After the Surge: Tourism as a Disaster Recovery Strategy in Tacloban, the Philippines

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public

Abstract

This thesis presents a comprehensive examination of the role of tourism in disaster recovery, specifically focusing on Tacloban's response to Typhoon Yolanda in 2013. Employing case study methodology, this study delves into the dynamics of tourism development post-disaster, highlighting both organic growth and structured initiatives facilitated by local government and tourism bodies.

The findings reveal that the influx of aid workers and disaster tourists played a pivotal role in the economic resurgence of Tacloban, transforming the city into a tourist attraction itself as well as a regional gateway for tourism. This unexpected shift not only bolstered immediate post-disaster economic stability but also laid the groundwork for sustainable economic development. The thesis underscores the dual role of tourism in providing immediate economic relief and fostering long-term economic growth, facilitated by strategic planning and policy-making.

Key recommendations from the study emphasize the importance of preparedness in leveraging tourism for disaster recovery, suggesting the implementation of strategic frameworks to manage and maximize the benefits of tourism post-disaster. The research contributes to the broader discourse on disaster recovery and tourism, advocating for further studies to explore the potential of tourism in diverse post-disaster settings globally.

Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Natural hazards are environmental phenomena that can adversely impact society and pose an increasing threat to many around the world (Kellenberg and Mobarak 2011; Coronese et al 2019). This is particularly true in locations with compounding vulnerabilities such as economic, social, and demographic factors where hazards can often result in disaster events that devastate large populations (Samphantharak 2014). Many of the most deadly and damaging disaster events caused by natural hazards have taken place in the developing world (Jang et al 2021) where economic stability is less common. These disasters can have a devastating impact that reaches far beyond immediate damages to social and economic structures for several years after the disaster event (Zorn 2018). Considering that the intensity of many natural hazards are further exacerbated by climate change, the risk of natural disasters is increasing worldwide (Alexander 2018).

Recovery from natural disasters is a complex topic, one where the strategies vary based on the location and context. One of the many factors that has been identified as contributing to post-disaster recovery is tourism (Rosselló et al 2020). Though this area of study is evolving, some work has been done in recent decades to explore the role of tourism in the economic and social recovery of destinations from a disaster event. The role of tourism in the disaster recovery process including the disaster event's draw for tourists and the use of successful disaster marketing is explored in the Tourism-Disaster-Conflict Nexus conceptualized by Neef and Greyman (2018). Robinson and Jarvie (2008) examined how the existing tourism sector contributed to the recovery of a town in Sri Lanka after a tsunami through direct relief contributions, marketing of the destination, and entrepreneurship

opportunities. The work that has been done presents a research gap – there are not many studies examining **the impact of tourism on disaster recovery in destinations with little to no international tourism prior to the disaster event**. It is to be seen the role that tourism plays in recovery in destinations that are not traditionally tourism destinations. This study will investigate the role that tourism played in disaster recovery in the context of Tacloban's recovery from typhoon Yolanda.

1.1 Research Objectives and Questions

The research goal is to understand how tourism plays a role in disaster recovery in a location that did not have a strong tourism sector prior to the disaster event. The objectives of this research are to: (**O1**) Engage key stakeholders to explore and identify the organic and structured ways that the tourism sector developed in the post-disaster period; (**O2**) Identify the ways in which tourism impacted the recovery of Tacloban after typhoon Yolanda, either in positive or negative ways; and (**O3**) Provide policymakers with lessons learned from post-disaster tourism in order in order to capitalize on potential opportunities.

The case study for this thesis is Tacloban, the Philippines, with a focus on recovery from typhoon Haiyan (hereby referred to as typhoon Yolanda - the name used in the Philippines) in 2013. The Philippines was selected as a case study site due to its reputation as a typhoon-prone nation, even being titled "the most storm-exposed country in the world" due to the geographical exposure to devastating tropical storms and the vulnerability of the population (Brown 2013). Typhoon Yolanda was one of the most powerful tropical storms in modern history, making landfall in the Philippines on November 8th of 2013. The disaster impacted the lives of over 14 million people with the most significant impact being in the Eastern Visayas region of the Philippines wherein Tacloban is the primary city (Reid 2023; Philippines Government 2021).

1.2 Organization of Thesis

The thesis was completed for submission to the Department of Geography and Environment using the *manuscript* option. It begins with an introduction chapter (Chapter 1); followed by a literature review on the main research areas of this thesis topic (Chapter

2); a methodology chapter that details the processes behind writing this thesis (Chapter 3); a chapter that contains the manuscript (Chapter 4); and a concluding chapter (Chapter 5); along with references and appendices for the thesis. The manuscript was written to be able to stand alone as a paper to be submitted for publication at a later date, meaning that there will be some overlap between the information covered in the thesis chapters and the manuscript chapter. Through the lessons learned in this research, this thesis outlines guidelines to facilitate better disaster recovery.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Natural Disasters and Disaster Recovery

Globally, disasters and their associated physical, economic and societal damages are steadily increasing over time, due to both changes in the natural environment as well as human interactions with this environment (Alexander 2018). The term 'natural disasters' is complicated as it is argued by many academics that natural events such as earthquakes, fires, floods, or storms do not become disasters without the presence of vulnerable human populations (Wisner et al 2014; Huan, Beaman, and Shelby 2004; Aldunce et al 2015). The escalating frequency and severity of disasters further exacerbates the condition of vulnerable populations worldwide. This trend underscores the pressing need for enhanced disaster preparedness, mitigation strategies, and resilience-building efforts to mitigate the adverse effects on communities and ensure sustainable development pathways.

The field of disaster studies can be broadly broken down into disaster risk reduction and disaster recovery. **Fig. 1** displays a conceptualization of the disaster management cycle, broken down by timeframe into the following sections: individual disaster response, response/relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction (Dewi et al 2020). Disaster risk reduction (DRR) is a policy objective aimed at reducing the damage of hazards and disasters, focusing on increasing resilience through economic, social, and environmental initiatives (UNDRR n.d.). While disaster recovery is linked to other phases of disaster management such as mitigation, and preparedness, it is unique in that it takes place after a disaster has occurred (Phillips 2009). Disaster recovery generally consists of repairing damages and returning to a "functional condition", which is rarely the exact same as the pre-disaster state (Coppola

2007; Paton 2006). For the purposes of this research, the aspects of disaster recovery that will be highlighted will be rehabilitation, the restoration of basic services after a disaster, and reconstruction, the full resumption of services as well as implementation of preventative measures, that span weeks to years after a disaster event has occurred (Dewi et al 2020).

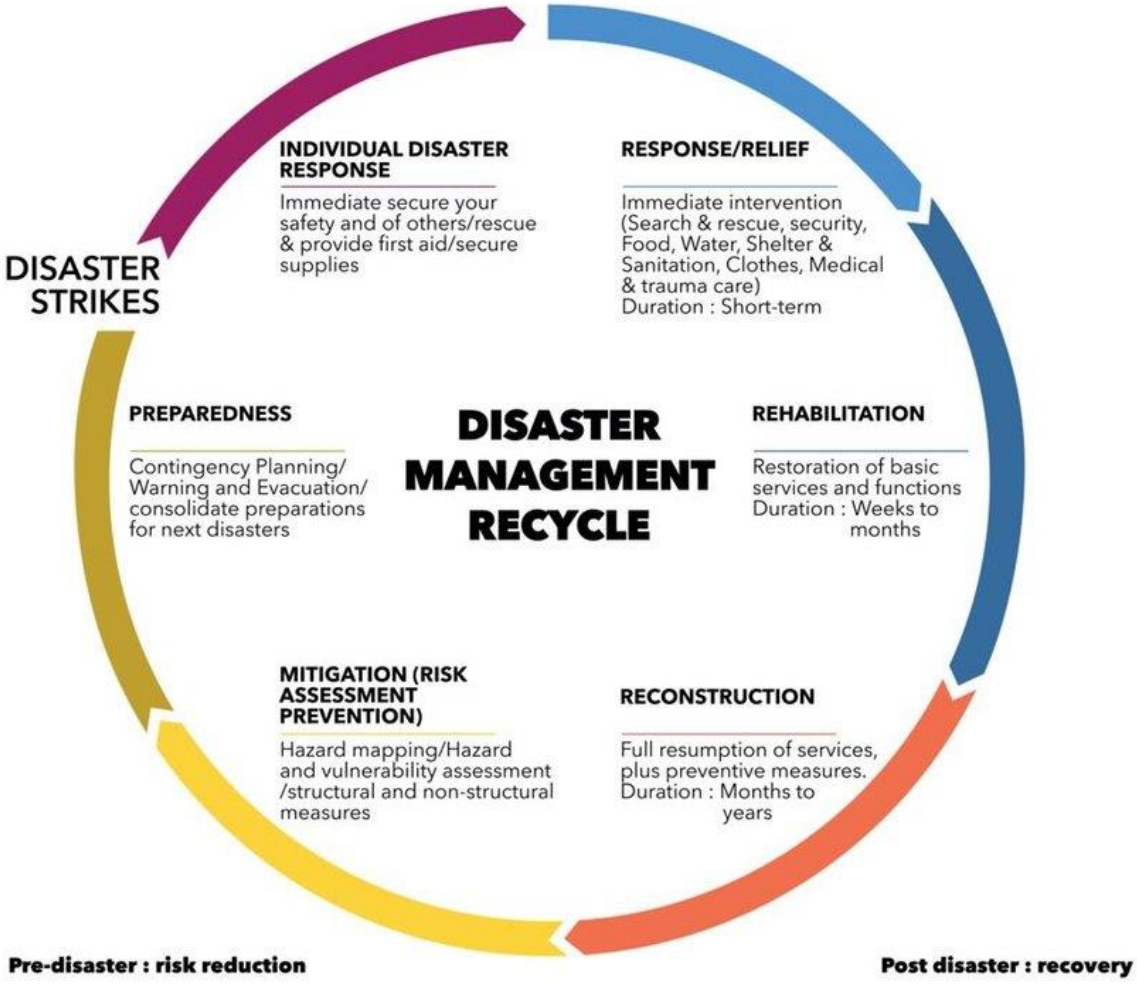


Fig. 1 Visualization of the disaster management cycle (Dewi et al 2020)

Various frameworks exist to outline pathways to disaster recovery. Some prominent ones in the literature and for practitioners are Sustainable Livelihoods, Leave No One Behind, and Build Back Better Frameworks - the last of which being by far the most prominent in the disaster recovery space (Clinton 2006; Joakim and Wismer 2015; Fernandez and Ahmed 2019; Kennedy et al 2008). Build Back Better - also known as BBB - is situated in the belief that a post-disaster environment is an opportune time to further invest in society as it is re-built to prevent the pre-disaster vulnerabilities which led to the magnitude of the disaster in the first place (Fernandez and Ahmed 2019; Kennedy et al 2008). This term was brought to the international stage during the July 2005 United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) by former president Bill Clinton, and since then the concept has been applied globally in the disaster recovery space (Mannakkara and Wilkinson 2014). While BBB is meant to encapsulate actions that improve the resilience of the built environment, communities, and the economy, the use of this framework typically focuses mainly on the built environment, with actions to improve critical infrastructures and services, land use planning, and housing being the most highlighted (Dube 2020; Su and Dé 2020; Mannakkara and Wilkinson 2014). This can be partly attributed to the fact that the concept of BBB is largely used by international aid agencies who tend to focus on the built environment, which limits the widespread application of the concept (Dube 2020; Su and Le Dé 2020).

Disaster recovery is not achieved on the basis of reconstruction alone, it is a complex process that involves the social and built environment of a place and can be measured by several metrics (Phillips 2009). Most studies within disaster recovery literature have

focused disproportionately on the physical aspect of recovery by primarily examining the level of damage, the scope and speed of reconstruction, and the amount of aid received while neglecting the social and cultural aspects that also play a role in overall recovery (Sadri et al 2018; Kamel and Loukaitou-Sideris 2004; Wisner et al 2014; Daly et al 2009).

2.2 Tourism

Tourism is a social, cultural, and economic phenomenon that consists of people voluntarily moving or travelling to visit places outside of their usual "home" environment for either personal or professional reasons (Camilleri 2018; UNWTO 2008). While the definition of who a tourist is has been debated, within the social sciences, this term typically encapsulates anyone who stays in a place that is not their usual environment for anywhere from more than twenty-four hours to less than one year (Eilat and Einav 2004). While tourists are in an environment that is not where they primarily reside, they engage in a number of activities that can be considered tourism (Camilleri 2018; Lew 2011). Tourism is well-recognized as a powerful economic, social, and cultural force due to the wide variety of goods, services, and activities that are tied to tourism activities (Bunghez 2016; Mak 2003; Sheng and Tsui 2010; Lew 2011; Camilleri 2018; Csapo 2012). It can be argued that tourism is an activity supported by many industries rather than a sector on its own, making quantifying its impact a difficult task (Lew 2011). However, data suggests that as of 2019, travel and tourism as an economic sector were responsible for over 10% of the global Gross Domestic Product (WTTC 2020). Tourism can be especially important in the economic development of developing nations as visitors attract foreign/domestic direct investment and jobs to accommodate these visitors (Jenkins 1982; Huybers 2007; Bunghez 2016;

Oppermann and Kye-Sung 1997). Tourism is complexly linked with livelihoods - in developing countries tourism can contribute to economic diversification, but can also reach the point where it replaces previously dominant livelihood sources and creates tourism-dependance (Lasso and Dahles 2018, Ghosh 2012).

2.3 The Relationship Between Tourism and Natural Disasters

Because the social, economic, and cultural elements that make up the tourism system are so wide-reaching and complex, like many socio-economic systems, tourism is vulnerable to abrupt changes and shocks such as political unrest, financial crises, and "natural" disasters (Rosselló et al 2020; Neef and Greyman 2018; Camilleri 2018; Becken and Carmignani 2016; Tarlow 2021). **Fig. 2** provides a visual demonstration of the theoretical relationship between disaster events and tourism demand, where the impacts of a disaster either have a negative (-) or positive (+) impact on demand. In established tourism destinations, the factors that take away from tourism demand - supply disruptions, infrastructure damage, unsafe perception, etc. - often outweigh ones that increase tourism demand (Rosselló et al 2020; Ritchie 2008).

