

# THE IMPLICATIONS OF DECENTRALIZATION FOR INTEGRATED COASTAL MANAGEMENT SUSTAINABILITY IN THE PHILIPPINES

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## ABSTRACT

*In 1991, the Philippines passed the Local Government Code (LGC) which transferred many coastal management responsibilities from the Central Government to Local Government Units (LGUs). Based on a decentralization framework proposed by Cohen (1999), this paper compares two case study sites to determine the effects of two forms of decentralization on coastal management outcomes and resulting sustainability implications. Mabini-Tingloy, a popular tourist destination, is used to represent a case of "institutional pluralism" while Bais Bay is used to illustrate a case of a "distributed institutional monopoly." While decentralized approaches are often critiqued for limited resources, failure to encourage commitment of local officials, lack of coordination between groups, and low local-level technical and managerial capacity, this paper argues that a situation of institutional pluralism has the potential to better allow non-central and private sector institutions and firms to carry out task-related roles more accountably, effectively, and efficiently than governmental institutions holding monopolies over public sector tasks. In the Philippines, these institutions must have a good relationship with the LGU since LGUs have a great deal of political power in the current framework. Tasks will be carried out more accountably, effectively, and efficiently in situations with an accountable private sector, political space necessary to accomplish public sector tasks, and an expressed agenda to accomplish these tasks.*

## Introduction

In 1991 the Local Government Code (LGC) transferred a great deal of coastal management authority to the Philippines' Local Government Units (LGUs). This transfer of power from central government agencies to local agencies, also known as 'decentralization,' is a dynamic process that can take many different forms (Lowry 2001). There are three conventional

decentralization strategies: deconcentration, delegation, and devolution. Deconcentration takes place when some personnel and resources are transferred from central government ministries to sub-national units of the same ministry; delegation involves a transfer of responsibility to sub-national agencies or authorities accountable to the central government; and devolution is the transfer of resources and responsibilities to local government units. The Philippines has adopted a devolution process involving the retention of some powers by the central government. The LGC devolved many responsibilities and resources to local governments at the provincial, city, municipal, and barangay levels including increased taxation powers, a share in national revenues through internal revenue allotments (IRAs), and the authority to enact and enforce policies concerning issues of coastal management. This devolution has also allowed the private sector to play a larger role in the coastal management process at the local level through non-government organizations (NGOs) and businesses (such as tourism).

Decentralization strategies have been widely noted for their ability to both increase the political participation of citizens in local development planning and improve administrative efficiency and capacity. The underlying developmentalist logic of decentralization is that local institutions can better discern and are more likely to respond to local needs and aspirations. This is believed to stem from local authorities—due to their proximity—having better access to information and being more easily held accountable to local populations (Prud'homme 2001; Shah 1998; Ribot 1996). However, there is a great deal of literature that calls into question this benevolent relationship between local authorities and citizens in the Philippines (McCoy 1994; Sidel 1999). For example, in many parts of the Philippines local bosses have often been noted for their violence against their populations.

The widely held belief that decentralization promotes more effective and more democratic coastal management programs must be analyzed more thoroughly. This paper will compare two cases

of decentralized coastal management programs. In one case, private interests play a considerable role in implementing coastal management programs. In the other, the LGU is mainly responsible for coastal management activities.

### **Frameworks for Analysis**

Any form of decentralization has a wide-reaching effect on the actors involved in implementing and receiving public sector tasks, essentially changing the institutional playing field upon which these actors operate. Decentralizing administrative responsibilities changes the actors responsible for implementing public sector tasks, the way these actors work with each other, and the resources available for them to implement these tasks. In other words, the rules under which these actors operate are fundamentally changed. Institutions in this study are described as sets of formal and informal rules and norms that shape interactions of humans with others and nature (Bates 1989; North 1990). They constrain some activities and facilitate others and without them, social interactions would be impossible (Poteete and Ostrom 2002). Following work in new institutional economics, new economic history, and public choice theory, institutions can be distinguished from organizations. If institutions are thought of as “the rules of the game in society,” then organizations may be thought of as the players, or “groups of individuals bound together by some common purpose to achieve objectives” (North 1990, p.5).

Traditionally, decentralization strategies have been analyzed in structural terms instead of examining the interaction of structural frameworks and roles. To correct this tendency, Cohen (1999) has proposed the use of an “administrative design framework” for analysis. Instead of focusing on types and forms of decentralization, this framework focuses on administration. This framework can be used to analyze administrative design in terms of the concentration of institutional roles that carry out public sector tasks.

The following analysis will utilize this framework through looking at the public sector task of enforcement delivery. Enforcement is a key issue in the Philippines as there are many environmental laws, but these laws are often not enforced (Eisma 2003, DENR 2001). The role of enforcement has been largely devolved to LGUs. Financial capacity, commitment, coordination abilities, and accountability are compared in these two situations by examining both the structural and role-related aspects of decentralized enforcement. In order to examine the implications they may have for sustainability of coastal management processes, I will present a comparison of each of these strategies.

### **Two Institutional Models for Decentralized Integrated Coastal Management (ICM)**

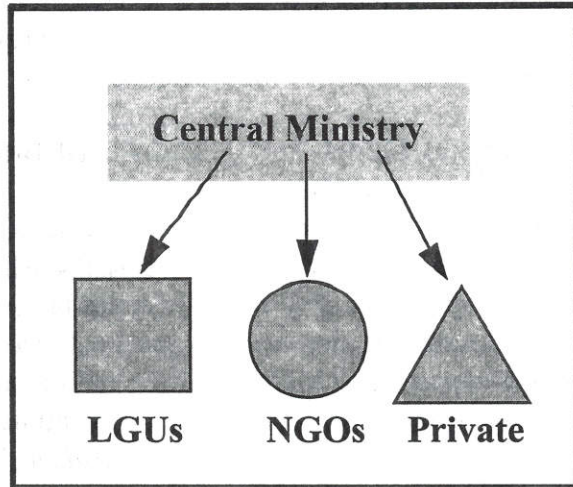
While there are many forms that decentralization can take, this analysis will focus on two popular models. Focusing on the concentration of roles that carry out enforcement tasks, the case study sites are divided into two categories – 1. *Distributed Institutional Monopoly*, which refers to a decentralization process in which roles are distributed spatially and concentrated in one organization or institution; 2. *Institutional Pluralism*, in which roles are shared by two or more organizations or institutions (Cohen 1999). These two strategies represent popular approaches to decentralization that warrant further analysis.

