Addendum: Area Profiles

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1 INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The study detailed previously was conducted primarily in three sites along the coast of Aurora Province, Philippines: Dikapinisan, Dibut, and Diotorin. In order to more justly represent these places in our writing, we held one group discussion in each site to learn about the place. Groups quickly drafted a statement to introduce their town to a foreigner, and after they presented, we asked questions about the place to cover topics they did not highlight at first. Then, from translated transcriptions of these discussions, we heavily edited and reorganized their words into a multivocal “profile” of each area (unlike usual quotes, we have taken liberty to reorder phrases and sentences, and we have omitted the standard ellipses) which tries to represent the site from the perspective of the people who live there. What follows are the resulting profiles, interspersed with some of our interpretation.

2 DIKAPINISAN

We live simply, and we are peaceful here. People from Barangay Dikapinisan are welcoming even to people not from our barangay and people we do not know. We respect each and everyone of us. Here we experience that no matter their title or standing in life, even if you’re someone very important, the people don’t care. Everyone is very much welcome. There is no discrimination. The very first people [in Dikapinisan] were the Dumagats and the Agtas. [Now], most of us are not minorities.

We are rich in fresh vegetables and fishes from both fresh water and sea. We have fresh air here. We have produce, like bananas, coconut, taro, and vegetables, that we sell outside. Our food is also simple. Most of us here have crops growing around our homes. Those are the things in Dikapinisan that we can be proud of.

Back then [when we were children], we really live only on sweet potato, banana. We often ate only those. Life was hard back then. In those times, we were able to survive just from what the fields could offer, and from the river.

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Mothers stay at home while most of the fathers are in the fields. Livelihood here in our community also includes our husbands going to the sea [to fish] when the sea is good like this. Most of us here also catch fish in the river. Most of us here have our own land. It is up to you how to make it productive. If you invest in farms, specifically in coconuts, that is for life.

Although farming and fishing are the mainstays of life in Dikapinisan, some people find outside employment. Particularly when typhoons make living in Dikapinisan difficult, people will get jobs in nearby towns, for example in construction. Many people from Dikapinisan have moved to other countries for work as *balikbayans*, part of the global export of Filipino labor.

When they brought the cell site here, it was a huge thing for us. It's really a very big help because instead of going outside to send money to our children [who study outside of Dikapinisan], we can simply send it to shore and our children can wait for it there. If we need something from outside, instead of going outside to call, we can call from here; before, we sent letters. Most of us who are present here have husbands who work outside, working as construction workers. Now, from here we can just call them. Just from that we have saved a lot already.

The nearest signal to Dikapinisan, besides the VBTS site, is in Baler and another similarly distant town. Residents of Dikapinisan are eager to get internet access in their village to contact relatives and use Facebook.

There was logging before. Based on what we remember about logging, it was depressing. There were a lot [of companies] before. [Logging started] around the '70s. In 2000, there was almost none. Around 2010, all of it stopped. We are now able to keep our trees safe.

If we are badly hit by a typhoon, all of us here really have no source of income. [The main effect of logging was] flood. We were almost wiped out. It's because there are no more roots that control the soil.

When they [companies] saw that there were branches all over the main waterway of the river, they should have cleared it. [When a typhoon came], instead of the water passing, these [debris] blocked the way. The water, then, found other exits. They didn't have any concern with cleaning up or pity for the citizens in case of a calamity. It's as if they didn't care about it because they don't live here.

A barangay can become very developed but if we, the residents, would be wiped out that development would be useless.

Our respondents recall logging starting in the early 70's, during the US-backed dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos. Use a citation to connect logging and neocolonialism. This extractive industry created what is now perhaps the largest threat to Dikapinisan: severe flooding caused by typhoons, unstable soil, and altered drainage systems.

3 DIBUT

In Dibut, our residents here have Dumagat roots [tubong Dumagat]; that is the tribe. Our cultural norm was more tribe-like in the beginning, always migrating. We have two leaderships, the tribe and the barangay, but they still have proper communication and solidarity with each other.

Dibut was offered by [President Manuel] Quezon as the land of our ancestors. The only ones with the right to till the land [in the ancestral domain] are those with dugong Dibut [i.e., Dibut ancestry]. Those who are Tagalog are not allowed. We should not give out our ancestral land because it should be for our children. Not just for today, but also for the generations to come.

