernacular languages that withstood the introduction of English at the turn of the 20th century would become key elements in the formation of regional identities in the post-independence period. Moreover, modernization under American rule did not eradicate older religious solidarities which had become vehicles for continued armed anti-colonial resistance after the elite capitulations to American forces by 1901-1902. By the outbreak of the Second World War and beyond, local religious associations continued to be important rallying points for group solidarity across the Philippines. Although certain *Colorum* groups in Leyte are known to have supported the Japanese occupation forces, they did not seem to have appropriated the Pulahan label. Ara, S. (2018). Forgotten Wartime Violence among the Masses in Periphery during the Japanese Occupation of the Philippines: With Special Reference to the Paramilitary Groups Collaborating with the Japanese in Leyte Island [in Japanese]. *Asian Studies*, 64(3), 33-59."

tensions which occasionally erupted in small scale uprisings in the 1920s and 1930s would again develop into open conflict after an anti-Japanese resistance movement dominated by coastal-dwellers began to take shape. In response, upland communities in towns such as Gandara and Wright (Paranas) formed pro-Japanese "Pulahan" militias led by supernaturally-powerful spiritual and military leaders in order to protect themselves against harassment by guerrilla groups led by the scions of pro-American, coastal-based elites. These anti-American groups called themselves "Katipunan," the name of the secret society first established in Tondo, Manila in 1892 that launched the revolution against Spain in 1896 (Ibid.). These examples of the divergent deployment of Pulahan identity as a mobilizing symbol to cope with another crisis period of foreign occupation highlights the uneven impact of intervening (i.e., American-sponsored) narratives on collective memory. The use of group labels such as "Pulahan" and "Katipunan" by anti-Japanese and pro-Japanese groups nevertheless suggests shared attempts to draw continuities with past anti-colonial movements (against Spain and America) despite these groups' contradictory stances in relation to foreign forces in the present (Japan and America).<sup>191</sup> The divergence in the response to Japanese rule can in part be traced back to the period of "democratic tutelage" (by which the Americans viewed their colonial enterprise in the Philippines between 1901-1946) which was, like in other parts of the colony, also a time of political uncertainty when elites and ordinary folk in Samar and Leyte alike anticipated and continued to seek an "independence" which had divergent and contested meanings. These contending discourses of an "unfinished revolution" (Ileto 1998) which underpinned independence politics during the American colonial period continued to shape local responses to the brief Japanese Occupation when competing *iraya* (upstream) and *ilawod* (downstream) groups (either

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<sup>191</sup> Such names and labels could thus be regarded as "collective memory anchors" which represent fissures and localized adaptations in collective memory and thus make possible different or divergent meanings to the same symbols of group identity. Gongaware, T.B., 2010. Collective memory anchors: collective identity and continuity in social movements. *Sociological Focus*, 43(3), pp.214-239.

pro-American or pro-Japanese) both embraced the “Pulahan” label as an anti-colonial and pro-independence identity. But it was the “assistance” offered by either Japan or America in gaining that independence that became a point of contention between Pulahan-identifying groups.<sup>192</sup>

The end of World War II in 1945 would spell the end of the use of the “Pulahan” appellation as an organizational label in the Eastern Visayas although it subsequently became an informal label for communist insurgents in the post-colonial Visayas. Thereafter, new labels would emerge from people’s responses to the new challenges and expectations of the post-war period when extensive exposure to American consumerism and greater mobility would redefine people’s sense of self and community and their means of coping with frequent adversity. The contesting Pulahan identifications and actions of WW2 in Samar and Leyte could thus be regarded as the final stage of long-running differences over the best means of achieving future security and well-being after the promise of independence from foreign rule introduced during the anti-Spanish revolution was stymied by back-to-back American and Japanese occupations with the help of local collaborators.

### Hopes of *Pilipinhon* Emancipation in Song

The terms *Pilipino* and *Pilipinhon* are national labels that often appear in Samar and Leyte folk songs documented in the post-war period.<sup>193</sup> In these songs, the labels came to symbolize the collective struggles for local autonomy under various leaders from the turn of the 20th century until the post-independence

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<sup>192</sup> Cf. Earlier perceptions of “Germany” as a powerful external agent that would help local kings and popes in ending Spanish rule in the islands.

<sup>193</sup> An interesting aspect of the appropriation of the Filipino label by people in Samar and Leyte at the turn of the 20th century is the fact that they were re-appropriating a name derived from *Las Islas Filipinas*, a geographic label which had originally been coined at the Spanish contact in the 16th century to refer to the island group they were inhabiting (i.e., Samar and Leyte and satellite islands such as Homonhon and Limasawa). For a published example of a parallel usage of *Pilipinhon* among the Cebuanos, see Vicente Sotto, *Mga Sugilanong Pilipinhon* [Filipino Tales] (Barili: Barili Press, 1929), cited in Resil Mojares, “Vicente Sotto and the Rise of Realism in Cebuano Literature,” (*The Resil Mojares Reader*, Cebu City: University of San Carlos Press), p.3.

period and beyond. In the face of successive waves of colonial occupation and administration that were regarded as forms of “enslavement,” these songs express hopes of a liberation which could only be achieved through solidarity and collective struggle. Although the c.1943 pro-Japanese Samar-Leyte Bisayan pamphlet discussed above portrayed the arrival of the Japanese as a necessary step in the forthcoming realization of independence, folk songs recorded in the region after the war suggest that the Japanese occupation, and even the United States’ granting of Philippine independence in 1946, merely marked the start of another period of collective endurance in the Filipinos’ long path (*kaagi*) to freedom and salvation. But instead of faltering, a song called *An Sondalo* (The Soldier) insists on the need for continued *onong* (solidarity) despite the odds among *Pilipinhon* (Filipinos) in their pursuit of an independence that remained elusive.<sup>194</sup>

Koro	Chorus
An tuna natawhan	The land that gave me birth
Buhi an pag laom	[Hope is (kept) alive]
Con sa tacna ng atanan	Every time all [of us]
Kita an Pilipinhon	Filipinos
Halad an kinabuhi	[Offer our lives]
Bisan maoripon	Even if [enslaved]
Ba sta eg pakita	[As long as we show
An [pa]g onong naton	our collective striving]

Another song from around the 1970s which references the *Pilipino* label explicitly links millenarian prophecy (i.e, the coming of a great flood) and calls for solidarity in the present with past periods of crisis such as the Revolution (*tiempo rebolusyon* [time of revolution]) and the “paradise” (*paraiso*) it sought to establish:

"Pagmata, pagmata kita Pilipino  
 Diri na maiha mil noybe sitenta singko  
 Maabot sa aton dako nga delubyo  
 Pagkakamatyan kadam-an nga tawo

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<sup>194</sup> Barrio Sapao, Guiuan, Samar, HDP, PNL, 1952-1953. Patriotic songs in the *Historical Data Papers* often use metaphorical terms to refer to independence, i.e., *bucad san catalwas* (flower of liberty/salvation) (Ibid.) or *langit* (heaven) and *katalwasan* (emancipation/salvation). “An Iroy nga Tuna” (The Mother Land), Guiuan, Samar, HDP, PNL, 1952-1953.

(Wake up, wake up Filipinos  
It is not long before 1975  
When the coming of a great deluge  
Will bring death to many [/a majority of people])  
(Nabong-Cabardo et al. 1990, 15)

The song also conflates groups such as those led by “renowned and fierce” (*mga bantugan kapin kamaisogonon*) leaders as Vicente Lukban and Papa Pablo Bulan as part of one movement. This would suggest that the social movements which subsequently historiography had distinguished between “nationalist” and “millenarian” leaders (Vicente Lukban vs. Papa Pablo Bulan) and between “rational” movements and “fanatical” ones (republican army vs. Pulahan army) could, in the minds of certain groups who continued to seek liberation after the post-independence period, co-exist as exemplary models for the continued quest for a “Filipino” (*Pilipino*) selfhood that was seen as preordained.

## Conclusion

It was seen in the previous chapter that despite attempts to return to the religion of the native diwata gods in the 17th century, village security and welfare in Christianized communities would for around three centuries be provided by male European missionaries who had displaced the pre-colonial religion’s women and effeminate-male priestesses. By the 19th century, however, self-identifying Christians dissatisfied with Spanish rule and suffering from a series of crises looked to indigenous (often male) healer-leaders claiming to channel God’s power as alternative power sources for community protection and well-being. By then, the growing economic inequalities and vulnerabilities brought about by socio-economic change in Samar and Leyte during the 19th century (e.g., the shift to an abaca-exporting economy), coupled with epidemic diseases and natural disasters, had made peasants receptive to a localized model of revolution that was based on the expectations of the arrival in the near future of a powerful and benevolent indigenous ruler. Spanish rule would again be challenged in the aftermath of another period of

crisis, the 1882-1883 cholera epidemic, in which cholera-healing shamans launched minor anti-Spanish revolts through a religious/revolutionary discourse that sought unity through local churches/kingdoms led by Bisayan priests and kings. To attract followers, these leaders were portrayed as favoured by the divine patronage of the Virgin Mary who would lead them through a cataclysmic period that would see the elimination of the Spaniards and local oppressors before the dawn of a new age. Coincidentally, a nationalist revolution seen as the fulfilment of *Dios-Dios* prophecy then erupted in Luzon which took some time to spread to Samar and Leyte. When it did, the armies organized by appointees of the first Filipino republican president, Emilio Aguinaldo, had to face off against the Americans which had replaced the Spaniards as a colonial power claiming sovereignty over the islands.

This chapter has argued that while a Filipino national identity was introduced by Aguinaldo's generals and embraced as a unifying label in Samar and Leyte, the extent of its affective boundaries continued to be constrained by local identifications (extended family, village, town, island-bound local churches, etc.) based on pre-existing solidarities. Such solidarities were shaped by cooperative networks for everyday needs, past crises responses (e.g., protection/healing from epidemic disease through healer-leaders; community reconstruction from typhoons, wars and similar natural or human-caused risks; mutual protection from war), and local social movements such as that waged by the *Dios-Dios*, *Pulahanes*, and *Colorums*. The belief in the direct involvement of God in the affairs of the world and thus of the shaping of events affecting the community was also a key element in influencing the actions of groups whose symbols of unity (Virgin Mary, Child Jesus, Holy Family, Bisayan King, Jose Rizal, etc.) and categories of risks and dangers (*Misterio* [Mystery], *Kataragman* [Cataclysm], *Delubyo* [Deluge], *Revolucion* [Revolution]) gave predetermined meanings to the disruptive events which took place between the cholera epidemic of 1882-1883 and the end of World War II in 1945. Rather than dismissing these groups as the product of fanaticism or cultural

backwardness, the persistence of local associations in resisting or evading colonial rule and coping with health/environmental crises should instead be seen as an indication of how deep ideas of the autonomy and selfhood of the Filipino (*Pilipinhon*) had been embraced (i.e., at the family- and village-levels) by the people of Samar and Leyte at the turn of the 20th century.

*A true WARAY-WARAY never says DIE!*

LVN Pictures Presents

Nida BLANCA Nestor DE VILLA  
in

**WARAY-WARAY**

*as serialized over DZBC with*

LORNA MIRASOL	LEROY SALVADOR
NATY BERNARDO	NORA DY
IKE JARLEGO, JR.	NATOY KATINDIG
LOURDES YUMOL	PIANING VIDAL

*Music by*  
JUAN SILLOS, Jr.  
*Story or Direction by*  
F.H. CONSTANTINO

*Filmed in*  
LEYTE and SAMAR  
*and featuring*  
the native  
SONGS and DANCES  
of the  
REGION

TUNE IN ON WARAY-WARAY  $\neq$  DZBC 8:15 - 8:30  
MON - WED - FRI.

**CENTER \* April 2 - 14**

Figure 6. Magazine advertisement for *Waray-Waray* (1954, LVN Pictures)  
([https://www.pintaram.com/u/nida\\_blanca/1801700970691280281\\_6197680239](https://www.pintaram.com/u/nida_blanca/1801700970691280281_6197680239))  
(Accessed: 29 April 2019)

## CHAPTER 3

### Migration and *Waray* Ethnogenesis, 1946-1990s

This chapter discusses the emergence and localization of the interrelated post-World War II group labels by which the people speaking the major language in the Eastern Visayas, i.e. the so-called “Waray” (literally, “nothing”) or “Waray-Waray” (lit., “carefree”) ethno-linguistic group,<sup>195</sup> were called by others and referred to themselves in an independent Philippines.<sup>196</sup> It will argue that these labels had recent origins in the post-war rural-urban migration phenomenon that saw families and town-mates migrate from Leyte and Samar for wage work in Manila, the national capital, in the wake of the Second World War and the granting of Philippine independence by the United States in 1946, and the resulting interactions between these Eastern Visayan migrants and counterparts from other ethno-linguistic regions. It will trace how, despite opposition from the local intelligentsia, the process of appropriating and transforming these often negative and stereotypic appellations was shaped by the hardships and crises people had to cope with, both in the new destinations they moved to in search of better opportunities as well as back in the home region. Such adversities were linked to various factors such as difficulties in post-war agricultural recovery and the shift to wage work, transformations in the post-war regional and national economies, inter-ethnic tensions in new migrant communities, and recurrent natural hazards and disasters in the home region.

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<sup>195</sup> Simons, G. F. and Fennig, C. D. (eds.) (2018) *Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Twenty-first edition*. Dallas, Texas: SIL International. Online version: <https://www.ethnologue.com/language/war> (Accessed: 2 November 2018).

<sup>196</sup> The major language spoken in the Eastern Visayas, variously called *Binisaya*, *Samaran*, *Samarenyo*, *Samareño*, *Samar-Leyte*, *Waray*, *Winaray*, among others, was spoken by around 2,560,000 people according to the Philippine census of 2000 (Ibid.); Lewis, M. P., Simons, G. F., and Fennig, C. D. (eds.) (2016) *Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Nineteenth edition*. Dallas, Texas: SIL International. Online version: <https://www.ethnologue.com/19/language/war/> (Accessed: 2 November 2018). Other vernacular languages spoken in the region include: *Cebuano*, *Abaknon*, *Baybayanon*, *Kinabalian*, among others.

The chapter will examine studies in the fields of ethnography, rural development, and migration in order to trace the post-war transformations in a region such as the Eastern Visayas which remained largely agricultural in its local economy but which also became a major source of outmigrants that served the national (i.e., Manila-centered) economy in the post-war decades. The effects of these transformations can perhaps best be seen in the meanings ascribed to the *Waray/Waray-Waray* labels by which the people speaking the major language in the region came to be called. These meanings are best reflected in movies, folk songs, poems, and sayings that emerged in the early years after the granting of Philippine independence in 1946. In the popular culture of the post-independence period, these labels came to acquire connotations of poverty, violence and criminality for a people coming from a backward region of the country. Nevertheless, these labels would at the same time be normalized by the people they referred to and infused with older meanings such as *isog* (ferocity, bravery, *tapang* in Tagalog) despite opposition against their use from local elites in the region. As in previous chapters, these labels will also be analysed in relation to mutual help practices that help mitigate the adverse effects of phenomena such as war, outmigration, and the adjustment to new communities and environments.

## WORLD WAR II-LINKED CRISES AND NEW POST-INDEPENDENCE OPPORTUNITIES

The following sections discuss the post-war labor shortage that emerged in Leyte and Samar in the aftermath of the Second World War which hampered attempts at re-starting the predominantly agriculture-based regional economy. It will examine the factors that contributed to this outmigration phenomenon, especially the role of the American counter-invasion at the end of World War II when the Eastern Visayas became the staging ground for the liberation of the Philippines. Moreover, it looks at the impact on the region's social memory of the people's close encounter with American military might and consumer

culture which stood in marked contrast to over two years of hunger and privation under Japanese rule. It will argue that this crisis in labor and agricultural recovery was brought about primarily by the impact of people's encounter with Allied liberation forces that introduced new ideas of the "good life" to people who had just lived through over two years of hardship under Japanese occupation and fierce guerrilla resistance.

## Outmigration and Migrant Motivations

The most dramatic transformation in post-independence Leyte and Samar was the outmigration of a significant portion of its youth population to other parts of the Philippines, most especially to the national capital of Manila. Leyte and Samar consistently featured in lists of top 10 migrant sending provinces. For the 1948-1960 and 1960-1970 periods, Leyte Province (which had one of the largest populations during these years, Flieger 1977, 209)<sup>197</sup> consistently ranked high (2nd for both periods, Filipinas Foundation, 1976) in the number of outmigrants. Samar's rise to 4th place can be attributed to a more belated pattern of land dispossession in the province. Like in Leyte, monopolization of the economy by a few also translated to political control by landed and business elites (Dones 1990). Although Samar was a migrant destination in the pre-war period, the island saw rapid outmigration in the post-war period which Hosoda's elderly informants saw as linked to the lure of wage work in Manila:

"Another significant change that took place in the early postwar years was the onset of wage work, mostly in Manila, spearheaded by the younger members of the village." (Hosoda 2007, p.16)

Most of 1960-1970 migrants from Samar Island to Manila and the adjacent "industrially developing" Province of Rizal came from Eastern Samar, their numbers just slightly overtaking those coming from Leyte (Flieger 1977, 209, 210). Eastern Samar has consistently ranked high among the poorest provinces

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<sup>197</sup> Flieger, W. (1977) Internal Migration in the Philippines during the 1960's. *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, 5(4), pp. 199-231.

of the Eastern Visayas, which in itself also ranks high on the list of the most impoverished regions of the Philippines, due in part to its exposure to periodic typhoons coming from the Pacific and floods caused both by typhoons and torrential rains brought by monsoon winds (McIntyre 1953).<sup>198</sup> By 1980, both Leyte and Samar continued to “suffer from a high rate of outmigration,” with a “great percentage” employed as “unskilled laborers and household help[ers]” (Region VIII book, 1980, p.85). The outmigration of working-age youths in the immediate postwar period was not unique to the Eastern Visayas or to the Philippines (Hart 1971; Flieger 1977). What differentiated Samar and Leyte migrants to other Visayans, however, was their general preference for Metro Manila and Luzon Island as a destination (Hosoda 2007). For migration trends in the 1960s, Flieger noted that, “Among the outmigrants from the three Visayas regions, a preference for certain regions of destination was evident: From Samar and Leyte (Region VIII), the bulk of inter-regional migrants moved to Luzon; from the Central and Western Visayas, the main movement was towards Mindanao.” (p. 209)<sup>199</sup>

This begs the question: why did migrants from Samar and Leyte prefer Manila and Luzon as a destination? And why did Leyte, closely followed by Samar, become leading migrant sending provinces? Since the early 20th century, it had been Mindanao Island which the American colonial government and its successors had promoted as a veritable “land of promise” for prospective migrants to alleviate population growth and agrarian unrest in Luzon and the Visayan Islands. Pre-war government advertising had promised better returns

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<sup>198</sup> McIntyre, M.P. (1953) Typhoons as a Retarding Influence on the Eastern Coast of Samar. *Philippine Geographical Journal*, 1(2-3), p.122.

<sup>199</sup> Flieger, Wilhelm, SVD, "Internal Migration in the Philippines during the 1960's," *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 5 (1977): 199-231. As Pinches further notes about the Visayan migrants to Manila: “The Visayas comprises about a quarter of the country’s population..., it contains some of the most impoverished provinces in the Philippines and, between 1948 and 1960, is reported to have been the source of about 40 percent of migrants settling in Manila. Various studies of slums and squatter settlements in Manila likewise indicate a high proportion of Visayan migrants...” Pinches, “The Rise of Wage Labour in a Manila Squatter Community,” p. 106.

for agricultural crops in Mindanao such as rice, coconut and abaca, crops that migrants from Leyte and Samar and Visayan youths in the two other regions were familiar with at home. Instead, outmigrants from the Eastern Visayas began to choose wage-based occupations which had largely been unpopular during the American colonial period owing to the persistence of a barter economy in the Philippines well into the 20th century.<sup>200</sup> This migration trend northward seems to have started soon after the Liberation period and was cited as one of the reasons behind the labour shortage that made agricultural recovery difficult in the early post-war years:

“The situation is further aggravated by a marked movement of farm youth to the cities where manufacturing and clerical jobs assume considerable luster when compared with the obviously fettered and unprofitable business of agriculture that they are able to observe at home.” (McIntyre 1951, 214)<sup>201</sup>

How wage work in the cities, and especially Manila, became appealing to young workers from agricultural villages can perhaps be better understood by looking back at the impact of the war on people’s attitudes toward post-war recovery and everyday life.

## The Shock of American Liberation

The Allied invasion of 1944 has been remembered in the discourse of “liberation” and “independence” as the fulfilment of General Douglas MacArthur’s promise to return to the Philippines after being forced to flee to Australia in 1942.<sup>202</sup> The landing of Allied forces led by General MacArthur on

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<sup>200</sup> Greg Bankoff, “Wants, Wages, and Workers: Laboring in the American Philippines,” 1899–1908,” *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 74, No. 1 (February 2005), pp. 59-86.

<sup>201</sup> Michael P. McIntyre, “Leyte and Samar : A Geographical Analysis of the Rural Economics of Eastern Visayans,” Ph.D. Thesis, Ohio State University, 1951.

<sup>202</sup> Cannon, M.H. (1954) *Leyte: the Return to the Philippines* (Vol. 2). Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army. Morrison, S.E. ([1958] 2001) *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II, Vol. 12, Leyte June 1944–January 1945*. Edison, N.J.: Castle Books; Morison, S.E. (2002) *The Liberation of the Philippines-Luzon, Mindanao, the Visayas, 1944-1945* (Vol. 13). University of Illinois Press.

20 October 1944 continues to be celebrated as the beginning of the liberation of the Philippines and the defeat of Japan's naval forces at the Battle for Leyte Gulf is regarded as a key moment in the road towards Japan's surrender less than a year later.

However, the more lasting legacy of the liberation period for the people of Leyte and Samar was perhaps the intensive cultural contact between American liberation troops and the indigenous population. It brought the locals into close contact with Americans who, for the older generations were remembered either as occupation troops during an earlier war, schoolteachers and supervisors, or visiting colonial officials, but not in the numbers that would arrive from late 1944 until early 1945. It also exposed them to America's advanced military technology and "technical know-how" (Lear 1951, 636)<sup>203</sup> and, perhaps more memorably, to a seemingly endless supply of relief goods and never before encountered luxury goods following more than two years of scarcity and fear caught between Japanese occupation forces and a very active guerrilla movement.<sup>204</sup> This interaction was made possible by the choice to make Leyte as the initial staging ground for the recapture of the Philippines from Japan. Thus, "next to Manila[,] Tacloban and environs [became] the most important supply center for the reoccupation of the Philippines" (McIntyre 1951, 337-338).

How the liberation period was remembered in Leyte is perhaps best summarized in the following description by Nurge (1965) based in part on her mid-1950s ethnographic fieldwork in the village of "Guinhangdan" in Palo:

"Late in October [1944], the American liberation forces landed. The native food supply was low but rice farming had been maintained. There was a shortage of clothing and drugs, commodities brought in

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<sup>203</sup> Lear, E. N. (1951) *Collaboration, resistance, and liberation: a study of society and education in Leyte, the Philippines, under Japanese occupation* (Doctoral dissertation, Columbia University).

<sup>204</sup> Alunan, M. M. (ed.) (2016) *Susumaton: Oral Narratives of Leyte*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

good quantity by the Americans. Today the liberation is remembered as a time of prosperity and plenty. To the astonishment of the natives, ton after ton of supplies was brought ashore by the liberation army. Food, cigarettes, clothing, and gum were liberally distributed for many months. The American soldiers, known as GI's, were generous spenders and did not cavil at high prices. For the most part, the troops were neither condescending nor derogatory in their dealings with Filipinos. Americans today (1956) have high prestige in Leyte villages and some of the credit for this standing must be given to a show of strength and resources, and to the conduct of the officers and men of the task force both during and after the liberation...Most of the villages in northeastern Leyte were occupied. The nearby village of Gocan had a hospital, and Guinhangdan, a post office, snack bar, and a finance office. The school was reopened and many children attended. The army, needing washerwomen, laborers, and other workers, provided jobs for many. Food, clothing, and money 'flowed like rain to everyone,' according to one enraptured informant. The effects of that honeymoon were still visible at the time of the field work." (Nurge 1965, 14-15)

Trade with American Troops (Lear 1951, 581-583) and wages for local workers were paid in Victory pesos (Lear 1951; Cannon 1993, 199) or what was later remembered in the age of overseas contract workers as "dollars" (Alunan 2016, 102). Men were hired to unload the ships, help (re)build airfields and bridges, carry war materiel and rations in support of front-line troops, and carry casualties back to the rear (Cannon 1993). The women not only served as laundresses but could also engage in small enterprises such as the conversion of military textiles (parachutes, for example) into clothing that they sold or traded back to American soldiers (Alunan 2016, 104-107). Children were paid for housekeeping duties, were free to ask for leftover food from mess tents, hitch rides on board trucks and amphibious vehicles, and were taught how to drive military vehicles such as *jeeps* (the precursor to the popular post-war

*jeepney* public transportation made out of surplus vehicles) (Alunan 2016, 102-107).<sup>205</sup> The locals could enjoy forms of entertainment such as movies and stage shows shown in outdoor theatres by the beach (Alunan 2016, 102; Hospital Ships of World War II, 4).<sup>206</sup> Candies, which would later be culturally-valued as “imported” goods (i.e., from ‘America’ and later only accessible from elite shops and to those with relatives and friends working abroad), were described by a Tolosa, Leyte eyewitness who had been a child at the time as then being “ordinary” treats along with ice cream. The period of *Liberation* was thus especially remembered as a time without hunger (*Waray gud hadto gutom*) (Alunan 2016, 103, 106).

Similar remembrances were also to be found in Samar. People from Borongan, for example, “went to [the American base in] Guiuan to barter shells, well-decorated bolo handles, abaca hats, slippers and shoes for clothing of the Americans. Sometimes they s[old] their articles.”<sup>207</sup> Although this suggests that barter continued to be regarded as an important means of trade until the war and afterwards, cash transactions during the liberation period clearly made a lasting impression on the people. Less than a decade after liberation, the time would be remembered as “the period when money was in abundance” (*Ibid.*). These local memories of the contrasting *makuri* (difficult) times of occupation and the *marisyo* (happy, fun) times of liberation were handed down orally to younger generations (Alunan 2016, 96-107), thus complementing or contradicting official narratives of how America saved the Philippines from years of oppressive Japanese rule.

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<sup>205</sup> Some of the skills learned by both adults and children during the liberation period in Leyte and Samar could help explain the preponderance of workers from the region who sought wage work in places such as post-war Manila (e.g., as domestic workers, vehicle drivers, etc.).

<sup>206</sup> Massman, E.A. (2007) *Hospital Ships of World War II: An Illustrated Reference to 39 United States Military Vessels*. McFarland.

<sup>207</sup> Barangay Ando, Borongan, Samar, HDP 1953, PNL, p.4 [14].



Figure 7. Leyte villagers welcoming the returning Allied Forces, 1944.  
([ibiblio.org/hyperwar](https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar))

Although this period of abundance was not to last, memories of the experience would nevertheless have a lasting impact on local culture and people's living standards and life expectations. The gradual departure of the liberation forces resulted in an economic crisis where the unemployed either followed the US forces to Manila or returned to farming.<sup>208</sup> The choice of Manila as a post-war migrant destination thus seemed to have been due in part to people's

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<sup>208</sup> Lear, E.N., 1951. *Collaboration, resistance, and liberation: a study of society and education in Leyte, the Philippines, under Japanese occupation* (Doctoral dissertation, Columbia University). Lear writes of how, "The proliferation of business enterprises in Leyte was a temporary postwar phenomenon. Primarily, it was due to spending by the U. S. armed forces on the Island. The departure of the United States forces had a deflationary effect upon the provincial economy. Filipinos dependent upon the United States custom[ers]-- souvenir hawkers, whiskey vendors, cafe proprietors, laundresses, etc.—disappeared. This trend became visible in stages, the retailers vanishing along the way-stations to Tacloban as the U.S. naval and army installations progressively contracted, centering near the provincial capital. Moreover, civilians directly in the employ of the U. S. armed forces as office clerks, mechanics and laborers were released. In keeping with the 'multiplier' principle, the resulting unemployment and reduced general purchasing power snowballed, hitting the businesses providing goods and services to the Filipino population. This led to the closing up of many businesses, further unemployment, and eventually--price stabilization at lower levels. Gradually, save for a small proportion of the skilled who followed the U. S. forces up to Manila, seeking employment there, many of these fledgling businessmen were reconverted to farming." (Lear 1951, 601) For details on some of the American military installations and camps facing Leyte Gulf in which the civilian population of Leyte and Samar found employment, see *Building the Navy's Bases in World War II: History of the Bureau of Yards and Docks and the Civil Engineer Corps, 1940-1946*. Volume I. Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1947. Chapter XXIX - Bases in the Philippines. Online: [https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/Building\\_Bases/bases-29.html](https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/Building_Bases/bases-29.html) (Accessed: 13 January 2019)

becoming accustomed to wage work in the months between 1944-1945 when the Northeastern coast of Leyte and parts of southern Samar became initial staging grounds for the liberation of the Philippines before the focus of military operations moved on to Luzon.<sup>209</sup> The introduction to a more dynamic cash economy, brought about by liberation-period employment and trading experiences and a newly acquired taste for American consumer goods that could only be obtained through cash transactions instead of through the customary barter system (which mostly applied only to subsistence goods and other agricultural produce), therefore seems to have been key factors in attracting young workers to Manila in search of opportunities for wage work. The attraction of employment in Manila to recreate some of the comforts of liberation-period life was also matched by aversion towards the back-breaking work needed (even if paid labour was complemented with traditional mutual help arrangements) to rehabilitate agricultural fields that had been abandoned during the war years.<sup>210</sup> Moreover, this migration pattern is also indicative of a change in lifestyle preferences among a young generation who lived through the war and who subsequently sought to imitate the imagined lives of their liberators.<sup>211</sup> Early manifestations of this imitative tendency through the consumption of American goods in Leyte and Samar included the brisk “buy and sell” trade and black market in American GI clothing both during the liberation period and for some time afterwards (Lear 1951) and the “unusual

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<sup>209</sup> Lear adds further that “...temporary pools of unemployment did exist, comprised of Filipinos displaced when the United States military establishments left the Island. These pools evaporated gradually, the unemployed being reabsorbed in farm occupations. But it would be too early to say whether the farms can retain a permanent hold over the rural population. Diminished spending power may cause a hankering after other modes of employment” (Lear 1951, 616).