#### **1. Institutional Pluralism (“Partnership model”)**

The strategy of institutional pluralism is often assumed to allow non-central and private sector institutions and firms to carry out task-related roles more accountably, effectively, and efficiently than governmental institutions holding monopolies over public sector tasks (Cohen 1999). This strategy refers to an expansion of the number and variety of institutions and organizational role players to which the central government can divest its responsibilities for the production and provision of particular public sector tasks. Traditional forms of devolution are commonly seen

as simply delegating responsibility to local government units (Lowry 2001), not necessarily increasing the diversity of actors involved in providing a public sector task.

Mabini-Tingloy represents an example of institutional pluralism as many public sector tasks are being carried out by NGOs and the private sector. This decentralization strategy entails the devolution of public sector tasks to private sector institutions, NGOs, and LGUs (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Institutional Pluralistic model of Decentralization (based on Lowry 2001)**

Since the end of the Cold War, bilateral and multilateral donor and development agencies have promoted a strategy of “good governance” that “requires a systematic effort to build a pluralistic institutional structure” (World Bank 1989, 61; Edwards and Hulme 1996). Public sector institutions in developing countries are often seen as unable to meet the demand for public goods and services due to reasons including incapacity, insolvency, and lack of accountability. In the “New Policy Agenda” (Edwards and Hulme 1996), renewed prominence is given to the roles of NGOs in poverty

alleviation, social welfare, and the development of "civil society".<sup>1</sup>

To support this agenda, funding to NGOs grew at five times the rate of official development funding during the 1980s (Fowler 1992). As they are seen as more efficient public providers than most central governments, NGOs are expected to translate between the state and local concerns as well as exert pressure on public officials for better performance and greater accountability (Abrahamsen 2000). This emphasis on NGOs has accompanied an increasing call by aid agencies and populist forces for governments to transfer many public sector tasks to NGOs or engage them in overseeing and assisting the state.

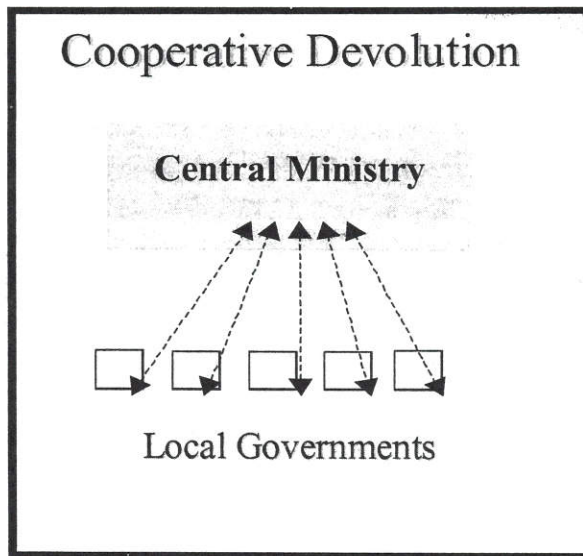
In the Philippines, increasing numbers of NGOs assume a variety of functions traditionally performed by the state (Silliman and Noble 1998). Terrence George (1998) estimates that there were 64,500 NGOs in 1998 in the Philippines.<sup>2</sup> The development of the NGO community marks a "fundamental change in the nature of civil society and its relationship to the Philippine state" (Silliman and Noble 1998). The passage of the LGC in 1991 reaffirmed the role of NGOs as legitimate representatives of popular interests. As George notes, nowhere in Asia does a law so explicitly afford NGOs a role in local governance (George 1998).<sup>3</sup> These NGOs are thought to mark an active civil society that would enable choice, scrutinize errant governments, and ultimately lead to regularized plural democracy.

Ngedwa, however, referring to the Kenyan situation, has noted that "civil society cannot be assumed to be congenial or supportive of democratic pluralism by its mere existence, expansion or level of activity" (Ngedwa 1996, 7). He specifies two conditions that are required for NGOs and civil society organizations to have a democratizing impact: first they must actively seek to promote democratization, and second they must have a political opportunity to do so. In the Philippines, there is currently political opportunity granted by the 1991 code. However, considering the entrenched system of familial politics and extreme societal divisions in many

regions, the degree to which NGOs can have an influence on effecting change varies from region to region. In Mabini-Tingloy, NGOs working in coastal management have had a large degree of influence in setting up and maintaining coastal management processes.

## 2. Distributed Institutional Monopoly (Cooperative Devolution)<sup>4</sup>

Bais Bay is used to illustrate a distributed institutional monopoly approach to decentralized coastal management. In this situation, roles are concentrated in one organization or institution. In the case of Bais Bay, the LGU is the primary implementing agency of coastal management tasks.



**Figure 2.** Cooperative devolution. (Lowry 2001)

The process by which decentralization has occurred in the Bais Bay region can be described as following a “cooperative devolution” model (Figure 2). In this model, general policy

directives are set by national agencies and local officials work out implementation details (Lowry 2001). This strategy inherently assumes that local officials are in substantial agreement with policy goals. It also assumes that there is substantial legitimacy, capacity, and efficiency for LGUs to carry out these goals.

While in the institutional pluralistic approach NGOs and private sector organizations perform many public sector tasks along with LGUs, in a distributed institutional monopoly, LGUs take the primary role of carrying out these tasks.<sup>5</sup> Since LGUs are proximally closer to the population they are serving, they are often seen as being better able to address the needs of the community more quickly and with greater understanding of local problems than the central government. When local authorities have powers to make decisions over local matters there is reason to believe that greater equity and efficiency may follow (Prud'homme 2001; Shah 1998; Ribot 1996). However, at the same time that this "local knowledge" is being praised, there are questions about corruption, inefficiency, and lack of capacity that challenge the capacity of LGUs to better serve their constituents or manage natural resources. Limited evidence suggests that the effectiveness of decentralized service delivery depends on the design of decentralization and on the institutional arrangements governing its implementation (World Bank 2001).

