

**DECENTRALIZED DISASTER MANAGEMENT in ACTION:  
A CASE STUDY of the PHILIPPINES' DISASTER RISK  
REDUCTION MANAGEMENT ACT'S  
(REPUBLIC ACT 10121)  
IMPLEMENTATION in the ILOCOS REGION**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the effects of decentralizing disaster risk reduction and management in the Philippines, with a focus on the Ilocos Region as a case study. I explore how national decentralization policies, particularly Republic Act 10121, affect the region's post-typhoon rehabilitation and recovery operations. Decentralization theory suggests that transferring government powers, resources, and political authority to the local level can enhance the government's ability to address its constituents' needs. Using the administrative, fiscal, and political dimensions of decentralization as my theoretical framework, I examine the advantages and disadvantages resulting from the current decentralized policies and practices of provincial offices in the region. The findings are derived from interviews with provincial DRRM heads analyzed through thematic coding in NVIVO. The findings reveal that imbalances in administrative, political and fiscal dimensions limit the effectiveness of decentralized policies. While administrative responsibilities and political authority are strongly devolved, weak fiscal mechanisms exacerbate inequalities between large and small localities. Inequitable fiscal mechanisms leave small localities with weakened capacities, rendering them unable to fulfill administrative responsibilities. Weak local level capacities then create an environment where local-national level patronage networks thrive due to strong political decentralization but limited fiscal autonomy of local government levels. These findings suggest a disconnect between the transfer of administrative duties and the fiscal and political realities of local governments. Future research and policy reforms must explore ways to bridge this gap by integrating political dynamics into decentralization and creating more equitable systems for financial distribution.

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## Acronyms

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| DENR       | Department of Environment and Natural Resources          |
| DILG       | Department of the Interior and Local Government          |
| DND        | Department of National Defense                           |
| DOST       | Department of Science and Technology                     |
| DRRM       | Disaster Risk Reduction and Management                   |
| DRRMO      | Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office            |
| DSWD       | Department of Social Welfare and Development             |
| IRA        | Internal Revenue Allotment                               |
| LDRRMF     | Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund        |
| LDRRMO     | Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office      |
| LGC        | Local Government Code                                    |
| LGU        | Local Government Unit                                    |
| NDCC       | National Disaster Coordinating Council                   |
| NDRP       | National Disaster Response Plan                          |
| NDRRMC     | National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council  |
| NDRRM Fund | National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund     |
| NEDA       | National Economic and Development Authority              |
| OCD        | Office of Civil Defense                                  |
| OECD       | Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development    |
| PDNA       | Post-Disaster Needs Assessment                           |
| PDRRMO     | Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office |
| PSWDO      | Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office         |
| QRF        | Quick Response Fund                                      |
| RA         | Republic Act   |
| SFDRR      | Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction             |
| UNDRR      | United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction        |

## Glossary

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Augmentation                     | Refers to the provision of additional resources (relief or equipment) or personnel to affected local government units. In the NDRP, defined in contrast to assumption, which refers to national government takeover of DRRM responsibilities.                              |
| <i>Barangay</i>                  | The smallest political and administrative level of the Philippines. Roughly translates to village or community.  |
| Bypassing                        | Though not officially defined in any laws, the term is used in Philippine DRRM literature and among Philippine DRRM officials to describe the exclusion or failure to communicate with a government level that should be consulted in reporting or augmentation processes. |
| Decentralization                 | In this thesis, refers to the transfer of responsibility (administrative), financial mechanisms (fiscal) and decision-making authority (political) from the national level to the local level.   |
| Local Government Code (the Code) | Implemented in 1991, this law defines the powers and responsibilities of local government units in the Philippines.  |
| Local government unit (LGU)      | Term used to collectively refer to political units of the Philippines under the national level. Includes provinces, cities, municipalities and <i>barangays</i> .  |
| Municipality                     | Second smallest political and administrative level of the Philippines, under the province but above the <i>barangay</i> .  |
| Prepositioning                   | Strategy of positioning resources to certain areas in advance for local governments who may need support when disasters are anticipated.   |
| Province                         | Second-largest political and administrative level of the Philippines under the national government.  |

Republic Act (RA) 10121

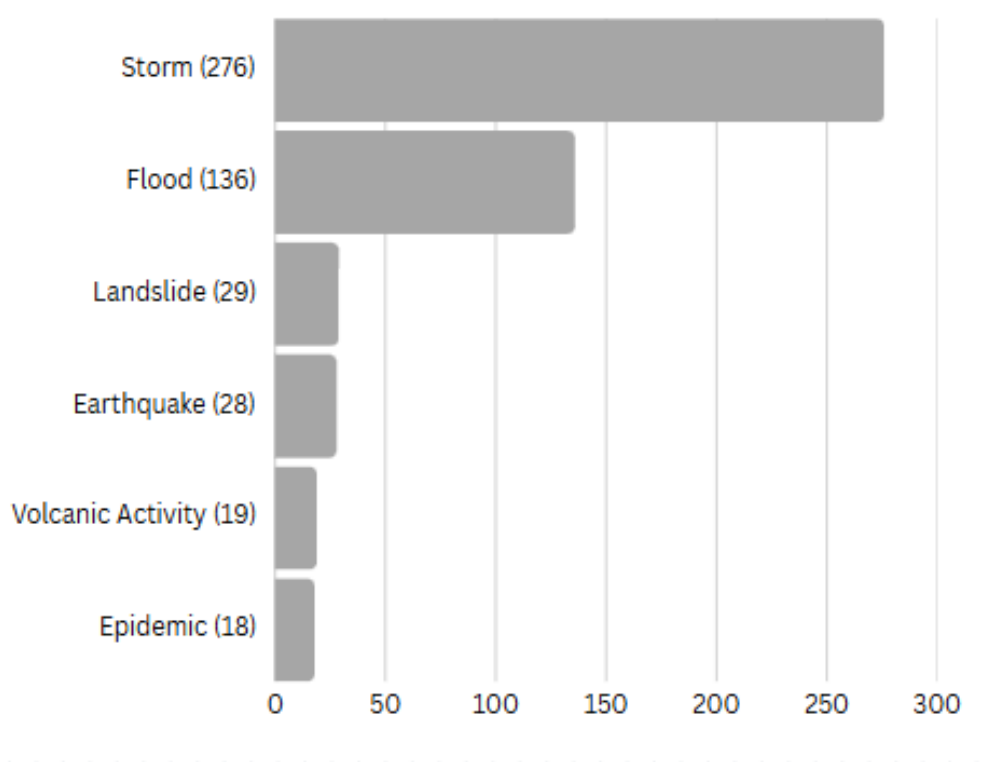
This law implemented in 2010 strengthens disaster risk reduction in the Philippines through the institutionalization of the disaster risk reduction management plan and framework, coordinating DRRM activities across all involved sectors and agencies.

Region

An administrative level of the Philippines above the province without any political powers. Tasked with coordination between national agencies and LGUs.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

The Philippines is no stranger to disasters. The country's geographic location makes it susceptible to various hazards, especially floods and storms (World Bank, 2024). The World Bank's Climate Change Knowledge Portal shows that the Philippines has experienced more than five hundred disasters since 1990 which have resulted in 70,000 casualties and twenty-three billion dollars in damages (World Bank, 2024). Of these different hazards, storms and floods occur most often in the Philippines, as seen in Figure 1.



*Figure 1: Average Annual Hazard Occurrence in the Philippines Between 1980 and 2020 (World Bank, 2024)*

Hazards and disasters are not the same – a distinction that is important in the Philippine context. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction defines disasters as “a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity” (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2007). The typhoons regularly experienced by the country, therefore, fall under hazards, but it is the socio-political factors that make these typhoons’ impacts a disaster.

In the Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft’s World Risk Report from 2021-2024, the Philippines has consistently ranked with the highest disaster risk due to high exposure to hazards, high vulnerability of the population and lack of adaptation strategies to lessen risk. To manage these disaster risks, the Philippines implemented Republic Act (RA) 10121, the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010 which defines decentralized DRRM in the Philippines.

Republic Act 10121 defines the functions of the different government levels that were created in the decentralization reform, Local Government Code 1991. These two laws define the current practice of DRRM, but their lack of integration results in overlapping of functions and limited autonomy of local government units (Gera, 2018).

The limited autonomy of local government units is a recurring issue in Philippine DRRM, where the vast majority of DRRM functions, roles and responsibilities have been devolved to these lower government levels (Blanco, 2015) Despite their large role, local governments lack resources, equipment and training to perform their responsibilities (Florano, 2014). This limitation is compounded by the need to address other social vulnerabilities, such as the low socio-economic status, low housing quality and low access to basic amenities which further increase disaster risk (Lloyd et al., 2022). Together, these challenges undermine local resilience-building efforts (Walch, 2018).

All these studies highlight the disconnect between the institutionalization and practice of DRRM in the Philippines, where current policies and practical realities limit lower levels of government from performing their DRRM-related duties. To this end, my thesis aims to contribute to literature analyzing the links between Philippine governance and DRRM through a case study. The case study explores the implementation of both the 1991 Local Government Code and Republic Act 10121 and how these two policies have shaped the practice of DRRM in the province. I set my case study in the Ilocos Region which while highly exposed to hazard risks, manages to maintain high levels of resiliency in local communities (PDC Global, 2021).

The overarching question this thesis aims to answer is: How does decentralized governance of disasters in the Philippines affect the post-typhoon rehabilitation and recovery operations performed by the Ilocos Region's provincial DRRM offices?

I break this main question into three smaller ones to help guide the study's objectives.

1. How does Republic Act 10121 in the Philippines devolve responsibilities of disaster recovery and rehabilitation to lower governmental levels in the country's Ilocos Region?
2. How do practices of DRRM provincial offices align with or diverge from the official frameworks or policies outlined in Republic Act 10121?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of decentralizing administrative, fiscal, and political DRRM responsibilities in the Philippines, particularly in the context of post-typhoon recovery and rehabilitation?

The study's findings are key to understanding post-typhoon recovery and rehabilitation within the Philippines' decentralized governance. This thesis outlines the shortcomings and successes of the current DRRM system. This thesis also contributes to wider discussions on decentralization by highlighting advantages and disadvantages of decentralized DRRM, serving as a reference for local government units who seek research as part of their policy improvement initiatives.

To answer these questions, I introduce the different concepts and theories that will serve as the analytical framework of my thesis. In Chapter 2, I define decentralization with a focus on its three dimensions: administrative, political, and fiscal. I apply these dimensions in an in-depth review of the Local Government Code of 1991, the cornerstone decentralization reform of the Philippines. I also introduce the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, which describes internationally considered best practices, and which I use to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages resulting from the decentralization of Philippine DRRM.

In Chapter 3, I examine key provisions in Republic Act 10121 and how they reflect the decentralization principles outlined in the Local Government Code of 1991. I demonstrate which key provisions of Republic Act 10121 reflect the administrative, fiscal and political dimensions of decentralization. I also explain my choice of the recovery and rehabilitation pillar and the Ilocos Region as the setting of my case study.

Chapter 4 outlines the methods I used to gather the data for my case study and the analysis process that produced my results. I describe my research instruments, fieldwork and coding processes. I highlight key challenges I encountered while interviewing my chosen participants, the Ilocos Region's Provincial DRRM Office Heads. Most importantly, I demonstrate the relevance of the concepts and policies discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 to my coding process.

Next, Chapter 5 presents the findings from my interviews which respond to the first two sub questions of my thesis. First, I discuss the way Republic Act 10121 devolved responsibilities of disaster recovery and rehabilitation to lower government levels (the province and municipalities) in the Ilocos Region. I also discuss how the practices of these provincial offices align or diverge from the official provisions of Republic Act 10121. This chapter provides a clearer understanding of how the implementation of decentralization policies link to alignment and variations in local government practices related to DRRM.

Chapter 6 explores the advantages and disadvantages resulting from decentralizing DRRM based on the experiences of Ilocos Region PDRRMO heads. The chapter uses the Sendai Framework as a basis for evaluating whether current practices may be seen as an advantage or disadvantage of the decentralized system. The chapter reveals how dimensions of decentralization interact to produce advantages and disadvantages in the current DRRM practice and system of the Philippines.

Lastly, Chapter 7 concludes this thesis with a concise summary of the research findings and a list of key recommendations for future research on the subject.

## Chapter 2: The Dimensions of Decentralization and the Local Government Code

### 2.1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the concept of decentralization, focusing on administrative, political, and fiscal dimensions, and examines their impact on public services like Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM). It reviews the Local Government Code of 1991, detailing its influence on decentralization in the Philippines, and introduces the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, which guides the case study. The chapter evaluates how these frameworks align or diverge from decentralization practices in the Ilocos Region, setting the stage for the thesis on regional recovery and rehabilitation.

### 2.2. The Three Dimensions of Decentralization

Loosely defined, decentralization refers to “the transfer of both authority and responsibility from higher levels to lower levels of government” (Ozmen, 2014, p. 415). Historically, the roots of the decentralization process undergone by various states in the last half century can be traced to the loss of the centralized state’s legitimacy (Bardham, 2022). Where centralized regimes proved effective during the colonialist expansion of earlier centuries until the Post-Second World War period, this effectiveness waned as corporatism and charismatic rule by politicians failed to adapt to changing economic conditions, such as the oil shocks of the ‘70s (Manor, 1999). Global South attributed these problems to the central government’s inability to efficiently distribute resources to regions according to their need (Rondinelli et al., 1983). These failures of the strong centralized governments at the time pushed various states to experiment with decentralization, and eventually, led to the widespread implementation of decentralized governance worldwide.

Today, decentralization has been named one of the most significant reforms in the last 50 years. Implemented properly, decentralization can improve public sector efficiency, democratization, and political stability (OECD, 2019). One important step towards the proper implementation of decentralization includes the recognition that decentralization is a “multidimensional concept”. Decentralization encompasses three dimensions: administrative, fiscal, and political.

**Administrative decentralization** refers to the distribution of public services across the different levels of government (Chaudhary & Iyer, 2024). Administrative decentralization is concerned primarily with the organizational structure of the government: the subdivisions of government and the distribution of responsibilities (Engdaw, 2022). This distribution also considers issues like the training of personnel, the resources available to offices and the mechanisms that hold public servants accountable (Hutchcroft, 2001). This thesis defines administrative decentralization with the following questions:

1. Who is responsible for providing which services and implementing policies at the lower levels of government?

2. What resources and training do local governments have allowing them to provide public services?
3. What mechanisms allow central authorities to oversee policy implementation at the local level?

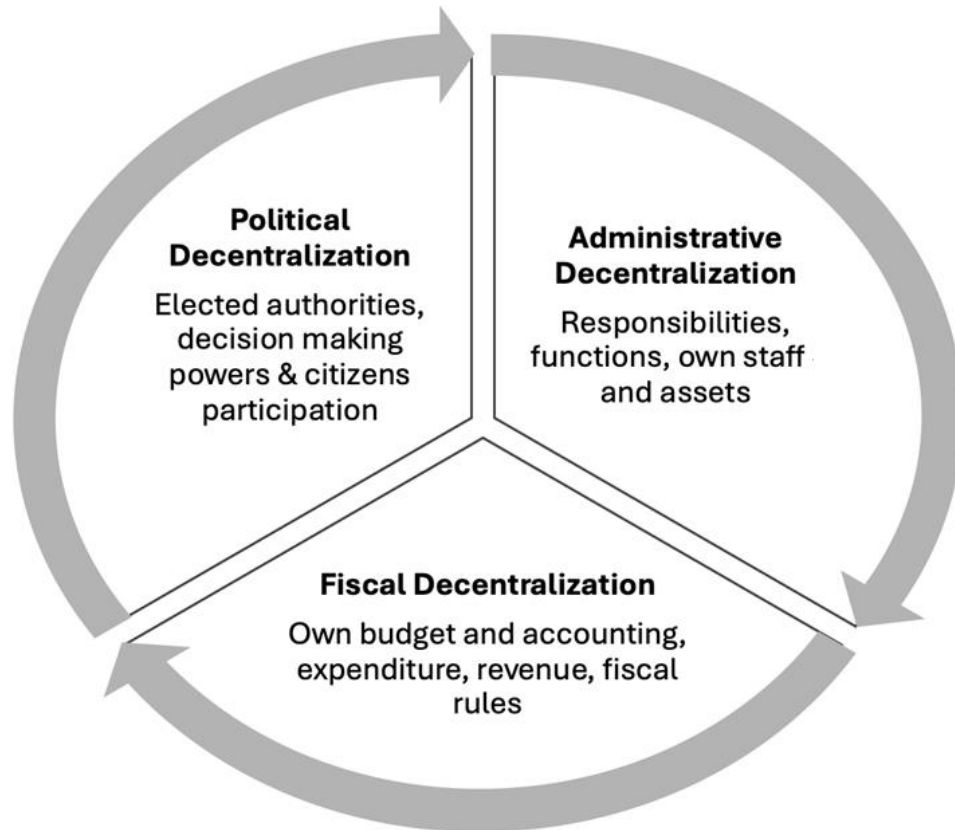
**Fiscal decentralization** focuses on the resources that local governments possess to fulfill the mandates accorded to them by administrative decentralization. It is primarily concerned with the policies defining the subnational governments' revenue streams (Ozmen, 2014). The idea behind fiscal decentralization is that through giving subnational governments the ability to establish their revenue streams, their independence and capability shall be increased for the benefit of smaller local governments and their constituents (Sofilda et al., 2023). Fiscal decentralization literature identifies two possible sources of fiscal resources: local taxation systems or transfers from higher government levels to lower ones (De Mello, 2000). I derive two main questions defining fiscal decentralization:

1. What are the mechanisms that define the transfer of funding from central to local governments?
2. How do local governments generate revenue to fund public services?

Lastly, **political decentralization** refers to decentralization reforms that aim to increase citizen participation in the government by giving the people power to choose their own leaders (Ozmen, 2014). Through increasing citizens' participation in the state, it becomes easier to hold government officials accountable to fulfill their mandates (Faguet, 2014). Furthermore, this dimension is equally concerned with the decision-making authority of subnational governments, or the degree to which they can make decisions without needing the approval of the central government (Treisman, 1999). I will summarize the definition of this dimension with the following questions:

1. Who holds the decision-making power in the decentralized government?
2. To what extent can local government officials make decisions independently, and when must they rely on the central government for support, approval, or funding?

These dimensions, responsibilities, resources, and powers are closely interconnected, and the success of decentralization reforms depends on the balance between these dimensions (OECD, 2019). Figure 2 represents the relationship between these three dimensions. The benefits derived from each dimension cannot occur without the simultaneous occurrence of dimensions.



*Figure 2: Dimensions of Decentralization*

For example, political decentralization without fiscal decentralization would affect local leaders' capacity to address local problems (Bojanic & Collins, 2021). The loss of one dimension may overstate the effects of other dimensions, destabilizing the effects of the entire decentralization reform (Saavedra, 2010). For example, fiscal decentralization might result in less administrative decentralization, if along with the transfer of funding, central governments increased their bureaucratic and regulatory controls (Schneider, 2003). These examples highlight how an optimal mix of different dimensions is necessary to maximize the positive outcomes of decentralization reforms.

I apply the theoretical dimensions of decentralization to policy, analyzing the manifestations of each of these dimensions in the DRRM policies of the Philippines. I analyze first how these dimensions interact with each other and consequently, how these interactions affect recovery and rehabilitation operations in the Philippines. This simple framework of the three dimensions of decentralization serves as the primary analytical reference for this thesis.

### **2.3. Philippine Decentralization through the Local Government Code of 1991**

Decentralization's history in the Philippines is rich and long, dating as early as the Malolos Constitution from 1898 to 1945, which empowered the municipal level by granting them

legislative powers (Brillantes, 2011). The Malolos Constitution institutionalized local powers according to the political divisions left by colonial Spanish rule in the Philippines, where the capital, Manila exerted control over the entire archipelago. The Malolos Constitution remained active even under the Americans who introduced democratic elections for local executive positions. However, the strong localized control also created the rise of bossism where local politicians were also members of political dynasties that have control over certain areas (Verbrugge, 2015). Decentralization provisions under the Malolos Constitution would persist until the 1973 Constitution where through his declaration of Martial Law, former President Ferdinand Marcos Sr. suppressed local elections (Brillantes, 1998).

Re-centralization would continue until the overthrowing of Marcos' dictatorship in 1986 and the subsequent efforts for democratization. As part of these efforts, former President Corazon Aquino implemented Republic Act 7160, the Local Government Code of 1991. This law saw the rapid devolution of services, responsibilities, and decision-making authority to the local governments of the Philippines, and for the last three decades, have remained the cornerstone policy defining decentralization in the country (Brillantes, 2018).

