

# Institutional Constraints Influencing Relocation Decision Making and Implementation

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**Abstract:** In the aftermath of a disaster there is often a call for mass relocation of exposed populations. The surrounding institutional context, comprised of normative and cultural-cognitive elements in addition to regulations, guides decisions made by relocation organizations. The theory of organizational institutionalism provides a window into beliefs, social norms, and coercive measures, but has not yet been employed to study relocation decision making. We investigated relocation in the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan in 2013 to illustrate how regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive ‘pillars’ of institutions affected the who, what, where, when, why, and how of relocation decisions. Results from the analysis of interviews, meeting observations, and documentation highlight areas of both discord and harmony between institutional pillars. Regulative and cultural-cognitive institutional influences often counter each other and can pull implementing organizations in opposite directions, particularly across the national-local divide. For example, in considering *who* drove implementation decisions, regulatory mandates determined which organizations originally participated but cultural-cognitive views eventually amplified organizational identities and diversified participation. The regulative and cultural-cognitive pillar were only unified in their influence on *where* to best place relocation development. Normative influences strongly impacted the *how* of implementation by defining proper behavior and communication both in and between inter-organizational meetings. However, *how* is increasingly pressured by cultural-cognitive appeals for improved implementation coordination. An emerging trend for future analysis is the need to study how post-disaster relocation motivates institutional change.

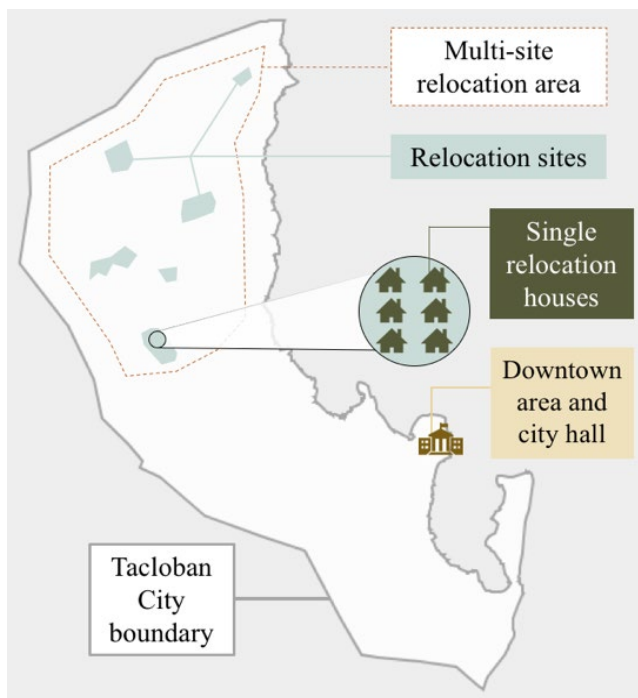
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## Introduction

After a disaster, governments and international aid organizations seemingly have wide control over recovery decisions, with an eye towards disaster risk reduction. In the many devastating disasters affecting informal settlements, where residents have limited legal and economic agency over their recovery trajectory, governments may be able to revise land use and move large portions of the affected population through mandated relocation. Post-disaster relocation is the movement of households from geographically-exposed locations to plots considered to be of less geographical risk. In developing communities at risk to coastal hazards, residents of seaside informal settlements may be relocated to inland socialized housing projects. Although affected communities should only be relocated when other options for disaster risk reduction are exhausted (Jha 2010), relocation is a default recovery choice for many countries trying to simultaneously manage urbanization, informal development, and vulnerable populations.



**Figure 1.** Multiple scales of relocation implementation within Tacloban City, Philippines

Literature shows relocation via greenfield construction is rife with dilemmas. Past relocation projects have failed to separate households from hazards as new risks are introduced (Fernando et al. 2010). In many cases, relocation projects have delivered unstable, poorly-constructed, or culturally inappropriate housing and infrastructure (Ahmed and McEvoy 2014). Relocation can surface new forms of vulnerability as prior social and economic links are strained and survivors disenfranchised (Kita 2017). These relocation outcomes are derived from the decisions that instigated them. While the spotlight within relocation literature is focused on the decision to relocate—predominately mandated by the government rather than self-driven by affected communities—a plethora of instrumental implementation decisions follow. Decisions about site planning, infrastructure service delivery, housing construction, social, health, and educational assistance, and beneficiary participation must be evaluated, negotiated, and determined. We define relocation decisions as the comprehensive set of resolutions that must be considered across the

house, site, and area levels to construct physical relocation outcomes (e.g. housing quality or on-site drainage) and establish neighborhood services for relocated households (e.g. homeowners associations or livelihood training). They are the decisions tied to critical economic, environmental, infrastructural, and social indicators for recovery (Jordan and Javernick-Will 2013). Relocation decisions are comprised of *who* makes, or is involved in making, the decision; *what* objectives are expected to actualize as a result of the decision; *where*, geographically, relocation will be sited; *when* each step occurs; the justifications to defend *why* a course of action is legitimate; and *how* coordination and collaboration will unfold (or not).

Readers imagining their own community devastated by a natural disaster are likely to envision their personal role in relocating; deciding where they would prefer to move to, designing the features of their new home, and balancing decision tradeoffs. In practice, however, communities in informal settlements typically have little say in the decision to relocate or in decisions throughout relocation implementation. Furthermore, while community participation is already known to be a critical but illusory aspect of in-situ post-disaster recovery housing (Opdyke et al. 2016), there is no evidence to suggest relocation projects better engage beneficiaries (Davidson et al. 2007). To the contrary, literature documenting the rejection and abandonment of relocation houses suggests relocation efforts tend to incorporate even less meaningful community participation (Boano 2009). Often, pre-existing marginalization and differential access to decision making is continued or exacerbated (Curato 2018). Furthermore, the sheer scale of no-build zones and concomitant housing demand following large disasters—reaching into the tens of thousands—drives a government-led push for top-down, uniform implementation (Maly and Shiozaki 2012). As such, the deciders are not the impacted. Organizations, not community members, own the vast majority of mass relocation implementation decisions. Still, who (which specific organizations and officials) makes relocation decisions, and their considerations throughout, remain elusive.

What is known, is that organizations make these decisions in an existing institutional context (Tierney 2007). Davis and Alexander (2015) assert recovery decisions are guided by pre-existing standard operating procedures, norms, and values on-top of post-disaster demands. However, the influence of institutions on relocation decisions has been under addressed in literature to date. One theoretical lens through which to examine institutional influences on relocation is organizational institutionalism, which both provides an analytical structure and, through the inclusion of norms and beliefs alongside regulations, facilitates a more comprehensive perspective. Including all three ‘pillars’ of institutions—regulative, normative, and cultural cognitive—helps to address the often neglected, but “equally important roles played by normative and cultural-cognitive systems” (Scott 2012, pg. 28). An institutionalist approach invites us to recognize institutions as not just government departments but “sets of formal and informal rules, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, and systems of meaning that define the context within which people and organizations interact” (Campbell 2004, pg. 174). Analyzing institutional effects on relocation decisions can help us better understand the forces and processes shaping these decisions.

