Can collaborative governance increase community resilience to hazards: A case study from Nepal.

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Abstract

This thesis argues for a deeper understanding of the discourse of collaboration, and its influence on emerging collaborative governance regimes in LMIC such as Nepal. Collaborative Governance has become an axiom within disaster risk reduction (DRR) lauded as the best way to reduce risk and increase resilience to hazard; it is a critical part of the United Nations 2030 sustainable development agenda. Yet, despite the recognition CG has there are still questions surrounding the discourse of CG and how it impacts and shapes the governance of DRR. This work utilised a range of approaches from discursive institutionalism to challenge the axiom of CG using Nepal as a case study. Starting with a historical analysis of key policy documents I explore the evolution of collaboration within Nepal's DRR policy landscape. This work shows how collaboration has emerged through two trajectories, a formal path between the state and international partners such as NGOs and the UN, and an informal path that emerged from the necessity of day-to-day governance needs in remote areas.

These two trajectories are still seen today and influence the narratives that are shaping the current national reforms around DRR. Drawing on semi-structured interviews with DRR actors working at different scales in Nepali DRR, I identify three narratives that are driving a state-sponsored strategy to implement a collaborative governance regime for DRR. These narratives are in line with the international DRR agenda that promotes the local as the primary scale of action. However, my analysis shows that these narratives emphasise top-down state-led goals that risk overlooking the municipal scale government and local communities from meaningful contributions to the emerging collaborative governance regime (CGR) and marginalising local-scale politics. This has resulted in a lack of implementation of key local-scale DRR projects and reforms. Further, I question if the emerging CGR is a truly collaborative and sustainable project.

The tensions that exist between the local and national scale have a marked impact on communities living in remote hazard-prone areas in Nepal, such as the poor implementation of policy reforms including non-functioning community-level DRR groups, unspent DRR funds, and continued lack of access to services. Drawing on interviews taken with community members in Sunkuda this work concludes by exploring the lack of engagement from CG that communities continue to face in Nepal. I argue that alongside the challenges of local scale politics, communities are further overlooked due to the influence resilience of practice in Nepal and its impact has on the emerging CGR. I suggest that to gain a deeper understanding of CG and its potential to reduce risk and increase resilience we need to understand how resilience in Nepal is shaping the emerging CRG in Nepal.

This thesis contributes to scholarship that explores the efficacy of CG to address wicked environmental problems. It calls for more attention to be given to the discursive impact of CG in the fight to increase resilience for remote vulnerable communities in Nepal.

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Abbreviations

CA	Constituent Assembly
CAA	Climate Change Adaptation
CDG	Collaborative Disaster Governance
CDO	Chief District Officer
CDS	Critical disaster studies
CG	Collaborative governance
CGR	Collaborative governance regime
DDMC	District Disaster Management Committee
DEOC	District Emergency Operating Centre
DI	Discursive institutionalism
DMC	Disaster Management Committee
DPTC	Disaster Prevention Technical Centre
DRM	Disaster risk management
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
DRRMA	Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act
DRRNSPA	Disaster Risk Reduction National Strategic Plan of Action
EOC	Emergency Operating Centre
GLOF	Glacial lake outburst flood
GON	Government of Nepal
HDI	Human development index
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
HH	Households

IAC	International aid community
IDNDR	International Decade of Natural Disaster Reduction
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross
INGO	International non-government organization
ISDR	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
LAPA	Local Adaptation Plan of Action
LDRMC	Local Disaster Risk Management Committees
LEOC	Local Emergency Operating Centre
LMIC	Low to middle income country
MOHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
NAPA	National Adaptation Plan of Action
NCA	Natural Calamities Act
NCC	Natural Calamities Committee
NDRRMA	National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority
NEOC	National Emergencies Operating Centre
NGO	Non-government organization
NI	New institutionalism
NRRC	National Risk Reduction Centre
NSDRM	National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management
PAR	Pressure and release model
PDMC	Provincial Disaster Management Committee
PEOC	Provincial Emergency Operating Centre
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SFDRR	Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

SNA	Social Network Analysis
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VO	Voluntary organization
YSA	Yokohama Strategy for Action

1. Chapter one: Introduction

"In developing countries people don't talk about the whole of the nation, whole of

community, they talk about the whole of government. We are talking about the whole of

the community, and we are lost, we have on board everyone in the world, but the driver

doesn't know where to go." (GON_02)

This assertion was made by the head of a key disaster focussed government department in Nepal. The interview participant was expressing frustration at the continued lack of collaboration that was happening in Nepal between disaster risk reduction (DRR) actors (international aid community (IAC), United Nations (UN), and academics/researchers) and the government; this is despite recent institutional reforms that were designed to decentralise decision making autonomy and make DRR governance in Nepal more inclusive. This statement captures the crux of the challenges associated with researching and implementing the collaborative governance (CG) of DRR. Yet, there are growing international trends that promote collaborative action and CG for DRR, which are fuelled by a global discourse that it could enhance resilience and reduce risk. CG is purported to democratise decision making and enable innovation and inclusion in DRR. However, there remains large gaps in the literature on how the discourse of collaboration is understood and translated into different geopolitical contexts, how it is implemented, who benefits from CG, and crucially who is excluded. I contend that gaps arise, in part, from a bias in CG scholarship towards response and recovery focussed studies, with only a few examples of CG research focused on mitigative and preventative action in DRR. This thesis aims to explore these questions and present an empirically based study of the emerging CG regime for DRR in Nepal to improve our theoretical knowledge of the relationship between CG and mitigative and preventive actions in DRR and provide insight for policy actors.

1. Collaborative Governance; a solution for complexity?

Wicked environmental problems are one of the biggest governance challenges currently faced across the globe. Wicked problems are large scale, long term public policy challenges that bridge sectors, geographical borders, and temporalities. They have evolving definitions, conflicting solutions, and require decisions to be made in the face of uncertainty (Rittel & Webber, 1973; Dewulf and Biesbroek, 2018). The complexity of wicked problems has led to the emergence of innovative ways of governing across traditional divides. One governance approach that has been gaining prominence as a means of addressing complex environmental wicked problems is collaborative governance (CG). CG is an inclusive approach to governing, which is defined as *"the processes and structures of public policy decision making and management that enable people to engage across boundaries"* (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015, p. 10). This approach is central to UN 2030 global agenda shown in the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) embodied in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR). The SFDRR priorities for action 2 and 3 both make multiple references to '*coordination*', '*participation*', and '*collaboration*' between different sectors of society, at different scales, to increase resilience to natural hazards. Through the SFDRR, CG has been interwoven into policy agendas across the globe, including the focal country for this study, Nepal.

Despite its mainstream acceptance CG is still a highly contested concept. There is concern over conflicting definitions (Ansell and Gash, 2008;); a lack of consistency of implementation of collaborative approaches (Nohrstedt, et. al 2022); how CG works in relation to scalar dynamics (Russell et.al. 2021) & historic geopolitical divides; and the efficacy of collaborative action for environmental challenges (Berardo and Lubell, 2016). In

DRR focused research on collaboration there are notable gaps concerning how CG functions in relation to pre-disaster scenarios as shown in the literature review most scholarship to date is focused on post-disaster response and recovery. This bias in focus leads to questions about what role CG can play in strengthening mitigation and preparedness to disasters? Further, most of this research is based in the minority world and as such explores well established institutional structures as shown in the focus on power by design e.g. the role of the state. By focusing on established, relatively stable, governance systems and the normative institutions and obvious actors there is a concern that the politics of informal institutional networks is being overlooked. This is a critical gap when exploring CG in a majority world context where poverty, war, famine, and repeated exposure to hazards can affect the institutional stability of the area. In Nepal, for example, informal governance networks emerged in part due to a volatile formal governance system. These informal networks in Nepal play a significant role in determining vulnerability to hazards (through kinship support systems, labour, access to community forests, and aid distribution) yet are often overlooked in studies that focus only on the formal institutions. The oversight regarding how these informal networks interact with the formal systems of government is linked to concerns that CG could reinforce asymmetrical power dynamics that previously existed (Morrison et.al, 2017). This is a concern that was legitimised throughout my fieldwork where actors from formal institutions often spoke of collaboration in a way that framed different actors as legitimate collaborative partners or not; this is explored in chapters 5 and 6.

 The gaps highlighted above in CG scholarship make me question the impact of this historical focus on post-disaster collaboration; particularly, how it is conceived of and imagined in the

mitigation/preparedness pre-disaster phase. It is at this cross section of the disaster risk management cycle that the value of this study is located. CG embodies the ideals seen in international policy's aims of systematic long-term collaboration in DRR for effective mitigation and preparedness. However, to date CG for DRR is an ideal and not yet seen in practice. Therefore, I explore collaboration primarily as a discourse i.e., in policy documents and institutional intentions not yet in practice. By exploring CG as a discourse this thesis aims to reduce the gaps that are currently still present in this field of study

1.1. *Research Questions*

This thesis aims to understand how CG is currently understood and implemented in Nepal. To do this I examine the prevailing discourse of collaboration in Nepal with a specific focus on historical institutional understanding of collaboration and how this has shaped the roles of different actors in collaborative processes and practice.

 The research questions examined are:

Q1. *How has the concept of collaboration evolved in disaster-related policies and institutional reforms in Nepal over the past 4 decades?*

To gain a deeper understanding of CG and practices of collaboration that are currently emerging in Nepal it's important to have an insight into how the concept has evolved over time. This question aims to identify how the discourse of collaboration has changed in policy. Further, in recognition that discourse does not exist in a vacuum, a historical lens is used to identify the geopolitical drivers of change. This is important as often institutional change in DRR is presented as the result of disaster without engaging with the historicity of place. This

analysis aims to elucidate how geopolitical factors have shaped how collaboration is understood and gives insight into the future trajectory of collaboration in Nepal.

Q2. *How is the discourse of CG shaping the implementation of recent institutional reforms in Nepal?*

This question aims to build on the last which identified the historical evolution of collaborative discourse in Nepal. Here, the analysis shifts onto the current emerging CG regime and aims to explore what discursive tools are upholding and shaping recent institutional changes. The aim is to address gaps in current scholarship that overlook the role of discourse in how collaboration is being mobilised and its effects on institutional changes. To do this, the focus is on how actors' roles/responsibilities are represented: what are the markers for success and failure? What/who is not included in current discourses of collaboration?

Q3-*How does the concept of resilience impact the emerging CGR in Nepal ?*

Drawing on the findings from the first two questions, this final research aim is to explore the relationship between the emerging CG regime and more established practices and discourse surrounding resilience building in far western Nepal. The purpose of this is to gain insight into why CG is lauded as one of the preferred methods to increase resilience and problematise the axiomatic position CG currently has in international DRR discourse. In doing so, this question aims to address a lack of critical engagement with the concept of CG in academic literature and how it is currently being implemented to increase resilience to disasters.

1.2. Research Context

Nepal offers a unique environment to engage with this topic due to its highly variable

topographical and socio-political landscape. Classified as a low to middle income country

(LMIC), Nepal rates low on multiple development and poverty indices and is consistently

ranked "high risk" on numerous disaster and climate vulnerability indexes (Maplecroft, 2018,

MoHA, 2019). Located in the Himalayan arch region of south Asia, Nepal is susceptible to

strong seismic activity, due to the active Indus-Yarlung fault, and climate related hydro-

hazards such as Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF,) shifting monsoon precipitation

patterns, flash flooding, and landslides. According to recent Government of Nepal (GON)

figures up to 80% of the population are at risk of being impacted by natural hazards (MoHA,

2019). Landslides and flooding represent the second most impactful hazard in Nepal and

frequently result in large scale damage to infrastructure and livelihood. In 2017-2018, for

example, there were an approximate 3973 landslides that resulted in 161 fatalities. During

this period hazard and human induced disasters affected an estimated 27,256 Nepali families

(MoHA, 2019). Further the combination of topographical and climatological interactions in

the region have resulted in complex multi-hazard exposure that is compounded by the

unstable socio-political landscape of the country (The MoHA, 2015; The Government of

Nepal, 2017).

DRR governance in Nepal has evolved alongside a 10-year conflict and the challenges of

transitioning into federalised republic; all whilst navigating a changing international

development agenda, with increasing pressure to become climate and disaster resilient in the

face of increasing hazard exposure (Jha, 2014; Nightingale, 2017). Since the fall of the Raja

dynasty in 1951 Nepal has bounced between autocratic rule, constitutional monarchy, temporary constitutional assembly, and federal republic (Blaikie, Cameron and Seddon, 1980b, 2002; Jha, 2014). In recent years Nepali governance has undergone a shift towards democratic federal statehood with the ratification of the 2015 Constitution of Nepal (GoN, 2015). The constitutional document marks the symbolic culmination of a decade's long civil war between the Maoist factions and royalist branches of Nepali government (Yates, 2012; Becken, Lama and Espiner, 2013). The spirit of the constitution is to move governance towards a decentralised locally determined administration (OPM, 2020). One of the main objectives of this process is the redistribution of state power and responsibility to the newly formed local municipalities, of which there are 721. By focusing decision making at the local scale, it is hoped that a new sense of autonomy will promote a new unified national identity across all levels of government. This new sense of national unity would address the discrimination of old caste systems that lead to cultural prejudice and dismantle the hierarchy inherent in Nepali culture (Nightingale, 2017; Watson, 2017; Nightingale and Rankin, 2018).

In relation to DRR especially, a swathe of new legislation has been ratified since the 2015 Gorkha earthquake; of note the 2017 Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act (DRRM Act). In line with the constitutional promises, the DRRM Act sets out the new formal institutional structure for managing hazards which locates autonomy and decision-making power with the local municipalities. The formal institutional structure envisaged in the DRRM Act consists of three tiers of government: the national level, provincial level, and municipal level. Each tier of government has its own committees and organisations with functions and responsibilities that feed into the other levels through various mechanisms;

financial and logistical (DRM funds, dedicated DRRM staff, and police and military co -

ordination), as well as knowledge exchange (through policies, plans of action, assessments,

and localised DRRM plans). In addition to the main three levels of government, the district

level remains in place from the pre-federalisation era functioning as bureaucratic assistance

for DRRM, and with the power to mobilise the police and military in the event of a disaster

(Basnyat et. al. 2020). Alongside their day-to-day functions, each tier has additional

responsibility when a hazard event occurs; mobilisation of these additional responsibilities is

dependent upon the severity of the disaster. The objective of the DRRM Act is that the

municipal and district level will handle the smaller scale hazard events with higher levels of

government being mobilised only when large scale disasters occur.
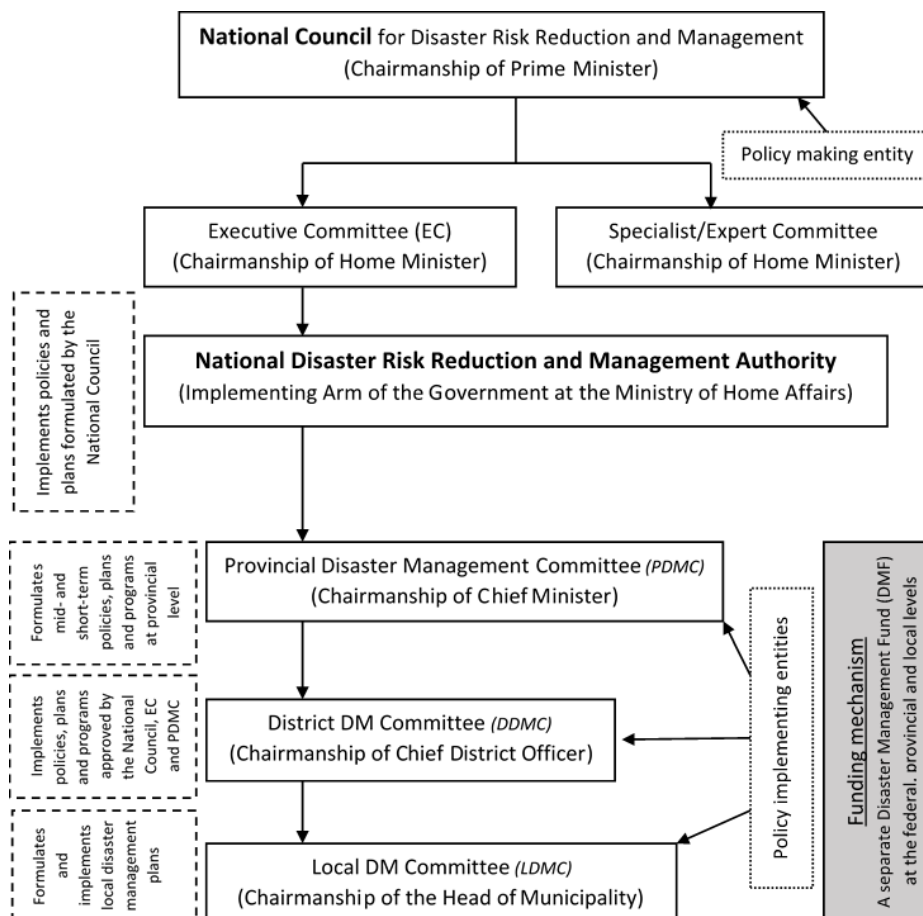
Figure 1. Formal organisational structure set out in the DRRM Act. (Basnyat et.al.
2020)

Further, governance was expanded horizontally to include a wider range of actors from the

non-profit sector, private sectors, and international and regional intergovernmental bodies.