The Local Government Code of 1991 (hereafter "the Code") was hailed as revolutionary piece of legislation that broke long trends of centralization in Southeast Asia (Atienza & Go, 2023). The Code has five key features. First, the Code transferred service delivery to the Local Government Units (LGUs). Second, the Code transferred regulatory and licensing powers to LGUs. Third, the Code increased the LGUs' taxation powers and their share of national taxes. Fourth, it strengthened the participation of non-governmental organizations and people's organizations. Lastly, the Code allowed LGUs to finance their own investments (Tadem & Atienza, 2023, p. 41). These five key features underscore the different dimensions of decentralization discussed as follows.

First, administrative decentralization is enshrined in the Code through the devolution of government functions to the country's administrative divisions. These administrative divisions include the provinces, municipalities, and *barangays*. Figure 3 presents these administrative divisions.

# Administrative Divisions of the Philippines

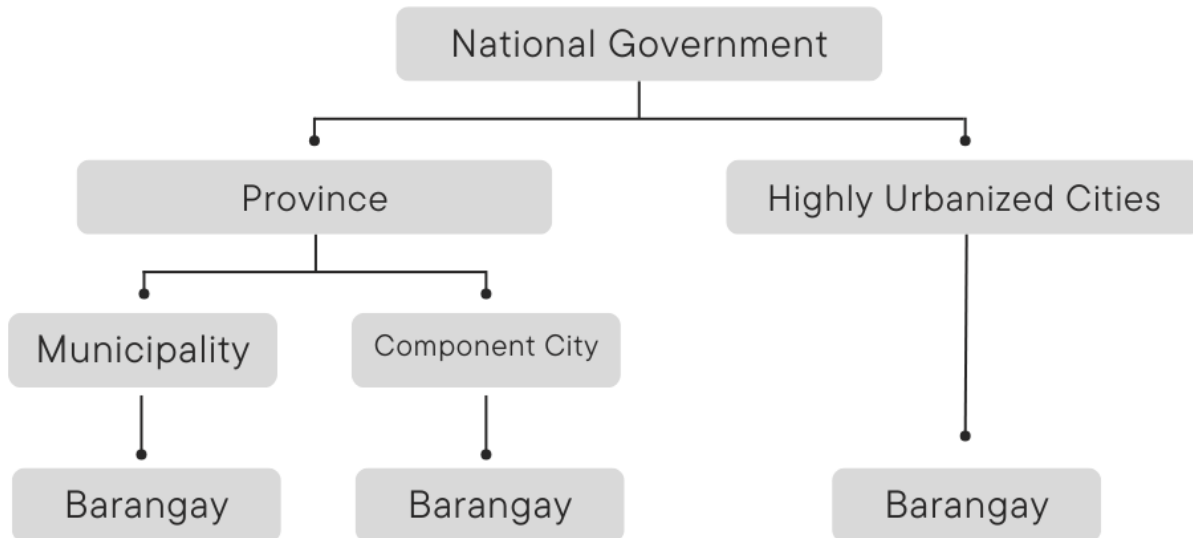


Figure 3: Administrative Divisions of the Philippines (Atienza et al., 2019)

In some cases, highly urbanized municipalities may be considered component cities, but remain under provincial supervision. Some higher-income cities may also acquire autonomous status, freeing them from provincial supervision. Philippine regions are between provinces and the national level, but they serve a statistical purpose than governance one (Shair-Rosenfield, 2016). The Code's implementation devolved services such as agriculture, environment, health, social welfare and education and public works to these lower government levels to encourage development in localities far from the capital (Berman, 2011). The Code also formally devolved responsibility for DRRM to local government leaders such as the mayor, governor, health officer and the Provincial Board, among other actors.

To fulfill these devolved responsibilities, the Code provided for an automatic release of national funds to the LGU, through fiscal decentralization reforms (Brillantes et al., 2011). Through the Code, subnational governments were granted broader taxation powers and were also provided with a specific share of the national wealth through the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) (Uchimura & Suzuki, 2012). The Code established three primary revenue streams for the new administrative subdivisions which included (1) local taxes, (2) IRA transfers, and (3) external sources such as loans, bonds, or the private sector (Berman, 2011). Of these three streams, I focus on local taxes and the Internal Revenue Allotment since both mechanisms relate more to the Philippine governments' decentralization than the participation of external actors like NGOs or the private

sector. Local taxes generally refer to powers granted to local governments to collect property taxes, business taxes and other minor taxes from its constituents (Tans, 2020). The IRA refers to the subnational units' share of national funds, determined through a formula that depended on the government units' population, land area and equal sharing (Diokno, 2012). Table 1 presents how the Code 1991 defines IRA in the Philippines:

*Table 1: IRA Criteria Before and After Code 1991 (Diokno, 2012)*

**IRA CRITERIA: BEFORE AND AFTER CODE 1991**

| <b>CRITERIA</b>       | Before 1991                          | After 1991                           |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>SIZE</b>           | 20% of all internal taxes            | 40% of all internal taxes            |
| <b>PREDICTABILITY</b> | Formula-based, discretionary         | Formula-based, mandatory             |
| <b>DETERMINANTS</b>   | Population, land area, equal sharing | Population, land area, equal sharing |

However, provisions of the Code related to the IRA was recently affected by the Mandanas-Garcia Ruling, which sought to clearly define “national taxes” from which the IRA is based. Previously, the IRA was derived from National Internal Revenue Taxes (NIRT) alone, but did not include other national taxes such as customs duties (Nisperos et al., 2024). From 2022, the Mandanas-Garcia Ruling made it so that the IRA was derived from all forms of national taxes.

The Mandanas-Garcia Ruling was also supported by Executive Order 138 dated June 2021. EO 138 aimed for the full devolution of executive functions to the local government through the creation of devolution transition plans. EO 138 does not explicitly mention DRRM as an area that would see increased devolution, but the Annex B of the document does record Republic Act 10121 as a devolution policy implemented after the Code 1991.

Certainly, the Mandanas-Garcia Ruling and EO 138 will impact Philippine DRRM moving forward. However, since the policy is newly implemented, existing studies on its effects are still lacking. Given that the ruling was expected to fully take effect by 2024, its absence in the case study, which covers 2011-2023 demonstrates this very limitation.

This thesis will take note that the Mandanas-Garcia ruling changed the amount of IRA available to LGUs in the Philippines but will also acknowledge that for the most part of the period covered by the case study, the ruling had yet to fully apply and was not mentioned by the participants.

The local revenue streams defined by the Code are of core importance to the case study since these same revenue streams serve as the source of funding for all operations of the provincial and municipal DRRM offices.

Lastly, the Code also established political decentralization reforms in the Philippines. Among the chief political decentralization reforms in the country was the appointment of local officials. Chief executives of the local government were now voted for by the people and these chief executives had the power to appoint local officials paid for by local funds. For example, where budget officers, local treasurers or assessors were previously national employees, they became LGU appointees after the Code (Legaspi, 2001). The scope of the political powers of local chief executives links back to the earlier discussed administrative divisions set by the Code. Component cities, which are still administratively under provinces, must still vote local chief executives under the provincial elections, whereas autonomous highly urbanized cities have a separate election for their leaders. Cities, therefore, have larger political power compared to provinces and municipalities (Brillantes & Cabo, 2006). In general, these political decentralization reforms aimed to increase the decision-making authority of local-level leaders, who are positioned closest to the people under their jurisdiction, best represent these peoples' needs (Fauguet, 2014). This decision-making authority is most relevant to the case study on DRRM, where I will analyze the extent to which local government leaders can define the DRRM operations under their locality, without the outside influence of national government actors.

Administrative, fiscal and political dimensions of decentralization interact to determine the government's effective fulfillment of responsibilities. For example, the Magna Carta Benefits for Health Workers Act of 1992 shows the intersection of fiscal and administrative decentralization since it required health workers in local government public hospitals to receive the same compensation and benefits as those in national hospitals. However, these benefits were funded from local governments' budgets, leading to financial and capacity strain on LGUs (Capuno, 2017). Although decentralization was strong in the large devolution of responsibilities, it was accompanied by weak fiscal decentralization since LGUs funding capacities were not increased. The disconnect led to conflicts and strain on lower governmental units. This example perfectly encapsulates the type of analysis I will perform in this thesis, demonstrating how these same dimensions manifest and interact but in the DRRM domain, using the perspective of the provincial level offices as a case study.

I further contextualize the administrative, fiscal, and political dimensions of the Code's provisions to the provincial level. Table 2 summarizes the relevant and key provisions of the Code at the provincial level, illustrating the political powers, capacity and responsibilities accorded to provinces, from which they derive authority and funding to fulfill their DRRM responsibilities.

Table 2: The Local Government Code and the Dimensions of Decentralization

| <b>The Local Government Code and the Dimensions of Decentralization</b> |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Types</b>  | <b>Defining Questions</b>   | <b>Local Government Code</b>  |
| <b><i>Political Decentralization</i></b>                                | <p>Who holds the decision-making power in the decentralized government?</p> <p>To what extent can local government officials make decisions <i>dependent or autonomous</i> to the central government?</p> | <p>The Provincial Governor, as the <b>chief executive</b> “exercises general supervision and control over all programs, projects, services and activities of the provincial government” (Section 465).</p> <p>Provinces shall “exercise powers as a political subdivision of the national government and as a corporate entity representing the inhabitants of its territory” (Section 15).</p>   |
| <b><i>Fiscal Decentralization</i></b>                                   | <p>What are the mechanisms that define the transfer of funding from central to local governments?</p> <p>How do local governments generate revenue to fund public services?</p>                           | <p>In the Philippines, local governments are entitled to 40% share in the national internal revenue taxes, of which provinces receive 23%. Allocation to provinces is then based on population size, land area and equal sharing (Section 284).</p> <p>Provinces may “impose and collect reasonable fees for services rendered” (Section 153) and “fix rates for the operation of public utilities owned, operated and maintained within their jurisdiction” (Section 154).</p> |
| <b><i>Administrative Decentralization</i></b>                           | <p>Who is responsible for providing which services and implementing policies at the lower levels of government?</p>   | <p>Provinces are responsible for improving agriculture and industry through research, enforcing environmental projects, managing health facilities, provincial jails, parks, and similar facilities as well</p>   |

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|--|--|--|
|  | <p>What resources and training do local governments have allowing them to provide public services?</p> <p>What mechanisms allow central authorities to oversee policy implementation at the local level?</p> | <p>as improving roads and bridges (Section 17).</p> <p>The chief executive of every local government unit shall be responsible for human resources and development in his unit. Training of personnel, however, in the Code is also assigned to relevant officers of certain departments (Section 77).</p> <p>National agencies and offices with project implementation functions shall coordinate with one another and with the provinces. Agencies should ensure the participation of the provinces in planning and implementation (Section 25).</p> |
|--|--|--|

Table 2 summarizes the limits and the scope of provincial responsibility, funding sources and decision-making authority, all which equally defines the scope of provincial DRRM operations which were the focus of the case study.

**2.4. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and Decentralized DRRM**

First, the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction refers to an international document adopted at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015 with the primary objective of “substantially reducing disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihood and health of persons, businesses, communities and countries” (UNDRR). The Sendai Framework represents the internationally recognized standards in implementing DRRM plans and strategies worldwide. The framework serves as the tool for evaluating current DRRM practices or policies, using its seven targets, four priorities and thirteen guiding principles.

Notably, the Sendai Framework emphasizes that disaster risk reduction (DRR) requires shared responsibility between DRRM stakeholders, including local governments. It underscores the importance of engaging local levels and clearly defining their roles as a key guiding principle (Section 19e). More importantly, the Framework advocates for the empowerment of local governments by providing “resources, incentives, and decision-making responsibilities as appropriate” (Section 19f). This call for local government empowerment through resource allocation, incentives, and decision-making aligns closely with the various dimensions of decentralization discussed earlier.

This section links the Sendai Framework to the dimensions of decentralization. Administrative decentralization is supported by the Framework's emphasis on shared responsibility between central and local governments, the development of local plans, and mechanisms to monitor progress (Sendai Framework, Section 19b, Section 27). Fiscal decentralization is addressed in Section 30, which stresses the allocation of resources for DRRM operations. Political decentralization is reflected in Section 27f, where community representatives are granted decision-making powers in DRRM through legal frameworks. These examples highlight the synergies between decentralization reforms and the Sendai Framework, making the latter a useful tool for evaluating decentralization's impact on DRRM.

The Sendai Framework will guide the evaluation of decentralization's impact on the Ilocos Region's PDRRMO operations, focusing on principles like resource allocation and decision-making powers. Positive themes aligning with localized DRRM objectives will be seen as advantages, while those diverging from the Framework will be viewed as disadvantages. By connecting local practices to Sendai's best practices, this thesis will contribute insights on policy implementation and practice at the local level, utilizing the Sendai Framework as the reference for assessment.

## **2.5. Conclusion**

This chapter defines the three dimensions of decentralization—administrative, fiscal, and political—and examines their interactions in determining the effectiveness of disaster-related services in the Philippines. I introduced the Local Government Code of 1991 which serves as the primary decentralization policy of the Philippines. I also introduced the Sendai Framework which is connected to decentralization through its promotion of local government empowerment. The next chapter connects the Code 1991 to Philippine DRRM by highlighting its links to the Disaster Risk Reduction Management Act of 2010 (Republic Act 10121).

## **Chapter 3: Decentralized Philippine DRRM in Republic Act 10121**

### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter examines decentralized disaster risk reduction policies in the Philippines through a detailed review of the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010 (Republic Act 10121), highlighting key provisions that demonstrate how the law decentralizes DRRM administratively, fiscally, and politically. The literature review is organized into three sections: the first connects Republic Act 10121 with decentralization through the Local Government Code, the second justifies the focus on recovery and rehabilitation by explaining the National DRRM plan's four pillars, and the third explains the selection of the Ilocos Region and typhoons as the case study focus. Together, these sections provide the context for the case study that informs the thesis findings.

### **3.2. Republic Act 10121 and the Decentralized DRRM of the Philippines**

The current DRRM system of the Philippines is defined by Republic Act 10121, the “Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010”. Signed under former President Arroyo, Republic Act 10121 aimed to create a paradigm-shift in the country's disaster response, promoting a proactive approach instead of a reactive approach (Florano et al., 2016, p. 132). To achieve this goal, Republic Act 10121 mandated the creation of a National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Plan (NDRRMP) which would guide disaster operations nationwide. Through Republic Act 10121 and the plan, DRRM was effectively institutionalized in the Philippines.

The institutionalization of DRRM through Republic Act 10121 required alignment with existing laws, including the Code 1991. This section gives emphasis to links between Republic Act 10121 and Code 1991.

Like the Code 1991, Republic Act 10121 also delineated agencies responsible for spearheading each of the thematic areas or pillars of DRRM. DRRM in the Philippines is led by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), previously known as the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC). Core members of the NDRRMC include (Section 5):

- Secretary of the Department of National Defense (DND) as Chairperson
- Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) as the Vice Chairperson for Disaster Preparedness.
- Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) as Vice Chairperson for Disaster Response.
- Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) as Vice Chairperson for Disaster Prevention and Mitigation.

- Director-General of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) as Vice Chairperson for Disaster Rehabilitation and Recovery

The leadership role of these national agencies in the NDRRMC is more focused on regulation, monitoring, and developing national plans than on actual DRRM operations. However, Section 6 of the law directs the NDRRMC to adopt a "community-based approach to DRRM," emphasizing the importance of local-level operations in the Philippines. Section 15 guides the relationship between the national level and local government units, stating that "the NDRRMC and Intermediary LDRRMCs shall always act as support to LGUs which have the primary responsibility as first disaster responders".

Local government units officially refer to provinces, municipalities, and *barangays*. To determine the lead LGU, the criteria listed in Republic Act 10121 are as follows:

- The *barangay* development council if only one *barangay* is affected
- The city/municipal DRRMC if two or more *barangays* are affected
- The provincial DRRMC if two or more cities or municipalities are affected.

Through these criteria and the reaffirmation that local government units are responsible for disaster response and recovery, Republic Act 10121 devolved DRRM responsibility to the country's lower government levels.

Local government responsibilities include design, program, and coordination of all DRRM activities according to the NDRRMC's guidelines. Local governments are also tasked with risk assessments, planning, reporting, information dissemination, creation warning systems, training, equipment, and supervision of local emergency teams (Section 12). These massive responsibilities all point to the significant role lower government levels play in on-the-ground DRRM operations.

Republic Act 10121 also granted political authority to local government leaders. Provincial DRRM offices were to be headed by the governor, the city or municipal DRRMOs to be headed by the mayor and the *punong barangay* for the BDRRMC (Section 12). As is the case with the Code 1991, these leaders were considered the local chief executives responsible for decision-making in DRRM activities within their jurisdiction.

Lastly, to support the devolution of responsibilities and decision-making powers to lower government levels, Republic Act 10121 also provided lower government levels with revenue streams to fulfill their mandates. First, Republic Act 10121 defines the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund (LDRRMF) as the primary funding source for local government units. The LDRRMF comes from the LGU's IRA, and the amount must not be less than 5% of this allotment. This fund is further subdivided into two parts: 30% for the Quick Response Fund, which serves as a stand-by fund for relief and recovery programs and 70% for all other DRRM-related

activities (Section 21). The LDRRMF, therefore, coming from a percentage of the IRA highlights the fiscal link between Republic Act 10121 and the earlier discussed Code 1991.

Another revenue stream for DRRM-related activities for localities is the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund (NDRRM Fund<sup>1</sup>). At the national level, this fund is allocated for all national-level DRRM activities. This allocation is decided and approved by the President of the Philippines, according to the recommendations of the NDRRMC. The NDRRM Fund can be allocated to subnational units in the country, provided that its utilization must be accounted for according to auditing rules. Where the LDRRMF serves as the available funding to local governments, the NDRRM Fund serves as the funds for augmenting operations. These two revenue streams represent the fiscal decentralization of DRRM in the Philippines.

The large decentralization of administrative responsibilities, political powers and fiscal resources to local government units required the establishment of monitoring and assessment mechanisms to ensure the accountability of these lower-level offices. Republic Act 10121 assigned monitoring responsibilities of all Local DRRM Offices (LDRRMO) to the Office of the Civil Defense (OCD). Representing the regional level, the Office of Civil Defense was tasked with planning and supervision. Therefore, decision-making and control over operations were indeed decentralized to the lower government levels, they still also had to comply with the reporting and monitoring mechanisms assigned to the Office of Civil Defense. Due to this reporting requirement, the Office of Civil Defense was also one of the most-mentioned actors in the case study.

This section has discussed Republic Act 10121 in the Philippines and the key provisions that resulted in the current decentralized form of DRRM in the country. Republic Act 10121 is vital due to its institutionalization of the roles of lower governmental levels in Philippine DRRM, creating a DRRM system that is in many ways, compatible with the political, fiscal, and administrative decentralization of the country enshrined in the Code. To highlight this point, the following Table 3 summarizes key provisions in Republic Act 10121 as they relate to the different decentralization forms relevant to provinces.

*Table 3: Republic Act 10121 and the Dimensions of Decentralization*

| <b>Types</b> | <b>Defining Questions</b> | <b>Republic Act 10121: Philippine DRRM Act of 2010</b> |
|--------------|---------------------------|--|
|--------------|---------------------------|--|

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<sup>1</sup> In RA 10121, the acronym NDRRMF stands for National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Framework, whereas NDRRM Fund was used for the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Fund

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p><i>Political Decentralization</i></p>      | <p>Who holds the decision-making power in the decentralized government?</p> <p>To what extent can local government officials make decisions <i>dependent or autonomous</i> to the central government?</p>                  | <p>LDRRMO of provinces are under the office of the governor. The governor must set the direction, development, implementation, and coordination of DRRM programs.</p> <p>NDRRMC and intermediary LDRRMC should always act as support to LGUs which have primary responsibility as first disaster responder.</p> <p>Provincial DRRMC leads response and recovery if 2 or more cities/municipalities are affected.</p> <p>Local levels can also issue a state of calamity according to damage assessment and needs analysis.</p> |
| <p><i>Fiscal Decentralization</i></p>         | <p>What are the mechanisms that define the transfer of funding from central to local governments?</p> <p>How do local governments generate revenue to fund public services?</p>  | <p>The National DRRM Fund’s allocation to recipient agencies and LGUs are determined based on the approval of the President of the Philippines.</p> <p>The Local DRRM Fund should not be lower than 5% of regular revenue sources in the Philippines. Of that amount, 30% is allocated to the Quick Response Fund (QRF) of the province, municipality, or city.</p>  |
| <p><i>Administrative Decentralization</i></p> | <p>Who is responsible for providing which services and implementing policies at the lower levels of government?</p> <p>What resources and training do local governments have allowing them to provide public services?</p> | <p>Provincial, city and municipal DRRM offices all have the same responsibilities. They must design, program, and coordinate disaster risk reduction and management activities consistent with the NDRRMC Guidelines</p> <p>PDRRMOs must organize, train, equip and supervise the local emergency response teams.</p> <p>Office of Civil Defense is responsible for supervising, overseeing, advising the National</p>   |

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  | What mechanisms allow central authorities to oversee policy implementation at the local level? | level, and ensuring provincial, city and municipal DRRM offices adhere to national strategies and programs. |
|--|--|---|

From the summary above, Republic Act 10121 shaped Philippine DRRM in political, fiscal, and administrative dimensions. The key provisions detailed in this chapter may be linked back to the discussion in Chapter 2 which highlighted how Code decentralized the Philippines in administrative, fiscal, and political dimensions. Table 4 highlights the parallels between the Code’s and Republic Act 10121’s provisions according to the different dimensions of decentralization and from the perspective of the provinces.