## **Organizational institutional theory**

Institutions are the frameworks that guide action, whether people act because they feel legally obligated (regulative pillar), because it is socially and morally imposed (normative pillar), or because they cannot conceive of any other way of acting (cultural-cognitive pillar) (Scott 2008b). Institutions are social structures “composed of cultural-cognitive, normative, and regulative elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life” (Scott 2008a, pg. 48). Regulative elements encompass formal rules that are accompanied by penalties for non-compliance, like

building codes. Normative elements involve socially expected and appropriate behavior, for instance disaster risk reduction training and certifications professionals are expected to gain or the interaction norms of a post-disaster planning meeting. The cultural-cognitive pillar invokes the role of shared mental frameworks, constructed of shared vocabulary and common interpretations, in affecting how we perceive the world. Cultural-cognitive elements motivate actions not because individuals feel coerced, or socially obligated, but because they can conceive of no other way of acting (Scott 2008a). Literature has highlighted how cultural frameworks shape beneficiaries' view of recovery aid (Ong et al. 2015) and we suspect such cultural-cognitive elements also significantly shape the views of decision makers throughout implementation. Defined in this sense, a nation's institution of governance includes regulations and government agencies as well as the historical, political, cultural, and customary aspects of appropriate behavior and shared beliefs. The overarching disaster recovery institution can then be characterized as a subset of the larger governance institution, with narrowed regulatory boundaries but ingrained with norms and beliefs.

Institutions form the context for decision making and define legitimate organizations and actors engaging in that decision making. Suddaby et al. (2017) indicated organizational legitimacy has been described by scholars in several ways. Some view legitimacy as the "fit" between the organization and its institutional environment; the better the organization aligns with the overarching institution, the more legitimacy it has (Suddaby et al. 2017). Consequently, one might expect the most legitimate organizations participating relocation decision making to be those best fit with the overarching disaster recovery institution. Legitimacy can also be characterized as a process of social construction (Suddaby et al. 2017), through which the most legitimate organizations throughout relocation implementation are those who adroitly sway social interactions—public consultation forums, inter-agency meetings, etc.—in their favor.

Determining institutional influences on relocation decision making and involved organizations will elevate knowledge of legitimacy in recovery and relocation contexts beyond the regulatory pillar. In post-disaster and relocation literature, legal boundaries and bureaucratic red-tape often take center stage (Rotimi et al. 2009). As institutions impose restrictions by outlining legal as well as moral boundaries (Scott 2008a), we hypothesize the other pillars of institutions also influence relocation implementation in critical ways, but are less understood by both scholars and practitioners. As collaboration across politico-administrative boundaries is both stifled and smoothed by inter-organizational structures, norms, and cultures (Vedeld et al. 2016), neglecting normative and cultural-cognitive aspects of endemic institutions hinders effective implementation by contributing to inaccurate judgements of local processes and a tendency to impose non-local (western) mechanisms in response (Lizarralde 2014). Nearly twenty years ago, Passerini (2000) challenged future researchers to investigate how disaster practitioners can understand and leverage institutionalized forces throughout recovery decision making, but reconstruction processes, and the development of relocation projects in particular, arguably remains the least established and actionable thread of disaster literature. Therefore, we seek to answer:

How is relocation implementation decision making influenced by the regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive elements of the overarching recovery institution?

Specifically, we aim to analyze how the three pillars—regulatory, normative, and cultural-cognitive— influence the who, what, where, when, why, and how of relocation decisions. Practically, illuminating institutional influences will sharpen the self-awareness decision makers bring to contemplate and act on key relocation decisions, particularly for the seasoned decision makers active in our study context, a Philippine city post-Typhoon Haiyan. As [Walch \(2018\)](#) points out, given the wealth of experienced gained in past disasters, the recovery institution of the Philippines arguably should have performed

better—there is undeniably room for introspection and improvement. Additionally, humanitarian and academic readers, although generally critical of relocation, are also likely to consider new avenues for facilitating improved outcomes via improved processes. Finally, we believe community members and their advocacy associations are eager to leverage decision making studies into advocacy tools.

## **Context and timeframe**

Our study is focused around the relocation projects underway in Tacloban City, Leyte (the province), Eastern Visayas (the region), Philippines, galvanized by the destruction of Typhoon Haiyan in 2013. Typhoon Haiyan brought winds at 350 km/hr and pushed in a 5 meter high storm surge (Lagmay et al. 2015). Over 1.1 million homes were damaged or destroyed across the country (NEDA 2013) and over 50,000 alone in the Tacloban City (Tacloban City 2014). In response, the local government elected to transfer over 16,000 households to relocation sites to a previously undeveloped area of the city known as Tacloban North. The decision to relocate aligned with previous post-disaster responses in the Philippines, for example [Carrasco et al. \(2016\)](#) investigated mass relocation in Cagayan de Oro following Typhoon Washi in 2011.

Nevertheless, relocation is a highly complex process unfolding for years after the disaster event. The international humanitarian organizations present throughout relief have a curbed attention span for long-term reconstruction (Alexander 2006) and dwindling taste for relocation. As such, government decisions, as opposed to those of international organizations, dominate implementation (Birkmann et al. 2010). It is not our intent to define with precision every characteristic of each institutional pillar within the overarching Philippine disaster recovery institutional context but rather highlight moments where the institutional context influenced organizations' relocation decisions. In the context of this study, relevant examples of organizations include NGOs, private contractors, homeowners' associations, the local city government, and regional and national government agencies.

Our primary unit of analysis is the organizational field enacting Tacloban City's relocation. Organizational fields, defined as constellations of organizations drawn together around a shared interest, are the recommended level of analysis for organizational institutionalism studies (Sandhu 2009; Wooten and Hoffman 2016). Studying inter-organizational dynamics will illustrate shared norms and beliefs that extend beyond any single organization. Additionally, embedded units of analysis, i.e. intimate knowledge of fourteen relocation project sites within the city, allowed a window to follow policy decisions into their rendering as project-level actions. Projects were selected for a diversity of management schemes, ranging from National Housing Authority (NHA) sites to those managed by non-government organizations (NGO) without publicly-funded housing construction. Some NGO projects nearly mirrored NHA processes, others incorporated various types of beneficiary participation, and one attempted to counter NHA-style relocation altogether. Maly (2018) highlighted this comparatively people-centric approach, supported in Tacloban City by a consortium of urban poor advocacy groups, as a promising build back better strategy.