<sup>210</sup> By the late 1940s and early 1950s, the attraction of outside wage work over farming had become so popular among the young in places such as Naval, Biliran that certain youths were humorously remembered years later as having outmigrated instead of settling accumulated debts of coconut wine (*tuba*) from the village store through customary cooperative farm labour (Rolando Borrinaga, personal correspondence, 22 June 2017). See McIntyre 1951, p. 223ff for a description on preparing rice fields for cultivation.

<sup>211</sup> Yoshimi, S. and Buist, D., 2003. ‘America’ as desire and violence: Americanization in postwar Japan and Asia during the Cold War. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 4(3), pp.433-450.

export” (and a major item in every cargo from Tacloban) of “thousands of cases of empty Coca Cola and beer bottles being sent off to Manila and Cebu to be refilled and returned” (McIntyre 1951, 338).

The appeal of American consumer goods and fondness for Americans continued into the next decades. In the 1970s and 1980s, Communist organizers across the country had to face “the average Filipino’s disinclination to hate Americans” in their efforts to win support and recruits in their struggle against the Marcos dictatorship, which then enjoyed the strong backing of the United States. As Chapman (1988) notes: “Preaching against the monster of imperialism, however, collided with one of the Filipino’s cherished attitudes—his affection for Americans. Many Filipinos retain an almost child-like fondness for everything American—clothes, soft drinks, music—and still show a marked deference when dealing with Americans personally” (p. 140). The dilemma was resolved “by explaining that it was the American government, not the American people, which was to blame for imperialist intrusions in the Philippines” (p. 141).<sup>212</sup>

Leyte’s northeastern coast, which had the largest presence of Allied forces in 1944-1945, continued to exhibit a strong identification with America several decades after the Leyte Landing. This is suggested, for example, in how Waray-speakers in the area jokingly distinguished between speakers of the two major languages in Leyte, the Waray-speakers of the northeast and the Cebuano-speakers of the west and south: “Despite language differences, there appears to be no serious conflicts between the two major ethnolinguistic groups on the island. While Warays teasingly call Cebuanos ‘kana’ (short for Canadian because the north of Leyte is known as USA), these two groups seem to work harmoniously together. This is the state of affairs perhaps because each linguistic group has its own territory with boundaries strictly defined.”<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Chapman, William. *Inside the Philippine Revolution*. London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1988.

<sup>213</sup> Pilar R. Jimenez and Josefa S. Francisco, *The Rural Poor in Leyte: A Social and Institutional Profile*, RC – DLSU Research Report No. 1. Manila: Research Center, De La Salle University,

## TRANSFORMED VILLAGE SOLIDARITIES

The early post-war and post-independence period saw changes in cooperative practices due to outmigration, the growing popularity of cash-based labor that contributed to a decline in agricultural mutual help practices, and the loosening of family ties. However, what seemed to be a decline in traditional forms of cooperation in the agricultural areas of the Eastern Visayas ran parallel with the rise of migrant mutual assistance/protection groups and identifications to cope with the new challenges of urban environments such as Manila. In the sections that follow, it will be argued that these transformations were ways of adjusting to new means of living and new life expectations. These new occupations and expectations were influenced by extensive exposure to American consumerism and wage work in the Eastern Visayas towards the end of World War II when Leyte and Samar became the staging ground of Allied forces in the liberation of the Philippines from Japanese rule.

The new forms of solidarity that emerged in migrant destinations (e.g., street/prison gangs composed of migrant workers or youth groups, town-based confraternities and mutual aid organizations composed of migrant workers) and the loosening of family or village ties (e.g., ritual simplification, smaller feasts, cash-based cooperative work) back in the home region were also ways of adapting to the greater distances migration placed between previously geographically close-knit family- and friend-groups. Nevertheless, the ways migrants dealt with social and personal difficulties (e.g., discrimination, loneliness, etc.) outside their traditional communities continued to draw on older social and spiritual themes (e.g., sharing the bounty of success with family, friends, and neighbors; personal sacrifice for the well-being

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1984, p. 28. Another common explanation for the *Kana* label is that the Leyte "Warays" are said to often hear the word "kana" (Cebuano: "that") uttered in the everyday speech of their Cebuano-speaking islandmates. As will be seen below, a similar explanation is also given for how "Waray" (nothing, none, no more, gone) (Makabenta and Makabenta 2004, 156), said to be a common everyday utterance among its speakers, came to be used as a label for the major language spoken in northeastern Leyte and in most of Samar.

of one's family, etc.) and collective practices (e.g., gangs reminiscent of pre-colonial warriors and raiding parties; urban mutual help associations that recall older agricultural cooperative groups) in forging solidarity against adversity in new migrant environments and in defining their identities based on these experiences of collective responses to hardship. As will be discussed further below, these transformed solidarities (which resulted from the pursuit of wage work outside Leyte and Samar after the collapse of the liberation-period economy brought about by the US Military presence in the region) came to be associated with group labels such as "Waray-Waray" that was embraced both inside and outside the Eastern Visayas despite the negative connotations ascribed to this name by outsiders. Collective identities continued to be the base for coping strategies among migrant and non-migrant Visayans in the face of economic and physical dislocation.

### Mutual Help and Problems in Post-War Recovery

Cash-based work, which gained popularity after milestone events such as the Second World War, would have an attenuating effect on local forms of cooperation which had long been important to environmental adaptation in hazard-prone areas such as Samar and Leyte. Ricafort (1980)<sup>214</sup> classified village cooperation in Eastern Visayas in the late 1970s into thirteen types, which included the exchange of labour, the sharing of food and drinks as recompense for labour, or the sharing of part of the produce or its proceed as recompense for the rendered service. Of the thirteen categories, five involved (or could involve) cash while two involved fines for non-participation. Among those which continued to be cashless cooperation was the practice of *pintakasi*, described as the "performance of work without wages as in building a chapel, community stage, etc. Usually done when there is an urgent need for a certain facility as when the chapel needs renovation for the coming fiesta" (Ricafort 1980, 193). It

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<sup>214</sup> Norma C. Ricafort, "Forms of Cooperation in Selected Villages in Region VIII," in Leonardo N. Mercado (ed.), *Filipino Psychology for Village Development: Proceedings of the Fifth National Conference on Filipino Psychology, 24-27 October 1979, Divine Word University, Tacloban City, Tacloban City, Philippines: Divine Word University Publications, 1980, 187-199.*

was also carried out after natural calamities, in preparing for community celebrations, digging wells, putting up school buildings or community centers, or cleaning the streets (Ricafort 1980, 195). Villages had come to rely on fictive kin networks for the cooperative activities that were part of their everyday tasks, their celebrations, and in recovering from crisis. Moreover, these practices fulfilled psychological needs in addition to social, economic, or political purposes:

“[Village folk] join cooperative activities because of their friends; because the leader holds a kindred political idea or learning; because of their ‘made’ (kumare) or ‘padi’ (kumpare); because of the joy derived from working together and because of the need to belong” (Ricafort 1980, 199).

However, in the 1970s and the 1980s, cash seemed to be a relatively new factor in the region’s mutual help practices and economic production. The anthropologist Michael Pinches writes as follows about the memories of villagers in Palompon, Leyte gathered in the course of a 1979-1983 ethnographic fieldwork which recall an older cashless type of economy: “A number of elderly village informants...recall a time when their families rarely saw money; when they either produced most of what they needed themselves or else acquired it through barter with other local producers. Labour, they say, was provided by members of the household or else through reciprocal exchange with neighboring households.” (Pinches 1987, p. 120)<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Pinches, M., 1987. “All that we have is our muscle and sweat”: the rise of wage labour in a Manila squatter community. *Wage Labour and Social Change: The Proletariat in Asia and the Pacific*. Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, pp. 103-40.



Figure 8. "Groups of planters in a joyful mood."<sup>216</sup>

These mutualist practices had likewise been important to community responses to events such as the Allied landings of 1944 and the subsequent period of rehabilitation and recovery from the devastation left by the war. The practice of mutual help in cooperating with liberation forces was evident in how the local population responded to the Allied counter-invasion which started in 20 October 1944. General Carlos P. Romulo, "then Resident Commissioner of the Philippines and holding the rank of brigadier [general]" (Lear 151, p. 537) and liaison officer between President Sergio Osmeña and General MacArthur who accompanied both in wading ashore to Leyte, had noted how his first glimpse of his countrymen after his return to the Philippines were of "groups of ragged people [including children 'so haggard they looked like little old people'] peeping between the [perimeter] guards and trying to attract my attention" in order to offer their help to the liberation forces.<sup>217</sup> An early news dispatch on

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<sup>216</sup> Source: Arens, R. (1957) The Rice Ritual in the East Visayan Islands, Philippines. *Folklore Studies*, 16, pp.268-290.

<sup>217</sup> Romulo writes: "They all wanted the answer to one question: 'What can we do to help the American Army?' I urged them, 'Wait! There will be plenty for you to do. Even the children will be able to help build the airfield and unload the ships. You must wait for the proclamations.'" (Carlos P. Romulo, *I See The Philippines Rise*, pp. 95-7; Quoted in Lear 1951, p.559)

the Leyte Landing would thereafter report on how, "All landings seem to have come off well...Loyal Filipinos helping us from the first moment of landing."<sup>218</sup> When the campaign reached Leyte's western coast, a native of Albuera town would recall that, "Everybody was extremely happy to taste the sweetness of liberation at last. . . Everybody was doing some service in one way or the other for the US Army. . . ." (Quoted in Lear 1951, p.549). Thus, apart from the livelihood and money-making incentives offered by the presence of Allied forces during the period of liberation from 1944-1945, the labour provided by the people of Leyte and Samar to the liberation forces can be seen as labour rendered to reciprocate the outsider "aid" (p. 324) (*ayuda*) received in driving away Japanese occupation forces and providing "relief from foreign oppression" (Lear 1951, 541ff, 575).

The post-war recovery period also saw various transformations that signified an increasing shift towards a predominantly cash-based economy in the Eastern Visayas. Mutual assistance practices made the task of rebuilding communities easier, especially in areas that were not able to avail of government rehabilitation funds:

"After the war, [the] natives returned to their respective homes. Finding their homes ruined, they began to reconstruct their dilapidated houses. The barrio did not receive any aid from the government for its rehabilitation. The people in the barrio just helped one another in the reconstruction of their homes. Some of them formed into groups and there was always a dat[e] set aside for one member to reconstruct his house. The group worked in one day for one member and the next day for another member until all members were helped."<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>218</sup>"A Letter From The Publisher, Oct. 30, 1944," Time Magazine. Online: <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,801435,00.html> (Accessed: 4 November 2018)

<sup>219</sup> History and Cultural Life of Barrio Maypangdan, Borongan, Samar, *Historical Data Papers* [HDP], Philippine National Library [PNL], 1953, p.124.

On the other hand, communities provided with rehabilitation funds reported a quicker recovery:

"The rehabilitation and reconstruction of their homes was accelerated by the help of funds coming from the War Damage Commission. A few of the barrio folks were recipients of war damage funds." (p. 3 [208], Barrio Tabunan, Borongan, Samar, HDP, PNL, 1953)

Although the reconstruction of homes was made easier through mutual help and war damage funds, agricultural recovery proved more difficult to realize. If wage employment in Manila served as a "pull factor" for outmigration, difficulties in post-war agricultural recovery served as a "push factor" owing to several problems in restarting the local economy. Among other efforts made to rehabilitate the agricultural economy, for example, was a government program to oversee the more organised export of abaca through the Philippine Fiber Inspection Service that began in Leyte in August 1945 and which spread to southeastern Luzon and Davao, the two other major abaca-growing regions in the country. However, production was thwarted when abaca plantations were destroyed by "the serious typhoons of November and December, 1947, most seriously affecting southern Luzon and the Samar-Leyte-Catanduanes islands" (p. 104), resulting in low production for 1948 and 1949.<sup>220</sup> Other factors that hindered the recovery of abaca production in the Eastern Visayas include competition from the more efficient production methods by emerging abaca growing regions such as Davao in Mindanao Island<sup>221</sup> and the rise in the use of substitute fibres (e.g., Mexican sisal and synthetic fibres).<sup>222</sup> These and other socio-economic and environmental hindrances to agricultural recovery (such as the successive typhoons which hit the region from 1949-1953) contributed to outmigration. McIntyre reports other agricultural problems hindering recovery

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<sup>220</sup> Spencer, J.E., 1951. Abaca and the Philippines. *Economic Geography*, 27(2), pp. 95-106.

<sup>221</sup> Pelzer, K.J., 1948. The Philippine Abaca Industry. *Far Eastern Survey*, 17(6), pp. 71-74.

<sup>222</sup> McIntyre 1951, p. 334.

in Leyte and Samar such as land title issues, a lack of work animals (i.e., carabaos) after the war, and labour shortage (McIntyre 1951, 213-214). Early post-war agriculture was thus beset by interrelated issues such as the lack of capital and machinery that contributed to low productivity, a shortage of labour due to outmigration, the shift to wage work and the decline in cooperative farming, and changes in land tenure patterns.

Another problem that can be linked to the spread of cash was post-liberation crime, which had earlier become rampant after the USAFFE defeat at Corregidor Island in 1942, the interregnum before the arrival of Japanese forces in the Visayas, and the subsequent occupation of Leyte and Samar by Japanese occupation troops (Lear 1951, 685). Its re-emergence in the liberation period proved harder to eradicate because of the proliferation of guns throughout Leyte. Attributed to the "loosening up of social discipline during the war years," those engaged in criminal activity included former guerrillas and volunteer guards notorious for committing abuses during the occupation period, "thieves, swindlers, prostitutes" "from elsewhere in the Visayas" drawn to Leyte and Tacloban by the brisk trade and circulation of money, and "unemployed juveniles" from the Leyte countryside who had heard the news of the "easy money" to be made in the American installations (Lear 1951, 604). Most were occupied with banditry, and "theft of large cattle and illegal traffic of Army clothing and other properties" (Lear 1951 607). Like the wage workers who followed the Americans to Manila, crime also seemed to have followed the source of the new money economy: "As Leyte's post-war boom subsided, some of the criminal elements drifted off to better pluckings in Manila and in other provinces" (Lear 1951, 608).

The mutual assistance practices that were key to the post-war recovery of village well-being were thus transformed to adapt to the changing needs and wants of independent Filipinos who, at least in Leyte and Samar, began to look up to and more strongly identify with "America" as a cultural model in the post-war years. In the national imagination, the memory of American

deliverance of the Filipinos from the hardships of the Japanese Occupation became the catalyst for the post-Independence imitation of America in the fashioning of a modern and independent Filipino self. This hardship-induced self-redefinition entailed new changes to community-sustaining mutual aid practices and beliefs. As seen in previous chapters, cooperative values and practices had also previously been modified to adapt to the introduction of Spanish and American institutions and lifeways and in the process of becoming Spanish-converted *Christians* and American-tutored *Filipinos*. This time, however, the growing monetization of labour and the local economy (resulting in a decline in non-cash-based cooperative practices), and additional factors such as rapid population growth, led to ceremonial simplification and the valuing of education and wage work as a means of collective betterment. Also linked to the shift to a full-blown cash economy were land accumulation and rural stagnation, ritualized outmigration and return migration, and the growing importance of the nuclear family over extended-family and fictive-kin ties.<sup>223</sup>

## Return Migration and the Seeking of Luck Outside the Home Village

This section argues that the maintenance of village solidarities continued to be a primary motivation for migrant work. Migrant workers regarded the home village as the focal point of one's actions, especially in seeking recognition of a migrant's success from family and friends. Moreover, the village was seen as an eventual point of return after retirement from wage work. The interaction

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<sup>223</sup> Hart's Bisayan respondents in Negros Island would report that "some traditional feasts have been dropped in the village, and others are curtailed 'because we can no longer afford them.'" (p. 111). Hart, D.V., 1971. Philippine Rural-Urban Migration: A View from Caticugan, a Bisayan Village. *Behavior Science Notes*, 6(2), pp.103-137. A 1975 study on Filipino migrants found evidence showing that "although family solidarity and the extended family system are highly valued in Philippine Society, the process of urbanization has tended to weaken familial bonds. There is a growing tendency towards the nuclear family and a moving away from the extended family that traditionally has been the main unit of social life. In many instances, the loosening of family ties is dictated by economic necessity. In others, it is a normal part of the growing complexity of urban life that makes for less interaction among family members." Filipinas Foundation, Inc., *Understanding the Filipino Migrant*, 1976, pp. 130-131.

between the migrant worker and family and friends back home was conceptualised in terms of local notions of luck (*suwerte*) which had longer roots in the region's history and culture than previously thought. It will be suggested that, even with the rise of mass outmigration after the end of World War II, the village continued to be the center of ethnolinguistic (*Bisaya, Waray/Waray-Waray*) and national (*Filipino*) identifications for many people in and from Samar and Leyte.

Closely related to outmigration was a reverse trend of migrating back to the home village. In the following analysis of return migration figures until the 1970s, the Eastern Visayas stands out for the sizeable number of return migrants from Manila:

"A large proportion of migrants (17.4 per cent) moved from urban to rural locations. The number certainly hides a good many people who migrated from cities to suburbs which are classified as rural barrios, but it likewise suggests a considerable return migration, particularly of rural people who had earned some money in the city that allowed them to acquire some property in their home villages. Such return migration is likewise indicated by e.g., the sizeable migration streams from Manila to the Eastern Visayas, the main storehouse for maids working in the metropolitan area." (Flieger 1977, 212)

The 1960-1970 migration figures Flieger (1977) referred to lists only a single entry of 11,037 migrants from Manila to Leyte for "Luzon-Visayas Streams" (p. 210). A similar pattern of return migration to Leyte is suggested in the 10,060 Cebu to Leyte and 10,053 Leyte to Cebu figures in the six entries for "Intra-Visayas Streams" (Flieger 1977, 210). Cebu Province, and especially its urban centre, Cebu City, was then in the process of urbanizing at a pace faster

than other provinces in the Visayas and thus became an attractive destination for migrants coming from adjacent provinces.<sup>224</sup>

This process of outmigration to urban centers and return migration to rural barrios suggests continuing ties between outmigrants and their home village. Although migrants usually intended work outside the village to be temporary, many of them ended up working outside the village for extended periods or outmigrating a few times when the purpose for doing so had yet to be satisfied (Hart 1971, 133; Pertierra 1992). More recent studies have sought to examine the cultural meanings ascribed by outmigrants to their departure(s) and return(s) to the home village. Aguilar (1999) argues that the act of migrating itself became a ritual “journey” or “pilgrimage,” a rite of passage for the worker, whose symbolic centre and audience (unless these ties were reduced or completely cut) continued to be the home village and whose successful pursuit becomes a means of self-transformation through reception and recognition by the sojourner’s family, relatives, and friends (Aguilar 1999, 100).<sup>225</sup> In Hosoda’s (2008) study of a coastal Samar village (the fictively named Barangay Bato near Calbayog City) successful outmigrants who went to Manila to “find one’s luck” (*makipagsapalaran*, Tagalog root: *palad*, palm/fate) (Hosoda 2008, 341, footnote 7)<sup>226</sup> were regarded as “full of luck” (*maswerte*: fortunate) upon the fulfilment of certain social expectations.

What Hosoda found striking, however, was the lack of significance placed on remittances back in the home village even though the search for job opportunities had been the most common reason cited by workers for outmigrating. In fact, a 2002 survey she conducted in the village found that

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<sup>224</sup> Zablan, A. I. E. (1977). Causes and effects of rural-urban migration: a study of 1972 Cebu City immigrants. SEAPRAP Research Reports, (16). Lange, A. (2010). Elites in local development in the Philippines. *Development and Change*, 41(1), 53-76.

<sup>225</sup> Aguilar, Filomeno Jr. V. “Ritual passage and the reconstruction of selfhood in international labour migration.” *Sojourn* 14:1 (1999): 98–139.

<sup>226</sup> *palad* “*n.* palm of the hand, luck, fate, *n.* sole fish, kapalad, kapalaran, *n.* fate” (Makabenta and Makabenta, p.21)

"Despite a strong trend of outmigration, only one out of ten households regarded remittances as the most important source of income." (Hosoda 2008, 321). Cultural importance was instead placed on a migrant's return or homecoming bearing gifts or *pasalubong* (which according to Hosoda would be considered irrational from an economic perspective) for distribution to family and friends. On the other hand, a migrant who did not return to the village or one who returned but did not engage in gift-giving was not recognized as *masuerte*.

Although regarded as a new phenomenon linked to globalization, outmigration has recently been linked to earlier historical phenomena such as the large-scale depopulation of the Visayas, especially of Samar and Leyte, brought about by the Moro slave raids during the Spanish colonial period. The captives' difficult experiences as the first such "overseas workers," although most were permanently cut off from their original villages, were nevertheless rewarded with opportunities for upward social mobility in the new communities they had been forcibly absorbed into (Aguilar 2014).<sup>227</sup>

In east Visayan culture, however, the slave-raiding analogy to migration and its search for "luck" can be traced back to pre-Christian times when slave raiding was itself a practice that brought prosperity to the village. The closest analogy Hosoda found for *pasalubong* (Hosoda 2008, 342, footnote 11), or the gifts one shares with family and co-villagers upon one's return, was the practice of sharing of fish catch (*barato*) by returning fishermen (Hosoda 2008, 341, footnote 10). However, tracing the indigenous equivalent to the borrowed Spanish word *suerte* in older dictionaries suggests the sharing of catch that had not been limited to fish. The Spanish-contact counterpart to *masuerte* (fortunate) in the so-called *Pintados* Islands was *bulahan*, which comes from the word *bula*—"foam" or "froth" from cooking. However, *bula* also meant "captives in war," or people who were captured during raids (*pangayao*) on

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<sup>227</sup> Aguilar, F. V., Jr. (2014) *Migration Revolution: Philippine Nationhood and Class Relations in a Globalized Age*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

enemy villages and were subsequently enslaved (Sanchez 1711, vol. 1, 96). In ancient Samar-Leyte Bisayan, therefore, someone who was *bulahan* or fortunate was "The one who br[ought] captives, [one whose] success is well, and the fortunate." Words such as *nabula*, *nagbula*, or *namula*, moreover, meant to go forth and "take captives," and the human captives ("foam") brought back by the *bulahan* raider (happy, fortunate, but also with the sense of being loaded with new slaves) thus came to signify "happiness" and "prosperity" for the community (*Ibid.*). *Makipagsapalaran's* (to search for one's luck) present-day connotation of pursuing an "unexpected, large tangible benefit" (Hosoda 2008, 322) thus evokes this older meaning of good fortune in the tangible form of added (but hard to acquire) manpower brought back to the village by fortunate warriors who went home not just "full of luck" but also literally aboard a boatful of captive slaves.

In place of slaves, contemporary return visits or homecomings by migrants, although the journey now took more time to accomplish than ancient slave raids, often featured the redistribution of resources via gifts from the city which served to reaffirm ties with the community through the sharing of the gains of one's "luck." Migrant returns also often included the sponsorship of the village feast and big family celebrations both as thanksgiving and to be able to ask for continuing blessings (Hosoda 2008).<sup>228</sup> This was because, just like the revolutionary period pursuit of village selfhood (*kaugalingnan*, *kalugaringnan*), the rewarding, upholding, or withholding of *suwerte*, which "connotes the

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<sup>228</sup> Naomi Hosoda, "Connected Through 'Luck': Samaron Migrants in Metro Manila and the Home Village," *Philippine Studies* vol. 56, no. 3 (2008): 313–344. "Many events in life—both good and bad—are believed to be caused by God or, sometimes, by animistic spirits. On the one hand, these supernatural powers can bring special benefits to a particular person if they acknowledge or appreciate something in that person, such as an innate characteristic (appearance, for example) and good deeds. On the other hand, they can also bring hardships if they deem the person to deserve them. Thus, a number of rituals and taboos are aimed at influencing or deflecting the course of supernatural events. Moreover, people often emphasize that they behave morally and that their pursuit of *suwerte* is not only for their own sake but also to help others, especially the family." (Hosoda 2008, 325)

possibility of uplifting one's living standard" (Hosoda 2008, 323), continued to depend on supernatural agents.<sup>229</sup>

Luck could also be framed in terms of customary/ancestral practices and class identity (e.g., "poor Filipinos" vs. "rich people").<sup>230</sup> Apart from determining class identity through the possession or non-possession of money, the seeking of luck is regarded as a risk-taking venture that sacrifices one's safety and comfort for the sake of the future of one's family and children.<sup>231</sup> On the other hand, the hardships endured by *suwerte*-seeking overseas migrants for long periods in more unfamiliar, dangerous, or oppressive environments (Hosoda 2008, 326) in other countries resulted in national recognition that is likewise couched in pre-colonial and revolutionary-period terms. Their working for the

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<sup>229</sup> Hence, qualifications such as, "*sa kaluoy san Diyos* (by the mercy of God)" when explaining how one found one's luck (Hosoda 2008, 329). However, similar to how villagers perceived the struggle for independence at the turn of the 20th century, trying one's luck in pursuit of good fortune for one's self, family, and friends was also seen as a collaborative effort between the spirit world and human agents: "Palad also refers to the palm of one's hand, where one's destiny is supposed to be etched. Many Filipinos believe that fate is not totally predetermined, but that its outcome can be changed by individual efforts." (Hosoda 2008, 6)

<sup>230</sup> As one respondent told Hosoda (2008b): "Our ancestors came to this village, trying to find luck (*sapalaran*), and today we continue to do the same by going elsewhere. This is the way of life of poor Filipinos." (Quoted in Hosoda 2008b, "Towards a Cultural Interpretation of Migration in the Philippines," 6)

<sup>231</sup> Hosoda reports as follows about how people in her study of the migration patterns of a Samar village defined a practice such as "luck-seeking:" "Normally villagers do not consider the business ventures of those with access to financial resources as *makipagsapalaran*; rather, they regard people with resources as different because *mayada na sira suwerte* (they already have *suwerte*). This contrast may come from the idea that moving out of a familiar place involves risking one's life, which is a person's last resort. This interpretation can explain why *makipagsapalaran* is considered as a way of life for "poor Filipinos" as one informant puts it—"poor Filipinos" are portrayed as without any capital to risk other than their lives." (Hosoda 2008a, *Samaron Migrants in Metro Manila and the Home Village*, p. 325) A similar view was documented by Pinches from a Palompon, Leyte migrant to Manila's squatter settlement of Tatalon around the turn of the 1980s: "For rich people, it is their money that moves, but the only capital for the poor is our labour. Poor people have to work hard to earn money. Rich people don't have to work; each weekend the rich man just checks his business to see if he has a big or small profit. They don't feel tired but for us; we have to use our muscles before we can make money. If we are lazy our children will starve. The rich don't sweat like we do!" Quoted in Pinches, M. (1987) 'All that we have is our muscle and sweat': the rise of wage labour in a Manila squatter community. In Pinches, M. & S. Lakha (eds.) *Wage Labour and Social Change: The Proletariat in Asia and the Pacific*. Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, p. 103.