*Table 4: Dimensions of Decentralization (Code vs. Republic Act 10121)*

| Decentralization | Code   | Republic Act 10121  |
|------------------|--|---|
| Political        | Provincial governor led by chief executive   | Provincial governor led by chief executive  |
| Fiscal           | Provinces receive 23% of the total national internal revenue taxes <sup>2</sup>  | LDRRMF is a minimum of 5% of province’s IRA.<br><br>NDRRM Fund may be appropriated to provinces according to their needs  |
| Administrative   | Health, agriculture and DRRM responsibilities have been devolved to provinces.<br><br>Local executives shall be responsible for human resources and development in their unit. | PDRRMOs must design, program, and coordinate disaster risk reduction and management activities consistent with the NDRRMC Guidelines<br><br>PDRRMOs must organize, train, equip and supervise the local emergency response teams. |

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<sup>2</sup> For the period 2022-2023 covered in this thesis, provinces receive 24% of the total national taxes due to the Mandanas-Garcia ruling discussed in the earlier part of the chapter.

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Several provisions in Republic Act 10121 are linked to the provisions of the Local Government Code, which decentralized Philippine governance. Republic Act 10121 not only defines DRRM but also aligns it to the existing decentralized system in the Philippines. Through both policies, DRRM in the Philippines was decentralized in political, administrative, and fiscal ways. Overall, the section established the direct link between the Philippines’ process of decentralization and the DRRM system created under this decentralized governance. The literature outlines the provisions of the law, which the case study analyzes in terms of their application by provincial DRRM offices in the Ilocos Region.

### 3.3. Defining DRRM Phases through the Philippine’s National DRRM Plan

The National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Plan (NDRRMP) was a result of Republic Act 10121 and was meant to guide all disaster management programs, policies and activities moving forward. The plan was composed of four pillars and fourteen key objectives, summarized in Table 5.

*Table 5: Four Pillars of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Plan (2020)*

| <b>I – Disaster Prevention and Mitigation</b>  | <b>II – Disaster Preparedness</b>  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce vulnerability and exposure of communities to hazards</li> <li>• Enhance capacities of communities to reduce risks and cope with impacts of hazards.</li> </ul>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase community awareness to threats of hazards</li> <li>• Equip community with the necessary skills to cope with disasters</li> <li>• Increase capacity of institutions</li> <li>• Develop and implement comprehensive national and local DRRM plans</li> <li>• Strengthen partnerships among all stakeholders</li> </ul> |
| <b>III – Disaster Response and Early Recovery</b>  | <b>IV – Disaster Rehabilitation and Recovery</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease the number of preventable deaths and injuries</li> <li>• Provide basic subsistence needs of affected populations</li> <li>• Immediately restore basic social services</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restore people’s livelihoods</li> <li>• Restore shelter and other installation</li> <li>• Reconstruct infrastructure and other public utilities</li> <li>• Assist in physical and psychological rehabilitation of persons suffering from effects of disasters.</li> </ul>   |

Like Republic Act 10121, the NDRRMP further solidified the key role of local government units in the country’s disaster management. Where Republic Act 10121 outlined the general responsibilities of local levels, the NDRRMP has an extensive Annex 3: Localizing the National

DRRM Plan that lists the responsibilities of LGUs for every single outcome in the Plan. Furthermore, this same annex associates the outcomes and pillars to relevant priorities of the Sendai Framework which serves as the reference for best practices in evaluating DRRM operations in the Philippines. The plan's elaboration of local responsibilities for each thematic pillar only further strengthened the decentralization of DRRM through Republic Act 10121.

Given the broad scope of the four pillars and the varying responsibilities of local governments across all phases, I focused on the rehabilitation and recovery pillar for this thesis. This phase occurs post-disaster and requires long-term efforts from DRRM stakeholders, particularly lower government levels managing complex processes like needs assessments, aid coordination, and resilience-building with limited resources. Gubić & Maroufi (2017) highlight that post-typhoon recovery in the Philippines involves strong local government participation, which strengthens relationships, improves DRRM plans, and builds trust in the government. Additionally, local governments rely on national resources to enhance their capacity during recovery (Cordero, 2024). This active involvement reflects central-local dynamics often studied in decentralization research, making existing findings on recovery a valuable starting point for my study.

I also acknowledge, however, that the various pillars or phases of DRRM outlined in the NDRRMP were emphasized to be intersecting and interoperable. Operations, programs, and policies, therefore, may not strictly belong to one phase alone and may instead be the continuation of programs already implemented under other pillars. The interviews, therefore, may reflect programs and operations that may be better categorized under the other pillars but are nonetheless important for recovery and rehabilitation.

I also note here that in the updated plan created and implemented 2020, the third pillar became known as the "Disaster Response and Early Recovery" pillar, compared to just "Disaster Response" in the earlier version. Early recovery efforts, such as relief after typhoons, may be classified under the fourth pillar for the earlier typhoons in the interviews instead of its current classification under the third pillar. In these cases, I do not try to correct or be rigid with these classifications, especially since the case study puts forward the subjective experiences and perspectives of the interviewed heads. The intersection with other pillars also minimally affects the findings since the focus on recovery and rehabilitation only serves to limit the study's scope.

Having discussed the three dimensions of decentralized DRRM in the Philippines through Republic Act 10121, its intersections with the 1991 Code, and the NDRRMP's recovery and rehabilitation pillar, the next section will focus on the Ilocos Region, detailing its risk profile and socio-political factors contributing to its vulnerability to typhoons.

### **3.4. Ilocos Region and its Exposure to Typhoons**

The Ilocos Region, also known as Region 1 of the Philippines, is the country's administrative region located in the northwest area of Luzon. The region is geographically surrounded by the

Philippine's Cordillera Administrative Region and the Cagayan Valley to East, Central Luzon to the south and South China Sea to the west (Department of Trade and Industry, 2024). Figure 5\_ below presents the geographical location of the Ilocos Region in the Philippines. The Ilocos Region is composed of four provinces: Pangasinan, La Union, Ilocos Sur and Ilocos Norte. Of these provinces, Pangasinan is home to the largest number of people, with a population of 3 million out of the 5 million total population of the region (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020). Situated at the northernmost area of the Philippines, the Ilocos Region is exposed to a variety of hazards, among these, typhoons.



*Figure 4: Map of the Ilocos Region (Mancenido, 2019)*

Typhoons are the most frequent hazard in the Philippines, contributing significantly to the country's disaster landscape (Doroteo, 2015). Annual reports highlight the population's vulnerability to storms and flooding, especially in coastal cities (Alcayna et al., 2016). These events also expose socio-economic risks, with minority communities, such as Muslim

communities, disproportionately disadvantaged by limited access to services, post-disaster spaces, or mortality records (Gibb, 2024). Poor urban planning has led to slums where residents suffer not only from low living standards but also disruptions to their livelihoods, such as small-scale commerce, during typhoons (Ballesteros, 2010).

The Ilocos Region is no different, with Pangasinan and Ilocos Norte among the 10 most flood-prone provinces in the country according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) (Unson & Cariaso, 2024). Considering that Pangasinan is the region’s most populated province, many of the region’s population is vulnerable to this hazard. Furthermore, the Ilocos Region is also susceptible to flooding since the geographical conditions of its river systems include a wide riverbed, constantly shifting channels and banks that make fixed water infrastructures ineffective (Wolters, 2007).

Despite the large vulnerability of its population and exposure to hazards, however, the Ilocos Region’s case is interesting because reports about the region usually underscore its high resilience. Take the Pacific Disaster Center’s 2021 report, for example. The report attempted to quantify hazard risk and resiliency of provinces through three components: multi-hazard exposure, vulnerability, and coping capacity. Multi-hazard exposure quantifies exposure to hazards like earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides, typhoon winds and floods. Vulnerability quantifies socio-economic conditions such as environmental stress, health, economic status, gender equality and access to clean water. Lastly, coping capacity includes factors that allow governments to mitigate hazard risks such as the available resources to LGUs, stability of governance and the quality of the environment and ecosystems in the province. The following table 5 summarizes the report’s findings for each of the Ilocos Region’s provinces:

*Table 6: Hazard Risk and Resilience of Ilocos Region Provinces (Pacific Disaster Center, 2021)*

| <b><i>Province</i></b> | <b>Multi-Hazard Exposure</b> | <b>Vulnerability</b> | <b>Coping Capacity</b> |
|------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Ilocos Norte</i>    | Very High                    | Low                  | Very High              |
| <i>Ilocos Sur</i>      | High                         | Very Low             | Very High              |
| <i>La Union</i>        | High                         | Very Low             | Very High              |
| <i>Pangasinan</i>      | Very High                    | Very Low             | Medium                 |

As detailed above, exposure to hazards such as typhoon winds and floods are high or very high across all the region’s provinces. Despite this high hazard exposure, however, good socio-economic conditions across the provinces lessen their vulnerability to disasters. Furthermore, the

coping capacity or institutions put in place to counter hazards are also generally positive across all provinces. These conditions of high exposure to a wide range of environment-related hazards yet equally high resiliency across all provinces make the Ilocos Region a compelling case for study. The high coping capacity of the Ilocos Region's provinces, especially the aspects of governance and fiscal capacity of LGUs, may provide valuable insights into the advantages and disadvantages of decentralizing DRRM, which I aim to do in this thesis.

Aside from its geographical conditions, the Ilocos Region's political characteristics make it a rich case for exploring the dynamics of political decentralization in disaster management. Known as the "Solid North" voting bloc, the Ilocos region has historically been known to support the Marcos family and their allies (Pawilen, 2020). Considering that both the Code 1991 and Republic Act 10121 were implemented by the Aquino administration, historical opposition to the Marcos family, the implementation and later, practice, of these two policies may have differed in the Ilocos region compared to other regions in the Philippines. Also, fieldwork for this thesis occurred at the time of Marcos Jr.'s administration, which may have shaped the responses and information held by participants. Since part of the thesis explores political decentralization, the "Solid North" affiliation of the studied region may play part in the way disaster management unfolds in the region.

Furthermore, there is a marked lack of literature exploring the regional and provincial level of DRRM operations, with emphasis placed more often on the highest or lower levels: national or *barangay*/municipal. This thesis aims to bridge the gap by examining the implementation of DRRM frameworks and policies in the Ilocos Region's provinces, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the current structure through a provincial-level case study.

### **3.5. Conclusion:**

Overall, this chapter has presented the administrative, fiscal, and political ways DRRM is decentralized in the Philippines by highlighting the intersections between the Code 1991 and Republic Act 10121. In establishing the link between all three dimensions in the policy, I now have the reference for analyzing the applications of Republic Act 10121 in practice based on the interviews.

Furthermore, this chapter contextualizes key elements of the case study, such as the emphasis on the recovery and rehabilitation pillar, which involves local governments while also encouraging financial support from the national government. It also highlights the focus on typhoons, a major component of the Philippines' disaster landscape, and the selection of the Ilocos Region—an area that, despite being highly exposed to hazards, demonstrates significant resilience. This background helps define the scope of my study.

The next chapter will further elaborate on the methodological approach and the methods and instruments behind the case study. I will present the link between the different dimensions of decentralization in Republic Act 10121 and how they factor into both the interview questions and

the coding process which I used to produce the findings of my thesis. The next chapter will also reference the Ilocos Region's provinces and their exposure to hazards discussed in this chapter as I establish the context under which the interviews took place.

## Chapter 4: Methodology

### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter describes the methodological approach and methods I used to study the Philippines' decentralized disaster governance and its impacts on the Ilocos Region's post-typhoon rehabilitation and recovery operations. These approaches and methods received research ethics approval from the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board (File Number S-04-24-10098). I did not require additional ethics approval from agencies in the Philippines.

This methodology chapter describes the development of instruments, fieldwork, and the coding process that led to the findings. I present the factors that influenced the shift in my thesis' questions and focus. I also detail the coding process used to derive the analysis in Chapters 5 and 6. Overall, this chapter connects the case study to the conceptual frameworks, legislation, and Philippine context discussed in earlier chapters, while linking the analysis to established literature on decentralized DRRM.

### 4.2. Research Design and Instruments

To answer my research question, I needed an approach that explored social relations between different government levels from the perspective of DRRM officers in the recovery and rehabilitation phase. I chose a qualitative approach using key informant interviews. Interviews would provide insights from DRRM office heads on factors affecting recovery facilitated by their position as the head of offices coordinating with both the local and national government levels.

For the interview participants, I selected provincial DRRM officers in position from 2011 to 2024 as participants. These officers were chosen because they hold the second-highest position in the office, under the elected governor, making them civil servants rather than politicians. This choice aimed to minimize bias from political factors or affiliations. I began with 2011, as Republic Act 10121, the law defining decentralized DRRM, was first implemented in 2010. The provincial level was selected for its key position between lower *barangay* and municipal and higher regional and national levels, which offered insights into intergovernmental relations. The case study focused on four provinces in the Ilocos Region: Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, and Pangasinan.

In total, there were six provincial DRRM office heads available for interviews. Of the six available heads, however, one of them was represented by their Assistant Department Head, directly under the PDRRM officer. Due to the potentially sensitive nature of the original thesis topic, interview participants were assured anonymity in that their interview responses cannot be traced back to them. To ensure anonymity, all interview participants were assigned labels, Interviewee A through F. The original topic of my thesis, and the design of the interview guide focused on examining how political connections with the national government affect the post-typhoon rehabilitation and recovery operations performed by the Ilocos Region's provincial DRRM offices.

The interviews were semi-structured and were designed to have provincial DRRM officers define and assess political connections as positive or negative. The interview was composed of three parts: First interviewees were asked to identify themselves and their backgrounds in DRRM as the provincial DRRM officer. Second, interviewees participated in a listing activity where they were asked to write down three main factors that affect disaster response in the province and to rank them from most significant to least. The final section unpacked these officers' understanding of the term political connections, asking them to define, assess and qualify their understanding of the term. A full copy of the interview questions may be found in Annex A.

To complement the study, I conducted extensive document analysis of the key legislation pertaining to decentralized Philippine DRRM, including Republic Act 10121 and the Code 1991. I also underwent visits to PDRRMO and other agencies relevant to DRRM such as the regional Department of the Interior and Local Government where I was able to observe facilities, equipment and staff demographics.

### **4.3. Fieldwork and Interviews**

I went to the Philippines in May 2024 to conduct the fieldwork for this thesis. For the first week, I established contact with the various DRRM offices through email, by phone and text messages, trying to set appointments for my fieldwork. After this initial contact, I spent the next two weeks visiting the different DRRM offices in the Ilocos Region.

During fieldwork, I observed significant differences between DRRM offices, such as varying equipment, facilities, and staff sizes. Some offices had nearly 100 staff members, while others had only about 20. Most offices had their own buildings, equipped with technology, rescue gear, and emergency vehicles like ambulances and trucks. Several staff members mentioned that these facilities were newly acquired within the last couple of years, suggesting a growing prioritization of DRRM services in the region.

Second, I was also directed to visit other national or provincial offices aside from the PDRRMO. Among the most mentioned were the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office (PSWDO) which keeps track of financial assistance to the province, or the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) which monitors compliance with national-level mandated plans, along with the Office of Civil Defense. During my fieldwork, I did visit the Department of the Interior and Local Government since it was highly recommended by one of the provincial heads. Getting to the recommended office was a bit of a struggle, however, since I was not aware at first that there was both a provincial and regional Department of the Interior and Local Government office located just mere steps away from each other. Both offices were very helpful, though the regional office was able to provide more advice about conducting interviews in the Ilocos Region. The provincial office only had information on that specific province and not the others. This experience was my first introduction to the decentralized administration of the Philippines where public service is provided by many collaborating agencies and offices. In fact,

this experience would be one of the instances that inspired my decision to later shift my focus from political connections to decentralized DRRM.

Overall, my fieldwork experience was pleasant and educational. The DRRM office staff were highly participative, responding to my questions in detail and offering valuable advice to improve my research. They were familiar with the process, referencing previous student research, and helped me quickly establish contact with the offices by introducing me to different departments. However, I was not able to meet all office staff since a large part of the office staff were in the field and do not regularly report to the office. Most staff I met worked in the office, monitoring emergency hotlines and social media for any reports or calls for aid. Interacting with these staff members and seeing their departments gave me a clearer understanding of how PDRRMOs plan and delegate day-to-day tasks.

In the four weeks I did fieldwork in the Philippines, I conducted site visits and established my first in-person contact with the offices. All the interviews were done online from May to August 2024 to allow the participants more flexibility. Interviews lasted 45 to 90 minutes. Participants have the choice of their preferred date and time for their interviews and the choice of having the call either on Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Having the interviews online also aided the transcription and recording since I also used the built-in recording and transcription tools available for both platforms. Clear audio recordings greatly helped the translation I had to do after the interviews, since I conducted them with a mix of Tagalog and English. Although the interview guide only had English questions, I would often ask my follow-up questions in Tagalog, and they would also reply in Tagalog. The use of both languages enhanced the findings and analysis since participants were able to use words or verbs that did not necessarily have direct translations in English. In the transcripts and throughout the findings and analysis section of this thesis, I made sure to retain the original Tagalog words that did not have exact translations to English.

Having Tagalog as my native language was an advantage for the interviews since I was able to speak more comfortably with the participants and understand the contextual cues behind their responses. Linguistic research on Filipino languages highlight that native speakers have a “high-context communication style,” marked with indirectness and non-answers to direct questions (Munalim et al., 2022). These indirect responses made it quite difficult to translate the interviews, especially since Tagalog speakers often drop the subject when the listener knows what the speaker is referring to through contextual cues (Milambiling, 2011). Most of my translations of the transcripts, therefore, have the subject in *[brackets]*, to keep my quotes as close to the actual statements as possible.

I also faced the challenge of some participants being hesitant to talk about the political side of DRRM. Some participants reemphasized existing policies that define DRRM, while others indirectly answered the questions, stating that what had been mentioned by other participants similarly applied to their province. This reluctance to discuss political connections led me to realize

that the data collected was less about the local chief executive's political ties and more about the decentralized DRRM governance in the country. Participants focused more on key legislation, their interactions with various government levels, and the advantages and challenges these interactions presented.

The participants' hesitation in responding to questions about political connections may have been due to my position as a researcher. First, my position as a young master's student may have meant that my interview participants approached me as experts that wanted to share more about their field. On the other hand, I did not perceive my gender to have affected the responses towards me since the Philippines has a long history and larger representation of women in leadership positions. Secondly, as an international student, the fact that I represented an institution in Canada may have generated increased interest for the target participants to join the study.

Local and regional politics may have also affected the participants' willingness to share information. While I was affiliated with the University of Ottawa throughout the fieldwork process, I was still a former graduate of the University of the Philippines, an institution historically known for opposing the Marcos dictatorship and its allies. Considering the Ilocos region's political profile as a voting bloc supporting the Marcos family, my previous affiliation may have contributed to their hesitation in responding to my more political questions. Also, since I was a resident of a different region in the Philippines, some of my participants asked me why I was not conducting research in my home region instead. I made sure to explain the unique geographical and political circumstances that have made the Ilocos region my choice for the study.

Given the hesitation with discussing political topics and the increased focus on legal frameworks, therefore, I decided to broaden the scope of my research. Initially, I had focused solely on political connections, representing the political dimension of decentralization. However, based on the insights from the interviews, I expanded the study to also include the administrative and fiscal dimensions of decentralization, which also define the operation of DRRM in the Philippines. This framing allowed me to better capture the full scope of factors affecting DRRM in the Ilocos Region's recovery and rehabilitation efforts.

After finishing the interviews, I began the transcription and translation process. Transcription was made easier since the interviews were recorded and automatically transcribed through Microsoft Teams or Zoom. I did have to manually type Tagalog words in the transcripts since they were not recorded by the automatic transcription tools. For translation, I performed most of the translation manually based on the context. I did utilize ChatGPT to help me better translate de-identified passages with multiple acronyms or technical jargon to help me figure out what these words may mean in the context of Philippine DRRM. After the transcription and translation process, I now had the data from which to draw my findings and analysis in the coding process.