Under the new legalisation local needs are to be regularly assessed with interventions tailored

to the individual municipality. Local Disaster Risk Management Committees (LDRMC) have

also been established to allow for households and individual citizens to become part of the

DRR decision making process. According to the DRRM Act, the LDRMC are chaired by the

municipality, and include ward members and individuals from the community; their role is to

meet regularly to discuss community needs (including training, aid, and infrastructure

development). However as discussed in detail throughout this thesis, confusion surrounding

interpretation of recent policy changes, slow establishment of committees and significant

political barriers remain at the time of writing.

This research takes a qualitative approach to investigate the role of discourse in recent

changes in policy and approach to DRR governance in Nepal (Schmidt, 2008, 2017, 2011).

The aim is to map how the discourse of collaboration has evolved in policy and how this has

been interpreted and implemented by different DRR actors (from national to community

scale). Further this research explores how these institutional changes impact different actors'

experiences of working and living with hazards. The research was conducted over a year

period, consisting of two trips between April 2019- March 2020. During the period of

research, the implementation of the DRRM Act was in its initial stages; with new

departments being set up and DRR responsibilities being transferred from their previous

home in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA). As such the initial focus of this study was to

capture this emerging new governance approach, the perceptions of key figures, and identify

the discourses that were informing and shaping the institutional landscape of DRR. When

working in a context of a *state in transition* the importance of discourses, narratives and

framing is crucial. The stories told about DRR by decision makers and dominant actors

provides insight into what and who is deemed as the *problem*, which actors and types of

knowledges are legitimatised, and which actors and knowledges are not (Dewulf, 2013;

González, 2006). By exploring these concerns, it also gives an insight into what might be

deemed the best course of action for the future of DRR.

Using Nepal as a case study for the role of discourse in DRR institutional change also allows

me to engage with large key discourses that currently shape DRR at an international scale,

specifically collaborative governance, and resilience. These are both contested and poorly

defined concepts that have gained traction within the DRR community despite the confusion

surrounding them. As such, asking questions such as what collaborative governance means to

different actors, who should be included in the CG process, and what resilience looks like and

for whom, can contribute to how DRR is shaped and how it progresses.

1.3. *Key concepts*
The key concepts that informed my thinking on this project include collaborative governance,

new institutionalism, critical disasters scholarship, and risk and resilience. **New**

institutionalism (NI) was used as a guiding analytic to understand how CG has evolved and

emerges in Nepal's formal institutional landscape. The NI lens was a crucial tool to

conceptualise the rapidly transitioning DRR governance system in Nepal due to its focus on

formal/informal rules, dynamic conceptions of institutions beyond formal structures, and its

acknowledgement of institutional embeddedness[1] (Lowndes, 2001; March & Olsen, 1984).

This thesis explores informal/formal networks' understandings and implementation of CG

from a position that "*institutions embody values and power relationships*" (Lowndes, 2001

1953) and as such interactions between individuals and institutions are salient to

understanding evolving collaborative efforts for DRR. The discursive turn within NI further

enhances and challenges three critical precepts of NI regarding institutions and their role in

how we govern complex problems. Discursive institutionalism (DI)asserts that, contrary to

what is commonly assumed, institutions are not enduring; their persistence is more complex

than self-reinforcing rules and structures (Carstensen, 2016). Whilst their internal structures

and rules do influence decision making processes, viability of policies, and can shape a

trajectory of a polity, institutions are seen as the context within which discursive and

ideational interactions exists (Schmidt, 2011, March and Olsen, 1984). Further, institutions

do not eliminate an actor's autonomy. Unlike historical, sociological, or rational actor NI

theories, which depict actors as constricted by path dependencies, norms, and incentives, DI

views individuals as autonomous from institutions. The existence and trajectory of

institutions are contingent upon actors, their ideas, insights, and discourses. Institutional

structures and norms do influence individual actors, shaping how governance issues are

understood and which solutions are deemed appropriate. However, this process is iterative

with individuals having a similarly transformative impact on institutions as institutions have

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[1] Institutions in NI thinking are understood as both formal (organizations, laws, policy) and informal – norms, opinions, attitudes, or beliefs. NI views these informalities as playing a significant a role in decision making and decision taking, and having as much impact as formal institutions - sometimes more so. (See Grubovic, 2004; Lowndes,2001)

on individuals (Giddens, 1984; Schmidt, 2008). Finally, institutions are not always a stabilising force; by focusing on the role of actor agency and discursive and ideational interfaces DI allows for political scientist to account for change and evolutions in the role and function of institutions. This is because DI views institutions as both real (the environment within which an actor performs) and conditional (institutions are shaped by the actors' words and actions) (Schmidt, 2008). Therefore, discourse and ideas have the power to disrupt patterns of behaviour or pathways that had been established within an institution. Therefore, DI enables exploration of how institutions evolve and change over time (Schmidt, 2011).

Incorporating DI conceptualisation of institutions and how they evolve is a crucial step to address concerns in **collaborative governance** literature which suggests that collaborative approaches and scholarship tend to rely on established organisational structures and systems to the detriment of truly a collaborative approach (Morrison, et. al, 2017). CG is a contested and vague concept due its genesis in multiple fields of enquiry. This thesis uses Nabatchi and Emerson's definition of CG which is:

> *"The processes and structures of public policy decision making and management that engage people across the boundaries of public agencies, levels of government, and/or the public, private, and civic spheres to carry out a public purpose that could not otherwise be accomplished"* (Nabatchi and Emerson, 2015, 18)

 This definition was selected as it is inclusive of more types of collaboration, compared with more stringent definitions (see Ansell & Gash, 2005). Further, it is more conducive to DI thinking concerning the reciprocal nature of shaping influence between institutions and the individuals. To expand further on the concept of informal institutions and their role in

governance I turn to **social network analysis** drawing on the conceptualisations of informal network, social capital, and weak ties (Granovetter,1973), These ideas are pertinent to core concepts of NI (see Grubovic, 2004; Lowndes,2001) as well as having strong links with **critical disaster scholarship** and **resilience** in terms of the social capital and network density that contribute to disaster vulnerability and resilience. Resilience, as a concept, is highly contested and can be explored in many ways. In this thesis, I draw on definitions of resilience seen in the scholarship of various academics working within the context of Nepal; this body of work explores the different ways the concept of resilience has been used as a tool of governance by different actors in Nepal (Ruszczyk ,2019; Nightingale, 2021; Watson, 2017). These scholars build on core ideas from critical disaster scholarship which addresses the political nature of disasters. Key aspects of thinking highlights that socially constructed markers (such as socio-economic status, formal and informal support system) will have a direct effect on the impact of a hazard on a person's resilience; how fast and effectively they can recover, and what that state of recovery looks like (Nelson et.al, 2007; Nightingale,2021). Together these concepts inform how empirical work was conceived and conducted, and provides a framework for analysis.

1.4. *Thesis structure*
This thesis is divided into two main sections. The first section addresses conceptual frameworks and the gaps in these areas that have informed my thinking during this research project. It introduces the methodology and details of my field sites. The second section contains three empirical chapters derived from data that was collected during field visits in 2019-2020 (Table 1.) Lastly, the conclusion to this thesis summaries findings and explores future potential research that could emerge from this project.

Table 1. Methods and aims used in different chapters.

Research Question	Methods	Data and aims	Chapters
1	Thematic analysis	Semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis of policy documents: to explore the historicity of CG and identity the factors shaping current policy trends in DRR.	2, 4
2	Case study	Semi-structured interviews, observations, and content analysis of policy documents: To gain insight into recent institutional changes and identify the discursive tools currently active in Nepali DRR policy.	5
3	Case study	Semi-structured interviews, observation: To focus in on the challenges still faced by remote Indigenous communities in western Nepal.	6

Chapter two: Literature Review

This chapter reviews three bodies of literature and sets out the crucial conceptual frameworks that are drawn on throughout this thesis.

- Firstly, I map out the history of hazards and disasters studies following how they have evolved from a purely geophysical focus to include wider socio-political processes.

- Secondly, I look at historical governance literature exploring the evolution from government to modern day governance.

- Thirdly, I look at collaborative governance exploring its genesis and emergence from various fields of study. In doing so I explore how CG, in the sense of sustainable long term governing solutions, has not been explored in relation to DRR.

Chapter three: Methodology

In this chapter I set out the methodological approaches employed in this study. I introduce the field site and explain the rationale and decision process utilized when deciding where to work. I then explore my reasoning for the chosen sampling approach and the methods used to contact interviewees for semi-structured interviews. I explain how the interview track was developed and the ethical control processes that were applied when conducting interviews. Further to this, I lay out the data cleaning and storage protocols. I then discuss analysis and different understandings that were considered through data cleaning and analysis. I then reflect upon my own positionality as a researcher, drawing on field notes to reflect on the evolution of the research, particularly in relation to COVID-19 disruptions.

I reflect on my experience of conducting this research. I do this along three axes. Firstly, I explore the challenges I faced conducting research during a global pandemic, the impact this had on my ability to access data and the measures I had to take to counteract the large disruption to my studies. I reflect on what this might mean for an international researcher and what impacts this has on the wider research community going forward. Secondly, I reflect on my experience of researching CG and focus on my role in CG systems and my experience of collaboration with other researchers. Lastly, I look at the challenges that still face the research

of CG and resilience and what can be done going forward to make this practice more inclusive.

Chapter four: The evolving discourse of collaboration

In this chapter I conduct a content analysis of grey literature and scholarship exploring the historicity of collaboration in DRR in Nepal and examine how it has evolved over the past 40 years. To do this I collate a data set of policy documents and wide grey literature and identify how collaboration and collective action for DRR is framed throughout distinct periods of time. I focus specifically on how collaboration is perceived in the policy- what are the benefits of CG, and which actors are connected to collaboration; and crucially which actors are not. I then supplement this analysis with extracts from semi-structured interviews I conducted during my field work. The interview participants I use in this chapter are all actors who have been involved in DRR and humanitarian work for over 20 years. Their experience is used as confirmatory insight into institutional change and factors that influence it from a *lived* perspective. Lastly this chapter draws on political scholarship that explored major events in Nepal's history to give additional contextual perspective.

Chapter five: Towards a collaborative governance regime

In this chapter I explore collaborative governance via a case study of the changing public policy and institutional structures that govern hazards in Nepal. As discussed in chapter 4, Nepal's recent federalisation and institutional reforms have reshaped DRR with the aim to embed a governing system based on greater collaboration. I argue this amounts to a move

towards a collaborative governance regime (CGR) for DRR. Drawing on primary qualitative data derived from seventeen semi-structured interviews at national, provincial, and local scales, I identify state-sponsored scalar narratives around 1) actor capacities and tendencies in DRR; 2) knowledge production on DRR and its dissemination; and 3) formal and informal institutional DRR roles and responsibilities. I suggest that these narratives are being used as anchor points for a new CG approach to national DRR strategy. However, the analysis shows these narratives exclude local participation in DRR though marginalising grassroots politics to emphasise top-down state-led goals. In turn, this leads me to question the viability of the emerging governance regime as a truly collaborative project embedding principles of sustainability and inclusivity. I conclude that if these state scalar narratives continue to shape national policy, they will impede the potential for transformative collaborative action for DRR in Nepal.

Chapter six: perceptions on community coping strategies and resilience.

 In this chapter I address the final research question, how does the concept of resilience impact the emerging CGR in Nepal? This chapter seeks to explore how the more established concept of resilience in DRR interconnects with that of CG.I argue that given the novelty and emerging nature of CG in Nepal it is not yet possible to answer if it will increase resilience, rather, I ask what is the impact of resilience thinking on CG. Drawing on seventeen semi structured interviews with national local and municipal DRR actors, I explore how, through the lens of *increasing resilience,* communities and community resilience is perceived in Nepal. I argue that the historical framing of resilience in Nepal is one of the contributing factors to the exclusion of communities in the emerging CG regime. This exclusion is then

explored through the perspective of community members. To do this I draw on eighteen semi structured interviews I conducted with community members in Sunkuda. These interviews focussed on the types of support communities got from each other, the state, and NGOs in the area. These interviews show that communities received no support from the state and instead relied upon informal networks of support, mostly kinship and locally powerful people. I argue that the focus on resilience thinking and the definition of what a resilient community looks like has led to these communities not being included in CG. Further by excluding these communities the emerging CG regime is overlooking critical knowledge concerning support networks and capacities at the community level; thus, making any emerging system less likely to increase resilience.

Chapter seven: Conclusion

I conclude by drawing together findings from chapters four , five and six and discussing how they interrelate to provide insight into the emerging CGR in Nepal. I argue that more consideration of the impact of discourse on CGR is needed to fill current gaps in scholarship. I then reflect on my research project and the methods I have taken. I discuss the pros and cons of these approaches and what I would have done differently. I end by discussing my thoughts on international research in the light of COVID-19and what this might mean for future projects.

2. Chapter two: Literature review

2. *Introduction*

This literature review gives a synthesized overview of three areas of research that this thesis

draws on: Disaster risk reduction (DRR), collaborative governance (CG), and collaborative

disaster governance (CDG). The first two, DRR and CG, are well established areas of

scholarship with a rich history of theoretical and applied engagement. The third, CDG, is a

novel field that has emerged in the last decade through the merging of key concepts from the

first two areas of research. By bringing these three bodies of literature together I will show

the genesis and key concepts that formed DRR and CG, and how they have merged to form

the new area of CDG research. This will allow me to explore the evolution of DRR from a

conceptual perspective and explore current gaps in scholarship. This chapter provides a

theoretical framework for the thesis and allows me to look forward to, and question the future

needs of CDG.

2.1. *The genesis of disaster research*

Natural hazards and disasters occupy a contested place in the study of human-environment

interactions, spanning across disciplines. Historically, how hazards and disasters were

understood has created tensions between epistemological communities, going as far back to

pre-1800 catastrophist[2] vs uniformitarianism debates (Lyell, 1833; Bryant, 1991). More

recent epistemic tensions are focussed on the divide between positivistic natural sciences and

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[2]Pre-1800 catastrophist viewed hazards as an act of God. This is different from modern day catastrophists who

view large scale events as being catalysts for permanent environment change (Bryant, 1991).

interpretive social sciences and humanities; as highlighted in the Royal Geographical Society debates in the mid-nineties on whether to acknowledge the relevance of subjective risk or stay with the status quo of measuring risk objectively (Thompson, 2020). From a governing perspective, hazard focused policies and institutions have historically tended to favour the positivist approach, although recent changes in the past two decades have encompassed more social science conceptualisations and tools.

 To engage with this complex terrain, I will use the lens of the three main concepts that guide and motivate policies and institutions working in DRR: These are risk, vulnerability, and resilience. Each of these concepts can loosely be associated with the history of a particular epistemic engagement with hazards and disaster. Risk is a concept that emerged first within the positivist sciences and was the dominant paradigm used for governing hazards from 1900 to the 1980s, Vulnerability emerged in the 1980s and is primarily associated with the social sciences; and most recently resilience has become the key guiding paradigm associated with DRR and is an extension of the two earlier concepts. These concepts are highly interrelated and represent the evolution and expansion of knowledge that informs and shape policies and practices in different and contested ways. By tracing their emergence, I provide an insight into how human engagement with disasters and hazard has evolved and expanded from a positivist natural science approach to one that includes interpretive social scientific methods and concepts.

2.2. *Risk*

Risk has historically framed hazards and disasters as interchangeable. Disasters were caused by exposure to hazards and disaster risk was measured in quantifiable terms i.e., exposure and potential cost of damage. Risk was the predominant lens used by positivist sciences when researching human interactions with hazards. As a result, disaster risk was presented as manageable and lent itself to a top-down technocratic managerial approaches to prevent disasters (Bryant, 1991; Frampton, 1996; White and Haughton, 2017; Hanson-Easey et al., 2018). The study of disasters with this framing are defined by Hewitt as part of the hazards paradigm (Hewitt, 1997).The hazards paradigm has roots in uniformitarian views that founded geology as a discipline and is associated notably with Charles Lyell (Lyell, 1833). The study of hazards within this paradigm focused primarily on geological processes as the cause of events, with natural hazards characterised mainly in terms of their geophysical, meteorological, or biological properties and processes.