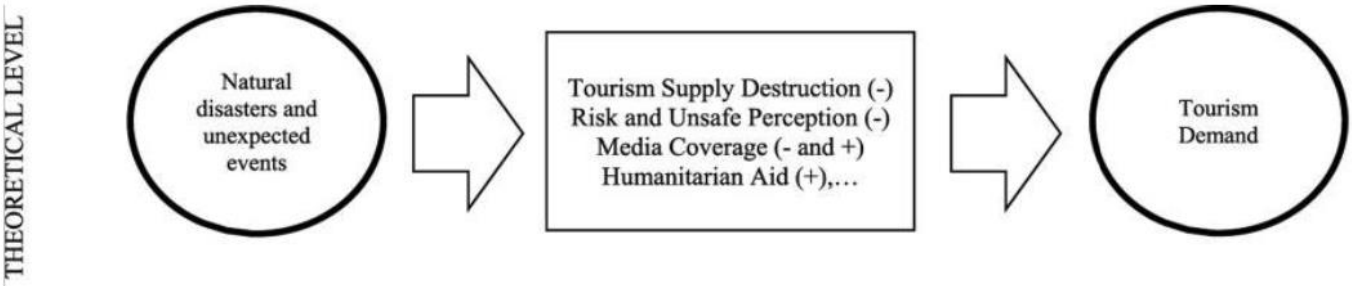


Fig. 2 Theoretical relationship between disasters and tourism demand (Rosselló et al 2020)

Many tourism destinations are in locations that are vulnerable to disasters, leading to a complex relationship between tourism and disasters at every stage - preparedness, response, rehabilitation, reconstruction and mitigation (Ritchie 2008; Hao et al 2022; Murphy and Bayley 1989). **Fig. 3** below is a model integrating tourism into the disaster management cycle, conceptualised by Muskat et al (2014).

Fig. 3

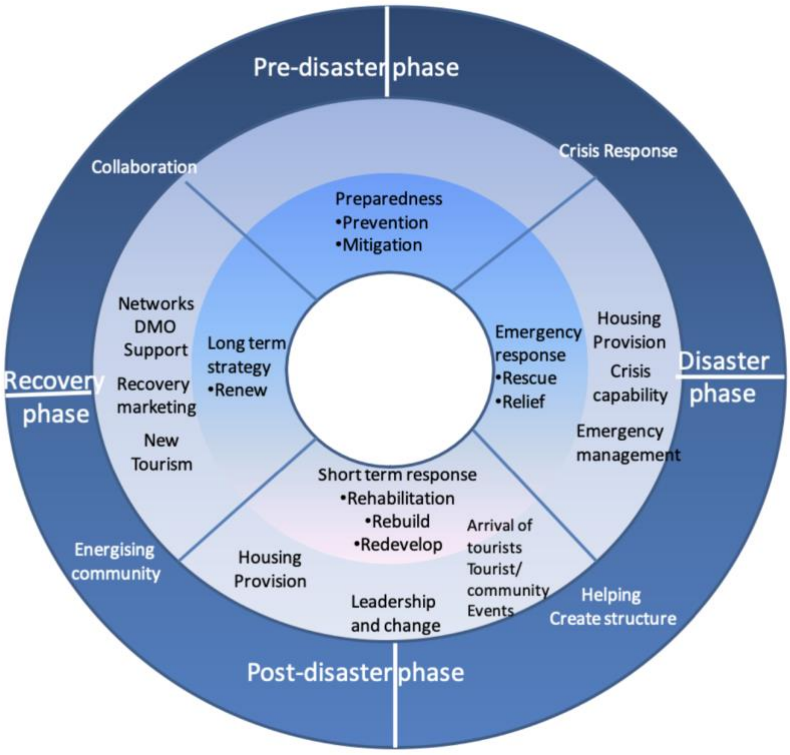


Fig. 3 Model of tourism's integration with the disaster management cycle (Muskat et al 2014)

Disasters can, in some cases, be amplified by the presence of tourism in a location. This relationship is especially prevalent when tourism development, often in coastal locations, causes environmental degradation for the sake of economic development

resulting in the triggering or amplifying of disasters (Genç 2018; Dahdouh-Guebas et al 2005; Estevão and Costa 2020). For example, when the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami made landfall, it was observed that the loss of green belt buffers such as mangrove forests and other coastal vegetation, in part driven by the development of tourism resorts, was a contributing factor to the devastation experienced and the resulting lives lost in both Sri Lanka and Thailand (Dahdouh-Guebas et al 2005; Neef Panyakotkaew and Elstner 2015). This can also be true in an economic sense, with developing nations that are dependant on tourism taking much longer to recover because of the significant drop in incoming tourists that occurs after a disaster (Guasco 2017; Telfer and Sharpley 2015).

Disasters can also be a driver of tourism, as seen in the phenomena of voluntourism and disaster tourism. Disaster tourism, the desire to visit a destination in the immediate aftermath of a disaster is suspected to be connected to a sense of curiosity about death, tragedy, or misfortune (Robinson and Jarvie 2008; Whyte et al 2011; Neef and Greyman 2018; Doberstein, Nepal, and Joakim 2018). Dark tourism, the phenomena that disaster tourism is a subset of, is "the act of travelling to sites associated with death, suffering, and the seemingly macabre" (Rucińska 2016, Martini and Buda 2020). Voluntourism is a form of tourism wherein individuals engage in volunteer activities alongside their travel experiences (Sullivan 2019). While these types of tourism in the aftermath of a disaster have the ability to help the recovery of a community by providing economic stimulus, it can also be viewed as exploitative and cause tensions within the post-disaster landscape (Deller 2010; Oppermann and Kye-Sung 1997; Tucker et al 2017). Voluntourism has been criticized by many as being a movement that promotes ignorance and misconceptions about developing

countries, prioritizing the experience of tourists over sustainable recovery efforts, and creating opportunities for further exploitation of disadvantaged locals (Freidus 2017; Lyneham and Facchini 2019; Proehl 2015). While there is often a blurred line between the two in the eyes of residents of a disaster-stricken location, there is a distinct difference between humanitarians who choose to volunteer in disadvantaged places of their own accord (who engage in voluntourism) and professional humanitarians who have sufficient training and accreditation to deliver aid, often through reputable organizations (Hanna 2018; Neef and Greyman 2018; Malkki 2015). This distinction can have impacts for the success of post-disaster recovery efforts. For example, when examining recovery efforts after the 2011 earthquake in Japan, it has been argued that the lack of training and coordination among the amateur humanitarians (voluntourists) and the clashes between them and professional aid workers contributed to extending the state of post-disaster recovery (McMorran 2017; Neef and Greyman 2018).

Overall, this suggests that there are multiple ways that tourism and disasters interconnect. Neef and Greyman (2018) organize these into four categories of connection that echo key issues identified throughout the literature:

"1. Tourism as a trigger and amplifier of disasters

2. The impacts of disasters on the tourism industry

3. The role of tourism as a driver in the recovery process

4. Disaster risk reduction strategies in the tourism industry".

Firstly, "Tourism as a trigger and amplifier of disasters" examines how tourism activities can initiate or worsen disasters. Secondly, "Impacts of disasters on the tourism industry" considers the consequences for tourism-dependent economies. Thirdly, "Tourism's role in recovery" explores how tourism can aid post-disaster recovery efforts. Lastly, "Disaster risk reduction in tourism" focuses on mitigating risks within the industry.

Most of the research within the literature connecting disasters and tourism focuses on the negative impact that disasters have on tourism, and the ways in which tourism destinations can return to a post-disaster state in terms of numbers of visitors and revenue generated. Tourism marketing of a destination being an attractor for financial and expert assistance (Wearing, Beirman, and Grabowski 2020) and loyal repeat tourists being motivated by place attachment to assist in economic recovery of destinations (Zavar et al 2020) are key ways that tourism has been identified as a contributor to disaster recovery. Chouhan et al (2023) found that overall disaster recovery of villages in Uttarakhand, India on tourist routes was significantly faster than villages off of the tourist routes due to differing socioeconomic conditions. However, there exists a research gap in understanding the relationship between disaster recovery and tourism in areas that are not established destinations (Mak 2003; Robinson and Jarvie 2008; Pikkemaat and Peters 2006). While there are a small number of articles that have explored the development of a tourism sector in places where this did not exist in any significant way pre-disaster, the research tended to focus on ways in which this development impacted the local population (Liu-Lastres et al 2020; Robinson and Jarvie 2008; Bui and Saito 2022). To our knowledge, no post-disaster

research has been conducted on the ways in which the development of a tourism sector supports the recovery process itself.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The research presented in this thesis was conducted using case study methodology. Case study methodology is a qualitative research approach that explores specific real-life cases to understand complex phenomena by gathering "comprehensive information about each case of interest" (Patton 2002). A case study can explore a multitude of subjects such as communities, specific events, individuals, or organizations that are bound by time and studied using a variety of data collection methods (such as interviews, documents, observations, etc.) specific to the case of study (Yin 2003; Priya 2020). Case study methodology was chosen for this study due to the nature of what is being studied - Tacloban's recovery from Typhoon Yolanda is a phenomena that is bounded by time and space. The research methodology of this study consists of collecting data using primarily semi-structured interviews, supplemented by observations and secondary data collection. This case study was conducted as part of an SSHRC-funded project entitled *Linking Tourism, Social/Cultural Capital, and Disaster Recovery: Comparative Perspectives from Nepal, Indonesia, and the Philippines*. This study has been conducted with data collected as a part of this project.

3.1 Interview Participants

Before data collection began a list of potential stakeholder groups was created, and local contacts in Tacloban aided in reaching out to participants who had relevant experience to be valuable to the study. The preliminary list of stakeholders - which included government officials, experts, and tourism operators - was compiled using the literature

review for an idea of key stakeholders, as well as local contacts in Tacloban who were able to facilitate some connections and point the search for participants in the right direction.

In the field, this was then aggregated by network - otherwise known as snowball - sampling each interview participant, asking them for additional contacts who may be relevant to the study (Yin 2018). Through this network sampling as well as information that emerged in the field, the list of potential stakeholder groups changed, with new groups being added such as the Mamanwa community, and others being not as prevalent in the research as first expected, such as representatives from international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as they were no longer present in Tacloban. Efforts were made to obtain a stratified quota sample by speaking to multiple participants in each stakeholder group to be able to represent a balanced group of perspectives on the recovery experience of Tacloban. The final key stakeholder groups consulted consisted of 28 interviews from the following: 1. Tourism operator (n=7); 2. Hospitality sector (n=6); 3. Government (n=3); 4. Expert (n=3); 5. Religious group (n=3); 6. Resident of Tacloban (n=2); 7. NGO (n=1); and 8. Mamanwa community (n=3). Participants who were members of multiple stakeholder groups were categorized into the one that they most strongly represented throughout the interview.

1	Code	Age	Stakeholder Group	#	%
2	23.09.12.22	55	Expert		
3	26.13.12.22	27	Expert		
4	27.13.12.22	45	Expert	3	11%
5	10.16.11.22	45	Government		
6	11.17.11.22	82	Government		
7	25.13.12.22	59	Government	3	11%
8	01.01.11.22	47	Hospitality sector		
9	07.07.11.22	54	Hospitality sector		
10	18.06.12.22	34	Hospitality sector		
11	20.07.12.22	58	Hospitality sector		
12	24.12.12.22	34	Hospitality sector		
13	08.07.11.22	35	Hospitality sector - Indirect	6	21%
14	14.02.12.22	37	Mamanwa Community		
15	15.03.12.22	57	Mamanwa Community		
16	16.13.12.22	40	Mamanwa Community	3	11%
17	12.01.12.22	49	NGO	1	4%
18	04.04.11.22	21	Religious		
19	02.04.11.22	65	Religious org		
20	03.04.11.22	26	Religious org	3	11%
21	09.09.11.22	29	Tacloban Resident		
22	13.01.12.22	28	Tacloban Resident	2	7%
23	05.05.11.22	51	Tourism operator		
24	17.06.12.22	38	Tourism operator		
25	21.09.12.22	41	Tourism operator		
26	22.09.12.22	47	Tourism operator		
27	28.14.12.22	56	Tourism operator		
28	19.07.12.22	62	Tourism operator, Hospitality Sector		
29	06.05.11.22	40	Tourism operator, Mamanwa Community	7	25%

Table 1 Interview Participant Identifier by Stakeholder Group

Table 1 above displays each interview participant's unique code, their age, and the stakeholder group that they are a part of. This table also includes the number of participants in each stakeholder group and the percentage of total participants that each stakeholder group makes up.

3.2 Data Collection

Data collection took place over the period of October to December 2022 in the form of long-form semi-structured interviews (n=28). When requesting to speak with government organizations or NGOs, interviews were requested first through a formal letter that introduced the project and researcher, and explained what the interview would entail, and then arranged over the phone or email. Interview participants who were members of the tourism sector or other affected communities were requested to interview by e-mail consisting of the same information as the formal letter.

Interviews occurred at a public location or at participants' workplaces. Participants were first re-informed of the details of the research project, assured of their anonymity in responses, and answered verbal consent questions permitting the interview, audio recording of it, and the use of their de-identified quotations. Interviews lasted between 20-120 minutes depending on the depth of answers from the participants, additional topics that came up, and whether or not translation was necessary. Notes were taken throughout the interview and they were audio recorded for transcription with consent from participants. If translation was necessary, the local research assistant on the project relayed questions and answers across the researcher and interview participant. Participants were asked questions relating to four themes: 1. General information, 2. Recovery experience, 3. Experienced social and cultural capital during disaster recovery, 4. Tourism experience. However, the specific questions varied by stakeholder group, depending on their roles and experiences during the post-disaster recovery period.

3.3 Data Analysis

Audio recordings of interviews were transcribed by either the researcher for interviews conducted in English or the research assistant for interviews conducted in Waray. In two cases where there were difficulties with retaining an audio recording of an interview due to excessive noise in the background of the recording, notes were used in the analysis instead of transcriptions.

To retain the anonymity of participants, each interviewee was assigned a unique code to analyze and reference their insights. As research and transcription were ongoing, initial theme conceptualization was done, using notes from interviews and observations from in the field. Once completed, the interview transcripts were imported into NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software. Analysis was conducted by going through each interview and selecting quotes that were relevant to the initial themes of study - aid workers, disaster tourism, short- and long-term tourism, and the positive and negative impacts of tourism. These themes were developed prior to conducting fieldwork through exploration of existing literature. Over time as findings were collected, these themes were re-organized, refined, clarified, and built out using sub-themes. **Fig. 4** below is the final iteration of themes (codes) and their conceptual mapping. The structure of this conceptualization was added to and altered as more interviews were coded. Initial interviews were also re-examined as the coding parameters changed to ensure that information was categorized as accurately as possible.