Historical hindsight and the contemporary chronology of Tacloban's relocation progress informed the selection of our timeline. Many of the relocation projects are ongoing and development of the relocation area will proceed well into the future. Given this, the endpoint, i.e. the close of the analysis, was set four years after the storm once major plans (e.g. beneficiary criteria outlined, sites purchased, construction initiated, and the scopes of work for support infrastructure detailed and out for bidding) have been negotiated among concerned organizations, with the last round of data collection occurring in December

2017. The justification of our starting point warrants a deeper discussion of the state of the overarching disaster recovery institution in the Philippines.

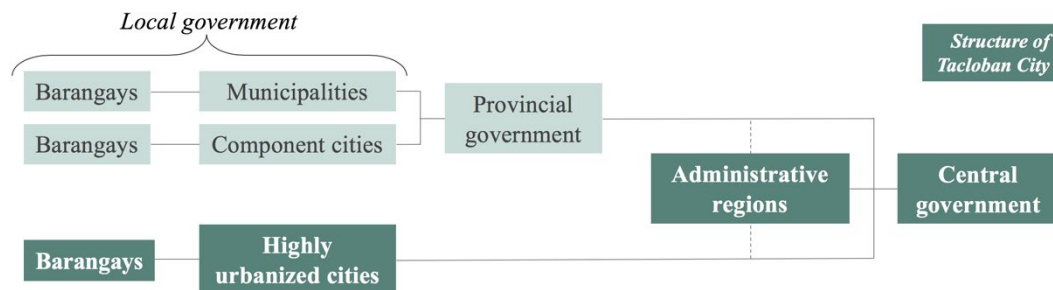
**Pre-disaster institutional environment**

Understanding the overarching disaster recovery institution requires us to examine the history influencing the evolution and institutionalization of regulations, norms, and culture. In 1986, the People’s Power Revolution resulted in the removal of dictator Ferdinand Marcos and, after a constitutional rewrite, the start of the fifth Philippine Republic. While notionally revolutionary, scholars doubt the true progressivity of the fifth republic, citing the pervasive influence of elites and little change in government structure (Mackenzie 1987; Turner 2006). A more dramatic turn, particularly in how disaster recovery would be prepared for, managed, and funded, occurred with the passage of the 1991 Local Government Code (LGC; Republic Act No. 7160). The LGC decentralized regulatory power and responsibility for basic services (Turner 2002).

A wave of relevant disaster management policies went into effect in the following decades, including the Climate Change Act of 2009 (Republic Act No. 9729) and the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010 (Republic Act No. 10121), which respectively established the Climate Change Commission and National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, organizations integral to the funding and oversight of relocation projects. Although the 2010 act was response-oriented, it did mandate establishing local disaster risk reduction and management offices and attempt a multi-sectoral approach to disaster management. Based on the historical and bureaucratic significance of the 1991 LGC we selected its passage as the beginning of our institutional analysis. Conversations with decision makers validated this selection, as many cited the 1991 LGC as the foundation of their authority and actions.

**Tacloban City and the government hierarchy**

Within the post-LGC environment, administrative power is divided into tiers; from local barangays (neighborhood-like) to municipalities and cities, provinces, regions, and finally to national authorities. Executive heads of each tier include barangay captains, mayors, provincial governors, and the president. There is no regional executive, although an endorsement by the regional development council, comprised of local government, line agency (e.g. the departments of agriculture or health), and private sector leaders, is important before elevating proposals to the national government. As depicted in Figure 2, decision-making power flows through this stream of leadership unless a city has been classified as a ‘highly-urbanized city’, in which case the city mayor can coordinate directly with the regional and central organizations.



**Figure 2.** Structure of government hierarchy in the Philippines (for non-autonomous regions)

Tacloban City became a highly-urbanized city in 2008, removing administrative control from the province. In theory, classification as a highly urbanized city ahead of Typhoon Haiyan should have

streamlined local-national post-disaster coordination. However, at the time of the storm Tacloban City was the epicenter of one of the most intractable political family feuds in the country. Many worried animosity between then-President Benigno Aquino III and then-Mayor Alfred Romualdez affected recovery, the former the son of a beloved and assassinated Marcos opponent and the latter related to Marcos by marriage. While it is not our expertise or interest to rehash dynastic tensions, we recognize disaster recovery is not apolitical and such history may have added friction among various levels of government. Like our respondents, we take these historical political and familial factors into consideration.

### **Key characteristics of the overarching disaster recovery institution**

Existing literature, particularly studies conducted by Filipino scholars, highlight regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive elements of the disaster recovery institution in the Philippines and key characteristics in advance of Typhoon Haiyan in 2013. For instance, Ballesteros (2002) noted regulatory issues in the devolution of control over socialized housing decisions to local governments. While local governments have the legal mandate, all of the financial power and many functional tasks, such as development permits, for socialized housing remain with the national government. Ballesteros (2002) also commented on the severe difficulty in finding available affordable land and the financially counterproductive nature of relocating to areas without existing infrastructure services. Consequently, interview questions investigated the role of national government regulations in enabling or harming relocation decision making.

Additionally, the years leading up to the typhoon were characterized by anti-corruption campaigns and predictions of rising populism (Teehankee 2010; Thompson 2010). Just a few months before the storm a corruption scandal involving siphoning government funds through fake NGOs fueled dissatisfaction with established politicians and their perceived corruption (Cainghog 2014). The fallout from the corruption scandal and pressure to increase scrutiny of NGOs and humanitarian aid motivated expanding our inquiry of the regulative pillar to include nuances of the country's auditing process in addition to policies directly designed to impact disaster recovery.

Pre-existing aspects of cultural-cognitive and normative pillars, forged through the merger of pre-colonial values with Spanish and American influences, are similarly meaningful. Cultural values influencing Philippine bureaucracy (and thus capable of impacting disaster management) include "amor propio (self-respect), delicadeza (propriety), hiya (shame), utang na loob (debt of gratitude), and pakikisama (friendship or familial ties)" (Reyes 2011, pg. 349). In coordinating post-disaster relocation, consideration for another's 'amor propio' and desire to avoid 'hiya' may discourage actors from openly disagreeing throughout decision making. Conversely, actors with an inflated sense of 'amor propio'—leaders of key organizations may be imbued with such pride—might struggle to take responsibility the impact of their decisions on downstream relocation steps. Community-centric values, such as bayanihan (concern and toil for others in times of hardship) have taken center stage in post-Haiyan literature. For instance, [Field \(2017\)](#) concluded values rooted in equality impacted survivor perceptions of aid distribution. Others suspect such community-centric values have been romanticized into a myth that hides the reality of recovery (Eadie and Su 2018), underlining the need to better untangle how cultural-cognitive influences materialize and are leveraged throughout post-disaster efforts.

