



## Subaltern Climate Change Adaptation: A Theoretical Framework on Strategic Resilience in Subnational *Border-communities*

Dascil, Rommel Meneses

Department of Sociology, Mariano Marcos State University, Philippines

Divine Word College of Laoag Graduate School, Philippines

### ABSTRACT

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Framed along pluralist and critical social theories, the paper offers an innovative climate adaptation theoretical construct—subaltern adaptation—which necessitates the reimagining of the ‘community’ as a *spatio-temporal* (‘historical’ space) and *spatio-social* (‘anthropological’ space) within a particular ecological zone, instead of the usual state-centric scale (e.g., the *barangay*, or the smallest administrative government district in the Philippines, as community), as a new and ideal site for climate change adaptation analysis and methodology. With the *border-community* as point of departure, it takes the subnational border-community as locus, and the local institution as unit of analysis. The proposed theoretical framework is grounded on the assumption that adaptation is a function and fusion of institutional strategy, inter-institutional partnership, and linked ecological and demographic realities. It fashions the complex and fundamental relationship between climate change, environment, and society—as lens to reveal the socio-ecological realities and vulnerability issues shared by local institutions in the border-community—and offers a methodical strategy that can guide interinstitutional, transborder or cross-scalar adaptation towards the creation of a resilient subaltern climate change community. The local transborder collaboration is basically geared at addressing the geospatial and social vulnerabilities that the local institutions share across the border and ultimately addresses the constraints that state-defined borders have on local climate adaptation.

### KEYWORDS:

Subaltern climate change adaptation, Subnational border-community, Inter-local adaptation governance, Inter-institutional transborder synergy, Strategic resiliency.

### INTRODUCTION

The only thing that can save us is a revolution in the constitution of human society itself (Foster et al., 2010: 38).

### THE CLIMATE CHANGE SCENARIO

In March 2020, the United Nations (UN) released a wide-ranging climate decadal forecast that graphically and comprehensively reveals scientific evidence of physical signs of climate change and its dire effects on socio-economic development, human health and mobility, food security and natural ecosystems (UN News, 2020). Four years later, in preparation for COP29, the UN (2024) once again issued Red Alerts, through its Climate Reports, that the years 2015-2024 had been the warmest on record.

*Corresponding Author: Dascil, Rommel Meneses*

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Early on, another international report, Tracking Progress of the 2020 Climate Turning Point, was released by the World Resources Institute. The report shows how far the world has done in fulfilling the climate change Mission 2020 campaign, which aims to bend the curve in global greenhouse gas emissions consistent with the Paris Agreement of 2015 (Ge et al., 2019). The latter document generally reveals that progress is uneven across the various set milestones, that data to assess progress are either outdated or insufficient, and that governments need to fulfill their commitment to get the world on track to deliver net zero emission by 2050. This in a way explains the UN’s decadal forecast that indicates that a new annual global temperature record is likely in the coming years and simply a matter of time (UN News, 2020).

Indubitably, climate change is now the number one global issue and considered as one of humanity’s greatest threats and most urgent challenges (IPCC, 2022). Once considered a myth believed to be propagated only by doomsayers, climate change has gradually been accepted in mainstream scientific research and international development agenda. As it has

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aroused fear for and pessimism on humanity's future, it has also inspired and necessitated multilateral collaborative arrangements among global political and economic institutions, e.g., the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties (UNFCCC-COP), Climate Vulnerable Forum (V20) or the organization of countries deemed most vulnerable to climate change, among many other international and local climate change-related organizations.

At the recent COP29, the UN Environment Programme (2024) reported on the growing global climate adaptation gaps and called for strong collective, quantified, and nationally determined efforts on climate finance. This resonates with UNEP's immediate goal, which is to bring countries to agree and commit to substantial reduction in carbon emission, which is scientifically proven as the primary contributor to the planet's rising temperature. The long-term perspective, however, is focused towards a more sustainable world economy that can turn around the impact of the changing climate and enhanced humanity's resiliency through multilevel initiatives.

### **Climate Change Adaptation Divide**

While adaptation strategies take center stage in climate change debates, these are mostly subsumed within comprehensive and broad policies created from the perspective of international and national decision-making bodies. Such perspective has resulted in large-scale models prescribed for national governments and implemented from the top. While there are sporadic attempts to consider community-level adaptation options, which are recently made visible in national policies, these are strictly bounded by and within state-centric platforms like the local government units (province, municipality, and barangay). Although this fulfills the recently developed idea that "approaches to adaptation must be turned upside down to focus on local adaptation strategies as the point of departure for engagement" (Christoplos et al., 2009: 31), it creates a glaring gap because vulnerability to climate change impact naturally transgresses state-centric boundaries.