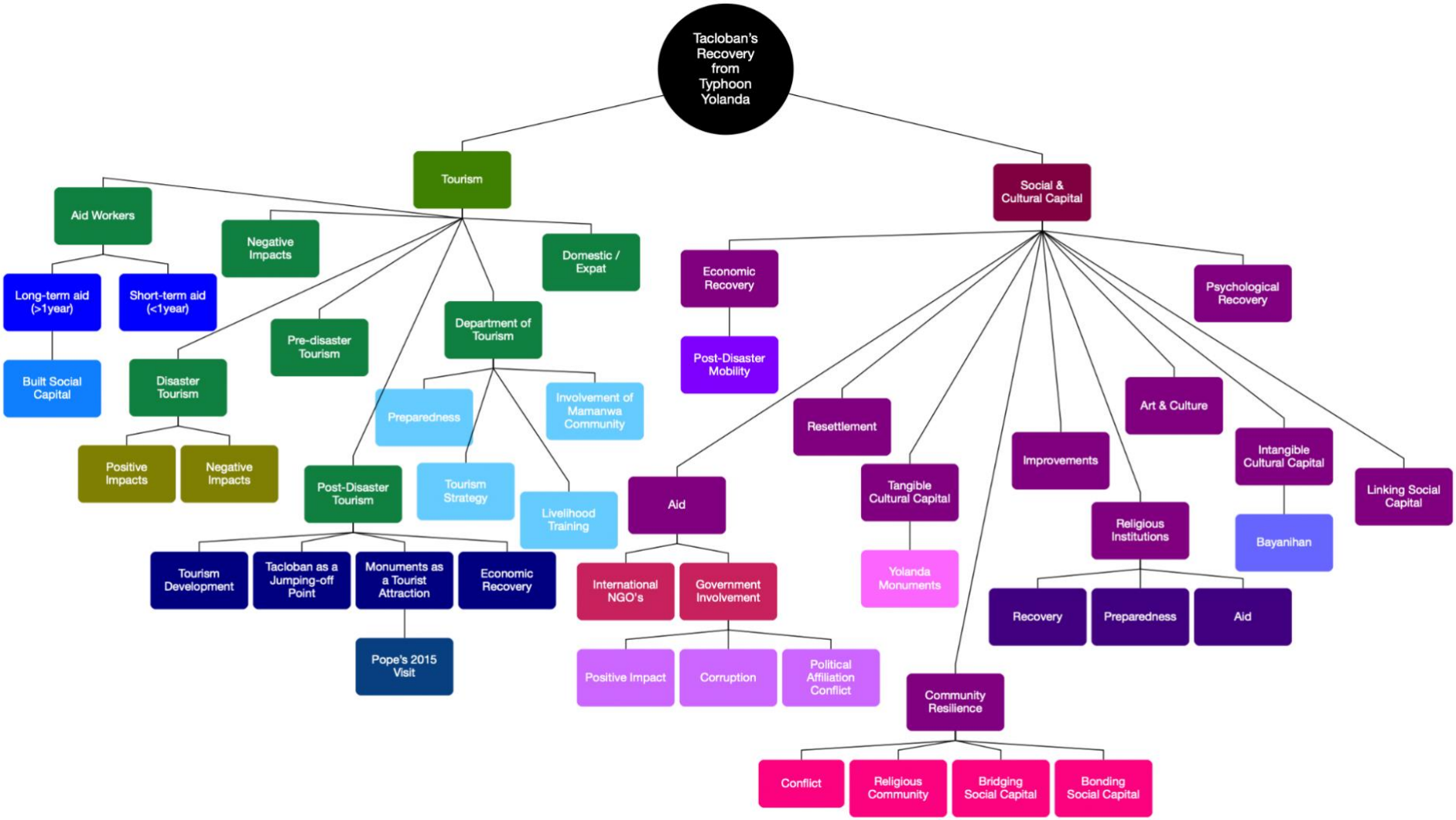


Fig. 4 Conceptual mind map of themes (codes) for the interviewee responses

To identify which themes were most strongly present in the data related to the following manuscript on tourism in Tacloban, mentions of themes and sub-themes were aggregated in Excel, as seen in **Table 2** below. In the leftmost column, the categories for coding within NVIVO are displayed. The "# of Interviews Theme is Present in" column indicates the number of interviews that provided contributions to the analysis, and the "Total # of Mentions" column is a count of how many mentions overall between the interviews where this was discussed (each level aggregates the child codes within them for both of these numbers). The stakeholder groups column displays the number of participants in each stakeholder group that makes up the total references count. This table gives valuable insight into which groups provide information on topics for analysis.

Tourism	# of Interviews Theme is Present in	Total # of Mentions	Stakeholder Groups
Pre-Disaster Tourism	7	11	Tourism 2 - Hospitality 2 - Government 2 - Expert
Post Disaster Tourism	19	146	Hospitality 4 - Religious Org 2 - Tourism 6 - Government 3 - NGO - Resident - Mamanwa - Expert
Tourism Development	10	20	Tourism 4 - Hospitality 3 - Mamanwa - Government - Expert
Tacloban as a Gateway	9	30	Government - Resident - Hospitality 2 - Tourism 3 - Government - Expert
Monuments as a Tourist Attraction	10	25	Religious Org 2 - Hospitality - Government 3 - NGO - Tourism 2 - Expert
Pope's 2015 visit	8	12	Religious Org 2 - Hospitality - Government 2 - Tourism 2 - Expert
Economic Recovery	12	33	Hospitality 4 - Tourism 5 - Mamanwa - Government - Expert
Negative Impacts	3	5	Mamanwa - Hospitality - Government
Domestic & Expat Tourism	9	13	Religious Org - Tourism 3 - Government 2 - Mamanwa - Expert - Hospitality
Disaster Tourism	9	45	Government 3 - Mamanwa - Hospitality 3 - Tourism - Expert
Positive Impacts	5	12	Government 2 - Hospitality 2 - Tourism
Negative Impacts	4	8	Government - Mamanwa - Hospitality - Expert
Department of Tourism	11	68	Tourism 3 - Government 2 - Mamanwa 3 - Hospitality 2 - Expert
Tourism Strategy	5	22	Government 2 - Hospitality - Tourism - Expert
Preparedness	1	9	Government
Livelihood Training	4	12	Tourism 2 - Government - Hospitality
Mamanwa Community Involvement	4	16	Tourism - Mamanwa 3
Aid Workers	14	66	Hospitality 5 - Tourism 3 - Government 3 - NGO - Mamanwa - Expert
Short Term Aid	6	7	Hospitality 2 - Tourism 2 - Government - Expert
Long Term Aid	9	31	Hospitality 5 - NGO - Tourism - Government - Expert
Built Social Capital	8	16	Hospitality 5 - NGO - Government - Expert

Table 2 Coding categories with files a concept is mentioned in, references of the concept, and # members of stakeholder groups that mentioned it.

With relevant quotes pulled from each interview, the next step was cross-comparison between interviews to determine findings. This involved going through coded data and clustering experiences, stories, and perspectives that were shared by multiple interviewees, oftentimes from several stakeholder groups. Through this process, findings were discovered about the relationship between tourism and disaster recovery in Tacloban after Typhoon Yolanda.

3.4 Limitations

There are several limitations that may have implications on this study - perhaps the primary one being the language barrier between the researcher conducting the study and many of the interview participants. The data was collected in either English or Waray (a language native to the Eastern Visayas region of the Philippines) depending on the interviewee. If the interviewee primarily spoke Waray, the local research assistant would conduct the interviews with a combination of translating back and forth and asking questions themselves. This process of translating between the researcher and interviewee so that follow-up questions could be asked had implications on the freeform aspects of the semi-structured interview process, often taking up more time and limiting the number of topics that could be discussed in the timeframe that the interviewee had available. Just as in translation, there is the additional consideration that when interviews were conducted in English, if the interviewee was not fluent, this could have impacted the way certain answers or statements were phrased.

Reaching members of certain stakeholder groups was also a limitation faced when conducting the research for this thesis. To speak to members of the government, oftentimes formal letters had to be hand-delivered before an interview was considered. This lengthened the timeframe for scheduling interviews, and the scheduling took up more fieldwork time than expected. Many interview participants also had to be sought by word of mouth, as online resources proved to be not accurate or not updated. These limitations in collecting interview participants required much adaptation and have implications on the timeframe of the research conducted.

There were also restrictions on the timeline of the study due to the nature of a master's students fieldwork. This study was conducted within the timeframe of October 21, 2022 - December 17, 2022, and the information collected may have been more comprehensive if the sample size (overall, and of each stakeholder group) could have been increased. Due to this temporal restriction, there were some locations in the study site area - such as a secondary tourism site in the Eastern Visayas area - that the researcher was not able to visit during the field research time.

Chapter 4: After the Surge: Tourism as a Disaster Recovery Strategy in Tacloban, the Philippines

4.1 Introduction

The threat posed by natural hazards and disasters has been steadily increasing in the past 50-60 years, causing physical damage to people and physical infrastructure as well as causing long-lasting economic damages (Institute for Economics and Peace 2021; Alexander 2018). This is especially true in developing countries where a higher proportion of the population experiences increased vulnerability because of socio-economic circumstances as well as infrastructure that is often not built to withstand higher magnitude hazards (Brower et al 2014; Benevolenza and DeRigne 2019). In fact, most of the world's most deadly and damaging disasters have taken place in countries across the global south (Zorn 2018). All the while, the physical impacts of climate change have exacerbated the intensity of disaster events, increasing socio-economic insecurity and complicating interacting vulnerabilities (Hore et al 2018; Hallegatte 2014).

Once a disaster has occurred, there are several pathways toward recovery that can be taken, with attention and funding often focused on rebuilding of physical infrastructure (Mak 2003; Robinson and Jarvie 2008; Pikkemaat and Peters 2006). However, restoring and strengthening the economy, including improving livelihood opportunities for those impacted by the disaster is a key element of recovery, and essential for reducing vulnerability to future hazardous events (Iturrizaga 2019; Robinson and Jarvie 2008; Mair et al 2016; Finucane et al 2020; Kumburu 2022).

In many disaster-impacted countries in the global south, particularly in coastal areas, tourism is a significant, if not dominant economic sector. After a disaster, the tourism sector is often damaged, both in terms of the physical infrastructure to support the industry (hotels, restaurants, roads, etc.), but also in terms of tourists staying away from the destination. Yet tourism can also provide support for relief and recovery after disasters; in this way, the tourism sector has a dual role of both needing to be recovered and also supporting recovery. As such, the tourism sector is a well-documented aspect of disaster recovery, although much of this research focuses on ways to return tourism to pre-disaster numbers. There has been some focus on the role that tourism and the associated organizations can play in short-term recovery, such as serving as short-term housing for those in need and encouraging "disaster" tourists to visit a destination (Becken and Khazai 2017); however, there is less research on the ways in which tourism supports long-term recovery. Furthermore, this area of study is still evolving when it comes to places that were not strong tourism destinations prior to the disaster (Bui and Saito 2022; Muskat et al 2014; Robinson and Jarvie 2008).

This research seeks to address this gap by exploring the role of tourism in the post-disaster recovery process in Tacloban, the Philippines after the 2013 Typhoon Yolanda. This city did not have a significant tourism industry prior to the disaster but the sector expanded throughout the recovery phase, so is an ideal location to explore the role that tourism played in supporting the disaster recovery process. The objectives of this research are to: (**O1**) Engage key stakeholders to explore and identify the ways that the tourism sector developed in the post-disaster period; (**O2**) Identify the ways in which tourism impacted the

recovery of Tacloban after typhoon Yolanda, either in positively or negatively; and (**O3**) Provide policymakers with lessons learned from Tacloban's post-disaster tourism experience. The findings from this paper are intended to be utilised by governments as well as businesses of locations that are susceptible to disaster events and do not have a significant tourism industry in place.

4.2 Literature Review

4.2.1 Disaster Recovery

Disaster recovery is a complex process - as disasters continue to have increasing impacts on society due to intersecting vulnerabilities and the impacts of climate change, it only becomes a more complex process (Hore et al 2018; Alexander 2018; Benevolenza and DeRigne 2019). The aim of disaster recovery is typically to repair damages caused by the disaster and return operations/society to a "functional condition", which in actuality is rarely the same as the pre-disaster state (Coppola 2007; Paton 2006). This process can be broken down into the processes of rehabilitation, the restoration of basic services after a disaster, and reconstruction, the full resumption of services as well as implementation of preventative measures (Dewi et al 2020).

Some of the dominant frameworks in disaster recovery literature include Leave No One Behind, the Livelihoods Framework, and Build Back Better (BBB) - of the most widely used frameworks for disaster recovery is BBB, focusing on rebuilding disaster stricken locations in a way that improves upon conditions and reduces vulnerability. (Clinton 2006; Joakim and Wismer 2015; Fernandez and Ahmed 2019; Kennedy et al 2008).

In the practice of disaster recovery, there has been a disproportionately strong focus on physical aspects such as rebuilding physical infrastructure, whereas concepts such as long-term social and economic recovery are not given as much attention (Wisner et al 2014; Kennedy et al 2019; Daly et al 2009). This is despite the fact that the inherent complexity of disaster recovery is due to the multidimensional impact of disasters - on the economy, people's well-being, the environment, community ties, social systems, and governance systems as well as the significant temporal aspect of this stage (Phillips 2009). A recent and growing theoretical development within the literature is the movement from approaching disaster recovery as a goal to be achieved to approaching it as a complex ongoing process with physical, social, and economic elements (Rouhanizadeh et al 2020; Johnson and Hayashi 2012).

4.2.2 Post-Disaster Tourism

Tourism - a social, cultural, and economic phenomena that consists of people travelling to places outside of their "home" environment for personal or professional reasons - has a powerful impact on a destination due to the integration of multiple sectors and the involvement with a location's economy, society, and culture (Camilleri 2018; UNWTO 2008; Bunghez 2016; Mak 2003; Sheng and Tsui 2010; Lew 2011). Tourism can be a significant driver of economic development, particularly in developing countries, as tourists often create demand for foreign or direct investment and job creation (Bunghez 2016; Huybers 2007; Oppermann and Kye-Sung 1997).

A number of studies have highlighted mechanisms through which the tourism industry interacts with disasters, such as through tourism being a trigger or amplifier of

disasters (Neef and Greyman 2018; Guasco 2017), the impacts of disasters on the tourism industry (Robinson and Jarvie 2008; Pikkemaat and Peters 2006), and strategies to return tourism to pre-disaster levels (Mak 2003), etc. Similarly, other studies have focused on mechanisms to reduce disaster risk in the tourism industry through preparedness plans (Tol 2018; Faulkner and Vikulow 2001; Sission 2018). Since this study focuses on exploring the intersections between recovery and tourism industries that emerge in the post-disaster context, the focus will be on exploring the role of tourism as a driver in the recovery process where tourism was not a significant pre-existing industry.

4.2.2.1 Post-Disaster Tourism as a Disaster Recovery Strategy

"Disasters can have a transformational dimension, with each event having potential positive outcomes'' (Faulkner, 2001). Post-disaster tourism is often identified as a tool that can be used to stimulate economic activity with focus on marketing and economic stimuli (Muskat et al 2014; Neef and Greyman 2018). Phrases such as "Your Holiday Can Help" have been integral in post-disaster marketing to international tourists following disasters such as 2015's Cyclone Pam (The Guardian 2015; Neef and Greyman 2018).