 Research of hazards can be further divided into two subfields; the earth process approach, described as "people living in a hostile environment" (Bryant, 1991) and studies that explore the effect of humans on the planet. The former engagement can be seen in work that focuses specifically on the geophysical causal processes of hazards, for example hydrological systems and their relationship to landslides (Bryant, 1991). Bryant, as an example of this worldview, views the geophysical and social as distinct spheres believing that disasters are not related to social processes. For example, Bryant states that disasters occur due to the misfortune of "living in a region that is hazard prone" (Bryant, 1991p8). Whereas scholars working in the latter subfield- humans' impact on the earth- include the *social* to show how humans' impact on geophysical processes and their potential trigger for hazards. A good example of this

subfield is the Theory of Himalayan Environmental Degradation (THED) which located the cause of landslide and related flooding on the agricultural practices of uneducated farmers; for example, Frampton, Chaffey, and Hardwick et.al suggest that the main cause of landslides is "over grazing and population pressure on the land" (Frampton et al., 1996 p78). Additionally, there is research that is in both subfields; McGuire et.al stress the complexity of natural hazards, suggesting that it is human practice and geologic processes combined that shape hazards (McGuire et al., 2002). However, it's important to note that whilst human impact such as over-population is presented as a directly attributable *cause* for hazards, the link between socio-cultural practices and the scale and impact of disasters is not made (McGuire,2002). All these examples focus on impact/outcome, normally coupled with little engagement with the socio-political constraints, histories, and practices that shape and uphold cultures impacted by hazards. Regardless of internal disciplinary subfields, the hazards paradigm connects hazards and disasters in a linear process of cause and effect. Hazards have the potential to cause widespread destruction/disruption by interacting with human systems, when they do this, they cause disasters. Hazards may be common but are not viewed as part of the everyday lived experience as such disasters ultimately are just part of natural earth processes (Bryant, 1991).

The shift in the accepted meaning of risk started in the late 1980-90s' with the introduction of social vulnerability as a core component. This position is typified in the pressure and release model (PAR) (Blaikie & Wisner et.al., 2004), which argues that disasters are the result of an intersection between vulnerability and hazards; both need to be present for a disaster to occur. According to the PAR model, disaster risk = social vulnerability x hazard. Social

vulnerability is created by a mix of root causes (well established political and structural inequalities), dynamic pressures (processes that reinforce the inequalities of the root causes), and unsafe conditions (specific forms of vulnerability in communities). Social vulnerability is seen as a critical factor in shaping how/if a hazard will turn into a disaster. Without social vulnerability, communities affected by hazards would be able to cope with the impact. The social turn in risk management can also be seen in the debates surrounding subjective measures of risk (Verweji, 2022). Subjective risk relates to the perceived risk that an individual feels based on lived experience of exposure to and recovery from hazards. Subjective risk has a direct impact on objective risk through the lessons learned by individuals and how they adapt to mitigate against future harm. During the early 1990's the inclusion of subjective risk in the debates on the root causes of disasters represented a big shift in how disasters are understood and governed (Verweji, 2022). These changes in the definition and of risk are part of a wider emergence of vulnerability in disaster management.

2.3. *Vulnerability*
Emerging in 1980s, scholarship that is loosely termed the disaster paradigm or critical disaster studies (CDS) started to gain traction. CDS is associated with the social sciences and humanities in fields such as human geography, sociology, anthropology, and political science (Blaikie and Brookfield, 1987; Timmerman ,1981). According to Wisner et.al this earlier geologic focus of disaster management led to the relationship between hazards and disasters being conflated; disasters happened as the result of a hazard coming into conflict with a system or society (cf. Bryant). For social scientists, this reading lacked nuance and didn't answer questions as to why, for example, communities experienced the same hazards differently, why some in communities recovered whilst others didn't , or people stayed or

moved into known high-risk areas (Hewitt, 1997; Wisner *et al.*, 2004; Scolobig and Pelling, 2016). A crucial way that disaster scholars started to explore these questions was to complicate the notion of *natural* in disaster discourse (Blaikie and Brookfield, 1987; Hewitt, 1997; Wisner *et al.*, 2004; White,1974). Gilbert White was one of the earlier academics to do this in his 1974 study on different responses to hazards. He suggests that the *natural* in disaster research was not something that simply occurred. White believes that the impact of disasters were strongly mediated by different society's adjustments to geologic events, linking his work with the formation of subjective risk (White, 1974). The concept of vulnerability was critical in the debates on the inequality in disaster impact. The importance of vulnerability comes from the concept being rooted in the understanding that exposure to hazards alone cannot account for the varying levels of impact that occur during a disaster. This concern led to the hazard's paradigm being criticised for ignoring the structural and political practices that create inequality between people in the same area.

To explore the political nature of disasters, scholars channelled their work through the concept of vulnerability. Vulnerability is a contested concept and has been criticised for being vaguely defined and variably applied in many disciplines (Adger, 2006; Prowse., 2003; Timmerman, 1981). In this thesis, I will focus on the hazard related vulnerability and not engage with the entitlements and livelihood approach to vulnerability although there are crossovers between them[3]. Wisner et.al, suggests that the concept of vulnerability is a crucial

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[3] Entitlements and livelihood conceptualisation of vulnerability arose from work on famine and explores how vulnerability to famine is the result of widespread failures across socio-political systems that results "entitlement

tool in addressing the dominance of the hazard's paradigm in mainstream disaster management. Whilst intricately linked with risk, vulnerability studies focus more on the political and social context within which hazards may occur.

 Vulnerability, according to Wisner is connected to the everyday lived experiences of communities inhabiting an area; as such cultural, historical, political, and economic factors play a role in how a hazard will impact different members of a community, and at various times (Wisner *et al.*, 2004). Embedded in this conceptualisation is the notion that place context matters, not just in the sense that people in Nepal and England have diverse cultural, social, and environmental concerns, but that the characteristics of a given place varies over time and in relation to other places (Agnew, 2002; Massey, 2005, 2013). Wisner calls this the "chain of explanation" which suggests that situational elements e.g. political upheaval, war, trade, and shifting climate all play a role in a community's susceptibility to disasters if a hazard event should occur (Wisner *et al.*, 2004; Wisner, 2017). A good example of this is Wisner's challenge to the understanding of disasters as a freak occurrence that has befallen an unlucky community that happens to be in harm's way by drawing on geographical concepts of place-making/inhabiting (Bryant, 1991; Wisner et al., 2004). The act of inhabiting includes lived knowledge of the physical attributes of that environment; the events, activities, and institutions that occur in that space; and the collective memory, meaning, understanding, and

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failure" (entitlements being a collection or combination of services and goods) (Sen, 1981). This approach to vulnerability, differs slightly in that it is more development focused and explores vulnerability from a human rights perspective.

intentions of people who interact with that place (Seamon and Sowers, 2008). In relation to disasters, the elements involved in place making create a historical understanding of the environment and a knowledge of risk that works to navigate the challenges of that environment over time. Wisner suggests that risk, in a sense, becomes part of the knowledge embedded in an area and therefore should be able to be mitigated. Whilst not always predictable, hazards are not unforeseen therefore, disasters become a product of inaction, maladaptation, or externalities (Wisner et al., 2004; Pelling and Dill, 2010; Clark, Chhotray and Few, 2013). The very fact that disaster risk continues to exist introduces questions of why and who is responsible for this, which makes disasters explicitly political.

At the root of arguments surrounding the political nature of disasters, chain of explanation and emphasis on contextual relevance is the idea that power impacts how and who are more vulnerable to disasters (Blaikie and Brookfield, 1987; Rocheleau, 2008; Blaikie and Muldavin, 2014; Smucker *et al.*, 2015) Piers Blaikie, in particular, has spent a career writing about the role of power in relation to environmental resource management. Regarding disasters Blaikie, working with Wisner, discusses how power and political relations can be harmful to more than just access to resources and aid in the aftermath of hazard. They suggest that power dynamics can affect access to decision making forums thus impacting the ability to create change, which could leave marginalised citizens vulnerable to future impacts. This suggests that communities that are economically and politically marginalised before a hazards event, suffer most, in part due to lack of political voice during a disaster and rebuilding phase (Blaikie, Cameron and Seddon, 1980; Blaikie and Brookfield, 1987; Wisner *et al.*, 2004). Blaikie here suggest that hazards and disasters are embedded in social

processes, not simply regarding previous states of insecurity, but that power relations are reproduced throughout a state of emergency.

Key writing surrounding critical engagement with disasters aims, in large part, at complicating the positivist approaches that had been very influential in informing mainstream policy and action over the last few decades (Hewitt, 1997; Wisner *et al.*, 2004; Clark, Chhotray and Few, 2013). The concern from many critical disaster scholars was that, as a result of the hazards paradigm, many state and international responses had become focussed upon recovery not prevention, therefore not addressing the root causes of disasters, making action costly, ineffective and unsustainable (Wisner *et al.*, 2004; Clark, Chhotray and Few, 2013; The Government of Nepal, 2017). Added to this, the history of positivist research on hazards left a legacy of disasters being seen as something uncomplicated and therefore easily manageable. This led to many of the international and national policies and best practices guidance being top down and expert led. There was little room for non-governmental, non- expert actors in the field of disaster management. However, the introduction of concepts of vulnerability and subjective risk changed that and highlighted the need for a more collaborative approach to disaster risk management, one that was more inclusive and attuned to the complexity of disasters.

One of the major catalysts for the move towards a more collaborative approach in disaster governance scholarship can be seen in the emergence and focus on increasing resilience as framework for action and policy at the international and national level. First explored by C.S Holling, the concept of resilience relates to a socio-ecological system's capacity to recover

from an external shock (Holling et, al 1973). A basic definition is a system that can withstand, adapt, and recover/rebuild to its previous state after a shock . This scholarship recognised the need for an analytical framework that could conceptualise the interdependence of social and ecological systems. Emerging alongside the concept of resilience in SES is the acknowledgement that novel governance approaches were needed in the management of these systems; ones that would reflect their complexity and dynamics. What emerged were approaches to governance that come under the umbrella of Adaptive Governance (AG). AG scholarship covers a wide variety of governance theories (collaborative governance, new environmental governance, multilevel governance, ecosystem governance) that, whilst different in approach and language, tend to share common principles such as: an emphasis on participation and collaboration, self-organization and networks, learning and innovative thinking, and polycentric institutional networks (Djalante,2019). Environmental policy from these governance approaches tend to prefer flexible, less prescriptive, decentralised decision making that promotes participatory multistakeholder groups that are intentionally adaptive (Djalante, 2019; Holley, 2010). It is within the wider AG scholarship that value of collaboration in increasing resilience was initially elaborated.

Collaboration is a core characteristic of AG and can lead to increased bonding, creates a sense of group identity, and pools knowledge and resources which fosters trust and social capital. In a system where there is greater trust and social capital there is an increase in polycentric system function and self-organisation networks which in turn promote learning and innovation heightening capacity and promotes resilience (Parker and Braithwaite,2003; Pahl-Wostl, 2009). This is prudent when it comes to dynamic DRR needs and challenges

which are recognised in the Sendai framework as requiring a broad base of collaboration to be successfully addressed (Munene, et.al, 2018).

2.4. *Collaborative Governance*

Collaborative governance (CG) emerged through small scale, multi actor engagements that filled gaps left by failed top-down managerial responses to complex issues (Ansell and Gash, 2008; Gunningham, 2009; Gupta, Pahl-Wostl and Zondervan, 2013). From a conceptual perspective, CG was forged through practice in the disciplines of public policy, organizational sociology, and behavioural economics. Over the past three decades CG has gained prominence in international governance and is lauded across academia and international policy agendas as the best approach to a wide range of complex issues, such as international development, climate breakdown, DRR, population migration, biodiversity conservation, and watershed management (Lubell, 2016; Voets, et al., 2021). CG has gained traction in governing wicked problems, which reflects the understanding that issues today have become too complex for traditional 'tame' solutions (Thompson, 2018). Wicked problems now dominate the international governance agenda, and they require complex, adaptive cross sectoral, multi actor approaches. Wicked problems are those that create uncertainty in governance. They are dynamic with no one solution, in fact, often they have competing solutions, and different understandings of what the problem is (Rittel & Webber, 1973). This is reflected in international policy in the Sendai Framework from the UNDRR, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), and in the UNFCCC with calls for greater collaboration. A further reason behind the endorsement is due to the synergies CG has with the concept of resilience. CG is deemed as more of a responsive way of governing as it

promotes increased adaptive capacity, self-organising, and sustainability when compared with traditional top-down approaches to governing.

However, a result of CG's multi-disciplinary origins is a lack of consensus within scholarship concerning how to define CG and what are the best practice processes and structuring of a CG network. Further, the vagueness of CG has led to a difficulty in comparing it to other types of multi-actor governance networks (Ansell and Gash, 2008; Nabatchi and Emerson, 2016). The incomparability of CG to other forms of governance has resulted in uncertainty as to what effective CG should look like, and how to monitor success and failure as traditional frameworks for measuring success in governance cannot be applied (Ansell and Torfing, 2015; Gunningham, 2009). These tensions are reflected in the body of literature surrounding CG which, historically, has focussed on how individual actors interacted with each other in small scale case studies. As a result of the tightly focused lens of past CG studies there are still gaps in knowledge in relation into the genesis of CG, what discourses are behind collaboration, and how this translates to exploring larger political questions in relation to what impact CG could have on future engagement with complex governance issues (Ansell and Torfing, 2015).

There have been attempts to create scalable frameworks for CG, notably Ansell and Gash, (2008) synthesised past scholarship into an operational framework for scalable, comparative, cross sector CG. They suggested that there are key aspects that make a governance system collaborative, these are: addressing a public concern; state agencies are responsible for initiating action (including instruments of bureaucracy and judicial institutions) which is

formally structured with regular meetings; the process must include non-state actors in a formative way not just consultative (direct involvement in decision making); lastly, even if not successful, CG should aim to make decision through consensus (Ansell and Gash, 2008). Further, they attempt to solidify who should be involved in CG and what their roles should be; noting that collaboration cannot simply be cross department government networks, or state and NGO partnerships .CG must involve a wide variety of actors including citizens, individuals, and interest groups, as well as state and civil society. These collaborations must allow for formally structured exchanges of information, with individual citizens having the opportunity to have a real impact in the CG network.

The emphasis on formal collaboration has often been used by scholars to distinguish CG from its origins of informal ad hoc partnerships between state and interest groups (Leach, Pelkey and Sabatier,2002; Padilla and Daigle, 1998). The purpose of this, according to the scholarship, is to add a level of structuring, purposeful strategy, and accountability to a governance system. In formal CG systems meetings and engagement by different actors are mandated and monitored ensuring that citizens and non-state actors are meaningfully involved, as well as ensuring state representatives are present and remain engaged. However, formality in CG has been critiqued by some scholars who argue that highly formalised CG approaches do not account for power dynamics between state officials and citizens, which can discourage citizen buy in due to the issues of distrust, intimidation, and nepotism (Nabatchi & Emerson 2015; Morrison et. al, 2017). Further, highly formalised systems tend to not be sustainable, as they are inflexible and fail to adapt to changing concerns that arise in a collaborative effort. When viewed through this lens, formalising a CG system does run

counter to the very thing that it is lauded for; that is being adaptable and therefore a more resilient form of governance.

Emerson and Nabatchi make similar observations about CG concerning the lack of clear understanding of CG, no consensus, and confusion caused by multiple definitions. However, unlike previous attempts to lock in a working definition, they take a much broader approach. CG, according to Emerson and Nabatchi, should be seen as a broad term that is nonprescriptive and therefore integrative of the various collaborative arrangements that exist. They define CG as "The processes and structures of public policy decision making and management that enable people to engage across boundaries" (Emerson and Nabatchi, 2015, 10). Emerson and Nabatchi argue, this broader approach to defining CG is the most effective response to wicked problems that require complex answers. CG is a process that is still developing, iteratively, to address the specific needs of that given problem at that specific time and place. Therefore, CG can manifest in different forms at various stages in addressing the problem. Having a more open definition of CG allows for scholars to engage with a wider selection of collaborative governance arrangements and models. To aid this endeavour, they develop a typology of CG that allows for greater understanding of the diverse types of CG that exists at different scales in different locales, and involving different actors. This caveat is important to this thesis as most examples of CG are based in the Global North, Western societies, and as such adheres to a specific understanding of governance and democracy, which may not be applicable in a different part of the world such as Nepal.

A broader approach to CG offers access to a range of new perspectives such as polycentric network thinking. The benefit of polycentric conceptualisation of networks is that it is an effective way to understand the interaction and power dynamics of multiple actors within a system (Berardo and Lubell, 2016; Lubell, 2017). Most notably linked with Michael Polanyi and later with Vincent and Elinor Ostrom, polycentricism is a network theory approach to governance which aims to explore the complexity and manifest relationships within a collaborative system (Polanyi, 1951; Ostrom, 2010; Aligica and Tarko, 2012). Lubell, for example, suggests a wide variety of elements such as organisational capacity of actors (from both state and non-state areas), relative strength of the state, knowledge generation and transference, and the context of the problem (the issue addressed), as well as geopolitics (the state, region, southern /northern designations etc) all work to shape a network (Berardo and Lubell, 2016). Pertinent to this study is polycentricism's focus on power dynamics between actors which, as I show later, is a pressing issue in Nepal. Exploring the power dynamics in CG also redresses gaps in the past studies that focussed on formalising CG; Ansell and Gash (2008), for example, do not engage with ideas of power between the state and non-state actors. This is a major gap in their work particularly as they emphasise the importance of the state in CG networks. This is not to say that polycentrism suggests the state has no role in governance, rather, the state is but one of many power centres that exist, interact and co-produce the governance system.