Professionalization of the civil services through merit-based benchmarks and certifications is a germane element of the normative pillar in many Western institutions but less so in the Philippines (San Juan 2014). While professional licensures and qualifications are generally normative requirements for political posts, a strong cultural emphasis on kinship can override norms and promote client-patron relationships.

Professional and bureaucratic work is highly relational. Appropriate professional behavior includes a non-confrontational disposition and easy deference to superiors. Coupled with a hesitancy against innovation (Reyes 2011), pleasantries at the expense of constructive conflict may stall inventive approaches for post-disaster relocation and recovery.

This study expands existing literature of the overarching disaster recovery institution and comprehensively examines normative and cultural-cognitive influences alongside regulatory rules. Determining institutional influences throughout the who, what, where, when, why and how of relocation decisions will illuminate avenues within relocation implementation where there may be opportunities for improved practices.

## Methods

The study is grounded in fieldwork conducted in the Philippines for five months in 2016, July through November, and an additional 2 months in 2017, November and December. We interviewed both decision makers and relocated community members to gain a comprehensive understanding of implementation processes and triangulated this with observations of governmental meetings and documentation. We define decision makers as actors (primarily with leadership positions) within organizations with the mandate or mission to construct, manage, regulate, or facilitate relocation decisions.

### Data collection

Data on relocation decision processes and the institutional pillars were collected through conducting interviews with important actors, observing inter-organizational meetings, and analyzing key documents.

We conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews with 47 decision makers, including: 13 leaders of non-governmental or bilateral organizations, 12 city, 4 provincial, 8 regional, and 10 national officials. The target sample was based on research of key organizations and grew to include emergent actors identified as important in meetings and interviews. Table 1 depicts the range of organizations consulted. In some cases, several representatives were interviewed in a single organization, but we refrain from additional specifics, as well as full interview dates, in order to ensure the confidentiality of interviewees. Interviews questions spanned a range of normative, regulative, and cultural issues, as well as specific actions in relocation. For example: *Can you describe the working relationship between your office and city/regional/national counterparts? What policies were most influential in guiding relocation planning? What are different decisions that you need to make during relocation? I'm not from here, can you help me understand if you feel there is anything culturally-unique about how organizations work to implement relocation?* Interviews generally spanned one to two hours and were conducted in English. As the common language for government and professional work in the Philippines, all interviewees were comfortably fluent in English. All but one interviewee consented to being audio recorded, and recordings were transcribed for data analysis.

**Table 1.** Range of organizations with interviewed representatives

<b>In-Country NGOs and Community Organizations</b>	<b>Local Government</b>	<b>Provincial and Regional Government</b>	<b>National Government</b>	<b>International Organizations</b>
- Coalition of Yolanda Survivors of Tacloban City	- Barangay Captains - City Architect's Office - City Council	- Department of Agrarian Reform	- Climate Change Commission	- Catholic Relief Services - Habitat for Humanity



- Couples for Christ- Answering the Cries of the Poor - Urban Poor Associates	- City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office - City Engineer's Office - City Environment and Natural Resources Office - City Health Office - City Housing and Community Development Office - City Mayor's Office - City Planning and Development Office	- Department of Public Works and Highways - Department of the Interior and Local Governments - Department of Education - Disaster and Risk Reduction Management Council - Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board - Leyte Metropolitan Water District - National Economic and Development Authority - National Housing Authority	- Department of Budget and Management - Department of Public Works and Highways - Department of the Interior and Local Governments - Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council - Local Water Utilities Administration - Mines and Geosciences Bureau - National Housing Authority - Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor	- Japan International Cooperation Agency - Operation Blessing - Oxfam - United Nations Development Programme - United Nations Human Settlements Programme - United States Agency for International Development - World Vision
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Inter-organizational meetings emerged as microcosms for observing institutional influences, particularly for normative and cultural-cognitive elements, as well as the priorities and actions of various actors involved in planning and construction. In coordinating relocation in Tacloban City, meetings were held between the city government, regional and national government agencies, community members, and NGOs in order to make decisions, unify plans, air grievances, or facilitate monitoring and evaluation. We attended 20 total meetings across all hierarchical levels to capture meeting activities, including behaviors and norms, through field notes. Where possible, meeting minutes were also obtained.

For example, numerous interviewees indicated Regional National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), with only the purview to monitor and not implement, was perceived as a fair and neutral body. Such statements were validated by observing meeting behavior. At the July 2016 Yolanda Recovery Partners' and Cluster Heads' Meeting facilitated by NEDA, the city government contended NHA contractors were using housing technologies that were not approved by the NHA or the City Engineers Office (CEO). An NHA project manager explained that the non-conventional technologies actually were NHA approved and responded "we were thinking all along that they had this technology in their application for their building permit." We noted how the city government filed their complaint within the public context of the NEDA meeting, and the commitments of attending NHA engineers and contractors to improve quality control. We observed communication norms as officials from the city government used the NEDA forum to motion for and secure a resolution requesting a written agreement from NHA that they will provide documentation of the full suite of approved housing designs.

**Table 2.** Example meeting types attended

<i>Decision-making:</i>	Mid-term water solution decision with national actors in Manila [1; July 2016] <sup>a</sup>
<i>Local coordination:</i>	Technical working group weekly meetings of the city government [6; July-Sept 2016]
<i>Community coordinator:</i>	Weekly round-table check-ins between the City and leaders of sites [2; Nov 2017]

<i>Monitoring and evaluation:</i>	Region VIII Yolanda Cluster meeting [3; July-Aug 2016; Nov 2017]
<i>NGO-specific:</i>	Catholic Relief Services stakeholder meeting [1; Nov 2016]
<i>Writesops:</i>	Local Climate Change Action Plan [3; Sept-Nov 2016]
<i>Trainings:</i>	Wastewater capacity training for local engineers [3; July-Aug 2016]
<i>Conferences:</i>	Coalition of Yolanda Survivors Association of Tacloban anniversary event [2; Nov 2016]

<sup>a</sup>The total number of meetings attended per type and date is provided in square brackets

In addition to observing meetings we also visited each City Housing-tracked relocation site and observed construction progress and quality, on-site amenities and services, and apparent occupancy. Significant documents collected for analysis included national post-Haiyan ordinances, NHA contract requirements, major city planning documents (CPO 2016; Tacloban City 2014, 2016), and Tacloban North construction, permitting, and transfer progress reports.