#### **4.4. Coding Process**

In this section, I describe the coding process I used to conduct the thematic analysis for this thesis. Through identifying and extracting key themes from the experiences of provincial DRRM heads, I can identify patterns and analyze them in relation to the broader conceptual framework I discussed earlier in Chapters 2 and 3. I primarily extracted these themes through qualitative coding in NVIVO, where I also organized and interpreted the data in response to my research questions.

My coding process follows the Five-Phase Qualitative Analysis Process created by Bingham and Witkowsky (2022). I simplify my explanation here though by outlining my steps according to the two cycles of qualitative coding: first cycle and second cycle coding (Gehman et al., 2018). Under the first cycle coding, I focused on identifying repeated terms and topics within the transcripts primarily through inductive coding, which resulted in a wide array of codes. I narrowed these codes in the second cycle coding where I mainly performed “theoretical coding” where previous categories and subcategories are linked to the “central or core categories” which best identifies or explains the information from participants (Saldaña, 2013). My core categories for this cycle were the dimensions of decentralization that I defined in Chapter 2 and contextualized to Philippine DRRM in Chapter 3.

Having now organized my data according to the administrative, fiscal, and political dimensions of decentralization, I could now interpret the data and determine where practice aligns or diverges with the provisions of Republic Act 10121. I was also now able to utilize the Sendai Framework’s guiding principles as a tool for evaluating whether the alignments or divergence from the policy resulted in advantages or disadvantages in DRRM operations, based on what is internationally recognized as the best practices. The results of this coding process are presented in Chapter 5 and further discussed in Chapter 6.

For a more detailed explanation of the coding process I underwent for this thesis, a document titled “The Coding Process” may be found in annex C.

#### **4.5. Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the instruments, research design, fieldwork and coding process which produced my research’s findings and analysis. I gave due emphasis to the challenges that arose during the fieldwork process, which led to the change in research questions and focus. I also explained the coding process in detail, illustrating the relevance of the earlier discussions in Chapter 2 and 3 to the findings and analysis I will lay out in Chapter 5 and 6. The work I outlined here serves as the foundation for the discussions in the subsequent chapters.

## Chapter 5: Findings and Analysis – Policy vs. Practice

### 5.1. Introduction

Chapter 5 answers this thesis' first two sub questions:

- a. How does Republic Act 10121 in the Philippines devolve responsibilities of disaster recovery and rehabilitation to lower governmental levels in the Ilocos Region?
- b. How do practices of DRRM provincial offices align with or diverge from the official frameworks or policies outlined in Republic Act 10121?

This chapter presents how the implementation of Republic Act 10121 affected the administrative, political, and fiscal dimensions of DRRM in the Ilocos Region. Unless otherwise specified, the findings written here are derived from my interviews with PDRRMO heads.

I argue that the effectiveness of recovery and rehabilitation operations in the Ilocos Region is shaped by the interplay of the administrative, fiscal and political dimensions which must all be present for decentralization policies to be effective. These dimensions must all be present and equally balanced for policies to work.

### 5.2. Administrative Decentralization of DRRM in the Ilocos Region

Recall in Chapter 2, I defined administrative decentralization as

- i) The actors responsible for providing services and implementing policies at lower government levels,
- ii) The resources and training local governments have allowing them to provide these services and,
- iii) The mechanisms allowing the central government to oversee policy implementation.

In this section, I present how these definitions and the broad applications of the Republic Act 10121 affect the operational realities of recovery and rehabilitation in the Ilocos Region.

#### *5.2.1. Devolution of DRRM Responsibilities*

The focus of provincial-level recovery operations in the Philippines is augmenting local-level efforts. Although not formally defined in any of the policies or supporting disaster plans published by the NDRRMC, augmentation<sup>3</sup> refers to the provision of additional resources (relief or

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<sup>3</sup> Augmentation, in the National Disaster Response Plan (NDRP) is differentiated from “assumption”, where the higher government level will take charge of all operations from the incapacitated LGU.

equipment) or personnel to affected local government units. Its salience surfaced consistently in interviews. The following explanation of one interviewee is illustrative,

[The province's role is] Augmentation when it comes to assistance. When I say augmentation, for example, if an LGU needs help with response or relief distribution, or if there's a need for retrieval, search and rescue, or evacuation and the LGU isn't capable enough, then we step in (Interviewee B).

The provinces' augmentation role is a mainstream practice in Philippine DRRM. A large part of this augmentation process includes the needs assessment phase where local government units communicate their needs to higher government levels (Abello, 2017). Municipal governments communicate their needs to the provincial government, which in turn submit requests to the regional level. Municipalities also maintain linkages with provinces to coordinate and align DRRM efforts during the augmentation process (Follosco-Aspiras & Santiago, 2016). The following passage outlines key parts of the augmentation process.

But what we tell municipalities and cities is that they should furnish a copy of damage reports to the province. Because if there's damage, the rehabilitation works are affected. For example, DPWH (Department of Public Works and Highways) wants damage reports reported to OCD, which should come from the province. The province certifies that the structure is damaged. If it's only the municipality or city, it has to be sent back to the province for validation. So, they know, the LGUs (Local Government Units) know this setup. They should report their damage to the province for consolidation. Because the province certifies the need for rehabilitation of a place or project (Interviewee D).

For more significant funding requests, local government units must send their requests to the region which will then be submitted to the national level (Domingo, 2014). Provinces, therefore, being in between the regional level and the local level must act as the intermediary, consolidating lower-level reports while also complying with higher level requirements. The following passage is an example of the province fulfilling this intermediary role.

So, we have to ask for funding from the quick response fund from the different national government agencies. Like the Department of Agriculture, Department of Social Welfare and Development, and the National Housing Authority. Of course, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council and DRMC, Department of Public Works and Highways, National Irrigation (Interviewee C).

These interactions between the provincial and local or between the provincial and national agencies are all strengthened by Republic Act 10121, which established national agencies as

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However, the trigger points for assumption are defined to be earthquake or tsunami events, none of which were relevant to the post-typhoon context of this study.

leaders for each disaster pillar but made local governments primarily responsible for local operations. The resulting collaboration between local, provincial, and national agencies is positive and increases the capacity (financial and personnel) of the lower levels. However, it also reveals the underlying implications that the capacity of the local government level is initially insufficient, raising into question the effectiveness of the decentralized system.

The dependence of lower government levels on higher ones contradicts decentralization's rationale of promoting development in peripheral areas (Berman, 2011). Provinces' reliance on augmentation highlights the issue of "underfunded mandates," where the transfer of fiscal resources, expertise, and personnel from central to local governments fails to cover devolved responsibilities (Brillantes & Flores, 2012). Local governments therefore need to seek assistance from higher levels, undermining their capacity to deliver services independently (Go, 2023). The provincial DRRM office's role as an intermediary between local governments and national agencies, along with the crucial needs assessment process for recovery and rehabilitation, are key points that will be explored further in subsequent sections.

#### *5.2.2. The Governor: DRRM Local Chief Executive (Provincial Level)*

At the provincial level, the governor is the primary actor responsible for DRRM, overseeing decision-making during emergencies and coordinating all involved parties, from the PDRRMO head to various response teams. This aligns with Republic Act 10121, which designates the local chief executive, typically the governor, as the key figure in disaster response.

Although the policy does grant the governor leadership responsibilities, interpretations of this leadership role vary. Interviewees revealed that governor can perform the role of a positive symbol which inspires responders, as in the following excerpt:

Actually, in the field when things happen. He's at ground zero. When he's there, overseeing, it's a morale booster for the people. (Interviewee E).

In the statement above, the participant highlighted how "the people," referring to local responders identify the governor's presence as a positive factor for their emotional state during operations. This governor as a positive "symbol" connects to participants' belief that the governor's direct involvement in DRRM operations allows for better needs assessment at the local level.

He [the governor] himself goes to the disaster areas. Not just in the province. They really look at what is needed by the communities (Interviewee F)

As the passage above shows, PDRRMO staff and local responders believe local chief executives' direct involvement in DRRM operations improves responses to local needs, especially in the needs assessment process. Participants noted that the governor's ability to negotiate with higher-level actors, including national agencies and even the President, helps expedite aid requests, further

enhancing the region's recovery efforts. Higher government levels' involvement is encapsulated in the following passage:

Well, the gov personally visited these areas and led in the distribution of the relief goods and followed it up with the concerned government agency called the request that we have forwarded to them. And sometimes it's best if you are there to follow it up personally and to communicate with them directly. Because it's not enough that you write a letter and then send it to them and then that's it (Interviewee C).

Both instances reveal that, although not enshrined in policy, PDRRM staff and local responders view the governor's direct involvement as key to successful recovery operations. The strong influence of local chief executives in successful operations is evident in sectors outside DRRM in the Philippines. Gallardo (2019) highlights that beyond coordination, governors' "hands-on" monitoring is crucial for achieving objectives, as they are aware of facility needs. Brillantes (2003) describes how the governor's active involvement in service delivery inspires local actors to participate more. Go (2023) emphasizes that governors' sector exposure leads to greater investments. The considerable influence governors have in public service provision suggests that participants' belief in the positive impact of their direct involvement in DRRM operations is justified.

### *5.2.3. Resources (Material and Fiscal)*

Local governments led by mayors have their own DRRM offices with equipment and personnel to fulfill their duties. The following excerpt underscores components of DRRM offices in LGUs:

When it comes to DRRM operations, actually, our local DRRM offices are prepared. They have manpower, they have equipment, and they are fully trained. So, basically, they conduct simulation exercises (Interviewee B).

Despite having their own resources, however, local DRRM offices still request augmentation from higher levels, such as provinces, when the scale of disasters overwhelms their capacity. For provinces who augment operations, the sufficiency of their resources depends on their capability to swiftly mobilize resources. PDRRMOs improve the mobilization of resources either through the purchase of vehicles like trucks and boats or through strategies that allow local government levels easier access to resources. The following passage demonstrates one such strategy, prepositioning:

We really, we preposition some goods to certain areas since we, if you look at it geographically, it will take some time if all the goods come from the provincial capital (Interviewee C).

The National Disaster Response Plan (NDRP) recognizes prepositioning as an important strategy for mobilizing resources since it incentivizes intergovernmental cooperation in DRRM. National and local governments are required to engage in information-sharing to effectively anticipate the ideal location and type of resources aligned with local governments' needs and operations (Blanco, 2015). Prepositioning is an example of an advantage resulting from the decentralization of DRRM through Republic Act 10121, since it provides an institutionalized opportunity for cooperation between different government levels.

I note though that while provincial offices have devised strategies to cope with disaster situations, large scale disasters remain a challenge for provinces. Take for example the following excerpt regarding Typhoon Doksuri (local name Egay) in 2023, a Category 4<sup>4</sup> hurricane:

One of the factors is that... When like this, for example, Egay. When it's a big disaster... big damage and amount, of course, one of the factors is the budgetary requirements (Interviewee F).

The strength of the hazard not only made it difficult for local governments to sustain their operations but also made it difficult for provinces to augment local operations. The provinces' augmentation role was jeopardized by infrastructure damage caused by the typhoon, impeding the PDRRMO's ability to provide their support. The following passage provides an example of infrastructure damages delaying augmentation:

During one of the typhoons, the bridge in Province A was cut off between Municipality A and B. It was cut. So, we had difficulty transferring goods. Ships transported them then. It was really difficult (Interviewee D).

These challenges have been observed in previous typhoons. For instance, during Typhoon Washi in 2011, a power outage caused by infrastructure damage disrupted communication systems in the Northern Mindanao region, hindering the ability of provinces and local governments to coordinate responses effectively (Rasquinho et al., 2013). While cooperation between government levels is institutionalized under Republic Act 10121, factors such as the magnitude of disasters and the resulting infrastructure damage continue to pose significant risks to the effectiveness of this collaborative system.

Large-scale disasters, therefore, expose the vulnerabilities of individual local communities with less resources and weaker fiscal and material capacity in a decentralized system. Even local government units assigned to augment recovery and rehabilitation operations, such as the provincial level, are pushed to request aid from higher government levels. That augmenting level

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<sup>4</sup> According to the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale, Category 4 hurricanes have wind speeds of 130-156 miles per hour, may uproot trees and damage the exterior structure of houses. It may also result in power outages for weeks up to months.

still requires support from the central level reinforces the question of whether decentralized localities even have, in the first place, the base fiscal and material capacity to fulfill their mandates.

#### 5.2.4. Resources (Human)

In the Ilocos region, provinces have ensured the availability of staff members to complete DRRM tasks. The number of personnel was not identified as a significant issue for any of the provinces. One provincial office notably had less personnel than other offices in the region, but this office also mentioned having already taken necessary steps to increase the number of DRRM staff.

Furthermore, interviews revealed that training programs were regularly implemented and done internally for all provincial office. Training sessions were not only confined internally to the offices. They were also horizontal, taking place between different provinces, where one province trains the staff of another. As one interviewee claimed:

Here, we are the trainers of the region. So, we provide, to different provinces (Interviewee A).

The interviewee further later clarified that there is no legal document or resolution that assigns this responsibility to the province, but the province took up this role since they have the greatest number of certified staff. This occurrence demonstrates innovative practices from the policy that local government offices must provide training to their personnel.

Furthermore, interviews also revealed that joint training sessions can be vertical between the provincial level and municipal and *barangay* levels. The following excerpt reveals such an instance:

We concentrated on the responders. We taught to potential responders in their municipalities so that municipalities in turn can teach to their *barangays* (Interviewee E).

Vertical training sessions align with the augmentation role provinces play since this cooperation increases the personnel capacity and technical expertise of lower government levels. Joint training sessions demonstrate how a decentralized system can foster information sharing and collaboration in personnel capacity building between lower levels of government, or even between higher and lower ones.

Increased collaboration among different units is not unique to the DRRM sector. Since the implementation of the Local Government Code, LGUs have actively sought partnerships with other LGUs to pool resources for their programs (Panadero, 2002). In the health sector, mayors have initiated development programs that foster coordination between municipal officials and higher government levels, enhancing vertical knowledge-sharing (Work, 2002). These joint personnel capacity-building exercises can be seen as a key advantage of devolving responsibilities

to lower government levels, as they not only promote collaboration but also encourage active participation in capacity-building initiatives.

The picture is not solely positive since participants also revealed continued gaps in the personnel capacity of provincial DRRM offices. These challenges become more evident during large-scale disasters. The following excerpt demonstrates how large-scale disasters can reveal gaps in the personnel capacity of provinces:

When it comes to the resources when it comes to the search and rescue. The ratio of those asking for help compared to the search and rescue units here was lacking. So that's why, from the EOC (Emergency Operations Center) of ours that was activated, we asked for help from the regional office, which was the office of the civil defense (Interviewee F).

Large-scale disasters reveal how the funding of localities remains insufficient to fulfill DRRM responsibilities devolved to local government units resulting not only in “underfunded mandates” but also limited transfer of personnel capacity and knowledge.

#### *5.2.5. Monitoring*

Lastly, administrative decentralization involves the mechanisms established to hold provincial offices accountable for the services they are mandated to provide under Republic Act 10121. In policy and in practice, the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) serves as the primary agency responsible for monitoring and overseeing DRRM processes in the Philippines. The Office of Civil Defense's monitoring process gives provinces the responsibility of consolidating reports from local municipalities under their authority, as participants claimed:

What happens there, the reporting to the OCD or regional, should come from the province only (Interviewee C).

However, the province's role in consolidating reports was not explicitly outlined in Republic Act 10121 whose Section 12 only mandates local DRRM offices to “consolidate local disaster risk information which includes natural hazards, vulnerabilities, and climate change risks, and maintain a local risk map.” The role is instead enshrined in other DRRM documents as the best practice. Output 15 of the NDRRMP calls local DRRM offices to “consolidate the Damage Assessment and Needs Assessment reports to facilitate the declaration of State of Calamity and access of quick response fund (QRF)”.

Provinces follow this practice in their recovery and rehabilitation operations, but it does put provinces in the challenging position of needing to meet lower local government demands while still adhering to regional-level requirements. The following excerpt describes this challenge in greater detail:

One reason for delays is that regional offices sometimes need to verify these reports through provincial DRRM. And provincial DRRM will further verify these with LGUs and *barangays*. This causes delays because sometimes, the reports from municipal offices, when assessed by regional validators, are found not to be caused by the specific disaster. So, an assessment is still needed before they provide funding (Interviewee B)

This back-and-forth communication that takes place during the needs assessment phase has been cited as the primary factor resulting in a time-consuming monitoring and verification process LDRRMOs must undergo. This challenge is further compounded when local governments pursue their own interests and attempt to disregard the provincial level's role of consolidating reports. The following excerpt shows tensions between municipalities and provinces as they undergo the needs-assessment phase.

There are those stubborn municipalities with high principles. They don't want to report but go straight there. But when they need it, they ask [from the province] (Interviewee E).

In the passage above, the municipalities' decision to "go straight there" reflects attempts to bypass the provincial level and submit reports directly to the national level instead. Attempts to bypass protocol often delay the needs assessment process, undermining DRRM operations. For instance, Gera (2018) highlights how political negotiations between local politicians, the regional development council, and national agencies can lead to "intergovernmental standoffs," which disrupt integrated DRRM interventions. These standoffs illustrate how decentralization, by delegating responsibility to local governments, has created a complex network of actors who must collaborate to achieve their objectives. However, when these actors fail to cooperate, fragmentation occurs, revealing a gap between policy intentions and actual DRRM practices in the region.

#### *5.2.6. Analyzing Administrative Decentralization in the Ilocos Region DRRM*

My analysis of administrative decentralization in the Ilocos Region reveals certain points of alignment and divergence from the policy in practice. Table 6 on the next page summarizes these alignments and divergences, based on the definition of administrative decentralization that I used to guide this discussion.

My analysis suggests that there is strong administrative decentralization of DRRM in the case study. Evidence pointing to strong administrative decentralization includes the large devolution of DRRM responsibilities to local government levels. Supporting this devolution of responsibilities, local governments are also tasked to conduct their own needs assessments, allowing them to address the specific needs of their localities. Furthermore, Republic Act 10121 also established DRRM offices at every government level, granting them the financial, material and human resources needed to fulfill their responsibilities. These characteristics of administrative decentralization are enshrined in the policy, and as presented in Table 6, this policy is followed well in practice.

| <b>Administrative Decentralization</b>           | <b>Policy</b>   | <b>Practice</b>   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Devolution of Responsibilities and Actors</b> | Provinces, led by the governor, take on the augmentation role in post-typhoon operations.   | <p><b>Alignment:</b> Provinces perform an augmentation role and are led by their local chief executive, the governor.</p> <p><b>Divergence:</b> Governors’ direct presence in recovery and rehabilitation operations is a positive symbol for local responders. Governors’ negotiations with national agencies expedite the assistance request process.</p> |
| <b>Resources (Material and Fiscal)</b>           | <p>Local DRRM offices must develop strategies to better mobilize resources.</p> <p>Local DRRM offices must be self-sufficient and have necessary equipment.</p> | <p><b>Alignment:</b> Local DRRM offices from the provincial to barangay level have resources for DRRM.</p> <p>Provincial DRRM offices have strategies such as prepositioning resources.</p> <p><b>Divergence:</b> Large-scale disasters make LDRRMOs dependent on augmentation from regional or national level government.</p>                              |
| <b>Resources (Human)</b>                         | Local DRRM offices must provide training to ensure the availability of suitably trained and competent personnel for DRRM in its area                            | <p><b>Alignment:</b> LDRRMOs provide training and certifications to their staff regularly</p> <p><b>Divergence:</b> LDRRMOs host joint training sessions among provinces, or between provinces and local government units.</p> <p>Large scale disasters reflect inadequacies in the number of personnel in DRRM offices.</p>                                |
| <b>Monitoring</b>                                | Local DRRM offices must submit reports to the OCD. In the NDRMP, consolidation of needs assessment  | <b>Alignment:</b> Local DRRM offices submit reports to the OCD as mandated, but provinces also take on the role of consolidating all reports from local governments.  |

Table 7: Administrative Decentralization Policy vs. Practice

### 5.3. Fiscal Decentralization of DRRM in the Ilocos Region

In Chapter 2, I defined fiscal decentralization as

- The mechanisms that define the transfer of funding from central to local governments.
- The ways in which local governments generate revenue to fund public services.

Here in Section 5.3, I explore how these two DRRM funding mechanisms, the NDRRM Fund and the LDRRMF, affect the local recovery and rehabilitation efforts of the provincial offices in the Ilocos Region.