## **Methods**

Between June and September 2001, I conducted 47 semi-structured interviews with key informants to investigate connections between formal institutions and ICM sustainability. Interviews took place with government officials, NGO employees, ICM practitioners, academics, and others involved in coastal management activities in Manila, Mabini-Tingloy, and the Manjuyod-Bais City-Tanjay area. Study sites were chosen to represent the effects of different management strategies in large bay ecosystems. Interviews were analyzed using ATLAS.ti for institutional themes associated with ICM sustainability.



### Case Study Sites

Mabini-Tingloy and Bais Bay are both coastal areas bordering large bodies of water with long histories of coastal management. In each of these cases, there are different institutional configurations of governmental, private, and non-governmental actors involved (Figure 3). These sites provide a contrast between an NGO/tourism-led coastal management site, Mabini-Tingloy, and a project/Local Government Unit (LGU)-led site, Bais Bay. The latter bay has a long history of participation in coastal management projects, largely as a result of its close proximity to Silliman University. The Mabini-Tingloy area has a history of tourism activities dating back to the 1960s, mainly related to its geographical and political connections to Manila. (See introduction for general description of the case study sites).

<b>Institutional Actors in General Coastal Management Processes</b>	
<i>Mabini-Tingloy</i> LGU officials in Mabini and Tingloy (mayor, MPCD) Alan White Haribon <sup>6</sup> KKP <sup>7</sup> <i>Bantay dagat</i> <sup>8</sup> Resort Owners	<i>Bais Bay</i> LGU officials in Bais Bay, Manjuyod and MAO, Tanjay (mayor, MAO, MPCD) Silliman University CRMP <i>Bantay dagat</i>

Mabini-Tingloy and Bais Bay are used to represent the two different decentralization strategies discussed above. Mabini-Tingloy represents a case of institutional pluralism as many public sector tasks are being carried out by NGOs and the private sector. The two NGOs most active in coastal management in this region are Haribon (1990-1995) and KKP (1998-present). There are also approximately 55 private resort owners in the region, active to various degrees in coastal management activities.

In Bais Bay, NGOs and private sector organizations do not play a significant role in implementing coastal management tasks. The role of implementing coastal management is concentrated in the LGU. Thus, this case is used to illustrate a distributed institutional monopoly approach. The private sector in the area is mainly represented by the sugar industry, which does not participate in coastal management activities. There are also few NGO representatives. The LGU has thus been the main agent responsible for implementing and sustaining coastal management projects, guided by a number of projects that have been active in the area since the 1970s (mainly Silliman University which, through outside funded projects, has been quite active in working with the LGU to implement coastal activities). As the former mayor of Bais City (1988-2000) describes,

*Silliman was important but the LGU was the most important player. Silliman has been around for a long time and since they don't concentrate on enforcement, only education, they need the local government to be committed to enforcement.*

While we may expect the mayor to emphasize his role in the coastal management process, the importance of the LGU in coastal management is emphasized by comments made by various interviewees about the effect of the recent change of mayors:

*The former mayor was very much into environmental control and coastal resource management but the new mayor is different. He has other priorities.*

This statement also implies that the LGU has been the primary factor in determining whether coastal management processes are implemented in this region.

### **Institutional Pluralism in Mabini-Tingloy**

Despite a long history of an active popular base in Mabini-Tingloy,<sup>9</sup> only recently have NGOs emerged as prominent actors.

In the 1990s, the two dominant NGOs, Haribon and KKP, began working in coastal management efforts in this region. Haribon (1990-1995) is a national environmental NGO that worked closely with local fisherfolks to establish the first marine protected areas (MPAs)<sup>10</sup> in the area. Haribon's main objective was to train the local community to become resource managers (Ortega 2001).<sup>11</sup> According to Ortega, a community organizer<sup>12</sup> at the time, the MPAs were not so much for fish but more for community members to be empowered and build a sense of identity'. Along with the MPAs, Haribon also established a fisherfolks' cooperative to provide affordable basic commodities and further their empowerment agenda.

As many NGOs in the Philippines began as anti-Marcos organizations (Christie 2001), many do not maintain close partnerships with the state. Haribon is no exception, working mainly with the fisherfolks and later involving the private sector in community-based conservation work. The LGU was involved only to pass the MPA ordinance. By concentrating on fisherfolk empowerment in the resource management sphere, Haribon sought to organize fisherfolks in order for them to have a unified voice amongst that of private resort owners, tourists, and government officials.

This tendency to avoid working with government reflects a general fear of "too much state" amongst development practitioners prevalent during much of the 1980s/90s. After several decades of interventionist and often obtrusive development strategies emphasizing centralized political control, many noticed that inefficient economies and corrupt political regimes seemed to result from this approach. This realization also resulted during a time when civil societies were organizing to press for democratic elections and greater participation in decision making while many governments committed themselves to market-oriented approaches for generating economic growth. The response to these problems occupied the development agenda for much of the 1980/90s. An almost universal focus on state minimalism – on cutting

down size, expense, and responsibilities of the public sector – was a response to decades of “too much state” (Grindle 1997).

Since the mid-1990s, bad state/good society dichotomies have largely broken down. The question now is not how much the state should interfere but rather focuses on the role that the state should play to foster good environmental management techniques (Barrett 2001). The production of capable states, not just minimal ones, is now seen as able to ensure that markets perform effectively, citizens are assured of their basic rights and freedoms, and the environment is sufficiently protected.

This trend to actively put the state back into the development agenda, combined with the democratization movement in the Philippines and a lack of history in dealing with the Philippine state make some international NGOs much more willing to align themselves with governmental organizations. KKP (1998-present), which actively pursues an agenda of enforcement for biodiversity conservation, has as their main target audience the private sector, and to a somewhat lesser extent the Local Government Unit (LGU). Following a trend favoring markets and private initiatives, coastal management is mainly pursued through public-private partnerships. The newest partnership program, “WWF Corporate Partners Program,” seeks partnerships with the Philippine business community, expressing WWF’s “faith in the private sector” (WWF 2000).<sup>13</sup>

In Mabini-Tingloy, industry, resort owners, and local and provincial governments are included in this partnership agenda. Supporting this goal, KKP has worked to organize a resort owners’ association (Friends of Balayan Bay, FOBB) comprised of Manila-based resort owners who espouse a strong commitment to environmental protection. Unlike Haribon, KKP does not concentrate on empowerment of fisherfolks, focusing instead on organizing the private sector.