“wellbeing of their loved ones amid great physical and emotional tribulation” (Bautista 2015, 427)<sup>232</sup> resulted in their being identified as *bagong bayani* (“new heroes,” with the word *bayani* signifying both a pre-Hispanic Tagalog warrior hero equivalent to the Bisayan *daragangan* and subsequently a Filipino word for national heroes) or Christ-like martyrs by the Philippine state and by their loved ones. They therefore became exemplary hero-martyrs (*Ibid.*) whose life trajectories, like the suffering Christ and the saints for Bisayan-Christians and the self-sacrificing revolutionary heroes and WW2-era American soldiers for Filipinos, were worthy of emulation by succeeding generations.<sup>233</sup>

The “search for one’s *suwerte*,” which “justify the moving out of a village yet maintain membership of the in-group,” can thus be understood as a post-independence transformation in the continuing search for *kaopayan* (well-being and good fortune) which, like the revolutionary-period quest for independence, had been regarded as a collective endeavour between the spirit world and the living world as well between family and friends both in the migrant destination and back in the home village.<sup>234</sup> In post-war Samar-Leyte culture, the continuing pursuit of *kaopayan*, this time construed as village wealth and comfort, had thus shifted from colonial period iterations such as ritual-based practices to protect against outsider attacks and illness/epidemic

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<sup>232</sup> Bautista, J., 2015. Export-Quality Martyrs: Roman Catholicism and Transnational Labor in the Philippines. *Cultural Anthropology*, 30(3), pp.424-447.

<sup>233</sup> Aguilar (2014), for example, cites a 2004 publication with a survey of 1,443 schoolchildren, with an average age of between 10 and 11 years old, that found close to half (47.3 per cent) with “thoughts of working abroad someday, the figure rising to 60.4 per cent among children of migrants” (p. 5). Filomeno V. Aguilar Jr. *Migration Revolution: Philippine Nationhood and Class Relations in a Globalized Age*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2014.

<sup>234</sup> Hosoda defines *suwerte* (luck) according to Samar migrants to Manila as follows: “*Suwerte* is generally imagined to be a large amount of wealth sent from the spiritual world. In actuality, for such wealth to be acknowledged as *suwerte*, it must be shared with one’s fellows, and in particular with family members and relatives. In this way, ‘the pursuit of *suwerte*,’ now an accepted discourse, sanctions the act of going out into the risky but relatively richer ‘outer world’ so that, if given a chance, they can bring resources back to the village to support as many relatives and community members as possible. It also means extending help to fellow villagers in the migrant’s destination, especially those who arrive later and need assistance. If this mission is accomplished, the migrant is recognized as *masuwerte*, with a correspondingly elevated social status. *Suwerte* therefore does not denote simple material gain, but is an important socially and culturally constructed notion” (Hosoda 2008, 339-340).

disease, and revolutionary period participation in the struggle for self-hood from excessive and unsympathetic outsider governance, toward the risking of one's life to improve community living standards through long-distance toil.

Although the seeking of well-being outside the community through migrant labour also bears similarities with pre-colonial practices such as the sharing of war booty from slave raids, it had also come to incorporate the Christian discourse of self-sacrifice, the revolutionary ideal of collective risk-taking (*onong*), and the quest for American-styled material wealth and home comforts in its representation and practice. The successful migrant worker had thus joined a long line of supernaturally-favoured personalities, culture-hero(ine)s, and local leaders—warrior chiefs and slave raiders, spirit mediums and healers, priests, schoolteachers, guerrillas, “abogados,” among others—expected to practice compassionate generosity and assistance (Hosoda 2008, 336) for the welfare of the village. The merciful worker's sharing of the fruits of personal success (*kaopayan*) with the village is then repaid with their recognition and esteem by co-villagers as “being buotan, a good and generous person” favoured by God or the spirits (Hosoda 2008, 337). These examples suggest that, for many outmigrants, the home village continued to be the imagined centre in one's life trajectory as independent and outmigrating Filipinos.<sup>235</sup>

In the case of post-war migrants to Manila from villages in Leyte and Samar, the seeking of luck in the metropolis along with thousands of others from other parts of the country would lead to tensions and rivalries as well as cooperation and mutual help that resulted in a new cultural identity label. Despite the availability of support networks based on barrio or municipality of origin who could share the burdens and adversities (*onong*) in pursuing of one's luck in Manila, the sheer number of migrants streaming to the capital from various

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<sup>235</sup> Even for overseas Filipino workers, for instance, Abinales notes how the affective extent of Filipino identification could still be circumscribed to the village: “they missed the village, not the nation—friends and relatives, not fellow citizens.” Patricio N. Abinales, “Absent Characters in the National Story,” *Manila Review* Issue 5 (September 2014): 6-7. <http://themanilareview.com/issues/view/absent-characters-in-the-national-story> (Accessed: 17 November 2016)

parts of the country would not have been all accommodated in the city's formal sector, especially after the economic boom brought about by the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the national capital had subsided and with the onset of subsequent periods of crisis. Hosoda writes,

"Beginning in the 1960s, Metro Manila has received a stream of migrants from the countryside far in excess of the employment and absorption capacities of the metropolitan area's modern commercial and industrial sectors. This gave rise to a series of problems stemming from over-urbanization, characterized by the excessive growth of small-sized miscellaneous economic activities. The influx of migrants has continued unabated, and had the effect of not only boosting the metropolitan area's population year after year, but also triggering the emergence of large-scale squatter areas and other social problems."<sup>236</sup>

The search for "luck" (*swerte/kaopayan*) by post-war outmigrants from Leyte and Samar would therefore not have borne fruit for many of their seekers. Instead of *kaopayan* and village recognition as *masuwerte*, unlucky early migrants to Manila would instead reap a negative ethno-linguistic label and stereotype denoting poverty, violence, and criminality that would eventually be expanded and normalized as an identifier for an entire group of people. However, the people these labels referred to would demonstrate "resilience" in the way they infused their own positive historical meanings into these group names and engaged in modified mutual protection and assistance practices to deal with problems such as poverty, inter-ethnic tensions, and harsh social and natural environments.

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<sup>236</sup> Hosoda, *The Social Process of Migration from the Eastern Visayas to Manila*, p. 1.

## WARAY IDENTIFICATION AND ITS OPPONENTS

This section describes the factors that gave rise to the negative connotations which group labels such as *Waray* and *Waray-Waray* came to acquire as a result of the interactions migrants from Leyte and Samar had with other ethnolinguistic groups in the metropolis. These representations would make these labels and the people who identified with them not only “undesirables” to other ethno-linguistic groups but also to the upper-classes of Leyte and Samar. However, for many of the people they referred to, these labels came to denote class- and ethnicity-based solidarities formed by migrants in Manila that continued to be influenced by past attitudes and practices that allowed for community survival and flourishing back in the hazard-prone and conflict-ridden Eastern Visayas. Moreover, the identifications through which they united in the face of adversity in the metropolis continued to reflect their collective struggle for well-being under new circumstances and environments. In the post-war/post-independence period, seekers of village autonomy, selfhood, or independence at the turn of the 20th century thus became seekers of luck (*swerte*) and good fortune (*kaopayan*) from outside the village for themselves, their families, and the home village.

### Migrant Marginalisation, Media Representations, and Self-Empowerment

This sub-section discusses the process by which migrants to Manila from Samar and Leyte came to embrace the group labels (especially the *Waray-Waray* label) ascribed to them by fellow migrants from other ethnolinguistic groups as a means of collective protection from discrimination in an environment rife with inter-ethnic violence and tension and to continue to provide for the welfare of their families and home villages back in the Eastern Visayas. The end of World War II and the granting of Philippine Independence by the United States saw a massive influx of migrant workers to the national capital of Manila.<sup>237</sup> As

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<sup>237</sup> This post-war migration phenomenon was described in relation to the housing crisis in the national capital as follows: "Squatting became a stark phenomenon in Manila after the Second

discussed in a previous section, many of these migrants came from the Samar-Leyte region where the Allied liberation forces under General Douglas MacArthur established their first beachheads in the Philippines on the way to recapturing the islands from Japanese control. The first stop for most migrants from the Eastern Visayas was the Tondo North Harbor Area where domestic shipping docked and unloaded passengers (Cinco interview 2016; Hartendorp 1961). By the mid-1950s, the area was already packed with migrants, many of whom had brought along family. These new arrivals would lodge in the area, often under unsanitary conditions, until job openings could be found elsewhere in the metropolis (Cinco interview 2016). Due to the limited availability of living spaces, many families that remained in the port area for work at the docks and other livelihood opportunities turned to squatting.<sup>238</sup>

Despite housing problems, networks of kin, village-mates, or town-mates could provide the new migrant with support in the capital. Hart (1971), for example, found a mutual support association called the Lalawigan Circle in mid-1950s Manila that was composed of migrants from Barrio Lalawigan in Borongan, eastern Samar. The Circle helped new migrants seek employment, gave support to members during times of difficulty, organized out-of-city excursions and the city-based celebration of the home village's annual feast day (although

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World War, when a large number of war victims built houses around Intramuros and Tondo Foreshoreland, which were reserved spaces for the expansion of the Manila Port...The national capital opened opportunities after the war. Factories opened, commerce and services regained traction and offices of the neocolonial government, which were being organized along the 'independence' that the US granted the Philippines, implemented a recruitment program. New migrants arrived continually. According to official estimates, Manila and suburbs had around 46,000 squatters in 1946; it rose to 98,000 in 1956 and to 283,000 in 1963...As early as 1960, hundreds of thousands of families have been feeling the strain of housing problems and relocation in Metro Manila." Philippine Human Rights Information Center. "From 'squatters' into 'informal settlers'" <http://philrights.org/from-squatters-into-informal-settlers/> [Accessed: 12 January 2019]. See also Lantoria, D. (1975) The Tondo Foreshore Urban Development Project. *Philippine Planning Journal*, 7(1), 1-10. Available online: [http://www.conference.surp.upd.edu.ph/downloads/PPJ/Vol%20VII,%20No.%201%20\(October%201975\)%20-%20Focus%20-%20Human%20Settlements.pdf](http://www.conference.surp.upd.edu.ph/downloads/PPJ/Vol%20VII,%20No.%201%20(October%201975)%20-%20Focus%20-%20Human%20Settlements.pdf) [Accessed: 12 January 2019].

<sup>238</sup> Jackson, J.C. (1974) Urban Squatters in Southeast Asia. *Geography* 59(1), 24-30; Richard P. Poethig, R. P. (2016) A Place to Live: The Struggle for Housing in Manila. *Presbyterian Historical Society* (Guest Blog). Available online: <https://www.history.pcusa.org/blog/2016/05/place-live-struggle-housing-manila> [Accessed: 12 January 2019].

adjusted to fit wage workers schedules) and raised funds for development projects such as the construction of a chapel for the home village, and paid for the transportation of those who wanted to return home to the province. He reported similar barrio- or municipal-based groups from other eastern Samar towns operating in Manila in the mid-1950s.

Those unable to find opportunities elsewhere in the city tried their hand in the nearest available occupation, which was work at the docks as stevedores. But work-related problems such as low wages, job insecurity, and apparent discrimination and bullying at the hands of other ethnolinguistic groups would hound these migrants in their pursuit of luck (Hartendorp 1965; David 1967).<sup>239</sup> That the *kaopayan* or *suwerte* many of these migrants were seeking was not forthcoming would start to reflect on how they came to be called by other fortune-seekers in the capital. Robredillo explains how,

“[W]hen Samareños [and Leyteños] started migrating to Manila, especially in Tondo, where many of them worked as laborers in piers, these migrants began to be called by outsiders as ‘*Waray-Waray*’, obviously because when Samareños greeted each other, they casually answered, ‘*Waray upay*.’ [lit., “no good”] (This is a typical Samareño response, even to date.) This could have described the general status of many Samareños in Tondo—migrants who had no or little social mobility, with hardly any improvement in economic conditions. Outsiders, who heard the word frequently uttered, began identifying them as ‘Warays’” (Robredillo 2011).

The label could thus have been derived from migrant frustrations in their seeking of well-being or welfare, *upay* (good) being the root word for *kaupayan* (well-being, good fortune). Alternative means by which migrants could improve

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<sup>239</sup> Randolph S. David, “Human Relations on the Waterfront: The Cabo System” *Philippine Sociological Review*, Vol. 15, No. 3/4 (July-October, 1967), pp. 135-140. Michael Pinches, “All that we have is our muscle and sweat...”

or cope with their economic condition (through low-wage domestic work, crime, prostitution, drinking, etc.) only added further to the emerging stereotypes around “Waray”-speakers. Melencio notes that in present-day Manila,

“Some Filipinos condescendingly refer to this group of people as ‘*waray upay*’ (poor) or ‘*waray kuwarta*’ (no money). Stereotypic images of Waraynons vary as ‘*waray upay nga mga tawo*’ (good for nothing people) to mean they are drunkards [‘people who drink gin till they drop dead in Tondo or Navotas side streets’], thieves [‘members of the Waray-waray Gang who does kidnap-for-ransom’] or gamblers for men; and prostitutes [‘the GROs along Ermita and Quezon Avenue’], dancers or housemaids for women” (Melencio 2010).

The stereotype of people from Samar and Leyte as fierce and easily-provoked would be cemented in the national consciousness by the movie *Waray-Waray* (1954), a romantic comedy written and directed by F. H. Constantino. The film features the actress Nida Blanca in the role of a “tomboyish” young woman who boards a boat in Tacloban, Leyte, “comes to Manila as a stowaway and ends up as a cook in a wealthy rich old couple's residence.”<sup>240</sup> The movie then follows her adventures in pursuing luck in the national capital. What makes Blanca’s character novel is its combination of roles as a domestic worker and a street toughie, which in popular imagination and in the migration process were usually divided according to gender between female house helpers and male labourers-turned-gang members. As will be seen below, this ambiguity in gender roles will make Blanca’s character an enduring culture-hero[ine] for many who would subsequently self-identify as “Waray.” But what has greatly

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<sup>240</sup> <http://www.kabayancentral.com/video/lvn/cplvnww.html> [Accessed: 26 May 2017]. The full movie is available for viewing online: 1954 “*Waray Waray*” by F.H. Constantino, <https://vimeo.com/315153182> (Accessed: 7/1/2020)

helped popularize Blanca's feisty hero[ine] in popular culture, long after the movie came out, is the movie's theme song written by Tondo-born composer, lyricist and later National Artist Levi Celerio (1910–2002).<sup>241</sup> The song's lyrics outline the basic elements in the "Waray-Waray" characterization as carefree and generous, but tough and ferocious when provoked. A few stanzas go:

Waray-Waray wouldn't flee (*hindi tatakas*)  
Waray-Waray ready to be done for (*handing matodas*)  
Waray-Waray careless of tomorrow (*bahala bukas*)  
Waray-Waray toughens up (*manigas*)!  
...  
Waray-Waray is what I'm called,  
in fights, doesn't back down  
to any challenger  
even if you are a tough guy (*maton*)<sup>242</sup>  
...  
We waray-waray women  
are show-offs/bullies (*sigasiga*)<sup>243</sup> anywhere  
But the waray-waray are different  
When challenged to a fight.

The screening of the film and the popularization of the movie's theme song, which has since become a popular national folk song,<sup>244</sup> came at a time when

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<sup>241</sup> Ryan Cayabyab (Filipino musician, composer and conductor) described Celerio as "the country's foremost lyricist of Pilipino music." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s81rvA3NMus> [Accessed: 22 January 2017].

<sup>242</sup> Jocano 1975, 116. ruffian/thug/gang leader - <http://www.binisaya.com/node/21?search=binisaya&word=maton&Search=Search> (Accessed: 22 January 2017)

<sup>243</sup> Jocano (1975) makes a distinction between a *sigasiga* ("show off") and a *sigasiga* ("the well-known, silent type") gang leader.

<sup>244</sup> The song also became part of American singer Eartha Kitt's repertoire. See Lucy Burns, "Eartha Kitt's 'Waray Waray': The Filipina in Black Feminist Performance Imaginary," in Manalansan, Martin F. and Augusto Espiritu (eds.), *Filipino Studies: Palimpsests of Nation and Diaspora*, NYU Press, 2016.

radio and motion pictures had replaced the *comedia* and *zarzuela* as popular forms of mass entertainment in the country. It was through these new media and through traditional means such as cultural performances that ethnic representations based on emerging stereotypes of migrant communities in big cities such as Manila would be popularized nationwide. Eventually, representations of “Waray” migrants in film and the media would be projected to people who spoke the major language in Samar and Leyte. The “Waray” label would also be embedded into a discourse of national identity which categorized different groups of people into distinct ethno-linguistic, religious, and cultural categories to account for *Filipino* diversity. Moreover, the people placed in these categories are assigned particular traits, which in turn influence people’s perceptions of their desirability as workmates, potential marriage partners, and neighbours, among other social roles.<sup>245</sup> According to Kaufman (2013)<sup>246</sup> strong clan, ethnic, and religious identifications and the tensions inherent in inter-ethnic relationships have served as stumbling blocks to national unity in the post-war Philippines. Similar to the colonial linguistic hierarchy of the Spanish period, the “Waray” category, like the earlier “Visayan” category out of which it emerged, has also continued to be a subset found near the bottom of a new national hierarchy.<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Filipinas Foundation, Inc. *Philippine Majority-Minority Relations and Ethnic Attitudes: An In-Depth Study*. Makati, Rizal, 1976.

<sup>246</sup> Stuart J. Kaufman, “The Limits of Nation-building in the Philippines,” *International Area Studies Review* 16:1 (2013): 3–23.

<sup>247</sup> According to Kaufman: “Along with this stronger attachment to their ethnic identities, Filipinos have also displayed a substantial degree of inter-ethnic tensions. Muslim–Christian relations have long been especially fraught. Early surveys found that Muslims did not identify themselves as Filipino at all, and according to one 1980s poll, Muslims still put their Filipino identity fifth in order of priority after clan, ethnic group and religious affiliation. There are important cleavages among Christian groups as well. A broad regional cleavage between Luzon and the Visayas is important enough that national political tickets typically include regional balancing, including one candidate from each of these two main regions. Indeed, a 1970s poll found extensive evidence of interethnic rivalries and negative stereotypes, finding that not only Muslims but also Christian Waray and [I]longgo were widely disliked by other groups. Strikingly, this was not a Luzon–Visayas cleavage, but an intra-Visayan one, with Cebuanos (from the Visayas) most likely to have unfavorable views of (Visayan) [I]longgos. Similarly, Warays (another Visayan group) are widely seen by themselves and others as being

As a result of such categorizations, many Samar-Leyte outmigrants to places such as Manila often chose to avoid mentioning their places of origin. One reason for avoiding being connected with the *Waray-Waray* label was its close association with criminality and prison gangs.<sup>248</sup> By the 1960s, the two biggest “ethnically-identified” rival gangs in Manila prisons were the Sigue Sigue Sputnik Gang (composed mostly of *Tagalogs*) and the OXO Gang (which was closely associated with *Warays* in the mid-1960s). The anthropologist Mary Racelis remembers how the notion that *Warays* were “prominent” or “key members of one set of Tondo gangs, whose networks are reinforced in prison” was already in place and was locally mentioned by informants during her fieldwork in 1965 for a study on Tondo life.<sup>249</sup> She believed this was because “the gangs were organized according to ethnic groupings and the Leyte *Warays* were identified as a major set” (Mary Racelis, email correspondence, 28 May 2017). On the other hand, Robredillo (2011) writes that after the initial coining of the *Waray* label by non-*Warays* in Tondo, “the identification of Samareños with ‘*Warays*’ was enhanced by the fame or notoriety of the ‘OXO’ gang (zero times zero equals nothing = ‘*Waray*’), whose members came mostly from Samar and Leyte, and by Nida Blanca’s 1954 song [and film], ‘*Waray-Waray*,’ which tended to create the impression that the ‘*Warays*’ were fierce, fearless and furious—a moniker many Samareños delighted in. Thus, the description ‘*Waray*’ stuck; it gave them identity.”<sup>250</sup>

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“matapang”—fierce or brave—a quality that made them the least-favorably regarded Christian group in the Philippines” (Kaufman, “The Limits of Nation-building in the Philippines,” p. 7).

<sup>248</sup> de Cadiz, Gerry, *Waray's Mistaken Identity* (August 23, 2010). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2485900> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2485900>

<sup>249</sup> Mary R. Hollnsteiner, “Inner Tondo as a Way of Life,” in Gowing, Peter G., and William Henry Scott. *Acculturation in the Philippines*. Quezon City: New Day Publishers (1971), 235-245. Originally published in *Saint Louis Quarterly*, Vol.5, Nos. 1 and 2, March-June, 1967.

<sup>250</sup> Robredillo, Lope C. “What native language do Estehanons [the people of Eastern Samar] speak—‘*Waray-Waray*’, ‘*Binisaya*’, or ‘*Samareño*’?” 2011. <https://www.facebook.com/LopeCRobredillo/photos/a.136767493045611.38097.136451346410559/208485999207093/?type=3&theater> (Uploaded: August 20, 2011; Accessed: 24 June 2017)

The available evidence suggests closer connections between the dock workers of Tondo, the OXO prison and street gang, and the 1954 *Nida Blanca* film. Ashburn reports that the OXO gang was formed in 1956 at the National Penitentiary in Muntinlupa in response to “maltreatment by the Tagalogs” (Ashburn 1965, p. 136).<sup>251</sup> He further noted that, “It was among the OXO's that the bitter rivalry along dialect and cultural lines emerged. According to the members interviewed, the Tagalogs (and this refers to the *Sigue Sigue Sputniks* both in jail and out) look upon them (OXO's are predominantly Visayans) as members of a lower social class and as being ‘stupid’.” (Ashburn 1965, p. 136). Additional details suggest that the OXO gang members Ashburn interviewed in the mid-1960s were closely linked to the migrants and dockworkers to which the *Waray-Waray* label first seems to have been applied: “All OXO members interviewed stressed the point that the members have ‘decent jobs’ and are hard workers. The trouble comes when the ‘Manila Boys’ (defined as ‘pure Tagalogs’) will not let them live and work in peace. Then they must defend their honor, pride, and ‘turf’.” (Ashburn 1965, 137). One of the main ‘battlegrounds’ for the inter-ethnic gang wars was “the North Port Area of Tondo between Pier #2 and Pier #10” (Ashburn 1965, 137).<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Ashburn, Franklin. “Some Recent Inquiries into the Structure-Function of Conflict Gangs in the Manila City Jail,” *Asian Studies*, III, 1 (April, 1965), pp. 126-144.

<sup>252</sup> As noted earlier, this area was an important starting point and migrant enclave for post-war outmigrants from the Eastern Visayas. The ancient parallels to village returns also had counterparts in outside warrior conduct. Just like how a returning migrant's *pasalubong* (“bring-home” gifts) evoked Spanish-contact *bula* captive slaves brought home to *Pintados* villages by *bulahan* (fortunate and full of captives) raiders, so too did the (self-)ascribed characteristics to Warays as “fierce, fearless and furious” (i.e., Tagalog: *matapang*, Waray: *maisog*) evoke the ancient *Pintados* in terms of the latter's practice of raiding and counter-raiding (now repeated in turf wars), the tattoos (*tatak*) received by members, and recognition as *maisog/matapang* (fierce) of those who gained renown (and tattoos) as warriors. Despite its loose structure, Ashburn notes that the OXO Gang was the only prison gang among four at the Manila City Jail whose members did not have their tattoos (*tatak*) erased, suggesting a strong identification with a group that prided itself with strong ties based on shared “Visayan blood” (Ashburn 1965, 137, 139).

The antagonism towards migrants seems to have been ingrained in the OXO's foremost rival gang: "Perhaps the most structured and best organized conflict gang in the Manila City Jail at the time of this study was the Sigue Sigue Sputnik group. The motto of this gang reveals the conflict nature of the organization: 'He who comes to destroy us, will himself be destroyed.' This is a direct reference to the 'Province Mates' such as the Visayan OXO group whom the Sputniks feel have 'invaded' the Tagalog territory of Manila" (Ashburn 1965, p.134). The other big provincial (*probinsyano*) (Hollnsteiner 1971, 243) group this referred to were the *Kapampangans* of the Sigue Sigue Commando Gang, who were migrants from nearby Pampanga Province in Central Luzon, a region that had been engulfed in the Hukbalahap agrarian rebellion in the early post-war years (1946-1954): "When they come to Manila, they meet head-on the solid front known as the 'Manila Boys'- the same situation that is presented to the Visayan OXO's [with whom they would form an alliance against the Sputniks]- and again the battle lines are drawn" (*Ibid.*, 138). These accounts suggest that these prison gangs had origins in migrant youth groups who ran into trouble with counterparts from other ethno-linguistic groups. Hollnsteiner notes that those who considered themselves "real Tondo residents" distinguished inhabitants as either part of the "*taga-rito* [Tagalog: 'from here'] circle" (Hollnsteiner 1965, 245) or as *dayo* ("stranger-outsiders"), i.e., migrants from the provinces, both pre-war and post-war, although the pre-war migrants looked upon the post-war Bisayan migrants as the real outsiders.

The OXO Gang was the opposite of the Sputniks in terms of organization and its history. Not only did it not have any strict rules or criteria for joining the group (linguistic "outsiders," including Tagalogs could join after a loyalty test), it also had vague origins (Gil Gotiangco, personal communication, 2007): "The origin and meaning of the term 'OXO' is questionable for there seems to be very little agreement or consensus among members on this point. Some say it is the symbol of the 'skull and cross bones' which means 'death to the enemy'; other claim that it came from the Tagalog term "oo" meaning "yes, yes" with

an 'X' in the center signifying that they, the Visayans, were opposed to anything to which the Tagalogs said "yes"; still other members seemed to have no idea at all as to the origin and meaning of the term 'OXO.'" (Ashburn 1965, 137).<sup>253</sup> The other gangs had more precise ideas about the origins and meaning of their gang names that were derived from mass media imagery. There was a "definite consensus" among Tagalog Sputniks that, "The name comes from the Russian orbital satellite of the same name" with its connotations of "'spying' or 'all-knowing' capabilities" which gang members saw themselves as possessing (*Ibid.*, 134-135). Among the *Kapampangan* Commandos, on the other hand, there was "virtually unanimous agreement" that their name and "the whole concept of the gang was derived from the [American?] motion picture entitled: 'The Commandos.'" Moreover, Ashburn's observation that taking a movie title as a gang name "represents a rather clearcut example of the influence of mass media on the activities of a conflict gang" (*Ibid.*, 138) could equally apply to the Sputniks and, arguably, the OXOs, if their name had been inspired by the 1954 *Waray-Waray* film when the gang was founded in 1956: i.e., "zero times zero equals nothing = 'Waray'" (Robredillo 2011) or, alternatively, "[Waray] times [Waray]" equals "double nothing."<sup>254</sup> If so, they would have been re-appropriating a label first applied to them as Tondo migrants by other ethnolinguistic groups but since then popularized through film. The migrants, the gang, and the film could thus be seen as mutually constitutive in establishing the *Waray-Waray* label and image.

While some avoided the *Waray* labels and its association with gang culture, why then did others delight in and even embrace a seemingly negative

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<sup>253</sup> The different meanings ascribed to "OXO" by the mid-1960s suggests a lesser number of members who self-identified as *Waray*. Since then, gang membership has expanded to include Visayan-speaking members from "Cebu, Samar, Leyte, Masbate and Iloilo as well as Mindanao" and its name has acquired its more fixed meaning of "Original Ex-convict Organization." (Candaliza-Gutierrez 2012, p. 209). Candaliza-Gutierrez, Filomin. "Pangkat: Inmate Gangs at the New Bilibid Prison Maximum Security Compound," *Philippine Sociological Review*, Vol. 60, Special Issue: Sociology of Deviance (January-December 2012), pp. 193-237.

<sup>254</sup> "zero, *n.* waray, numero nga waray bali [null],.." (Makabenta and Makabenta 2004, 389).

stereotype? Perhaps because, given the difficult circumstances both in Manila and the home region that people who identified with the label had to live in, it might not have been regarded as a completely negative stereotype at all. In identifying as *Waray* or *Waray-Waray*, people could selectively appropriate the necessary characterizations (such as “ferocity” [*isog*]) needed to thrive in an insecure and volatile environment and ignore other characterizations such as being “uncouth” and “uncultured” (Robredillo 2011). The label had thus become another self-transformative identity symbol that could empower and unite people and allow them to continue their pursuit of luck or well-being by giving off (or acting on) the impression of being people who were not to be messed with. In difficult social environments, it became necessary to appear tough or act tough to make it in life. That the film, song, and gangster image resonated with many viewers and listeners and “gave them identity” thus suggests that the *Waray-Waray* film and song were seen as representative of their own difficult experiences, both in Manila and back in Eastern Visayas, as seekers of *kaopayan*. The migrant *Waray-Waray* success story portrayed in the film and the carefree but strong character memorialized in song provided people with an idealized identity model which they could emulate and a life trajectory they could aspire to in their own life journeys.

Such a model, however, also generated exclusions, and some youths in the Eastern Visayas who did not self-identify with these “macho” attributes found it difficult to gain acceptance from their *Waray*-identifying parents and contemporaries for their own identifications. Two self-identified gays who grew up in Leyte and Samar in the 1960s, for instance, “claimed that back then ‘Warays (from the Eastern Visayas) are brave and masculine...they don’t back down in a conflict. And one thing they really don’t like is to have a gay son.’” (p. 9) In the high school of the Leyte respondent, those who did not fit into this mould were teased and called *bayot* (Visayan for “gay”), including by girls, and appear to have been constantly challenged to prove their adherence to the internalized norm of *Warays* as toughs who didn’t back down from fights (p. 9).