#### 5.3.1. Intergovernmental Transfers

Officially, all intergovernmental transfers<sup>5</sup> related to DRRM fall under Section 22 of Republic Act 10121, which discusses the National DRRM Fund. As discussed in Chapter 3, the National DRRM Fund is allocated to requesting national agencies, LGUs and other government institutions who require additional funding for post-disaster aid, relief, and rehabilitation services. The policy suggests a linear NDRRM Fund, where lower levels request and receive support from higher levels. Figure 6 presents the normal flow of NDRRM Fund, according to policy.

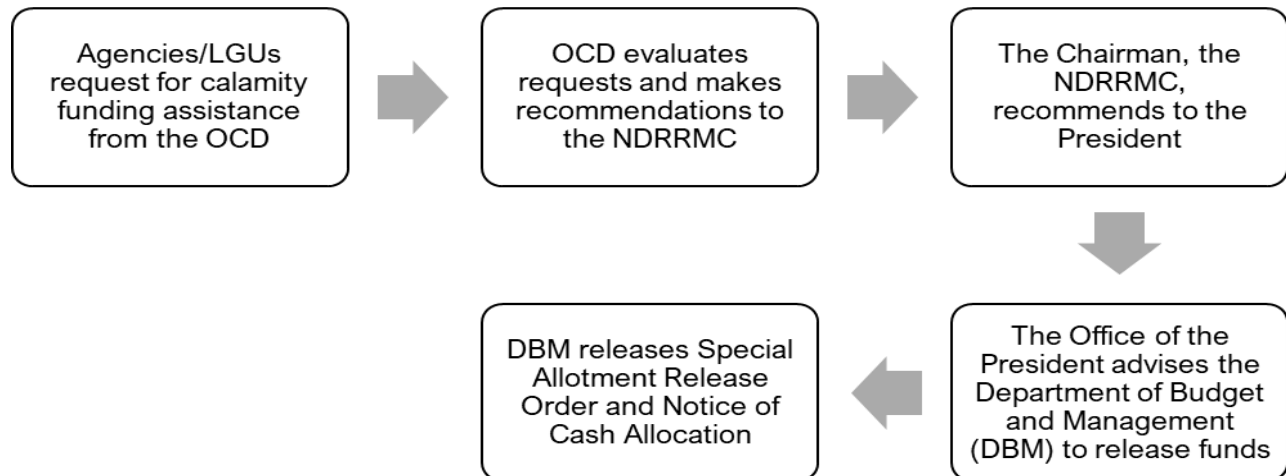


Figure 5: NDRRM Fund Process Flow (DBM, 2017)

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<sup>5</sup> Technically, both the LDRRMF and NDRRM Fund may be considered intergovernmental transfers since the IRA (which is the source of the LDRRMF) is also transferred from the national to local. However, for this thesis, intergovernmental transfers will refer to the NDRRM Fund which is not part of the initial budget local government units have when planning for their DRRM operations and are instead funds they receive generally in the post-typhoon phase.

However, in practice, fund transfers could occur between levels that do not necessarily follow this linear flow. The following excerpt is an example of transfer occurring between provinces.

So, when Province A is hit by calamity, Province B or C provides funds. That's the beauty of political connections. For example, they provide funds for relief or rehab, which adds to the province's funds (Interviewee D).

Participants also revealed that politicians may serve as another funding source for DRRM operations. The next excerpt lists politicians who often act as donors following disasters:

And there are also a lot of donations, from political personnels, like senators, the president and other big politicians that also give cash assistance (Interviewee F).

These divergences from the linear flow of funds have impacts on the post disaster needs-assessment phase (PDNA)<sup>6</sup> of recovery and rehabilitation operations, which should ideally define the flow of intergovernmental funds. Joint Memorandum Circular No. 45 s. 2017, which serves as the Guidelines on the Administration of the NDRRM Fund incentivizes submission of the PDNA, since submitting the PDNA means the request process will be completed within 15 days, where without it, the process will take 30 days (Villacin, 2017). Despite its institutionalization, however, the process may be time-consuming, due to the verification process the national level governments need to follow. The following passage references these delays:

Of course, we know that assistance from the national government would take time to mobilize, especially in terms of its regular mobilization. The national government follows certain processes which can cause delays in providing assistance. (Interviewee A).

The time-consuming process prompts provincial offices and local chief executives at the municipal level to look for ways to expedite the process. Some local governments officials do so through their political connections, including acquaintances or friends in the government that could help them expedite their requests. The following passage reveals how these connections work:

Primarily, they might think that if it's national, it's faster. They believe that if they bypass the province and regional offices, they can get assistance directly from the national level. Sometimes, local chief executives might have connections [*kakilala*] or powerful acquaintances [*malakas sa taas*] who they think can help them bypass the normal process (Interviewee B).

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<sup>6</sup> In the National Disaster Response Plan (2014), Section 2.3.4.3 states that PDNA stands for Post Damage and Needs Assessments. Other sections (Cluster F) though, call the PDNA the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment. This thesis will refer to the PDNA as post-disaster needs assessment aligning with what the acronym means according to the United Nations Development Programme.

In the excerpt above, political connections are presented as a factor resulting in positive outcomes, especially since they can expedite assistance from higher government levels. Having powerful acquaintances [*malakas sa taas*] as means for negotiating increased or expedited aid has been recorded in other studies. Eadie & Yacub (2024) highlights the prevalence of the *Palakasan* system in distributing COVID-19 aid, where politicians prioritized allocating aid to political allies. However, this system does not always produce positive effects for local government units. Politicians could equally delay or outright deny aid to non-political allies (Eadie & Yacub, 2024). The excerpt below highlights the reality of requesting assistance through political connections:

However, it [requesting assistance] doesn't work that way. The request [to the national] will still be returned to the regional office and then to the LGU. Even if they have connections, the protocol must be followed (Interviewee B).

Since the regional level can refuse to accept reports directly submitted by municipalities or *barangays* under provinces, the report must be resubmitted and reconsolidated by the provincial level, further impeding the request process. In a post-disaster context, the delay in financial assistance from higher government levels limit PDRRMO's capacity to augment recovery and rehabilitation efforts in smaller localities, especially since quick mobilization of resources is one of the province's main objectives.

These delays do not only occur in post-disaster contexts, but they persist throughout all the disaster phases. One participant pointed out the difficulty of accessing funds due to the extensive requirements needed in the process in the following excerpt:

There is government funding available. Many LGUs want to avail of it, but there are so many requirements that many don't avail of it. The funding is there, but there are many compliance issues and documents needed, so LGUs are discouraged from availing themselves of the available funds (Interviewee A).

All these instances show that although the policy defines financial transfers from central to local governments, inefficiencies in the system still push actors to diverge from the process and find other ways to get assistance further. These inefficiencies in the process only contribute further to the challenges of DRRM in the region.

Provinces continue to depend on funding from higher government levels such that 75% of the provinces' income comes from grants (Guevarra, 2000). This dependency impedes the capabilities of province to build their resilience against disasters since most funding is instead directed to relief, recovery, and reconstruction instead of mitigation efforts (Villacin, 2017). Local government units' dependency on fiscal transfers is linked to insufficient local revenue streams, to be discussed in the next section.

### 5.3.2. Local Revenue Sources

Local revenue sources are represented by the LDRRMF under Republic Act 10121. The LDRRMF serves as the primary fund for disaster risk reduction and management at the local government level. The LDRRMF is derived from the IRA of the province. Since local governments have the primary responsibility for DRRM operations in their area, any operations they have will revolve around this available fund.

I asked participants whether they found this initial funding to be sufficient. None of the participants directly claimed the funds were insufficient, but they all acknowledged the limitations of the amount. The following passage highlights how these limitations are linked to the fiscal decentralization defined in the Code:

The class of the municipality affects its Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA), and the 5% calamity fund is drawn from the IRA. For lower-class municipalities, from third to fifth class, their IRA is smaller, so the 5% calamity fund may not be sufficient if the devastation is significant (Interviewee B).

The above passage reveals that the LDRRMF is heavily reliant on the IRA which incentivizes localities with high revenue collection, instead of improving the capacity of local government units which have greater needs (Villamejor-Mendoza, 2020). The LDRRMF has the same issues since it is tied to the IRA, resulting in disproportionate DRRM funding to smaller localities. The following excerpt highlights the lack of alternative budget sources offered for local government units:

Here's the question. How about the small municipalities? Small municipalities, small income, but face the same disasters. How can they cope up with their resources, their equipment, with minimal budget? The national government doesn't provide additional income or offerance for DRRM projects. They use the existing local budget. That's their issue (Interviewee E).

The lack of alternatives to the LDRRMF, and in turn the IRA as a source of DRRM funding raises into question whether local government units, especially smaller localities, gained the autonomy promised to them by the Code. My findings are echoed by de la Rosa Reyes' (2016) study which argued that the current setup does little to address the reduced capacities of smaller local government units and leaves them persistently IRA-dependent.

Although responsibilities were devolved to lower government levels, they were given nominal revenue generating schemes and the established system does little to account for the varying socioeconomic inequalities among the provinces (Diokno-Sicat & Maddawin, 2018). In the context of DRRM, the occurrence of disasters weakens or destroys existing local revenue sources and further hinders local governments from implementing policies that could increase their revenues (Resuello, 2020). With weakened local revenue sources due to the insufficiency of the IRA, local governments need to rely on other financial sources such as transfers through the

NDRRM Fund, but the earlier section also illustrated how the application process for this fund can be challenging for provinces.

### 5.3.3. Analyzing Fiscal Decentralization in the Ilocos Region DRRM

The following table now summarizes the points of alignment and divergence in the fiscal decentralization policy and practice of DRRM in the Ilocos Region.

| <b>Fiscal Decentralization</b>     | <b>Policy</b>   | <b>Practice</b>   |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Intergovernmental Transfers</b> | Represented by the NDRRM Fund, intergovernmental transfers must follow official request channels, such as the PDNA and transfer flows | <p><b>Alignment:</b> PDNA and the proper channels to request for NDRRM Fund are used by local government units to request assistance from higher levels.</p> <p><b>Divergence:</b> Transfer of funds is not necessarily linear. May occur between partner provinces or from politicians to province. Attempts to bypass PDNA to expedite process for aid.</p> |
| <b>Local Revenue Sources</b>       | Represented by the LDRMMF, funding for DRRM at the local level must be at least 5% of IRA.  | <p><b>Alignment:</b> The Local DRRM Fund is 5% for all local government units.</p> <p><b>Divergence:</b> Small localities receive smaller IRA, in turn less LDRRMF, making them dependent on augmentation from higher levels.</p>   |

*Table 8: Fiscal Decentralization Policy vs. Practice*

From these alignments and divergences of fiscal decentralization policy and practice in the Ilocos Region, fiscal decentralization is weak in the case study. The issue of underfunded mandates is a recurring theme in the interviews, linked to the IRA's incentivization of high-earning localities to the detriment of low-earning ones. Low-earning municipalities have lower LDRRMF, pushing them to request for augmentation of financial resources following typhoons. However, this process is fraught with delays and extensive requirements, further weakening the capacity of these localities. These characteristics resulting in weakened capacities translate to weak fiscal decentralization, since most resources are still under the central government.

## 5.4. Political Decentralization of DRRM in the Ilocos Region

In Chapter 2, I defined political decentralization through the following questions:

- Who holds the decision-making power in the decentralized government?
- To what extent can local government officials make decisions independently, and when must they rely on the central government for support, approval, or funding?

Republic Act 10121 asserts that local chief executives should determine DRRM operations within their jurisdiction and that local government units have the primary responsibility of responding to disaster-related needs. The next section will define the extent to which these leaders have authority and autonomy to make decisions in DRRM recovery and rehabilitation operations.

#### *5.4.1. Decision-Making Authority*

In section 5.2. on administrative decentralization, I presented that primary decision-making falls to the local chief executives, tasked with determining all DRRM operations. Both in practice and in policy, at the provincial level, the governor has primary decision-making authority over the operations of the provincial DRRM office itself. The governor's leadership entails sending out advisories to mayors, delegating responsibilities, and ensuring coordination of all provincial-level actors. The following excerpt highlights the components of the governor's executive role:

Even if the executive chief [the governor] is political, our head is still our chief executive. He is our chairman so all our actions, we will go to the executive office, for close coordination. (Interviewee E)

Nevertheless, the governor only heads augmentative operations and the mayor still emerges as the key decision-maker in recovery and rehabilitation efforts. To illustrate the mayor's authority, I cite this statement from the interviews:

In the setup here in the Philippines, since we have political divisions or boundaries, what is always followed in terms of operations is the local government. Even if the national government wants to provide assistance or introduce a program, if the mayor or local chief executive identifies that it is not aligned with our platforms or programs, they can deny the assistance (Interviewee A).

The strong authority of the mayor in DRRM is a result of the Code's significant devolution of regulatory functions to LGUs (Atienza et al., 2020), supported by Philippine political culture which promotes strong adherence to local chief executives (Dangcalan et al., 2019). The strong authority of mayors in the Philippines can even allow them to influence national-level politics, an observation given by one of the case study's participants.

Normally, the executive branch should communicate with the legislative branch through the President. However, if a mayor has family members in Congress. Even the mayor can have influence in the Senate or House of Congress if they have relatives or friends there. (Interviewee A)

However, it's also important to note that the strong authority of the mayor and their control over policy making processes in the Philippines is limited only to certain areas of public service provision. For example, in the health field, the provincial level has control over provincial facilities such as provincial hospitals, whereas municipalities and thus the mayor has more control over direct and primary health care provision such as the maintenance of schools (Shair Rosenfield, 2016).

In DRRM, I make a similar observation, especially in the earlier administrative and fiscal sections. Provinces have greater resources and more control over rescue teams and equipment, whereas municipalities and *barangays* have more control over the immediate provision of relief aid to their constituents. The following excerpt lists examples of vehicles and personnel that lower local government unit levels have greater control over:

Because the PDRRMO has vehicles, rescue vehicles, ambulances, and now we have more than 100 manpower. We also have Water Search and Rescue teams (Interviewee B).

The services and facilities managed by each level of government influence the authority of local chief executives, raising the question of who has the final say when conflicts arise during recovery and rehabilitation. The next section highlights how although both executives do have authority, it is equally important to determine the extent to which they can make decisions outside the influence of higher government levels.

#### *5.4.2. Political Autonomy*

The DRRM process is characterized by collaboration between different government levels. These levels collaborate mostly due to the lower government level's reliance on augmentation from higher government levels. Despite the mayor's authority, however, local chief executives (both mayors and governors) still need to navigate political factors that influence the decision-making processes.

These political factors include political party alliances that affect the speed or prioritization of augmentation recipients in post disaster recovery and rehabilitation. The following passage demonstrates local-level party politics influencing DRRM processes:

In an LGU, especially in a province, there are many who are not in the same political party because we have many political parties. So, some mayors belong to a different party, while others share the same party as those in power... They prioritize their party members. It's like that" (Interviewee B).

While political connections can result in prioritization or the expediency of augmentation requests, the reverse, political conflicts can also result in challenges in the recovery and rehabilitation process. Yilmaz & Venugopal (2013) call these conflicts "a hallmark of Philippine political life"

and are linked to the way political parties in the country are controlled by dominant political families and depend heavily on individual loyalties and personal gains. The passage below demonstrates how individual loyalties, and personal relationships hinder cooperation between key stakeholders in DRRM:

Those relationships between the *barangay* captain and the municipality. When there are instances that... that's really political... when the mayor and the *barangay* captain are not on good terms. That's when there's a problem, especially in relief operations, damages (Interviewee D).

Conflicts between political actors become a significant problem considering that the primary responsibilities of the provincial level center around the quick mobilization of augmentation to local government units following disasters. These same conflicts also impede the submission of the PDNA, which serves as the basis for financial transfers from central to local.

While outright exclusion did not occur, political factors influence prioritization and conflict outside official processes, limiting local chief executives' ability to make independent decisions. Some participants expressed sentiments of resignation to the ongoing impact of political connections on their operations, as in the passage below:

Actually, that's the reality in terms of connections in the Philippines. Aside from your friends and families, if you are the leader and you did not come from a strong family background or strong political background, you need to have leverage here in the Philippines (Interviewee A)

Participant A's assertion about requiring leverage or strong political background for better access to resources is not a new finding in Philippine DRRM. Though the Code granted increased local government units increased political power; effective implementation of policies still requires political support from national-level government actors (Basaluddin, 2021). This need for political support (and financial support, as discussed in section 5.3) pushes local government units to engage in negotiations with higher government levels. The problem with these intergovernmental collaborations, however, is that these negotiations are vulnerable to shifting political alliances that threaten an impasse in every joint project (Gera, 2018). In the context of DRRM, political negotiations between local chief executives, each with their own degree of political power threaten to fragment what should ideally be cohesive recovery and rehabilitation efforts, reducing the overall capacity of the DRRM offices (Jovita et al., 2018).

Political negotiations reveal an interesting picture of how decentralized DRRM works. Higher levels of government prioritize areas politically advantageous to them, while lower levels of government use their leverage and strengthened political authority to influence processes, up to the national level. Political decentralization in the case study shows strong authority but weak

autonomy of local government units, which as this section has also presented, is linked to the norms of political practice in the Philippines.

### 5.4.3. Analyzing Political Decentralization in the Ilocos Region DRRM

The following table summarizes the alignments and divergences in political decentralization policies and the Ilocos Region’s practice.

| <b>Political Decentralization</b> | <b>Policy</b>   | <b>Practice</b>  |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Decision-Making Authority</b>  | LDRRMO are responsible for direction, development, and implementation of DRRM operations, where LGU are first responders.     | <p><b>Alignment:</b> LDRRMO, and their chief executive, the mayor, has the primary responsibility of implementing recovery and rehabilitation operations</p> <p><b>Divergence:</b> Authority is limited to direct services offered by local governments.</p> |
| <b>Political Autonomy</b>         | LDRRMOs collaborate with higher government levels. Higher levels must align their operations to the needs of the local level. | <p><b>Alignment:</b> Local governments led by mayors have authority over operations.</p> <p><b>Divergence:</b> For increased prioritization or speed of assistance, local chief executives negotiate with higher levels through political connections.</p>   |

*Table 9: Political Decentralization Policy vs. Practice*

In the Ilocos Region, political decentralization policies grant authority to the local government units. This transfer of authority is followed in practice, where the provincial level follows the decisions made by the mayor and designs their augmentation operations accordingly. These characteristics demonstrate strong political decentralization.

However, the current setup of DRRM in the Ilocos Region requires the collaboration of different government levels. Since there is weak fiscal capacity in some localities, this collaboration takes place when lower government levels request aid from higher ones. This setting creates an environment where prioritization according to political connections or leverage thrives.

## 5.5. Interplay between Administrative, Fiscal and Political Decentralization

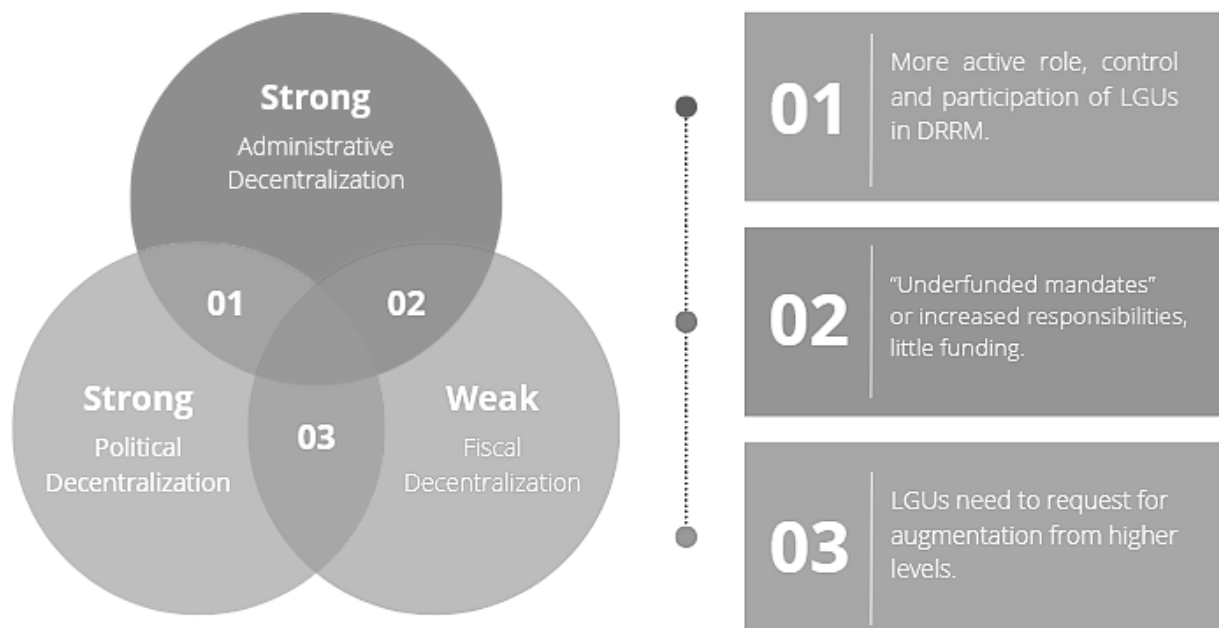
The previous section highlighted strong administrative and political decentralization, but weak fiscal decentralization. Now, I examine how these dimensions interact to shape recovery operations in the Ilocos Region.