While adaptation is addressed at the community-level, the idea of 'community' is politically framed within the bounds of the *barangay*, which is assumed as basis and unit for measuring the vulnerability of the community. This approach is plausible and laudable considering the weight of the challenges of climate change, however, it fails to consider the fact that the causes and features of vulnerability, e.g., ecological and social, could extend beyond centralized local jurisdictional boundaries, in such a way that two or three barangays bordering each would share similar vulnerability that requires integrated or unified adaptation strategies. This issue is made more problematic in the case of border-barangays belonging to two or three different municipalities

that differ in administrative and financial capacities to implement adaptation programs.

Considering the above, the *border-community* scale needs to be explored in climate change and local adaptation strategies. Primarily due to the constraints of state-centric scales in research and development frameworks, subnational border-communities remain invisible to the curious and evolving lens of climate change research, dimmed in development studies, and overlooked in community development policies. Since policies are framed in the context of the local government unit and therefore confined in definite political boundaries, community-level adaptation, including those that involve local institutions, are confined in the *barangay*. This leaves the realities of the border-community, as a homogenous entity, unexplored.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **The Border-Community as Locus for Rethinking Resiliency**

As a new way of looking at climate change and local adaptation, this paper takes on the subaltern logic in development discourse and rests on a radical consideration of local or subnational border-communities and the necessity of horizontal adaptation/development integration across local borders through local institutions; hence, it brings the climate change adaptation strategy debate to a new locus, scope, and context.

The *border-community*, the locus of the framework, has two distinct characteristics. First, it is a cluster of (two or more) *barangays* that are jurisdictionally parts of different municipalities but share the same jurisdictional border, (although this may also mean other intra-state geographical areas that share the borders of larger political jurisdictions (provinces and regions). Second, it is situated in a homogenous ecological and topographical zone, i.e., upland, lowland, or coastal. Different ecological zones face different climate risks, and, therefore, need different adaptation strategies.

Although unexplored and therefore unusual in climate change literature and practice, this choice of locus assumes that the dimensions of vulnerability and adaptation operate at multiple but interconnected spatial and temporal frames, and that the indicators of the same dimensions should be measured and integrated in ways that are sensitive to underlying geographic, ecological, and socio-political realities. Simply put, this paper argues that community-level vulnerability and the required adaptation strategy vary according to shared hazards resulting from climate variability; common geo-spatial realities; and, perennial socio-demographic features, resulting from social, economic and political structures, and institutional structures and arrangements that shape said features.

Thus, this paper offers a framework based on the common social-ecological realities of border-communities and that

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which necessitates an adaptation strategy beyond the geographic boundaries of state-defined administrative structures. Since local institutions inevitably shape climate governance discourse and direct the practice of adaptation at the local level, the paper proposes looking into formal and informal local institutions as the unit of measurement to review current climate adaptation practices and determine the feasibility of an inter-institutional and trans-border synergy for community-managed adaptation governance.

### The Local Border in a Changing Climate: Engaging Critical Social Theories

Challenged by the limiting essentialism of state-centric, top-down, and centralist development paradigm, and the relatively unexplored potential of the border-community as an alternative locus of and scale for, and local institutions as key to, subnational, community-level climate change adaptation, this study is generally framed along critical social theories and revolutionary paradigms. It adopts theoretical pluralism and engages theories that propound *development as political* and *historical, liberation of the periphery*, and *participatory development*. As to how climate change should be appropriately structured, the study adopted revolutionary paradigms such as *structural vulnerability paradigm*, *social ecology*, *borderland framework* and *transformative adaptation*.

These critical points of view have found various strains among adaptation schools of thought that prefer to see the realities of vulnerability because of historical socio-structural formation and exacerbated by changing environmental conditions. Vulnerability to climate change hazards, being anthropogenic, as these schools argue, is produced by the powerful predisposition of social structures formed throughout many climate change regimes that see adaptation as a technical rather than a social issue. Consequently, these thinkers propound climate change adaptation is best tackled, not by state and corporate entities, but by those who are vulnerable—the poor and the periphery.

To portray a holistic picture of this paper's takes on critical and radical theories in juxtaposition with the mainstream theories that they challenge. Through this, it clearly posits the need to consider a subaltern scale, like the border-community and local institutions, to fulfill the requisites of community-level strategic resilience.