In a post-disaster context, tourism activities often have unique structures and drivers, commonly related to aid work, voluntourism, and disaster tourism. Non-governmental organizations involved in disaster response and recovery often send international workers to sites impacted by disasters to assist in the aid distribution and recovery efforts (Hanna 2018; Malkki 2015). While in this location aid workers function as tourists who require accommodations, stimulate the economy with purchases, and visit

attractions during spare time, particularly if situated in one location for an extended period of time, which can be from several weeks for up to 2 years (Garland 2015; Nelan 2021). Voluntourism - the combination of volunteering and tourism - is similar to aid work in that the goal is to assist in the post-disaster period, but differs in that voluntourists are often not trained, skilled or vetted by an organization (Sullivan 2019; Deller 2010; Tucker et al 2017). Disaster tourism is the practice of travelling to a destination to see the impacts and aftermath of a disaster (Whyte et al 2011; Neef and Greyman 2018; Doberstein, Nepal, and Joakim 2018). One problem with the use of tourism for economic recovery is that areas that are less touristic or smaller tourism operators tend to receive less support during recovery, as Neef and Greyman (2018) observed across Thailand following the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami (Larsen et al 2011; Rice 2005). While the widely accepted definition of tourism consists of travel from more than one day to less than one year, for the purposes of this study the timeline of tourism is extended to two years to accommodate for aid workers who resided in Tacloban for up to two years (Eilat and Einav 2004).

In some cases, post-disaster tourism can be seen as a tool to not only facilitate disaster recovery, but to change existing power structures and vulnerabilities through new forms of economic agency (Neef and Greyman 2018; Nelson 2007; Bui and Saito 2022). Through examining previously marine-resource dependent communities in Japan after the 2011 earthquake, Bui and Saito (2022) identified tourism as an alternative to traditional extractive resource dependency - such as fishing - for communities to diversify livelihood sources (Winkler et al 2012; Mueller 2021; Deller 2010).

Much of the understanding of the interaction between tourism and disaster recovery has been developed by studying locations where tourism existed prior to a significant disaster event, and therefore focus on restoring tourism (Robinson and Jarvie 2008; Pikkemaat and Peters 2006; Muskat et al 2014; Neef and Greyman 2018; Mak 2003; Rice 2005). This study builds on the research gap and examines the relationship between post-disaster tourism and disaster recovery in the context of a location where international tourism was not common prior to the disaster event.

4.3 Case Study

4.3.1 Social Characteristics

With a population of approximately 250,000 people, Tacloban is a highly urbanized city in the Philippines, acting as the economic and cultural center of the Eastern Visayas region which is made up of three main islands: Samar, Biliran, and Leyte (Philippine Statistics Authority 2020). There have been several significant events in the region's history, including a devastating typhoon in 1912 and the historic landing of General MacArthur, liberating the Philippines in World War 2, and of course, Typhoon Yolanda, the subject of this paper, in 2013 (The Washington Herald 1912; Lear 1952). Tacloban is made up of 138 Barangays, which serve as local administrative divisions in the Philippines (Philippine Statistics Authority 2022). Close to 90% of the population is Waray-speaking, a language spoken primarily in Eastern Visayas (Philippine Statistics Authority 2020). A significant percentage of the population in Tacloban is religious, similar to the Philippines as a whole, with approximately 88% of the population of the city being Catholic (Philippine Statistics Authority 2020).

Palo is a municipality that borders Tacloban. The two are often grouped together due to their physical proximity, and the fact that several significant locations for residents of both Tacloban and Palo are shared between the two - such as the Palo Cathedral, the University of the Philippines Tacloban, and several government offices (Field data 2022; Philippine Statistics Authority 2020). Palo was also significantly impacted by Typhoon Yolanda. From this point onwards, when referring to Tacloban, this incorporates the municipality of Palo.

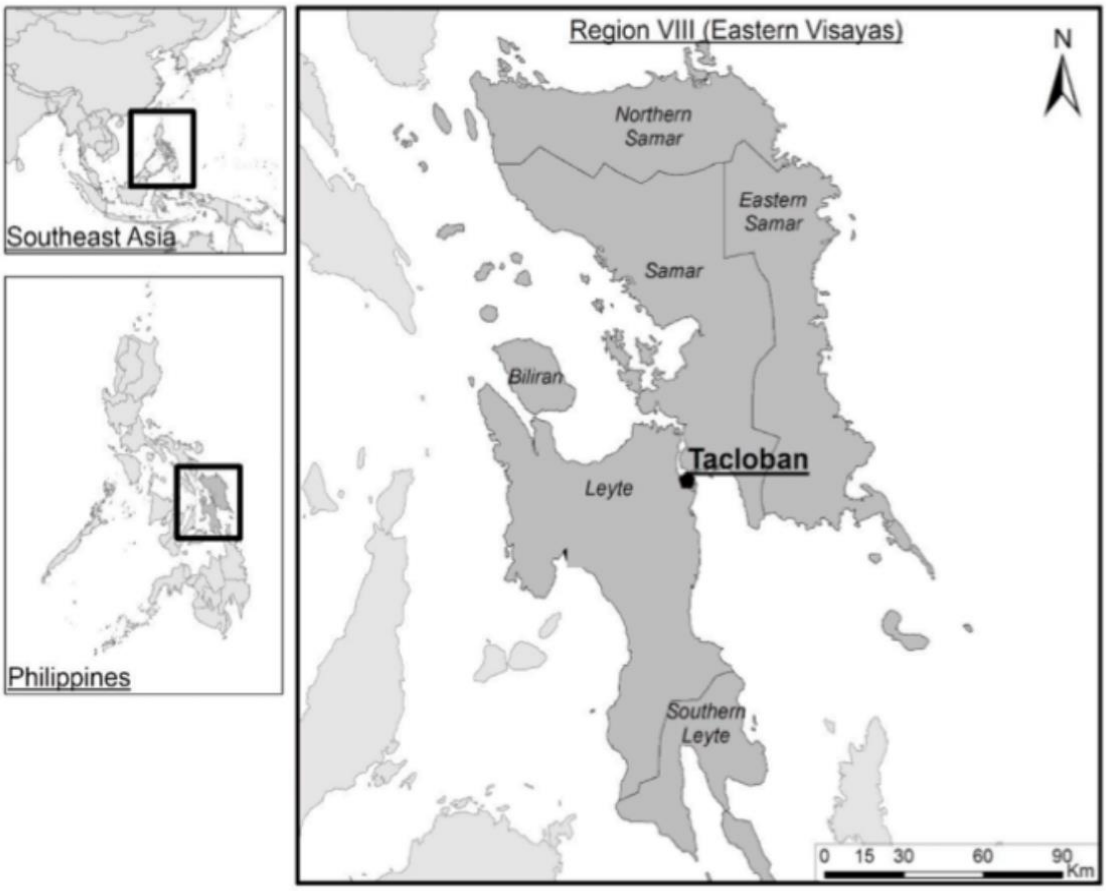


Fig. 5 Map of Tacloban in the Eastern Visayas region (van Loenhout et al 2018)

4.3.2 Geographical Characteristics

Tacloban is located on the eastern coast of the island of Leyte [**Fig. 5**]. The east coast of Leyte along with the southern coast of the bordering island, Samar, creates a funnel shape leading in from the San Pablo Bay which amplifies the concentration of storm surges (Su and Le Dé 2020). This geophysical structure creates a level of vulnerability that many coastal cities that are vulnerable to tropical storms experience (Needham et al 2015). The Philippines generally has a tropical, maritime climate with no dry season throughout the year (Philippines Government 2021). The water surrounding the island nation is on record as having some of the warmest ocean temperatures in the world, making coastal land a strong target for cyclonic storms that may form in the region (Philippines Government 2021). The impact of cyclonic storms can be devastating as they tend to bring high wind speeds, intense rainfall, flooding, and storm surges (NOAA 2022).

4.3.3 Typhoon Yolanda

In early November of 2013, one of the most powerful cyclonic storms in recorded history began to form over the Pacific Ocean (NDRRMC 2013). As Typhoon Yolanda made landfall, it devastated much of Southeast Asia including Taiwan, Vietnam, China, Palau, Micronesia, and most of all the Philippines. [**Fig. 6**] depicts the storm progression throughout the Philippines, with the areas in red being the most impacted by population. The maximum 10-minute sustained windspeeds reached approximately 285 km/h and the lowest pressure experienced was 895 hPa (mbar). At the time, Yolanda recorded the strongest ever 1-minute sustained winds upon landfall at 315 km/h, only being surpassed by cyclonic storms in 2016 and 2020 thereafter. Yolanda was also the second deadliest

typhoon in the history of the Philippines with an estimated death toll of over 6,500, of which approximately 50% is attributed to Tacloban (Philippines Government 2021; Kinghorn 2018).

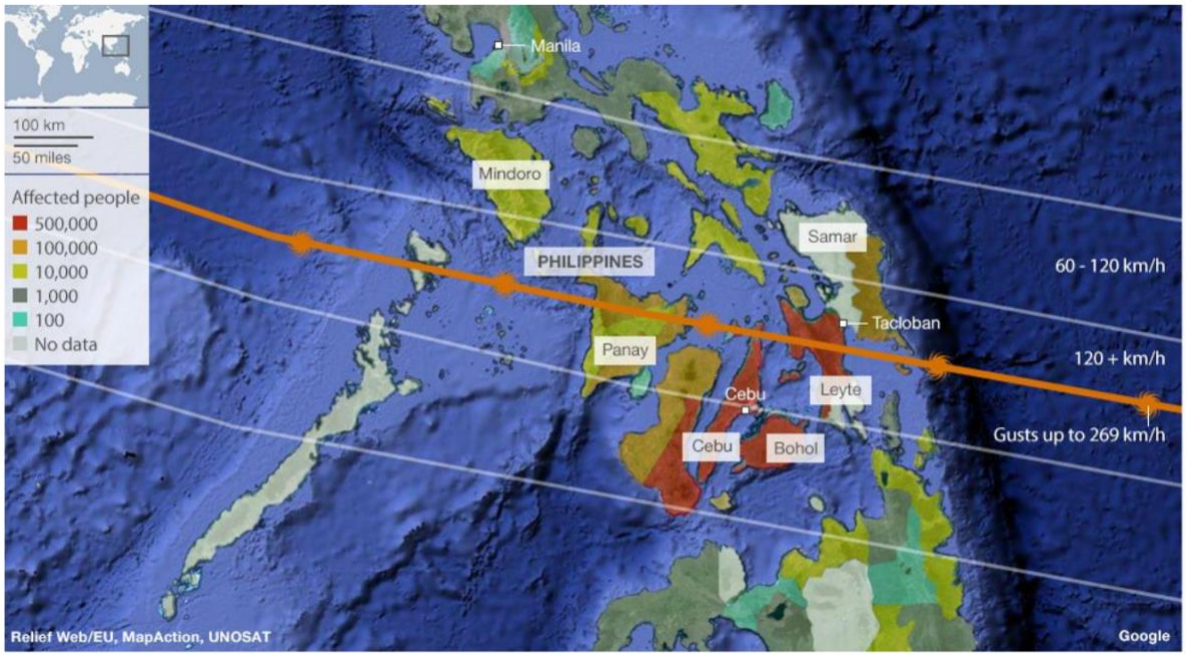


Fig. 6 Map of Typhoon Yolanda storm progression (BBC 2013)

In the immediate aftermath of the typhoon, Tacloban was described as resembling "a corpse-strewn wasteland" (Kinghorn 2018). In addition to the direct human cost of the typhoon, approximately 90% of buildings within Tacloban were impacted, with over 12,000 structures destroyed and over 46,000 structures partially damaged (Athawes 2018; Reid 2018). Although storms of nearly comparable strength had made landfall in previous years, the destruction experienced in Tacloban was unprecedented largely due to the unfortunate combination of a 5-6 meter storm surge and a population that primarily resided within a 5-metre elevation of the water (Athawes 2018; Kinghorn 2018).

While there has been research conducted on the recovery efforts in Tacloban, much of this body of work is focused on the role played by the government and International NGOs in implementation of the *Tacloban Recovery and Rehabilitation Plan*, building back better, and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) development - with few studies examining long-term recovery (Kammerbauer et al 2018; Brower et al 2014). Papers that do explore the process of long-term recovery from Typhoon Yolanda primarily focus on relocation of those impacted, understandings of resilience, and changing political capabilities for disaster management (Su and Le Dé 2020; Ensor et al 2021; Iuchi 2024). There is a notable research gap when considering the role of the tourism sector in the recovery of Tacloban from Typhoon Yolanda.

4.4 Methods

This research was conducted using case study methodology, Case studies - which can be an event, activity, community, etc. - that are bound by time are studied in-depth by the researcher using a variety of data collection methods (Priya 2020; Yin 2003). Allowing for data collection method such as interviews, focus groups, observation, text analysis, etc. ensures that the researcher gains a comprehensive understanding of the social dimensions of a case (Lashua 20115; Johansson 2007; Patton 2002).

Data collection took place over the period of October to December of 2022 primarily in the form of long-form semi-structured interviews (n=28), and supplemented by field observations and secondary data collection. The key stakeholder groups consulted consisted of: Tourism operators (n=7); Hospitality sector employees (n=6); Government

tourism agencies (n=3); Tourism and recovery experts (n=3); Religious group representatives (n=3); Tacloban residents (n=2); Non-governmental Organization representatives (n=1); and Individuals from the Mamanwa community (n=3). Interviewees were compiled through a list of potential stakeholders as well as snowball sampling in the field. The length of interviews ranged from ten minutes to over an hour depending on the willingness and ability of the participant to engage in the questions. Interviews were either conducted in English or in Waray when translation assistance was performed by a research assistant.

Participants were asked questions relating to four themes: 1. General information, 2. Recovery experience, 3. Social and cultural capital during disaster recovery, 4. Tourism experience. However, some questions varied by stakeholder group, depending on their roles and experiences during the post-disaster recovery period.

Once the transcription of recorded interviews was completed, qualitative analysis was then performed with the NVIVO software, where topics discussed during interviews were coded into themes. Frequency counts of theme mentions were aggregated using Microsoft Excel, and then statistical analysis was conducted to determine the stakeholder groups that were contributing to the themes in order to draw conclusions . **Fig. 7** below is the conceptualization of the connection between themes mentioned in interviews.