In general, Foe argues that, despite years of colonization by patriarchal societies which looked down on transgendered persons or even outlawed aspects of their lifestyle in their own countries (e.g., Spain and America), the Philippines of the 1960s had retained an ingrained tolerance for this group of people despite some instances of youth teasing or bullying experienced by some of Foe's respondents from different parts of the Philippines.<sup>255</sup> In the Eastern Visayas, however, people's identification with the *Waray-Waray* image as fighters seems to have served as an added influence to such instances of teasing and bullying. In later decades, the connotations with criminality of the Waray-Waray label would be further heightened by the police's use of the label to refer to a kidnap-for-ransom group operating in Metro Manila which gained notoriety in the 1990s and the early 2000s.<sup>256</sup>

Left out of these studies on the links between ethno-linguistic stereotypes and national identity, however, are alternative points of migrant identification that are village-, town-, and island-based. "Waray" communities in Manila continue to congregate along town or village lines to celebrate their annual town fiestas, although as noted earlier this is usually on a set on a different date than the original celebrated at home. The Sto. Niño de Leyte Shrine in Quezon City, for example, hosts different "Waray"-speaking communities from both Leyte and Samar for their feast ceremonies, usually involving 9-day novena prayers culminating with food offered by the year's sponsor on the last day<sup>257</sup>. Although these migrant communities from the Eastern Visayas share the same venue for feasting that hosts people who speak the same language, the different dates for such activities means that socialization is still largely town- and

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<sup>255</sup> Jonathan Foe, "The 1960s Gay Life in the Philippines: Discretion with Tolerance," *Electronic Journal of Human Sexuality*, Volume 17, January 3, 2014. <http://www.ejhs.org/volume17/gaylife.html>

<sup>256</sup> Joshua Hill, John M. Miller & Daniel J. Mabrey (2010) Classification of Terrorist Group Events in the Philippines: Location, Location, Location. *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, 5(2), 41-54. DOI: 10.1080/18335300.2010.9686948; de Cadiz, G., 2010. Waray's Mistaken Identity. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2485900> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2485900>

<sup>257</sup> Virginia Cinco interview, 2016

village-based. Beyond town affiliations, Waray migrant communities in Quezon City are also often distinguished between Leyte Warays and Samar Warays which is complemented with stories on island-based, inter-“Waray” rivalries and opinions as to which group was more *ma-isog* (“fierce”).<sup>258</sup>

In terms of class distinctions, the Waray labels’ connotation of poverty, of “people who have nothing” (e.g., *walang wala*), above other meanings such as people “who have nothing better to do [e.g., *waray-waray la* (i.e., carefree, lazy in *Binisaya/Waray*)], or who have no direction in life [*wala lang*, Tagalog for being ‘Directionless, lacking in purpose’]” (Robredillo 2011; Lagarde 2017; Bordeos 2017),<sup>259</sup> could also be embraced as an identity by those who self-identify as *pobre nga Filipinos* (poor Filipinos) (Hosoda 2008, 322, 325) or “we who have nothing at all” (Cannell 1999, 15ff), since it is a condition that could elicit the pity (*kalooy*) of *maluluuyon* and *buotan* (merciful and kind) social and spiritual superiors who could bestow *swerte* on lucky migrants. One group from which these migrants did not seem to have elicited pity, however, were elites of their own home region who resented the use of the labels and saw them as derogatory labels for the language and its speakers.

### Elite Responses to the *Waray-Waray* Label and Stereotype

As *Waray-Waray* and *Waray* gained nationwide currency as ethnolinguistic labels, attitudes to them among native speakers of the referred language group living both in the home region and outside fell into two camps: those

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<sup>258</sup> Leonila Oga-oga interview, 2016.

<sup>259</sup> See comments to Stephen Lagarde, “Waray is Wrong, Binisayá is Correct,” <https://www.facebook.com/stephen.lagarde/posts/10155444853734265> (Posted: 20 June 2017; Accessed: 28 June 2017); See also comments to Carl Sanchez Bordeos Facebook post sharing Lagarde’s article: <https://www.facebook.com/the.least.champ/posts/10209662600786682> (Posted 21 June 2017; Accessed: 28 June 2017); Jerry B. Grácio, “Hindi mali ang Waray” [“Waray” is not wrong], <https://www.facebook.com/jerry.gracio/posts/10213895876609901> (Posted 20 June 2017; Accessed: 21 July 2017); Voltaire Araza, “Pagturutulidong han Waraynon nga Pamahungpahong” [Displaying the Waray Disposition], <https://www.facebook.com/notes/voltaire-araza/pagturutulidong-han-waraynon-nga-pamahungpahong/10155414709028794/> (Posted 21 June 2017; Accessed: 21 July 2017)

who took pride in it as an identity and those who saw it as a source of shame. Intellectual elites based in the region, who sought to define a distinct regional identity for the people of Samar and Leyte in the post-colonial Philippines, mostly fell into the latter group. Members of the *Sanghiran San Binisaya* (Visayan Academy), an association founded by Norberto Romualdez in 1909 (Region VIII 1980, 6) which sought to preserve and promote east Visayan language and culture, preferred *Bisaya/Binisaya* and *Leyte-Samar/Lineyte-Samarnon* as a label for the people and the major language of Samar and Leyte. That the eradication of the *Waray-Waray* label had become the academy's primary mission by the 1960s is demonstrated by the fact that the Leyte Courier newspaper, run by members of the *Sanghiran*, featured in its banner a quote from Iluminado Lucente, one-time Tacloban mayor and a leading poet and playwright in the language who penned the lyrics to the popular folk song *An Iroy Nga Tuna* (The Mother Land):

"It's saddening that our language, *Lineyte-Samarnon* is being named *Waray-Waray* by no more than the sons and daughters of Leyte and Samar. That moniker is a mockery of our language."

A poem by the respected Leyte composer Agustin El O'Mora, *The Name of the Language* (1957), written only a few years after the release of the 1954 *Waray-Waray* movie, also casts blame on the Tondo migrants for inventing the label. However, in a manner similar to the myth-making of previous revivalistic movements, he also points to imagined intellectual predecessors as the source of his preferred label (*Lineyte-Samarnon*) which in fact had more recent origins in earlier *Sanghiran* writings:

"This [label] is only a fabrication and plain name-giving  
By the pier troublemakers (*magsamok*) there in Tondo, Manila.  
Truly it was *Lineyte-Samarnon*  
That our language was named

By the wise, the experts and the brainy  
(*kamag-araman, ladinós ug uluhan*),  
Of past times (*panahon nga una*), of days long ago.”

These laments about the widespread but self-injurious use of the *Waray-Waray* label from some of the leading figures of the Academy suggests that, although the label may have initially been imposed on Samar-Leyte migrants by members of other ethno-linguistic groups they interacted with in Manila, these impoverished migrants (perhaps relating to how the labels referenced and encapsulated their life in Manila as the “have nots”) and many others back home had embraced these appellations as their own just as their predecessors had appropriated earlier imposed labels such as *Bisaya*, *Cristiano*, and *Pulahan* to define themselves against non-Christian, non-Filipino, and non-poor outsiders. The Leyte-born First Lady Imelda Romualdez-Marcos’ attempt to substitute *Waray-Waray* with “may ada-ada” (“has a little”<sup>260</sup> or has a few things in life), which failed to catch on because its meaning “evolved to include persons who suffer from occasional loss of sanity” (Borrinaga 2003),<sup>261</sup> only further highlights the class divisions which the label had come to denote.

The Manila-based migrant “troublemakers” were not the first group against which the intelligentsia had tried to define a more refined cultural identity. The Leyte-Samar literati’s campaign against the new label starting in the 1950s stemmed from the fact that they saw language as an important means of promoting local solidarity. Eduardo Makabenta in *Why Should We Speak Tagalog?* (1940) (Bagulaya, p.247-249),<sup>262</sup> for instance, uses the flag symbol,

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<sup>260</sup> Makabenta and Makabenta 2004, 90.

<sup>261</sup> Rolando Borrinaga, “Waray-Waray Defended,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, November 29, 2003.

<sup>262</sup> Bagulaya, J. D. S. (2006). *Writing Literary History: Mode of Economic Production and Twentieth Century Waray Poetry*. UP Press.

familiar to those who remembered earlier movements for village autonomy, to denote linguistic identity:

Kay bis bungdo<sup>263</sup> may tungod nga langit  
Ngan bis diin mayada bandira.

There is a sky above any land [*bungdo*]  
That carries the flag of its native tongue.  
(pp. 248-249)<sup>264</sup>

Leading *Sanghiran* members such as Makabenta thus saw the *Binisaya* or *Lineyte-Samarnon* "native tongue"<sup>265</sup> as a symbol of unity for Leyte-Samar Bisayans as a distinct subset of Filipinos who were then on their way to becoming independent from America. Academy members thus felt a duty to preserve and purify the language from the encroachment of non-Bisayan and non-Filipino influences in preparation for this eventuality. However, such self-definition around what was considered more dignified identity labels as *Binisaya* (lit., to speak in Bisayan) and *Lineyte-Samarnon* (lit., to speak in [the] Leyte-Samar [language]) involved negative representations of groups seen as threats to linguistic cohesion and solidarity. When Makabenta wrote the above poem in the eve of World War 2, it was in response to government moves to institutionalize a national language based primarily on the Tagalog language spoken around Manila.<sup>266</sup> By the 1960s, the campaign for linguistic independence, which continued even after political independence, included as its enemies not only the growing popularity and notoriety of the *Waray* labels but also the more prevalent intrusion of what was seen as base

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<sup>263</sup> "bungdo. *n.* mound of earth, hillock" (Makabenta and Makabenta 2004, 22).

<sup>264</sup> Bagulaya, J.D.S. (2006) *Writing Literary History: Mode of Economic Production and Twentieth Century Waray Poetry*. UP Press.

<sup>265</sup> Bagulaya, 247-249.

<sup>266</sup> Ironically, the promotion of a Tagalog-based national language was spearheaded by Makabenta's fellow Leyteños and fellow *Sanghiran* members, i.e., *Sanghiran* founder Norberto Romualdez and Jaime C. de Veyra.

American-influenced values among members of their own linguistic community. Examples of satirical portraits found in the works of Sanghiran members from the 1920s and 1930s include: Chinese shopkeepers and merchants portrayed as dishonest and troublesome (Bagulaya 250-252), political elites and “Laytinhon and Samarnons who ‘pretend’ to be Tagalogs” by speaking the language spoken in Manila even in the presence of fellow native speakers of “Binisaya,” and women “who accepted the new commodities and lifestyles” compared to the *Sanghiran* literati who “remained allied with the old [lifeways] in spite of their education.”<sup>267</sup> The male-led, vernacular-based identity the Academy tried to define was drawn in terms of differences with racial and ethnic outsiders and gendered subordinates. Alunan argues that the poetics that the *Sanghiran* promoted in fashioning this nobler notion of Bisayan-ness had as its model the internalized and localized Spanish cultural influences that had prevailed among the local gentry in the late 19th century.<sup>268</sup> The *Binisaya* identity model promoted by the Academy thus reflected a hierarchical ethos patterned after an earlier patriarchal coloniser culture. In attempting to supplant the *Waray-Waray/Waray* labels with *Binisaya/Lineyte-Samarnon*, it can be argued that some *Sanghiran* members were repeating the earlier distinctions made by the Spaniards in the early

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<sup>267</sup> Bagulaya, J.D.S. (2004) Satirizing Women: The Ilustrados and Women in Waray Poetry. *Journal of English Studies and Comparative Literature*, 7(1), p.111. The Samar-Leyte *ilustrados'* promotion of women's adherence to the normative “Maria Clara” image, to counter what was seen as the seeping of “corrupting” modern values into women's lifestyles, was derived from their reading of Rizal's 1887 novel *Noli Me Tangere*. See also Schumacher, J. N. (1991) “Rizal in the Context of Nineteenth Century Philippines.” In *The Making of a Nation, Essays on 19th Century Filipino Nationalism*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

<sup>268</sup> “[I]t may be pointed out that Sanghiran poetics, patterned on the dodecasyllabic verse, represented more of an interruption or intrusion into the stream of indigenous poetry. The alexandrine is a twelve-syllable verse broken by a slight pause in the sixth or the seventh syllable, a staple of Spanish versification. Schooled in this tradition, the writers of that generation sought to apply it to their own work, aware of its polish and elegance. The system adapted readily to the Filipino languages and became the standard by which verse was composed. It was the model of the Sanghiran poets....Still, the aesthetic impact of their [new writers] works hews closer to the concrete earthiness of universal poetry that we find in the folk, than to the turgid didacticism of the older poets.” Merlie M. Alunan, “Milestones in Waray Writing,” A paper read at UP Visayas Tacloban College, April 25, 2016. <https://tinalunay.wordpress.com/2016/06/29/milestones-in-waray-writing/> (Accessed: 17 August 2017).

Spanish period between uncivilized Bisayans and Hispanized Christians. This time, the *Waray/Waray-Waray* labels had replaced the former as a negative identification and the *Binisaya/Lineyte-Samarnon* labels had taken the place of Christian/Hispanized labels as more noble names for the language and people.

## Conclusion

In the aftermath of the Second World War, outward mobility towards Manila from the Eastern Visayas (in contrast to the Mindanao-oriented migration trend in the rest of the Visayas) in the early post-war years was heavily influenced by Leyte and Samar's role as the re-entry point of the Allied forces led by General MacArthur in recapturing the Philippines from Japan. Although it still involved assistance from relatives and co-villagers in the migrant destination, outmigration provided young people with a new means (through wage work) of pursuing their luck and providing for the "good of the barrio" based on America-modelled notions of the "good life." This outmigration trend, however, gave rise to outsider-introduced and stereotypic ethno-linguistic labels such as *Waray-Waray* or *Waray* denoting poverty, ferocity, and criminality that emerged out of these young migrants' interactions with other linguistic groups in Manila. Despite elite opposition to the use of the appellation, and the promotion by elite intellectuals of *Bisaya/Binisaya* and *Leyte-Samar/Lineyte-Samarnon* as more suitable designations for a distinct group of Filipinos and their language, *Waray-Waray* and *Waray* would nevertheless be internalized and normalized by speakers of the major language in the Eastern Visayas as a means of generating solidarity against various forms of risks and hazards both in migrant destinations and back in their home villages.



Figure 9. Post-Yolanda magazine cover. The national attention which fell on Samar and Leyte at that time is suggested in the following passage: "Instead of featuring a celebrity or any other prominent personality like it always does, Esquire Philippines decided to have a map as the cover of its newest issue." <https://news.abs-cbn.com/lifestyle/12/04/13/map-typhoon-hit-area-s-esquire-cover> (Accessed: 28 April 2019).

## CHAPTER 4

### Typhoon Haiyan and the Fierce 'Resilience' of *Yolanda Survivors, 2013-Present*

This final chapter examines the local responses to the worst natural disaster in the living memory of the people of Leyte and Samar, 2013's Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda, which also happened to be one of the strongest storms to make landfall in recent world history. It explores the historical and cultural contexts to these responses in order to understand the self-ascribed claims of "resilience" of its survivors. Since Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda struck the central Philippines on 8 November 2013, the Waray or Waray-Waray people of Samar and Leyte, the ethno-linguistic group that bore the brunt of the storm's strong winds and storm surges, have emerged with a new sense of identity that takes pride in their collective survival and resilience in the face of the disaster. However, recent studies on the local responses to Typhoon Yolanda have problematized these claims of resilience in light of observed problems in its relief, recovery and rehabilitation phases.<sup>269</sup>

However, the lack of historical and social scientific literature that focus on the land and people of Eastern Visayas have thus far resulted in conceptual frameworks that provide a limited understanding of the representations and transformed self-perceptions of so-called "Yolanda Survivors." These studies have often framed local responses to the typhoon in terms of borrowed Tagalog/Filipino concepts such as *bayanihan* (cooperative endeavour, community spirit) that has been popularised in subsequent local remembrances of the event.<sup>270</sup> Other studies have attempted to account for the

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<sup>269</sup> Su, Y. and Mangada, L. (2016) Surviving Survival: The Limits of Bayanihan and Disaster Solidarity after Typhoon Haiyan in Tacloban City. *Typhoon Haiyan Shelter Case Studies*. Boulder: Mortenson Center in Engineering for Developing Communities, 104-107; Eadie, P. and Su, Y. (2018) Post-disaster social capital: trust, equity, bayanihan and Typhoon Yolanda. *Disaster Prevention and Management: An International Journal*, 27(3), 334-345.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

Waray-language counterparts and nuances of meaning to local collective practices labelled as *bayanihan* in recent literature on the Haiyan/Yolanda response.<sup>271</sup> However, none of these studies have as yet looked at these responses as part of longer historical processes and historicized the local appropriation of borrowed words such as *bayanihan* in post-typhoon assessments of the local response. Without a deeper grounding in local cultural history, the important lessons that could be drawn by governments, humanitarian agencies, and communities from these studies might not be properly appreciated and applied in preparing for future hazards.

This chapter aims to address these issues on post-Haiyan disaster solidarity and contribute answers to the question of how “resilience” was conceptualised and practiced in local responses to Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda. It will do so by drawing links between the Haiyan/Yolanda experience and similar crisis responses and collective self-representations in the past that were referred to by typhoon survivors and their family and friends in the national and global diasporas to generate group solidarity in the storm’s wake. It will examine the documented and observed words and actions of survivors across the emergency, rehabilitation and recovery phases that followed the disaster, and compare them with historical parallels in the past. It will argue that, in the local post-typhoon discourse, borrowed terminology such as “resilience” and “bayanihan” came to be appropriated as words that brought to mind older values and cooperative practices (e.g., *isog* [ferocity/courage/bravery], *onong* [solidarity], *tic/os* [mutual aid], etc.) that, as seen in previous chapters, had allowed closely-knit communities to survive past extreme events and crises. In light of social transformations (such as outmigration, urbanization, and the loosening of extended family ties) that preceded the typhoon, people adapted

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<sup>271</sup> Abis, K. (2016) *In the spirit of Bayanihan: Disaster Recovery from Typhoon Yolanda in Eastern Visayas* (Major Paper, Master of Environmental Studies, Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University). URI: <http://hdl.handle.net/10315/34678>; Go, C.O. (2017) Women of storm surges: meaning making as cultural process of social repair for Yolanda survivors. *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints*, 65(2), 227-256; Tanyag, M. (2018) Resilience, Female Altruism, and Bodily Autonomy: Disaster-Induced Displacement in Post-Haiyan Philippines. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 43(3), 563-585.

their acts of mutual help or assistance in its aftermath to accommodate new distances, locations, or mutual help partners (e.g., acted out in “low trust” urban environments, by family and friends separated by distance because of migration, cooperation with foreign humanitarian workers, etc.). The survivor’s new self-regard that came out of their disaster experience thus formed part of a longer and repeated process that memorialised crisis experiences and people’s (modified) collective survival practices through new or transformed group labels (e.g., Yolanda Survivor, Waraynon, Waray-Waray, Filipino, Bisaya, Cristiano, Pintados, etc.).

What the Haiyan/Yolanda experience has shown is that the risks and hazards that people in the region have normalised as a “frequent life experience” (Bankoff 2007) in one of the most hazard-prone countries in the world had continued to provide new meanings and new practical examples to local identifications. And as has been shown across this study, such transformed identities were key to generating solidarity and cooperative action in the face of new or recurrent adversities.

### THE YOLANDA DISASTER AS A ‘BIG DEFEAT’

The following sections discuss Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda’s impact on Samar and Leyte, the problems that emerged in the government and humanitarian responses, and the implications of these problems for the people in the region who were worst affected by the storm.

#### Super Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda and its Aftermath

Typhoon Yolanda (International name: Haiyan) struck the Philippines on 8 November 2013. Hardest hit was the Eastern Visayas region where the eye of the storm system made landfall at near-peak strength and pushed up seawater in storm surges which devastated coastal communities. In the storm’s aftermath, reports emerged of hundreds of deaths due to drowning from the debris-filled rising waters, the widespread looting of basic needs and luxury

goods from warehouses and commercial establishments, mass paranoia/hysteria and the spread of wild/evolving rumors; and the outward flux of thousands of families from the region, especially toward centers such as Cebu and Manila.

## Problems in the Government Response

The national and local responses to the devastating aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda would see a repeat of the political contests that marked collective action in response to earlier crises (see previous chapters). Reports in the national and international mass media on the early days after Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda made landfall highlighted the long-standing political feud between two political dynasties that had been at the forefront of Philippine politics since the early decades after the end of the Second World War. The playing out of a media war and blame game between scions of the Conjuangco-Aquino clan (i.e., then Philippine President Benigno S. Aquino III) and the Romualdez-Marcos clan (i.e., then Tacloban City Mayor Alfred Romualdez) caused real problems in the disaster response due to a lack of leadership and coordination in relief efforts as a result of political bickering (Bankoff and Borrinaga 2016). But the squabble between rival political families at the national and city levels and the problems it caused in relief provision constituted only one layer in politically-charged disaster responses that were also happening at the local level. A Leyte representative later lamented the decision of the national government and many (I)NGOs to distribute aid through the Local Government Units:

“...There are alliances on the ground and especially when Haiyan happened. It was a few months [*sic*, days] after elections. So the wounds of elections were so raw, so fresh, and everything had to be through the LGU...I know the LGU is important but they should have defaulted a bit also so that the help reaches many people more.” (Lucy Torres-Gomez interview, *Esquire Philippines*, 2015, p.24)

Various other reports attest to the widespread practice of selective distribution of aid to favoured communities and inhabitants (Bankoff and Borrinaga 2016). The distribution or withholding of relief goods became a means of rewarding voters or punishing non-voters of successful *barangay*(village)-level candidates in the 28 October 2013 elections (just over a week before the typhoon) for *barangay* (village) chiefs and councils. This practice came to be known as “color-coding” in which relief goods or other forms of assistance were distributed by local officials to supporters or family members (Ibid.).

### Problems in the Humanitarian Response

International and humanitarian intervention in the post-Yolanda response added new dimensions and challenges to the local dynamics of reciprocal relations between community members and the “social contract” between communities and government at the local and national levels. A subsequent review of aid provision by humanitarian agencies which responded to Yolanda have found that the common practice of selective distribution of aid, a policy which targets the poorest members of an affected community and area, engendered “status anxiety” in many recipient neighborhoods, causing frustration and anger between friend groups and neighbors in a culture where people of unequal status are nevertheless seen as possessing equal value (Kerkvliet 1986; Cannell 1999).<sup>272</sup> In an apparent attempt to help diffuse intra-village resentments in Eastern Samar, an editorial note in the February 2014 edition of the Diocese of Borongan’s monthly newspaper had to remind its typhoon-affected readers that the selective distribution of aid by humanitarian actors was meant to address the unequal impact of the typhoon with the limited resources available to these groups:

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<sup>272</sup> Jonathan Corpus Ong, "Hidden Injuries of Humanitarian Relief," 23 Feb 2015, Online: <http://www.cdacnetwork.org/i/20150223164553-xdmv2> (Accessed: 10 December 2017)

*"Dire ngatanan nga tawo papreho an epekto o mayda papreho nga mga panginahanglanon kahuman mahinabo an bagyo nga Yolanda."*<sup>273</sup>

Not all people had the same effect or have the same needs after Typhoon Yolanda happened.

On the other hand, the article reminded aid groups that,

*"Sugad man, an bisan hin-o nga 'humanitarian actor' in dire kaangayan umaro hin bisan ano man nga pabor o kabalyu hit ira mga bulig ha mga tawo."*<sup>274</sup>

Likewise, it is inappropriate for any 'humanitarian actor' to ask for any favours or exchanges for their help to the people.

Doing so could have been seen as advantage-taking by more powerful and resource-rich outsiders who, in the first place, were not part of pre-existing reciprocal relations between members of local communities and between these communities and local and national leaders. As a Tacloban fish vendor told humanitarian researchers later, "We are thankful to humanitarians. [But] [a]s foreigners, they have no obligation to help us. Our government, yes—but them, no."<sup>275</sup>

Policy advisers have since called for better coordination between international aid agencies to avoid overlaps and omissions in relief provision that occurred in the Yolanda humanitarian response. Also citing examples from the Yolanda case, these studies have furthermore urged predominantly Western-based agencies to implement policy reforms that allow for greater inclusion of local civil society in their decision-making processes. They argue that had there been greater engagement with groups such as local NGOs, which possessed

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<sup>273</sup> "An Pag-ayuda Ha Mga Estehanon [The Giving of Aid to *Estehanon*s (the people of Eastern Samar)]," *ESTE! Eastern Samar News and Views*, Vol. 2 No. 2, February 2014, p. 6.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

<sup>275</sup> Quoted in Ong, J. C. (2015) Hidden Injuries of Humanitarian Relief. 23 February. Available online: <http://www.cdacnetwork.org/i/20150223164553-xdmv2> [Accessed: 10/12/2017].

extensive local knowledge and long-established social networks, many of the above-mentioned aid distribution problems and the unintended “social divisiveness” these caused could have been prevented (Ibid.).

## POST-TYPHOON SOLIDARITIES

Were the people of Samar and Leyte as “resilient” against Typhoon Yolanda as portrayed by themselves or others? On this point there is still much confusion over how exactly to measure or even define “resilience.” Scholars studying Yolanda have noted differences in meaning ascribed to “resilience” by survivors. One reason for this confusion over its meaning, just like the use of “storm surge” in typhoon warnings before the storm, is the English words’ recent origins. In the years before the storm, “resilience”—defined as the capacity to withstand adversity—had become a buzzword in humanitarian circles, being used in various capacity-building programs throughout the world. There is also the danger that the term could be used as a sort of feel-good “disclaimer” for officials or governments to skirt their actual responsibilities in alleviating the poverty that make communities vulnerable to natural hazards in the first place.<sup>276</sup> Disaster scholars agree that communities do have innate resilience. But, in cases such as the local response to Typhoon Yolanda, this can be “difficult to measure and understand.”<sup>277</sup> To break through this conceptual barrier, it is perhaps necessary to analyze the words that have been used as a local equivalent to “resilience” to understand how solidarity in the face of typhoon-induced adversity was generated. A closer look at the local practices of solidarity and mutual help in the wake of Typhoon Yolanda, and the way people talked about these practices, reveal local meanings to “resilience” that problematize attempts to measure or quantify this concept. The following sections suggest that, in addition to measurement and quantification, it is also

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<sup>276</sup> Pauline Eadie, “Typhoon Yolanda and the ‘Tyranny’ of Resilience.”

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

important to understand the history and local cultural context which informed typhoon survivors' understandings and practices of "resilience."

### Local and Translocal Solidarities and Mobilisations

How did people respond to the typhoon in the immediate hours and days after it passed through Samar and Leyte? The following examples suggest that local responses to Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda drew on both traditional forms of solidarity (discussed in Chapter 1 and 2) and transformed forms of mutual assistance shaped by mass post-war outmigration (discussed in Chapter 3). On the impact of the typhoon on local society, the Tacloban-based poet and academic Merlie Alunan wrote about how,

"There was nowhere to turn for help or support. Fortunes were suddenly overturned. The intricate system of dependencies on which any city rested had been blasted. The fragile contract that kept the peace and stretched the mantle of respect between and among the social classes snapped and unravelled. The city turned quickly into what seemed like a war zone, but it was war without battle lines. Everyone had become a potential enemy." (Alunan 2016b, p. 71)

Rumours spread about the deaths of prominent personalities in Tacloban and of house-to-house depredations of escaped prisoners, communist rebels, sea nomads, or upland indigenous groups. Whole communities stayed up for nights on end in anticipation of rumored impending raids. Yet, despite the seemingly chaotic societal pandemonium unleashed by the typhoon, signs of mutual help were to be seen in the way people assisted each other with immediate needs such as food, shelter, and clothing, and protected themselves from the possibility of the spread of these reported events to their homes and neighbourhoods. The apparent breakdown of social order as transmitted by word-of-mouth and as portrayed in mass media tended to obscure the emergence and operation of small-scale solidarities that sought to secure immediate needs such as food, medicine, and security that were slow to arrive

because of the problems in the national and international responses discussed in the previous section. Various incidents<sup>278</sup> give a sense of the level of fear and paranoia that gripped the city and other affected areas in the typhoon's immediate aftermath. As Alunan observed further, "The paranoia was infectious and spread across the city, aggravated by the loss of communication, the impassability of the roads, the lack of transport facilities, and no signs, it seemed, of the presence of government" (Alunan 2016b, 71).

The circumscribed character of local group solidarities was visible in the phenomenon of community mobilisation to guard neighbourhoods against what turned out to be largely false rumours of looting and pillage by phantom prison escapees, New People's Army (NPA) communist rebels,<sup>279</sup> or Badjao sea nomads<sup>280</sup>—marginalized groups who were imagined to be the biggest threats to survival in the days after the typhoon. With or without promptings from the few military forces that had arrived in the city in the early days after the typhoon, neighbours banded together at night armed with weapons and improvised alarm systems to implement curfews and challenge or confront strangers found inside neighbourhoods within curfew hours.<sup>281</sup> It later became apparent that the main perpetrators of looting were typhoon survivors who

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<sup>278</sup> In one case, young neighbourhood volunteers who surrounded a vacated Tacloban home they believed to harbour an escaped woman prisoner found the house empty in the morning after a long night of waiting and taunting. Some days later, a Tacloban car repair shop owner shot dead two men, one a neighbour on the way home in the passenger tricycle he drove for a living, thinking that they were about to loot his shop.

