KINSHIP NETWORK

IN REDUCING DISASTER RISK IN A COLLECTIVIST CULTURE

Enrique G. ORACION, Ph.D.
Silliman University
Dumaguete City, Philippines

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Introduction

- Disaster, either natural or human-induced hazards, is a sudden and destructive phenomenon
- Sequence of drastic impact of natural hazard: PRINCIPAL (e.g. typhoon) and CONSEQUENTIAL (e.g. flooding, food scarcity)
- Require different modes of preparedness or responses to CONSEQUENCES or IMPACT
- Perceived "stubbornness" of disaster-stricken opens up question what really keeps them strong and confident to REMAIN with limited economic resources and capacities

Kinship and collectivist culture

CLOSE KINSHIP is one indicator of a COLLECTIVIST culture

Philippines has relatives traced bilaterally—PATERNAL and MATERNAL— including those by RELIGIOUS rituals

Small rural village possibly has most residents related by CONSANGUINITY or AFFINITY

Networks of families promote cooperation, solidarity and SURVIVAL, both biologically and socially, forged by unwritten pact

"Collective consciousness" enhanced by kinship ties become a SOCIAL SECURITY BOND in times of disasters

Filipino culture as collectivist

Filipinos belong to a collectivist culture evident in social dynamics and sense of BELONGINGNESS during relief distribution in Typhoon Yolanda-affected Philippines

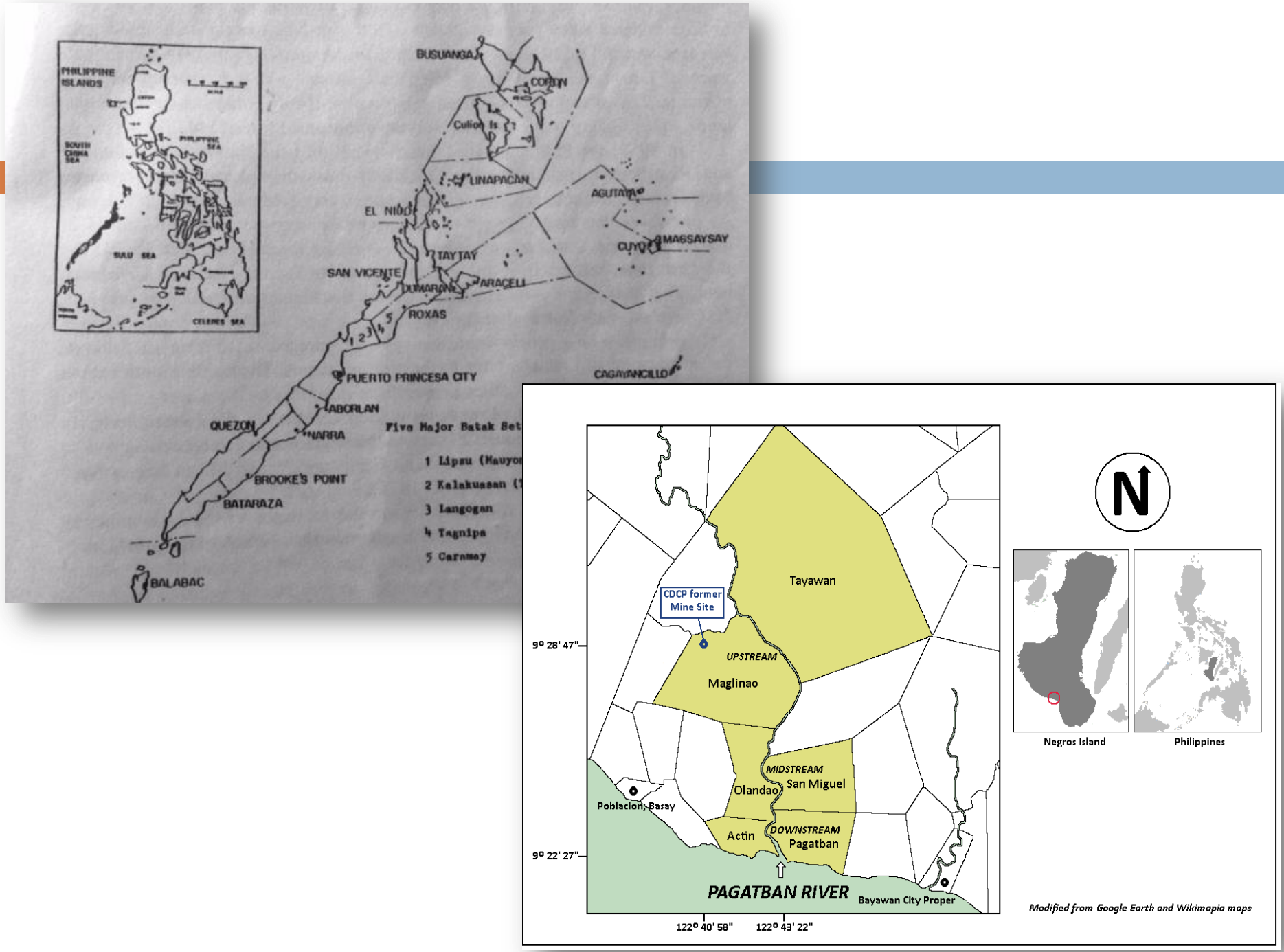
When SCARCITY becomes critical collectivist value has limits and assistance is reduced to CLOSEST relatives