By organizing groups, NGOs play a role in determining whose voice will have political power. In organizing a private sector group with similar values to its own, KKP sought to ensure that mayors

with coastal management agendas get elected. One resort owner describes the empowerment agenda of KKP as the following:

*[Conservation] ...did not move as fast and hard as it did until KKP organized FOBB because they recognized the absence of private sector representation in multi-sectoral politics... Unlike if you're just resort-resort-resort, now that you're FOBB, the Governor recognizes you. The Municipal Mayors recognized the organization. So now, you can go to any forum and say I'm representing the private sector of Mabini: the coastal stakeholder.*

Thus, within the pluralistic decentralization framework, we can see two distinct strategies emerge from the case studies. The model used by Haribon emphasizes power differences between involved actors. In not specifically addressing unequal power relationships in these models, it is assumed that each actor enjoys equal representation. In this case, the status quo is reinforced and often only the most powerful actors are included in decision-making processes. These two distinct strategies of institutional pluralism have implications for coastal management sustainability which will be examined in the sections that follow in a comparison between these two strategies. It will be argued that the espousal of KKP's strategy has alienated many people (specifically, fisherfolks with little political voice) who were previous proponents of coastal management.

Other major themes to be covered in this discussion of coastal management process sustainability that emerged from the interviews conducted are adequate resources for management, commitment of officials, inter-organizational collaboration, and accountability. The results of this study are summarized in the table below and elaborated upon in the sections that follow.

**Public Sector Task: Enforcement of fisheries code laws**

	<b>Institutional Pluralism</b>	<b>Distributed Institutional Monopoly</b>
<b>Main Actors Involved</b>	<i>Mabini-Tingloy</i> KKP*, Haribon*, Private Sector*, <i>Bantay dagat</i> , LGU, PNP Maritime Command, Sulu Fund	<i>Bais Bay</i> LGU*, PNP Maritime Command, <i>Bantay dagat</i>
<b>Resources for Enforcement</b>	Adequate – provided by KKP*, Haribon*, the Private Sector*, LGU	Insufficient- the LGU provides all material resources required
<b>Commitment – Short-Term</b>	NGOs/Resort Owners/Tingloy mayor highly committed to coastal management; Commitment can be coerced/encouraged by having many dedicated actors working on the same public sector task	Commitment largely dependent on personal motivations of mayors/MAOs (encouraged by outside actors such as Silliman University and CRMP)
<b>Commitment – Long-Term</b>	Outside actors often do not have a long term commitment necessary to establish commitment in those who remain/use the resources	Commitment changes with political appointments
<b>Inter-Organizational Coordination</b>	High – presence of outside actors provides mechanisms for coordination	Low – generally little coordination between LGUs
<b>Accountability</b>	NGOs not accountable to PI organizations <sup>14</sup> ; private sector exerts pressure on public representatives that support coastal management	LGC integrates downward accountability mechanisms

\* key actors

**Resources for Management**

From the interviews conducted, the majority of respondents cited funding as a major issue to consider in the sustainability of coastal management. Given the new coastal management responsibilities under the LGC and the Fisheries Act, local officials need substantial funds to carry out coastal management responsibilities (Lowry 2001). With the passage of the LGC, LGUs receive about 40 percent of the national revenue.<sup>15</sup> Twenty percent

goes to the barangay level, of which there are approximately 43,000; 34 percent to the municipalities, of which there are approximately 1500; 23 percent goes to the cities, of which there are roughly 65; and the remaining 23 percent goes to the 76 provinces (Pimentel 1996). This leaves cities with the majority of the LGU resources due to the result of a "not well-studied distribution formula," resulting in many municipalities and provinces unable to afford the devolution (Brillantes 1996; confirmed by interviews). In a 1997 survey of coastal mayors, 75% identified inadequate funding for coastal management as a key constraint (DENR, *National Policy*, 28). Lack of revenue generating strategies and a lack of resource acquisition priorities on the part of LGUs also contribute to the lack of funding for coastal management activities (Lowry 2001).

In the case studies these resource issues have manifested themselves in different ways. Bais Bay, because of the lack of NGO or private funding sources, is much more directly dependent on the IRA and tax generating revenues for coastal management than Mabini-Tingloy. Bais City, one of the three LGU jurisdictions in the Bais Bay area, is relatively affluent because of its city status as well as its ability to collect taxes from its three sugar mills. While LGUs may impose taxes or fees for the use of municipal waters, many fail to collect from this tax base, making the principal revenue source a share of internal revenue allotment (IRA). Cities are generally better off than municipalities and consider themselves to be financially able to provide basic services to their constituencies (Mayor, Bais City, pers.comm.). It has been easier for cities to achieve the estimated annual budgetary requirements for CRM programs, which cost approximately 1-1.3 million pesos annually to begin and maintain this process (White and Cruz-Trinidad 1998). See Figure 4 for an illustration of these differences.

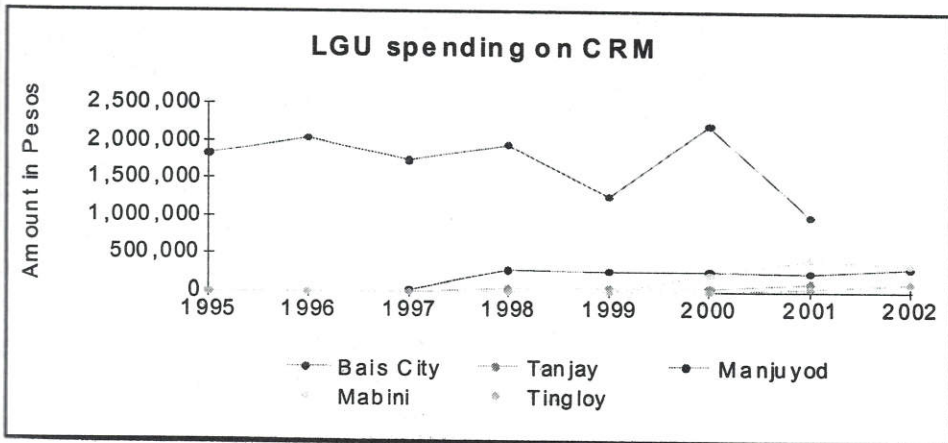


Figure 4

Municipalities in each case study generally felt themselves unable to afford the devolution. Evidence that these coastal communities feel unable to pay for the additional obligation of managing their 15 km of municipal waters can be seen in a countrywide rally for an increased budget for CRM activities. Coastal municipalities through the League of Municipalities of the Philippines (LMP) are advocating for an amendment to the LGC to include the area of municipal waters in the computation of their IRA. Currently the computation is based on land area of the municipality, population, and equal sharing. Many coastal municipalities feel that the management of coastal resources is an under-funded mandate. As the mayor of a coastal municipality has remarked,