<sup>279</sup> Tom Phillips, "Typhoon Haiyan: Tacloban deputy mayor calls on rebels to avoid 'armed violence'," *The Telegraph*, 14 November 2013, Online: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/philippines/10448673/Typhoon-Haiyan-Tacloban-deputy-mayor-calls-on-rebels-to-avoid-armed-violence.html> (Accessed: 23 November 2018)

<sup>280</sup> *Lunop*, pp. 133-134, 136-138; Alunan 2016b.

<sup>281</sup> Rappler.com, "Tacloban residents unite to protect each other," 18 November 2013, Online: <https://www.rappler.com/video/reports/44025-tacloban-residents-unite-protect-each-other-yolanda-haiyan> (Accessed: 24 April 2019)

were mostly after food and emergency supplies.<sup>282</sup> Nevertheless, the sharing by ordinary survivors with family, neighbours or even with strangers of items that they had looted such as emergency supplies (“food, medicine, and other needs”) attests to the operation of small-networks of mutual help that were key to survival in the early hours and days after Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda struck.<sup>283</sup>

Local mobilization in response to threats to family and community security and cohesion had a long history in the Eastern Visayas and beyond. As previously noted, these dangers ranged from slave raids in pre-colonial times and the Spanish period, to the threat of colonial demands impinging on family unity, and tensions between migrant groups in multi-ethnic metropolitan slums. As a motive for revolt, the threatened or actual forced separation of families because of an occupying power’s labour demands is a recurring theme in the history of Samar where some of the most serious rebellions against Spanish and American rule began. The 1649-1650 Sumuroy Rebellion was partly motivated by the spectre of forced labour at the Cavite shipyard near Manila which would have divided households. The 1904-1907 Pulahan Rebellion in Samar, which re-energized parallel anti-American Pulahan movements in adjacent islands,<sup>284</sup> was in many ways caused by the devastating American retaliation to the Balangiga Attack on the entire island. Local accounts of the

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<sup>282</sup> The excesses were quickly condemned as not in keeping with the then immediate needs for survival, i.e., “steal[ing] things they didn’t need.” See Michael Villas, “Reflections of a bibliophile, post Haiyan,” in *Our Memory of Water* (Alunan 2016b), p. 54.

<sup>283</sup> Ibon Foundation, Inc., 2015. *Disaster upon Disaster: Lessons Beyond Yolanda*, Quezon City, Philippines: Ibon Foundation, Inc.; Alunan, M.M. ed., 2016. *Our Memory of Water: Words After Haiyan*. Ateneo de Naga University Press in collaboration with Leyte Normal University, University of the Philippines, Katig.

<sup>284</sup> Early 20th century Pulahan hotbeds such as the islands of Leyte, Cebu, and Bohol had also been sites of proselytization by Samareño *Dios-Dios* recruiters in the 1880s. See Borrinaga, G. E. R. (2009) The Pulahan Movement in Samar (1904-1907): Origins and Causes. *Journal of History* LV, 226-270. In addition to *fin de siècle* end-of-the-world fears that had shaped people’s perceptions of and responses to the Philippine Revolution (1896-1898) and the Philippine-American War (1899-1902), the subsequent Pulahan Movement in Leyte (1902-1907) was motivated in part by people’s desire to be reunited with dead ancestors, relatives, and carabao draft animals during a period of successive epidemics (e.g., cholera and rinderpest) from the late 1880s to the early 1900s. See Borrinaga, G.E.R., “Seven Churches: The Pulahan Movement in Leyte, 1902-1907,” 38, 91.

1901 attack on US garrison troops stationed at Balangiga, Samar, whilst soldiers ate breakfast on the morning of 28 September, blamed the American commanding officer's decision to detain around 80 of the town's menfolk for compulsory labour during a town clean-up drive as one of the main factors that triggered the event. This mass detention, along with the destruction of the stored rice grain of households, was perceived as endangering the physical and food security of the municipality and its households, prompting town leaders to plot the coordinated surprise attack with the help of several adjacent southern Samar communities with which it had close family and friendship ties.<sup>285</sup> As previously noted, *barrios* and small villages in Samar and Leyte were the most active social units in the Sumuroy Revolt, the Philippine Revolution, and the Pulahan Movement. In post-war Manila, migrant communities tolerated ethnically-divided street gangs because they provided a modicum of security to neighbourhoods that were likewise divided along ethnic lines (Jocano; Hollsteiner). Contemporary campaigns to make available more job opportunities in the country and the region are driven by similar fears of how forced separation brought about by overseas contractual labour are destroying the families of migrant labourers.<sup>286</sup> Before and after Typhoon Yolanda, concern for family unity likewise influenced decisions (often made by family matriarchs) to evacuate or stay (Shaw 2016).

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<sup>285</sup> Fernandez, OP, Pablo and Cantius K. Kobak, OFM, "The Bisayan Uprising of 1649-1650: A Mid-17th Century Account." *Philippiniana Sacra* XVIII: 52 (January-April 1983): 89-157; Bob Couttie, *Hang the Dogs: The True Tragic History of the Balangiga Massacre*. Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 2004; Rolando O. Borrinaga, *The Balangiga Conflict Revisited*. Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 2003. Linn, Brian McAllister. "The Pulahan Campaign: A Study in US Pacification." *War in History* 6, no. 1 (1999): 45-71.

<sup>286</sup> "According to the Commission on Overseas Filipinos, there are 10.4 million ethnic Filipinos living abroad. OFWs (Overseas Filipino Workers), according to the Philippine Statistical Authority in the 2013 survey estimate, number 2.3 million workers. They represent 22 percent, or roughly one-fifth of the overseas Filipinos...The rest of the OFWs come from the Visayan islands and Mindanao. But it should be noted that Eastern Visayas (dominated by Leyte and Samar) provide 9.4 percent of all OFWs.." <http://www.philstar.com/business/2016/02/10/1551398/ofws-who-they-are-where-they-work-and-what-they-do> (Accessed: 1 January 2018).

Subsequent surveys have highlighted the important role of translocal assistance between households linked through kinship and friendship in local responses to the typhoon. A 2015 survey found that relatives, friends, and neighbours were the earliest, quickest, and most continuous aid providers to typhoon survivors compared to other responders such as the local and national governments, INGOs/NGOs, people's organizations, church groups, and foreign governments.<sup>287</sup> Intra-village mutual protection and reciprocity, and assistance from family members and relatives separated by distance due to outmigration, also merged with the local logics behind outmigration and migrant return (see previous chapter) in addressing problems such as the slow arrival of rescue and retrieval units, food relief, and security forces in the difficult days after Typhoon Yolanda. An example is to be found in the following account by a refugee from Ormoc, Leyte who was interviewed in Manila:

"We've been here in Manila 5 days, [we're just saving money] so we could go back home. Our family back home is starving ... and this is what they are waiting for, the relief goods that we're bringing back to Leyte. They need our help. They need water, the water there is dirty, and we boil it because if we don't, the kids get sick. We've collected one sack [of goods]. We have a big family... but these are not just for our family. Our neighbors also need help, and in our neighborhood, we help each other. When we got [to Manila], we couldn't stop crying. We didn't expect to get so much love from people. When we got off the C-130, it's like my soul rose out of my body, people were applauding, they were so happy that we survived ... God really had plans for us. We received so many blessings to bring back home." (A farmer from Ormoc City, Leyte interviewed at the Pasay City Tent City in Manila)<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> IBON Foundation, Inc., *Disaster Upon Disaster: Lessons Beyond Yolanda* (2015), p. 41.

<sup>288</sup> Stephanie Valera and Eric Jankstrom, "'The Sea Washed it Away:' On the Ground After Typhoon Haiyan," *The Weather Channel*, (n.d.). Online: <http://stories.weather.com/story/8058> (Accessed: 10 December 2017).

Relief goods that were important for survival in the aftermath of the typhoon had replaced the luxury/status-conferring goods and gifts (or the *bula* captive slaves and captured *bahandi* heirloom wealth of pre-colonial times) that returning migrants (or returning slave raiders in the earlier era) shared with relatives and neighbours in ordinary times and for which they could be recognized as successful and divinely favoured with luck. Similar logics on migrant work also operated at the town level. The mayor of Dulag, Leyte, for example, sent family breadwinners to other regions unaffected by Yolanda so that they could earn and send money back to their families while Region VIII's economy was still recovering.<sup>289</sup>

### Resilience and Cultural Pride in Post-Yolanda Livelihood Activities

Under what terminology and ways was "resilience" demonstrated by Yolanda Survivors? This section will argue that local notions of resilience emphasized pride in local identities (represented by older labels such as Pintados) that represent local solidarities that were key to survival and to the recovery process that followed. Moreover, these labels continued to represent values such as *isog* (bravery/ferocity) that continued to be a core value for survival in a hazard-prone and conflict-ridden environment. Local equivalents to "resilience" continued to have pre-colonial roots in ancient war rituals whose meanings would re-emerge in people's new collective "victory" against Typhoon Yolanda. One local term counterpart to "resilience" is the word *kadasig*,<sup>290</sup> applied to a

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<sup>289</sup> The Weather Channel, "The Sea Washed it Away."

<sup>290</sup> Dictionary entries for *kadasig* and its root word, *dasig*, tell us something of the local meanings to resilience, including references to social relations and acts of solidarity that make such "resilience" possible:

- "*kadasig*, *n.* bravery, courage, intrepidity" (Makabenta and Makabenta 2004, p. 26)
- "*dasig*, *nadasig*, *adj.* proud" (Makabenta and Makabenta 2004, p. 46)
- dasig*, *arrimar* [*n.* come in, *v.* bring close, move up] (Sanchez 1711, 174b) [366/403]
- "*padasig*, *v.* encourage, support, back up" (Makabenta and Makabenta 2004, 104)

An ancient Bisayan cognate traceable back to Father Alcina's chronicle, the *padasig* ritual (Alcina [Part 1 Book 4 PDF, 103/192]), was conducted after a successful slave raiding expedition to "chant the victory," that is, to memorialise the important event in song as well as to seek the continued blessing of bravery (*isog*) from their ancestors who the ancient Bisayans believed

bracelet produced by *Kinamot nga Buhat* (lit., “handmade”), a group of Leyte-based women typhoon survivors who handcrafted ornamental wear such as bracelets, necklaces, scarves that helped promote “Waray” culture and identity to buyers from outside the region and country. A *kadasig* bracelet is described as,

“A solidarity piece that is solid and sturdy, just as how [F]ilipinos are resilient. Named after the Waray word that means ‘resilience’. Each purchase will help feed a child from the Kusina Ng Kalinga [Kitchen of Care] Project.” (*Kinamot nga Buhat: Artisan Jewelry from Leyte, Philippines* [PDF, no date].)

In seeking collective self-improvement for themselves and their families after surviving the typhoon, *Kinamot nga Buhat* partner-workers were thus promoting pride in their history and culture:

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had sent to them this important trait. These feats thus became the subject of epics in which the deeds of ancient Pintados/Bisayan warriors could still be chanted until Alcina’s time in the mid-17th century.

Alcina makes frequent mention of the “ancient songs” through which such chanted victories became part of a sort of oral archive. From such epic songs (*siday* and *kandu* [Scott 1994, p.98ff]) Father Alcina could reconstruct the feats of his Christian-Bisayan parishioners’ forebears in the years before his fellow missionaries helped put an end to the tradition of raiding. That Alcina could cite many such sources in his own written history suggests that they were still widely sung in the 17th century as a way of memorializing and thus immortalizing the “bravery and nobility” of the Bisayans’ “Pintados” ancestors (Gemelli Careri, 1700).

Within pre-colonial communities, another form of boasting was the individual display of tattoos done to gain recognition of personal fierceness (*isog*). Scott writes that, “Warfare itself was seen as a kind of initiation into manhood” and tattoos “were therefore required for public esteem by either sex...Not surprisingly, the Visayan vocabulary included terms like *kulmat*, to strut around showing off new tattoos, and *hundawas*, stripped to the waist for bravado” (Scott 1994, 20). If new terminology were to be applied to classify these warriors, then those covered all over with tattoos, including up to the face would have been the ultimate symbols of “resilience.” As Scott opined, “Indeed, those with tattoos right up to the eyelids constituted a Spartan elite. Such countenances were truly terrifying and no doubt intimidated enemies in battle as well as townmates at home. Men would be slow to challenge or antagonize a tough with such visible signs of physical fortitude.” (Scott 1994, 20. Italics in original.) On the other hand, “a tattooed man who was considered cowardly was compared to a *halo* lizard, a large black and yellow reptile ‘tattooed’ all over but extremely timid.” (Ibid.) Exempted from the male tattooing tradition were “celibate transvestites,” i.e. respected *asog* priests, who were “socially acceptable *mapuraw*, natural-colored.” (Ibid. Italics added.)

“Kinamot nga Buhat [lit., handmade] is a for-profit creative social enterprise that hopes to alleviate labor rights in Region 8 while producing pieces that Warays can be proud of.”<sup>291</sup>

Their jewelry lines were given names such as *The Haiyan Unity Series*, *Kadasig* (Resilience), *Sangkay* (Friend), and *Pintado* (bracelets with a “painted” or “tattooed” design with the name presumably derived from the *Pintados* identity label). Their flyer states that, “The construction of our pieces draw inspiration from the Waray culture, and hopefully will raise awareness about economic problems and bring about solutions to these problems.”<sup>292</sup> The entire *Kinamot nga Buhat* project itself can thus be seen as an example of how local notions of resilience operated. In displaying pride in their traditional culture and identity through their handicraft, the “partner-workers” (a label that emphasizes the cooperative character of their work) of *Kinamot nga Buhat* at the same time engaged in mutual help practices with friends (*sangkay*) to produce jewelry that could help them support the “children or grandchildren that they [we]re raising.”<sup>293</sup>

Those considered *sangkay* (friends) of *Kinamot nga Buhat* partner-workers included not just those involved in the production and distribution process (trainor/designer, retail/online store, corporate supporters or customers) but also those “who ha[d] helped with the Haiyan effort.” This suggests that by helping the “Warays” and local groups such as those brought together by the *Kinamot nga Buhat* project, aid workers had become an intimate part of local mutual help networks, both formal (neighbourhood associations, people’s organizations, professional organizations, etc.) and informal (“neighbors, friends, batchmates, relatives”), that were often linked by close family or

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<sup>291</sup> *Kinamot nga Buhat: Artisan Jewelry from Leyte, Philippines* [no date].

<sup>292</sup> Ibid.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

friendship ties (and to which people confided in coping with trauma from the typhoon). According to another study on post-Yolanda resilience and recovery:

"In Tacloban Barangays we spoke with members in general were in appreciation of the NGO presence...[I]nstitutional diagrams drawn by survivors in Tacloban and Palo...demonstrate the prominence of NGOs in the memory of survivors and gratitude with which their work has been received."<sup>294</sup>

In these diagrams, the national government and its agencies were often the furthest away from survivors' intimate circles. On the other hand, humanitarian agencies were to be found intermediately between the government and the village with its extended network of family and friends outside the village, and between individual survivors and the village council, the church, and the military.<sup>295</sup>

Mutual aid was an important factor that strengthened these new ties between communities and people's organizations on the one hand, and humanitarian and government agencies on the other. Old (pre-typhoon) and new (post-typhoon) associations (representing fisherfolk, typhoon-displaced communities, etc.) that received assistance from (I)NGOs often benefited from the seed capital they provided to fund new livelihood ventures. These groups also served as intermediaries between associations or small communities and higher officials or government agencies in seeking technical assistance, skills training, and better resettlement housing.<sup>296</sup> For mutual assistance, part of the

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<sup>294</sup> CENDEP with ActionAid Philippines, *Resilience and Recovery after Typhoon Haiyan* (2015), p.42. Online: <http://architecture.brookes.ac.uk/research/cendep/media/philippines-field-trip-report.pdf> (Accessed: 4 August 2017)

<sup>295</sup> *Resilience and Recovery after Typhoon Haiyan*, pp. 48-49. See also the drawing on p. 37 for an institutional diagram of the international response as experienced by the inhabitants of a Palo, Leyte village.

<sup>296</sup> Oxfam sa Pilipinas [Oxfam in the Philippines] 2016, p. 14. The leader of Tacloban City's largest fisherfolk organization ("composed of 50 fishers associations from 42 coastal

earnings from aid-funded livelihood projects, such as those from a new milkfish venture by a small fisherfolk association in Balangiga, Eastern Samar, were used to set up low-interest lending schemes for association members in most need (Oxfam sa Pilipinas [Oxfam in the Philippines] 2016, p. 9; Yee 2017). Those fighting exclusion from government recovery programs likewise practiced mutual help. A Tacloban community-based organization called *Kusog* (Strength), when not protesting against exclusionary local and national government relocation and aid policies, "facilitate[d] mutual aid among members in rebuilding houses, giving credit, and providing basic assistance" (Yee 2017, p. 9, note 68).<sup>297</sup>

For the partner-workers of *Kinamot nga Buhat* and other informal and formal people's organizations, "boasting" about their cultural identity and the help given by various *kasangkayan* was thus a way of displaying solidarity (*onong*) and expressing hope for better days as had been done before in past struggles against adversity. This discourse on past responses was carried on not only through history books and official commemorations, but also in songs and narratives (*susumaton*) passed on largely through oral tradition. This is especially true of the local dimensions of these responses that are little known in national accounts, although exemplary accounts could be transformed by official/written remembrances and rituals, and the values that propelled them joined by new infusions. These narratives of past struggles (whether against nature, people, or poverty) thus provided a level of familiarity to the adversity

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barangays") who led his own fisherfolk association that was then dealing with government policy to keep survivors away from newly declared coastal "danger zones," described the key role played by one aid agency in bridging the gap between communities and government in the recovery process: "Oxfam has been with us, walked with us when we were strengthening our organization, are negotiating on our permanent housing with authorities, and in finding real solutions with us. Oxfam brings us nearer to national government, so we speak with high officials, so they will hear us and act. If we just negotiate within our own localities, nothing will really happen. This is the biggest help Oxfam has been giving us ever since." (*Ibid.*)

<sup>297</sup> Dakila Kim P. Yee (2017): Constructing reconstruction, territorializing risk: imposing "no-build zones" in post-disaster reconstruction in Tacloban City, Philippines, *Critical Asian Studies* <https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2017.1407663> (Accessed: 7 December 2017)

brought about by Typhoon Yolanda that survivors placed in historical and cultural perspectives in their calls to mobilisation after the storm. Like past displays of unity for the fulfilment of hopes of conquest, salvation, independence, or luck, such displays were also intended for a supernatural audience with powers to reward, protect, and punish. Moreover, these memorialisations of unity were meant to serve as examples not only to outsiders but to future generations as well.

## Intergenerational Environmental Conservation

Various forms of identity-based solidarity also emerged in efforts that sought to inculcate an environmental mindset in younger generations and in activities that put into practice what turns out to be rediscovered ideas about the key role of the environment in the flourishing of small communities. These activities sought to harness cultural pride and communitarian values in group efforts that lay the groundwork for what survivors envision as an environmentally-friendly future that avoids a repeat of the suffering they endured in the aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda.

### *In Post-Yolanda Children's Book Narratives*

Typhoon Yolanda left such a lasting imprint in the minds of its survivors that subsequent cultural expressions were transformed by the event. The months and years after the typhoon saw an increase in ritual practices and literary/artistic expressions by typhoon survivors that served not only to memorialize the traumatic experience of the typhoon, including the erasure of the landscape and the loss of livelihood and loved ones, but which also endorsed steps to ensure that future generations never again experience a similar scale of suffering. Among these publications was a three-book series called the "*Gani* Children's Book Series"<sup>298</sup> and written, illustrated, and

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<sup>298</sup> In the books' back blurbs, *Gani* is defined as "a young sprout for planting." They further explain how, "In producing and publishing this series, the Leyte Normal University [for which the series was published] sows the seeds of memory and nurtures hope for genuine recovery [from Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda] of both land and its people."

translated by members of an association composed of Eastern Visayan writers, the KATIG (*Katig-uban han mga Magsusurat ha Sinirangan Bisayas*) Writers Network, whose members assisted each other with basic needs in the aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda.<sup>299</sup> At a time when the role of children's agency in disaster mitigation and management is increasingly recognized in humanitarian circles, these books represent early initiatives by the local academic and literary community in instilling environmentalism and disaster preparedness in the young. One primary goal was to nurture an environmental outlook in children and foster a communitarian identity through stories that, according to the rationale for the series, "[embody] the cultural tradition of the people of Ibabao and Kandaya" (old names for parts of Samar and Leyte):

"Above all, Amandiwing<sup>300</sup> Books hope to plant the love of reading in young children, that they grow to become aware of who they are, and their role in the greater community." (Back blurb)

One book in the series, *An Nagpabukid nga mga Barko* (The ships that climbed a mountain), tells the story of three anthropomorphized ships that were washed ashore during a strong typhoon after failing to heed the advice of a passing seagull to evacuate.<sup>301</sup> According to its writer, the story was meant to address the "hardheadedness" of people who refused to heed official warnings to evacuate before Typhoon Yolanda made landfall.<sup>302</sup> He saw this stubbornness as a "colonial hangover," a legacy of the colonial era when resistance against colonial authority became deeply ingrained in local culture and thus continues to shape people's ambivalent attitudes towards the national government and the advisories/directives of its agencies (*Ibid.*).

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<sup>299</sup> Phil Harold Mercurio, personal communication, 13 July 2016.

<sup>300</sup> Also the name of the tallest peak in Leyte and Eastern Visayas.

<sup>301</sup> Oyzon, V. Q., Claro, R. V., Ramos, F. J. T. (2015) *An Nagpabukid nga mga Barko*. Tacloban City, Philippines: Amandiwing Books. The names of the boats in the story are those of actual ships that were washed ashore by Typhoon Haiyan's storm surge.

<sup>302</sup> Voltaire Oyzon, personal communication.

A second volume, *An Pagbalhin ha Tagpuro* (The move to Tagpuro), tells the story of a family (the parents and two children) that survived the typhoon, beginning on the day they moved from a temporary tent shelter to a beautiful bungalow house in the safety of Tacloban City's interior.<sup>303</sup> Early the next morning, the mother and her teenage daughter goes to their front yard to plant a *panhuali* (root: *uli* [return/go home]) herb, one that, in rice planting rituals in Samar and Leyte, is among the "symbolic plants" a master of ceremonies first plants to express the wish that "diseases be driven away" (Arens, *Leyte-Samar Studies*, pp. 5-6). The mother tells the daughter,

*"Ini nga tanom magtatambal han mga kasakit nga aton gin-agian."*

"This plant will heal our pains away."<sup>304</sup>

In their new backyard, the father and son plant vegetables and fruits in a scene that promotes both self-sufficiency and food security. In a few pages, recovery of well-being and nourishment are presented as precious rewards in the practice of planting. For this family of Yolanda survivors, their new home and their shared practice of obtaining healing and nourishment from the land through planting helped actualize their hopes of better days (*adlaw*) to come.

In a third book from the series, *An Kamiyapian ha Kataisan* (The Mangroves in *Kataisan* [Pointed Peninsula]), the practice of planting is further portrayed as the best means of insuring future protection against the storm surges that caused the most death and destruction during Typhoon Yolanda.<sup>305</sup> In a scene depicting a storytelling session between a grandmother and granddaughter about the formerly mangrove-covered peninsula that had traditionally

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<sup>303</sup> Ramos, F. J. T. and Gaspay, J. G. (2015) *An Pagbalhin ha Tagpuro*. Tacloban City, Philippines: Amandiwing Books.

<sup>304</sup> Alternatively: This plant will heal the pains that we have been through.

<sup>305</sup> Salvacion, J. C. B., Paete, M., and Villas, M. C. C. (2015) *An Kamiyapian ha Kataisan* [The Mangroves of *Kataisan*]. Tacloban City, Philippines: Amandiwing Books.

protected Tacloban from tidal waves, local history and folklore combine to tell of the dangers of environmental degradation and the importance of rehabilitation. Its few pages also manages to address some key debates that emerged after the typhoon. In a passage that introduces one of the suggested vernacular terms (*dulok*) for “storm surge”<sup>306</sup> as well as puts emphasis on the importance of natural barriers to such hazards,<sup>307</sup> the fictional grandmother tells her granddaughter,

*“Ginpupusak han kamiyapian an lapdos<sup>308</sup> han dulok. Salit, Sabel, pirmi panumdum.”*

Mangroves break the strength [or whip] of the storm surge. So, Sabel, always remember.<sup>309</sup>

The book thus provides a reminder of the importance of mutual protection between people and trees such as mangroves. The story also highlights the important role of women as culture-bearers and decision-makers in local society.<sup>310</sup> Overall, the book series serves as an example of the combination of

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<sup>306</sup> After the storm, Philippine-based scientists and scholars engaged in a debate to find vernacular alternatives to the term “storm surge,” whose incomprehensibility before Typhoon Yolanda was cited by many as a reason not to evacuate, that could be used in future weather forecasts and advisories (Go 2016).

<sup>307</sup> Controversy also revolved around proposals to build man-made structures that could protect coastal areas from future storm surges (Yee 2017). See also *Sights and Sounds of the Surge* on the argument for the effectivity of natural barriers such as mangroves over concrete barriers or embankments in preventing future disasters.

<sup>308</sup> “lapdos. *n.* a whip.” (Makabenta and Makabenta 2004, 72)

<sup>309</sup> Salvacion, Paete, and Villas, *An Kamiyapian ha Kataisan*.

<sup>310</sup> Go, F. S. (1979) Mothers, Maids and the Creatures of the Night: The Persistence of Philippine Folk Religion. *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, 7(3), 186-203. Nurge, E. (1965) *Life in a Leyte village*. Seattle: University of Washington Press. For a pre-Yolanda example of mothers training their children to be environmental stewards, see the case of the *Young Innovators for Social and Environmental Development Association* (YISED, Inc.), an agroforestry people’s organization based in Sitio Canlugoc in Barangay Lanao, Maasin City, Southern Leyte: “In the community, mothers grow seeds and teach their children how to care for a seedling. The children are taught early on that the forest is part of the community and not just a source of timber...This is a way of instilling stewardship in the children, [said a member of the organization].” Lerma, R. (2011) “Southern Leyte farmers show how to manage forests,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 25 September 2011. Available online: <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/64575/southern-leyte-farmers-show-how-to-manage-forests>

older and newer forms of storytelling: the older *susumaton* oral tradition continued through the medium of Western-influenced text-based storybooks in telling cautionary tales and promoting environmentally mindful attitudes and behaviour. They join various other local narratives pointing to overconfidence in one's self (*kumpyansa*) in facing natural hazards, a lack of concern for the environment in the face of climate change, and declining faith as primary sources of danger to community and family safety, well-being, and continuity (Alegre 2015, Alunan 2016, Letaba 2016). To address such self-inflicted vulnerabilities, the books promote risk awareness and a more nurturing attitude towards the environment as the best insurance against future calamity.<sup>311</sup>

In addition to children's fiction which depicted faults in the preparation for the storm and suggested steps for recovery and disaster mitigation, there was also a proliferation of testimonial coffee table books meant to register the voices of "Ground Zero" survivors, artists, writers, poets, and ordinary civilians. These constitute a collection of transcribed *susumaton* about people's experiences of the typhoon. What these volumes had in common was a strong desire to gather and collect as much local perspectives as possible from "Ground Zero" or "Yolanda" survivors (Interview with Prof. Alegre) and to register urgent calls to action to mitigate or prevent future calamities in memory of those who died, to repay those who helped, and for the sake of future generations. In the book launch for the most recent volume of these collections, the editor spoke of how, "This book is like that lit candle, an act of love for our home. But *Our Memory of Water* is more than an act of love, it also means to show us what we must become. As a people, as a city that had suffered ignominiously the effects

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(Accessed: 27 October 2017). For a semi-fictional account depicting the role of women as decision-makers before and after Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda, see Shaw (2016).

<sup>311</sup> The books series' hybrid form of text-based, bi-lingual narrative went hand-in-hand with the reworking of older musical forms. That popular folk songs (e.g., *Akasya*, *An Iroy nga Tuna*, etc.) have taken on new meanings after Yolanda suggests that what is arguably one of the last remnants of the pre-colonial practice of sung history lessons will continue to be perpetuated through both old (face-to-face interactions) and new (social media) means of transmission and in response to new events.

of climate change, we must become, both personally and politically, a people fighting for the environment, for clean air and water, for the health of our forests and our oceans, for the land. We owe this to the world. But more than this, we owe it to our children. Because we love our children and all children to come, and we love this planet which is the only home we will ever have as long as we live."<sup>312</sup>

These remarks served as a call to unity and self-transformation in order to become stewards of the environment after experiencing the worst effects of its neglect, to pay back the rest of the world for its help, and leave behind a safe and healthy environment for future generations. Overall, the above-described books serve to memorialize the lessons from the typhoon and promote the need for environmental conservation through tropes that reflect local notions of solidarity and cooperation.