Closest to BLOOD relatives away from relatives by affinity

Philippine cases

Indigenous people in Palawan called the *Batak* (Cadeliña 1985)

Riverside communities in rural Negros (Oracion 2015)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2 Kalakuasan (
3 Langogan
4 Tagnipa
5 Caramay
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Tayawan
UPSTREAM
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MIDSTREAM
Olandao
San Miguel
Poblacion, Basay
Actin
DOWNSTREAM
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PAGATBAN RIVER
Bayawan City Proper
9º 28' 47"
9º 22' 27"
122º 40' 58"
122º 43' 22"
N
Negros Island
Philippines
Modified from Google Earth and Wikimapia maps

Inter-household food sharing among indigenous people

SHARING is common in Filipino communities

FOOD is a common item shared with amount dictated by links

Batak community can show the **AUTHENTIC** features of food sharing; they are less exposed to or less contaminated by other cultures

Food sharing is both through **DIRECT** (immediately in consumable form) and **INDIRECT** (instrumental) modes

AFFECTING factors

context of sharing, types of food, family life-cycle stage, kinship proximity and geographical distance

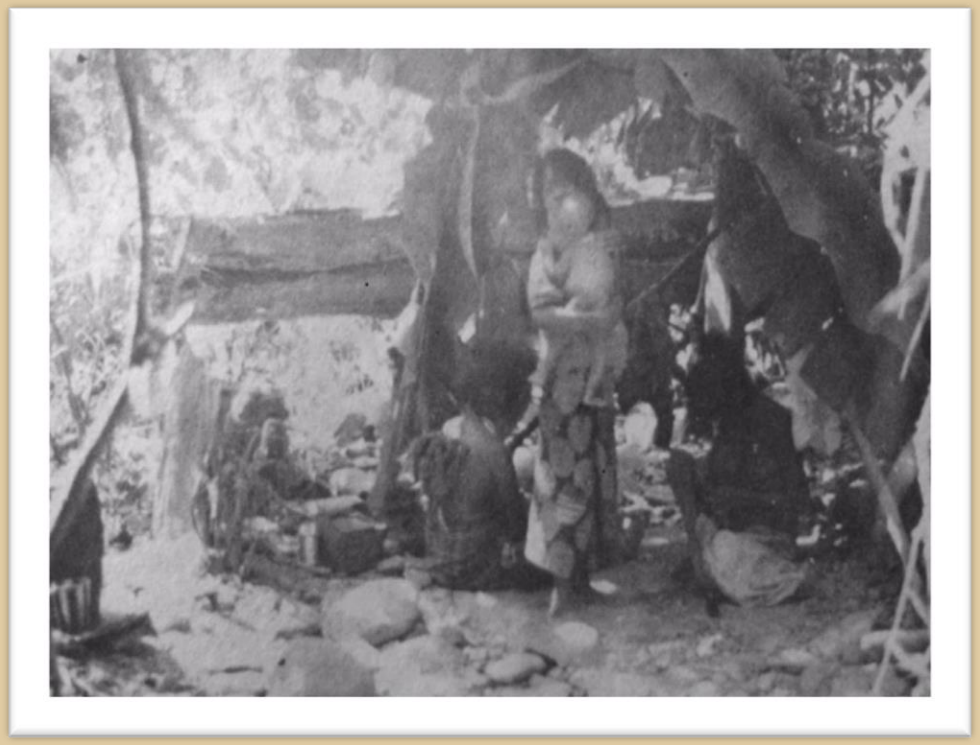
Family life-cycle

Stage 1= newly married couple

Stage 2= with small children

Stage 3= with more number of growing children

Stage 4= couple of advanced age without children



Contexts of food sharing

Relative food ABUNDANCE: harvest and post-harvest

1. **GENEROUS food sharing**
2. **diffused distribution and geographical distance opens SOCIAL REPOSITORY of food for future use**
3. **debt of GRATITUDE widens**