**Problematizing Local Borders.** Practically, state-centric political or jurisdictional borders exist for the purpose of restriction, but with climate events and their associated risks increasingly transgressing border spaces, the current border framework becomes increasingly problematic. While available literature dwells on inter-state/international borders, this paper seeks to identify how local, subnational, or intra-state border policies interplay with risks and adaptation policies and practices. Moreover, it proposes reframing current border concepts to advance, rather than restrict, local

climate adaptation by improving connections between communities and local governments and enhancing inter-institutional ability to respond to climate change. It assumes that a strategic policy framework is necessary to persuade border-communities to cooperatively manage resources, risk, and opportunities in a way that allows transborder synergy for enhanced climate adaptation strategies.

Local borders, as implied above, are seen here as inherently problematic in the face of climate change. Hence, this paper pursues the conceptual call (although now mostly directed on inter-state boundaries) to look at borders not as fixed or that must be overcome, but as an evolving construction that must be constantly reviewed and considered as habitat rather than national spaces and to see political responsibility for the pursuit of resilience (Connolly, 2007; Belcher et al., 2008; Goemans, 2006; Fraser, 2007; Williams, 2007).

This form of border thinking calls for a more productive ethic that re-frames the discussion in terms of the impacts that borders have on people in an unpredictably changing climate. This way, it seriously recognizes the necessary roles of borders and the barriers to adaptation that they create.

While local climate change governance is still key to *soft resiliency*, this must be a radically democratic form of inter-institutional governance, where information for decision-making productively flows among local institutions across the border. This is made possible through transborder and cross-scalar synergistic collaborations that engage multiple institution-actors. While knowledge, information, and other resources play key roles in adaptation and in building and strengthening the capacity of multiple stakeholders, inter-institutional transborder adaptive collaboration can provide exceptional opportunities for the creation, management, exchange and application of relevant local climate change information and knowledge. Hence, transborder collaboration can greatly contribute to the important dimensions of adaptation—*informed decision-making*, *stakeholder engagement*, *adaptation delivery*, *feedback and learning*, and *institutional capacity-building*.

This ultimately affirms the *Capabilities Framework* of Sen (1985;1999), which is motivated by the claim that freedom should play a key role in social evaluation and suggests complete consideration of what it is that people are free to do and what they do. This paper offers a wide range of capabilities that exhibit statistically significant inter-institutional transborder relations to community-managed adaptation and well-being, and that relations are complex and would be different for communities in different ecological and topographical zones.

While the introduction of local transborder climate governance affirms and fulfills Sen's freedom in social evaluation, it also increases natural local adaptation capacity by enhancing participatory and transparent governance of local climate change initiative. Indeed, Indeed, the paper assumes that empowering local institutions is necessary in

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addressing the perennial root causes of vulnerability, especially exclusion and marginalization.

**Transformative Adaptation.** In his critique of common adaptation concepts and practices, Taylor (2015) presses for the need to interrogate climate change adaptation not as a self-evident analytical framework and normative goal but as an array of discursive coordinates and institutional practices that themselves form the object of analysis. This necessitates a concept of adaptation that fashions a relatively cohesive body of ideas around the relationship between climate change and society into which issues of social change, power and environmental change are placed and solutions drawn. Generally, this brings to bear the concept of transformative adaptation, one that challenges the usual framing of nature as an inevitable threat and humans as helplessly exposed.

Transformative adaptation is varied; it occurs at different levels and dimensions, mediated by power relations, but usually implies a systemic or paradigm shift, possibly triggered by intolerable losses due to climate change hazards. The change is likely to be radical and challenges the current status quo, although the experience of the change and whether it is radical, incremental or transformational depends upon where one is in the system (Pelling, 2011). Along this challenging concept, the study attempts to see beyond technocratic politics that seeks to contain the perceived threats posed by climate change within existing state-centric institutional parameters and offers critical thinking about climatic change and social transformation.

**Adaptation as political, historical, and local.** With the rising prominence of adaptation as a viable solution to the threats posed by climate change and as a core element of *sustainable development*, which has now become the mainstream development paradigm, it is often said within the United Nations (UN) and non-government organization (NGO) circles that there has been something of a *paradigm shift* regarding how climate change is viewed and dealt with. While the focus used to be solely on finding technocratic solutions to climate-related hazards, it has now broadened to finding social solutions to vulnerabilities. This, however, is not really the case. Climate change adaptation—as it has been promoted by the UN system—retains many of the same prejudices and false assumptions of the traditional hazards paradigm which mistakenly views the sources of risk as being outside of society and separate from normal life. Without the existing concept of climate-related risk reduction to give it substance, adaptation would be a rather meaningless term. Like the *hazards paradigm* of climate change, adaptation, in this view, is fundamentally *apolitical* and *ahistorical*.