### *In Post-Yolanda Practice*

Post-typhoon conservation initiatives have begun to put into practice the environmental ethos promoted in these books. The people involved in post-typhoon conservation projects express similar ideas of intergenerational solidarity and mutual help in attempting to win over cooperation from fellow community members and the wider public. One type of project in Yolanda-affected coastal communities involve attempts to replant mangroves or rehabilitate those affected by Haiyan/Yolanda's strong winds and storm surges. In the aftermath of Haiyan/Yolanda, conversations and initiatives about the conservation of coastal mangrove forests were rejuvenated by the international response to the typhoon and the arrival of international and national agencies and NGOs offering support for affected communities. However, the state of the Philippines' mangrove forests makes the task of conservation a difficult one owing to years of development and environmental

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<sup>312</sup> Alunan, M. (2017). "Because we love our home," Editor's message during the launch of "Our Memory of Water: Voices After Haiyan," Feb 27, 2017, Tacloban City, Philippines. Online: <https://www.facebook.com/malunan1/posts/10155963915233009> (Accessed: 9 January 2019)

degradation. According to one report, "Rough estimates show more than 70 percent of the country's original mangrove forests were destroyed between 1918 and 1994. Many were replaced with fishponds, resorts and other kinds of coastal development."<sup>313</sup>

In addition to Haiyan/Yolanda-related examples of their capacity to withstand natural hazards such as storm surges and protect nearby coastal villages, mangroves have long served as important symbols and means of safety and security in the archipelago. Traditional polities in maritime Southeast Asia were often hidden some distance inland from the mouths of mangrove-laden rivers ("dense swamp forest") to prevent easy detection by potential raiders.<sup>314</sup> In Samar and Leyte, the Spanish-contact counterparts of the present-day town centres (which continue to be situated further up river mouths?) of such municipalities as Palo (Leyte) and Basey (Samar) were likewise hidden in similar locations (Chirino; Gaspar de San Agustin). Around the turn of the 20th century when various prophets predicted a revolution and deluge that were about to engulf the archipelago after the outbreak of cholera in the early 1880s, mangrove forests, like banyan (*nunok, baliti, dakit*) trees<sup>315</sup> that according to local folklore serve as facades or portals to the unseen world, seem to have been seen by *Dios-Dios* millenarian sectarians of the late 19th century as gateways towards prophesied magical cities (e.g., Barrio Bonga in Tarangnan,

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<sup>313</sup> Holtz, M. (2013) Saved by the Mangroves? A Philippine town dodges Haiyan's storm surge. *The World*, 29 November, Available online: <https://www.pri.org/stories/2013-11-29/saved-mangroves-philippine-town-dodges-haiyans-storm-surge>.

<sup>314</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya, "Cash Cropping and Upstream-Downstream Tensions: The Case of Jambi in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," p. 97.

<sup>315</sup> According to contemporary folklore, such trees are the mansions of unseen people (*encantos*) to which unwitting passersby (in many folktales these are represented by itinerant Boholano vendors) could be lured and pranked or tricked into staying through offers of food. See various papers in Beyer Ethnographic Collection, Philippine National Library. At the Spanish contact, Kobak (2002, *Ancient Bisayan Religion*) argues that, as portals to the spirit world, these trees were "living temples" that served as a counterpart to the stone temples (e.g. Borobudur, Angkor Wat, etc.) of nearby Southeast Asian societies. Around them were performed some of the most important rituals of the community.

Samar?) in which they would be safe from the cataclysm prophesied by local healers. Today, the legendary city of *Biringan*, an enchanted and ultra-modern city inhabited by *encantos* (unseen beings) occasionally visible to humans, is believed to be centered along the coast of the municipality of Pagsanghan (root: *sanga* or branch) near areas where *Dios-Dios* sectarians had converged in anticipation of the appearance of magical cities in the 1880s.<sup>316</sup> The coastal areas of this municipality are covered primarily by a mangrove forest that lines the branching system of smaller rivers connecting the Gandara River to the Samar Sea.

Tales about a similar city on the opposite coast of Samar facing the Pacific Ocean are also recounted in a Tagalog/Filipino language pamphlet authored by the leader of a local sect called ASKME that had had a “widespread mission in the Samar/Leyte Region” since 1986.<sup>317</sup> In accounts that the pamphlet states were gathered around Eastern Samar from the late 1980s until the mid-1990s, people from around Samar had told sectarian missionaries from Luzon folktales about the Balangiga Massacre and Homonhon Island’s “secrets.” Homonhon Island is known in history books as the first island in the Philippines where the explorer Ferdinand Magellan and members of his expedition first set foot. But in folklore gathered by Father Alcina in the 17th century it was also feared and avoided for being the abode of Makapatag, the Bisayan war god whose name meant “the great equalizer/leveller,” and an island that also hid an enchanted village, as recounted in one of the earliest accounts of mysterious sightings in the Philippines.<sup>318</sup> Stories from 1990s Samar also included those about an

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<sup>316</sup> Pity (*awa*) for the plight of a person has been cited as one condition for the *encantos*’ (enchanted beings) bringing of humans into their world, a sentiment which the difficult post-epidemic conditions of the 1880s would have occasioned (Mel and Joey documentary, GMA News).

<sup>317</sup> Evangelista, Arturo R. (n.d.) *LUPA NG ARAW TUKLAS NA LIHIM NI RIZAL Tomo 1: Mula sa kadulu-duluhang Silangan ng Samar hanggang pinakamayong Kanluran* [Land of the Sun The Discovered Secret of Rizal Volume 1: From the extreme edge of Eastern Samar to the furthest reaches of the West]. Baliwag, Bulacan, Philippines: ASKME Books.

<sup>318</sup> Alcina writes: “We may still add this: they were sailing toward that island [Homonhon] and nearing it, they were able to see the town, the houses and people, but upon arriving there they

enchanted city called "Araw City" (from the Tagalog/Filipino word for the sun, *araw*) found along the mangrove-laden Pacific Coast of northeastern Samar whose sighting had caused the beaching of various ships whose wrecks were still visible besides islets that line the coast of the Samar mainland. Bringing to mind the fortified city of Samariño that after the 1882-1883 cholera epidemic was prophesied to appear shortly before a "revolution" against Spain that was to start in Manila and Cebu around 1887-1888, local folklore had carried on the narrative of a seemingly "unfinished revolution" (Ileto 1998) still awaiting its fulfilment and for which the environmental spirits and ancestor-giants of the spirit world were still willing to provide assistance and solidarity:

[Facing the Pacific was] a big cannon with a man's very large shoe beside it. The people of the Land of the Sun they said were just waiting for a signal to fight the enemy. Because of the length of time in waiting and preparing, the front part of the cannon had been overgrown by a banyan tree (*balete*) and the place overrun by venomous insects. Meanwhile, the (enchanted?) inhabitants of the Island of Sun City (*Isla ng Araw City*) worked silently or without talking in preparing for a widespread world war...The cannon's form could still be seen in that part of Gamay [in the northeastern coast of Samar]...[and on the ground was] left a footprint where the shoe had been.<sup>319</sup>

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were unable to find anything. It is for these reasons that the Spaniards call it 'Isla Encandada.'" (Alcina, *Historia de las Islas e Indios de Bisayas*...1668, Part II, Book 3, Chapter 25).

<sup>319</sup> Evangelista, A[r]turo. R. (n.d.) *Lupa ng Araw Tuklas na Lihim ni Rizal*...That this unnamed "enemy" continued to refer to the Philippines' former Euro-American colonizers becomes obvious in the rest of Evangelista's text. In a narrative reminiscent of both millennial and nationalist narratives of the late 19th century and the hybrid millennial/nationalist discourse in Martial Law-period Samar discussed in Chapter 2, the tract continues with a discussion that mainly condemns a declining West ("to fall; to set [as of the sun]," "occidentalists," "Westerners") that continued to oppress and colonise the Filipino (*Pilipino/Pinoy*) mind. This prevented them from discovering their illustrious and ascendant Oriental ("orientalist," "Easterner") identity that was like a pearl of great luster or the rising morning sun (hence, the elusive *Araw City*, a "shining City in the Pacific" found in Samar, as a metaphor for the Philippines). As the pamphlet points out, this was a "secret vision" (or "discovered treasure") of a "new nation" that was first discovered by Dr. Jose Rizal and encoded in his writings. But Rizal's discovered secret still awaited discovery by his people at the right hour and with the right generation. It was Evangelista's and his religious organization's aim to help bring about

In Leyte, similar tales are told about the presence of an invisible city in Barugo municipality's *Tago-rabong* (Hidden Forest), a mangrove forest on the outskirts of a town that drew a large following for the *Dios-Dios* Movement of the late 19th century (see Chapter 2). Situated between Carigara (Leyte's ancient capital) and Barugo, the area is still the subject of folktales about strange disappearances of noisy and disrespectful visitors, an occasionally visible enchanted city with trade links with Manila, and visits from car dealers from the capital seeking payment for a car loan supposedly made by a long-dead caretaker (Alunan 2016a).

Belief in the intervention of the spirit world in epidemics such as cholera outbreaks in the 1880s and the early 1900s as well as its retaliation for pollution remained in folklore recorded in the 1950s Jaro, Leyte (where a *Dios-Dios* commune had been established in the Amandiwing mountain range in the 1880s). Informants told of how an "[epi]demic was caused by unseen devils who were getting people to inhabit another world. The dead during an epidemic [wa]s taken to an unknown life after death."<sup>320</sup> However, the seeking of this enchanted world as many *Dios-Dios* supporters had done in the difficult post-cholera years of the 1880s had by the 1950s seemingly lost its appeal: "A saint, San Roque[,] was believed to be the savior of the people from an ep[i]demic so there was a need of a novena coupled with a procession. A quack [doctor] was another means of saving a person who was sick. The queer person performs encantations to deliver the sick from the power of encantados." (*Ibid.*) Spirit world retribution for pollution, just like how Typhoon Yolanda's storm surges were later regarded as retaliation for people's polluting

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this national awakening. The similarity of their narrative of collective self-discovery in the face of the historical amnesia brought about by Western colonial rule with that of the writings of some post-colonial nationalist historians, who attributed some of contemporary Philippine society's ills to a lingering "colonial mentality," suggests a common lineage in Rizal's writings that sectarian pamphleteers and nationalist historians both cite in their texts. See Renato Constantino's *The Miseducation of the Filipino*.

<sup>320</sup> Barrio Hiagsam, Jaro, Leyte, *Historical Data Papers*, Philippine National Library, 1952-1953, p. 6.

of the oceans, is likewise suggested in how, "Putting garbage over a passage of water or brooks causes the people around to get sick." (*Ibid.*)

It was these traditionally enchanted environments (upland virgin forests and coastal mangrove forests), degraded by gradual disenchantment and the survival needs of impoverished farmers, that disaster-affected communities now sought to rehabilitate or conserve. In Tacloban City's San Jose district, the subject of *Kamiyapian ha Kataisan's* story of environmental degradation and rehabilitation, local officials and the leaders of people's organizations in the actual villages left devastated by the typhoon announced plans to plant mangroves and Talisay trees that would not only protect their communities but also provide livelihood opportunities for its people. They lamented, however, the lack of government action on legislation and ordinances that would have made these visions a reality even before the typhoon hit but expressed hope that the influx of material aid and expert knowledge in the aftermath of the typhoon would bring these hopes to fruition.<sup>321</sup>

Finding the *miyapi* (*Avicennia marina*) species (along with the *pagatpat* [*Sonneratia alba*] species) to be "more resistant to storm surges," it was decided to plant around 3,000 seedlings of this variety for the initial batch to be planted.<sup>322</sup> By early 2016, a multi-sectoral mangrove reforestation activity was conducted at Barangay 83-Paraiso of the city's San Jose district, the site of a mangrove forest that had almost totally been wiped out by Typhoon Yolanda's storm surge. Senior citizens, college students (NSTP program), local government and NGOs, along with Japanese experts with specialist knowledge on mangroves, banded together for the "first people-initiated

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<sup>321</sup> "Revive Tacloban's mangroves," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 23 June 2014. Online: <http://opinion.inquirer.net/75866/revive-taclobans-mangroves>

<sup>322</sup> "Tacloban community embarks on massive mangrove reforestation," *Sun Star Philippines*, 15 February 2017. Online: <http://www.sunstar.com.ph/tacloban/local-news/2017/02/15/tacloban-community-embarks-massive-mangrove-reforestation-525916>

project” in the city “that [wa]s supported by private organizations.” A Tacloban pro-environment advocate, who gave a speech at the tree-planting event, likened the trees to children who are obliged to help their parents in their later years in return for the years of nurturing and protection the latter had provided them:

“Just like your children, once these mangroves are fully grown, they will pay you back by enriching our marine life and protecting us from future disaster[s] caused by climate change...”<sup>323</sup>

Taking as their models other municipalities that had earlier developed their own mangrove conservation projects for eco-tourism and educational trips (Earlier Examples: Lavezares, Samar; Palompon, Leyte; etc.), Paraiso’s village chief hoped that their own example could be followed by other Tacloban coastal villages: “We hope that this will not only be done here in Paraiso, but also by other villages that surround Cancabato Bay...”<sup>324</sup> A year later, the president of the association that oversaw the project along with two army battalions and the local senior citizens’ organization, renewed his call to “neighbors and residents in nearby villages to help in protecting the mangrove forest” after learning about the accidental uprooting by some fishermen of some of the seedlings planted in February 2016:

“We are asking for their cooperation because what we have been doing is not only for us, but for the future of our children...”<sup>325</sup>

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<sup>323</sup> “In San Jose district – Mangroves planted as storm surge protection,” *Leyte-Samar Daily Express*, February 13, 2016, Online: <http://www.leytesamardailynews.com/in-san-jose-district-mangroves-planted-as-storm-surge-protection/> (Accessed: 29 December 2017)

<sup>324</sup> “Tacloban mangrove reforestation eyed for tourism development,” *Bayanihan*, 16 February 2016. Online: <http://bayanihan.org/2016/02/16/tacloban-mangrove-reforestation-eyed-for-tourism-development/>

<sup>325</sup> “Tacloban community embarks on massive mangrove reforestation,” *Sun Star Philippines*, 15 February 2017. Online: <http://www.sunstar.com.ph/tacloban/local-news/2017/02/15/tacloban-community-embarks-massive-mangrove-reforestation-525916>

What the above examples have shown is that, when faced with new cataclysmic *lunop* (deluge) brought about by Typhoon Yolanda, or even with earlier flooding disasters that were as devastating to lives and livelihood, it was local communities with active leaders that initiated moves to conserve and rehabilitate their environment. In their aim of fortifying coastal and upland villages with protective and livelihood-providing trees, local initiatives to conserve or rehabilitate mangroves and reforest mountains had retained some of the logic of the region's past social movements where mutual protection and cooperative effort (with the help of sympathetic outsiders and nations,<sup>326</sup> as well as the spirit world) would, after enduring a period of adversity seen as a test of people's unity, provide security from outside dangers and prosperity for them and future generations. Hence, the need to "display" or "boast" about their unity to elicit both human and supernatural support.

## IDENTITY-BASED 'RISE AND FIGHT' DISCOURSES

In the aftermath of Yolanda, various tropes emerged that called on solidarity and strength to rally people to action. These discourses invoked older and sub-national identifications whose imagery and symbolism had been ingrained in popular consciousness but which had to be remade to face a new crisis. These narratives promoted valued cultural traits and exemplary group models that were necessary for survival from the typhoon's devastation.

### *Pintados* Warrior Identification

Post-typhoon narratives highlighted *isog* (ferocity) as a valued trait handed down across generations in struggling against human adversaries, and now in the struggle against nature-caused adversity.<sup>327</sup> A Facebook public group initially called "Bulig Leyte" (Help Leyte) and later renamed "Tingog Leyte"

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<sup>326</sup> Cf. prophesied German help for the *Dios-Dios* or rumoured Japanese help to the Katipunan secret society during the revolutionary period and actual help from various individuals, agencies, and nations in the aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda.

<sup>327</sup> As seen in Chapter 1, the *isog* trait had also been ascribed to the *Pintados* label originally used by the Spaniards to identify the people of Bisayas.

(Voice of Leyte) placed emphasis on this trait in its English-language group description:

“Our island has always fought storms since the beginning of time. Now we will engage again. No disaster will bring us to our knees. We are the sons and daughters of the Pintados, fierce and brave warriors who will never give up. Rise sons and daughters of the motherland, rise ! Time to fight back. Let us use this page to inform, help and coordinate our efforts to take back Leyte and Tacloban from hopelessness.”

This call to action combines the themes of *isog*, lineage, and fighting back for an intimate landscape (motherland) against a new adversary (the climatic storm Yolanda in place of colonial storms) in appealing to a common ancestry and birthplace to mobilise those who shared in these identifications. Post-typhoon accounts, like those of the women of Palo, Leyte, likewise attributed people’s survival to what Go (2016; 2017) calls an “ancient ferocity” which allowed them to withstand the storm’s aftermath. Moreover, a Facebook post from the typhoon’s second anniversary links this characteristic not only to survival from Typhoon Yolanda but to other storms that have come and gone:

“It mga Waraynon mag-isog amu bis pa pira ka-bagyo it umabot, matindog kita dayun. ... #RememberingYolanda.”<sup>328</sup>

The Waray people are fierce, that is why no matter how many typhoons come, we rise up immediately. ... #RememberingYolanda.

The ascription of the *isog* (ferocity/bravery) trait with group labels might have preceded that of its association with the *Pintados* and *Waraynon* labels. After Christian conversion in the early Spanish period, for instance, the people of *Ibabao* (the Spanish-contact name for the coastal areas of Samar Island facing the Pacific Ocean) continued to distinguish their region and themselves from

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<sup>328</sup> Johnny Pusong, “We suffered, lived and survived.” 8 November 2015. Available online: <https://www.facebook.com/JohnnyPusongOFFICIAL/photos/it-mga-waraynon-mag-isog-amu-b-is-pa-pira-ka-bagyo-it-umabot-matindog-kita-dayun-/1640343022893602/> (Accessed: 30/11/2018).

people of the opposite coast not only through their geographic orientation to the latter (Ibabaw means “above” or “on top of” in Bisayan [Tramp 1995]) but also through their self-ascribed ferocity (*isug*) as opposed to their neighbouring “other.” Writing in the 17th century, Father Alcina wrote the following about early Spanish-period “identity politics” in the Visayas and the war cry used by people in Samar’s Pacific coast (*Ibabao*) when faced with that period’s dangers which is similar to the deployment of the “Waray Ako” slogan (see Waraynon section below) against Typhoon Yolanda:

“[A]ccording to their ancient adage, the natives of Samar [today’s Province of (western) Samar] were regarded as cowardly and of little manliness. Thus went the adage: Pipira an isug sa Samar? [*How many fierce (persons) does Samar have?*] which means to say in our language: ‘Count the men of bravery in Samar and you will find so few that they do not amount to one, because you will not find any.’<sup>329</sup> Although today [c.1668] they hear this reluctantly, those of other regions do not stop repeating it, especially those of Ibabaw. This is on the east coast of the same island [in what are now the provinces of Northern Samar and Eastern Samar], as we have said. Both of these [Ibabao and Samar?] were considered as brave and feared in their antiquity [among people in adjacent islands?]. Even today, when the occasion offers itself [e.g., when defending themselves against Moro slave raids?], they are prone to say among themselves, to encourage one another: “Ibabaw kita!” [*We are Ibabao!*] This means to say: “Remember friends, that we are the people of Ibabaw!” It is the same as saying that they should not weaken or decline in their ancient valor and bravery of their forebears. It is certain that they demonstrated much more than was expected of them in an uprising [1649-1650 Sumuroy Rebellion] that they instigated in the years after they had become Christians.”<sup>330</sup>

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<sup>329</sup> The answer to this rhetorical question thus seems to have been either a terse “Waray” (None) or “Waray bisan usa” (None, not even one.).

<sup>330</sup> Alcina 1668, Part 1 Book 4 [101-102/192]

It was thus this “cultural trait” of *isog* fierceness that seemed to have been primarily associated with post-Yolanda “resilience.” As Jeff Manibay, Tacloban-based broadcaster and head of One Tacloban (NGO and news network) observed: “I realized that because of the collective tragedy, our trait of being *matapang* [fierce] was transformed into what they now call resilience.” The transformation from “isog” to “resilience” was also accompanied by the emergence of a new category of person, the “Yolanda Survivor,” which became synonymous with the “Waray” or “Waraynon” not only in the Eastern Visayas, but throughout the Philippines (Jessica Soho documentary).

### *Pilipinhon* Guerrilla Analogies

Parallels were also made with past anti-colonial movements that had unified people against foreign powers such as the Spanish, Americans, and Japanese. As discussed in Chapter 3, local social movements that had resisted colonial rule eventually assimilated a Filipino identification after it was introduced to the region by nationalists from Luzon Island at the turn of the 20th century. In the new struggle against the devastation brought about by Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda, the memories of these past resistance movements would be invoked to remind people of their forebears’ more prolonged resistance against past adversities such as colonial oppression. This was the message that the Tacloban artist Cesar Cayanong sought to convey through a billboard he set up in the first few days after the typhoon. Its final version reads thus:

We fought (back) during WW2..

We survived!

For this mere Yolanda

do you run (away)?

Stand up, Leyte!

Stand up, Tacloban!”

Cayanong was making a historical reference to the guerrilla movement which laid the groundwork for the liberation of the Philippines from Japanese rule

during World War II (see Chapter 2 and 3). This historical period would have been the most familiar years of hardship to which Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda's aftermath could be compared by typhoon survivors. In the original version of the text he had planned to write, Cayanong makes no direct reference to the World War II resistance movement but instead (with some artistic adjustments) references centuries of colonial rule which preceded the new crisis represented by Yolanda. Had less of print artist Cesar Cayanong's paint been washed away by Yolanda's storm surge, which compelled him to abbreviate his analogy to the struggle against Japanese, the following message would have constituted the full text for his makeshift billboard:

400 years under the Spaniards  
40 years under the Americans  
4 years under the Japanese  
and 4 hours of [Typhoon] Yolanda...  
For this do you run (away)?  
Stand up, Leyte!  
Stand up, Tacloban!<sup>331</sup>



Figure 10. Cesar Cayanong's billboards  
(Photo by Frederick R. Borrinaga, 16 November 2013)

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<sup>331</sup> Interview with Cesar Cayanong, 2014, Tacloban City.

Had circumstances allowed for the display of Cayanong's fuller heroic "emplotment,"<sup>332</sup> people attuned to local history and culture would have understood its broader scope which likened the typhoon to the metaphorical storms of the colonial past that their ancestors had weathered and whose hopes of selfhood for future generations had since been realised, although not necessarily completely. As discussed in Chapter 2, the anti-Japanese resistance had drawn inspiration from earlier anti-colonial movements. Instead of facing another group of colonizers, however, Cayanong was representing the typhoon as a new adversary against which people were to fight back against after being dealt with what another commentator called a "tremendous defeat" (*dako nga kapirdihan*). In contrasting pride in what their forebears achieved (e.g., survival under presumably greater and long-drawn difficulties and pains) in past decades and centuries and which could again be achieved in the present through mutual help, and the potential shame (*awod*) in escaping and failing to fulfil one's obligation to help the community in rising and recovering from this new challenge,<sup>333</sup> Cayanong drew together localised conceptions of history, dignity, and self-worth to remind survivors of their historical identity and their ties and obligations to the community.

Cayanong's code-switching into English in the text of his second billboard, "The Eyes of the World is [sic] on Us, Relax...but Don't Quit," further suggests that practicing historically-based resilience was as much a performance for

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<sup>332</sup> Neil Genzlinger, "Hayden White, Who Explored How History Is Made, Dies at 89," *New York Times*, Online:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/09/obituaries/hayden-white-who-explored-how-history-is-made-dies-at-89.html> (Accessed: 18 March 2018)

<sup>333</sup> E.g. stories that later circulated in Tacloban City, Leyte in the immediate aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda of middle class families from the city's relatively less affected neighbourhoods making their way to metropolitan Cebu City and strolling (*pasyada, sudoy*) around its malls, with the implicit assumption that many more families who did not have the means to do so had to endure immense hardship and suffering from the typhoon's devastation and the problems in the recovery and relief operations and fear of rumoured house-to-house looters. A common trope in subsequent narratives about the typhoon point to how many locals who had gone away during the most critical days and months after the disaster (due to lack of food, medicine, supplies, etc.) eventually came back to resettle in the city and find some way of atoning (*bawi*) for their absence from the community, or at least to just share in the hardships (*kakurian*) still being experienced by the collective. (Author's personal observations)

outsiders to the community of *Waray*-language speakers as it was an attempt to live up to ancestral expectations.<sup>334</sup> What is suggested in pointing out an external audience (i.e., “the world”) to post-typhoon actions was what the anthropologist Michelle Rosaldo referred to as the “threat of circumstance or activity to undermine an ideal presentation of the self” (p. 136),<sup>335</sup> in this case *Waray* self-conceptions of their ancestor-bestowed ferocity or bravery (*isog*) and their reputation (popularized by depictions such as those found in the 1954 film *Waray-Waray* film and its theme song) for “not backing down from a fight” (see Chapter 3), and thus of the shameful prospect of being labelled as cowards for running away from the storm’s blow.<sup>336</sup>

This metaphorical comparison of the local response to the typhoon to a test of endurance and strength was further elaborated in a subsequent billboard Cayanong made some days later (painted on top of his earlier texts) and before a boxing match featuring internationally-renowned Filipino boxing champion Manny Pacquiao, which he captioned in a mixture of English and Tagalog/Filipino with “We will win this fight...*Laban* [Fight] Tacloban! *Laban* [Fight] Pacquiao!” The images of folkloric (e.g., *daragangan*<sup>337</sup> heroes), cinematic (e.g., the toughie heroine of the 1954 film), and historic (e.g., WW2

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<sup>334</sup> Go, Chaya Ocampo. *Kababayan-an han Karak-an (Women of Storm Surges): A Feminist Ethnographic Research on Waray Women Survivors of Super Typhoon Yolanda*. Diss. University of British Columbia, 2016 <http://hdl.handle.net/2429/57666> (Accessed: 18 March 2018); Go, Chaya Ocampo. “Women of Storm Surges: Meaning Making as Cultural Process of Social Repair for Yolanda Survivors.” *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints* 65.2 (2017): 227-256.

<sup>335</sup> Rosaldo, Michelle Z. (1983) “The Shame of Headhunters and the Autonomy of Self,” *Ethos* 11.3: 135-151.

<sup>336</sup> cf. *halo* lizard metaphor for tattooed but timid pre-colonial warriors (Scott 1994, p. 20)

<sup>337</sup> According to Fr, Alcina (1668, Part 1, Book 4, p. 105): “The men, especially powerful in strength or in spirit or bravery, they call *daragangan* in their language; this means to say: ‘he who can do much or to whom has been given great courage [i.e., *isog*].’ The greatest praise that they have is to say, ‘So-and-so was or is *daragangan*’ by which they distinguish him as exceptional in strength and bravery.” The word appears in an entry for *Daragangan nga tavo* (*daragangan* person) in Fr. Sanchez’s dictionary (1711, p. 173): “Ligero y de grandes fuerzas [Spanish: Light and strong forces], an *cadaragangan niya yadro* [*Waray*: (a person’s) being strong/agile in times past].” Father Kobak (no date) translates the dictionary entry thus: “A slight, agile individual who is swift and has great strength.”

guerrilla) warriors that the first sentence could have evoked in the people of Tacloban is joined by the image of a celebrated Mindanao-born athlete whose own success in his sport he has attributed to the *tapang* (ferocity/bravery) he inherited from his *Waray* mother. If we are to assume that similar ideas of shame and pride operated in the events that Cayanong had planned to mention as historical precedents to the resistance to Yolanda, then the repercussions of failure (i.e., not helping/running away) could reflect negatively not only on the memory of their ancestors, or on outsider perceptions of their character as a people, but also on how they could potentially be remembered as role models for generations to come.