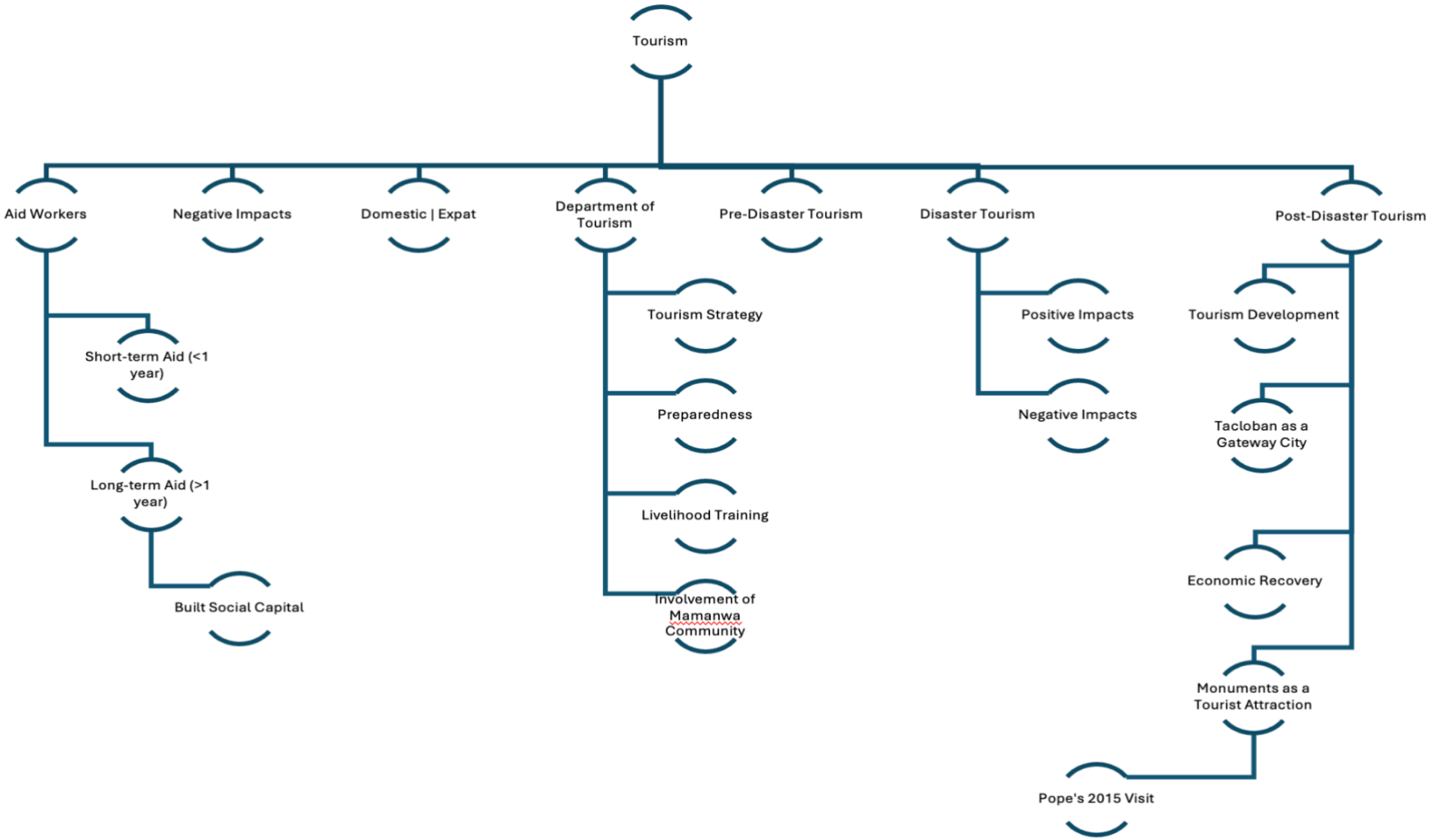


Fig. 7 Conceptual map of themes present in interviews

In the following presentation of results, each interviewee will be identified by their stakeholder group with unique reference codes to retain anonymity. The stakeholder groups will be referred to as:

- Expert = EX
- Member of the government = GOV
- Member of the hospitality sector = HS
- Mamanwa community member = MC
- NGO = NGO
- Member of a religious organization = RO
- Resident of Tacloban = RES
- Tourism operator = TO

For example, (GOV 11) would refer to interviewee no. 11, who is a member of the government.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, as a researcher from a North American university conducting research in a developing country, there are inherent dynamics and biases that may have influenced the research process and findings. These include cultural differences, power dynamics, and potential biases in the interpretation of data. Secondly, the COVID-19 pandemic impeded discussions on long-term recovery. The pandemic has had significant detrimental impacts on both disaster recovery and tourism, influencing the relationship between the two phenomena and impacting the study. Lastly, the insights on aid workers in this study come entirely from the perspective of residents of Tacloban, as there were no international aid workers present in Tacloban by the

time the study was conducted. This presents a one-sided view of the interactions between international aid workers and locals. Future research could benefit from incorporating the perspectives of aid workers and volunteers themselves to provide a more balanced and comprehensive understanding of the role of aid workers in post-disaster tourism and recovery.

4.5 Results and Discussion

4.5.1 Pre-Disaster Tourism in Tacloban

Prior to Typhoon Yolanda, visitors to Tacloban were limited mainly to transiting and small-scale domestic tourism. As the urban centre of the Eastern Visayas region that hosts most of the region's businesses and post-secondary institutions, Tacloban often acted both as a transiting location for tourists and travelers wishing to visit locations within Samar, Leyte or Biliran, or a destination for people in the region to engage in business and schooling activities (Disasters in the Philippines: Before and After Haiyan 2023; GOV 25, HS 18, GOV 10, EX 27). Despite this, most of the visitors were ex-pats or from different parts of the country (TO 5, HS 7, TO 21, TO 22, and EX 27). As noted by one interviewee:

> *"Years prior to Yolanda, the area was booming already because we had been elevated to an urban city. So the city was starting to bloom, starting to perk up prior to Yolanda. People at that time, tourists, were locals. Not locals, but [they were] mostly Filipinos." (EX 27)*

It is a shared sentiment across stakeholder groups that pre-Yolanda visitors to Tacloban were primarily domestic due to the city's lack of presence as a destination itself and the obscurity of many Eastern Visayas destinations on the global tourism market. Previously, most - if not all - of the travel agencies within Tacloban focused on bringing customers from the city to other destinations, either local, domestic, or some international (TO 21, TO 22, TO 17). However, after Typhoon Yolanda, several other forms of tourism developed - many for the very first time (GOV 25). As the tourism sector evolved, it impacted the recovery of the city in different ways. This section will explore the forms of tourism that occurred in the post-disaster period and the impacts that they had on recovery.

4.5.2 Post-Disaster Tourism in Tacloban

In the immediate aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda, international support swelled in response to provide aid to those impacted - including aid workers and volunteers arriving to the most impacted areas in the thousands (Eadie, Atienza, and Tan-Mullins 2020). Much of the experiences that people in Tacloban had with aid workers, voluntourists, and post-disaster tourists occurred within 1 year of the disaster, the time frame that this section will be focusing on. During this time, there was little distinction between aid workers who came in a professional capacity, volunteers who came with an organization, and volunteers/disaster tourists who came to experience devastation - and often help as well (GOV 10, HS 24). In the context of Tacloban, all of these visitors functioned as tourists - visitors to a location for either personal or professional reasons for a time period of 1 day to 1 year (Eilat and Einav 2004). This timeframe has been extended to 2 years for the purpose

of this study, as several interview participants identified post-disaster tourists and aid workers as staying for a maximum of 2 years.

Multiple interview respondents noted that the influx of people was the primary reason that economic "recovery" was achieved as quickly as it was (HS 8, HS 24, GOV 25, HS 18). The economic influence of on-the-ground aid workers and volunteers - tourists - in recovery from a disaster has not been studied in great depth, but is no doubt a contributor to economic recovery in many situations (Cheng and Minhas 2021; Sou 2022). One way that this happened is through the re-opening of businesses in the immediate aftermath of the typhoon. Hotels and restaurants were the primary target of this economic recovery, as those were locations needed to support the population of tourists new to the city (HS 18, HS 24, TO 19, TO 22).

> *"After Yolanda, [tourism] started picking up actually. So the presence of the volunteer workers really helped us. When you're here for as long as you stay in a hotel, in an accommodation facility, [the Tourism Board] counts you as an arrival. So whether you came here as a tourist or you did volunteer tourism work … we were on an upwards trend" GOV 25*

In addition to the quick re-opening of businesses, another method of economic recovery made possible due to the presence of tourists in Tacloban was the opening of new businesses, often informal, to cater to the international tourist population. When asked how their business began in the aftermath of Yolanda, HS 7 responded:

"It just came to my mind that I should build a little house so that my children won't get wet when the rain is strong. We were trying to survive… but I thought what if the relief provided by the government for the families affected by typhoon Yolanda runs out? So I decided to build [the informal eatery] just so we could survive and have income, because we don't have any work at all.. The people with the money were visitors at the time." HS 7

Indicated by the story above, there was strong incentive to capitalize on the tourist population because of the inconsistencies with aid experienced in the weeks and months following the disaster when many did not have an alternative source of income. In this way, tourists contributed to economic recovery through their participation in impromptu informal economies in the post-disaster period. Informal economies in the aftermath of a disaster are in many situations inevitable, the extent of them depending on the level of devastation and the effectiveness of disaster response (Coate et al. 2006; Mackie et al 2017). Tacloban experienced this in the weeks post disaster, described below by HS 18:

"When I came here, I was seeing this informal... what do you call it? Informal economy going on, where people would just trade stuff on the street. People can freely set up their own booths and sell whatever they want to sell and I found that

really, really interesting when I saw people selling, you know, soap from their cars. Aid workers were a big part of that." HS 18

It is the perspective of many that the presence of aid workers and volunteers as tourists in the year after Yolanda was an important factor in the economic recovery of Tacloban. It has been stated across multiple stakeholder groups that tourism's contribution to recovery was generally welcomed (GOV 10, HS 18, HS 19, EX 23).

The relationship between locals and the tourist population evolved over time along with the methods of aid/assistance being distributed. While in the immediate aftermath of Yolanda there was a separation between visitors and those impacted by the disaster, social ties were formed over time (HS 24, NGO 12, EX 27). Once immediate relief was no longer needed, the trauma of experiencing a disaster event began to be addressed. Disaster events can have significant psychological impacts on people - especially children and adolescents - including feelings of anxiety, fear, depression, and post-traumatic stress (Reggina and Indriani 2023). There were several free, informal workshops and events focused on stress relief and the mental health held by voluntourists who were not associated with aid organisations and NGOs in the years after Yolanda. Examples of these events held include child-friendly spaces, psychosocial support programs such as group therapy sessions, grief groups for those who have lost loved ones, and stress debriefing with adults (GOV 10, TR 13, TO 19, NGO 12, EX 27).

Another type of impact that long-term aid workers functioning as tourists had in Tacloban is the built social capital between tourist aid workers and residents of Tacloban.

Tzu-Chi is a Taiwanese humanitarian organization that was heavily involved in Yolanda recovery efforts. Below, EX 27 discusses how on-the-ground members of Tzu-Chi made a difference in the lives of those in Tacloban. Because members of Tzu-Chi stayed for several years in Tacloban after the disaster event, individuals were able to form connections that had socio-economic benefits for residents of Tacloban that extended beyond immediate recovery, or typical aspects of aid work (EX 27, EX 23, GOV 10, HS 24).

> *"[There are] those who stayed and helped in the recovery in terms of financial, livelihoods, eco-social, social aspect. So all these different aspects of life, social life in a community - for example Tzu-Chi in Palo, they really built a village. And they [sponsored] students who they had connections with. And these scholars who have graduated are now in Taiwan. They helped them find jobs. To me, that's important because the lives of these people have been changed for the better." (EX 27)*

In the years after Yolanda, social relationships formed between long-term tourists and residents of Tacloban led to visitors coming back to visit the places they had once had a hand in aiding recovery (HS 1, HS 18, HS 7). Even after 9 years, aid workers that were stationed in Tacloban have come back to see how people and establishments were doing (HS 1). Long-term tourism after typhoon Yolanda continues to have an impact on the lives of residents of Tacloban.

4.5.3 Development of the Tourism Industry

The tourism that occurred in the post-disaster period of typhoon Yolanda led to the development of Tacloban's tourism sector, both in organic and structured ways. While the term 'informal economy/tourism' is used to refer to economic activity that is not regulated or monitored by the government – something that is very common in the short-term period following a disaster (Kraemer-Mbula & Wunsch-Vincent 2016; Coate et al. 2006; Mackie et al 2017), in this paper 'organic tourism' will refer to opportunities for tourism that were recognized and capitalized upon by locals – **with the potential for growth into sustainable avenues for income**. It is important to note that informal sector tourism can evolve into organic and then more formalized tourism that is supported by the government. The DoT - which references the actions of both the City of Tacloban's Department of Tourism as well as the Eastern Visayas Department of Tourism which often work in tandem. This section of results will explore the shifts within the tourism sector post-disaster and the subsequent impacts on recovery.

Prior to typhoon Yolanda, increasing tourism was discussed within the DoT but never prioritised: baseline tourism data was not even collected until 2011 (GOV 25). This lack of record keeping can be attributed to many things - such as the fact that there were not many visitors to the city, and that many of the visitors were not counted as tourists because they were family members of those who live here or expats (GOV 11, GOV 10, TO 19). When arrivals "boomed" due to the arrival of aid workers and disaster tourists after Yolanda, the DoT was surprised at the tourism opportunities that had presented themselves and

recognized the significant impact of tourists in the post-disaster context. This is discussed by interviewee GOV 25:

"After Yolanda, I was trying to borrow a car to visit some of our destinations. And one of the regional directors I talked to said, 'Why are you going to check on those destinations? There's no more tourism. Tourism is dead.' But not even a week later our accommodation facilities were forced to open because of the many volunteer workers coming in from all throughout the world. Tourism was not dead." (GOV 25)

The largest change in post-disaster tourism was that Tacloban became more well-known due to Typhoon Yolanda (TO 22, RO 2, TO 6, EX 27). As discussed in 5.1.1, the influx of people caused several residents of Tacloban to engage in livelihood strategies related to tourism. This includes the formation of restaurants, food suppliers, and accommodation facilities often in an informal manner. As time went on and tourism remained more significant than it was pre-2013, there was an organic movement from informal tourism businesses to established tourism businesses. The very first hostel in Tacloban was opened in 2014 because of the increase in tourism due to typhoon Yolanda:

"I [opened the hostel to accommodate for NGO workers]. That was the initial purpose but you know, there were more people aside from NGO workers coming in. There were a lot of - I feel like it's a bad term - but disaster tourists and other tourists coming in" (HS 18).

There were issues experienced from investing in businesses targeted towards tourists, in part due to the short-term nature of the large influx of aid workers in a post-disaster setting. There were accounts of several businesses that were started to cater specifically to the tourist population that then failed once tourist numbers dwindled (HS 24, TO 19, HS 18, GOV 25). This speaks to the nature of short-term disaster recovery efforts, such as opening tourism-related businesses without the support of an established tourism sector or population, not contributing to long-term vulnerability reduction (Finucane et al 2020; Ingram et al 2006).

One of the ways that tourism became formalized in the region was through the promotion of voluntourism, which happened for around 2 years after the disaster (TO 19, GOV 11, TO 17). Government-led promotion of voluntourism with catchphrases such as "lend a hand" - which was the slogan that was used in the Eastern Visayas - is one of the ways that tourism is used as an intended disaster recovery strategy in many destinations (Wearing, Beirman, and Grabowski 2020; McMorran 2017). After the promotion of voluntourism, the messaging switched to recovery and adventure experiences, hand in hand with Tacloban's organic development as a gateway city (GOV 25, GOV 11, TO 17, TO 28).