*The LGC has not been good for CRM because national agency officials are devolved to the local level but their salaries come from the IRA allotment. We do not have enough funds to support these people.*

These financial inequalities between governance units tend to hinder productive agreements between adjoining cities regarding management of a shared water resource. For example, tourism



revenues disproportionately favor Mabini over Tingloy. Out of the 28 dive spots in Balayan bay, 19 are within Tingloy's jurisdiction, while only 9 are in Mabini. However, since most dive resorts are in Mabini, Mabini collects the majority of tourism revenues. These inequities between the two units have led to resentment and a lack of coordination in establishing a sustainable divers fee funding mechanism.

Funding has important implications for enforcement potential as can be seen in the following statement by the head of the *bantay dagat* in Manjuyod:

*The bantay dagat receives little support from the LGU. They are commonly referred to as the 'bantay dawat' (watcher for bribes) because they can be so easily bribed. The honorarium amount they are given is too small.*

Even in the more affluent city of Bais, funding for the *bantay dagat* is not always prioritized:

*The Bantay Dagat in Bais City, despite its effectiveness, suffers from the lack of funds and logistical support. The members are given a daily allowance of P91.00, in spite of the 24-hour daily duty. Considering the length of the Bais coastline that they have to monitor, they are in desperate need of financial support, more boats, more members, and the VHF radio units*

It has been easier for actors in the pluralistic model to acquire enough resources for coastal management because of the high financial input of outside NGOs and private actors. However, there are trade-offs involved in using this model. These high inputs are often not included in the LGU's budget while the outside actors are there. As one KKP worker explains,

*The local government sees KKP as a resource and figures that if KKP is spending money on a particular coastal activity, then they don't need to duplicate those funds.*

If the system is dependent upon outside actors, when they leave it may be difficult for those remaining to sustain the high financial inputs that were introduced. This has important implications for sustainability since processes that are not funded will not continue.

In Mabini-Tingloy, KKP funds a great deal of coastal management activities. KKP has provided financial and technical assistance to local officials and enforcement equipment such as a speedboat and an honorarium for *bantay dagat* members. To prepare the LGU for its departure, it is working to institute a divers fee system in the area.

Funding for coastal management is also greatly helped financially by the presence of private actors in the area. Resort owners fund much of the enforcement activities that impact the areas near their resorts, mainly regarding MPAs. Through both the 1980s and 90s privately funded enforcement measures drove funding of MPA protection in Mabini-Tingloy. As one FOBB member states,

*Funding for the resort association's activities comes from our own pockets. Whoever has money, gives to the association.*

While a stable funding mechanism is the most mentioned category contributing to sustainability, substantial funding does not guarantee a sustainable process. Other variables weigh heavily in the sustainability equation, such as those that determine how the funding will be spent. Without a commitment to coastal management by implementing officials, it is doubtful that coastal projects will continue.

### **Commitment of Implementing Officials**

Local commitment to coastal management can be coerced or encouraged through a variety of mechanisms (Lowry 2001). The Philippine national management framework, however, is relatively silent on both inducements for improved local (or national) management or penalties for non-compliance. Both the lack of incentives and a lack of penalties in the LGC and Fisheries

Code to perform coastal management duties have been identified as general constraints to performance (Lowry 2001). Incentives and constraints to commitment have manifested themselves differently in each of the case studies.

Due to this lack of formal incentives for LGUs to perform coastal management duties, personal commitment is essential for coastal management processes to be instituted and maintained. In both decentralization models, commitment by LGU officials is important for sustainability. However, in the institutional pluralism formula, there are committed non-LGU members who can also carry out coastal management tasks. These committed members can often work to ensure that other committed individuals are in decision-making positions. In the distributed institutional monopoly formula, on the other hand, personal commitment by LGU officials is fundamental.

Levels of personal commitment vary between organizational contexts. Those at the LGU are generally most concerned with the delivery of basic services. While coastal management is believed by many to be important, it is not yet widely considered to be a basic service (one large promotional campaign held by the USAID-sponsored Coastal Resources Management Program works towards the recognition of coastal management as a basic service). In the study sites, there were several excellent examples of mayors and MAOs who took the lead in coastal management activities. For example, the former mayor of Bais City, seen by many as a leader in coastal management activities, revealed a personal mission for coastal conservation:

*Because I grew up in the uplands and saw the people from the uplands follow the topsoil down to the coast, I felt it was my duty to protect the remaining coastline.*

While there are examples of personal commitment on behalf of mayors, there are also political roadblocks in the way of doing coastal management. In Bais Bay, for example, powerful sugar interests contribute to the pollution of the bay. It is therefore

politically dangerous for mayors to enforce policies against these polluters. According to one official,

*The sugar industry has had some bad effects on the environment – both sugar mills have contributed to the pollution of Bais Bay. But it's hard to be very strict with these industries because about 80% of the people are dependent economically on sugar.*

In a pluralistic situation, such as Mabini-Tingloy, commitment by LGU members is also important, but there are other committed actors already involved. NGO workers also often put in long hours despite little financial compensation. One KKP worker explains her commitment to conservation:

*I tell myself that I could still protect and conserve the environment even if the KKP has no more money. I could still work for them even if they cannot pay me anymore as long as I am helping people and making them aware of what resources they have. I will still continue to work.*

Besides NGOs, some of the major implementing “officials” are resort owners committed to enforcing the MPAs near their resorts. Resort owners are often concerned about the state of the marine environment partly because this is directly tied to their livelihoods. However, this commitment often transcends purely economic considerations. Many hotel owners in Mabini-Tingloy expressed a profound commitment to the enforcement of the MPAs:

*Little by little the people will understand because I keep telling them that if we restrict them from fishing here, we're only letting the fish come back. As soon as the fishes are here, there will again be a season for fishing. And they can fish as many fish as they want then. We will have more fish than we can handle. I am not from here. One day I will return to Cebu and the people here will*