Around 1972, Dibut was recognized by the government as a barangay, and in 2005 the Dumagat indigenous people got an official title to much of the land in Dibut. The vast majority of people living in Dibut are Dumagat.

We live peaceful lives because we live prosperous lives here. Our people live harmoniously. We are also religious people. We actually have five churches here, and every Sunday, we go to our churches.

Our primary occupations are fishing, farming, and anything else that is profitable. From September until March, we are usually in the farms, planting coconuts, bananas, and sweet potatoes. We sell [banana and coconut] outside, but we cannot complain to [the produce traders] because the price and profit is set beforehand. This had been the cause of our problems and is why the farmers are on the losing side. Now, our product prices are quite low, but we are still grateful that we have something to cook.

The reason why we do not get jobs is because of the lack of education. A percentage of [the children] need to graduate to be able to work with machines. But we cannot finish school because of the lack of income.

It is uncommon for people to leave Dibut for work, but there are a few who do, and some who work overseas. The school in Dibut goes up to grade 6, and starting in grade 7 students leave the village to go to boarding school.

When there was no VBTS yet, we would go to several places just so we can do important calls. But today, at least, we can make immediate contacts if needed. That is why technology is beneficial. [Before], there were no signal here. You had to climb the mountain; as soon as you get higher, there would be signal from Smart.

In the nearby mountains, people could get internet access well before the VBTS project and had cell phones to do so. People would climb the mountain to contact family in other towns or overseas.

We have a clean environment, which is one of our important characteristics. We have a rich forest, because most of our areas here are still virgin forests with large trunks. Barangay Dibut is proud to firmly stand for the trees, despite whatever calamity we face, because these are God's treasures.

The type of logging that uses vehicles started around 1986 to 1987. It was totally stopped in 1995, with an ordinance that prohibits logging at the mountain front. There are areas where if there are no more forest trees, erosion and flash floods become more hazardous. But we tend to our land here.

We are also proud to have bountiful oceans, just like we are proud to have built our fish sanctuary. We tend to it in order to protect the corals inhabited by fishes, because once these corals are destroyed, the fishes will leave.

4 DIOTORIN

Our lives are simple here. Diotorin is quiet and fun. The whole community possess a strong and healthy communication with each other. That's why everybody has a healthy relationship with one another. There's still what we call bayanihan [roughly, communal work]. This old value has not been forgotten.

This place is very small, yet we wanted you to know that we have different sorts of people here. There are Tagalog people, Bisaya, Bicol, and we also have our minorities, Dumagat and Lumad. The first people here were the Agta. It's very diverse.

Our foods are fresh, and bountiful as well. During Amihanin [the rainy season], our livelihood becomes more difficult. The farmers will come back to the mountains [instead of the sea] to start and plant crops again. A problem here are the big buyers outside. We cannot argue about how [exports] are priced; their prices are standard. That's why normally, many people have no money. Because of that, it's hard for us to buy or get food, and we end up eating bananas. The city is very far. Sometimes, we're not eating rice. The problem here is money. How will our children study if we have no money?

In an event when the boat cannot get to Baler due to the strong sea current, our children suffer, walking through this mountain. That's the sacrifice of our students. If we only have a proper road, perhaps, it would be a great relief for each of our citizens here. Everyone wants a road. From there, we can have improvement in all of our products.

Cellphones are big help in this place. Somehow, we can contact with each other despite the distance, the circumstance. Through calls we can easily have a conversation.

It is important to people in Diotorin to help each other in the tradition of *bayanihan*, which can include helping people park boats, carry houses, recover after disasters, or various other tasks.

Almost everything here was established by the locals, who mostly dedicated their lives for this place. A number of people practice slash and burn [kaingin]; however, many of us have done it in the lands we do not [formally] own. These lands are controlled by the big landowners. How did it happen that they got a land title? Perhaps it was done under table. Usually [the municipal government] asks people to certify that they are the owners of the land, but they did not ask us to do it. How about us, poor people, who struggle for our future? For our family? One day, the lands we till will be grabbed by whoever the owner is. That's our other problem here: if the time comes, they might treat us as mere trash, displaced in our own island. That's why it's our other request. We're grateful for your system as it made us happy and hopeful that you [the researchers] might help us in this matter.

The biggest threat to the people of Diotorin is that their land will be taken by big landowners who have secured legal rights to their land without ever having lived there. Some people working their land for up to 20 years have found that the local government gave out the title to someone else.