First, strong administrative and political decentralization interact to produce more active and participatory roles of LGUs, resulting in strategic partnerships between stakeholders. Devolution of responsibility to local government units has made them the primary actors in DRRM. Policies support devolved roles by giving local chief executives decision-making authority over recovery and rehabilitation operations. Devolved decision-making and disaster service provision roles encourage local government units to cooperate with each other or with the national government to fulfill devolved responsibilities, increasing their overall role and participation in DRRM.

Second, strong administrative decentralization intersects with weak fiscal decentralization resulting in underfunded mandates. Strong administrative decentralization means that local governments have more responsibility to fulfill but weak fiscal decentralization means that financial transfers do not provide local governments with financing mechanisms that would allow them to generate the funding they need to fulfill said responsibilities.

Lastly, strong political decentralization intersects with weak fiscal decentralization fostering local governments' dependency on augmentation from higher government levels. Strong political decentralization means that local government units have greater control over their operations but without the proper funding due to fiscal decentralization, local government leaders need to request augmentation from national-level agencies or actors.

These intersections shape the current landscape of recovery and rehabilitation operations in the Ilocos Region. Figure 7 presents the intersections of these different dimensions and the producing effect which defines current operations in the region.



*Figure 6: Dimensions of Decentralization in the Ilocos Region*

Decentralization theory suggests that by devolving administrative responsibilities, political authority and financial mechanisms to local governments, public services such as DRRM would be greater improved (Rondinelli, 2006). However, as this chapter has shown, decentralizing in administrative, political and fiscal ways is not sufficient to attain the full benefits of decentralized governance. Gaps where fiscal decentralization fails to address disparities between high-earning and low-earning localities undermine advantages of devolving responsibilities to localities, since these localities lack the financial capacity to support devolved responsibilities. Similarly, fiscal decentralization gaps also undermine the advantages of increased authority of local leaders since local leaders continue to rely on financial resources that are controlled by national-level leaders. These findings highlight the importance of viewing decentralization as multi-dimensional, where it is necessary for all dimensions not only to be present but must also be robust to improve provision of services, such as DRRM.

## **5.6. Conclusion**

This chapter examined the administrative, fiscal, and political devolution of DRRM responsibilities in the Ilocos Region, analyzing how local operations align with or diverge from Republic Act 10121. It explored factors within Philippine politics and DRRM that contribute to this divergence and evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of each decentralization dimension, as defined in Chapter 2. The intersections of these dimensions were also discussed, shaping the region's recovery and rehabilitation operations.

## **Chapter 6: Advantages and Disadvantages of Decentralized DRRM**

### **6.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, I answer the third sub question of this thesis:

What are the resulting advantages and disadvantages from the administrative, fiscal, and political decentralization of DRRM in the Ilocos Region?

This chapter is divided into two sections: the first discusses the advantages of decentralization in improving DRRM operations, based by the Sendai Framework from Chapter 3. The second section highlights the disadvantages of decentralization, showing how non-conformity to the Sendai Framework can negatively impact recovery and rehabilitation in the Ilocos Region. I argue that these advantages and disadvantages stem mainly from weak fiscal decentralization, limiting the effectiveness of strong devolved DRRM responsibilities and political authority.

### **6.2. Advantages Resulting from Decentralized DRRM**

#### *6.2.1. Localization of DRRM Authority*

Local chief executives, specifically mayors and governors, emerged as the primary decision-makers in the recovery and rehabilitation phase. Out of 61 instances discussing decision-making in DRRM operations, they were mentioned 29 times, highlighting their political authority in this process, as in the passage below:

In the setup here in the Philippines, since we have political divisions or boundaries, what is always followed in terms of operations is the local government (Interviewee A).

I utilized the adjective “strongest” here, because not only do local chief executives determine local operations, but they could also define the augmentation efforts from higher government levels. The provincial, regional, and national actors involved in augmenting local needs must ensure that any resources they send to localities align with local project needs.

If the mayor or local chief executive identifies that it is not aligned with our platforms or programs, they can deny the assistance (Interviewee A).

Republic Act 10121 institutionalizes local governments’ political authority by explicitly assigning local leaders the primary leadership for DRRM responses. Strong political decentralization through increased local authority is an advantage since it strengthens the relationship between the governor and the governed, reducing the people’s alienation from political processes (Miller, 2002). The close relationship between leaders and civil society is evident in the case study, where the provincial governor's presence in DRRM operations was seen as a "morale-booster" by local responders.

Increased political authority of local leaders is an advantage reflecting the guiding principles of the Sendai Framework, which in turn reflects the call for localization by academic scholarship. Localization in this case does not refer to the reallocation of funding from global North to global South development organizations but refers instead to the strengthening of local systems and stakeholders that provide core services (Patel et al., 2021). Empowering local authorities, a core principle of the framework, includes granting local governments increased decision-making powers through laws, regulations, standards, and procedures (Section 27g). Political decentralization in the Ilocos Region is strong since Republic Act 10121 explicitly defines the transfer of power from the national to the local.

### *6.2.2. Better Representation of Local Needs*

The case study also features strong administrative decentralization through the devolution of DRRM responsibilities to lower levels of government. Strong devolution of responsibilities to the local level meant that local needs are better represented and addressed by the government (Pearce & Mawson, 2003). In the case study, local needs are represented and addressed through the PDNA system.

If there is no budget in the region, they will ask help through the Post Disaster Needs Assessment which will be passed to the region and eventually, the region will pass to the national (Interviewee F).

The value of the PDNA lies in the fact that through it, local governments can request augmentation that aligns with the operations they have implemented at the local level. My analysis of the interviews corroborates this finding. Of 12 references under the “Alignment to Local Needs” code, 6 are simultaneously coded with the PDNA process. My analysis thus suggests that the PDNA process serves as the mechanism for the better representation of local needs in the Ilocos Region’s recovery and rehabilitation process.

Bowen (2015) describes, for example, how the PDNA created after Typhoons Ondoy and Pepeng effectively identified specific sectors whose workers suffered the most losses in productivity and livelihoods. The PDNA also provides a holistic picture of infrastructure damages, livelihood losses and affected families, concentrating institutionalized efforts for recovery and rehabilitation efforts to specific local needs (Florano & Perez, 2014).

The existence of a mechanism that communicates local needs through the PDNA aligns with the Sendai Framework’s ideals of increasing local government participation. Priority 4 of the framework specifically emphasizes the need for strengthened coordination between different governance levels in post-disaster recovery planning (Section 33a). The PDNA fulfills the role of strengthening coordination by serving as the mechanism for communicating local needs to higher government levels. Therefore, better representation of local needs is one of the advantages that emerged from decentralizing local needs.

### 6.2.3. Strategic Partnerships between Local Governmental Units.

Strong administrative decentralization produces LGUs with increased responsibilities and strong political decentralization empowers leaders that have their own policies and programs. Combined, my analysis reveals that these two factors are significantly simultaneously coded with “strategies” that LGUs have developed to facilitate the fulfillment of their responsibilities. These strategies improve intergovernmental collaboration, producing positive effects.

For example, provincial and municipal offices use the strategy of prepositioning resources to expedite recovery and rehabilitation assistance in times of large-scale disasters. The following passage highlights how prepositioning goods improve recovery and rehabilitation operations:

And we, the response cluster team of the council, has already been pre-deployed at the capital and other areas of our, but may be in need of a search operation. And well, it was already nighttime when the calls came in. So even then, we tried to mobilize solar resources at equipment and trucks, goods. And we were successful in the relocation of residents trapped in the communities (Interviewee C).

The National Disaster Response Plan (NDRP) recognizes prepositioning as one of the best practices. Prepositioning resources requires higher and lower-level governments to communicate information with each other to determine ideal location and resources needed by communities (Blanco, 2015). Prepositioning is a strategy that emerges because higher-level governments must align augmentation to local leaders’ operations and needs.

Furthermore, government units of similar levels may also partner with each other to increase both their capacities. Joint training exercises between provinces increase opportunities for knowledge-sharing and in turn, personnel capacity-building for both provinces. The collaboration may also result in resources-sharing where provinces augment each other’s resources instead of just supporting lower government levels, as exemplified in the passage below:

To the level that we even received national recognition for our heroic acts, in Kalasag, due to our rescue operations in other provinces, like our rescue operations in other provinces (Interviewee E).

These strategic partnerships in the Ilocos Region are a result of the clear devolution of responsibilities to the lower government units (administrative decentralization), and the institutionalization of the local governments’ authority through policies like the NDRP (political decentralization). The solidification of responsibility and authority improves overall collaboration of LGUs and higher government units and each other. A similar case study in the health sector produced a similar finding. During the COVID-19 pandemic, capacity and resource issues made emergency health response difficult for the *barangay* level, but the institutionalization and incorporation of local communities’ role allowed for easy *barangay* cooperation with provincial

and national levels (Shair-Rosenfield, 2024). My case study discovered a similar finding where intergovernmental collaboration was made easier through the institutionalization of local governments' authority in implementing local recovery and rehabilitation efforts.

Increased cooperation and formal partnerships between government levels align with the Sendai Framework, particularly Section 48, which advocates for "United Cities and Local Government organizations" as spaces for "mutual learning" in DRRM. The sisterhood agreements in the case study and joint training between LGUs and provincial offices serve as examples of mutual learning envisioned by the SFDRR. Additionally, Section 33j highlights the importance of sharing expertise and lessons learned in post-disaster recovery. Augmentation, joint training sessions and prepositioning strategies developed by provinces reflects the application of these priorities in the Philippines. The development of strategic partnerships between lower government levels, as seen in the case study, is an advantage that aligns with the principles of the Sendai Framework.

#### *6.2.4. Conclusion: Advantages*

This section has overall discussed the advantages that emerged from decentralizing DRRM in the Philippines. In general, the advantages produced here stem from the strong administrative decentralization of DRRM in the Philippines, which encouraged the formation of reporting systems to ensure that local governments fulfill their mandates. Furthermore, strong administrative decentralization is supported by equally strong political decentralization, demonstrated by the mayor taking charge of all DRRM operations at the local level, and having the authority to influence augmentation efforts of higher levels. These advantages thus align with the Sendai Framework's core principle of empowering local government in terms of decision-making and through clearly identifying their responsibilities.

### **6.3. Disadvantages Resulting from Decentralized DRRM**

#### *6.3.1. Small Locality, Small Financial Capacity*

While political and administrative decentralization in Ilocos Region DRRM was strong, fiscal decentralization was weak. The local DRRM Fund's is heavily reliant on the IRA, which favors high-income localities to the detriment of small localities. The following passage provides a concrete depiction of this issue:

So that's what I'm thinking, how about the small municipalities, they should look at it. Revise it. Because I went on an inspection in one of my municipalities. I saw. How much? 200,000? 300,000? That's their budget. That's their 5%. With 200 or 300 what can you buy? You can't even buy a car with that (Interviewee E).

Variations in municipal budgets are best illustrated by their classifications based on IRA. According to Presidential Decree No. 465, Section 4, local government units shall be categorized

according to their annual revenue. Note that 1 CAD (Canadian dollar) is equivalent to roughly 40 PHP (Philippine peso).

1. First class - total revenue of 1,500,000 PHP or more per year.
2. Second class - total revenue of 1,000,000 PHP to 1,500,000 PHP per year.
3. Third class - total revenue of 500,000 PHP to 1,000,000 PHP per year.
4. Fourth class - total revenue of 300,000 PHP to 500,000 PHP per year.
5. Fifth class - total revenue of 100,000 PHP to 300,000 PHP per year.
6. Sixth class - total revenue of less than 100,000 PHP per year.

The following table summarizes the number of first to sixth class municipalities for each province for the year 2023, as summarized from the information publicized in the Cities and Municipalities Competitive Index<sup>7</sup>.

| Province     | First Class | Second Class | Third Class | Fourth Class | Fifth Class |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| Ilocos Norte | 1           | 2            | 7           | 7            | 4           |
| Ilocos Sur   | 2           | 2            | 7           | 12           | 9           |
| La Union     | 6           | 2            | 2           | 6            | 3           |
| Pangasinan   | 19          | 3            | 13          | 8            | 1           |

*Table 10: Number of Municipalities under Each Class per Province*

Based on the information in this table, a total of 29 municipalities are under the third-class classification and 50 municipalities are in the fourth class to fifth class range. What these categorizations mean for the DRRM budget (at least 5% of the municipalities' revenue) is that for third class municipalities, the DRRM budget ranges from 25,000 to 50,000 PHP (1,250 to 2,500 CAD) per year whereas fourth and fifth class municipalities have annual DRRM budgets that fall under 15,000 PHP or just under 400 CAD.

This amount is not enough to purchase any meaningful resources for DRRM operations, or even to repair damaged infrastructure, highlighting their inability to become self-sufficient, leading to aid requests in later DRRM phases. This disparity in LDRRMF is a problem for provinces whose mandate is to support local governments. Since local resources are insufficient, the province must augment operations in these localities. The higher the number of small localities, the more resources and augmentation operations the province needs to perform, overwhelming the provincial office. As an interviewee pointed out:

The ratio of those asking for help compared to the search and rescue units here was lacking. So that's why, from the EOC (Emergency Operations Center) of ours that was activated,

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<sup>7</sup> The following table excludes component cities, which as discussed in Chapter 3 do not report to provinces

we asked for help from the regional office, which was the Office of the Civil Defense (Interviewee F).

The LDRRMF's skewed balance in favor of larger municipalities due to weak fiscal decentralization in DRRM policies fail to promote the objectives of building resiliency enshrined in the Sendai Framework. Section 30a emphasizes the need for resource allocation at all administrative levels. However, IRA allocations are insufficient for sustaining DRRM operations, limiting local governments' ability to invest in resiliency. Local governments fail to comply with Section 30c of the SFDRR which stresses the importance of investing in critical DRRM facilities due to the insufficiency of funds.

### *6.3.2. Underfunded Mandates and Dependency on Central Governments*

Strong devolution of responsibilities but weak financial decentralization results in “underfunded mandates”, or responsibilities that cannot be fulfilled by the government due to insufficient resources (Brillantes & Flores, 2012). With weak financial decentralization resulting in capacity (material) issues for local and provincial DRRM offices, localities continue to be dependent on the national-level government. Additionally, the code “dependency” is simultaneously coded to “lacking capacity (material)” 8 out of 11 times. The data suggests a connection between weakened capacity and local governments' continued dependency on the central government.

In theory, fiscal autonomy enables LGUs to make decisions tailored to local contexts, promoting greater local accountability. However, the study reveals that fiscal autonomy in the region is constrained by the lack of local revenue generation strategies. The small tax base in rural municipalities exacerbates these challenges, making it difficult to implement national policies or achieve the desired governance outcomes. Rural LGUs find themselves in a continuous cycle of funding dependency, where centralized control remains a dominant feature of governance, stifling local development.

Even the *barangay* DRRM committees have their own calamity funds, but it also depends on their IRA. So, if the IRA is small, the calamity fund is also small. They need to request assistance from their municipality first. That's the protocol, SOP (Interviewee B).

The above passage highlights how the direct link between the IRA and the calamity fund pushes the *barangay* level to request for assistance. On a larger scale, the capacity issue of small localities reflects urban-rural financial disparities. Urban areas in the Philippines, like Zamboanga City benefit from greater funding and in turn, better governance due to their higher IRA percentage. However, more rural government units that receive lesser IRA share find it difficult to conform to national policies, rendering these LGUs dependent on central funding and limiting their administrative autonomy over their DRRM responsibilities (Moreno & Sulasula, 2024).

Underfunded mandates from decentralization hinder DRRM effectiveness and limit resiliency building in municipalities. The Sendai Framework stresses that local governments need sufficient capacity to fulfill devolved DRRM roles (Section 19f). While authority was decentralized, it wasn't matched with financial power, contradicting Section 30a's call for adequate resources at all levels. Weakened capacity and persistent dependency on central funding emerges thus as a main disadvantage produced by decentralizing DRRM.

### *6.3.3. Limited Political Autonomy and Bypassing*

Where weak fiscal and strong administrative decentralization intersect to produce underfunded mandates, weak fiscal and strong political decentralization intersect to produce limited political autonomy of local governments. My coding shows that “limited autonomy” is simultaneously coded with “fiscal decentralization” through the “PDNA process”. Local governments undergo the PDNA process to request for more financial resources to compensate for weak local capacity. However, the PDNA process is marked by negotiations between national-level politicians and local-level politicians, where political factors, such as alliances, may come into play, as is the case in the excerpt below.

We have a municipality here that was really hard hit, the hardest hit in the entire Philippines. But their mayor, or the governor, doesn't have connections with national government agencies. So they will not be a priority for the national government. (Interviewee A).

Although local government leaders have increased political authority over their LGU, national-level leaders can limit this autonomy, since they control larger resources needed by local governments. Strong political decentralization without fiscal decentralization pushes local governments to maintain alliances with the central government to obtain resources for their operations. Not maintaining alliances may lead to non-prioritization to the detriment of local government operations.

But their mayor, or the governor, doesn't have connections with national government agencies. So they will not be a priority for the national government (Interviewee A).

Political factors affect conformity to proper channels such as the PDNA, since local governments use connections to prioritize or expedite requests for aid. We see political factors in the case study through the instances of bypassing. Bypassing, though not defined in official DRRM legislation, is used in DRRM literature to describe the exclusion or failure to communicate with a government level that should be consulted in reporting or augmentation processes. Dy and Stephens (2016) use the term as follows:

“Provincial governments were largely bypassed in the Haiyan response, although they have potential for coordinating humanitarian assistance, addressing gaps, and serving as intermediaries between national and municipal governments. (Dy & Stephens, 2016, p. iv)

Interviews recorded instances where local government units bypassed provincial offices to expedite the PDNA process, as in the passage below:

Yes, it can disrupt the chain of command. Normally, the executive branch should communicate with the legislative branch through the President. However, if a mayor has family members in Congress. Even the mayor can have influence in the Senate or House of Congress if they have relatives or friends there (Interviewee A).

The code "Bypassing," like "Dependency," is linked to both fiscal and political decentralization. It reflects local leaders' efforts to leverage devolved authority to compensate for weak financial capacities. In the Ilocos Region, the intersection of strong political and weak fiscal decentralization leads to a patronage or "*palakasan*" system, where resource allocation is driven by personal connections rather than objective criteria (Eadie & Yacub, 2024). The prevalence of a patronage system in recovery and rehabilitation practice may be linked to Filipino cultural values, which often take precedence over formal laws. For instance, the "*palakasan*" system in the case study is rooted in the value of *utang-na-loob* (debt of gratitude), a key influence in Philippine politics (Ballano, 2017).

The difference between bypassing, where local-government leaders exert their authority and dependency, where local leaders defer their authority highlights the flexible roles political leaders play in Philippine patronage politics. Patrons and clients in the Philippine context are not fixed but varies depending on the context, the engaged actor and the network (Tan-Mullins et al., 2021).

Limited political autonomy in the Philippines raises concerns about whether local governments are truly "empowered" as envisioned by the Sendai Framework (Section 27h), particularly regarding their involvement in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and their financial and regulatory authority. The lack of sufficient financial support hampers local authorities' ability to exercise their power effectively, conflicting with the Sendai Framework's goal of stakeholder coordination (Section 19e). Additionally, conflicts and bypassing between local government units (LGUs) and provinces during post-typhoon recovery undermine the framework's call for coordinated relief mechanisms and procedures (Section 33e), revealing a failure in decentralizing DRRM effectively.

#### *6.3.4. Political Conflicts Between DRRM Actors*

Strong political decentralization in the Ilocos Region increased local authority over recovery and rehabilitation operations, but the persistence of political conflicts between actors demonstrate that strong political decentralization also failed to address conflicts that stem from Philippine political practice. Analysis of the code "political conflicts" reveals that there is no significant intersection between political decentralization and other decentralization types. Instead, the code reveals political factors that result in conflict between actors, hindering the needs assessment, as in the passage below:

Yes. If the *barangay* captain and the mayor are not friends, there's a tendency that not everything will be reported. For example, if a *barangay* is hit by 100 disasters, the mayor might report fewer (Interviewee D).