What becomes interesting is if you examine the issues different CG scholars are looking at. Lubell and Ostrom, both of whom explore collaboration within a broader polycentric network structure are looking at collaborative environmental governance. A reason for this is raised by

Koontz et al in their critique of stricter CG. They question the efficacy of CG acceptance as the *best* approach to global environmental governance (Koontz and Thomas, 2006). The suggestion is that the hype around CG has outpaced research conducted on the actual outcomes and whether they produce impacts that are good for the environment. Quantifying environmental outcomes in relation to policy is a tricky and complicated process, in any given environment, there is a diverse ecosystem at work which includes multiple variables, processes and interactions that manifest in diverse ways over multiple time periods. As such designing research that can take all these variables into account and then relate it to the complex international policy arena is extremely difficult, with many researchers electing to record governance outputs (reports, policy aims) as a means of evaluating the success of CG (Koontz and Thomas, 2006). It is in this position that the question is raised; what role does the environment play in CG networks? Is there something about environmental collaborative governance that creates the need for differing expectations of actor roles and engagements?

DRR fits into the definition of a wicked environmental problems which is why it is important to question how CG is being implemented for DRR. Internationally, CG for DRR is emerging as a highly formalised network and is struggling as a result. Why CG for DRR has taken this more formalised route is yet to be understood. But, given the high stakes in finding an equitable and effective governance approach to prevent disasters, it is a critical challenge for international governance. In the next section I will look deeper into how CG and DRR have merged to become, Collaborative Disaster Governance(CDG).

2.5. *Collaboration in disaster scholarship*

Over the past decade there has been a growing international *buzz* within disaster risk reduction (DRR) community about the potential for CG to increase resilience and reduce

disaster risk (Nohrstedtst,2022). Collaboration between different government departments, sectors, and disciplines has a long history and is an extensively researched aspect of how we respond to and recover from hazard induced disasters. This is due to the tacit understanding that when a large-scale disaster occurs it requires a response far beyond what the state alone can provide. Collaboration, in its various manifestations, is represented in international and national policies as fundamental to the management of and recovery from disasters. Collaboration can enhance adaptability and resilience due to processes of decentralised decision making and by providing a platform for traditional and local needs to be heard in relation to actionable knowledge; these are a crucial part of successful recovery in the aftermath of disaster (Uhr,2017). However, there are still areas that have not yet been covered by disaster literature, which I will explore later in this section; firstly, I outline the major themes of collaboration focused research to date.

2.5.1.   *Actor typology*

Actor typology scholarship has roots in public policy and sensemaking research that explores the impact of individual actors or collectives in a network on the structure and efficacy of collaboration. In the disaster context the objective of this research is to understand how different actors impact collaboration in the post disaster context (Uhr, 2017). Scholars examine these questions in multiple ways. One of the more common examples is how diverse types of actors work together in the post disaster network i.e. state and non-state, and what are the challenges and benefits of these relationships. A good example of this is Lai et al. (2012) work on voluntary organisations. In this case study Lai et al. look at how voluntary organisations (VO) can contribute to collaborations in complex transboundary regional disaster response. Using a comparative analysis of two disasters they show that VO are better

at providing swift resource mobilisation and more able to accommodate community needs (Lai et al. ,2012). The study found that state bureaucracies cease to function effectively in the aftermath of disasters, particularly when dealing with transboundary hazards that affect multiple jurisdictions. In this study, VOs can become crucial brokering agents in the transboundary collaboration context; however, this is caveated depending on the organising capacity of the VO. Lais et al work focusses on the Red Cross, a large international organisation who have a strong history of cross boundary disaster response.

A variation of the questions on how different actors work together, is the study of scalar politics to explore how international, national, and local collaborate. Multiple studies on this area exist with particular focus on the scalar barrier, policies and regulations that govern collaboration during disasters. Drawing from the disciplines of anthropology, adaptation, and resilience literatures there is a strong focus on local actors such as community members who are seen as crucial to successful DRR. Kapucu et.al (2010) argue that *"local actors are faster and more effective in responding to disasters"* (Kapucu et al., 2010, p. 240). Scholars focussing on post disaster response often seek to highlight gaps between the local and national/global to promote autonomy from the bottom up; local knowledge is depicted as critical to understanding vulnerability, needs and traditions. Not only do the local actors provide more effective action their responses are also better coordinated as they have a stronger tie with people in their local network (Kapucu et al., 2010). However, it is important to note that this is in the response and recovery, there is still a marked bias against including local knowledge in risk reduction activities and a dearth of research on the local in CG DRR.

Moving beyond which actors and scales work effectively together are studies that explore why this is the case focusing on management styles and actor perceptions. Scholars working on this seek to understand different variables such actor qualities or characteristics, capabilities, and political influence; and how these variables are both projected by the individual actors and placed upon them from within and outside the network. Warganegara and Samson, for example, argue that even perceptions have a negative impact on the efficacy of a collaborative network. In their case study of the 2018 Indonesians tsunami, they argue that governments preconceived notions of the qualities i.e., capacities and abilities of different actors, impacted collaboration in the DRM network (Warganegara and Samson, 2020). Their critique is centred on the lack of engagement by local governments with the informal cultural institutions and local religious groups. They suggest that there is a lack of understanding of the abilities of informal cultural and religious institution had in utilising traditional knowledge, community influence and trust. This led to these organisations being excluded from the collaborative process resulting in duplication and gaps in victim support. By excluding this organisation recovery from the tsunami was impacted and the network was less effective due to poor understanding of vulnerability distribution in the local communities (Warganegara and Samson, 2020).

2.5.2. *CG system context*

Another common aspect that work exploring collaboration in DRR is focused on is the context of the system in which the network is based. This area has its genesis in the critical realist world view that emphasises relational power in shaping systems. The epistemic position of this work is that DRR networks and CG systems are not formed in a vacuum, they are affected by the shifting dynamics of the wider geopolitical, social economic, and

historical context in which they emerge and evolve (Nabatchi & Emerson, 2015; Hermanson, 2019). To understand a CG system, you need to understand the context where it operates and how this can influence and shape it. This context is not limited to the location where the CG system is enacted, it also speaks to the wider regional and international context, including shifting paradigms and international movements and hegemonic discourses e.g. the inclusion of vulnerability as a component of risk. Importantly, the system context is constantly evolving and is in turn influenced by the CG network working within it. As such scholars have focused not just on the historical context of a CG system, they also engaged across temporalities, exploring recent shifts and predicted trends for future interactions.

Helena Hermanson's work on the role of municipalities in Turkey's DRR policies is a primary example of how historical governing norms can affect CG (Hermanson, 2019). Hermanson explores how the previously established institutional structure and political customs of the Turkish governance has shaped cross scalar collaboration in relation to DRR, particularly at the local and municipal levels. She argued the deep-rooted traditions of centralised hierarchical disaster management system has played an integral role in isolating local and municipal actors and ignoring their needs. Despite reforms that followed international paradigm shifts towards decentralised CG the history of political norms of centralisation have proven difficult to break down in practice. This, she argues, is due to the impact that trust, pre-existing relations, and shared motivation can have on processes of collaboration. If historic collaborative relationships have had negative outcomes, then actors are less likely to work together again. This is compounded by interdependence and how different actors view each other's role within a collaborative system: linking back to actor

typologies actors must see the value in working together for collaboration to be successful. In Turkey the partially centralised government system has led to conflicting roles between the different administrative layers; because of this political affiliation has become crucial to determining the effectiveness of CG. Hermanson concludes that the strictly centralised governance is resulting in missed opportunities and neglect of local vulnerabilities. This in turn has created stagnation in knowledge transfer and resulted in bureaucratic delays in post disaster relief and recovery, rendering the current DRR system ineffective.

More recent work on CG has broken system context down further and focuses on the various subsystems as a scale of analysis. Xing et al (2020) deconstruct the broader conceptualisations of system context into identifiable variables which are defined as the components that contribute to effective collaborative disaster risk management, e.g., emergency command, monitoring and early warning, information sharing. By doing this Xing et al can analyse how different subsystems of governance have an impact on the system as a whole; and what is the relative weighting between the subsystems? Is one more important than the others? This knowledge can then be used to explore and predict what impact subsystems have on effective collaboration, allowing for policy guidance and emerging systems.

Looking beyond the state context an emerging area of research explores the international perspective. Guo and Kapucu draw upon gaps that have been observed in wider CG scholarship surrounding a western bias, particularly the north American focus (Guo and Kapucu, 2020; Nabatchi and Emerson, 2016; Ansell and Gash, 2008). This bias in CG

scholarship is particularly salient when looking at DRR, as non-western, majority world

countries are overwhelmingly more affected by natural hazards than the minority world, with

higher levels of vulnerability and lower levels of resilience. Added to this majority world

countries are governed by a diverse set of ideologies, whilst many align with what we, in the

global north, understand as a democracy, other countries practice starkly different political

ideologies. Guo and Kapucu (2020) in their study of collaborative governance in communist

China unpack this ideological friction further. They argue that China's one-party state has a

strong history of collaborative work in DRR, but it is system that pushes for unity and

consensus in DRR activities; this runs counter to the collaborative partnerships studied in

western democracies. As such, it is salient to explore this form of collaboration to understand

the different systems and their relative effectiveness to highlight commonalities and

differences.

In the context of China, previous work exploring major disasters has suggested that the party

command and control system is efficient and can be extremely effective in responding to

disasters (Guo and Kapucu, 2020). However, there are also strong critiques of Chinese

collaborative disaster governance (CDG) stating that the system is inflexible and lacks ability

to adapt to different actors needs and vulnerabilities; this makes the system non-conducive to

building resilience and threatens the long-term sustainability of CDG. Guo and Kapucu

concentrate their comparison on the network structure of CDG using social network analysis

to understand the design of network, the number of ties and movements between actors in

China's DRR governance. Guo and Kapucu's work highlights key aspects of collaboration

that can be effective across political ideologies, which given the increasingly prominent

influence that international policies and paradigms have on shaping DRR is crucial to test what aspects of CG are truly globally transferable.

An important distinction that has been noted by scholars working on CG is that system context is temporally complex; what is true to that system at one point in time is not true even a few short months or years later. There are multiple shifting elements at work here, the DRM systems itself evolves based on lessons learned, adapting to type and scale of hazard it is addressing. Alongside this is the evolving international context which helps shape and drive best practice and policy guidelines. Further, the system context may change drastically based on the current ruling administration's policy initiatives and priorities. Systems are sensitive to the cultural movements, for example, if a minority group is perceived to be more affected by a disaster than others. An example of how a CG system can change over a brief period, as is seen in work by Htein et al (2018). Whilst the focus of the study is on actor typologies, they capture the temporal dynamics of the system context in Myanmar between 2015 to 2016. They explore how during the period between the flooding events, 1 year, a new political party was elected to run the government. This new administration swiftly reorganised the disaster risk management policies and practices. In this case study, they found there was a significant growth in the number of actors involved in CDG system between the two years. Further Htein et al argue that the CG network in 2016 was denser with actors intricately connected and working together more effectively than the previous year. They attribute this to policy changes that aimed explicitly at creating a decentralised system with the hope of forging a more autonomous local level disaster response. This shift in policy mirrors international

discourse and paradigms surrounding DRR which are promoted by the United Nations system and are requirements to meet the international sustainable development agenda.

All the papers reviewed in this section are rooted in the understanding that CG networks are shaped by and through the wider cultural and socio-political context. These works offer analysis of a few different variables that have impacted the CG network in their case study. In a similar line to the other CG research, the main aim of these papers is to explore examples of networks from an applied perspective to improve the efficacy of the collaborative networks in relation to DRR needs. However, these papers focus primarily on the top-down perspective, leaving little room for exploring the community level context and how that effects the CG network.

2.5.3.   *System structure*
A recent trend that has emerged in CDG scholarship is the use of social network analysis (SNA) to explore the structure of the network itself. Scholars believe that network structures have a marked and recognisable impact on how the network is governed and could indicate future outputs, success, and failures in collaboration (Bryson et. al,2015; Anklam, 2007). Common examples are comparing visualisation of network patterns to explore the power relations and connections of non-state sanctioned actors with policy documents, e.g., according to policies the nationally mandated disaster focused office is the central actor in the DRR network, whereas in practice a variety of international and national NGO's may have more social currency and stronger ties within the network (Granottover, 1973). An interesting example of how SNA is now being used in CG is Jovita et al (2018) paper exploring why

post disaster management networks fail in the Philippines. They analysed four networks in different parts of the Philippines using a range of network measurements (centrality, density) and compared the results. They found that density scores varied across regions and that regions where there were more actors resulted in poorer connections. What this meant was that there were fewer interdependencies and less trust resulting in less collaboration in the DRR network, as actors tended to stay in small distinct clusters.

Another use of SNA in CG disaster scholarship engages with questions of temporality and how networks and the actor relations and prominence within them evolve over time. Htein, et .al are a good example of how networks shift over a period in their paper on the shifting role of the military in response to flooding in Myanmar between 2015-2016 (Htein et al., 2018). This study uses social network analysis to explore evolving network centrality of flood response and recovery. Their data suggests that between the two flooding events there was increased collaboration between State and NGOs in disaster response. This closer collaboration between state and NGOs coincided with a reduction of responsibility and centrality of the military in disaster response networks. This is noteworthy as it highlights a convergence of trends in disaster management that have occurred over the past decade; firstly, higher levels of collaboration between state and non-state actors is linked with the rolling back of the state, in this case the military. Secondly, the reduction in military assistance is consistent with a move towards more preventative approaches to DRR. Internationally, the military has been associated with the post disaster scenario due to their primary functions as search and rescue.

As shown, previous scholarship on collaboration explores a range of questions: How actors collaborate during disaster response; actor roles (Uhr, 2017;) management styles (Wallner, 2018); knowledge transfer (Tselios and Tompkins, 2017; Zappa and Robins, 2016); network structure and components (Rivera et al., 2015;Vignola et al., 2013; Boschken, 2017); the different definitions of success in collaboration (Berardo and Lubell, 2016); how state include/excludes various actors (Bodin, 2017; Clark-Ginsberg, 2020)   and barriers to success (Spiekermann et al., 2015; Islam and Walkerden, 2017).

Yet, whilst there is a wealth of research on collaboration and disasters, there is a bias in the scholarship towards post- disaster scenarios with most CG studies focusing on disaster *aftermath* case studies. These are usually short-term collective or participatory responses to a disaster e.g., international aid distribution, military/UN response and recovery, state, and civil society partnerships to rebuild and recover. By focussing on one aspect of the disaster cycle, studies do not always address the full DRR cycle. In fact, most of the collaborative disaster scholarship focuses on the disaster cycle (post disaster) at the expense of the other phases (prevention / mitigation, preparedness, and reconstruction) pre-disaster. The result is that there is a dearth of interrogation surrounding CG and disaster preparedness/risk reduction.

2.6. *International frameworks of DRR*
The trends in evolution and co-construction of hazards and disaster studies can be traced within international governance structures, represented, primarily by the United Nations system. According to UN archives, the main objective of intergovernmental action in the first few decades of its tenure was to act as an aid facilitator and relief work co-ordination platform (Brown, 1979). This policy trajectory was reflective of the conventional wisdom of the time, framing disasters as part of the hazards paradigm, discussed above. The UN

followed response focused policies until the late 80s/90s and the International Decade of Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR). The IDNDR represented an official endorsement of emerging discourses that complicated the response heavy framework of the past. This shift in policy started to incorporate a focus on the social conditions that contributed to disasters, and incorporated, at a much larger scale, concepts of vulnerability (United Nations, 1994). It is important to note here that, prior to and during this period, sustainable development discourses and climate change had been growing in prominence in the UN global agendas since 1972 and the International Conference on Human Environment. As such, it is useful to view the IDNDR as part of the wider UN system of global agendas. In doing so, it becomes apparent that those working in DRR started to place emphasis not simply on the varying aspects of the political dimensions that contribute to disasters; i.e. asking why certain populations are situated in more exposed areas to hazards than others; but also trying to explore how this links with current and future poverty, poor land use, or migration etc (Madu and Kuei, 2017).

Salient markers from this period of UN history, position risk and vulnerability as crucial elements that need addressing for successful DRR policy; for example the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World 1994 (YSA) and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015(HFA) both reflect a marked shift towards preventative action based on risk and vulnerability frameworks that resulted in concepts of risk management and early warnings system being integrated into intergovernmental agendas (UNISDR, 2015; Munene, Swartling and Thomalla, 2018). Further to this, priorities of HFA are aimed at increasing awareness, knowledge dissemination, and national engagement in an attempt to reduce

vulnerability (UNISDR,; John Horekens, 2007; Unisdr, 2011; Jones *et al.*, 2014a;

Zimmermann and Keiler, 2015). Whilst this was a step in the right the direction, these phases

of the UN approach to DRR were subject to criticism for lack of effective action

(Zimmermann and Keiler, 2015). The nineties culminated in the emergence of the

International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) which was rebranded more recently as

the United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) as the portal through which the UN

system and many nations states channel disaster related knowledge and action co-ordination,

at least at an international level (UNISDR, 2018).