### Data analysis

In order to investigate how relocation implementation decision making was influenced by the overarching recovery institution, we qualitatively analyzed interview data. First, we coded interview transcriptions according to regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive institutional pillars and then coded emergent subcategories within each institutional pillar. Next, we classified codes according to the who, what, where, when, why, and how of decision making, incorporating rival explanations and knowledge gained from observations and documents, to test our judgements. Finally, we compared classifications in order to identify patterns, i.e. the presence of and relationship between institutional pillars across key relocation decisions.

Our coding scheme was deductive in that the macrocodes came from a conceptual framework (Miles et al. 2014); institutional theory drove the selection of the macrocodes *Regulative*, *Normative*, and *Cultural-cognitive* (Scott 2008a). Statements were coded into the *Regulative* macrocode when respondents commented on specific laws, executive orders, and regulations; funding and financial sanctions; contracting arrangements; and any other statement identifying the use of coercive legal or financial structures to motivate organizational decision making.

The *Normative* macrocode included discussions of appropriate social behavior; common means of communication; and other statements discussed with a ‘that’s how it’s always been done’ tone and defended using a logic of appropriateness. Social norms and cultural-cognitive influences are notoriously difficult to separate. It is also widely recognized that the institutional pillars influence each other (Scott 2008a). One rule of thumb was to code organization-level interactions to *Normative* and limit the *Cultural-cognitive* macrocode to individual-level mental frameworks. Of course, just because mental frameworks are individually-held does not mean they are not shared, or that they do not impact organization decisions. After categorizing data into macrocodes, a review of each surfaced more specific themes and additional subcodes emerged inductively.

Each singular subcode is both positive and negative coded, i.e. favorable statements of sufficient funding as well as critical statements on the lack of adequate appropriations or its disbursement were coded to *funding and financial sanctions*. Subcodes are also coded for both (apparent) fact and opinion, that is, both the statements “BP 220 is the law that guides subdivision design” and “We have seen that BP 220 is not adequate for relocation projects” would be coded to *national law* (within the *Regulative* macrocode).

Unifying all statements about a particular topic allowed a more comprehensive understanding of the subcode’s impact on relocation decisions.

Next, in order to shift the focus to implementation, subcodes were classified according to the who, what, where, when, why, and how of relocation decisions (rather than organized according to pillar).

Throughout classification, we used rival explanations to challenge emerging findings. Miles et al. (2014) recommend the tandem use of causal and rival explanations to avoid research biases. Causal and rival explanations consist of telling a narrative in one direction or through one perspective, and then immediately inverting it to assess whether it holds true—or looks truer—the other way. For example, a mother worried about her child’s school performance may suspect “my son is failing because he cuts class” (causal explanation). However, reflecting on the inverse, “my son is cutting class because he is failing” (rival explanation) is likely to challenge the underlying assumptions of the causal explanation and surface more discerning insights. For instance:

- (Causal) The provisional water utility uses its power over water provision as a political weapon against the local government because the local government gained “Highly-Urbanized City” status.
- (Rival) The local government gained “Highly-Urbanized City” status because provisional water utility uses its power over water provision as a political weapon against the local government.
- (Causal) The national government was hesitant to fund non-housing projects because they were concerned the local government was leveraging post-disaster shelter needs to secure national funds for a new township development.
- (Rival) The local government leveraged shelter needs to secure national funds for a new township development because they feared the national government would not provide non-housing development support otherwise.

In the case of the dispute between the water utility and local government, rival explanations give credence to both ‘sides’ of the issue. Representatives from both organizations expressed suspicion that the other was making decisions maliciously in order to purposefully weaken their own objectives. If we had only heard from one ‘side’ it may have been difficult to recognize a different perspective, but assessing emerging inferences with rival explanations can protect from one-sided narratives. In this way, the technique is particularly useful when considering judgements about another’s motives. Data gathered from observations and available documentation was integrated throughout the process of building causal and rival explanations to triangulate emerging conclusions with additional sources. Table 3 presents a summary of all emergent subcodes, each definition and example quote excerpts are provided in Supplementary Table A.1.

**Table 3.** Emergent subcodes within the three institutional pillars

Regulative	Normative	Cultural-cognitive
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	- Communication norms	
	- Continuity	- Agency identity
- Auditing	- Cross-agency relationships	- Beneficiary criteria and attitude
- Contracting	NGO-Local	- City self-conception
- Department standard	Local-Local	- Deference to superiors
- Funding and financial sanctions	Local-Regional	- Holistic planning
- Government hierarchy	Local-National	- Ningas kugon (burning quick, but burning out fast)
- Land use policies	Regional-Regional	- Political dynamics
- National law	Regional-National	- Pressure
- Permit processing	National-National	- Risk characterization
	- Human resources	
	- Socialized housing archetype	

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## Results

Although each institutional pillar impacts all aspects of decision making, the following focuses on the most prominent constraints described by interviewees or observed at meetings. Most notably, the regulative and cultural-cognitive were often in tension, exerting opposing influences in the *who*, *what*, *where*, and *when* of relocation decisions. The *why* behind relocation decisions, driven by cultural-cognitive justifications, was more commonly shared by all organizations. Normative influences largely shaped *how* relocation decisions played out among organizations.

### Who

Both the regulative and cultural-cognitive pillars set course to who (which organizations) were active in the organizational field and relocation decision making, the former through official mandates and the latter through an amplified sense of agency identity. The earliest organizations participating in relocation decision making acted out of adherence to national law and their official mandate, thus the organizational field was initially defined by the regulatory pillar. For example, the National Housing Authority's mandate directs a clear role in relocation, "Under PD 757 dated 31 July 1975. NHA was tasked to develop and implement a comprehensive and integrated housing program which shall embrace, among others, housing development and resettlement..."

However, not all organizational mandates instruct a role in relocation implementation. Perhaps this phenomenon is most poignantly captured by the response we received frequently when requesting interviews: "Oh, you're studying relocation? Well then you need to speak with the NHA, *not me*." Resonating with post-Haiyan studies conducted by [Tan-Mullins et al. \(2017\)](#), we observed confusion in coordination among relevant organizations. The resulting gaps between mandates meant implementation commenced without all the necessary organizations brought to the table. Several non-housing infrastructure organizations, particularly the local water municipality and national water administrator, stated the first meetings they were invited to occurred in March of 2015, a year and a half after Typhoon Yolanda. Considering that water shortfalls stalled transfers into completed houses for several months,

noting who feels responsible, according to the official regulatory outlines of their organization, to take initiative in reconstruction, and who does not, is of critical concern.