### Shame and Pride in the Philippine-American War

A historical parallel to this example-setting process comes from the revolutionary period in the region and the locally-divisive impact of American military intervention in the nationalist movement to throw off the Spanish yoke. Cayanong's message of the importance of collective resistance (*pag-ato*) against Yolanda's devastation is mirrored in a letter dated 29 August 1901 (i.e., almost a month before the Balangiga Attack on 28 September) written by Antonio Tarrayo, the revolutionary chief for Calbayog, Samar who, at the time the letter was written, had apparently been one of the last remaining insurgent holdouts from his town after American occupation troops had established their presence there a year before (p. 70).<sup>338</sup> Sent from the "Mountain of Samar" and addressed to his "Kalbayog siblings," the letter starts with expressions of the longing he felt for the company of his town-mate-"siblings" and of his having to suffer the "hermit"-like life of a rebel fugitive in the Samar mountains. These mountains he had to traverse on a daily basis with what appears to be a few remaining comrades or subordinates on a diet of "leaves from trees" to stave

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<sup>338</sup> Rosario Nabong-Cabardo, "The Philippine-American War in Samar: Letters and Orders, 1899-1901," *Batis ng Kasaysayan* (Historical Sources), Bernardita Reyes Churchill (Editor), Madrileña L. de la Cerna, Faina C. Abaya-Ulindang, and Augusto V. de Viana (Associate Editors), Volume 1, Number 1 (2004): 32-87.

off hunger. His siblingship with unnamed townmates (whether or not pre-existing through ritual kinship ties with peers or social superiors/inferiors) is then revealed to have been (additionally) forged through a *junta magna* (a general assembly of insurgent forces), where they had apparently made a sacred pledge to fight for independence that was affirmed with their own signatures (of blood?).<sup>339</sup>

It then becomes clear that the letter's main purpose was to express Tarrayo's lament for the breaking of the sacred oaths made at that assembly by people he had trusted who, in Tarrayo's view had unjustly "surrendered their hearts" to the Americans (and were now after his head for continuing the resistance), thus "pushing" him to endure the hard life in the mountains on his own in pursuit of the revolutionary cause. In a highly metaphorical middle paragraph (in a letter full of figures of speech), he then reiterates his resolve to follow through with his pledge to fight to the end rather surrender and set a bad example to other people and to future generations:

"Well, mister voters, during our *junta magna* (Supreme Assembly), was it not sacred that [we swore] we would all risk the dangers (*oonongan*) together until death, [affixing] our signatures in front of many [people], for as long as we do not see yet our well-being (*caopayan*)? And [now] my siblings, it is not just to surrender your heart(s) (*casingcasing*), you just pushed me so that I would just expose myself to the extremes in this mountain or difficulty that you wish me to suffer. These I am obliged to

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<sup>339</sup> The *Katipunan* ("association," "a coming together") secret society which launched the Revolution had appropriated a written form of *sandugo*, the ancient blood compact ritual, using blood drawn from a wound which prospective allies drank in a shared cup of wine, which subsequently obliged them to protect and help each other, especially in times of need. Tarrayo seems to suggest a similar ritual practiced among Samar-based insurgents. This could have been introduced either by General Vicente Lukban, the Philippine Republic's President Emilio Aguinaldo's appointed military governor for Samar and Leyte (later limited to Samar) when he arrived in the island in December 1898 (?), or a little over two years after the start of the Revolution, or by earlier Katipunan members with Samar links (some of the earliest members executed by the Spanish colonial government in Manila came from the island) who could have facilitated the early spread of the society to Samar even before the outbreak of the Revolution (1896-1898) and the Philippine-American War (1899-1902).

fulfill or to endure (*pag eilobon*), because my conscience does not allow that my face be stepped on [or, that “shame be put on my face” (*manehauan/manehojan an bayjon co*)] or we would be enslaved by such nation of heretics. It is worthier to die wherever in the wilderness because I have already sworn [*nahimbuejan conaman* (i.e. released words of promise)] to the defense of my own land [*depenza san acon lugaringong nga tuna*]. Because if I live and [just] become an [adverse] example (*sanglitanan*) to our later descendants (*tolin na orje*), or from the view of other people, it is better to suffer, to later become like those who died in camp in defense of this our Filipino cause, whom we just hastily buried [forgotten] in wherever soil.”<sup>340</sup>

Hence, whether in 2013, 1901, or even earlier, people’s display of unity (*onong*) in response to adversity in pursuit of goals such as *katalwasan* (salvation) or *pag-lugaring/kaugalingnan* (selfhood) were not only derived from the past examples set by their ancestors but were seen as itself setting a new example to a wider society and for future generations who would look back to the past in shaping their own actions. But these events, whether anti-colonial revolution or “natural” disaster, are considered part of a grand scheme of things over which humans ultimately have no control other than to hold fast to themselves and to each other for collective sacrifice to be rewarded with the realization of their hopes and dreams. Tarrayo concludes his letter by expressing the hope that his sacrifices would ultimately be rewarded with well-being: “Well, my brothers, let us put our hope (*laome*) in the powerful God in heaven, because He was the one who gave us life, and the one who takes it back. Because whoever asks from Him will not be refused, will still be granted. Because if there is night, there is also day for this my suffering of the difficulties. I hope that we will now be paid [what is owed us] or be granted what we had asked for.” (Ibid.)

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<sup>340</sup> Tarrayo [1901] in Nabong-Cabardo [2004]

Typhoon Yolanda, as a divinely ordained event, was also the subject of one of Cayanong's last artworks related to the theme of Typhoon Yolanda, this time painted on the broad side wall to his shop. Captioned with "It is God's Will! Thank [you] world!," with the Philippine flag as its backdrop, it features two popular figures that have come to symbolize the strength and resilience of people in Samar and Leyte who identify as Warays, Filipinos, or Christians, among other identifications. The stern face of Manny Pacquiao is still included as a symbol of strength on one side, but on the other he is joined by the smiling face of Pope Francis, who had visited Tacloban City and Palo, Leyte on 17 January 2015 (and, in what came to be seen as a heroic move, risked his own life by flying into and out of the island before another typhoon made landfall in the area) to condole with and console survivors, a cathartic event which many survivors cite as an important event leading towards spiritual recovery.<sup>341</sup> Cayanong's juxtaposition of these symbols and popular figures highlights the important role played by various identifications (ethnic, national, religious, etc.) not only in people's material recovery from the typhoon but also in their psychological recovery from the trauma caused by the disaster.



Figure 11. Cesar Cayanong wall art  
(Photo by George Borrinaga, 8 January 2016)

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<sup>341</sup> 8 Magazine, Vol. 4, No. 2.

## *Waraynon* Survival Despite Poverty

In addition to the transformation of older identifications in order to collectively mobilize against the typhoons, the most recent label (Waray/Waray-Waray) applied to the people of Samar and Leyte (and the one which has caused the most division over its acceptability as a cultural identity label), was also transformed to connote survival despite poverty. The anonymous or collective authors of the signs and slogans that referenced these labels (or new variations of it such as *Waraynon*), by playing with the negative meanings (i.e., poverty, indifference) associated with the labels and juxtaposing them with the destitution brought about by the typhoon, could paradoxically draw positive meanings that promoted pride in survival or carefreeness in what fate had (or didn't have) in store for a *Waraynon* person. Slogans, proverbs, and poems suggesting people's poverty (*kawaray*) even before the typhoon struck served as background context for which many survivors could identify with the "Waray" label even while critics (see previous chapter) had rejected the word as a cultural identity label because of its connotation of poverty. This pre-disaster self-identification as "the poor"<sup>342</sup> represented by the "Waray" label, as people who did not have much to begin with, could thus make them "carefree" (another shade of meaning to the "Waray-Waray" label) about the further suffering brought about by the typhoon,<sup>343</sup> and express pride and hope on the new lease on life bestowed upon them.

At a post-typhoon workshop organized by Clowns without Borders, teenaged youths presented the following proverb ("poem") as their final group presentation:

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<sup>342</sup> Or, as the Bicolano peasants in Cannell's study called themselves, "*Kami mayong-mayo*" / "We who have nothing at all." Cannell, *Power and Intimacy in the Christian Philippines*.

<sup>343</sup> Curato, N. (2018). Beyond the spectacle: slow-moving disasters in post-Haiyan Philippines. *Critical Asian Studies*, 50(1), 58-66

Proud to be Waray!!!  
 No (*Waray*) house, no (*Waray*) food  
 No (*Waray*) money...  
 At least didn't (*Waray*) die..<sup>344</sup>

Expressing pride in having gotten away with their lives despite the loss of all essential means of living, life preservation gains value as an asset for which people were thankful despite nagging questions as to how and why their survival was possible in the midst of the almost total destruction that surrounded them. Being stripped of everything but life was not seen as an end, but a new starting point in a process of rising and recovery, a starting over that, as seen in the previous examples, drew on historical and cultural memory for guidance to thought and action.<sup>345</sup>

An expanded version of this play on *Waray* meanings and survival from Haiyan/Yolanda is found in a makeshift billboard that had been put up along the road near the Tacloban Astrodome where many survivors from surrounding impoverished coastal communities had evacuated (see Figure 12):

= <i>WARAYNON</i> =	Waray inhabitant/dweller
<i>WARAY – AKO</i>	I am a Waray / I do not have
– <i>TRABAHO</i>	No-job
– <i>BALAY</i>	No-home
– <i>GAMIT</i>	No-things/possessions
– <i>SANGKAY</i>	No-friends
– <i>OYAB</i>	No-boyfriend/girlfriend
– <i>KAMATAY</i>	Did not-die [i.e., from Typhoon Yolanda]
<i>NGAN WARAY LABOT!</i>	And does not care!

<sup>344</sup> <http://www.clownswithoutborders.org/update/proud-to-be-waray/> (Accessed: 12 April 2016)

<sup>345</sup> Cf. "...to re-form walls, roof and selves."  
 (<https://womenwritingwomen.org/2018/01/08/an-island-in-the-path-of-storms-have-they-built-better/>) (Accessed: 22 January 2018)



Figure 12. *Waraynon* makeshift billboard. Photo by George Borrinaga  
(26 December 2013)

The text lays out in greater detail the poverty experienced by many of the survivors even before the typhoon. It builds on the “carefree” meanings attributed to the “Waray-Waray” label by incorporating disaster survival into a narrative of poverty that people had constantly faced before the disaster. Survival from the typhoon is portrayed as only the latest in a series of privations that is the *Waraynon’s* lot. In this emplotment, the disaster experience merely adds to a chronic lack of opportunity that in turn merits more indifference. The surrounding texts by what seems to be the same author nevertheless suggest pride in survival (“junex® STILL ALIVE!!!,” with variations by other anonymous authors in destroyed walls across the same street) as well as hopes of recovery and the chance at a better life by seeking aid from outside (PLS. HELP US...WE NEED JOB FOOD SHELTER), including from television networks with known charity programs (GMA, ABS-CBN).<sup>346</sup> The display of survivor identity is thus linked to an appeal for charitable solidarity from Filipino media groups and their donors with the means to help already-disadvantaged people who had further become disaster survivors.

<sup>346</sup> Ong, J. C. (2015) *The poverty of television: The mediation of suffering in class-divided Philippines*. London and New York: Anthem Press.



Figure 13. "United as One" (Flickr)<sup>347</sup>



Figure 14. "Waray ako" (I am Waray) (Facebook)

The Waray label and identification came to encompass and subsume many meanings and was represented as a key component to Filipino identifications that were harnessed to mobilize support for disaster survivors.<sup>348</sup> Online, expressions of Waray identity and solidarity included a map of the Philippines (which became a viral profile picture in the immediate aftermath of the typhoon) in which the islands of the Eastern Visayas were colored green to distinguish Samar and Leyte from the rest of the Philippine archipelago. Above this representation of the Eastern Visayas was placed a green text that read "Waray Ako" (I am Waray) (see Figure 14). Another version of the image for an online Yolanda aid campaign called "One Philippines: Black Monday," appears to have been the original version of the map which called for national solidarity to help afflicted fellow Filipinos (see Figure 13). If so, this appropriation of a symbol of national solidarity (i.e., a Philippine map with "UNITED AS ONE" written below it) became a means of reinforcing regional/ethnic pride (i.e., as a

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<sup>347</sup> One caption for this image read: "Facebook profile pictures were changed to this logo for One Philippines: Black Monday, a show of sympathy to the victims of Haiyan and solidarity as a people helping the afflicted rise back up (Image courtesy of Our Awesome Planet via Flickr CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)."

<sup>348</sup> Curato, N. (2017). 'We haven't even buried the dead yet': Ethics of discursive contestation in a crisis situation. *Current Sociology*, 65(7), 1010-1030. On local agency after Typhoon/Haiyan, see also Curato, N. (2019) *Democracy in a Time of Misery: From Spectacular Tragedy to Deliberative Action*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

*Waray* person) among those who used the image as their profile pictures. This display of cultural pride, like the examples discussed in the previous sections of this chapter, could likewise translate to cooperation and solidarity in the relief and recovery efforts then underway and the rehabilitation efforts that followed.

The subsequent recognition by outsiders of people's capacity—whether as *Taclobanons*, *Leyteños*, *Samareños*, *Waray-Warays* or as a *Lahi ng Waray*<sup>349</sup> (Tagalog: *Waray* ancestry; race; brood; lineage)—to survive the typhoon thus later served as a source of pride that has to some extent helped to counteract past negative stereotypes associated with ethno-linguistic labels such as “Waray” (and its connotations of poverty, ferocity, etc.). Hence the observation that the *Waray* trait of being fierce (*matapang*) had been transformed into “resilience,”<sup>350</sup> and helped put on the map previously little recognized place names such as “Tacloban.”<sup>351</sup> Like similar major periods of transition in the region's history (the Spanish conquest, the Revolution, World War II), the post-Yolanda period also saw transformations in people's perceptions of themselves, with many identifying themselves as “Yolanda Survivors.” This new

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<sup>349</sup> Cesar Cayanong Yolanda Journal

<sup>350</sup> Jeff Manibay of civic group *One Tacloban* reflected as follows on the links between the self-ascribed “Waray” ferocity trait, solidarity, and resilience in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda: “We're [i.e., the *Waray-Waray* people] known as a fierce people. We're the Pintados [Tattooed Ones]. I was worried that trait [of ours] would turn violent, so I went out there at the [candle lighting] memorial to remind people that though we suffered personal losses, it was a collective tragedy, and that we were in it together'...Manibay recalls that they gathered along a 12-kilometer stretch of highway and connected 12,000 candles: 'Imagine, we had no electricity, all you could see were the candles. Before the memorial there was [a] mass exodus. The city was half empty, but so many were there. Turns out, people from nearby towns came to pay their respects to the dead. Most were relatives, friends. People were holding onto each other, crying together.'...That's when I realized, *may pag-asa pa* (there is still hope). We can do this, together. I said, 'If there is a time for us to be *matapang* [fierce], it's now. We get two choices. We either give up the city, or we make a stand. After the memorial, people decided to make a stand. We stand, we hold as one.'...Several months in, I realized that because of the collective tragedy, our trait of being *matapang* was transformed into what they now call resilience...I'm just glad it ended up that way.'" Inquirer.net, "Tacloban group's London exhibit thanks UK for disaster aid," November 24, 2015, Online: <http://globalnation.inquirer.net/132638/tacloban-groups-london-exhibit-thanks-uk-for-disaster-aid> (Accessed: 11 March 2018).

<sup>351</sup> Medium.com, “Stories a Typhoon Made”

category of person not only memorialized cherished personal traits such as *isog* but also the mutual help local people practiced after the storm despite problems in the national and international responses to the disaster.<sup>352</sup> Moreover, many of these survivors' post-typhoon self-expressions exhibited a new appreciation of nature's power. People's pride in their survival despite the odds thus often went hand in hand with a strong emphasis in post-Yolanda narratives on the need to care for the environment for the sake of future generations.

## Conclusion

This chapter's examination of survivor narratives and cooperative practices in response to Typhoon Yolanda suggests that the "resilience" people displayed through words and actions after the storm were closely linked to values, traits, and practices found in local historical and cultural traditions that gave them personal and collective models with which to face up to the disaster. The pride people expressed over their survival from the typhoon were not mere "overstatements" but were based on memories of past cooperative practices that allowed for collective survival. The subsequent attempts by many survivors to document their disaster experiences in writing, art, and other forms of creative expression added up to a general revival and reformulation of these traditions in order to advocate for environmental conservation and rehabilitation, as well as instill the importance of disaster preparedness for future extreme events. Despite persistent and increased poverty and economic inequality in the region that hinder capacity-building in the face of increasing natural disasters, it was people's cultural resources—i.e., their various means of representing common roots and lineages—that provided them with alternative means of empowerment in rising up from this latest challenge to their pursuit

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<sup>352</sup> The following recollection of the woman village leader of one of the most devastated communities in Tacloban City after Typhoon Yolanda's landfall exemplifies this close correlation between survivor identity and mutual aid: "[W]e were in a group helping one another after Yolanda, we were survivors." Emelita Montalban, Captain of Barangay 88 (Fisherman's Village), San Jose, Tacloban City (Quoted in Eadie, P. [2017] *Post-disaster resilience: problems and challenges* (Working Paper V), November 2017, p. 10).

of well-being. Calling upon their shared values, histories, identities, and heredities helped facilitate cooperative action that drew on past models and present examples. The continuing challenge in the years to come for these communities and the agencies that provide them with new knowledge, skills and resources to enhance resilience will be to match people's sense of self-recognition and pride in their survival despite the odds, and their attempts to raise awareness of their plight, with the social changes necessary to bolster their ability to face future environmental adversity.<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>353</sup> An example of survivor pride in their resourcefulness can be gleaned in a post-Yolanda proverb from Tacloban City which goes, "*Bisan waray, nakagbalay*" (Even with nothing, was able to rebuild a house) (Interview with Cesar Cayanong, 2016). Given the examples of identity-based wordplay cited above, this could also translate as "Even if (a) mere Waray(s), (was/were) able to rebuild a house." In Lawaan municipality in the southern coast of Samar, where conserved mangroves had helped to protect communities from Typhoon Yolanda's storm surge, the popular post-typhoon saying, according to the president of a fisherfolk association that had helped conserve and protect these natural barriers before the typhoon, was "'*Waray balay, waray pagkaon, pero waray patay*' meaning there's no house, there's no food, but there's no death." "After all," he added, "that's the most important thing anyway." (Quoted in *Sights and Sounds of the Surge: Stories from the Coast as told by Yolanda Survivors*. Quezon City: Foundation for the Philippine Environment, 2014, pp. 53, 55)

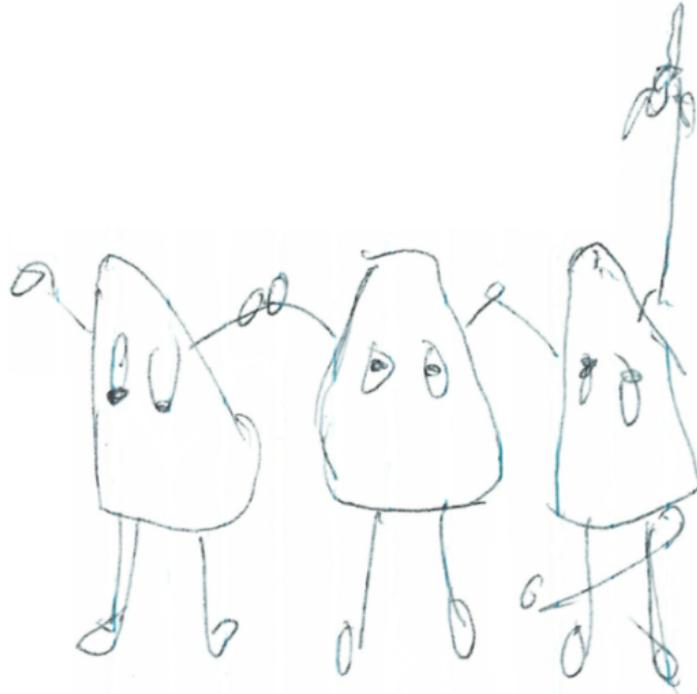


Figure 15. Randolph Cayanong's sketch as drawn in the researcher's fieldwork notebook, 27 July 2016.

## CONCLUSION

This study has aimed to contribute to the growing scholarship on the historical and cultural underpinnings of “community resilience” in the face of social and environmental adversity. It did so by taking 2013’s Typhoon Haiyan (local name: Yolanda), at that time considered the strongest tropical cyclone to make landfall on record, as a starting point for exploring the local historical meanings of resilience among the people most heavily affected by the storm. It has found that the various labels that people in Samar and Leyte accept (and in some cases reject) as group identifiers, served as important rallying points for collective action that were meant to deal with the massive destruction and loss of life wrought by Haiyan/Yolanda’s strong winds and storm surges. Understanding the process involved in generating resilience out of several group names in response to a single extreme event required a focus on the history and culture of the region.

This concluding chapter seeks to draw connections between the identity labels referenced in the storm’s aftermath and their origins in people’s responses to various forms of adversity in the history of the Eastern Visayas. These historical responses were analyzed according to key time periods in the preceding chapters. The self-referencing narratives that emerged in the typhoon’s wake, which were meant to encourage fellow survivors in the relief and recovery processes, often drew on local notions of identity and history in framing the massive loss of life and property brought about by the typhoon and in pointing the way toward acceptance and self-recovery. The event itself was likened to past periods of adversity that they themselves or their ancestors had responded to and lived through. These responses were primarily referred to in the context of identity labels that, although mostly introduced by outsiders and often associated with pejorative and condescending meanings, were for the most part appropriated and transformed by the people they referred to. These names were given historical meanings and cultural values that were important

to local communities for their own survival in a hazardous environment prone to typhoons, earthquakes and other natural hazards as well as to centuries of successive foreign occupation, slave raids, and religious/political conflict.

The previous chapters presented these historical responses to adversity as case studies that were delineated according to group labels that gained popular appeal at important turning points in the history of Samar and Leyte. They show how local responses to pivotal events such as Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda were influenced by people's collective memories of similar responses against past adversity. These idealized historical examples were linked to ancestral traits and practices such as personal bravery and cooperative action against a common threat. However, collective action could come in myriad forms that were modified or transformed in response to colonizer cultures and adverse events.

These identity-shaping historical representations of traits, practices, and shared historical experiences in responding to adversity came to equally draw from oral tradition and official/written narratives for their images of the past and people's place in the cosmos. Moreover, local discourses on adverse historical experiences and the agents involved were confined neither to socio-political events and anti-colonial struggles nor to interactions between people alone. That is, these accounts also referred to people's frequent engagement with a hazardous natural environment and to their active involvement with an ever-present but largely invisible world of supernatural beings and ancestors. The ways these stories were told and by whom, and how they were remembered in subsequent periods of adversity thus shaped how these narratives informed responses to events such as Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda. This study suggests that social memory served as a lynchpin connecting these accumulated identities which came together as symbols of unity for different groups of people in response to the typhoon's devastating aftermath. The next section answers the study's main question.

## Community Resilience in Samar and Leyte

From the earliest documented accounts about the region, the people of the adjacent islands of Samar and Leyte have been known to experience periodic risks and hazards due to a seismically- and climatically-active environment, as well as human-induced adversity brought about by inter-community warfare, foreign occupation, and armed social movements. In response to these adverse events, the people developed practices of mutual protection and assistance that helped them to survive and thrive in such precarious natural environments. Furthermore, in the local oral tradition that recorded these experiences, the characteristics of this environment also came to be embodied in the people's cultural values (e.g., *isog* ferocity/fierce courage).

In addition to frequent environmental hazard, communities also had to deal with the coercive or hegemonic influence of occupying powers, the resistance movements against them, and the possibility of being caught in between these antagonistic forces. In the face of colonialism, resistance, and the influence of dominant foreign cultures (e.g., Spanish and American), local communities found ways of maintaining or transforming adaptive practices for local community cohesion and survival. These practices continued to be rooted in closely-knit family-, friend-group- and village-level relationships despite newer phenomena such as labour outmigration and the loosening of extended family ties due to factors such as geographic distance between relatives and a decrease in the frequency and size of ritual celebrations.

To generate solidarity and cooperation in the face of adversity and/or disunity, appeals were often made to group names that had originally been coined by outsiders (often with derogatory and subordinating meanings) but were subsequently adapted to refer to both local face-to-face communities and wider geographic, linguistic/cultural, religious, and national communities. Moreover, these labels evoked associated cultural values and mutualist practices important to group survival. These names had thus come to acquire

local meanings through the process of collectively coping with frequent adversity. Unifying symbols and models helped mobilize people into action in the face of present hardship by drawing on their memories of similar responses in the past. The new responses themselves came to be memorialised in labels and identifications that either emerged after or were transformed by the latest crisis experience. Locally, “community resilience” thus involved a cyclical process where risks and crises were closely intertwined with active solidarity and changing group identities in people’s frequent engagement with a hazard-prone environment and conflict-ridden history.

## Identity Labels and Local Knowledge

If greater participation from Filipinos in current efforts to adapt to climate change and its negative impacts is to be realized, then a deeper understanding would be needed of the connections linking the various languages and cultures found in the Philippine archipelago, the self-conceptions of these speakers and practitioners, and how these practices and self-conceptions have been deployed to cope with various forms of societal and environmental adversity in the past and the present. Such a task can lead to richer, more inclusive understandings of being “Filipino” that bridges the divide between different ethno-linguistic, cultural, and religious groups who may have more in common through their responses to frequent adversity (Bankoff 2003) than differences that often become sources of disagreement and conflict. As shown in Chapter 3, post-colonial Filipino society has assimilated various categories that distinguish between different groups of Filipinos based on gender, economic/educational status, language, culture, religion, among other divisions. These labels often emerged to mark off one group of people from others based on perceived characteristics seen as static and inborn (and often caricatured in film, mass entertainment, etc.) rather than as dynamic social values that guide people’s interactions with their society and environment. What these stereotypical characterizations of different groups of Filipinos have in common is their disconnection from the actual histories and environments

under which these depictions emerged. The lack of understanding of these differences is seen as the main impediment to true Filipino unity. As a result of stereotypic depictions, debates continue to erupt about which label (*Bisaya/Binisaya, Waray-Waray/Winaray, Leyte-Samar/Lineyte-Samarnon, etc.*) is appropriate for the language predominantly spoken in Eastern Visayas and its “community of speakers” in the face of a constant “sea change of labels.”<sup>354</sup>

What this study has shown is that, rather than insist on the appropriateness of one label over the others, the various labels should instead be situated in their proper historical contexts as cultural products that emerged out of human cooperation and solidarity in response to past adversity. Furthermore, the meanings ascribed to these labels continue to evolve in response to new challenges, both human-induced and environmental. In the case of the Eastern Visayas, it was demonstrated how various identity labels (instead of dismissing them as unsuitable or derogatory labels for people’s cultural identity) must be taken seriously as indicators of “histor[ies] from below”<sup>355</sup> by virtue of their having been embraced by many of the people they referred to and which they

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<sup>354</sup> Borrinaga, R. O. (2015) “Revisiting Bisayan Culture and Identity in Eastern Visayas,” Lecture at the Symposium on “History as a Tool in Understanding Waray Culture and Identity,” Samar State University, Catbalogan, Samar, 27 February 2015. Online: <https://www.facebook.com/notes/rolando-borrinaga/revisiting-bisayan-culture-and-identity-in-eastern-visayas/795808233827764/> (Accessed: 9 December 2018)

<sup>355</sup> E. P. Thompson, ‘History from Below’, *The Times Literary Supplement* (Thursday, 7 April 1966), issue 3345, p. 279. “Toward a History from Below,” Chapter 1 of Reynaldo C. Ileto’s *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910* (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1979). Such histories were therefore not just the product of a “rescue mission” by historians who set out to recover marginalised voices, but were equally the re-conceptualisations of history by people who were rescuing themselves. Cf. Thompson’s much quoted rationale for writing his classic study on the formation of the English working class which draws connections between crisis and solidarity in the making of working-class identity in England: “I am seeking to rescue the poor stockinger, the Luddite cropper, the ‘obsolete’ hand-loom weaver, the ‘Utopian’ artisan, and even the deluded follower of Joanna Southcott, from the enormous condescension of posterity. Their crafts and traditions may have been dying. Their hostility to the new industrialism may have been backward-looking. Their communitarian ideals may have been fantasies. Their insurrectionary conspiracies may have been foolhardy. But they lived through these times of acute social disturbance, and we did not. Their aspirations were valid in terms of their own experience; and, if they were casualties of history, they remain, condemned in their own lives, as casualties.” E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, London: Victor Gollancz (1963), pp. 12-13.

imbued with meanings that reference concrete experiences of and struggles against various forms of adversity (raids, oppression, onerous state demands, war, poverty, a harsh natural environment, etc.). On the other hand, the negative stereotypes (religious fanaticism, thuggery, criminality, etc.) attached to these labels were seen by some as a source of shame (*awod/alo*),<sup>356</sup> thereby leading them to deflect queries about their place of origin or insist on alternative labels for their ethno-linguistic identity. However, these interpretations often went hand in hand with positive self-stereotypes (bravery, ferocity, strength) by others who embraced these labels (*Bisaya, Pulahan, Waray-Waray*) in the context of their own collective struggles against hardship and hence became positive interpretations from which people derive pride and unity.<sup>357</sup> In a still largely oral-based culture (where *susumaton* folktales, folk

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<sup>356</sup>Agustin El O'Mora, *Ngaran han Pinulongan* (The Name of the Language), <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/DILA/conversations/topics/8752>

<sup>357</sup> The use of the *Pulahan* label in Samar and Leyte continues up the time of this writing, with the label now applied to partisans in the country's half-a-century old communist rebellion. A recent report provides the following explanation for the persistence of this contemporary movement considered as "one of the oldest communist insurgencies in the world:" "Fuelled by one of the world's starkest rich-poor divides, a Maoist rebellion in the Philippines that began [i.e., in 1968] months before the first human landed on the moon [i.e., in 1969] plods on even though the country now boasts one of the world's fastest-growing economies...A key reason that the Philippines continues to host a communist rebellion when Marxism has dissolved almost everywhere else around the world is an economic system that has created huge wealth but left tens of millions in deep poverty" (AFP, "Philippines' communist rebellion: a new generation" 16 August 2017, Accessed: 16 March 2018). Just recently, public school teachers assigned to interior villages in and adjacent to the municipality of Calbiga, (Western) Samar which has a strong rebel presence, described how a prevailing response from parents to their attempts at encouraging school attendance and participation among the children of poor families was that their children, instead of continuing their pursuit of education, could instead pursue an alternative path of "becom[ing] Pulahan" (*magpu-Pulahan nala hira*) (Rolando O. Borrinaga, personal communication). This referred both to present-day communist rebels (often people's only exposure to protective forces in the interior and hence alternative role models equivalent to the teachers, police officers, or other professions children often aspire to become) in an island that has long been a hotbed for the insurgency (and in the town where this nation-wide movement launched its first tactical offensive in 1974). The *Pulahan* label also evokes the older revolutionary/millenarian movement that saw recurrent revivals well into the post-WW2/post-independence period (W. N. Holden, "The Never Ending War in the Wounded Land: The New People's Army on Samar," *Journal of Geography and Geology*; v.5, n.4; 2013, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/jgg.v5n4p29> Accessed: 16 March 2018). Eric Gamalinda's *Empire of Memory*, a novel of historical fiction, includes the follow passage set in the Western Visayas depicting this survival of this meaning-ful label (e.g., contemporary communist rebels associated or equated with participants in the older peasant movement) along with a succinct interpretation of the Visayas-wide historical movement: "'The what?' I asked... 'Pulajanes,' Jun explained. 'Reds.'...The colonel called the NPA [New People's Army, the armed wing of the

songs, etc. have persisted and have been assimilated into newer forms), these labels (*Pintados*, *Waraynon*, etc.) also became markers for localized oral histories that evoked tacit knowledge of past responses to adversity that have yet to be included in mainstream Philippine history,<sup>358</sup> although local knowledge of these past experiences against adversity could also draw on or be framed through official/written accounts.