*inherit the legacy of the sanctuary. I am trying to protect it for the future of this area - so people will be able to harvest more fish. Not like before the sanctuary, when there was nothing at all. If you look at it now, there are a lot of fish because I am protecting it.*

Thus, their actions are mainly grounded in their strong commitment to seeing the environment improve. Unfortunately, these enforcement actions occasionally take an extreme form which only serves to alienate the rest of the community from marine resources. This can be seen in the following statement by a resort owner,

*We will have to bribe people. I will resort to anything that will prevent any direct negative impact. Anything...that needs to be done...Let me be damned, so that the fish will live. So, I consider myself an extremist, but I will go to the whole 9 yards...I see to it that I'm cleared with the people who matter, the people who really have a stake... That's why I'm telling everybody, even WWF, talk is very cheap. Ink is very cheap. Paper is very cheap.*

During the time of Haribon, the implementation and monitoring of MPAs was a community process heavily involving the fisherfolks. However, over time, these MPAs have largely become privatized as various resort owners have taken over their protection. For example, people in the community next to one MPA have begun to divest themselves from management of that MPA since they feel that it has been taken over by local hotel owners. As one community member in Mabini asserts,

*Community member: Now, since the resort was established they are the ones who guard and protect the sanctuary. But I think they already privatized the sanctuary and that's the problem now. Because they are in front of the sanctuary.*

*Umm, they might hear my interview they'll be angry with me... but I think that's how it is. After their resort was established, they are the ones now who prohibit fishing. Even before they build their resort, there was already a sanctuary, so how come they are the ones who enforce things now? It's like they already own the sanctuary. The sanctuary was established in 1994 and the resort was only built 2 years ago.*

*Interviewer: So, what's the difference, if they protect the sanctuary?*

*Community member: It's the same but the only thing is that sanctuary is for the community, now they are already privatizing it.*

Thus, through the coastal management process currently in place, fisherfolks have become largely alienated from the processes to which they had previously been participants. This has led to increasing tensions between resort owners and fisherfolks, thereby decreasing the legitimacy of coastal management processes by the direct users of coastal resources.

Commitment by each of these different actors has important and complex implications for coastal management sustainability. The commitment of powerful actors can serve to increase commitment of some and decrease commitment of others. For example, in Mabini-Tingloy the zealous commitment of resort owners often serves to decrease commitment of fisherfolks. However, committed resort owners can serve to influence commitment of government officials by helping to ensure that environmentally-friendly politicians are elected. Through financial contributions, one Mabini resort owner feels that he has helped ensure that environmentally-friendly local politicians have been elected in Tingloy:

*Resort owner: The interest groups are heavily involved in putting councilors, pro-environment councilors in the municipal council in the past*

*elections.*

*Interviewer: So, who was lobbying to have this?*

*Resort owner: We were giving them campaign funds, materials. We were able to get just one here in Mabini, but we were able to get four in Tingloy.*

The election of such pro-ICM officials may contribute to rapid progress in ICM. Of course, if local politicians are perceived as overly zealous in their commitment to enforcement or selectively enforcing laws to favor certain sectors, then long-term sustainability may well be eroded.

In conclusion, while personal commitment by some seems to ensure that ICM is established, accepted, and well-informed, the zealous commitment of others may be problematic for ICM sustainability. In an ideal situation all the actors would be committed to coastal management. However, this is not often the case. Due to internal community tensions and existing power relationships, it is likely that the commitment of some actors will positively or negatively influence the commitment of others. While it is true that with a number of committed individuals dedicated to a task, this task will most likely be carried out, it is important for long-term sustainability that these individuals inspire commitment in those actors who will remain in the area. Outside actors have the potential to influence this commitment, yet it is important to try to get the commitment of those who actually are dependent on the resources in question and not alienate the majority of the community in the process of task delivery.

### **Inter-organizational Coordination/Collaboration**

In any decentralized context, coordination between actors is essential to implementing and sustaining effective coastal management processes. In a distributed institutional model, it is essential that LGUs work effectively with the central government. In an institutional pluralistic context, an environment is created in which public sector responsibilities are distributed amongst a wide

variety of actors. This makes it essential to understand the roles and coordinational issues between these different actors. Understanding the factors that encourage and hinder coordination is important in both types of decentralized strategies and the factors tend to vary contextually.

In Bais Bay, there are temporal and spatial tensions between mayors that may inhibit coordination for coastal management. Mayoral differences can impede abilities to coordinate on coastal management projects. One Silliman employee attributes the failure of MPAs in Bais Bay to these mayoral differences,

*The marine reserves failed because of a quarrel  
between the mayors of Manjuyod and Bais City.*

Temporal relationships between mayors can also inhibit coordination. A concern expressed by a leading ICM practitioner is the tendency for political leaders to undo the efforts of political rivals,

*There were important mayors like Boy Villanueva  
in the past who were quite supportive of coastal  
management. Now he is no longer in power and  
you have a new mayor and he feels obliged to  
either undo all the work of Boy Villanueva or  
ignore it. A bad case scenario is that he just  
ignores it and the worse case scenario is that he  
actually undermines it. The latter is likely if the  
incumbent mayor is a political rival.*

This concern is emphasized by comments made by a Bais City MAO on the change from a mayor supportive of coastal management activities to a different administration:

*So we established a [mangrove] nursery during  
the early part of 1990.... It has been stopped  
because of the change of [mayoral]  
administration. The person responsible has  
already been laid off. So, there's no more nursery.*

After the change in Mayor, this individual was removed from her



position in the city government and transferred to the Department of Agriculture. *Bantay dagat* members were also changed and the new members had to be trained. The considerable efforts of Silliman Marine Lab to educate the LGU staff were to some degree nullified. According to a biologist at Silliman University,

*We at Silliman would say that we (Silliman University Marine Laboratory personnel) have contributed to the awareness and the campaign to stop illegal fishing. I think that's the reason, but we should really now be more vigilant because of the changes in the guards, the new administration, changes in the bantay dagat. We need to again launch a massive information campaign, training, etc.*

This quote again illustrates the importance of the mayor in distributed institutional monopolies. It also illustrates that it is difficult to sustain coastal management processes through changing political administrations.