Current intergovernmental DRR policy is represented in the Sendai Framework for Disaster

Risk Reduction (SFDRR). The SFDRR, has 187 signatories from the international

community and was the first major intergovernmental policy to be enacted in the post 2015

period[4]. The SFDRR has attempted to take an action-oriented approach as seen in its four

priorities for action; these priorities focus on increased understanding of risk and

vulnerability, build back better (BBB) to improve infrastructure, strengthening institutional

capacity, and increased resilience through collaborative action from multiple stakeholders

(Murray, 2014; UNISDR, 2015; Zimmermann and Keiler, 2015; Munene, Swartling and

Thomalla, 2018). According to Glantz the spirit leading up to and during the world

conference on disaster risk reduction in 2015 was one of genuine desire for innovation and

change (Glantz, 2015; Kelman and Glantz, 2015). This can be seen in the moves from the

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[4] The other two major policy documents from the UN are the UNFCCC Paris accord, and the Sustainable development goals.

UN over the past two decades to reconceptualise socio-political links between poverty, vulnerability, and the environment to engage with large scale, complex, wicked environmental concerns. By doing so, modern day DRR questions how these interactions shape our future relationship with the planet and how we want that future to look. Whilst this is a step in the right direction, I should note that UN rationale for preventative action is still strongly associated and understood through economic discourse and business as usual models of growth and development. This has led to intergovernmental approaches to DRR to be criticized widely within the academy and beyond for promotion of western conceptualisation of modernity and democracy, and neo-liberally shaped development agendas (see Mysiak *et al.*, 2015; Nightingale, 2017; Munene, Swartling and Thomalla, 2018b).

A more nuanced look at these criticism around westernised views, highlights the state centric approach to DRR at the international level; particularly in how the UN conceptualises collaboration. The UN explores collaboration extensively in priority 2 of the Sendai Framework, which forefronts the *"engagement of all State institutions of an executive and legislative nature at national and local levels"* (UNDRR, 2015) as being critical to successful DRR. The power the state holds, in the vision of the UN, is to *"identify sectoral and multisectoral disaster risk…facilitate and support local multisectoral cooperation"* (e.g. among local governments); whilst *"setting a clear articulation of responsibilities*" (UNDRR, 2015) vertically across all sectors. Further, the state should facilitate greater horizontal collaboration with local government and community actors and should enable, guide and coordinate whilst "empowering local authorities and local communities to reduce disaster risk" (UNDRR,2015). Further these responsibilities should be established through laws,

regulations, standards, and procedures" (UNDRRR,2015). This characterisation of collaboration aligns with a formal collaborative governance approach (Ansell and Gash, 2009; Nabatchi and Emerson, 2013). Formal collaborative systems focus on the State as the main catalyst for action, that actively shape how actors are selected to participate and provide platforms in which collaborators engage with one another. In a formal collaborative system, the state is the main actor and normally has final say on decision and outcomes, although consensus decision making is the ideal. The role of the UN, (I)NGOs, and citizens participation is essential, but limited as the objectives and facilitation of these collaborative actions are set by the state (Nabatchi and Emerson, 2013). As such, what is envisioned in the UN framework and explored in discourse surrounding collaboration resembles a decentralisation of state power through a highly formalised version of collaborative governance. However, international policy from the UN is broad in its vision of CG leaving it open to interpretation on how collaboration should look and what roles different actors can adopt in the process. The broad definitions of CG coupled with the centring of the state by international policy has resulted in a system of governance in DRR that could be seen as paying lip service to collaborative ideals without any meaningful transformations in how states approach DRR.

2.7. *Conclusion*
Using the intersecting theories of disaster research (vulnerability, risk, and resilience), wider CGs scholarship, and international policies this study explores how these areas impact and help to shape and clarify institutional changes around collaboration in DRR . By drawing on thinking in these areas, I hope to address knowledge gaps that currently exist in CG for DRR. The conceptual framing for this research for this project was guided by a desire to complicate the axiom in international DRR that promotes CG as the best way to increase resilience to

hazards. By challenging the uncontested acceptance of CG, I have highlighted key gaps in the literature that could have very real impacts for people living in hazard prone areas. Much has been made of the benefit of CG yet there remain large gaps in the scholarship to understand the challenges of implementing this complex and often vaguely defined governance approach in different geopolitical contexts. Nohrstedt et al, argue that more research is essential to understand collaborative arrangements and the *"drivers and outcomes"* of these systems (Nohrstedt et al., 2022). Particularly at the grassroots level, it is critical to highlight the challenges to implementation as there is a risk of replicating past power dynamics that have traditionally overlooked the needs of Indigenous/remote populations (Morrison, et.al, 2017). The primary aim of this thesis is to explore these challenges and benefits in an emerging collaborative governance regime through a case study of Nepal's institutional changes. By doing this I hope to answer questions concerning how the *collaborative ideal* is being interpreted, implemented, and shaped by the geopolitical context in Nepal.

CG studies have tended to focus on mechanistic aspects of networks that emerge after a hazard event. However, this research begins by tracing the discursive evolution of collaboration and then examines how this discourse is impacting governance reform within the Nepali context. This research privileges the power of discourse to shape how problems are understood and solutions formed. In doing so, I approach the understanding of CG as contingent on the discursive and ideational history of the actors involved in the DRR. Therefore, this research project explores how the concept of CG is shaped by the cultures and context in which it is being implemented. By putting the geopolitical context at the centre of the study on CG, this study opens space to address the ongoing challenges in Nepal's

emerging regime.

3. Chapter three: Methodological exploration

3. Introduction

This research process has been intellectually and physically challenging and I have gained a lot from this experience. The challenges from the project ranged from the expected hurdles of conducting research in remote areas to the completely unforeseen navigation of a global pandemic that put a stop to all data collection mid-way through my Ph.D. During the initial stages of the pandemic, after being urgently recalled home, I was left with no choice but to wait with no idea of when I would be able to return or if I could complete my data collection. After a few months, it became clear I would not be able to, resulting in a major restructuring of the project. I was forced to make the second-best decisions about my research and make the most of the data I had managed to collect; this is not the Ph.D. I had intended to write but I've done my best with what I have.

This chapter lays out the epistemological framework for this project. It explores how research decisions were made and the changes that occurred, how field sites and participants were selected, how questionnaires and interview tracts were designed, and how knowledge was produced and structured. This chapter will address the following topics:

- Research partners and assistants.

- Research location.

- Field site selection.

- Participant sampling and data collection.

- Impacts of COVID-19 on research.

- Qualitative methods used in this thesis (semi-structured interviews, social network analysis, photographs, and field notes).

- Methods used for analysis.

Lastly, this chapter includes a reflexive section that explores my positionality and ethics of the research process. This leads me to share my reflections on the project and learning processes.

3.1. *Research design.*

My research uses a case study methodology which is informed by an actor-based humanistic approach. This approach comes under the umbrella of a critical realist worldview which emphasises the social construction of reality through human practices. Central to this critical realist perspective is asking how humans understand, navigate, and interact with the world and as such can create and uphold systems of that reality (Archer et al., 2008). Critical realism attempts to challenge and deconstruct positivist ideas of objective truth. Research within this paradigm places emphasis on a grounded version of truth (or truths), one that gains value within a specific locale and temporality, whilst being sensitive to the wider socio-political contexts of the researcher. As such, there is an emphasis on deconstructing grand narratives to explore conflicts, overlaps, and dichotomies that exist within the status quo. Research in this paradigm seeks to explore asymmetric power dynamics inherent in culturally mediated phenomena; to increase participation and reduce marginalisation (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Flick and Flick, 2018). As such, this paradigm complements the epistemology of New Institutionalist thinking which forms much of the analysis for this thesis.

A Case study approach was taken as it is highly compatible with qualitative data and analysis as it prioritises the value of in-depth grounded processes that are analysed through theoretical frames (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Patton, 1987; Thomas, 2011, 2015; Yin, 2009). Case study methodology acknowledges fragmented and relativistic truths and accommodates analysis of

the interlinkages between different conceptualisations and empirical outcomes. This is crucial to this project where narratives of what local DRR collaborations look like from citizens living within the communities vary from those of a bureaucrat who is solely based in Kathmandu: transversely, the Kathmandu-based bureaucrat could provide more insight into national-level policy processes aimed at promoting CG than a local farmer. Using a case study approach, I can compare these different narratives and explore the contextual factors that have shaped and are shaped by different actors' conceptualisations and everyday experiences of emerging CG.

3.2. *Research partners and assistants.*
During this project I worked with three partners whom I engaged with in diverse ways: the Science for Humanitarian Emergencies and Resilience (SHEAR) funded project Landslide-EVO, Practical Action Nepal, and two research assistants. My initial engagement with my research was through the Landslide-EVO project. This was an international interdisciplinary project that my Ph.D. was funded through. Landslide-EVO was an important entry point for my research, and field sites, introducing me to another research partner, Practical Action. Fieldwork in Nepal was based in a shared field site with Landslide-EVO which gave me greater access, reduced the financial cost of working in remote areas, and reduced participant fatigue. Throughout my Ph.D. I collaborated with Landslide-EVO work package 3 (social science) on several of their work deliverables, including community household survey, and citizen science in schools, and teamed up with Landslide-EVO colleagues for semi-structured interviews at municipal and national scales. I have contributed to three publications with Landslide-EVO (Ciezick, et.al 2019; Vij, et al., 2020; Martin et.al, 2021,) and collaborating with them was invaluable to facilitating my project. However, care was taken at every step to

ensure my research and data were stand-alone and separate from the project. Through my work with Landslide-EVO, I was connected to Practical Action Nepal, an international NGO with a strong presence in Nepal. I worked extensively with Practical Action colleagues on Landslide-EVO related work in the field sites; and the knowledge and advice I gained from them was instrumental in shaping how I conducted my research. Lastly, I worked with two research assistants during this project, Manoj Suri, and Ravindra Gyawali. Their knowledge, ability to gain access to municipal level DRR actors, and ability to navigate community level interviews was invaluable. Additionally, Manoj's skill in translating and transcribing from audio recordings was critical to collecting usable data without which this project would not have been able to explore community narratives and would have resulted in a heavily top-down focussed view of emerging collaborative governance.

3.3. *Research Location*
Nepal was chosen as the country of focus due to the high number of hazards and vulnerability to disasters. Nepal is a LMIC country, that rates poorly on multiple development and poverty indices (GoN, 2019). Further Nepal is consistently ranked "high risk" on numerous disaster and climate vulnerability indexes (Maplecroft, 2019,). Nepal is susceptible to strong seismic activity, due to its location in the Himalayan arch region of South Asia where the active Indus-Yarlung fault line is located. Nepal has seen an increase in climate related hydro hazards such as GLOF, shifting monsoon precipitation patterns, flash flooding, and landslides. According to recent Government of Nepal (GON) figures, up to 80% of the population is at risk of being impacted by natural hazards (MoHA, 2019). Landslides and flooding frequently result in large scale damage to infrastructure and livelihood. In 2017-2018, for example, there were approximately 3973 landslides that resulted in 161 fatalities.

During this period, hazard and human induced disasters affected an estimated 27,256 Nepali families (MoHA, 2019). Further, the combination of topographical and climatological interactions in the region has resulted in complex multi-hazard exposure that is compounded by the unstable socio-political landscape of the country (The MoHA, 2015; The Government of Nepal, 2017).

The second reason for selecting Nepal as the country of focus is that DRR governance has undergone a major policy reform since transitioning into a federalized republic with the ratification of the 2015 Constitution of Nepal (GoN, 2015; Yates, 2012; Becken, Lama, and Espiner, 2013). The spirit of the constitution is to move governance towards a decentralised locally determined administration (OPM, 2020). One of the main objectives of this process is the redistribution of state power and responsibility through policies and acts that shift the focus from central government to the semi-autonomous governing subdivisions (provinces & municipalities); the most pertinent acts being the constitution of Nepal (2072) 2015, the Local Governance Act (2073) 2016, the Disaster Risk and Management Act (2074) 2017. In 2017 Nepal held its first local elections in over a decade, creating 723 new local governments across all seven provinces. These moves are in line with the spirit of CG and make an interesting case study to explore an emerging CGR in a LMIC. Further, because of the systemic restructuring and new policy ratifications, the Nepali DRR landscape is currently best described as in transition. Many new departments and committees are either under or inadequately staffed and most provincial offices and municipalities are still in dire need of capacity building. All whilst navigating a changing international development agenda, with increasing pressure to become climate and disaster resilient in the face of increasing hazard exposure (Jha, 2014; Nightingale, 2017).

By focusing decision making at the local scale Nepal aims to create a new sense of autonomy that will promote a new unified national identity across all levels of government (Nightingale, 2017; Watson, 2017; Nightingale and Rankin, 2018). However, the new decentralised approach has been characterised as reinforcing informal dynamics characterised by the caste system in part due to a lack of state authority during the years of the civil war and the post-war transition process (Nightingale, 2017; Nightingale and Rankin, 2018). This fluctuating state presence has led to a void that has been filled by a community-based organisation (such as money saving co-operatives, women's groups, and community forestry users groups) , NGOs, international civil society, and businesses. These new political actors are part of a system of regulation in Nepal where authority to govern is given and remade in a fluid network. This has resulted in reinforcing the status quo in local governance which is dominated by elites to the detriment of those without political power (Nightingale and Rankin, 2018). In practice, political elites who have strong connections and decision-making power within the new institutions are reshaping spaces of authority in Nepal (Nightingale and Rankin, 2018).

About DRR specially, a swathe of new legislation has been ratified since the 2015 8.1 Mw earthquake (Gorkha earthquake) that caused widespread destruction across the country and killed close to nine thousand people (The Government of Nepal, 2017). The earthquake was followed by multiple severe aftershocks and landslides in the following months causing the GON to declare a state of humanitarian emergency. The effects of the earthquake are still evident at the time of writing, almost 7 years on, with many historical buildings in Kathmandu in need of repair. Following the earthquake, the Disaster Risk Reduction

Management Act (DRRMA) was passed through the Nepali congress in Sept 2017. The DRRMA mirrored the spirit of the constitution by redistributing decision-making power and responsibility to the local municipal levels. It also aimed to address criticism of the GON response to the Gorkha earthquake which viewed it as a complex, multi-stakeholder network that struggled with poor coordination and lack of political will across scalar levels (horizontal and vertical) (Bisri and Beniya, 2016; Watson, 2017). The DRRM Act also shifted the home of Nepali DRR from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) to the newly created Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (hereafter referred to as the Authority). The authority now oversees a dedicated DRR portal and knowledge platforms, produces and monitors key policies, and provides support for provincial and municipal scale government.

In line with the constitutional promises, the DRRM Act sets out a new structure for managing hazards which locates autonomy and decision-making power with the local municipalities. Further, governance was expanded horizontally to include a wider range of actors from the non-profit sector, private sectors, and international and regional intergovernmental bodies. Under the new legalisation, local needs are to be regularly assessed with interventions tailored to the individual municipality. Community disaster risk reduction and management committees have also been established for households and individual citizens to become part of the DRR decision-making process. However, as discussed in detail throughout this thesis confusion surrounding the interpretation of recent policy changes, an implementation lag and significant barriers remain at the time of writing.

Focusing on a LMIC where the state is in midst of large scale DRR institutional change has multiple benefits from a research perspective. Firstly, it allows for a stronger engagement

with debates concerning the role of the state in collaborative governance, as highlighted in the literature review (Bodin et al., 2016; Koontz and Thomas, 2006). Secondly, the emerging nature of CG in Nepal allows for an analysis of how CG is being interpreted and implemented. Lastly grounding the analysis in a LMIC is important as most studies of CG have thus far been in a minority world context. As such this analysis will give insight into larger questions concerning the global transfer of knowledge and how this impacts local scale and communities and the challenges this may face.

3.3.1. *Community level field site selection*

My fieldwork took place over a period of 2 years and included multiple visits to Nepal. I travelled to Nepal three times in total. The first visit was a 2-week scoping trip to Kathmandu and Sunkuda in Nov 2018, the second trip was 4-months of fieldwork-based primarily in Kathmandu with a 2-week visit to Sunkuda in April 2019. The focus of this 4-month visit was on national level interviews. The final fieldwork trip was planned to be a 6 month visit with 7-8 weeks planned in Sunkuda and the wider Sudurpashchim province in Jan 2020; the aim was to interview provincial, district and municipal actors as well as focussed interviews at the community level, but this visit was cut in half by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although my preference was to spend a full year in Nepal, with extended visits to the community field sites in Sunkuda, I opted for an iterative approach that allowed for a period of reflection and adjustments to my research design if needed. The rationale behind this decision was based on the fact the transitions to the new DRR institutional structure were still in their initial phases when fieldwork began. Therefore, little was known about the evolving DRR governance network at the time, with many organisations not yet formed or fully staffed. The downside of this approach was that my time working in the community field site was shorter than I

wanted, meaning I could not build a more substantive relationship with community participants. However, returning to Sunkuda multiple times did result in my face being recognised and gave me credibility with the municipality and community members.