The term *sustainable development* is simply what proponents of mainstream development (which pivots on economic growth) use to show that they favor *good* development. Challenging this, Ferguson (1994) describes mainstream development as a combined conceptual and institutional

apparatus he calls the *anti-politics machine*. He calls it a *machine* because its methods of *depoliticization* are systematic and many of its agents of *depoliticization* are not fully conscious of this but rather more like cogs in a machine. The mainstream development discourse, he explains, follows its own logic, and part of this includes creating the need for apolitical, technical projects where the development apparatus can insert itself.

Since the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, when it was formally recognized by most states and large NGOs that global warming and other ecological crises are serious problems—and that traditional development practices were much to blame—mainstream development has transformed itself into *sustainable development*, the catch-all solution to every social and ecological problem on the planet. Attempting to be *apolitical* means much more than striving for scientific objectivity, it also means ignoring the fact that politics, history, and unequal power relations pervade every aspect of society. In this sense, mainstream development is in fact very political because, by not addressing existing social hierarchies, it only helps to maintain them. Further, as Ferguson explains, the side effects of the anti-politics machine expand the scope and reach of the state and its bureaucracies, “not by directly or measurably making the state stronger, but by increasing the ways its forces of control interact with people in everyday life” (Ferguson, 1994: 254-255).

**Vulnerability is structural and cuts across state-centric scales.** As implied above, the *structural vulnerabilities paradigm* in climate change would recognize that it is usually the *decision-makers* and *expert communities* who are—either directly or indirectly—responsible for *creating* vulnerability in the first place because of their elite status and misguided perceptions. This paradigm, therefore, takes a more politically confrontational approach towards these groups instead of making the implicit assumption that they are the ones who fix the problem. A genuine vulnerabilities approach should aim to transform the communities that are *literally vulnerable* to climate risk into the decision-makers of their own lives—a more politicized and radical process of social change.

Meanwhile, engaging the philosophy of liberation bravely penned by Dussel (2011), which promotes the historical perspective of the periphery as a necessary requirement for the creation of a just world, this paper focuses on *border-community* and local institutions, which is an attempt to confront the apolitical, top-down and state-centric approaches to climate change adaptation.

Post-structuralist thinkers, like Foucault (1978; 1991), argue that the state itself is more of an abstraction than a literal entity, and that individuals are manipulated not by any sovereign, but by *themselves* (“governmentality”) because the complex relations of power and control confined within



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administrative boundaries are so ubiquitous and the cultures of fear and desire so prevalent that individuals willingly surrender themselves to powerful forces in the name of *security* and *comfort* (also cited in Rabinow, 1984).

### Climate change is anthropogenic and socio-ecological.

Eco-socialist thinkers, like O'Connor (1996), argue that there is a second contradiction of state-sanctioned capitalism, whereby the over-exploitation of external nature and the disregard for natural limits (the *conditions* of production) eventually results in an ecological crisis of *under*-production. Foster et al (2010), on the other hand, do not see the ecological crisis as merely a question of under-production, but as a menace to the continuation of life (human and nonhuman) on earth. Due to neoliberal capitalism, “[t]he planet is now dominated by a technologically potent but alienated humanity—alienated from both nature and itself; and hence ultimately destructive of everything around it” (Foster et al., 2010:14). Neoliberal capitalism is causing several ecological crises—all of which are interconnected—including, among others, loss of biodiversity, disruptions to the nitrogen cycle, land use change, ocean acidification, chemical pollution, and, of course, global warming.

To prevent the excessiveness of capitalism from reproducing itself, genuine adaptation must therefore be based upon a critical consciousness (recontextualization) and solidarity and a holistic outlook (reconciliation). This has been recognized by eco-socialists who also realize that the traditional options of *reform* and *revolution* must be transcended and that innovative—indeed, *adaptive*—methods of social transformation must be sought after. Of course, this does not mean there is widespread agreement on precisely what is to be done.