The current tourism strategy that is in the works by the DoT is to make Tacloban a prominent MICE city within the Philippines (GOV 25, GOV 11). MICE – which stands for *Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions* is a type of tourism strategy that focuses on having the facilities to host large-scale meetings for companies and organizations along with being a pleasurable city to visit, making a destination desirable for such bookings (Meetings & Conventions Asia 2024; Ladkin 2006; Spencer and Bavuma 2018). Part of this

strategy involves emphasis on the available gateway destinations from the highly urbanized Tacloban as part of the pleasure aspect of this marketing (GOV 11). The focus of this strategy is targeted toward the domestic market, as most of the tourism in the Philippines is domestic.

4.5.3.1 Disaster as an Attraction

One unintended consequence of a disaster event - whether natural or manmade - is the cultural significance that is attached to a place marred by destruction, transforming certain focal points of said disaster into monuments or celebrations of recovery (Miles 2014; Tang 2018). This has been seen previously in Palo, a municipality of Tacloban, where the site of the Battle of Leyte in World War 2 is commemorated at MacArthur Landing Memorial National Park (Jose 2012). There have been several such sites related to typhoon Yolanda that have emerged in Talcoban and now hold cultural significance, some of which have been made official/structured through the involvement of the DoT, and remain as attractions in Tacloban to this day. Two of the primary Yolanda tourism sites are the mass graves and Eva Jocelyn Shrine (Field data 2022; Tibay 2018). The Eva Joclyn Shrine - pictured in Fig. _ - is a commercial ship that was pushed ashore by the storm surge of typhoon Yolanda, and has drawn visitors from all over the world (GMA News 2016; Field data 2022). The Eva Jocelyn Shrine is a prime example of this. Pushed ashore by the storm surge of typhoon Yolanda, it was treated as an attraction for tourists who came to Tacloban in the wake of the disaster (Field data 2022). Due to the notoriety of this image that represented the city's experience with typhoon Yolanda, Tacloban's Department of Tourism decided to remove the back half

of the ship, add a steel barricade, repaint the body, and turn it into a tourist attraction that people can climb and take pictures of and on (Tibay 2018, GOV 11).

Pre-established tourism businesses also participated in the new tourism economy of Tacloban. The tourism industry - consisting of accommodation facilities, hospitality services, and travel agencies - was able to recover financially with no assistance from the government (GOV 25). One way that travel agencies and transportation businesses were able to supplement their income during the time of low travel demand was by renting their vehicles - typically vans - to aid workers who resided in Tacloban but wanted to take weekend trips to other destinations in Eastern Visayas (TO 19, TO 17). In the aftermath of Yolanda when taking vacations was not a high priority for many and there was an influx of visitors to Tacloban, several travel agencies adopted a novel business model wherein travel agencies would connect with volunteers who wanted to help and provide voluntourism tours. This concept is detailed by TO 19 explaining how their travel agency participated in organizing voluntourism tours:

> *"In my travel agency, the first work that I was able to do was just connecting people together. People from outside coming in, they would want to help out, so we do the network for them. Then people were contacting us to help, asking for leads on how they could help. I had a group of employees of Credit Suisse from Singapore. Part of our program was [to] bring them to the area where they were helping, and then after*

that, we would take them around for de-stressing so that when they go back to where they're staying they would feel a lot better. I called it the 'Do Good, Feel Good' Project." (TO 19)

This practice occurred organically, with no guidance from the government or tourism boards. Several of the "city tours" provided by local travel agencies began by taking people to see sites of mass destruction - highlighting the shipwreck, mass graves, churches in the area, and abandoned homes - a practice which continues to this day (TO 17, TO 19, GOV 11). Disaster sites as an attraction can also be seen as dark tourism, with ethical debates on the consumption of disaster legacy (Tang 2018). The city tours that were offered after Yolanda catering to volunteer tourists in the wake of Yolanda have since adapted to become city tours that highlight disaster monuments, which are still very popular amongst tourists 9+ years after the typhon (NGO 12). Tacloban's DoT has partnerships with several of the travel agencies offering these tours through the Association of Eastern Visayas Tourism Council, promoting tours offered by the travel agencies at the city tourism office (GOV 11, TO 19, TO 17, Field data 2022).

"[When people come to Tacloban] The number one thing would want to experience - they want to see about the effects of Yolanda. So I take them to the mass graves, and to the churches that were destroyed." (TO 19)

Monuments to the disaster have become embedded in the local culture of Tacloban; residents perceive these monuments to be focal points and tourist attractions (TR 13, GOV 11, TO 19). Many see them as a necessary reminder of what has been lost and a warning for potential future storms (EX 27, EX 26):

> *"Those [disaster] tours became embedded already in the local culture in the sense that we have now artifacts that remain to remember the Yolanda catastrophe, like the ship." (GOV 10)*



Fig. 8 Eva Jocelyn Shipwreck Shrine in Tacloban (Tibay 2018)

In the years after Yolanda, celebrations were larger and drew in more visitors to Tacloban. This includes events such as the annual fiesta of Tacloban that is held each summer. While not an event that was directly related to Typhoon Yolanda, it has been identified that in the 1-5 years after the disaster event, the fiesta was more extravagant and had larger out-of-town attendances than several years prior or since (TR 9, HS 20, GOV 11). It can be said that this phenomena was due to the people of Tacloban's desire to gravitate toward community and resilience while reeling from loss, and the culture of support for a city that had gone through unprecedented loss that this celebration inspired (GOV 11, GOV 10).

Not only were celebrations larger post-Yolanda, but memorials on the anniversary of the storm have also been a draw for tourists (GOV 11, TR 13, RO 2). Anniversaries of death hold a strong place in the Catholic religion, and typically a mass is held on or close to the anniversary of great loss (Woodward 1968). In the Philippines, the custom of anniversary mass holding great importance is typically repeated for 9 years, after which people are supposed to begin to move on (RO 2, RO 3, EX 26). As 2022 - the year in which the field data for this study was collected - was the 9th anniversary of typhoon Yolanda and the loss of the lives claimed by the storm, there were several large masses and commemorations which drew in visitors from across the Philippines (GOV 11, Field observation 2022). For both celebrations and commemorations, the makeup of tourists who arrived for events in the years after typhoon Yolanda were primarily domestic, consisting of those across the country who were also impacted by Yolanda, those who had family impacted by Yolanda, and on

some occasions aid workers or volunteers who had been tourists in the years after the disaster (EX 26, GOV 11, GOV 25, NGO 12).

In particular, one event related to typhoon Yolanda that was a significant tourism event was when the Pope of the Catholic church visited Tacloban and the Palo Cathedral in January of 2015 to speak about recovery from typhoon Yolanda (Medina 2023). While reliable numbers on tourist arrivals for the event do not exist, several interviewees stated that many tourists came into Tacloban and Palo to see the Pope, many of them arriving in the days before and camping overnight (RO 4, EX 27, RO 2). Those who came in for the event were mainly domestic visitors, but there were also international visitors who were either ex-pats or families of those residing in Tacloban (EX 27, GOV 11). The influx of tourists once again brought in economic benefit to actors in the tourism industry, specifically with respect to accommodations and food businesses (HS 7, TO 19, TO 22, GOV 11).

All of these attractions that either sprung from or were amplified by the disaster occurred organically with the presence of tourists in the post-disaster period.

4.5.3.2 Tacloban as a Gateway City

Tacloban has been the regional hub of the Eastern Visayas for quite some time with many of the regions businesses, government offices, and schools in the city. In the past decade, it has also functioned as a gateway city to lesser known destinations in the Eastern Visayas region (GOV 25, GOV 11, HS 24, TO 21).

While foreign aid workers were visiting in the years post-disaster, many of them would spend their weekends exploring destinations adjacent to Tacloban, many of which were several hours away from the city (GOV 25, HS 18, HS 24). These places became known to foreign aid workers through their relationships with locals, as many of the quieter beaches in the region would not have been known or easily accessed without this knowledge sharing (TO 21, HS 24, EX 26, EX 27). These trips not only introduced international tourism to the economies of these lesser-known destinations, but also provided opportunities for Tacloban-based transportation agencies when aid workers would rent vehicles (TO 22).

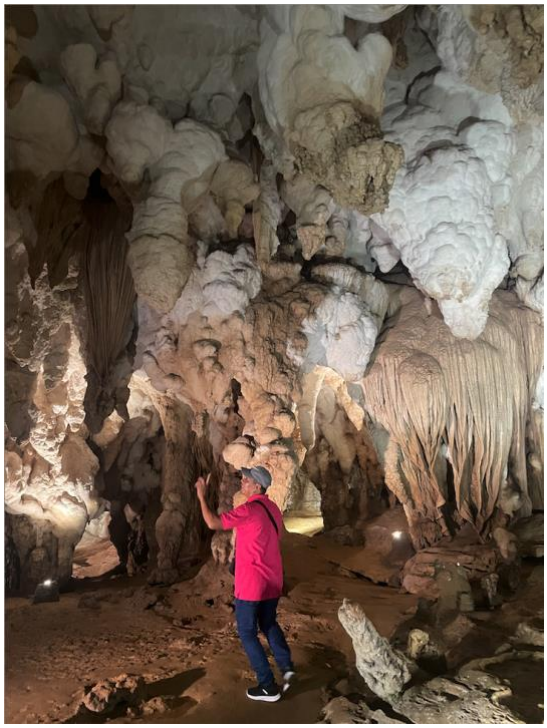
This exploration of destinations in the Eastern Visayas region prompted travel agencies to offer packages and tours to local destinations, much like their capitalization on disaster monuments and the offering of Yolanda tours. Most of the "Region 8" (Eastern Visayas) tours that focus on destinations that can only be accessed by going through Tacloban retained their newfound popularity as aid workers and tourists began to leave (TO 17, TO 19, EX 26, HS 18). The Kalanggaman Islands are perhaps the most popular destination from Tacloban (HS 18, GOV 25). Four hours way from Tacloban by private van, trips to these islands are usually overnight packages. It is now the number one destination of many travel agencies, becoming popular in 2014 after typhoon Yolanda (TO 19, TO 17, TO 22).

Also seeing growth in tourism numbers are destinations all across Region 8, many of which are nature-based tourism with focuses on adventure and relaxation. Sohoton Caves and Natural Bridge Park and the Paranas Torpedo Boat Ride (seen in both **Fig. 9** and **Fig. 10**)

are adventure tourism attractions that saw increased visitation while aid workers were in Tacloban, and have retained some of that increased popularity since (TO 4, TO 5, GOV 25). The DoT had direct involvement with the development of Sohoton Caves and Natural Bridges, recruiting cave guides because of the abundance of tourists in 2014-2016 (TO 5).

> *"We were recruited [and sent to] seminars on how to be a cave guide. [The Department of Tourism] then gave us test jobs and duties, and after that we [became] official cave guides for Sohoton." (TO 5)*

Quieter beaches across Leyte and Samar are examples of destinations that were previously accessed by locals but have been experiencing tourism (through Tacloban) since 2014 (TO 21, HS 24, EX 26, EX 27); southern Leyte beaches have become known for diving and eastern Samar for surfing.



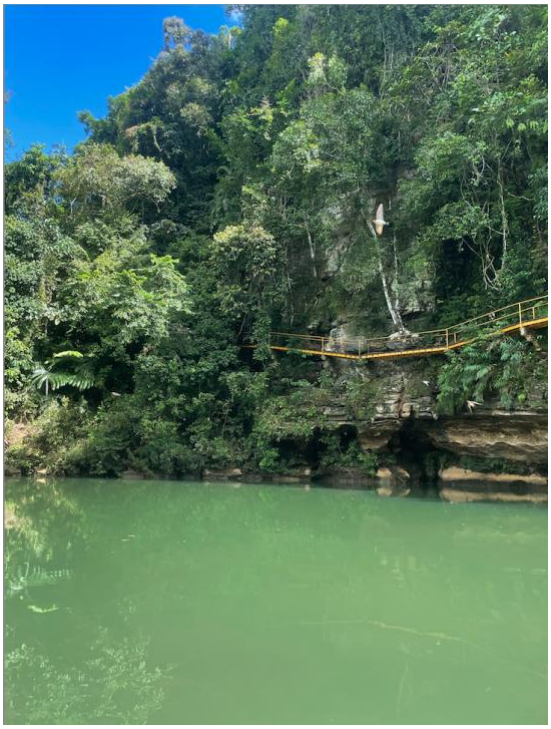


Fig. 9 (*left*) Cave guide (who was recruited for tourism after Yolanda) in Sohoton Caves Natural Attraction

Fig. 10 (*right*) Bridge at Sohoton Caves Natural Attraction that was built after Yolanda

Residents of Tacloban perceive tourism in Tacloban as a gateway city. The city alone does not have a thriving tourism industry, but it is the heart of Eastern Visayas tourism (EX 26, EX 27, GOV 11). When people fly into Tacloban, they are typically headed for another destination that they can only reach through the city such as Samar or Ormoc (TR 13). The average length of stay in Tacloban is approximately 2 nights, in addition to visits around the Eastern Visayas (GOV 10, GOV 25, GOV 11). At the Tacloban airport, the tourism promotions and posters are not for sights in the city itself, but primarily advertise adjacent destinations in the region (Field observations, 2022). **Fig. 11** below is a map with some of the major gateway destinations of Tacloban highlighted, condensed through collected field data. Tacloban has gained notoriety for being close to several scenic destinations that are

otherwise difficult to get to, therefore if people come to the city the opportunity to visit the destinations is often capitalized on (EX 27). This is elaborated on by interviewee GOV 25 below:

> *"Tacloban is a gateway. It's a regional gateway. It's our center for services. It's where most of our tourism facilities are located. And it is in the heart of the region. So it's the center for both Samar Island and the rest of Leyte Island and Yolanda. If we attribute arrivals, we can probably say that 60 - 70 percent of our visitor arrival is attributed to Tacloban City. They stay in Tacloban, but Tacloban also admits that they don't have much in terms of natural attractions. So Tacloban is magnanimous enough to promote other places in the region. [It's] basically the jump-off point to the different tourism destinations in nearby places in Samar, Leyte, as far as Southern Leyte and Biliran, East and North of Samar." (GOV 25)*