The first scoping visit arose from an opportunity to work alongside another SHEAR-funded project Landslide-EVO was working with in Far-Western Nepal. I joined a scoping trip in Nov 2019 to explore the two field sites that Landslide-EVO was working in, Sunkuda and Bajedi.[5] This visit confirmed recent scholarship, which suggested there was a disparity between what international DRR policies stated and how it was currently being implemented in the geographical context, for example, at the field level there was little evidence of collaborative platforms that would allow for knowledge exchange with communities or business concerning DRR needs (Nightingale, 2020; Watson, 2018). From a conversation with community members and research partners during this trip, I recognised that any study of CG needed to capture a bottom-up perspective on *if* collaboration was occurring in the way new policies were suggested and *who* was involved; to do that I wanted to collaborate with communities affected by hazards. Alongside reflecting on the aims and objectives of my research and methodological design, this visit gave me the chance to assess the viability of

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[5] Landslide_EVO's field site in Bajedi was extremely remote. Reaching Bajedi required a perilous 2-hour drive on poor mud tracks up the side of a mountain. The communities had little access to water and electricity with no NGOs' working in the area due to difficulty reaching it. The landslide hazard in Bajedi was extensive and villages close to the hazard had little option by way of mitigative actions that could be taken; Relocation seemed the only viable option. As such, I decided to not use this field site as I felt my work and outcomes would not benefit this community.

the field sites for my research and get a sense of fieldwork requirements and if they were possible. Sunkuda required 3 days of travel (by plane and jeep) to reach as such posed logistical and financial challenges for a limited Ph.D. research grant. By working in collaboration with Landslide-EVO, I was able to increase the number of visits I could make to the field site allowing me to get a fuller picture of the on-ground situation and strengthen my relationships with people in Sunkuda. Further, working with a wider network of international interdisciplinary colleagues, I was able to gain insight into the geomorphological and hydrological data about the case study site. Most importantly, it reduced participant fatigue in the field site by working with Landslide-EVO combining qualitative data collection activities.

3.3.2. *Sunkuda*
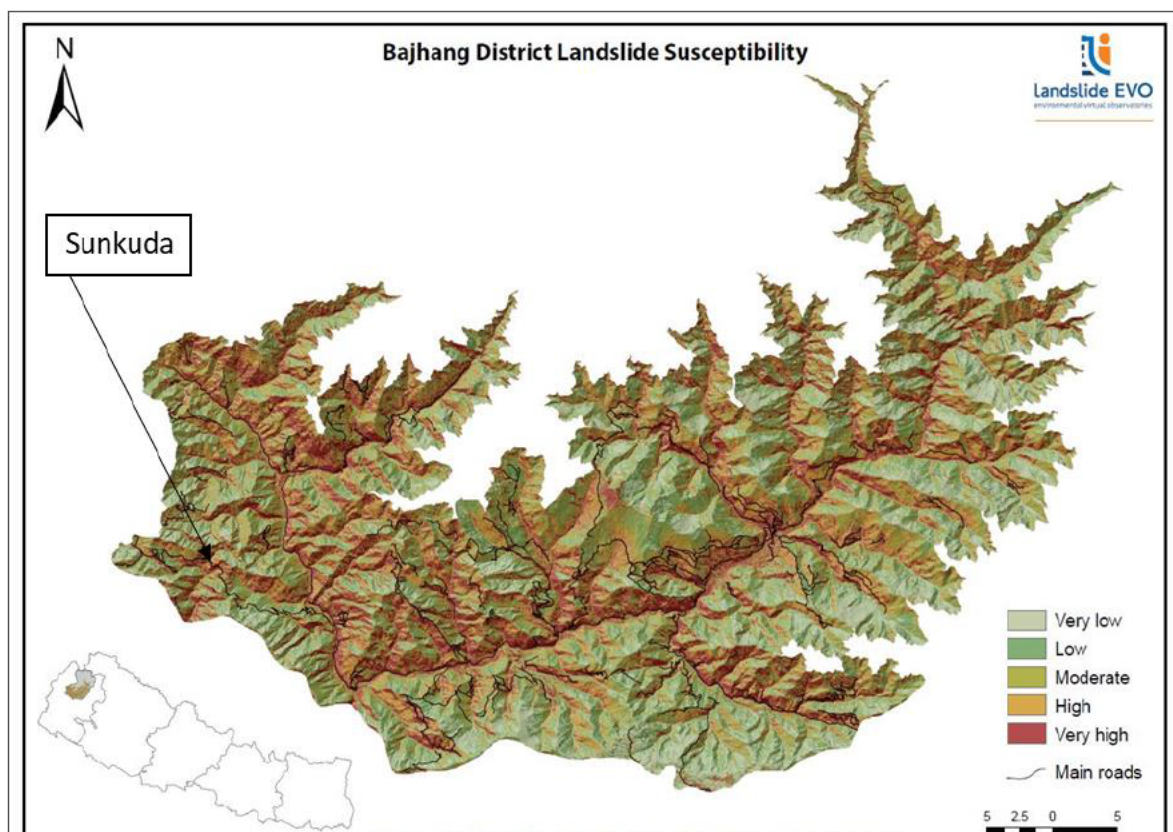
Figure 2. Landslide susceptibility map of Bajhang District (map by GBA, 2018)

When selecting a case study site consideration was given to the size of the hazard, proximity to the community, the potential for DRR activities to have an impact, and the level of activities from international aid community (IAC) and the government in the area. The primary site for the community and municipal level case study is Sunkuda village located in Bajhang district, Sudurpashchim province, Far-Western Nepal (Figure 2). This region of Nepal is viewed as vulnerable; most households are subsistence farmers engaged in agriculture and livestock activities; with many households relying on remittances to survive (Martin, et.al, 2021). As a result, there are elevated levels of out-migration in the area, with many households having at least one member working away. Topographically, Bajhang is in a high landslide susceptibility area.

Sunkuda is in the southwestern part of Bajhang, there are 329 households in this village with 1645 residents, and twelve *self-designated* communities (see data collection section for further details on how communities were defined). Sunkuda is part of the Bitthadchir *Gaunpalika* (Rural municipality) and connected both to Bitthadchir and the Bajhang district headquarters based in Chainpur along the Jay Prithvi Highway; this is a tarmac road and gives road access to Sunkuda for livelihood diversification opportunities and access during emergencies. Households (HH) in Sunkuda rely on solar power for electricity, however, there are electrical lines that run through the village to the municipality and a hydropower plant is being built in the area. Alongside signs of increasing development in the area, multiple NGOs are working in Sunkuda; Practical Action, Mercy Corps, and Red Cross run livelihood diversification and money-saving programs.

Figure 3. Dhokla Landslide in Sunkuda, Nepal.(pic by C. Russell)

Communities in Sunkuda live with four chronic landslides (*Pahiro)* that are increasing in size

annually (Figure 2). Landslides in this village are deep-seated as well as shallow seasonal soil

slides (Sudmeier-Rieux et al., 2012; Martin et al., 2021). The causes of landslides in Sunkuda

are associated with poor land management, unregulated development (inadequate drainage

from the highway that runs through the village to the upper slopes), and are intensifying due

to climate change (Sudmeier-Rieux et al., 2019; Vuillez et al., 2018). The Sera landslide

which occurred around 50 years ago forced the entire Sera community to relocate within the

village or, if able, to different areas of the country. Currently, the largest landslide in Sunkuda

is the Dhokla landslide which initially formed in the 1990s and expands each monsoon

season (Figure 3). So far, the Dhokla landslide has resulted in at least two HH relocating

within the village. The landslide continues to impact HH in the Dhokla community due to

increasing loss of arable land and threat to houses; we spoke with 2 HH that were located less than 20ft away from the edge of the landslide and had lost all their land for grazing and crops, and would inevitably lose their houses but had no means to relocate.

3.4. *Sampling methods and data collection*
3.4.1. *Formal DRR actor data*

Qualitative data from DRR actors were collected using semi-structured interviews. Interviews were conducted at three different political-administrative scales: national, provincial, and district or local municipal scale. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the main qualitative data collection due to their ability to capture participants' history, opinions, and insights without imposing a rigid structure of a survey – which can restrict the data and limit the responses participants can give(Galletta, 2012).

It was important to reduce potential interviewer bias from this study as little was known

Table 2. Semi-structured interview list

Number of Government of Nepal interviews	Number of international aid community /United Nations interviews	Total interviews
6 (3 National, 2 District, 1 Municipal)	11	17

about the evolving CG system; there were concerns that employing a survey would compromise the inductive approach of this project. Further, semi-structured interviews are known to encourage reciprocity between the researcher and participant which was critical for the sampling methods used (Kallio, Pietila et. al, 2016). Each interview started with a

personal history of the interviewees' role working in DRR, with the rest of the interview

organised around the themes: Challenges and success of DRR; the meaning of collaborative

action for DRR; and the impact of recent institutional changes (See appendix 1). A common

spine of interview questions was used for both Government of Nepal (GoN) and NGO

practitioners, as I wanted to capture the variability of different interpretations of CG in Nepal.

This interview tract was replicated at all scales to gain an understanding of if and how

discourses of collaboration have infiltrated the dominant understanding of DRR in Nepal.

This study used a combination of snowball and purposive sampling to identify prominent,

active figures in Nepali DRR from government departments, IAC, UN, and the academe

(Heckathorn,2011). A total of seventeen interviews were conducted with DRR experts in the

government departments (at different scales) and in the IAC (NGOs and the UN) with a

potential ten more having to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 shutdown of research[6].

Whilst participant's identities are protected, as per ethical guidelines, actors I spoke with held

positions in a range of salient DRR organisations. Examples of these organisations are high-

level government offices working directly on researching, designing, and implementing DRR

policies; disaster-focused United Nations organisations; international NGOs who have

worked in disaster management for over 30 years. Many of the people I spoke with had held

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[6] These 10 were with municipal state actors, members of the IAC, and KI living and working Sunkuda. These

participants had agreed to talk with us, but I was called away from the field site before I could conduct

interviews. Additionally, I was in the process of organising further national level interviews but could not

continue due to COVID-19.

multiple positions over the past few decades, working nationally, regionally, and internationally on disasters. Further, a few of the participants from the IAC had regularly consulted as experts for the MOHA on disaster-related policy changes. The seventeen interviews undertaken were thus broadly representative of key policy practitioners currently involved in or with the new state administrative structures of DRR nationally, provincially, and locally.

Participants were chosen for purposive sampling at the national scale based on searches for active and past DRR actors; names were found through academic and 'grey' literature and details were found through LinkedIn and online. Further 'known' international NGOs – INGOs - e.g., Red Cross) and government departments working at national, provincial, and local scales were contacted for interviews. In total, thirty-eight actors were contacted via email and phone, resulting in seventeen semi-structured interviews (20 contacted actors did not respond, one initially responded positively, but missed the interview and did not respond to follow-up emails). During interviews, participants were asked to nominate other key actors working in DRR who were then contacted for interview.

NGOs had the highest response rate, whilst government officials were harder to gain access to. This was expected as the Nepali government was transitioning its formal national institutions to align with changes outlined in the DRRMA at the time fieldwork was conducted. Common problems encountered whilst contacting potential participants for interviews were that actors previously involved in DRR had moved on, were unwilling to be interviewed, and were reluctant to share the names of other actors. Further, when working at the sub-national level (in the new provincial, district, and municipal authorities) many offices

were still being formed and were not fully staffed or operational. However, this bias in data towards (I)NGOs does not limit the quality of the data as it has been well documented that the (I) NGOs and the IAC have historically led the Nepali government in DRR innovation (Jones et.al, 2014, 2016; Nightingale, 2018). As such, I would argue that collecting this perspective gives a critical insight into how DRR has evolved and influenced the shape of institutional change in Nepal.

Government interviews were limited in number for two reasons: Firstly, at the time of field work in 2019-2020 Nepal DRRM Act was still in the early implementation phase which meant that there was a transition of DRR responsibilities from the MOHA to the newly formed DRRMA. Whilst in Nepal in 2020 the head of the DRRMA had not been selected and the transition was not complete. Secondly, additional interviews that I had set up for the summer of 2020 where cancelled due to the COVID 19 pandemic. However, during my fieldwork 2019 - early 2020 I did manage to get interviews with government officials working within different departments of MOHA and other government departments that worked under various Ministries. Further to this many of the interviews I conducted with NGO's and the UN were with people who had worked with and for the Nepali government in various roles relating to DRR; for example, one interviewee, over a 20- year career, had worked for MOHA, the UN, and had been an expert consultant on the committee that designed the current DRRM Act. It is due to the dense DRR actor network at the national level in Nepal that I am confident that the interviews reflect some of the dominant thinking within the national government surrounding collaboration and DRR governance.

I conducted most national scale interviews in English, with all interviewees offered the option

of a Nepali translator if they preferred. Interviews ranged from 30 minutes to two hours, with

the majority around one hour. Interviews were conducted in participants' offices or neutral

spaces such as local cafes. I transcribed interviews conducted in English from audio

recordings and used a Nepali-speaking research assistant to transcribe the interviews that

were conducted in Nepali into English. During the transcription process, all references to the

organization's names were anonymised by removing the name and replacing it with an

identifying code (e.g. NGO_04) as were any references that the participant could be

identified by, such as specific project names, job titles, and locations where they worked. On

two occasions participants asked for certain information not to be transcribed or to be

included in any research outputs; this information was not transcribed. This protocol was

followed at all scales of formal DRR-focused semi-structured interviews at all scales.

3.4.2. *Village scale data*

Household and community-level data collection was done through purposive sampling using

a range of techniques to assist in selecting participants. This approach posed a distinct set of

sampling challenges compared with the national level. Most of these challenges lay in

navigating the inherently political act of naming who and what constitutes a vulnerable

community (Nightingale, 2021*)*. This concern was compounded by access limitations

inherent with working in a remote, hard to reach area. In order to mitigate concerns of top

down categorisations (naming), I visited the field site 3 times before my main data collection,

speaking with local community members and local political and bureaucratic actors to gain

an insight into which communities were deemed as vulnerable by the people living in the area

itself; this allowed, to an extent, for the communities to be self-defined and self-determined (

which clusters of people saw themselves as communities, and which of those communities were seen as most vulnerable by those living in the area). To facilitate the numerous visits to the area (which are costly and require detailed planning), I combined my Ph.D. field site selection with my work on another project (Landslide_EVO) at their field site, in Sunkuda. This allowed me to do some initial scoping, and gather some initial data based on local knowledge and understanding of vulnerable communities in the area. Further, I was able to combine some of my initial data collection with part of the Landslide EVO project, which I used to make informed decisions about purpose sampling selection (I describe this in further detail later in this chapter).
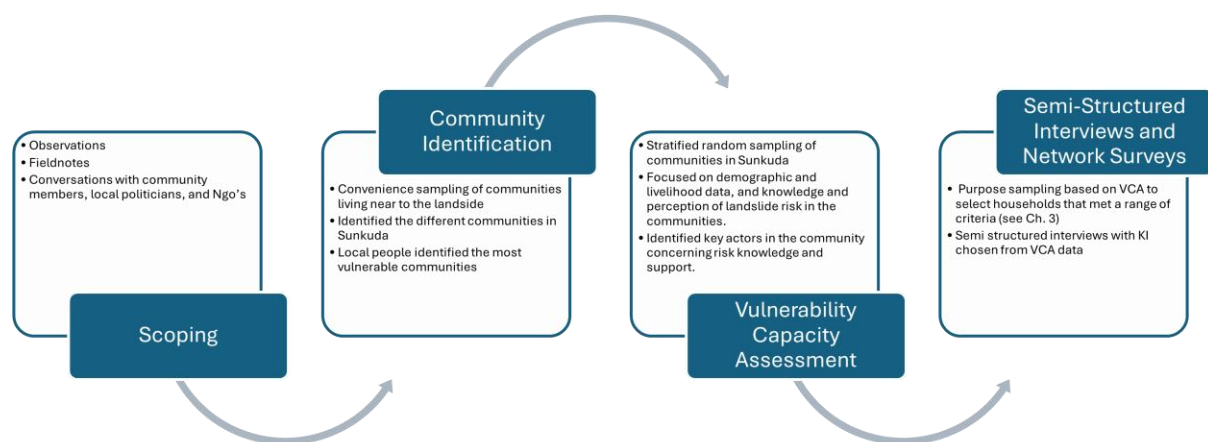
Figure 4. Flow chart of data collection methods explaining what each stage did and what data was collected.