Sale (2000) has promoted a new form of social organization called *bioregionalism*. He argues that the earth must be recognized as a living creature—*Gaea*—and respected and revered as such, with all human activities, including economics, politics, and culture, being shaped by the natural environment. Humans must be “dwellers in the land,” fully aware of the intricacies of their native ecosystems and the limits of natural resources (Sale, 2000: 42). Economically, the goal for every locality in a bioregion is pure self-sufficiency. For political organization, bioregionalism seeks to follow natural laws and demands decentralization and the reallocation of power to small, non-hierarchical units. “The primary location of decision-making, therefore, and of political and economic control, should be the community, the more-or-less intimate grouping... at the close-knit village scale... or extended community scale” (Sale, 2000: 94).

Far more nuanced than Sale’s bioregionalism, the *social ecology* perspective of Bookchin (2005) argues that all forms of hierarchy in human societies are directly based on man’s domination of nature. Social ecologists go beyond the *Gaea* principle, which is seen as essentialist, attaching too much

sacredness to nonhuman nature, and would rather see a creative interaction and communion between humanity and nonhuman nature that would reinforce equality and solidarity within human societies. The political implications of this would be what Bookchin calls *libertarian municipalism*:

It is “libertarian” in that it advances a new politics of popular control over the material means of life—land, factories, transport, and the like. It is “municipalist” in that it advances a new politics of civil control over public affairs, mainly by means of direct face-to-face citizen assemblies. It is also confederalist, in that it seeks to foster interdependence... to avoid the parochialism of “self-sufficient” communities, which can easily become ingrown and self-aggrandizing... (Bookchin, 2005: 57)

This vision differs from the bioregional idea in that it places more importance on the role of human beings to shape their own lives rather than allow them to be shaped by ecological conditions. The ultimate goal of an ecological society is to overcome all forms of hierarchy, whether political and economic or cultural and psychological, and this requires a sophisticated and productive relationship with the natural environment, as opposed to “revering” nature for its own sake (Bookchin, 2005). This paper assumes that such hierarchy can be avoided through a multi-institutional synergy operated in an ecological context.

### Adaptation requires radical sociological imagination.

That climate change is now a planetary crisis should remind humanity that the frontiers and barriers erected by the state have become imaginary and that global cooperation is necessary. Building more *prefigurative autonomous zones*—which must increasingly connect to one another in inter-local networks of affinity—seems to be the only way to accomplish this task. This is where the border-community, which cuts across direct state control, can offer a promising venue for genuine adaptation. Such may facilitate the diminishing of what Marx (2007) refers to as false consciousness brought about by being slave to the state, even as it is why Freire (2009) sees critical pedagogy as a method to conscientize the masses. Moreover, the realization of critical consciousness—particularly *class consciousness*—across those who share ecology-defined vulnerability, poses a serious threat to the divisive hegemony of the state and capitalism. Building a collaborative and synergistic framework among those who share ecological zones, like institutions in border-communities, despite the controls set through political-administrative jurisdiction, is a minor but revolutionary step towards genuine class conscientization. This may create a communal capacity against the possibility that such consciousness may constantly be warded off through

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increasingly sophisticated statist modes of propaganda and ideology, as argued by Chomsky (1997).

**Resilient development directly addresses the root causes of vulnerability.** While referring to a genuine vulnerabilities-based approach to the problem of climate change and development, it is important to remember the concept of “progression of vulnerability,” (Wisner et al., 2004: 51) where root causes (limited access to power and resources, and certain political or economic ideologies) lead to dynamic pressures (lack of or weak local institutions and skills, rapid population change, environmental degradation), which in turn bring about unsafe conditions (dangerous locations, weak infrastructure, fragile livelihoods, prevalence of disease, lack of preparedness).

This process can be reversed in a “progression of safety” (Wisner et al., 2004:344) that addresses unsafe conditions in an at-risk community to promote resilient development. Following the *soft resiliency paradigm*, it emphasizes the importance of *who* directs adaptation activities to establish genuine resilience—namely, the vulnerable communities themselves. Such perspective thus promotes *community-managed adaptation*, purposely avoiding the term *community-based* because this may still make *elite decision-makers* and *experts* think that it is they who hold primary agency while only having to pay lip service to community participation.

While engaging these arguments, this paper pursues a nuanced and integrative approach that seriously makes sense of the differentiated social realities in different political geographies bordering each other—the shared vulnerability of local social groups in a homogenous ecological zone, the capacity of local institutions as appropriators of a common-pool resource, and the possibility of inter-institutional transborder synergy as a frame for strategic community-managed adaptation.