Inter-mayoral relationships in Mabini-Tingloy, on the other hand, have been greatly helped by continuing assistance by NGOs. KKP has worked to establish a variety of inter-LGU coordinating mechanisms in order to plan coastal management activities. They are working towards a common management plan among the 11 municipalities involved in the Balayan Bay region. Various groups have been formed in order to encourage this collaboration such as MFARMCs, BFARMCs, the IFARMC, MATINGCAD-C, and *bantay dagat*. To encourage this collaboration, they bring in various actors impacted by coastal management (divers, resort owners, LGUs, etc) to work in partnership with them.

However, there are other types of conflicts that seem to have been exacerbated by KKP's activities. For example, conflicts between fishermen and resort owners have not been helped by KKP's presence. These conflicts largely revolve around privatization of the MPAs discussed above and differential enforcement of the Marine Protected Ordinance No. 11-91,

amended in 1993. This amendment is quite unclear (Eisma 2003), yet it should read that both diving and fishing are off limits inside the MPAs. However, generally diving has been allowed inside the MPAs because the main enforcers are resort owners/divers while fishing has generally been prohibited. These issues should be addressed by putting conflict resolution mechanisms in place, which has not been done by either Haribon or KKP.

Thus, more committed actors at the coastal management table have potential implications for changing dynamics, yet the direction of this change depend on the agendas of the actors involved. Due to the changing nature of political appointments, relying on elected officials, such as mayors, as the principal agents of ICM, is likely to always destabilize ICM in the long term. On the other hand, as ICM becomes increasingly mainstream, the election of sympathetic political leaders may help establish ICM as a basic service. Committed outside actors can play a role in encouraging the election of these leaders by rallying local people to support coastal management processes.

### **Accountability**

For various reasons, decentralization is often associated with increasing accountability. Accountability is generally interpreted as the means by which individuals and organizations report to a recognized authority and are held responsible for their actions (Edwards and Hulme 1994). Cohen (1999) asserts that providing tasks through a pluralist rather than a monopolist administrative design tends to promote accountability. Others theorize an increase in accountability when decentralizing decision-making responsibility to local governments as they are able to “discern the needs and preferences of their constituents, as well as provide a way for these constituents to hold local governments accountable to them” (Smoke 1999, 10). Others view NGOs as inherently more accountable than the state due to the idea that NGOs are concerned with civil society, and therefore potentially more “accountable” to the needs of subaltern groups (Clark 1995).

Ribot has noted that it may be more important to examine the kind of actors who are empowered in decentralization because these acts of empowerment shape the outcomes that can be expected (1996). Different actors are embedded in different kinds of accountability relations, and these relations shape the ways in which they exercise their powers. There are multiple accountabilities to consider: downwards to partners, beneficiaries, staff, and supporters, and upward to their trustees, donors, and host governments (Edwards and Hulme 1996). Downward accountability can be promoted in an institutional pluralism model through the empowerment of local citizen groups to enable them to participate more directly in central and non-central government operations.<sup>16</sup> As a result of the empowerment of NGOs in the LGC, they now have a greater ability to empower actors in the local situations in which they work. For example, KKP's concentration on private actors (the resort owners) rather than on fisherfolks in Mabini-Tingloy reinforced the privatization of the MPAs.<sup>17</sup> As decentralization concerns distinctly public resources, privatization takes place when public resources are transferred to private groups, such as individuals, corporations, or donor-organized management committees, and NGOs (Guyer 1994; Fox 1990; Fox and Brown 1999).

NGOs may be upwardly, downwardly, or horizontally (to their peers) accountable within certain legal and moral bounds, but their membership base or donor interests often largely determine their objectives—not the public as a whole (Ribot 2001). NGOs in the Philippines are primarily funded by international donors. Thus, they must provide evidence that the funding they received was used according to donor guidelines. The people who receive NGO services have little if any means to hold the NGOs accountable. With increasing donor funding given to NGOs, there is fear that donor funding may reorient accountability upward, away from the grassroots, and bias performance measurement toward criteria defined by donors (Edwards and Hulme 1996). For example, before a major Debt for Nature swap in 1990,

Haribon was a small member-based bird-watching organization. With the swap, this organization grew considerably and accountability shifted upwards. KKP is also not downwardly accountable as they are a national organization with a worldwide membership base. Most of their accountability concentration focuses on partnerships with the provincial LGU. The director of KKP explains,

*Our partners in the provincial offices (PG-ENRO and PPDO) sit on the Provincial Land Use Committee (PLUC) and are responsible for approving LGU plans. Their involvement in the PLUC will make sure that LGUs look at the ICM plan before they submit their plans for approval.*

The private sector is also not downwardly accountable since no conflict resolution mechanisms have been developed to deal with the increasing tensions between private interests and those of fisherfolks. However, the private sector, due to its commitment to coastal management, its financial resources, and empowered status, does exert pressure on public officials to uphold coastal management agendas.

Cohen argues that distributed monopolies do not make systems more accountable because task-related roles are monopolized and not shared. As Moore (1997) also points out, states are not likely to be accountable to a population from whom they do not earn their income through taxation.<sup>18</sup> Thus, there is likely to be greater accountability to private interests on the part of the local governments. For example, commercial fishers are often well organized and are often released with a nominal fee for illegal activities. Committed business interests can also lend money to ensure that coastal management officials are elected.

Thus, accountability in distributed monopolies is more dependent on personal commitments of mayors than on institutional pluralistic models. While there is a mechanism in the LGC to replace a mayor who is not performing well, this is often not used. It takes a great deal of resources and an understanding of the political

process to engage this mechanism. In the institutional pluralistic model, there are more actors involved in performing a public sector task. More committed actors involved has the potential to increase the amount of downward accountability depending on the actors empowered in a given situation.

### **Conclusions**

Decentralized governance approaches are often critiqued for their limited resources, failure to encourage commitment of local officials, lack of coordination between groups, and low local-level technical and managerial capacity. However, this blanket critique does not consider the myriad forms that decentralized management systems can take. Within the Philippines, distinguishable versions of decentralized coastal management exist. While, on the surface, increased resources, commitment, inter-organizational coordination, and accountability are more likely to be found in an institutional pluralistic situation than in a distributed institutional monopoly, each of these potential factors carries important implications for ICM process sustainability.