The conflict then is purely political, as there is no financial link between the *barangay* captain and the mayor. In the Philippines, political rivalries continue to affect DRRM where higher government levels choose whether to support lower government levels depending on personal relationships or party affiliations (Bankoff et al., 2016).

Furthermore, political parties in the Philippines are defined according to patronage-based networks (Hedman & Sidel, 2000), based on elite political families that dominate the national government (Yilmaz & Venugopal, 2013). Although political decentralization in the case study was strong, there was little mention of policies that addressed issues stemming from the norms of Philippine politics. In fact, though the Code aimed to counter patronage politics in the country, it only “re-sliced” the “patronage pie” in favor of local-level leaders such as governors, mayors, or *barangay* captains (Hutchcroft & Rocamora, 2011, p. 109). Strong political decentralization only further contributed to this previously existing issue of patronage politics. For example, LGUs were given increased political authorities to create new offices and have these new offices staffed with their supporters or, through their control of local youth councils, provide an entry for local leaders’ grandchildren into politics (Carada & Oyamada, 2012).

Strong political decentralization intersected with norms and the patronage character of Philippine politics, to produce persistent conflict between political DRRM leaders that challenge the effective implementation of recovery and rehabilitation efforts. The Sendai Framework through Priority 2: Strengthening Disaster Governance highlights the importance of intergovernmental coordination and accountability for effective DRRM but does not mention how everyday politics, and the resulting conflict, can affect or must be considered in DRRM. Still, despite its lack of mention in the SFDRR, this case study has presented how everyday politics of the Philippines hampered effective compliance to recovery and rehabilitation policies.

Strong political decentralization, combined with the patronage nature of Philippine politics, fuels persistent conflicts among political DRRM leaders, hindering effective recovery and rehabilitation. The Sendai Framework’s Priority 2: Strengthening Disaster Governance emphasizes intergovernmental coordination and accountability but overlooks the impact of everyday political conflicts on DRRM. There have been few efforts studying conflict-sensitive framework DRRM (Mena & Hilhorst, 2021). In fact, the SFDRR does not refer to political conflicts and how they may limit the effectiveness of DRRM (Kreyscher, 2024). Nonetheless, the case study demonstrated that characteristics of the Ilocos Region’s everyday politics obstructed compliance with recovery and rehabilitation policies.

### 6.3.5. Conclusion: Disadvantages

Weak fiscal decentralization limits local government units' capacity to fulfill responsibilities that were devolved to them. Weak capacity increases reliance on the national government and reduces their political autonomy since local governments require augmentation to support operations. Their dependence on augmentation from higher government levels fosters patronage networks, where personal and political ties override official processes, leading to conflicts in disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM). These issues hinder the Ilocos Region's recovery and rehabilitation efforts and contradict the Sendai Framework's emphasis on empowering local governments with both decision-making authority and adequate resources.

#### 6.4. Summary

The analysis revealed that the advantages and disadvantages of recovery and rehabilitation operations in the Ilocos Region result from the different decentralization dimensions. Weak fiscal decentralization resulted in disproportionately limited financial resources for small localities whose share of DRRM funds cannot fulfill devolved responsibilities. Strong administrative decentralization, on the other hand, resulted in better representation of local needs through reporting mechanisms like the PDNA where local levels are the primary source of information. Lastly, strong political decentralization strengthened local leaders' authority and increased their participation in the DRRM process. However, strong political decentralization also intersected with patronage networks inherent in Philippine politics, where political affiliations and personal connections prioritized over formal processes, leading to conflicts among DRRM actors. Figure 8 summarizes these advantages and disadvantages resulting from each decentralization dimension.

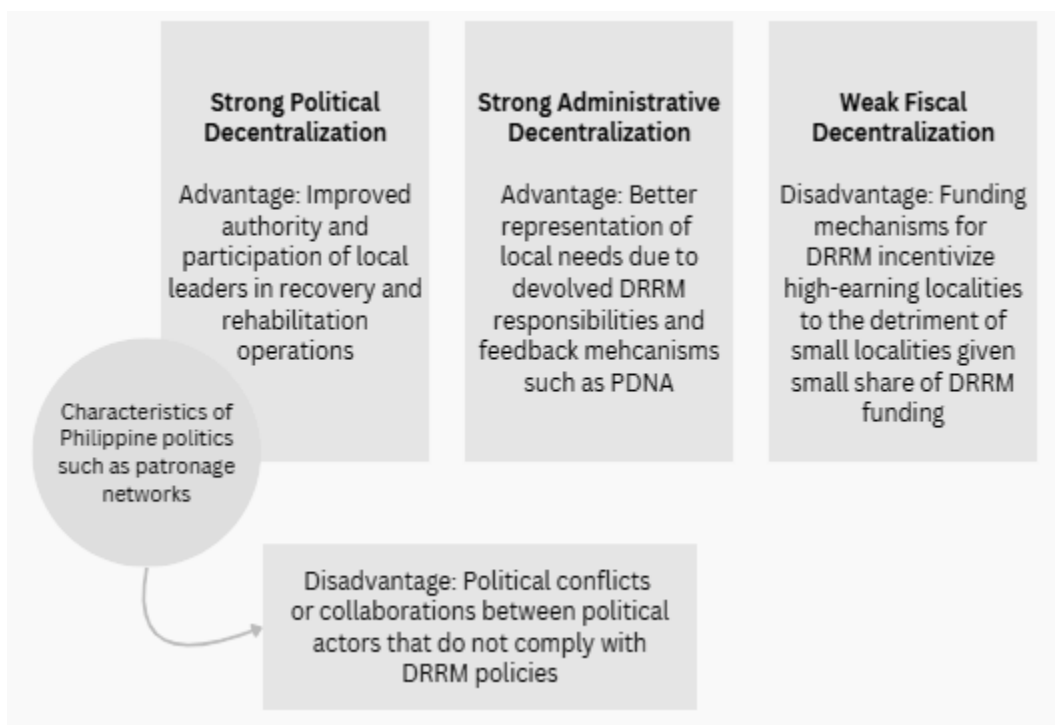
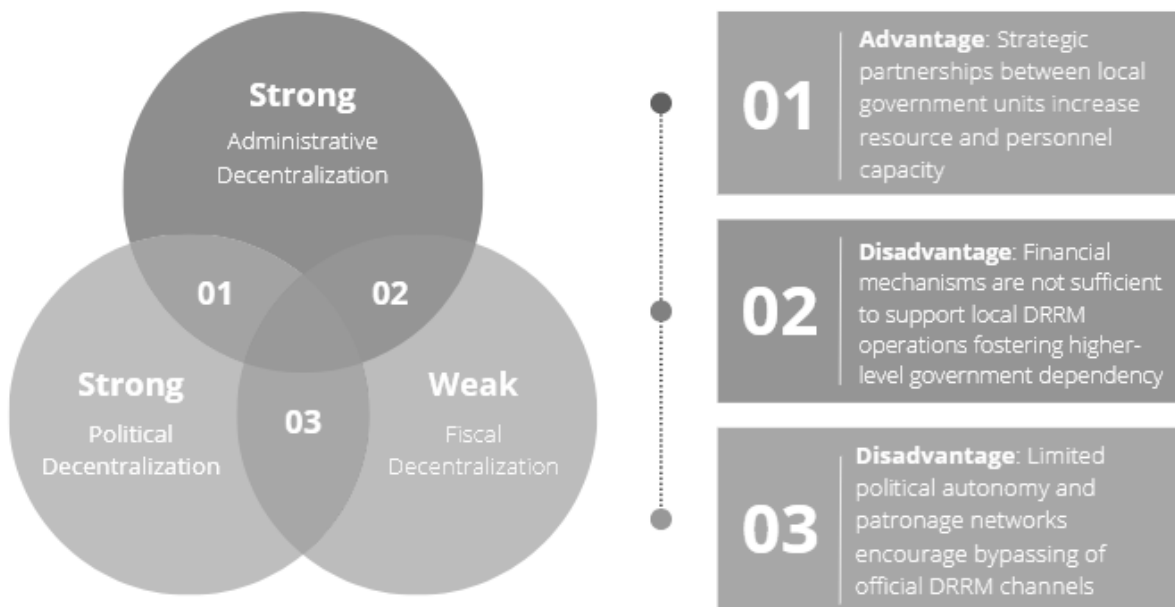


Figure 7: Advantages and Disadvantages per Dimension of Decentralization

Furthermore, each of these dimensions of decentralization also intersect to produce additional advantages and disadvantages. Strong political and strong administrative decentralization together encouraged strategic partnerships between different government levels to better fulfill DRRM responsibilities. Strong administrative but weak fiscal decentralization resulted in increased responsibilities but limited funding to implement recovery and rehabilitation operations. Limited funding at the local level perpetuates dependency on higher government levels for augmentation. Lastly, strong political but weak fiscal decentralization resulted in increased authority for local leaders but limited decision-making autonomy since they need to navigate political alliances or patronage networks in the process of requesting for additional financial resources. Local-level actors thus prefer to circumvent or bypass official channels to expedite assistance. Figure 9 summarizes these different advantages and disadvantages using the same axis in Chapter 5.



*Figure 8: Advantages and Disadvantages from the Intersections of Decentralization Dimensions*

Overall, this chapter presented how each dimension of decentralization manifests in the Ilocos Region’s case and the resulting advantages and disadvantages from their intersections. In general, the discussion revealed that the implementation of decentralized DRRM is very strong, evidenced by largely devolved responsibility to local governments and key policies, plans and even reporting mechanisms to supplement said devolution. However, these policies do little to improve the financial capacity of these local governments and equally do little to address the influence of political conflicts and patronage networks that prevail in the country. These imbalances between the dimensions and the policies’ failure to address political factors limit the full effectiveness of decentralized DRRM policies in the Ilocos Region.

These findings show that the benefits of decentralization are contingent on the balance between the different decentralization dimensions. For example, while fiscal decentralization may be present, it is not sufficient by itself; local governments require financial transfers or revenue-generating mechanisms that match devolved responsibilities. Similarly, decentralization may also be limited by the existing political environment in a state where conflicts between local leaders thrive due to the devolution of political authority. Decentralization framework and policies do not account for these complexities at the local level, limiting the effectiveness of governments to meet the people's needs. There is a disconnect between implementation of decentralization policies and the fiscal and political realities of local governments, limiting the effectiveness of decentralization reforms.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

This thesis explored the effects of decentralizing disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) in the Philippines, focusing on a case study of the Ilocos Region. The primary objective was to demonstrate how the country's decentralization policies intersect with DRRM and how these policies translated into practice at the provincial level. Specifically, the study sought to answer the question: How does the decentralization of disaster governance in the Philippines affect post-typhoon rehabilitation and recovery operations carried out by the Ilocos Region's provincial DRRM offices?

The discussion was structured around three sub-questions. First, I defined the policy framework of decentralization and DRRM in the Philippines. Second, I examined how the current practices of the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Offices (PDRRMOs) in the Ilocos Region align with or diverge from the policies. Lastly, I identified the advantages and disadvantages resulting from the decentralization of DRRM in the region.

To answer these questions, I reviewed key decentralization policies in the Philippines, particularly Republic Act 10121, which builds on the earlier Local Government Code. Both policies devolved authority, financial mechanisms, and responsibilities to lower levels of government. They reflect the multidimensional nature of decentralization, institutionalizing administrative, fiscal, and political decentralization throughout the country. These policies set the framework for disaster risk reduction and management, aiming to give local governments greater control and responsibility over disaster response and recovery.

The case study revealed that DRRM practice in the Ilocos Region is shaped by these policies, particularly in the context of intergovernmental collaboration. Local actors use formal channels to submit damage and needs assessments, reflecting the policies' emphasis on coordination. Local leaders have greater control over DRRM operations within their areas, which helps them address local needs more effectively. Moreover, the decentralization framework has encouraged collaboration among LGUs, facilitating capacity-building efforts across the region.

However, while local governments gained more responsibility and authority, they were not granted the financial resources necessary to sustain their operations. Fiscal decentralization policies have been skewed in favor of larger, urban localities, leaving smaller and low-earning LGUs with insufficient funds. Consequently, local governments continue to rely on financial augmentation from higher government levels, creating an imbalance in national-local relations where the national government retains a disproportionate level of control over resources.

A deeper analysis highlights that patronage networks, a persistent feature of Philippine politics, exacerbate these challenges. Local leaders must navigate political alliances or affiliations with political dynasties when requesting disaster-related aid. The case study reveals that these political networks can influence the prioritization of recovery efforts or, in some cases, lead to the non-reporting of damages. This reliance on political connections raises questions about whether local government leaders truly have the autonomy to exercise the political authority devolved to them.

Many local leaders believe that bypassing formal channels would be more beneficial to their operations. This tendency to circumvent established protocols can complicate coordination and undermine the intended benefits of decentralization.

Moving forward, the Ilocos Region case reveals the need to address the weak fiscal decentralization of DRRM funding to ensure the improved capacity-building of LGUs, especially smaller and low-income ones. Possibilities for capacity-building may include the 2021 Mandanas-Garcia Ruling which increased IRA sources for all LGUs. Having only been fully implemented last year, 2024, the changes this ruling produced would certainly be valuable to analyze in the context of DRRM.

Furthermore, policies must also explore equitable distribution of LDRRMFs, beyond a simple share of the LGU's IRA. Building resiliency for an entire region entails that its smallest localities must have the capacity to recover and rehabilitate following disasters. Additionally, DRRM policies in the Philippines must also consider additional safeguards or accountability measures that address the impacts of patronage networks. Definitely, the delineation of formal and official channels in DRRM has contributed to the positive intergovernmental collaboration observed in the case, but the effectiveness of these channels is limited by actors who continue to attempt to bypass the system.

The decentralized DRRM policies of the Philippines is certainly promising, and the increased involvement and decision-making power of local governments have certainly empowered local DRRM, as envisioned by the Sendai Framework. However, as the case study reveals, it is not enough to simply devolve authority and responsibilities to local actors. They must also be provided with adequate financial resources and genuine political autonomy to make recovery and rehabilitation more effective. Otherwise, policies will continue to bend under the weight of weak capacity and political influence, limiting the success of recovery and rehabilitation efforts.

Decentralization theory proposes that dividing the powers of government through the delegation of responsibility, financial resources and political power to the local level may improve the government's capacity to better respond to the needs of its constituents (Rondinelli et al., 1983). The case study supports this by showing how local DRRM practices do align with the administrative, fiscal and political decentralization enshrined in Republic Act 10121 and the Code 1991.

However, the study also reveals that decentralization theory does not always account for imbalances in decentralization dimensions, especially in fiscal and political dimensions. It is not enough to decentralize financial mechanisms to the local level; it is also necessary to ensure that these mechanisms account for the revenue-generation capacity of small localities and their needs. Not accounting for these imbalances means that decentralization threatens to disempower localities instead of empowering them since the mismatch between available local funding and increased responsibilities creates an environment fostering continued local government reliance on the national government.

Similarly, it is not sufficient to only transfer political powers to local governments, political decentralization must also create institutional safeguards that prevent persistent influence of patronage networks that compromise local autonomy. Political decentralization must be applied in consideration of the existing political culture or practices that characterize the state. The disconnect between political decentralization policies and existing political practices or culture weakens the compliance of political actors to institutional procedures which do not address historical relationships between the national and local government. Combined, these financial and political realities limit the effectiveness of decentralized policies in important sectors such as education or health, which like DRRM heavily tasks local governments with great responsibility but limited political and financial power.

Moving forward, future research would do well to explore the disconnect between decentralization theory and the fiscal and political realities of local governments in countries where decentralization is being implemented. Future studies on decentralization reforms must explore ways to ensure more equitable distribution of financial resources from national to local, to ensure that small localities have the funding to fulfill large responsibilities as much as high-earning localities. Similarly, future research must address the impacts of political culture, such as patronage networks, which affect the effectiveness of decentralization policies. Although institutional safeguards may exist, their disconnect with local political culture discourages actors from conforming to procedures. Future research and policies, therefore, must find ways to integrate existing political dynamics into decentralization reforms, to maximize the benefits from devolving responsibility, political power and financial mechanisms to local government units.

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## Annex

### Annex A: Interview Questions

#### PART I - Identification of Interviewee and Explanation of Interview Procedure

Thank you for completing the consent form. Before starting the interview, I would just like to assure you that all information shared during the interview process shall and will remain confidential. The paper will not be naming any of the officers interviewed, and neither will the answers be associated with a particular province in discussing the results.

However, the interview will be recorded and transcribed for the purpose of data analysis later on. Do you agree with these terms?

#### Purpose of Interview

For this study, I want to learn about the different factors that affect the disaster rehabilitation and recovery process after typhoons in the Philippines. The factor I am exploring in this study is the strength of political connections. I would like to find out whether the provincial government's connections with and the strength of these connections affect the overall process of recovery and rehabilitation following the typhoon.

Please state your name and the province where you worked as the leading DRRM Officer.

And to confirm, were you the leading officer during Typhoon (**Nesat, Josie, Doksuri**).

To start the interview, I would like to get to know you a little more.

How did you learn about DRRM?

- Please tell me about yourself, your educational background and your previous experiences working in DRRM before (**year of storm**) and after.

I would like to ask you some questions about your activities during the time of the typhoon.

What were you doing professionally during Typhoon (**name**)? Who did you work with?

When Typhoon (**name**) struck the Philippines, how long have you been working in the (**province**) DRRM Office?

How would you describe the general operations of your province's DRRM office at the time?

- Did the office have enough resources for its programs?
- Did people receive training?

- How often did the staff receive training?

## **PART II - Listing Activity**

For the second activity, I would like you to write down the factors that you believe affect disaster recovery and rehabilitation in your province. Now, please put them in order from the least to the most important. Why have you placed them in this order?

If political connections are on the list: I see that you wrote down political connections in this list as the *nth*. Why did you put it here?

If political connections are not on the list: I noticed that you didn't write down political connections in this list. Why not?

- Is it because during their role, they were not heavily involved with local politicians?
- Were there new measures put in place making connections a non-issue?

## **PART III - Questions**

I would like you to recall your specific experiences with Typhoon (**name**) for this one.

1. How would you describe the provincial government's political connections with the national government during Typhoon (**name**)?

Note: Let the interviewee freely define what they mean about political connections. Let them trace the connections or lack of it, of the governor or related politicians accordingly.

- a. Do they have family members in the national government?
- b. Are they from the same party as any national government leaders?
  - i. Is that person a politician or part of the agencies or another person with political connections?
- c. Do they come from a family with existing rivalries with current national government leaders?
- d. Do they come from the opposing party as the current national government leaders?
- e. Are they friends with any current national government leaders?
- f. How do you define political connections?

- g. How do you define the strength of political connections?
  - h. How do you understand the strength of political connections?
2. Do each of the listed (mention each one) political connections affect disaster recovery and rehabilitation programs implemented by the provincial DRRMO?
- a. If yes, how?
    - i. Do positive political connections increase the amount of aid received by the province? How so? Give an example.
    - ii. Do negative political connections decrease the amount of aid received by the province? How so? Give an example.
    - iii. Do positive political connections make the approval of implementation and organization of recovery and rehabilitation projects faster? How so? Give an example.
  - b. If no, why do they not?
    - i. Are there measures in place preventing political connections from affecting disaster recovery and rehabilitation projects?
    - ii. Is it related to the characteristics / measures put in place by the provincial government at the time, or is it institutionalized in the province's DRRM procedures?
3. Aside from the questions I asked, what other questions should I have asked about political connections and disaster rehabilitation and recovery?
4. Are there other staff members you would recommend for an interview? Do you also have any documents relevant to the mentioned (budget, projects, etc.)?

Thank you very much!