Sunkuda was selected through several measures such as hydrological catchment, landslide size and type, and community proximity to an active landslide hazard. Sunkuda village spans two wards (7 and 9) and is under the governance of the Bitthadchir Rural municipality. In Nepal, the ward is recognised as the smallest formally recognised unit, however, the fund for

DRR activities is distributed at the municipal level. During my initial scoping trip in Nov 2019,working with Landslide-EVO colleagues we set out to find out what communities made up Sunkuda village. To do this we convenience sampled diverse groups of people in Sunkuda and asked them to label a map of the communities in the village and rate their level of vulnerability to the landslides (Figure 5). The value of this is that the communities were *self-defined* and reflected the informal on-ground networks and did not simply reflect the arbitrary governance boundaries which did not capture the lived reality of the area and its inhabitants. To verify the initial map, we replicated the exercise with multiple groups in the area to confirm community names and locations (Figure 5)
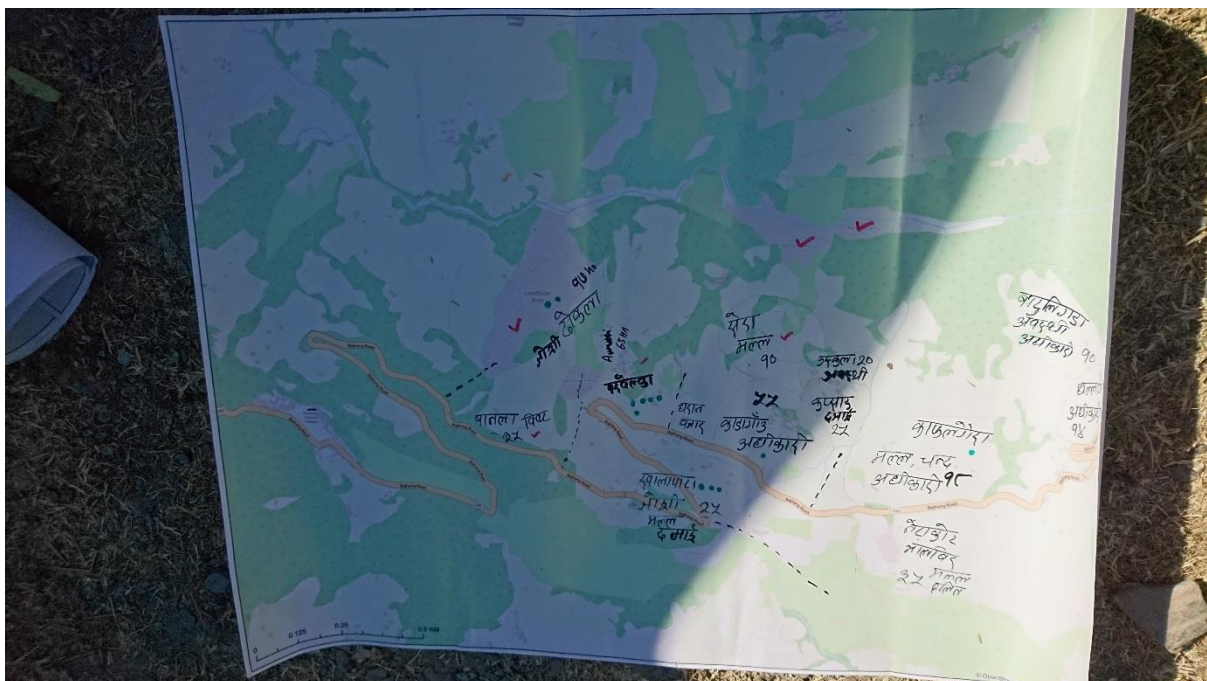
Figure 5. Community vulnerability mapping in Sunkuda. Pic by C. Russell

Once we had determined the different communities in Sunkuda we returned to perform a base level vulnerability survey in March 2019. Working with colleagues in Landslide-EVO we created a quantitative household survey to capture economic and demographic information,

and assess perceptions of exposure and vulnerability to the landslide hazard. This survey was

a key deliverable for the Landslide_EVO project and most of this data was for that project;

the results of which can be found in Martin, et.al, 2021. However, I added some additional

questions to the survey concerning community networks for the sole use of my Ph.D.; my

questions asked participants to name the 3 most important people inside and outside of their

community that they got help or information from about landslides and flooding in the last 2

years. This question helped me to identify people of import in Sunkuda. By focusing on

Table 3. Community names and sizes in Sunkuda, Bajhang, Nepal.			
Community Name	Ward No.	Number of HHs	Number of HHs surveyed
Dhokla	9	17	4
Banala	9	35	6
Barbelka	8	65	13
Khalapata	9	25	5
Shera	8	10	2
Kandagaun	8	55	16
Uskala	8	20	5
Kapsad	8	25	5
Kaphalgaira	8	18	4
Netakot	8	35	5
Batuligada	8	10	2
Dhallagaun	8	14	3
Total		**329**	**72 (2 unknown)**

individuals who were named the most I was able to identify KI interviews that were selected

by the people in the area. Unfortunately, I was unable to conduct these interviews due to

COVID-19 disruption. The household survey was conducted in March and May of 2020

using a stratified random sampling technique to capture approximately 20% of the field site.

In total, seventy-two households were surveyed (Table 3). The value of working

collaboratively with Landslide-EVO was that it would reduce amount length and amount of

time   participants in the Sunkuda were asked to participate. By sharing this data, I was able

to access information I needed for my Ph.D. without duplicating surveys and further, I could use the information to assist in sampling and add details to interviews when I did my fieldwork.

The second stage of this selection process used purposive sampling to choose members of the community to interview based on demographic data collected during the household survey. The criteria for this purposive sampling was designed to sample HH cross a range of social indicators such as economic status, male/female led HH, caste, occupation, proximity to landslide, access to remittances, and a sample from each community. These social indicators were chosen based on scoping interviews from the communities, and literature on known cultural dynamics that can affect a person's vulnerability and access to support in Nepal (Vivekananda et.al.,2014; Martin et.al, 2021). I then discussed these indicators with my research assistant to limit overlooking a critical category. Whilst purposive sampling does introduce researcher preconceptions this approach was taken to ensure the selection of marginal groups in the community and mitigate bias toward powerful community members; this is a common problem that occurs working as a foreign researcher in an unknown community (Morrison. Et.al., 2017). In total, 25 HH from the quantitative survey database were selected as the focus of my Ph.D. research, with backup HH fitting similar criteria chosen in case the selected HH did not want to participate further. This number reflects two aspects; all the purposive sampling criteria being met and the time and cost limitations of fieldwork activities. Unfortunately, it was this data collection field trip that was disrupted by COVID-19 with less than half of the intended data collected leading to significant changes and adaptations to my research.

The focus of the community level interviews was to capture the HH support network. This was done through the egonet survey as well as additional semi-structured open questions I asked at the end of the egonet survey. Each HH was approached and the senior member of the HH present at the time was asked to participate in the survey. The scope and aim of the survey was explained to each participant and verbal and written consent was obtained. Interviews and surveys were conducted using a translator who led the ego net survey and translated exchanges between myself and the participant. Each interview/survey lasted approximately 40 mins- 1hr and took place inside or outside the person's home. Interviews were recorded and photography was used as additional data. The interviews were partially transcribed from the audio recordings during the summer of 2020. The reason I opted for partial transcription was that the egonet data was not usable, due to the small sample size caused by COVID-19 interruptions. Instead, the translator focussed on the open-ended questions at the end of the recordings and translated those into English. It is this data that is used throughout chapter six when quoting community members.

3.4.3. *Photography and field notes*

Photography was used as a visual method for exploring the community field sites and as a tool for data collection (Figure 6. Photo of egonet survey, and consent forms.). I attempted to take photographs of the respondent's house and scenes that captured
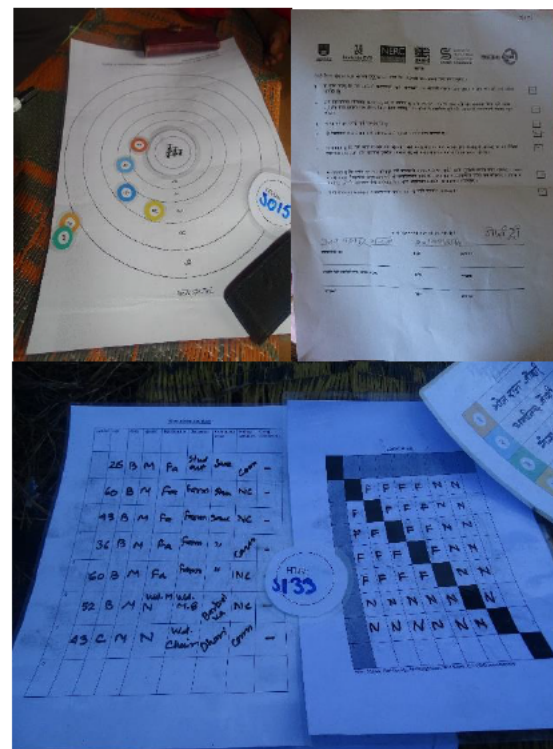
Figure 6. Photo of egonet survey, and consent forms. (Pic by C. Russell)

the day-to-day life of Sunkuda. I attempted to capture the size and scale of the landslides, but

often these photos do not do them justice. Photography is an extremely useful tool for

fieldwork and can complement field notes well (Crang and Cook,2008). Photography is an

asset to capturing details that you become desensitised to during your research process and

allowed me to go back and reflect on moments and instances during my fieldwork

(Collier,1986; De Boeck et.al., 2014). I drew heavily on this photographic record during the

reflexive account of my Ph.D. and throughout chapters 5 and 6 . Being able to go back

through photographic archives and link them with field notes was extremely helpful;

particularly in evaluating how my thinking had evolved over the course of the Ph.D.

exploring why I took that photograph, and what I found important about that image.

As well as documenting the households and areas where a participant lived, I also used

photography as a data collection and record keeping tool. Using photography allowed me to

reduce the number of surveys I needed to take into the field, instead of a large number of

physical copies I opted for a reusable laminated version and dry wipe pens. This technique

enabled me to upload and back up data quickly, reducing the risks of losing any data due to

damage or loss of the hard copy. As a means of collecting data in remote areas, it worked

extremely well, however, it was dependent on functioning electricity to recharge cameras,

which we did not have for a 3-day period (but luckily my battery lasted).

3.5. *Research Challenges & adaptations*
The main challenge and adaptation that occurred during this Ph.D. was the use of data

collected at the community scale. Before I discuss these changes, there are two important

caveats; the data collected from the community scale was cut short by COVID-19, meaning I

only managed to complete 18 interviews in total; secondly, due to a communication breakdown between myself and the research assistant I was working with, the 18 responses cannot be used as intended (egonet data) as they do not meet the criteria for social network analysis (SNA) data (Crossley, et al, 2015). Instead, the audio files from these interviews have been partially translated and used as semi-structured interviews in chapter 6, where I capture the key points from the individuals' networks.

Without COVID-19, this project was demanding due to the transitional state that Nepali DRR was in during the time of fieldwork, with many formal institutional changes only partially implemented and few policies and grey literature translated into English for international archives. As a result, this research evolved based on an iterative process that required continual engagement with theory and data as it was collected. At the national scale, this iterative approach worked well as it allowed me to approach the emerging institutional landscape with adaptability, therefore capturing changes and new DRR actors as they were appointed. However, at the local scale, this institutional transience was more challenging as government departments and offices (in all aspects not just DRR-focused) were often not functioning, or appointments were new to the job and not fully updated on current policies and changes. Whilst noteworthy (and analysed at length in chapter 6) it did raise questions about how best to understand DRR governance changes at the community level. The approach I decided upon was to focus on informal community networks; the rationale being that informal support networks were even more critical to understanding how collaboration was evolving because formal networks were non-functioning. I wanted to explore how communities collaborated for DRR purposes, and what impact this might have on emerging

CG models that were happening at the national scale. To do this, I employed social network analysis; specifically, egonet analysis (see appendix 5). Egonet surveys are designed to map an individual's social network around a certain issue. Participants for egonet surveys were asked to name individuals they would turn to for support at various stages during the disaster cycle; known as name generating in SNA (Crossley et.al, 2015). After names were generated, each participant was asked to rate the level of support they received from each name for several aspects of disaster-related support (material support, knowledge access, political support). Throughout this survey, additional questions were asked about why different names were rated for that aspect of support or how had they helped in the past. This approach aims to encourage conversations about the participant's network and allowed me to capture the richer network narratives (Crossley et al, 2015). Further, additional data was collected via semi-structured questions at the end of the network survey and field observations.

The use of egonets as case studies in this research originally was intended to help visualise informal community-level DRR support networks. Each network is unique to the participant (ego) and represents a *reality* of support, access to knowledge, and influence (Crossley et al, 2015; Everett and Borgatti,2018). Egonet data in this study were engaged with as a "performative process to generate a space of research" (Marshall and Staeheli, 2015 p56), namely as a collection of *truths* related to the discourse of collaboration in DRR. However, on reflection, this approach was not as useful as intended. COVID-19 challenges notwithstanding, when looking at the egonet data that I was able to collect what, it revealed that communities in Sunkuda were mostly made of kinship groups, with high-density

networks and little or no outside support or knowledge transfer. This suggests that communities were isolated, which could lead to low adaptive capacity and resilience.

Whilst interesting of course, this is known and offers little in the way of insight into novel ways to improve community participation in the emerging CG in Nepal. However, what was useful was the conversation elicited surrounding support networks, how and why participants had chosen certain actors, and who had not been included. These narratives described the prominence of informal power and influence that is relative to specific locale, socio-economic, and political context; this data and discussion is the focus of chapter six.

3.6. *Data analysis*
In this thesis, I draw on multiple theoretical frameworks that align with key thinking from new institutionalisms to explore my research questions; specifically, I build upon key concepts of New Institutionalist (NI) understanding of the power of discourse. Discursive institutionalists view discourse as having the power to construct and shape how *institutional reality* evolves (Schmidt, 2008); I use this to problematize and deconstruct the internationally prominent discourse surrounding collaborative governance in DRR (Nohrstedt et.al, 2022; Ansell,2008; Nabatchi and Emerson, 2015). To do this, I conducted a thematic analysis focusing on how *collaboration* had been presented and engaged with in DRR-related documents (Johnstone, 2018). Documentary material was collected from a variety of sources including policy documents, strategic plans, and other documents from the government of Nepal; I also looked at project documents from NGOs and (I)NGOs, United Nations documents; academic scholarship; and interview transcripts (see appendix 7 for a full list of texts). Once the data was collated, I familiarised myself with the data set, making initial notes

and observations on how collaboration had been mentioned in the text. After this initial familiarisation phase I started to develop codes for the data based upon patterns I observed (post/pre disaster collaboration, the role of different actors, success or failure). These codes were developed into themes based on their unifying features; temporal ideal, governance and institutional systems, and collaborative ideal . These themes were reflexively examined to ensure they conveyed the data and codes comprehensively. This analysis was further categorised by date to explore how these themes evolved over time. During this analysis I worked from a position of discursive institutionalist traditions which assume that there is power in language. According to this epistemology, discourse can shape how institutions and their engagement with issues evolve (Schmidt, 2008), thus the evolving themes and engagement with collaboration in the text I examined is both reflective of and instrumental in changing attitudes and understanding of collaboration in DRR by actors directly involved with the governance of hazard in Nepal.

In chapter 5 I turned my focus to look at the impacts of the historical discourse on present-day institutional reforms at the national level. To do this, I drew on works by Gonzales, (2006) to examine scalar narratives; the stories told by actors that shape and reinforce how problems are understood, and the function and role of different scales and actors in governing, and promoting a specific solution. For these analyses, I used interview data collected during the 2019-fieldwork work; these interviews were with national level DRR actors.

Lastly, in chapter 6, I built on the historical and current analysis of the framing of collaboration and how it is being used to shape and influence the merging collaborative

governance regime in Nepal and explored the wider context in which this discourse of collaboration exists. My focus was on the relationship between resilience and collaboration in DRR. Often CG is seen as the solution to resilience challenges and as such it was important to examine how these concepts of resilience are constructed and the impact they have on CG approaches. To do this, I used the thematically coded data from community-level interviews to capture the lived experiences of vulnerable communities. I then drew on scholarship that focussed on the concept of community resilience in Nepal and found that there was consistency between the documented misuse of the concept of resilience and what was happening at the community level in Sunkuda. I then discussed how this embedded understanding of resilience from formal DRR actors in the IAC and GoN was shaping their approach to CG and threatening to undermine the CG process in Nepal. All analyses for this thesis were conducted using Nvivo12 software.

3.7. *Positionality & ethical considerations*

My initial exploration of this research question (can CG improve community resilience?) was shaped by my background in development research and critical and literary theory. Having worked in South Asia on an applied development focussed project I wanted to continue down the path of quantitative policy-relevant work. I initially didn't want to engage with discourse or the impacts of language on institutional evolution having spent 4 years (undergraduate studies and MA) focussing on critical theory. I felt that this project would benefit more from quantitative or mixed-method approaches that I know are preferred by decision-makers. Further, I wanted to expand my skill set to include a variety of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques. However, the more I read into CG scholarship and the emerging CG landscape I encountered in Nepal made it clear that, given the current

novelty and lack of consensus around the concept, focusing on discourse was a very appropriate approach for this thesis; exploring discourse would allow me to make some sense out of the complexity of current CG systems and agenda. This project has shown me that I should not make assumptions about what types of data would be of value until I have explored the research context further.