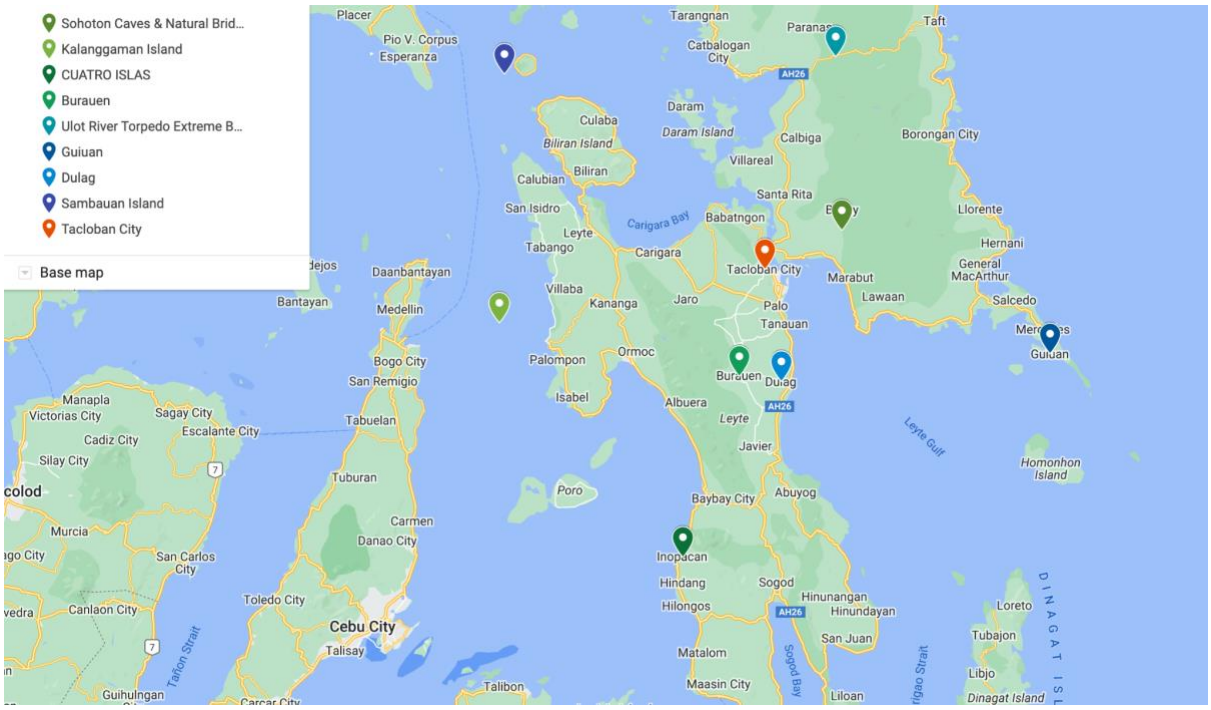


Fig. 11 Map of major gateway destinations from Tacloban, colour coded for reference

This conceptualization of Tacloban as a gateway to smaller destinations in the region has caused the impacts of tourism caused by typhoon Yolanda to trickle-down, in some cases to destinations that were not greatly impacted by the disaster in the first place (TO 19, TO 21, GOV 25). There are positives and negatives associated with this shift in the tourism dynamic. Smaller destinations can have difficulty balancing increased carrying capacities when there is an influx of tourists, which has been seen in the Kalanggamann Islands which is one of the gateway destinations that experienced a significant increase in tourism post-Yolanda (GOV 25). One of the positive impacts experienced by locals has been the expanded opportunities for livelihood development in the region. There have been several instances of tourism-related livelihood training being held by the Department of Tourism all across the region, including community-based tourism initiatives in Samar - a province

neighbouring Leyte - that were initiated because of the post-Yolanda tourism boom (GOV 25). One of the ways this is organized is through the Association of Eastern Visayas Tourism, a group consisting of tourism businesses and municipal and regional Departments of Tourism that is aimed at improving the quality of tourism in the Eastern Visayas so that there is a standard for tourists to expect (Reyes 2018; GOV 25, GOV 11, TO 17, TO 19). Some of the private stakeholders in the association include accredited tourism businesses such as tour operators, accommodations, and souvenir and transport businesses. The training that the DoT provides to small, new destinations in the region is typically related to frontline service quality, branding, and local entrepreneurship (TO 19, GOV 25; Cotejar 2024).

4.5.3.3 The Involvement of the Mamanwa Community in Tourism

One example of the expansion of the Department of Tourism is their involvement with the Mamanwa Community that was initiated post-Yolanda. The Mamanwa are a group of indigenous peoples in the Philippines that live throughout Panaoan Island, Agusan del Norte, and Southern Leyte (Tomaquin 2014; Ponce 2018). For the purpose of this study, the group of Mamanwa that will be focused on is the community residing in Samar - approx. 1 hour east of Tacloban. The community has a distinct religion, dialect, and cultural dynamic compared to the rest of the Philippines (Ponce 2018; Cuaton and Su 2020). Within this community there is a tendency to focus on the well-being of the community over the nuclear family structure, and they are also traditionally a nomadic people, moving based on resource availability (Cuaton and Su 2020).

This group's primary source of income is agriculture and handmade crafts - which are typically hammocks or small souvenirs made of 'banig' (a type of red grass) and rattan (Sedanza, Piedad, and Lerios 2021; Field data 2022). The Mamanwa community has historically struggled with low-income, due to pressures on resource availability and lack of product marketing opportunity (Presnilla-Espada 2023). The Mamanwa community used to reside several hours away in the mountains of Samar, but were moved by the government after Typhoon Yolanda because the group's isolation was seen as dangerous for future storms as it was difficult for aid to reach them in the aftermath of Yolanda. Aside from access to medical aid and supplies, members of the group stated that increased proximity to quality education for the children of the community was one reason that they were willing to move closer to the city centre of Tacloban (MC 14, MC 16). The housing that was provided for the community by the government and aid organizations is pictured in **Fig. 12**.



Fig. 12 Residence for the Mamanwa Community provided after typhoon Yolanda

This movement to a new home also began a connection between the Mamanwa Community and the Department of Tourism (Field data 2022; Sedanza, Piedad, and Lerios 2021). While prior to typhoon Yolanda, the community was too isolated to participate in tourism, once they were situated in the central area of Basay - right next to Sohoton Caves and Bridge Natural Attraction - there were several ways that the DoT chose to involve the Mamanwa Community in the Samar tourism loop (Sedanza, Piedad, and Lerios 2021).

One of the most prominent ways that the Mamanwa Community has been involved with tourism is through contracts with the DoT to perform cultural dances for tourist groups (MC 14, MC 15, MC 16). The DoT provided funding for musical instruments and clothing,

and offers payment for dance performances that are often hosted at the Mamanwa Community base (MC 14; Sedanza, Piedad, and Lerios 2021). The DoT also provided the main hut in the centre of the community's residence that they use to create their handcrafts, pictured in **Fig. 13** and **Fig. 14** (TO 6). Members of the Mamanwa community who previously had to travel for hours to be able to reach the markets of consumers for their products are now able to sell products at destinations managed by the DoT (such as Sohoton Caves and tourism offices) as well as at their residence which is now accessible (TO 6, MC 14, Sedanza, Piedad, and Lerios 2021).





Fig. 13 (*left*) Banig hammock weaving in progress (Field data 2022)

Fig. 14 (*right*) The hut in the Mamanwa Community residence provided by the DoT (Field data 2022)

There have also been livelihood training sessions - provided by the DoT in conjunction with other departments of the government - that have been hosted at the hut

in the centre of the community, related to tourism and other hard skills such as plumbing and electric work (MC 14, Field data 2022). These connections with the DoT have resulted in additional sources of income, in some ways improving the lives of the members of the Mamanwa Community. For example, products are sold at a higher rate because of increased exposure to buyers (TO 6).

However, there are other pitfalls associated with the changes that the Mamanwa Community has experienced. The materials that community artists depend on are located in the mountains near their previous residence and require significant travel to obtain. Handicrafts makes up the majority of income sources in the community, and poor infrastructure and a lack of ability to travel makes sourcing raw materials difficult (MC 14, MC 15, Presnilla-Espada 2023). Although dance performances serve as an alternative source of income, members of the community feel that the compensation of 1000 pesos (17.55 USD in 2024) is lacking, especially since the cost of living has risen due to the shift from a self-sustaining way of life (MC 15, MC 16). There has been little research done on the Mamanwa Community - and similar indigenous groups in the Philippines - and their involvement with tourism in recent years, and this remains a research gap to be addressed (Ponce 2018; Sedanza, Piedad, and Lerios 2021).

Table 3 Ways That Structured Tourism was Developed from Organic Occurrences

Organic Occurrence	Structured Tourism Result
Eva Jocelyn shipwreck site became a disaster attraction	Creation of official Eva Jocelyn Memorial
Volunteers and aid workers come in to Tacloban	DoT promotes volutourism for approx. 2 years post-Yolanda
Travel agencies give disaster tours to volunteers/disaster tourists in the aftermath of Yolanda	Partnership between travel agencies and the DoT to promote Yolanda-focused city tours of Tacloban
Gateway destinations from Tacloban emerged due to presence of aid workers and volunteers post-Yolanda	DoT-led livelihood training programs for tourism businesses in these gateway destinations
Mamanwa community moved closer to Tacloban because of aid difficulty after Yolanda	Community began partnership with DoT to perform dances and sell handmade items

4.5.3 Discussion

The primary objective of this study is to explore and identify the organic and structured ways that the tourism sector developed in the post-disaster period of Typhoon Yolanda in Tacloban, and how this helped or hindered recovery. There are three main lessons to be learned from this research, expanded on below:

Lesson 1: Organic tourism can become structured

One lesson that can be learned from Tacloban's experience with post-disaster tourism is that informal tourism can present organic opportunities for growth, which then

can become formalized tourism with sufficient support. The question is raised: how do we take advantage of tourism that occurs in the post-disaster period, and how do we transition this to the creation of a long-term destination? The Department of Tourism (in this study, referring to the Eastern Visayas regional and Tacloban's municipal departments of tourism collectively as DoT) recognized the opportunity for tourism in locations which were not previously popular destinations and invested in development such as livelihood trainings in gateway destinations, creation of disaster monuments, voluntourism promotion, partnerships with travel agencies, and involvement of the local indigenous community. In Tacloban, these significant developments occurred in the years after typhoon Yolanda as opportunities presented themselves - but these kinds of opportunities for tourism development can be planned for, as informal economies and therefore tourism activities are a trademark in many post-disaster environments (Coate, Handmer, and Choong 2006; Mackie et al 2017). Communities at high risk of disaster events need to prepare for the influx of tourists and how they may capitalize on short-term tourism, as well as transitioning it to long-term tourism based on the opportunities they see presented in the post-disaster period.

While the findings from this research can be used to guide strategies for recovery efforts, this concept does not apply universally. A prime example that has been explored in this paper is the case of the Mamanwa Community in Samar, which highlights more complex interconnections between recovery and tourism. While tourism has been a positive economic influence on the community in some ways, they are also experiencing increased difficulty with the income insecurity that being dependent on tourism has brought, as well

as in accessing materials needed to produce the crafts that they sell to tourists (Field data 2022). This is an example of how the framework of 'increased tourism after a disaster can be used to aid in economic recovery' does not apply in the same way to isolated communities. While this community and similar ones that exist are not the primary focus of this study, the findings do indicate that further work is needed in this area.

Lesson 2: Preparing for Tourism After Disasters

Prior to typhoon Yolanda, there was little to no tourism in Tacloban. The tourism that did exist was almost entirely domestic, and usually for the purpose of visiting family in the area. The aftermath of typhoon Yolanda brough tourists in the form of aid workers and disaster tourists in levels that was before unseen in Tacloban and the surrounding areas. It is well-documented that this phenomena of increased tourism in the approximate 2 years after a devastating disaster event occurs (Whyte et al 2011; Doberstein, Nepal, and Joakim 2018; Guasco 2017), however, this has mainly been observed in locations where tourism was present, or even thriving before the disaster event. Tourism is likely to occur in the aftermath of a major disaster, and should be viewed as an opportunity to aid recovery. In the case of Tacloban there was a shift towards tourism to support the influx of additional people in the city during the post-disaster period, and not so much as a strategy for direct recovery – however, tourism presented opportunities that assisted with recovery in the short timeframe after typhoon Yolanda, as well as regional growth further down the line.

The presence of tourists (in the form of aid workers, volunteers, and disaster tourists) in the aftermath of a major disaster should be planned for by locations that are at high risk of disaster, even if tourism is not already a dominant industry. Communities that are at high risk of disaster who may experience this influx of tourists should coordinate the optimization of these benefits, with the intent of spreading the benefits and making them equitable. This can happen by allocating funds to hospitality businesses during times of emergency, supporting local creation of short-term accommodation facilities, advertisement of gateway destinations, or many other strategies appropriate for the context of the given community.

Moving forward, the Department of Tourism has been expanding on their operations, in part using lessons learned from the aftermath of typhoon Yolanda. One change that is being made is that there are now disaster preparedness plans in progress specific to the tourism industry in Eastern Visayas, with the aim of supporting industry stakeholders during times of disaster such as flooding or storms (GOV 11, GOV 25).

> *"Since we had Yolanda, [our central office has been working on] tourism DRRM, disaster risk reduction and management. Because while our local government units have their own DRRM plans, there's really nothing that focuses on the tourism industry. It's more for the community." (GOV 25)*

This focus on disaster preparedness has been strongest in regions that are prone to disaster events, such as Tacloban and the surrounding cities. Tacloban's Tourism department has partnered with the University of the Philippines' Asian Institute of Tourism to help local government units come up with their tourism disaster preparedness plans, emphasizing the need for different protocols for each location and the risks that they face (GOV 11, GOV 25).

Lesson 3: Places with tourism and without tourism pre-disaster experience similar benefits from post-disaster tourism

The research goal of this thesis is to understand how tourism plays a role in disaster recovery in a location that did not have a strong tourism sector prior to the disaster event, and assess whether the role tourism plays in this context differs from the role that it plays when tourism is prominent in an area before the disaster. Both destinations with tourism prior to a disaster and destinations with little to no tourism prior to a disaster experience similar benefits from tourism during the recovery period (Chouhan et al 2023; Wearing, Beirman, and Grabowski 2020; Zavar et al 2020; Robinson and Jarvie 2008; Liu-Lastres et al. 2020; Bui and Saito 2022). In the short- to medium- term post-disaster period, the contributions of tourism to disaster recovery are similar in both types of destinations, with the primary benefits of engaging in tourism including economic stimulation and provision of alternative livelihood sources for those recovering from a disaster. The key difference between these types of destinations lies in the long-term benefits, as the goal of the former is to return to a previously held state and the goal of the latter is development of a tourism

sector. The development of a tourism industry during a post-disaster period can significantly contribute to the long-term economic stability of a place, thereby reducing future hazard vulnerability as well.

One of the main gaps that this paper aims to fill is the lack of research on post-disaster tourism in locations that did not previously have significant tourism. The main difference in *why* tourism became an industry in Tacloban was due to adaptation as opposed to a direct recovery strategy - which it often is when a location already had tourism present. In the short-term, the tourism that occurs in this kind of low-tourism destination does not seem to differ significantly in the role that it plays in disaster recovery - which can be in the forms of reviving businesses to serve the tourist population, and spurring the creation of new businesses. The difference that can be gleaned from this study is that when a destination that does not experience significant tourism experiences a disaster event and the subsequent tourism that follows, there is an opportunity for the development of an industry. The development of an industry can not only assist with recovery with short-term economic stimulation, but long-term economic strengthening of the destination as well through diversification of livelihood opportunities and spreading these opportunities to more isolated locations - in this case referring to the gateway destinations that experienced the development of a tourism industry post-Yolanda. Locations that are vulnerable to disaster events such as strong tropical storms can use these learnings and develop their tourism industries based on the opportunities that are presented in the post-disaster period when most tourism occurs.