With time, local actors began to witness where gaps in who was at the table was translating into gaps in outcomes and services at relocation sites. One local official explained, “We realized that we need the regional players to come in. It’s because we’re not going to build the roads, [the Department of Public Works and Highways] is going to do it. We’re not going to do the water, [Leyte Metropolitan Water District] is going to... And we realized, ‘gosh, we should have actually done this earlier’” (City official; 2016). Figuring out who needs to be at the table can be one of the most challenging aspects of any project, but in a post-disaster setting the added time to identify overlooked organizations, those without mandates initially compelling their active participation, can mean missing out on vital recovery funds and attention. The holes in the relocation field, gaps between regulatory mandates, had to be filled.

Several organizations particularly at the local level, chose to evoke and amplify cultural-cognitive notions of their identity and embody a larger role than their mandate specified. As implementation gaps emerged and these organizations worked to fill them or pressure those who they believed should, they swayed the ongoing decision-making process and enhanced their own legitimacy within the relocation organizational field. One such organization was the Tacloban City Housing and Community Development Office (CHCDO), which grew to take leadership roles in advocating for wastewater treatment, schools, and improved construction quality at relocation sites (tasks normally led by city or regional departments of health, education, and public works/engineering). As CHCDO and others joined key decisions not because of mandate but through augmenting their own organizational identity, the relocation field grew to include not only housing-focused agencies, but also civil infrastructure and utility providers, health and education agencies, and advocacy organizations for the urban poor. The field included all levels of government organizations and local and international non-governmental organizations.

Importantly, we do not mean to imply that a handful of organizations enhancing their cultural-cognitive identity beyond the reaches of their regulatory mandate was a panacea for an otherwise empty field. First, the relocation field was far from empty—there are numerous government and non-government organizations, at all levels, that recognize and rise to their roles in recovery and socialized housing. In the case of Tacloban City, however, earlier participation from several key organizations may have meant significantly better on-site quality of life for relocated households. Second, the expanse of identity over mandate is not without contention. Some respondents felt they were stretching their identity and exceeding their authority. Those that perceived the amplified identity negatively made a point to explain how other actors were distending their expectations. They clarified their role versus the role of others in the field by stressing their legally assigned mandates—and reminding us that the balance between regulative and cultural-cognitive pillars defining who is active in relocation decision making is far from frozen.

## **What**

*What* relocation is was split between two viewpoints that, like *who* participates, were each dominantly influenced by the regulative and cultural-cognitive pillars: (1) relocation is housing and (2) relocation is a city extension. Organizations that fit well within the overarching disaster recovery institution—recalling Suddaby et al.'s (2017) stance that one way to interpret legitimacy is extent of alignment with dominant institutions—aligned their viewpoint with regulations and view the immediate relocation scope as primarily as a by-the-books socialized housing project. In contrast, organizations on the periphery, such as local city government offices or non-governmental organizations, viewed relocation as cultivating a comprehensive settlement, complete with not just housing but social, academic, and economic resources

and the civil infrastructure to support them. For instance, consider statements from national regional, and city officials:

“The resettlement program is an incremental and ongoing program, so eventually you add what needs to be added to make the resettlement site sustainable so eventually there will be livelihood, other facilities, given time...Hopefully by 10 years it will be a sustainable community” (National official; 2016).”

“The focus should be on livelihood, then shelter” (Regional official; 2016)”.

“Livelihood is the main challenge. I was joking for a long time that if you put Robinson’s in the north, people would have work. It’s really livelihood, how towns are built” (City official; 2017).”

As we discuss below when addressing the underlying *why*, organizations and actors were driven by a universal belief that survivors deserved relocation, but there were organizational differences in how *why* was translated into *what*. Such differences can have tangible impact on outcomes, as conceiving relocation as only housing undermines the ability to find funds for non-housing infrastructure and services in a timely manner, because housing is seen as the most admissible budget item.

In deciding more specifically what to do, i.e. the particulars of what housing or site design, materials, or amenities to select and divert funds to, the regulatory pillar prevailed, in particular the threat of sanctions drove organizations to adhere closely to existing policies and avoid novel practices. Government organizations, from the city-level through national departments, are compelled by strict post-audit consequences to allocate public resources in legally prescribed ways. The Commission on Audit (COA) enforces accountability and aims to prevent corruption, and their conclusions can be damaging for organizations suspected of corruption. The worry is palpable; we observed city officials spring into crisis management mode after the release of the 2015 audit of the Government of Tacloban City (COA 2016) and following noxious article by a popular news agency (Rappler 2016). Although the official report did warn of financial sanctions and required reimbursements, overall the findings and language of the report were not outlandish—but the potential consequences tied to COA-reported squandering warranted a quick response by city officials.

Numerous agencies lamented the constraining influences COA had on their choices and actions; they feared that if they acted outside of the narrow avenues directed in existing regulations, they faced both legal consequences or accusations of corruption. There are limited flexible funds within budgets and agencies found it difficult to work in innovative ways because of auditing. When asked if there was any ability to invest the funds in an innovative way, a respondent answered: “We have requested something like that, but always the guidelines prevail. We cannot be away from the guidelines or there will be a problem with the Commission on Audit” (National official; 2016). No funds existed for project needs that lie at the gap between two COA-checked budgets, and few want to commit their own funds to intersection between organizations.

## **Where**

There were two layers to determining where relocation communities were to be built. First, the selection of a general area of the city, a region where exact lots should be pursued. Second, the acquisition of those exact lots. In selecting the general area, cultural-cognitive perspectives of both risk and city growth motivated the city government’s preference for Tacloban North. Given the deadly nature of the storm surge, conceptions of risk were inseparably based on coastal proximity. The selection of the northern

reaches of the city has been fueled by the near singular characterization of risk as storm surge. Tacloban North has a higher elevation, albeit only slightly in some areas, but other notable risks (both natural (flooding) and socioeconomic). Yet, its characterization as safer and better is grounded as much in decision-maker perceptions as it is in science. Yee (2018) described the process of rendering meaning to territory as the “territorialization-of-risk” (pg. 106), through which the characterization of land as risky or risk-free can be used to achieve other economic or political objectives. This goes hand-in-hand with the observed perspective of city growth. Cultural-cognitive pride in Tacloban City’s regional economic power and a belief that northern development is inevitable and impending influenced local leadership’s opinion of where relocation should be concentrated.

Potential alternative beliefs about the city’s design and future—a disdain for urban sprawl and disconnect or valuing the northern reach of the city as an agriculture and environmental preservation area—could have inspired different general location preferences. Interviewees also suggested the selection of Tacloban North was politically palatable. For instance, in several interviews we mused that the cost of support infrastructure (water, roads, schools, etc.) might be dwarfing the cost of land acquisition and a closer area with less infrastructure needs may have been less expensive overall. At the proposition, many respondents reminded us “financially it would be cheaper, but politically it could be more expensive because it has more contending interests” (National official; 2016).