SCARCITY of food supply: pre-harvest

1. **generosity DECLINES but varies with life-cycle stages**
2. **food giving REDUCES**
3. **more receiving for households with high DEPENDENCY ratio and couple of ADVANCED age**

Disaster risk (DR) reduction

Disaster risk is a function of hazards, exposure and vulnerability (DR= H x E x V)

Food scarcity is a SURVIVAL problem and disastrous

AGRICULTURAL CYCLE primarily determines it but made worse by TYPHOONS and DROUGHTS

SUCCESS is relative to the networks established during periods of food abundance

CLOSEST kin and those living nearest the givers benefit more from food sharing

Kinship network is basically a MEANS for family survival in times of disaster where food is a priority

Kinship and networks of assistance in rural Philippines

- Pagatban riverside communities show some SIMILARITIES with Batak in extending assistance
- Food scarcity was due to FLOODING during strong typhoons
- WIDE distribution of relatives reveals the potential of kinship network as source of food assistance
- Network of assistance is resorted to when EXTERNAL AIDS are limited or not promptly received

Table 1. Relatives of Households Across Sections of the River (Multiple response)

Relatives	Upstream (%)	Midstream (%)	Downstream (%)	Total (%)
Paternal	31 (77.50)	33 (82.50)	30 (75.00)	94 (78.33)
Maternal	27 (67.50)	33 (82.50)	26 (65.00)	86 (71.67)
Ritual	16 (40.00)	20 (50.00)	29 (72.50)	65 (54.17)
None	4 (10.00)	-	2 (5.00)	6 (5.00)

Source: Oracion (2015)

Food assistance

15% of the 120 households received assistance from kinship networks

Kinship assistance is significant to biological survival and preservation of collectivist values

Common forms of assistance:

money, food items and labor (repair of houses and boats)

Helped affected households recover and provided meanings to kinship network

Variations in assisting

More households received assistance from MATERNAL relatives followed by paternal relatives, least from ritual relatives

Shows that "blood is THICKER than water" and more NURTURING stance of women or of mothers

MIDSTREAM households received assistance compared to upstream and downstream households

Amount of DAMAGE on farms and other properties at midsection explains direction of extending assistance

River flooding and damages

Why midstream households more VULNERABLE to flash floods and overflow of water during typhoons that reached up to about a kilometer beyond the banks?

Thirty years ago there was a copper MINING company near the upstream section of the river

CLOSED after four years due to financial management problem; world price of copper dropped

But prior to the closure it already caused damages:

physical ALTERATIONS of the mountains for roads

use of OPEN PIT technology ERODED the soil down the river

Physical alterations

Anecdotal reports about the river:

- **BEFORE mining: deep, pristine, and abundant**
- **AFTER mining: shallow and grayish due to siltation and sedimentation, turned midsection to chokepoint**
- **NOW without mining: rushing water goes up and beyond the riverbanks and into the farms**

Flash flooding also occurred downstream but overflowing was SELDOM; already at the mouth of the river; excess water goes directly into the sea

Marks of damages

Sections of the river

Extent and cost of damage

- About 42 percent admittedly experienced the destructive impacts of river flooding, majority from midstream (77.50%)
- Chi-square test shows significant association between household location and exposure to the impact of flooding
- Result supports earlier claim that flooding and overflowing of the river had severely affected the midstream households

Estimated damage cost

Estimated total damage cost was Php 63,602.27 (US$ 1,439.97) from the recollection of respondents

Relative to the total damage cost

1. **midstream households (41.63%)**
2. **upstream households (40.33%)**
3. **downstream households (18.04%)**

Nature of the loss

1. **farm animals (39.39%)**
2. **fishing boats (24.34%)**
3. **farm crops (15.88%)**
4. **farmlands (12.45%)**
5. **houses (7.94%)**

Note: US$ 1 = Php 44.20

Conclusion

Humans cannot prevent natural hazards (e.g. typhoon) but its consequence (e.g. food scarcity) can be overcome

1. food assistance from humanitarian groups
2. may not come on time due to transport problem
3. not enough to all affected households

Tension between the assisting groups and victims may erupt in regards to relief distribution but locals have own support network

1. to keep them psychologically alive
2. to restore their sense of internal balance

Conclusion

Therefore, this paper concludes

1. **kinship assistance is first line of defense**
2. **may be integrated into the DRRM program**
3. **practical where collective consciousness is strong**
4. **not only a cultural obligation; also a resource**

The appreciation of kinship networking by DRRM experts:

1. **enhance disaster preparedness**
2. **generate immediate help**
3. **harmonize distribution of external assistance**

References Cited

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THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

Enrique G. Oracion, Ph.D.
Professor in Anthropology
Dean- University Graduate Programs
Silliman University
Dumaguete City, Philippines

enriquegoracion@su.edu.ph