### FRAMEWORK SYNTHESIS

#### Theoretical Postulates

In recent years, border-communities in international state borders have received considerable scholastic attention in mainstream literature, especially in political geography, development geography, and international relations, but these remain relatively unexplored in local, community-level research and practice. Considering the possible gap in development knowledge due to this limitation, this paper works on the general assumption that the complexity of the intra-state, subnational border-community may offer new insights on climate change vulnerability, optimize the role of local institutions in adaptation, and enhance the potential of transborder collaboration for subaltern adaptation—a contextual discourse that takes on the inherent but neglected mutuality of climate change vulnerability and adaptation. This overarching assumption is premised on the following postulates:

1. The impacts of climate change may vary in different ecological and topographical zones, such that climate change vulnerability is differentiated among coastal, upland, and lowland communities;
2. The *barangays* in a border community, when located in a homogenous ecological or topographical zone, may share related, if not similar, impacts of climate change variability, and therefore share common historical narratives of drought, flood, famine, hunger, pest-infestation, vector-borne disease and other climate change hazards. However, these *barangays* may not necessarily share similar adaptation strategies as such are possibly shaped by institutional policies relative to individual *barangays* and as framed from state-centric jurisdictional administrative policies;
3. Mapping the shared and nuanced (either similar or asymmetric) vulnerability and adaptation strategy of different *barangays* in a border-community can give new and powerful insights to the discourse and practice related to climate change adaptation. A comparison, for instance, of local institutions in different *barangays* in a border-community and in different ecological zones may reveal new or hidden information in the discourse of political exclusion and marginalization, which are factors that significantly contribute to immediate and long-term vulnerability;
4. While climate-related hazards and impacts differ among local communities in different ecological zones, this necessitates adaptation to become inevitably local, and local institutions as key to adaptation. Conversely, local institutions ultimately shape the structure of adaptation strategies as they mediate between individual and collective responses and facilitate possible adaptation strategies. This, therefore, necessitates a closer look at local institutions and how they support and constrain local adaptation within and beyond the political border of the *barangay*; and,
5. Climate change adaptation and community-development are two sides of the same coin. However, climate change is mainly framed not as a development issue but as an environmental concern, hence, the missing argument that vulnerability can be induced and heightened by poverty incidence and other inappropriate and inadequate socio-demographic structures, even as climate variability can worsen poverty incidence, food and health insecurity, social exclusion, among others.

#### Subaltern Adaptation: An Innovative Epistemological Construct

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As previously implied, resiliency in border-communities is understood here as a function and fusion of institutional strategy, inter-institutional partnership, and linked ecological and demographic realities. With this, the paper proposes re-framing local adaptation to inform the practice of community-level climate change governance, as follows:

1. *Re-imagining* the ‘community’ as *spatio-temporal* (historical space) and *spatio-social* (anthropological space) unit within a particular ecological and topographical zone to reveal and address the possible limitations of state-centric scales in dealing with climate change. The border-community in this sense is a *socio-ecological* unit—the scale and locus of subnational community-level resilience—that is not only geared towards adapting to climate change, but more so to a distinct ecological reality;
2. *Rethinking* of adaptation in the border-community through a community-managed framework, in such a way that shared socio-ecological reality exposes how and why the issues and concerns of one barangay can impact other barangays beyond its administrative border, and the potential of trans-border synergy for adaptation and development among local institutions within and beyond political or administrative boundaries;
3. *Refocusing* the adaptation lens on local institutions to fill the glaring gaps in existing literature and practice, such as: the lack of middle-range framework that can help frame policy debates on climate change and local institutions; the absence of empirical comparative studies on institutional approaches (in different barangays as influenced by state policies) to adaptation to support policy interventions at the local level; the neglect of contextual (ecological, social, economic, political, and cultural) factors shared by institutions in the border-community (e.g., how local institutions utilize common-pool resources in finding solutions to common problems); and, the necessity of looking at climate change from the privileged position of local institutions. In line with this, adaptation programs must consider how local institutions can adopt and navigate around international and national climate change strategies; and,
4. *Redefining* resilience as a state of becoming, not a state of being; not the goal, but the process of adaptation. It is measured as progress, not perfection. Hence, it has to be strategic and dynamic and contextualized in the realities of the border-community. Like excellence, it is a habit that the local institutions in the border-community should be able to develop on their own, through their sincere awareness of their evolving shared vulnerability and the institutional lessons they derived from the collaborative adaptation strategies of their own choosing. With this redefinition of resiliency, the process and method of adaptation is subaltern—one that is derived and developed from the underside of climate change history,

from the common historical experiences and shared narratives of the local institutions across subnational borders.

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