## Annex B: Survey Questionnaire

| A SCALE OF 1-5 WITH 1 INDICATING "STRONGLY DISAGREE" and 5 INDICATING "STRONGLY AGREE"   |                            |                            |                            |                            |                            |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Questions  | Strongly Disagree          | Disagree                   | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree                      | Strongly Agree             |
| I know a lot about my province's politicians' political connections.   | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I know a lot about how my provincial government's connections affect disaster response.  | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I am heavily involved in the implementation of my province's disaster rehabilitation and recovery projects.  | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I believe that strong political connections (family ties, friendships or party affiliations) of the provincial government with the national government <b>affects</b> the disaster rehabilitation and recovery projects of the DRRM office.            | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I believe that political connections (family ties, friendships or party affiliations) have a <b>positive impact</b> on disaster rehabilitation and recovery projects.  | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I believe that political connections (family ties, friendships or party affiliations) have a <b>negative impact</b> on disaster rehabilitation and recovery projects.  | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I believe that <b>strong</b> provincial government political connections (family members, friendships or party allies) <b>can increase the amount of disaster relief (non-monetary)</b> received from the national government.                         | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I believe that <b>strong</b> provincial government political connections (family members, friendships or party allies) <b>can increase the amount of disaster recovery and rehabilitation budget (monetary)</b> received from the national government. | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I believe that <b>weak</b> provincial government   | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

|   |                              |                            |                             |                            |                            |
|---|------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| political connections (rival families, personal rivalries, and rival party affiliations) <b>can increase the amount of disaster relief (non-monetary)</b> received from the national government.  |                              |                            |                             |                            |                            |
| I believe that <b>weak</b> provincial government connections (rival families, personal rivalries, and rival party affiliations) <b>can increase the amount of disaster recovery and rehabilitation budget (monetary)</b> received from the national government. | 1 <input type="checkbox"/>   | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I believe that <b>strong</b> provincial government political connections <b>can affect the speed</b> of implementing disaster rehabilitation and recovery projects.   | 1 <input type="checkbox"/>   | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/>  | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Survey Questions on the Typhoon</b>  |                              |                            |                             |                            |                            |
| I was an employee in the <b>(province)</b> DRRM Office during Typhoon <b>(name of typhoon)</b> .<br><br>*If your answer is no, please skip this part of the survey  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |                            | <input type="checkbox"/> No |                            |                            |
| During Typhoon <b>(name)</b> , how long have you been working in the DRRM office?   |                              |                            |                             |                            |                            |
| Please list down some of your responsibilities when Typhoon <b>(name)</b> affected your area.   |                              |                            |                             |                            |                            |
|   | Strongly Disagree            | Disagree                   | Neither agree nor disagree  | Agree                      | Strongly Agree             |

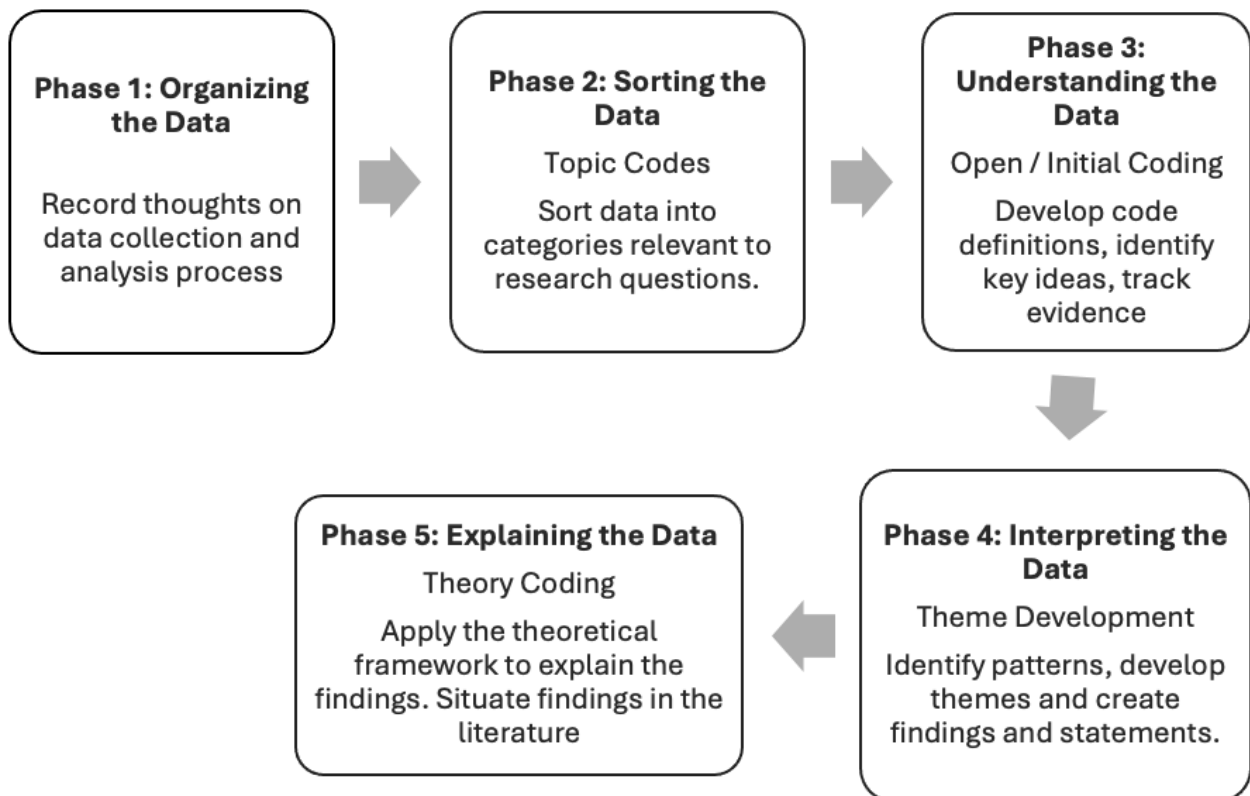




## Annex C: The Coding Process

This section outlines the coding process I used to conduct the thematic analysis for this thesis. Thematic analysis, as applied here, focuses on identifying and interpreting core themes from the interviews. These themes align with the central aim of the thesis: to explore the experiences of provincial DRRM office heads as they lead disaster recovery and rehabilitation efforts in the Ilocos Region. I relate these themes to the conceptual framework of decentralization that underpins this study. Finally, I organize and interpret the data from the transcripts through qualitative coding, which enables me to identify and organize themes in response to the research questions of this thesis.

In doing the qualitative coding for this study, I loosely followed the Five-Phase Qualitative Analysis Process created by Bingham and Witkowsky (2022). Below is a figure summarizing these five phases:



Following this process means I needed to undergo hybrid coding, which is a mix of the deductive and inductive approach. I also determined two coding phases that I underwent: first cycle coding and second cycle coding. “First cycle coding” usually reflects words or vocabulary used by research participants, whereas second cycle coding is more research-centric, using the concepts, themes and dimensions from existing theories (Gehman et al., 2018), which for this thesis’ case would be the dimensions of decentralization.

As recommended by the process, I began first by organizing the data and extracting terms that repeatedly occurred in the transcript. From this first step, I was able to record and organize emerging themes and the different perspectives in each of the six transcripts.

Next, since I transcribed and translated the data myself, I performed Phase 2: Sorting the Data less systematically, simply taking note of repeated themes. Under Phase 2, however, I was also able to create some of my first provisional codes. Provisional codes refer to predetermined or “start list” codes developed from expected categories or responses from the data (Saldaña, 2013). I then moved on to Phase 3: Understanding the Data. Here, I underwent inductive coding using the themes I originally extracted in Phase 2. I mostly performed “descriptive coding”, where I coded according to the “topic” of the passage of qualitative data (Saldaña, 2013). My initial codes, thus, were generally keywords which summarized what the passage was talking about. An example of these descriptive codes includes those presented in the table below. Any passage referring to bypassing, coordination, communication or media were coded accordingly.

| Name          | Files | References |
|---------------|-------|------------|
| Bypassing     | 2     | 11         |
| Coordination  | 3     | 6          |
| Communication | 2     | 4          |
| Media         | 3     | 4          |

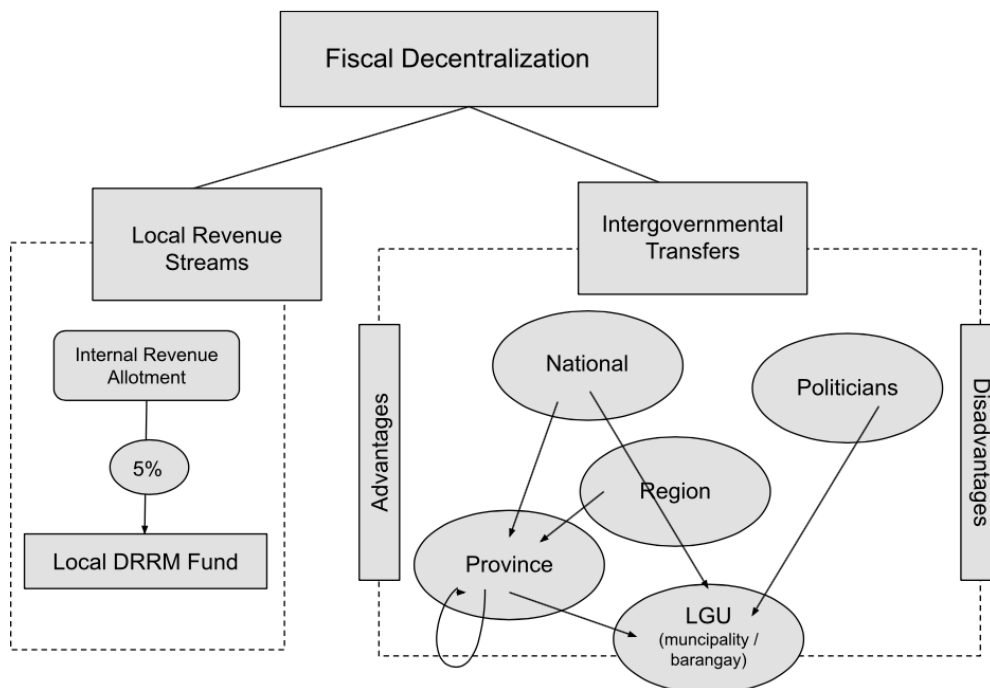
I also underwent “constant comparison” (Bingham & Witkowsky, 2022), where I compared the new data from each transcript with the ones I have already previously coded. This way, I was able to determine whether I needed to create new codes or whether the existing codes could already explain my data. With the increase of codes, I also found myself performing more sub coding, which referred to second-order tags assigned after a primary code to enrich the entry or increase the specificity for categorization and data analysis (Saldaña, 2013). In total, my initial coding produced 17 parent codes and a total of 99 subcodes.

Some of the subcodes I ended up having were meant to respond to the third sub question of my thesis: “What are the resulting advantages and barriers from the administrative, fiscal and political decentralization of DRRM in the Ilocos Region?”. Since this question required the evaluation of whether participants saw certain factors as positive or negative, I also performed evaluation coding, which meant to attribute judgements about the merit, worth or significance of programs or policy (Saldaña, 2013). In this case, I used evaluation coding to note whether the participants deemed certain topics as positive or negative. For example, I utilized evaluation coding to note whether participants deemed the financial and material resources available to their locality as *enough* or *lacking*. I also utilized evaluation coding to evaluate the capacity of personnel, and which factors were barriers or advantages to intergovernmental transfers.

Since inductive coding meant that I was coding openly according to new data and themes that emerged from the transcripts instead of a limited and structured framework, I ended up with a large total of 99 codes. It became necessary, then, to limit and organize these codes according to the conceptual framework of the study.

This led me then to Phase 4: Interpreting the Data, where I retained codes that fit the conceptual framework, or modified existing ones to combine them under codes that better answer the questions. I also sorted codes according to the dimensions of decentralization, which I primarily applied to the study. Under this phase, I primarily underwent deductive coding, as I transferred my existing codes from the first-cycle coding to my new central or core categories: administrative, fiscal and political decentralization.

With these overarching concepts to guide my “second-cycle coding”, I mainly performed “theoretical coding” where previous categories and subcategories are linked to the “central or core categories” which best identifies or explains the information from participants (Saldaña, 2013). Below is an example diagram for one of my “core categories”, fiscal decentralization. Recall in Chapter 2, I defined fiscal decentralization through two questions, the first referring to local revenue streams and the second pertaining to intergovernmental transfers. Under local revenue streams, I have two subcodes: the internal revenue allotment (IRA), which participants revealed to be the source of the second, the Local DRRM Fund. Whereas for intergovernmental transfers, I have 8 subcodes, 2 which evaluate the advantages and disadvantages in the fiscal intergovernmental transfer process and 6 subcodes which evaluate the direction of these transfers.



Aside from having fiscal decentralization (exemplified above) as one of my core categories, I also have administrative decentralization and political decentralization as my two other core categories after the coding process.

By the end of my second-cycle coding, the final code book contained three core categories, under which there were 8 parent codes and 36 subcodes. This information may be found in the final codebook in Annex D.

Aside from producing the core categories, Phase 4 also revealed which codes and categories were significant to the analysis my study wished to focus on. As described by the Five-Phase Qualitative Analysis Process, I was able to produce my thesis' findings under this fourth phase of the coding process. Here, I was able to describe the actual practice of DRRM according to the three dimensions of decentralization and highlight key repeating themes and keywords from the participants' responses. I was also able to view intersections between the codes that would be used for the analysis in the next phase.

In Phase 5: Explaining the Data, I linked the findings from the previous phase to the conceptual framework. Where in Phase 4 I was able to divide parts of the DRRM operations according to the three dimensions of decentralization, in Phase 5, I went one step further and compared the themes to the provisions in Republic Act 10121. Under this phase, I was able to discover where practice aligns or diverges with policy, which allowed me then to fully respond to my first two research questions. Furthermore, under Phase 5, I was also able to assess the advantages and disadvantages from decentralization according to the Sendai Framework's guiding principles which I also outlined in the second chapter of the study.

These steps I outlined here allowed me to produce the findings and the discussions for this thesis.

## Annex D: The Codebook

Codes (Exported from NVIVO)

Codes\\Decentralization

3 Types of Decentralization

| Name                          | Description  | Files | References |
|-------------------------------|--|-------|------------|
| Intergovernmental Conflicts   | All instances where conflict occurred between actors of different administrative levels in the Philippines   | 6     | 52         |
| Bypass                        | All instances where participants mentioned/referred to incidents of bypassing in PDNA process  | 4     | 6          |
| Dependency                    | *Different from request for aid, I coded instances where it was implied DRRM operations could not push through without the assistance from higher government levels. | 6     | 11         |
| Political Factors             | All mention of political factors that affect DRRM responses  | 5     | 15         |
| Intergovernmental Cooperation | All instances where collaboration occurred between actors of different administrative levels in the Philippines  | 6     | 51         |

Codes\\Decentralization\\Administrative Decentralization

| Name                            | Description  | Files | References |
|---------------------------------|--|-------|------------|
| Administrative Decentralization | How do local units manage their human resources? How do they procure goods / services / infrastructure How do they deliver services? | 6     | 135        |

Codes\\Decentralization\\Administrative Decentralization\\Actors Responsible for DRRM Services\\Actors

Different Actors Responsible for DRRM in the Philippines

| Name                        | Description | Files | References |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------|------------|
| Governor                    |             | 5     | 17         |
| LGU (Local Government Unit) |             | 4     | 9          |
| Local Level (Mayor)         |             | 5     | 10         |
| National Agencies           |             | 6     | 27         |
| National Level Politicians  |             | 4     | 16         |
| Office of the Civil Defense |             | 6     | 15         |
| Provincial Agencies         |             | 3     | 7          |

Codes\\Decentralization\\Administrative Decentralization\\Actors Responsible for DRRM Services\\Devolution of Responsibility

| Name                     | Description   | Files | References |
|--------------------------|---|-------|------------|
| Alignment to Local Needs | Instances where higher government levels must align operations/projects or programs to local needs              | 6     | 12         |
| Provincial Operations    | All operations, services and responsibilities related to DRRM that fall under the scope of the province.        | 6     | 66         |
| Collaboration            | All instances of province collaboration with other administrative levels  | 6     | 28         |
| Strategies               | Mention of strategies utilized by actors to facilitate provincial operations or intergovernmental collaboration | 4     | 8          |
| Conflict                 | All instances of province conflict with other administrative levels.  | 6     | 14         |

Codes\\Decentralization\\Administrative Decentralization\\Human Resources (Skills or Capacity and Training)

| Name                          | Description   | Files | References |
|-------------------------------|---|-------|------------|
| Enough HResources (province)  | Province staff numbers are sufficient, and they have enough training to fulfill DRRM responsibilities         | 5     | 15         |
| Horizontal Cooperation        | Training sessions between same-level governments  | 2     | 3          |
| Vertical Cooperation          | Training sessions between higher and lower-level governments  | 2     | 3          |
| Lacking HResources (province) | Province staff numbers are insufficient, or they do not have enough training to fulfill DRRM responsibilities | 3     | 9          |

Codes\\Decentralization\\Administrative Decentralization\\Monitoring Mechanisms

| Name       | Description   | Files | References |
|------------|---|-------|------------|
| Monitoring | Feedback/reporting or accountability systems put in place to ensure local governments fulfill devolved responsibilities | 4     | 9          |

Codes\\Decentralization\\Administrative Decentralization\\Resources (Financial and Material)

| Name                        | Description  | Files | References |
|-----------------------------|--|-------|------------|
| Enough Resources (province) | PDRRMOs have sufficient material or financial resources to fulfill devolved responsibilities | 5     | 9          |
| Prepositioning              | All mentions of prepositioning   | 1     | 2          |

|                              |   |   |    |
|------------------------------|---|---|----|
| Lacking Resources (province) | PDRRMOs do not have sufficient material or financial resources to fulfill devolved responsibilities | 6 | 17 |
|------------------------------|---|---|----|

#### Codes\Decentralization\Fiscal Decentralization

How do local units generate financial resources?

| Name                    | Description  | Files | References |
|-------------------------|--|-------|------------|
| Fiscal Decentralization | What are the local revenue streams? What are the intergovernmental transfer schemes available to DRRM actors | 6     | 81         |

#### Codes\Decentralization\Fiscal Decentralization\Intergovernmental Transfers.

| Name                        | Description  | Files | References |
|-----------------------------|--|-------|------------|
| Intergovernmental Transfers | Transfers between different government levels (Not necessarily higher to lower). | 6     | 67         |
| PDNA Process                | All mentions of the PDNA process   | 6     | 22         |

#### Codes\Decentralization\Fiscal Decentralization\Intergovernmental Transfers\Advantage or Barriers or SOP

| Name                        | Description   | Files | References |
|-----------------------------|---|-------|------------|
| Advantages                  | advantages linked to fiscal decentralization or instances participants mentioned having sufficient financial sources.           | 6     | 19         |
| Barriers                    | Any disadvantages linked to fiscal decentralization or instances participants mentioned not having sufficient financial sources | 5     | 16         |
| Speed (Financial Transfers) | Any challenges related to the speed of financial transfers specifically   | 5     | 8          |
| SOP                         | Any mention of the “official channels” enshrined in policy that must be followed for intergovernmental transfers (financial)    | 5     | 15         |

#### Codes\Decentralization\Fiscal Decentralization\Intergovernmental Transfers\Types of Intergovernmental Transfers

| Name                             | Description | Files | References |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-------|------------|
| From politicians to lower levels |             | 3     | 5          |
| National-LGU                     |             | 6     | 15         |
| National-Province                |             | 6     | 23         |
| Province-LGU                     |             | 4     | 6          |
| Province-Province                |             | 3     | 3          |
| Region-Province                  |             | 3     | 4          |

### Codes\\Decentralization\\Fiscal Decentralization\\Local Revenue Sources

| Name                      | Description  | Files | References |
|---------------------------|--|-------|------------|
| Local Supply of Provinces | Revenue-generating streams for provinces, (mentions of the LDRRMF) | 6     | 15         |
| IRA                       | All mentions of IRA  | 5     | 11         |
| Local DRRM Fund           | All mentions of the LDRRMF   | 6     | 15         |

### Codes\\Decentralization\\Political Decentralization

Who is in charge?

| Name                       | Description   | Files | References |
|----------------------------|---|-------|------------|
| Political Decentralization | Who has the authority to make decisions over DRRM operations? Do local governments have autonomy from national influence when making decisions? | 6     | 63         |

### Codes\\Decentralization\\Political Decentralization\\Political Authority

| Name                            | Description   | Files | References |
|---------------------------------|---|-------|------------|
| LGU UNITS                       | Instances where LGUs lead operations                    | 3     | 4          |
| Local Level (Mayor or Governor  | Instances where LGU leaders make DRRM decisions         | 6     | 28         |
| Governor                        |   | 4     | 15         |
| Mayor                           |   | 4     | 14         |
| National Level                  | Instances where the national level makes DRRM decisions | 2     | 8          |
| OCD                             | Instances where the OCD makes DRRM decisions            | 1     | 1          |
| PDRRM Officer                   | Instances where the PDRRM officer makes decisions       | 2     | 3          |
| Political Dynasty or Politician | Instances where politicians or dynasties make decisions | 4     | 6          |
| Province                        | Instances where provincial office makes decisions.      | 4     | 11         |

### Codes\\Decentralization\\Political Decentralization\\Political Autonomy

| Name                          | Description  | Files | References |
|-------------------------------|--|-------|------------|
| Good Autonomy (Local Govt)    | Local government is not influenced by other government levels in decision-making   | 3     | 3          |
| Limited Autonomy (Local Govt) | Local government is influenced by other government levels in their decision-making | 5     | 13         |