Recurring debates about the choice, for example, between *Waray/Winaray* and *Bisaya/Binisaya* as linguistic and cultural identity markers must therefore have to take into account the historical context of labels which were imposed from outside but either subsequently or at the same time embraced as unifying symbols in order to collectively cope with hardship and adversity (*kakurian*) through solidarity (*onong*). Labels such as *Pintados*, *Bisayan*, *Christian*, *Pulahan*, *Filipino*, and *Waray* that were meant to mark the boundaries between colonizer and colonized, Christian and non-Christian, and between national identity and ethnic difference, instead became means of generating solidarity in a hazardous environment. These labels were continually transformed by new events and challenges that required cooperative action and that brought about new meanings (or revived older ones) into people's preferred identifiers. Labels

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Communist Party of the Philippines] *pulajanes*; he was not ignorant of his history. Towards the end of the nineteenth century Filipino guerrillas who fought against the Spaniards but became disillusioned with America's forgotten promise of independence retreated to the hills to continue the war. They came to be called *pulajanes*, after the red trousers they wore." (Eric Gamalinda, *Empire of Memory: New Edition* [Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Anvil, (1992) 2014], p. 72) This passage somewhat contradicts the book's back cover premise about the Philippines' seeming lack of historical memory (a sentiment shared by many of its historians): "This is a land both fact and fiction, where generations leave no trace of themselves and everything is constantly wiped out by clockwork destruction: typhoon, tsunami, earthquake, drought. Because of this we have no memory of ourselves: we remember only the last deluge, the last seismic upheaval." (*Ibid.*, back cover blurb) This study has argued that labels such as "Pulahan" are in themselves traces of these past selves, whose stories are often transmitted through local oral tradition, which have for the most part been forgotten or excluded from official national memories but which continue to be relevant for marginalised communities facing frequent human-induced and environmental adversity.

<sup>358</sup> Patricio N. Abinales, "Absent Characters in the National Story," *The Manila Review*, September 2014, <http://themanilareview.com/issues/view/absent-characters-in-the-national-story> (Accessed: 11 March 2018).

such as *Bisaya* and *Waray* should thus be seen not as mutually exclusive terms but as labels that emerged from the same historical process to coping with adversity. These events spawned different labels for the same group of people at different points in their history. These labels could thus co-exist in their more recent iterations by retaining historical meanings valued by newer generations who identified with them as markers of their own cultural identity and historical experiences.

People's identification with different labels, moreover, allowed for the maintenance of societal relationships that continued to provide mutual help and protection for close-knit communities or groups, whether in close proximity to each other or separated by distance due to migration. These solidarities persist despite modifications to people's lifeways brought about by bigger processes such as colonialism, nationalism, and urbanization/globalization/migration which introduced these same identity labels and their associated beliefs and practices. The co-existence of these names through this historical process could likewise lead to multiple and contested identities that people could embrace, redefine, or reject.

These labels could also accommodate both backward-looking and forward-looking meanings and hopes. In looking forward, they represented changing hopes (influenced by the changing priorities and values of different historical periods) that families and small communities shared across the centuries: e.g., heavenly salvation for ancestor-benefactors, divine protection from slave raids, divinely-ordained and divinely-rewarded independence from excessive colonial demands, luck (*suwerte*) as divine reward for sacrifice of overseas/out-of-town work, etc. In looking back, the traditional characteristics and traits implied by these labels are seen as ancestral heritages that serve as exemplars for being and action.<sup>359</sup> They evoked images of historical/mythological characters whose traits came to be symbolized by

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<sup>359</sup> e.g., Maka-andog and *daragangan* folk heroes and heroines, ancestor revolutionaries, Pulahanes, national heroes, WW2 guerrillas, etc.

various culture heroes and heroines who they could emulate, in more mundane everyday life and during periods of adversity. But these labels also functioned to distinguish groups of people from others who could be treated as allies or threats depending on observed or received knowledge about their trustworthiness and reliability as friends or benefactors.<sup>360</sup>

The benefits (*kaupayan*) one enjoys or hardships (*kakurian*) one endures are therefore outcomes of a wide field of beneficial and/or antagonistic human and spiritual relationships a person (*tawo*) becomes embedded in and within which they negotiate, help out or reciprocate, and fight back or retaliate. It is also through these relations that they receive recognition, derision, or rejection for personal/collective actions and accomplishments and failures. This interplay between inter-personal interactions and identification by others (influencing their sense of self-worth or dignity, bringing either pride and joy, or humiliation and shame) shapes the actor's changing self-perceptions and subsequent decision-making. It is through this process that collective names invoked in the face of adversity mark out a group of actors by recalling traits (*isog*, or an ancient ferocity which "re-emerge" or "[umala]abas" [Go 2017]) and memories of past responses to difficulty that the group can re-enact when dealing with present hardship (e.g., "We are the people of *Ibabao*" in defending themselves against early Spanish period slave raids, "I am a *Waray*" or "We fought in WW2" in response to Yolanda).<sup>361</sup>

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<sup>360</sup> e.g., the contradictory role of Americans as invader and liberator in the cultural memory of Samar and Leyte when responding to the Japanese Occupation during the Second World War, hence the divergent stances [pro-American/anti-Japanese vs anti-American/pro-Japanese] of resistance groups who self-identified as *Pulahanes*.

<sup>361</sup> These examples evoke Filipino magical speech/practice in that they resemble an *anting-anting* (amulet/talisman) possessor's uttering of the key words *egusum* or *ego sum* (Latin for "I am") when reciting a magical prayer (*oracion*) that unleashes magical power to save the speaker from harm, especially in combat situations or during times of danger. The word was said to have been uttered by Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane (i.e., "It is I..you are after") when asked "Who among you is Jesus of Nazareth?" by arresting soldiers following Judas' betrayal. In the Tagalog *pasyon* text (a localised Catholic epic about Christ's passion, death, and resurrection that is ritually read/chanted during Holy Week in the Tagalog-speaking region of Manila and surrounding provinces), Christ's self-identifying speech act had immediately immobilized and knocked over these soldiers before Christ restored their "feelings and

These labels often represented a process of indigenization which assimilated new institutions, centers of community life, and imposed identities (e.g., *iglesia/singbahan/kapilya, iskwilahan* [Makabenta and Makabenta 2018, p.336]) that are often organized around local forms of mutual help practices (*tiklos, pintakasi*). In the aftermath of pivotal events (e.g., Spanish conquest, Revolution, Liberation, post-war outmigration, Super Typhoon Yolanda) fraught with risks and dangers, local responses often resulted in the creation or transformation of community-oriented identities (good *Christians*, educated *Filipinos*, successful *Waray* migrants). Survival from these adverse events also offered opportunities for self-transformation and the hope of securing community continuity and well-being. A new (collective) self is then defined that incorporates new lessons from the latest experience.

The identity labels (and the “little universes of meaning”<sup>362</sup> they represent) with which such responses came to be associated could therefore provide

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potency” (Ileto 1998, pp. 58-59). It is this effect that is seemingly recreated by the utterance of *egosum* in magic prayers to ward off physical harm. On the significance of the word in the *pasyon*, Ileto writes: “The efficacy of ‘ego sum’ is signified by its retention as a Latin phrase in the [primarily Tagalog *pasyon*] text. Rather than refer to a particular object, ‘ego sum’ is a form of speech that makes Christ’s potency felt in the world.” Reynaldo C. Ileto, “Rizal and the Underside of Philippine History,” in *Filipinos and their Revolution: Event, Discourse, and Historiography* (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press [1998]), p. 59. See Ileto’s *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910* (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1979) on the role of the *pasyon* text in providing a framework and “grammar of dissent” for various Tagalog anti-colonial movements of the late Spanish, revolutionary, and early American colonial periods. What McAndrew writes about these prayers (primarily based on his interviews with 20th century Visayan migrants to Mindanao Island) parallels what is argued here about the importance of self- and past-referencing speech in the face of adversity: “Magical speech provides a model of action to help the individual concentrate his attention and the group to coordinate its effort. It is not simply a matter of supplying meaning where there is anxiety and doubt or confidence in the face of uncertainty. The rigid scripts provide the certainty of an authoritative definition of what is happening and what has happened. Besides providing collective certainty the [Latin-derived] scripts borrowed by [indigenous] magic make it possible for the individual to think or speak or act in his uncertain symbolic world.” John P. McAndrew, *People of Power: A Philippine Worldview of Spirit Encounters* (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2001), p.58. See p. 54 for examples of usages of “Egusum” in magical prayers and *anting-anting* that require ritual self-sacrifice for them to be efficacious. Slips of paper and prayer booklets with *oracion* prayers captured from *Dios-Dios* and *Pulahan* sectarian rebels of Samar and Leyte likewise include *ego sum* among the appropriated Latin words they contained.

<sup>362</sup> Geertz, C. (1983). “Blurred genres: The refiguration of social thought,” p. 25.

metaphors for collective action that could be invoked by members of a community when responding to recurrent, new or unfamiliar extreme events. Furthermore, the frequency of these events in relation to changing values and identifications suggests that cooperative action in response to adverse events is the result of a constant negotiation between old and new identity models. The hybrid cultures and accumulating identities that emerge from this coping process result in various rallying points for solidarity that can help mitigate against adversity.

It was the social identities that had accumulated as a result of this process that were key to generating various solidarities in the aftermath of Super typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda in 2013. However, what is often forgotten is that although Haiyan/Yolanda is considered the biggest and most devastating disaster to have struck the Philippines in living memory, and one that tends to be seen as unique in history, it has since become just another moment of crisis out of many that have struck and will continue to strike the Philippines. The Yolanda crisis has become another benchmark of memory that will be remembered when the next big crisis hits the country. Furthermore, the responses to Yolanda would come to serve as examples to future crisis responders.

### **Preparing for the Storms of the Future**

The significance of this study's findings for disaster risk reduction (DRR) perhaps lies mainly in the methodological approach it followed rather than on any theoretical contributions. This study sketched an outline for how to recover the local meanings and associated practices of "community resilience" in one locale (i.e., the Samar and Leyte region in the Philippines). This method could then be replicated in future studies on the coping practices of communities in the Philippines and the rest of the world as part of global endeavours to better prepare for social and environmental risk.

How well we prepare for future extreme weather and other crisis events would mainly depend on how well we remember and learn from events such as Super Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda. The “historical amnesia” of storm surges and similar rare but cyclical natural hazards have so far been addressed by new ways of memorializing the event (rituals for the dead, historical monuments, etc.) at the local level where the impact of the typhoon was most strongly felt.<sup>363</sup> At the national level, however, the lessons from this disaster experience needs to be better integrated into postcolonial historiography where the role of the environment in the shaping of a nation has largely been overlooked. The previous chapters have shown how much local ties of reciprocity and mutual help were shaped as much by responses to frequent natural hazards (typhoons, floods, earthquakes, etc.) than by political events and struggles that have been the focus of nationalist history.

Calls from disaster experts for governments and humanitarian agencies to take into account local capacities when intervening in both risk reduction and disaster response have emphasized the need to pay attention to the role of culture in helping to generate the local capacities and responses of vulnerable or afflicted populations (World Disasters Report 2014). It has been argued that for risk reduction programs to succeed, the interventions of humanitarian agencies and governments must take into account the distinct languages, cultures, and histories of the communities they are working with if these programs are to be self-sustainable (*Ibid.*). Recent studies have argued that community engagement in governance in the Philippines can be enhanced by engaging with local associations (which, as shown in this study, have

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<sup>363</sup> Ambeth R. Ocampo, "Tacloban, not once but thrice," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, November 19, 2013, <http://opinion.inquirer.net/65685/tacloban-not-once-but-thrice> ; Raphael Lotilla, "Flashback: 1897, Leyte and a strong typhoon," *Rappler*, November 20, 2013, <https://www.rappler.com/move-ph/issues/disasters/typhoon-yolanda/44062-leyte-1897-typhoon> ; Antonio Montalvan II, "Samar-Leyte more than thrice," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, December 29, 2013, <http://opinion.inquirer.net/68409/samar-leyte-more-than-thrice>; Antonio Montalvan, "El Observatorio de Manila and the Specious Filipino Amnesia for Typhoons," no date. [https://www.academia.edu/9039986/El\\_Observatorio\\_de\\_Mania\\_and\\_the\\_Specious\\_Filipino\\_Amnesia\\_for\\_Typhoons](https://www.academia.edu/9039986/El_Observatorio_de_Mania_and_the_Specious_Filipino_Amnesia_for_Typhoons) (Accessed: 18 March 2018)

traditionally found ways of providing for the welfare of their own communities in the absence of the colonial and post-colonial state) and empowering smaller divisions of official government units (*sitio, purok*) where cooperation between households can be easier to manage and through which programmes such as community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) better implemented given the right leadership and motivation.<sup>364</sup>

The political decentralization of communities and the promotion of sustainable local development are also seen as key in generating self-sufficient livelihoods and practices that help counteract the factors behind global warming and climate change that result from globalisation and individualistic lifestyles.<sup>365</sup> Despite centuries of attempts at political centralization and the influence of individualistic values on traditionally collectivistic societies, the diverse cultures and societies of the Philippines, including those of the Eastern Visayas, have retained social organisations and livelihood practices that help reduce consumerism and competitive individualism that alienate individuals from each other.<sup>366</sup> The close-knit communities covered in this study often have strong local identifications, take pride in local traditions, and owe their allegiance to informal civic leaders as much as to more distant official ones.<sup>367</sup> Bound by various and often overlapping ties with many other people (as family members,

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<sup>364</sup> Matthies, Angelina (2017). Community-based disaster risk management in the Philippines: Achievements and challenges of the *purok* system. *Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies*, 10(1), 101-108; Bernados Jr, S., Ocampo, L., Pilapil, E. and Zamora, N., 2018. Can the Bonding Social Capital Be Used to Mitigate the Impact of Natural Hazard?: The Case of a Flood-Prone Urban Community in Central Visayas, Philippines. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3196169> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3196169>; Curato, N. and Calamba, S. J. (2018) 'Surviving Disasters by Suppressing Political Storms: Participation as Knowledge Transfer in Community-Based Disaster Governance', *Critical Sociology*. doi: 10.1177/0896920518796167.

<sup>365</sup> Martell, L. (1994) *Ecology and Society: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Polity Press. Menconi, M.E.; Artemi, S.; Borghi, P.; Grohmann, D. (2018) Role of Local Action Groups in Improving the Sense of Belonging of Local Communities with Their Territories. *Sustainability*, 10(12), 4681. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10124681>

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>367</sup> Bankoff, G. (2015). "Lahat para sa lahat" (everything to everybody): Consensual leadership, social capital and disaster risk reduction in a Filipino community. *Disaster Prevention and Management*, 24(4), pp.430-447.

fictive kin, friends, neighbours, churchmates, workmates, schoolmates, etc.), individuals from these communities are often affiliated with mutual assistance associations or informal groupings found in one or more of the institutions and locales in which individuals are embedded in their social lives.<sup>368</sup>

These organisations and groups (which evoke the traditional *guinhaopan*<sup>369</sup> small polities of the region) are often led by charismatic “small men” (Bankoff 2015) and women who often possess great oratorical skills and who serve as alternatives to the “big men” and women from wealthy landowning families that dominate Philippine politics. The “community governance” that such groups can set into motion can be seen to fill in for the lack of welfare provision from what is often perceived as a distant government prone to corruption and elite capture of public resources and that is often unresponsive to the needs of small communities. On the other hand, the leaders and members of these local associations are often bound by interweaving ties (religious, social, etc.) and therefore have a strong sense of obligation to look after the welfare of fellow members of their association and the wider community (Bankoff 2015).

Given adequate support, it is groups such as these that help facilitate inclusive community governance that are key to bridging the gap that exists between government risk reduction and management policy and effective preparation for the adverse impacts of climate change in the future. As seen in the case of local responses to Typhoon Yolanda, various people’s organizations and communities, including those with previous experience dealing with the adverse effects of environmental degradation and natural hazards, were active

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<sup>368</sup> Morais, R. (1979). Some notes on the historical roots of contemporary interpersonal relationships in the Christian Philippines. *Philippine Journal of Psychology*, 12(2), 45-49; Szanton, M. C. B. (1979). The Uses of Compadrazgo: Views from a Philippine Town. *Philippine Sociological Review*, 161-180; Hart, D. V. (1977). *Compadrinazgo: Ritual kinship in the Philippines*. Northern Illinois University Press; Morais, R. J. (1981). Friendship in the Rural Philippines. *Philippine Studies*, 66-76.

<sup>369</sup> A term originally applied to the *datu* (warrior chief) and *haop* (following) relationship of pre-colonial times, the term is now used to refer to elected village leaders: “ginhaupan, *n.* chief of a barangay” (Makabenta and Makabenta 2004, p. 54).

participants in recovery and rehabilitation programs launched by humanitarian and government agencies or in negotiating the local government's resettlement policies.

The years after Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda have only underscored the inadequacies of the government not only in the immediate response to the typhoon but also in long-term preparations for future extreme events. A recent assessment on capacity-building measures in areas affected by Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda makes clear the problems caused by the distance between affected communities and local government units and proposes remedies to address this gap:

“[W]hile national legislation is in place in the Philippines,<sup>370</sup> the absence of fully functional disaster management structures and plans at local levels reflects a broader weakness in the capacity of local government units (LGUs) to translate laws into a more resilient reality for those affected by typhoon Haiyan. Capacity building at the local level, including with local authorities, civil society organizations and communities themselves, is a necessary foundation for a more operational and inclusive disaster management system in the Philippines.”<sup>371</sup>

The goal of “building back better” and “building resilience” (or perhaps “nurturing” resilience) in disaster zones and hazardous places could thus be better realized by directly supporting small communities and mutual aid organisations with a strong sense of identity and autonomy (which might, as noted in a previous chapter, be called “village nationalism”), a good track record of cooperative activity, and a willingness to engage with government and international humanitarian agencies. Given the experience of many of

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<sup>370</sup> e.g., the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010, Online: <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/idrl/878EN.pdf> (Accessed: 13 March 2018)

<sup>371</sup> [http://www.unisdr.org/files/40990\\_pwsitrep2014002.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/files/40990_pwsitrep2014002.pdf) (Accessed: 24 January 2018)

these groups and communities in facing past challenges, it is also important to recognize their own ability to withstand adversity through pre-existing capacities inherent in what are often characterised as “vulnerable” communities in the narratives of international humanitarianism.<sup>372</sup>

The inclusion of the perspectives and experiences of these self-reliant communities and groups in the global discussion on collective responses to challenges such as the climate crisis could also prove beneficial to other communities faced with similar risks and hazards since, whether consciously or not, these voices might be drawing on centuries of local knowledge and traditions of cooperative action that had served as exemplary models for their own resilience in the present.<sup>373</sup>

From this study’s comparison of community responses to various forms of natural and human-induced adversity across several time periods in the history of Samar and Leyte, it can be concluded that the collective practices that enabled communities to cope with hardships and crises were in part generated through appeals to people’s sense of identity and history that in themselves changed across time. These responses, which were often based on pre-existing and environmentally-adaptive mutual help practices, drew on outsider-imposed (e.g., Christian Bisayan, revolutionary/nationalist Filipino, migrant Waray, resilient Yolanda Survivor) identity discourses that added new layers of meaning to the different names with which people were labelled. Moreover, these localized collective identifications were adapted down to the smallest communities and families bound by affective and mutually-beneficial ties and were often represented as having links to past adversity and their responses. These identity- and memory-based responses are remembered in later periods

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<sup>372</sup> Bankoff, Greg. "Rendering the world unsafe: 'vulnerability' as western discourse." *Disasters* 25.1 (2001): 19-35.

<sup>373</sup> Bankoff, Greg. "Cultures of disaster, cultures of coping: hazard as a frequent life experience in the Philippines." *Christof Mauch/Christian Pfister (Hg.): Natural Disasters, Cultural Responses. Case Studies toward a Global Environmental History*. Lanham, Md. (International Environmental History) (2009): 265-284.

of difficulty largely through a pantheon of ancestors who are seen to continue to be active helpers of the living community and culture-hero[in]es who represent ancestral values and attitudes such as ferocity/bravery (*isog*), perseverance (*ilob/antos*), cooperation (*onong*), and collective strength (*kusog*). “Community resilience” in the Eastern Visayas, Philippines thus entailed a historical process where hardship-induced solidarities either appealed to, created or transformed localized identity labels that were given new meanings by people’s responses to frequent adversity. By becoming part of social memory, these identifications that represent past struggles against hardship could subsequently be called upon and remembered to serve as guides to collective action when faced with new challenges (*kakurian*) to people’s collective pursuit of well-being (*kaopayan*). After all, the collective ability to endure (*ilob*) hardship and fiercely resist (*pag-ato*) adversity in seeking a good future in a hazard-prone and historically conflict-ridden part of the Philippines are key characteristics of what it means to be “resilient”<sup>374</sup> for families and communities in the islands of Samar and Leyte.

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<sup>374</sup> “resilient, *adj.* butang nga na balik ha una nga dagway bisan kun pinipilo, hinuhugtan, o iniipit; (of a person) mailob ha kakurian ngan madali makabalik ha kaupayan” (a thing that returns to its original appearance even if folded, tightened, or pressed down/clamped tightly between two objects; (of a person) enduring of adversity and could easily return to wellness) (Makabenta and Makabenta 2004, p. 327; ipit, p. 68; resist, p. 327).

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## Interviews

### *Super Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda*

Alegre, Prof. Joycie D. 19 January 2016, Tacloban City – Editor of *Lunop: Haiyan Voices and Images*. Tacloban City: Leyte-Samar Heritage Society, Inc. (2015); On her Yolanda experience and the circumstances behind the compilation of materials that went into the *Lunop* volume of post-Haiyan/Yolanda testimonies, pictures, art and literature.

Astilla, Danika. 26 July 2016, Tacloban City (Online Communication) – Tacloban-based social entrepreneur (Kinamot nga Buhat [Hand Made], Haiyan Unity Bracelet); On the challenges of marketing ornamental jewellery handmade by women typhoon survivors.

Cayanong, Cesar, and Cayanong, Randolph. 27 July 2016, Tacloban City – Father-and-son artists who created inspirational post-Yolanda slogans/graffiti art which drew the attention of national and international media.

Celestial, Rodolfo. 27 July 2016, Tacloban City – Member of the Tacloban Bible Community; Oversaw post-Yolanda house re-building/repair (mostly in Tacloban City but also in other parts of the Eastern Visayas) for affected members funded by US-based Baptists.

Colasito, Franklin A. and Colasito, Estrella E. 20 July 2016, Tacloban City – Residents of V&G Subdivision, Tacloban City; On their observations of Tacloban in the immediate wake of Typhoon Yolanda.

Decripito, Chrion Bernard. 16 July 2016, Cebu City – Cebu-based volunteer in post-Yolanda relief goods repacking.

Enage, Dante. 21 July 2016, Tacloban City – Tacloban-based artist; On his art before and after Yolanda; thoughts on the Tacloban and Eastern Visayan/Waray art scene.

Gimena, Mary, MD. 21 July 2016, Tacloban City – On-duty at Bethany Hospital (Tacloban City) during Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda.

Laguna, Jean Marie. 28 July 2016, Tacloban City – Midwife; On experience as midwife in RTR Hospital in the aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda; Resident of Marasbaras, Tacloban City.

Letaba, Lucien. 13 July 2016, Tacloban City – Composer and author of “Haiyan: the Aftermath: Images and Stories of Recovery in Samar and Leyte;” On backstories behind the writing of the book.

Manibay, Jeff. 5 January 2016, Tacloban City – Media producer and One Tacloban main organizer; On various aspects of the local response to Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda.

Mercurio, Prof. Phil Harold L., 13 July 2016, Tacloban City – President and co-founder of Katig Writers Network [in Eastern Visayas] Inc. (Katig-ubanan mga Magsusurat ha Sinirangan Bisayas Inc.); On his Yolanda experience and thoughts on “Waray” identity before and after Yolanda.

Nabong, Marissa Daa. 20 July 2016, Tacloban City – Midwife; On her experience as midwife in RTR Hospital in the aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda; Resident of V&G Subdivision, Tacloban City.

Orbino, Ruby, MD. 19 July 2016, Tacloban City – On-duty at the Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center (Tacloban City) during Typhoon Haiyan.

Oyzon, Prof. Voltaire. 13 July 2016, Tacloban City – Tacloban-based poet and academic; On “Waray” identity before and after Yolanda.

Tumandao, Donabel. 19 July 2016, Tacloban City – UP Visayas Tacloban College (UPVTC) political science instructor; On her fieldwork among Yolanda bunkhouse evacuees for foreign-funded studies on Yolanda.

Yaokasin, Jerry. 15 January 2016, Tacloban City – Vice-Mayor of Tacloban City; On various aspects of the government and non-government responses to Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda.

Yu, Christine L., RN, 19 July 2016, Tacloban City – On-duty at the Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center (Tacloban City) during Typhoon Haiyan.

### *Padre Gaspar Shrine*

Corpin, Manny. 23 July 2016, Biliran Municipality, Biliran Province – Barangay Tanod (village police officer) of Barangay Hugpa and guide to the shrine; Shared stories about the shrine and the pilgrims who visit it (including those who evacuated there in the aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda).

Palconit, Celia. 23 July 2016, Biliran Municipality, Biliran Province – Barangay Kagawad (village councilor) of Barangay Hugpa; Wrote a manuscript in the Waray language on the Padre Gaspar lore; Spoke about the circumstances behind the writing of her manuscript.

Plecerda, George. 23 July 2016, Biliran Municipality, Biliran Province – Former

executive secretary to the municipal mayor of the Municipality of Biliran, Biliran Province; Shared stories about local devotees and the history of the shrine.

Urbina, Fr. Gilbert. 30 July 2016, Tacloban City – Diocesan priest; Chairperson of the Commission on Liturgy of the Palo Archdiocese and former parish priest of several parishes in Leyte that were devastated by Yolanda; Interview about church history in Eastern Visayas, the role of women in the Catholic Church in the Philippines, his knowledge about the Gaspar Shrine in the Municipality of Biliran, etc.

### *Migration from Samar-Leyte to Manila*

Abarca-Almaden, Ciriaca. 6 August 2016, Quezon City – Moved to Manila in the early 1970s; Virginia Cinco's aunt. Spoke about the circumstances behind her migration to Manila.

Cinco, Virginia. 6 August 2016, Quezon City – Migrated to Manila from Tanauan, Leyte with parents and relatives in the early 1950s. Spoke about her memories of their move to the national capital, first to Tondo, and later to Quezon City.

Melencio, Prof. Gloria. 6 August 2016, Quezon City – Philippine historian and daughter of Leyte migrants to Manila; Spoke about her parents' background and the times she spent in Leyte; Guided the author to the Sto. Niño de Leyte Shrine in Quezon City.

Oga-oga, Leonila. 5 August 2016 – Street vendor and urban poor activist originally hailing from Burauen, Leyte. Spoke about her personal experiences as a migrant and the Waray-speaking communities in the capital.

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