The selection of the exact lots was primarily influenced by the contractual and financial aspects of the regulatory pillar. Resonating with Fayazi et al.’s (2017) discussion of unintended consequences emerging from reconstruction contractual arrangements, contractors rose to have significant influence in relocation site selection. Compelled to purchase lots as a part of their bid package under the terms of reference for the NHA’s Yolanda Permanent Housing Program (NHA-YPHP), contractors for NHA sites were influential in deciding where relocation sites would be located. One city official explained his understand as such:

“Normally what happens in the regional context plan of the NHA, it’s the NHA who acquires the land and gives it out to qualified bidders to develop it. But in this case, because of the urgent need, they just gave the freehand to contractors. So, what happened then was because the contractors were probably trying to reduce the cost of acquisition—because it’s a package deal—they looked for sites that were not really ideal simply because it’s cheaper” (2016).

Contractors were financially incentivized to select the cheapest lots, which were generally far from the city center, void of pre-existing amenities, and sometimes in floodzones. This profit-centric, contractor-led process of specific site selection stands in contrast to recommendations of exhaustive decision-making models for locating post-disaster shelter (Nappi and Souza 2015). Non-governmental organizations, though not under the NHA’s contracting system, were similarly hard-pressed to find financing for more desirable lots. Notably, two of the furthest sites are NGO-developed communities. Two of the closest sites are also NGO-supported communities and by far the most participatory and community-driven. However, with land acquisition being a significant hurdle, they are also the most prolonged.

Unlike *who* and *what*, the regulatory and cultural-cognitive influence on *where* relocation projects proceeded worked in unison, not opposition. Mental frameworks conceptualizing storm surge as the ultimate risk and the northern growth as the city’s natural trajectory opened up Tacloban North land as generally acceptable. Simultaneously, the undeveloped, relatively distant Tacloban North plots were the cheapest and easiest to procure for contractors, who sought the most streamlined way to win NHA bids.

While a few NGO actors dissented, particularly those built around a mission to advocate for the poor, we found general consensus for site selection among government organizations.

### **When**

The accord between regulative and cultural-cognitive pillars found in *where* did not carry over to *when*, and, like *who* and *what*, opposite forces dug in. However, whereas the tension between each pillar in *who* and *what* parallels tension between national (central to the institution) and local (peripheral) organizations, the influence of each pillar on *when* was more uniform across organizations. Respondents from both central and peripheral organizations felt it was dutiful to provide relocation housing as quickly as possible. The belief that relocation should occur immediately was challenged by existing regulatory land and construction policies. In the Philippines, the process for land acquisition or expropriation is careful and multi-layered. Concern about fraudulent claims to ownership motivated a cumbersome title check. Additionally, protection of small agricultural land necessitated a land use review. Numerous respondents cited the pace of obtaining clean titles and necessary permits as a significant bottleneck in relocation. In consequence, several relocation projects were constructed without permits. A document titled “Status of application for development permits as of Nov. 2016” provided by the city detailed ongoing subdivision projects. While 80 percent of the NHA sites either had been issued a development permit or had their permit being considered in city council, five out of six NGO sites listed had not started the development permit process at all despite ongoing construction or, in some cases, site occupancy.

### **Why**

The strong sense of urgency about *when* was closely tied to the underlying cultural-cognitive *why*. *Why* was motivated by a characterization of risk primarily as storm surge, resulting in the need to retreat. This is consistent with theory, which states that risk perception is most prominently shaped by personal experience (Wachinger et al. 2013); the Typhoon Yolanda storm surge is the most recent and vivid hazard experienced and thus is perceived as a magnified threat. *Why* is also dependent on organizations’ shared understanding of relocation as the only appropriate action and just action for survivors of the storm. Housing aid was viewed as something the survivors unquestionably deserved and moving them inland was indisputably perceived as necessary by local, regional, and national organizations (although humanitarian organizations were not as unilaterally aligned).

Although *why* is not characterized by inter-institutional pillar tension, it is impacted by intra-pillar discord in the form of conflicting cultural-cognitive beliefs. Alongside what we saw as shared perceptions of risk and compassionate relocation, we also documented mutual mistrust across national and local divides. Some national actors thought the city was using recovery planning in a dishonest manner to acquire national resources for projects eyed long before the storm. One national representative discussed her suspicions: “But as I have said my personal perception was that it was intentional. The local government wanted to probably push the development going to this site in the north” (2016). Later, as the city and NHA fell out of sync tracking beneficiary transfers in the first half of 2017, “the national government resolved the issue on their own, they called the barangays to a meeting and identified people as possible beneficiaries and after verification awarded houses. Some of the original beneficiaries didn’t get houses” (City official; 2017). Regional and city officials expressed frustration and confusion at the abnormal execution (expanded on in *how*). Some of the mistrust was certainly related to historical political tensions, especially from 2013-2016 before the election and national administration change. Importantly, not all accusations were so deep and intractable, indicating there may be promising opportunities to affect opinions enough for functional improvements to relocation implementation.



## How

Diverging from the regulative and cultural-cognitive dominance of other decision aspects, the normative pillar, particularly the norms of communication and inter-agency collaboration, guided *how* issues were deliberated, information shared, and implementation progressed. Regarding deliberation, we found that meetings were rarely arenas for open dispute, which can be regarded as a socially improper disruption. At decisions meetings, when the goal is to leave with an outcome selected among alternatives, it may appear to non-institutionalized actors as though deliberation is limited. In truth, deliberation occurs, but the first round is conducted outside of the meeting room as actors reach out to contacts for intel on the likely objectives of other agencies and then prepare their statements in subtle rebuttal to the expected position of others. An occasional exception to normatively constrained meetings was the small technical working groups initiated and run by the local city government in partnership with UN Habitat. The technical working groups were designed to handle a specific issue, for instance wastewater treatment or livelihoods, and they were comprised of the lower-level engineers, architects, and social workers that were charged with designing facilities or programs. In working group meetings, members interacted more casually and there was additional space for disagreement.

Additionally, the normative physical mechanism of coordination operated through communication via letters, phone calls, and texts. Where organizations had the benefit of pre-existing and agreeable relationships, communication could be conducted with calls and text. Most commonly however, and for all official business, organizations are expected to compose a letter, secure the signature of their executive leader, and hand deliver it to their-counter organization. While detailing how one organization reaches out to another may seem trivial, it was far from trivial to respondents. One city official commented, “There are a lot of challenges. Number one is really the coordination mechanism, it’s just not in place. The Philippine Government isn’t wired to communicate effectively from one branch of the Government to another. I mean we can mail, but in terms of coordination there’s no system in place” (City official; 2017). Structurally, coordination in the Philippine disaster recovery institution can be inexplicably cumbersome and occasionally aided or worsened by cultural-cognitive ties (or lack thereof) between organizations.