As the LGU often does not have enough money or legitimacy to collect taxes, the presence of powerful outside actors committed to coastal management tends to bring increased resources for these activities. However, once these actors leave, generally the processes they initiated do not continue. Thus, to enhance the potential for process sustainability, it is essential that some mechanism for funding continuation be put in place before these actors leave. Private actors committed to coastal management are also a key source of resource provision, as is the case in Mabini-Tingloy. While funding was the category most mentioned in interviews conducted as contributing to process sustainability, commitment is also a key factor in determining whether processes will begin and be sustained.

Without the commitment of private actors and NGOs to coastal management-related tasks, the sole responsibility lies with the LGU, in which case commitment relies on the mayor's personal

commitment to coastal management. Mayoral commitment is subject to political turnover. However, as coastal management gains greater acceptance, it can be expected that officials sympathetic to coastal concerns will increasingly be elected. Encouraging this long-term commitment amongst those stakeholders who remain in place is a major challenge to ensuring sustainability. As outside actors often do not have a long-term commitment to coastal management in any one particular area, they can play a role in ensuring that people in the place they set up these processes do.

The level of accountability in a given situation largely depends on the actors empowered. Finding a balance between upwards and downwards accountability is essential in developing a successful decentralization model. In a distributed institutional monopoly, decentralization mechanisms may serve to empower local elites with little accountability to their constituents. While there are accountability mechanisms in the LGC, these have never been used to uphold coastal management agendas. In Mabini-Tingloy, the private sector exerts pressure upwards onto public officials to uphold coastal management agendas. However, the private sector is not downwardly accountable to the people. The development of conflict resolution mechanisms would allow for dialogue between the increasingly marginalized fisherfolks and private resort owners in the area, thereby increasing downward accountability. Although there are generally greater accountability mechanisms that could be achieved in the institutional pluralism model, both upwards and downwards mechanisms must be actively cultivated.

Thus, a situation of institutional pluralism may have the potential to better allow non-central and private sector organizations and firms to carry out task-related roles more accountably, effectively, and efficiently than governmental institutions holding monopolies over public sector tasks. This will most likely occur in situations with an accountable private sector, political space necessary to accomplish public sector tasks, and an expressed agenda to accomplish these tasks. In some regions

in the Philippines, there is currently the necessary political space to incorporate committed NGO and private interests in the coastal management arena. Correcting these potential problems in a model of institutional pluralism is possible when it is an expressed agenda of the actors involved in delivering public sector coastal management tasks.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This emancipatory view of civil society reflects a long-standing tradition in Western political thought. Since de Tocqueville, the presence of voluntary associations (organizations below the state and above the family, and sometimes including the for-profit sector) has been considered by many to promote pluralism, democracy, rapid economic growth, and effective public service (de Tocqueville 1900; Uvin 1996). While early debates about civil society were tied to fundamental questions about what it meant to be civilized and the tensions between a state of nature and an ordered society, most contemporary debates seek to create institutions that promote equivalence and freedom within the logic of the market.

<sup>2</sup> As Uvin points out, the emergence of civil society is a qualitative matter, not a quantitative one. Thus, while there are many NGOs in the Philippines, this does not necessarily mean that there has been an equivalent increase in democracy, economic growth, or effective public service (Uvin 1998).

<sup>3</sup> Section 35 of the LGC states that: "LGUs may enter into joint ventures and such other cooperative arrangements with people's and non-governmental organizations to engage in the delivery of certain basic services, capability-building and livelihood projects, and to develop local enterprises designed to improve productivity and income, diversify agriculture, spur rural industrialization, promote ecological balance, and enhance the economic and social well-being of the people."

<sup>4</sup> The distributed institutional monopoly approach can take many different forms (see Lowry 2001 for elaboration); however, for purposes of this case study, the form taken can be described as a cooperative devolution model.

<sup>5</sup> Officially Mabini-Tingloy is also under a cooperative devolution strategy. Due to the increasing numbers of NGOs and private interests involved in coastal management in this region, however, we can consider it to be a case of institutional pluralism.

<sup>6</sup> Haribon's mission is 'biodiversity conservation through protected area management. Haribon's scientists and organizers team up with the site communities to develop and employ resource management strategies...working to raise the national consciousness on sustainable approaches to development, Haribon aims to build a constituency for environmental issues that will call for prioritizing: habitats and sites for protection, conservation issues, and conservation actions.' (Ortega 2000). "Sanctuaries of San Teodoro," Orlando C. Ortega, *Haring Ibon*, July/August/September 2000.

<sup>7</sup> KKP (Kabang Kalikasan ng Pilipinas), established in 1996, has a mission to "stop, and eventually reverse the accelerating degradation of the environment in the Philippines and to build a future in which Filipinos live in harmony with nature." KKP is the Philippine Counterpart to the US-based NGO World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

<sup>8</sup> The *bantay dagat*, or sea watch, refers to community members given a mandate to enforce fisheries laws.

<sup>9</sup> Central Luzon, where Mabini-Tingloy lies, has long been considered to be an area of intense peasant resistance against the state.

<sup>10</sup> A Marine Protected Area is defined as "any area of the intertidal or subtidal terrain, together with its overlying water and associated flora, fauna, historical and cultural features, which has been reserved by law or other effective means to protect part or all of the enclosed environment" (IUCN 1988).

<sup>11</sup> Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identities of the informants.

<sup>12</sup> Community organizers (CO) are social workers that often live in a community and help with goals of participation and empowerment in various development projects. COs are common members of community-based projects.

<sup>13</sup> Examples of this increasing tendency to partner with business interests are illustrated in the WWF Philippines 2001 Annual Report. Their public-private partnership agenda follows a popular contemporary donor view that partnerships between CSOs and 'participatory and accountable governments' are the only way to secure sustainable development (Hearn 2001).

<sup>14</sup> KKP and the LGU have a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that may provide some degree of accountability.

<sup>15</sup> Prior to the passage of the LGC, LGUs received only about 11 percent of the nation's taxes (Pimentel 1996).

<sup>16</sup> The LGC actually contains a provision allowing for greater downward



accountability. This mechanism has been used in a limited number of cases in the country, yet provides an important mechanism.

<sup>17</sup> Resort owners are also becoming more influential in determining election outcomes.

<sup>18</sup> Thus, countries that draw most of their income from extractive industries such as oil, timber or mining exports, are less dependent on their people for revenues, also creating a disconnect between state and society (Yates 1996; Watts 1987).

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