4.6 Conclusion

Typhoon Yolanda caused several deeply significant changes to Tacloban - loss of life and loved ones, displacement of entire communities, the prevalence of disaster risk reduction and mitigation measures, and the role that tourism occupies in the city and region. This study, titled "*After the Surge: Tourism as a Disaster Recovery Strategy in Tacloban, the Philippines*" explores the role of tourism in Tacloban, the Phillipines in the aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda, addressing a gap in the literature - the role of tourism in disaster recovery in locations where there was not a significant tourism industry prior to the disaster.

The surge in tourism experienced by Tacloban, primarily made up of disaster tourists and aid workers, played a strong role in the economic recovery of Tacloban and the surrounding region of the Eastern Visayas. Interviews with stakeholders - including members of the direct/indirect tourism sector, government officials, experts, members of the Mamanwa community, and residents - revealed that tourism directly led to opening and re-opening of several establishments catering to this temporary population and generating economic activity. This opportunity gave rise to organic tourism practices as Tacloban became a gateway city, expanding the impact of tourism to connected destinations across the region. In the following years, the Department of Tourism has worked to formalize this growth and create a sustainable tourism industry with implementing strategies and programs across the destinations. These efforts not only cushioned the economic impact of the disaster but also laid a foundation for **long-term economic development** and resilience - which is the key difference between the role of tourism in the disaster recovery of pre-

established tourism destinations and destinations with minimal tourism. It is important to note that tourism does not solely produce positive outcomes – growing the tourism sector can be associated with environmental degradation, a rise in the cost of living for locals, cultural commodification and more (Tribe & Paddison 2023; Shahzalal 2016). Although these problems may not be in the near future for Tacloban, as tourist numbers are still relatively low compared to nearby locations, many other tourism-dependant locations must eventually face these within the lifecycle of the destination (Shahzalal 2016; Postma & Schmuecker 2017).

This research aims to identify policy guidance that will better facilitate disaster recovery in destinations that do not have a previously strong tourism sector. The lesions learned from the case study of Tacloban provide valuable insights into how tourism can emerge and evolve in the aftermath of a disaster, and how it can contribute to recovery and long-term development.

1. **Places with tourism and without tourism pre-disaster experience similar benefits from post-disaster tourism** in the short- and medium-term, where tourism provides opportunity for economic stimulation when typical livelihood sources are disrupted and people are vulnerable. The development of a tourism industry in the post-disaster period in a destination that did not have significant tourism pre-disaster can contribute to creating long-term economic stability and sustainability.
2. **Preparing for Tourism After Disasters** is essential for locations that are at risk of disaster due to geographical location or environmental conditions. It is safe to assume that some level of tourism will occur in the aftermath of a disaster whether

or not a location is a tourism destination, and it should therefore be planned for to ensure that the benefits experienced by tourism are maximized and equitable.

3. **Organic tourism can become structured** when governments capitalize on the opportunity that post-disaster tourism provides. In the case of Tacloban, this took shape in the form of voluntourism promotion, livelihood trainings in gateway destinations, partnerships with travel agencies, involvement of the local indigenous community, and the creation of disaster monuments. Communities at high risk of disasters can respond to the surge in tourism post-disaster by strategically identifying opportunities to formalize tourism and invest in long-term economic development.

This paper demonstrates the need for additional research to be conducted exploring the role of tourism in the post-disaster context in a variety of destinations in order to better understand the complex relationship. Furthermore, additional comprehensive frameworks of this relationship between tourism and disasters should be developed in order to aid policymakers and stakeholders in preparing for and optimizing the presence of tourism. The findings and lessons learned from this study contribute to that growing body of research, providing insight into post-disaster tourism in locations where there was not significant pre-disaster tourism. Understanding the dynamics of tourism in the post-disaster period is essential for policymakers and stakeholders to enhance the experience of disaster recovery.

Chapter 5: Thesis Conclusion

In conclusion, the study "*After the Surge: Tourism as a Disaster Recovery Strategy in Tacloban, the Philippines*" explores the role of tourism in the aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda. This research addresses a gap that was identified in the literature - the role of tourism in disaster recovery in locations where there was not a significant tourism industry prior to the disaster. Utilizing a case study methodology, the research involved extensive data collection through semi-structured interviews with various stakeholders including government officials, tourism operators, and local residents, complemented by field observations.

The findings reveal that the sudden surge in tourism, primarily driven by aid workers and disaster tourists, was crucial in revitalizing the local economy of Tacloban. This influx, as noted by stakeholders - government officials; members of the hospitality sector; tourism operators; experts; residents; local non-governmental organizations; and members of the local indigenous community - led to the rapid reopening and establishment of businesses catering to the needs of these temporary visitors. The economic activity generated by these tourists, who were often involved in volunteer activities, significantly contributed to the city's recovery by boosting demand in the hospitality and service sectors. This influx led to the rapid development of both organic and structured tourism initiatives. Organically, the city became a gateway to the region, fostering new business ventures in Tacloban and connected destinations, as well as boosting existing ones. The Department of Tourism capitalized on this growth, implementing strategies to sustain and formalize the emergent tourism sector. These efforts not only cushioned the economic impact of the disaster but also laid a foundation for long-term economic development and resilience.

While social capital was found to have played some role in the relationship between tourism and disaster recovery – such as in bonds forming between visitors in the post-disaster period and locals that led to repeat visits over the coming years – there was generally not strong evidence of social capital links when examining the intersection between tourism, social capital, and disaster recovery. This could be due to the fact that the emergence of Tacloban tourism likely co-occurs with emergence of tourism-specific social capital (TSSC) – however at this stage this is speculation that requires more research.

This study aimed to examine the impact of tourism on a location that had not been a major tourist destination prior to experiencing a disaster event, and to assess how tourism contributed to the recovery from the disaster. It was found that in the short to medium term, the economic stimulation provided by post-disaster tourism is similar, regardless of whether the location was previously an established tourist destination. However, the key difference lies in the long-term benefits: the development of the tourism industry following the disaster has significantly contributed to the location's long-term economic stability.

This study is not without its limitations - the primary constraint being the cultural and linguistic barriers faced during data collection which may have influenced the comprehensiveness and depth of the gathered data (Squires et al 2019). Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic posed significant challenges, affecting the global tourism landscape and potentially skewing the applicability of the findings to other post-disaster scenarios without similar health crises (Alsiri et al 2021; Harper et al 2020).

Tourism has been seen across the literature to have the ability to play a significant role in disaster recovery (Chouhan et al 2023; Neef and Greyman 2018; Bui and Saito 2022;

Muskat et al 2014). Most of the research examining the role of tourism in disaster recovery is focused on the restoration of tourism numbers in pre-established destinations through methods such as destination marketing and attraction of loyal repeat visitors (Wearing, Beirman, and Grabowski 2020; Pikkemaat and Peters 2006; Zavar et al 2020; Mak 2003; Robinson and Jarvie 2008). This research underscores a critical need for further studies to explore the development of a tourism sector in the post-disaster period. Future research should also aim to develop frameworks that can guide the strategic harnessing of tourism for disaster recovery, ensuring that such strategies are inclusive, sustainable, and adaptable to changing global conditions. This study lays a foundational understanding that can be built upon to enhance the resilience of vulnerable regions through thoughtful tourism planning and development. The insights and recommendations from this research are particularly valuable to policymakers and tourism practitioners in destinations where there is an opportunity for tourism in the post-disaster period. By understanding the dynamics and potential of tourism as a recovery mechanism, these stakeholders can better prepare and implement strategies that leverage tourism for economic and social recovery, ultimately enhancing resilience against future disasters.

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Appendix A – Interview Guide

Introduce the research team and project. Read the consent form to the participant and obtain verbal consent for the interview as well as audio recording of it. All interviews began with the documentation of the same information as well as demographic information.

Interview Information:

Date of Interview: DD/MM/YYYY

Location:

Participant ID Code (determined before interview):

Demographic Information

Name:

Age:

Education level:

Current Occupation:

Introduction Questions

- How long have you lived in Tacloban?
- Where were you living in 2013 when the typhoon happened?
- What was your experience with recovery from Typhoon Yolanda like?

From this point, depending on the participants' responses to the introduction questions and the flow of the conversation, the interview would be selected from a question bank. This question bank, separated into the topics of i) Social Capital Questions, ii) Cultural Capital Questions, iii) Religious Organization Questions, iv) Indirect Tourism Sector Questions, v) Higher Level Tourism Questions, vi) Climate Change Adaptation Questions, vii) Tourism Management Questions, and viii) Government Questions is attached below. Often, only a select few questions from each section were asked to an interview participant, and the wording may have been altered for the direction of the conversation or for the purpose of

clarity. Oftentimes during lengthy interviews, additional questions were asked or topics were covered as the interview progressed.

Social Capital Questions

- How did Yolanda impact your personal/family life?
- In what ways did people help each other in recovery from Yolanda? Who helped you?
- Did you experience bayanihan after Yolanda? Can you give me some specific examples of how?
- Did your family members or friends help you? How? Did they hinder recovery? In what ways?
- Have there been any conflicts that arose because of shared support during recovery?
- Did community members help you? How? Did they hinder recovery? How?
- Did you receive any support from outside your community?
- Where did you receive aid from? How did it help you?
- Were there any long-term conflicts or problems from the aid you received?
- Were there any government projects to support the hotel's recovery that you know of?
- Did you feel supported by the government in recovery from Yolanda?
- Do you feel that the government did a good job facilitating recovery from Yolanda?

Cultural Capital Questions

- Were there any traditions or arts or festivals that impacted recovery?
- Did any monuments or historic artifacts had an impact on recovery?
- Did the damage of historic sites impact you?
- How do you feel about monuments commemorating Yolanda now?
- What was the role of religion and the church in your recovery experience?
- What would you say are some important heritage sites for the Tacloban and Palo area?

- Who helped re-build those after Yolanda?
- Were there any foundations or communities that were important in re-building of these heritage sites?
- How was the provincial/federal government of Leyte involved in re-building of these heritage sites?

Religious Organisation Questions

- Can you describe the community of the church in the aftermath of Yolanda?
- Did members of the church community come together to help each other in recovering from Yolanda?
- What specific ways were people in the congregation helping each other?
- Did you give or receive help within the church community? In what specific ways?
- Did the way parishioners interacted with each other change after Yolanda? How? (e.g. were people more willing to help each other, were people more or less trusting)
- Did mass or church services change after Yolanda?
  - Did more or less people attend?
  - Was mass service longer or shorter?
  - Was there a change in topics covered in mass? What were they?
- Did any of the mass services discuss hazards, or climate change, or any reason for the disaster?

- What would you say are some important heritage sites for the Church and for the Tacloban and Palo area?
  - What kinds of damages did these sites experience?
- Are these heritage sites more important for locals or tourists?
- Who helped re-build these sites after Yolanda?
- Were there any foundations or communities that were important in re-building of these heritage sites?
  - How was the provincial/federal government of Leyte involved in re-building of these heritage sites?

- How do you feel about monuments commemorating Yolanda now?
- What was it like when the pope visited the Cathedral in 2015?
- Did people from outside of Palo and Tacloban come for this event?
    - How many? Where did they come from?
- Do you think that this helped recovery after Yolanda? In what ways?
- Did people feel better emotionally or psychologically after the pope's visit?
- Did the pope's visit help bring funds and tourists into the area? Where did tourists spend money?
- Were there any negative impacts to the increase of people?
- Were there any long-term impacts of this visit?

<u>Indirect and Direct Tourism Sector Questions</u>

- When did you start working at this establishment?
- What did you work as before?
- What has been your job at this establishment?
- Can you tell me about your experience working in this establishment after Yolanda?
- What kinds of ppl visited this establishment? What were your interactions with them like?
    - How long did they stay?
    - Do you know why they were here or what they were doing?
- Did any aid workers directly impact your life, did they give you any gifts or assistance?
- Were there any drawbacks to having visitors?
- Was there resource sharing between businesses in recovery efforts? Did places help each other? If so, how?
- Is there any source that you wished you had received more help from?
    - If yes, what would you have wanted this to look like?

<u>Higher Level Tourism Questions</u>

- What was tourism like in Tacloban before Yolanda?
- What was tourism like in Tacloban after Yolanda?
- Do you know what disaster tourism is?
    - (Explain if not)
- Did you find that “disaster tourism”, where people would visit to see the impact of Yolanda, occurred? If so, how did you feel about it?
- Do you think the hotel or the government could have done anything to improve the recovery of the hotel or the city?

<u>Climate Change Adaptation Questions</u>

- In rebuilding, what changes have been made to increase the resilience to storms, either physically or socially?
- Are there any programs that you know of to increase awareness of climate risk in the area?
    - If yes, have you, or do you know anyone that has participated in them?
    - Did you or anyone you know find them to be helpful?
    - Who were they provided by?

<u>Tourism Management Questions</u>

- What sort of messaging was pushed after typhoon yolanda?
- Can you give me a timeline of when after yolanda which types of tourism were being promoted?
    - How has this changed over time?
- Are there any partnerships with certain communities or businesses related to advancing tourism in the city/region?
    - + if yes, follow ups
- Do you think that attention was brought to Tacloban due to the typhoon?
    - If yes, what kind?
    - Did this attention bring anyone to visit? After how long? How long did people tend to stay?

- Were tourism campaigns targeting any group of people specifically?

Government Questions

- Are there any programs that this branch of government provided related to disaster recovery or climate change adaptation?
    - If yes, + follow-ups
- In what ways did people help support each other after Yolanda?
- Were there any traditions or arts or festivals that helped or hurt the city's recovery?
- To what extent, and in what way, did tourism operators and tourism agencies contribute to disaster recovery from typhoon Yolanda?
- What kind of aid was received in the city to help people recover after the disaster?
    - If yes, which ones?
    - How did they help? What resources did they supply?
    - How long were they here for?
- Do you think aid workers were helpful for the recovery in the city?
- Immediately after Yolanda, what programs or resources were in place to help businesses?
    - Who were these programs or resources intended for?
    - How did they help/support benefit these businesses?
    - How long were these programs/resources available for?
    - Were there any businesses not able to access these resources? Why was this the case?

At the end of the interview, concluding questions would be asked to each participant.

Conclusion Questions

- Is there anybody else within or outside of the community you think we should reach out to who played a role in disaster recovery?
- Do you have any final questions about this research project?

Thank the participant for their time and reiterate that confidentiality is ensured, as well as the fact that they have the ability to withdraw their interview recording at any time up until my thesis is published.