Nearly three years after the storm, the *how* of relocation implementation received what appeared to be a cultural-cognitive boost over the most trying normative hurdles. In June of 2016, the nation inaugurated a new President and Tacloban City welcomed a new Mayor. Newly-elected President Duterte campaigned on promises of reform and he began by purging bureaucratic officials. Mayor Cristina Romualdez also wanted to revamp existing programs and align them under her vision. Post-inauguration, ongoing struggles in how relocation was being executed regained attention in the government and media. The leadership of Tacloban City found an amicable audience in President Duterte, who seemed to agree that Haiyan relocation was special. “Ultimately, as far as the new [national] government is concerned, Yolanda housing is not exactly a typical resettlement project...because this is a very emotional and politically charged housing resettlement project” (National official; 2016). Feeling overlooked by national organizations pre-2016, the new president’s support of their narrative and vision allowed local organizations to package and route concerns in new ways, such as face-to-face meetings between the mayor and president.

Openings to alter *how* echoed across implementation. Opportunities materialized in the form of cultural-cognitive buttresses, i.e. belief-based justifications organizations could stand on for an atypical, but increasingly legitimate, foothold in the organizational field. For instance, to acquire national funds for non-housing infrastructure in Tacloban North, local organizations evoked their cultural-cognitive

understandings of *why* relocation was necessary and *what* relocation is in meetings, letters, and on Facebook. They maintained committing to holistic relocation development was incumbent on any equally compassionate organizations. “Once we decided that it was the North, it has to be a city extension, no more no less. And that’s our bottom line, otherwise it’s not stable... There’s a lot of relocation in the Philippines that are not sustainable and we don’t want that. After we did the fine tuning in the Tacloban North technical working group we really had to stop everything and really ask the national government ‘Are we serious?’ Otherwise, let’s not move” (City official; 2016). Without the growing ability to leverage beliefs about appropriate recovery, the city government may have simply accepted financial support for socialized houses without also demanding full infrastructure and social packages.

## **Limitations**

The theoretical approach lacked the foundation of a pre-existing articulation of regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive pillars, as no prior study has viewed the Philippines disaster recovery institution through the lens of organizational institutionalism. Related scholarship in political science, public administration, and sociology was used to compensate.

Methodologically, many of the findings rely on semi-structured interviews, yet we recognize interviews are imperfect. Interviewees may struggle to recall past events, disregard impartiality, and be influenced by social desirability bias to feed us more positive responses. We triangulated interviews with observations and documentations, and actively sought to engage interviewees with differing or even contradictory perspectives. Additionally, by selecting the end date of our analysis to be December 2017, four years after Typhoon Haiyan, omits later developments in the relationship between the institutional environment and relocation implementation.

Finally, our access, theoretical perspective and analysis was bounded by our own positionality. As non-Filipino Americans, neither author had a pre-existing familiarity with Filipino culture or the overarching disaster recovery institution prior to Typhoon Haiyan. We took care to openly address our foreignness and unfamiliarity in interviews and meetings by initiating conversations about culture and inviting interviewees to correct emerging conclusions.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

We uncovered regulatory, normative, and cultural-cognitive institutional influences throughout the *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* of relocation implementation decision-making. Addressing a normative and cultural-cognitive gap in prior studies of relocation, results show institutional norms and cultural beliefs considerably narrowed the range of options post-disaster decision makers perceived as viable, appropriate, or compassionate. Some institutional influences seemingly counter guidance found in literature. For instance, scholars suggest relocation lacks compassion, but in the Philippine disaster recovery institution we observed a cultural-cognitive perspective of relocation as an empathetic strategy. Other influences align: a city conceiving of itself as ambitious and resilient is poised to embody post-disaster calls to ‘build back better’.

Results highlight a persistent tension among institutional pillars, most prevalently between regulative and cultural-cognitive influences. For instance, regulative guidelines directed initial organizational participation (*who*), bounded the scope of relocation to housing-focused (*what*), and added friction to the pace of implementation through hard-to-acquire titles and permits (*when*). In contrast, cultural-cognitive impacts amplified organizational identities and contributed to the expansion of the relocation field (*who*),

promoted a holistic city extension relocation scope (*what*), and encourage fast development (*when*, motivated by *why*). *Where* was the only aspect of decision making experiencing synergetic influences from regulative and cultural-cognitive pillars, with both contributing to the selection of Tacloban North land for relocation sites. Most organizations shared cultural-cognitive beliefs about *why* relocation was a legitimate and compassionate course of action. Normative influences primarily compelled the *how* of collaboration and communication throughout decision making and implementation, but were increasingly pressured to change by local organizations leveraging cultural-cognitive appeals for improved implementation.

The deep interplay among institutional pillars has been largely overlooked in prior relocation scholarship and practice. Idealized relocation goals—driven by cultural-cognitive beliefs, such as the way leaders perceived the city’s prominence—were reined in by regulatory financial or land use constraints. The dictated hierarchy of who was to participate in decision making was expanded as previously less-legitimate organizations leveraged beliefs that recovery should be holistic and community-centric to increase their presence and legitimacy in the organizational field. With new organizations gaining a seat at the table and new relationships established, future complex decisions may benefit from diverse contributors. However, while local organizations are championing better relocation for their citizens four years after the storm, in future years they may be blamed themselves for failing to deliver on ambitious promises.

In the five years following Typhoon Haiyan, local organizations have grown active in more (and more active in) decisions by leveraging cultural-cognitive beliefs to advocate for their own goals. Furthermore, they can reasonably expect their once-rookie behavior to now be perceived as legitimate and responded to accordingly from peripheral (national) organizations. As numerous local organizations, ranging from local NGOs to the offices of the city government and even some regional organizations, use updated mental frames to make their case, they attempt to modify the overarching disaster recovery institution itself and change what it means to be the most legitimate organizations involved in relocation implementation.

The post-disaster leveraging of beliefs and values to capitalize on sensitive cognitive frames resonates with characterizations of disaster as a ‘window of opportunity’ for organizational and institutional improvements (Birkmann et al. 2010). Results suggest the institution itself may have been affected and ultimately changed throughout implementation—highlighting a need for further inquiry into the overarching disaster recovery institution follow complex mass relocation projects. If the scale of Haiyan-driven relocation is changing the institution, then the next disaster will unfold on an altered institutional landscape. Investigating institutional change in the context of post-disaster relocation is an exciting avenue for future research to advance knowledge of relocation implementation and best practices. International humanitarian organizations and government agencies in the Philippines mindful of shifts will be best positioned to respond quicker and more collaboratively to facilitate improved relocation outcomes.

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