My positionality as a woman and queer person also impacted the way I conducted research and shaped the types of questions I asked. As a woman conducting research in remote areas, ensuring my safety is an issue that must be considered; particularly when conducting my community-level interviews with just myself and my research assistant; I was told that staying within the community was not preferable. This decision limited the interaction I could have with community members, with it mostly being confined to interview situations. Further, as a queer researcher, I am aware of the cultural attitudes toward LGBTQI+ rights in Nepal. Whilst Nepal is deemed one of the safer more progressive countries in South Asia, LGBTQI+ people are still widely discriminated against, and it is deemed a culturally taboo topic. Alongside the personal safety measures, I took (restricting social media profile access, removing any posts that overtly identified me as part of the LGBTQI+ community, and omitting/editing personal details about myself during conversations) my research may also have been impacted. A growing area of DRR scholarship that has emerged recently is focussed on LGBTQI+ vulnerability, exclusion, and discrimination in international and national DRR agendas (see Gorman-Murray et al., 2018, 2017; Yamashita et al., 2017). Yet despite my knowledge of this, I did not include this minority in my semi-structured interviews or selection processes, whilst I did other minorities. What I can't decide is if this is

because I knew I would not get answers from interviewees on this topic, or because I avoided it because I did not want to expose myself.

Throughout my time on this project, I made a conscious effort to keep my positionality and power at the forefront of my mind. As a western, white researcher I had access to spaces of power that are not as easily available to citizens of Nepal or researchers from different regions of the world (Skelton,2001; Navaro-Yashin,2012). Further, I spent considerable time thinking and reading about the decolonial movements in DRR and climate change (Hammett and Sporton, 2012; Giwa, 2008, Bronen et.al, 2021). I am aware of the continuous issue of being a minority world researcher 'speaking' for the majority world, and much care and consideration was taken to try and limit this by focusing on my analysis of international agendas, their discourse, and their impact; However, this is a position that I uncomfortably occupy and have not fully resolved my thinking on it (Mohanty, 2003). I relied heavily on the research assistants, and staff at Practical Action Nepal as gatekeepers to the communities and decision-maker in the GoN. I saw how I was able to gain recognition and familiarity within the community due to my multiple visits with Practical Action and the research assistants I worked with.

I was acutely aware that, when conducting interviews, respondents were also assessing me (Navaro-Yashin, 2012). Whilst I was able to access spaces of power at the national level relatively easily due to the gatekeepers in my network, the conversations I had on occasion seemed quite scripted. This is in part due to the fact the respondents didn't know what I would do with their data. I took measures to reassure interview participants through consent forms and offered to forward any published work that resulted from this study. However, I

found that when the recorder was turned off conversations flowed more easily, and I often got

salient information after the formal interview was concluded. I tried to build a rapport with

interviewees and myself striving to find common interests, such as international politics

(mostly with NGOs), personal stories and photographs about my life in the UK, or my love of

Nepal as a country, its culture, food, and people. These informal conversations made

respondents much more at ease with me and took away some of the apprehension of a formal

interview.

My research was conducted in line with the University of Birmingham's ethical guidelines

and protocol for data management. I submitted all supporting documents (consent forms

semi-structured interview tract, health, and safety forms) for ethical review before fieldwork

commenced. During the data collection period, all data was stored in the University of

Birmingham-approved could Bear Data Share and only myself and my supervisors had

access. Research assistants, I worked with signed contracts that outlined that all data they

translated must not be shared, returned to me, and deleted from their computer once work

was complete. All interview transcripts are anonymised, with names of people and

organisation removed. Lists of interviewees and their data are stored on Bear Data Share in a

locked file that only I have the password to.

3.8. *On collaboration; Personal reflections from the field.*
    3.8.1.   *Introduction*
This story starts before I went to Nepal for field work, I was visiting Wageningen University

in the Netherlands for a workshop on citizen science. As visitors to the university, colleagues

and I presented our work-in-progress as part of the SHEAR Landslide_EVO project. In my

talk, I mapped out my plan to use Social Network Analysis to gain insight into community

Figure7. A collection of signs from NGO-UN-GON collaborations on WASH and Development projects at the Sunkuda secondary school.(Pic by C. Russell)

support networks in Nepal. The tentative aim of this approach was to gather network stories

to gain insight on who *matters* to communities throughout the disaster cycle. At the end of

the talk, I was asked what measures I had taken to *account* for myself in this network? I

couldn't answer that question.

Auto-ethnographic approaches to qualitative research suggest a methodology that privileges a

researcher's own experience during field work as a source of data that can be used to provide

insight into socio-cultural phenomenon (Zempi, 2017). The practice of auto-ethnography

requires the researcher to engage with reflexive analysis and self-observation to understand

the researchers lived-experiences and advance sociological understanding. The exact

definition of autoethnography is debated in the field of anthropology; it was originally seen as

an ethnography from a researcher native to the culture/location of focus (Hayano,1979).

Today, questions surround the methodological difference and similarities between traditional

ethnography and autoethnographic approaches, with the latter being seen as fashionable and often not engaged in with the methodological rigour required for an effective account (Moors, 2017; Luvaas, 2019).

Disciplinary debates aside, this chapter draws inspiration from the core tenets and objectives of autoethnographic research, although it is not an autoethnographic account. My aim in this chapter is to explore my own experiences as a researcher working on collaborative governance. This section focuses on my experience whilst trying to connect these personal stories to a broader social phenomenon, namely emerging collaborative governance regime in Nepal (Anderson,2006; Zempi, 2017). This research project is an apposite choice for a reflexive account as the role of the researcher in CG for DRR is a worthy and under-engaged subject. As was rightly pointed out to me during my talk in Wageningen, the role of the researcher is never neutral, even more so in a collaborative network. My objective is to explore my experience working as a DRR researcher as part of CGR in Nepal and relate them to the challenges and success within Nepal evolving CG system. I will examine how my understanding and preconceived ideas of CG shaped and influenced this study; and what challenges I faced and lessons I learned from my field work experiences. To do this I will draw on field diaries and photography to help me share some stories from my time working as part of the emerging CGR in Nepal. In doing so, this reflexive chapter attempts to *account* for myself in the collaborative governance network.

3.8.2. *The role of research in Nepal DRR*

Researcher positionality is a critical part of social science. Understanding how my life experiences, prejudices, cultural preconceptions, and ontological position all shape how research is conducted and influences the outcomes put into the world is something I am strongly aware of (Coghlan et.al., 2014). Yet, when I sat and read over my field notes I realised I had not fully engaged with questions about what my role, a researcher's role, is as an active collaborator in the GC networks of Nepal. Particularly, how this might impact communities living in far western Nepal. The reason for this, is that I do not believe I have an *impact* on the lives of people in the communities I visited (or at least not in a tangible way). In fact, in line with best practice and ethical guidelines, throughout my years working in different disaster affected communities, I always make sure they know that I cannot do anything (meaningful) for them. Not only is this important to manage the expectations of the project but it is also a deeply ingrained belief. Large scale social changes, the kind that is needed to address the wicked problem of DRR, comes through the collective action of multiple sectors and people. No one person, organisation, or policy will create meaningful change. In my worldview, the role of a qualitative researcher is to add to the discussion. I hope that my work will add to the hundreds of thousands of other voices, which may impact social and institutional change for the better. So, when confronted with questions about my place in a CG network I was at a loss- how could I impact the network of a person who lived in the remote far-western hills of Nepal? And honestly, I still don't think I do, not in any direct way. Given the wide range of CG systems and the variations within them, to attempt to unpack the role research plays in Nepal I had to grapple with what I understood CG to be, what value I saw in CG and wider informal collaborations in relation DRR. Whilst answers to these questions is complex with no clear correct one, it highlighted areas that are worth discussing.

3.8.3.   *Into the network*

This project was funded by NERC with the view of being actionable, applied and policy

relevant. The aim was to explore the efficacy of collaborative governance approaches as a

viable way to increase resilience in rural mountain communities in far-western Nepal. My

intention had been to map the different collaborative networks at scalar levels and see if and

how they worked together, what barriers there were and what progress had been made. This

took on an additional level of complexity once I completed my first round of field work.

After initial semi-structured interviews with national level stake holders, I realised the extent

to which collaborative governance had yet to be materialised in Nepal. In line with the

literature that suggests CG is mostly researched in minority world context, the methods and

findings that I had read about were not applicable to the Nepali context (Nabatchi, et.al,

2015). In Nepal, CG is at best a future aim of DRR actors but for the most part it is a still

vague concept found within international policy from the United Nations without any

consideration for geopolitical context; there was very little consensus around what CG is or

could be in Nepal. Yet, this uncertainty of CG in Nepal highlighted an avenue for me to

explore my role as a researcher working within that network.

Often depicted as a concept that has emerged from practice (Ansell, 2008), the understanding

of what CG is, is dependent upon its framing and use. As such, critical engagement with

discourse and its role in meaning making becomes an essential element in researching CG. Of

interest are scholars who suggest that meaning in language is contingent on use

(Wittgenstein, 2001; Lorimer 2005). Language and the meaning it conveys is not based on

preconceived rules, but evolves and is grounded by embodied and tacit performance

(Krzywoszynska, 2015). As such, the role I played as a researcher engaging in discussions,

the question asked in interviews and inflections they have, my presentations in workshops, published work, and collaborating alongside Nepali NGO's and policy actors, contributes to and is influenced by the discourse of CG. The researcher occupies the role of participant in the discourse of CG in a comparable way to other actors in the network.

3.8.4. *Balancing impact*

Viewing my role in the CG network from the perspective of a discursive participant I started to think about the different approaches I adopted when engaging with different actors. With each actor I spoke with I adjusted my language; when talking to NGO's, lobbyists and academics, who I shared a common understanding of CG with, I could speak more academically; with government officials I was more formal and careful with how I asked about the actors they work with; and again, with community members I rarely spoke of CG at all. In my language I adopted assumptions like those outlined in the previous chapters- that NGO's and researchers share similar knowledge, that the government is defensive, and that academic language of CG would not translate to communities; without intending to, I risked replicating the same barriers that have been highlighted throughout this work. My approach to different actors raises very real questions on the role of the researcher in CG. How do we find the balance between tailoring our research so that it is accessible for different audiences without replicating destructive assumptions concerning actors' roles and abilities? When researching a concept where the definition is still ambiguous, does the way we approach discussions around that topic risk excluding voices from the debate?

The impact researchers have in shaping and advancing the discourse of CG is salient when viewed in the context of criticism of DRR which suggests that it is still an expert led field resulting in bias and tension for emerging CG (Nohrstedt, 2022). In Nepal, the frictions that

exist in between government and non-state actors is well documented; particularly since the DRR policy history is greatly influenced by experts and international aid community (Jones, et.al, 2015,2016; Nightingale ,2018). When reflecting on the interactions I had with government officials I experienced the various levels of openness to *expert* knowledge; with some officials arguing for more collaboration and knowledge generation with international researchers and NGO's whilst others wanted experts to be led by the government aims. The role of research in the emerging CGR for DRR is not uniform and mirrors the fact that separate actors see collaboration differently based on their own organisational agendas and histories.

The first example of this was during an initial scoping visit to far western Nepal, where I was assisting a colleague to conduct semi structured interviewees for Landslide_ EVO. The participants were a rural municipality chair and his board members. The focus of the interview was to assess the needs of the municipality in relation to what the project could produce. The conversation continued without much progress until the chair said, "you're the experts, you tell me what I need to do for landslide management, and I'll do it[7]". This was our cue to wrap up; either the chairman had lost interest in the conversation, or as was later confirmed, there was yet to be a working DRR management plan in the local municipality and as such they were dependant on outside experts. A contradiction to this interaction, is one I had with a head of a national government department; for him, the role of international

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[7] Paraphrased based on field notes.

research was to support the governments through data sharing which would strengthen the government's position and allow for them to be the central actor in DRR.

> *"The civil society, the researchers, the students can help the government to help change their policies, to change their laws and to change their actions. But we have to go through the government."* (GON_02)

These two different interactions highlight a frequent problem when working as part of collaborative system; actors' perceptions of the role of researcher in CG systems is just as important as your own goals for this research. To some extent it becomes a balancing act between being aware of what's expected of you from decision makers, what data they are willing to hear, how the discussions you have can make the most impact and shape the discourse around CG, but doesn't necessarily reflect the research aims you think are relevant based on your understanding of the situation.

Yet, the primary audiences for my research output are government officials working at the national level, wider DRR practitioners and DRR/Governance scholars. Through my outputs I share the stories of communities that are often overlooked by decision makers in the hope that they will listen and take account of gaps at the community level. In many ways it can feel futile because there is little you can do. At the same time, it's uncomfortable as you are asking for people's time and for them to relay personal suffering from their past; many times, this can include death of a loved one and/or destruction of their homes and livelihoods. Yet my position comes with immense privilege and a deeply unbalanced power dynamic; this is evident with the relative ease I was able to gain access into spaces of political power, and have meetings with government departments and UN offices. This balance of occupying two

spaces of both limited abilities to affect meaningful on ground change and privilege at the same time is frustrating and upsetting, whilst also very rewarding.

Many researchers working on social justice issues are faced with a tension due to the immutable fact that the work we do will have more benefit for us than it does for the communities we work with. This unease is particularly present when you are a white western researcher working with impoverished remote communities in the majority world; knowing the data I collect and the work I do has undeniable personal advantages in the form of qualifications, financial gains (both present and future), publications, and peer recognition; despite being driven by a desire to be part of a change for good. Whereas for the communities who share their stories and give their time, there is very little benefit. (Giwa, 2015).

3.8.5. *Collaborating with translators*

Accounting for my role within a CG network is more than just understanding the expectations and privileges afforded to researchers. A unique challenge I faced, as a researcher working in a different country, was navigating the different definitions of CG when my understanding differed from those who I had to rely on to communicate. This varying discourse and framing can represent challenges to effective collaboration especially when working with a translator to gather data. The challenges of cross-cultural translation are well documented with geography scholars noting the ethical and political choices in translation (Poblete, 2009, Temple,2002; Temple and Young,2004). Instead of translation being seen as the transfer of meaning from context to another, it is widely noted that translation often does not do justice to the richness of meaning derived from connotation and cultural context (Muller, 2007). Translation is often viewed as a hybrid space between two languages (Smith,1996) Krzywoszynska suggests that:

"The first act of translation in research is not between the researcher and the readers of their text, nor between the research participants and those readers, but between the participants and the researcher. It is in this space that sense is made. The first stage of translation, then, is understanding." (Krzwoszynska,2015, 315)

I would argue that when researching an ambiguous concept, the first act of translation needs to be between the researcher and translator. An experience I had that speaks to these challenges came from my community level interviews. The uncertainty around collaboration and what this means in relation to DRR dictated an explorative flexible research design, based on iterative learning and adaptations based on what I learned in the field. One aspect that I didn't account for when working with my research assistant was how their understanding of collaboration, and what networks for support should look like, would impact my research.

This story starts in the last part of my field work in Nepal in February 2020. I had begun preparation for the next part of my research, which was aimed at capturing informal community level support networks. I wanted to understand networks of informal collaboration; how they work together, who was included and how important they are for people living in landslide prone areas. I had chosen a social network analysis egonet survey, as the design lessened participant fatigue[8] and would circumvent some of the barriers I face

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[8] The community participants had already answered a lengthy quantitative survey for the Landslide_EVO project; further I knew that amongst the participants were subsistence farmers with many livelihood and

as a non-Nepali speaker[9]. I hired a research assistant (I will refer to him as RG from now on) who was recommended by a colleague. RG had a career spanning a 20+ years, had worked as a community organiser/support officer for multiple NGO's, was newly retired as a head of local governance programme, and had worked with large international NGO's and researchers before as a translator- I felt very lucky to have his expertise and assistance for this part of my field work. After a few test-runs and some successful municipal levels interviews we embarked on 2 days of travel to the mid hill region of the Himalayas where the community of Sunkuda is located. We set up base in the local municipal town of Deuklekh where we planned to stay for the next month gathering network data and additional semi-structured interviews; the semi-structured interviews were from local politicians, government departments, local members of the International Federation of the Red Cross, and key informant actors who were involved in local disaster related activities, management, and knowledge dissemination.

The ego net survey was designed to find out who the participants turn to for help in relation to landslide hazard or floodings. RG would then help the participant fill in their personal network, and gather details about each person in the network (Figure 8. Alter information

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childcare responsibilities, and some were effectively single-head households for most of the year with the men working away. I did not want to take up too much of their time.

[9] My egonet survey design used visual markers, colour coding and pictures, to allow me to follow along with the survey and ask for additional questions as they arose- whilst my RA could concentrate on conducting the survey.

sheet used to collect data on the individuals identified by interview participant as providing support.). This was a delicate aspect of the study as you must encourage participants to think about people in their lives and their roles they play in relation to DRR: but not influence the list or impose your ideas of who should be on that list. However, RG seemed confident that he could do it. At first all went well, the survey worked well, and I was able to interpret interesting visual indicators within the

Figure 8. Alter information sheet used to collect data on the individuals identified by interview participant as providing support. (Pic by C. Russell)

network and ask additional questions to elicit details (known as network stories) to add grit and context to the relationship ties we were seeing. However, halfway through I noticed a pattern emerging in the answers – all participants (bar the first 4 we had interviewed) listed 7 people in their network. This might seem trivial, but a key part of egonet data collection is that the participant share *their* network- with as little interference as possible. A participants egonet can be as big or as small as they want- as it reflects *their* reality; in fact, network size is a measurement used within SNA. I discovered that RG had, unintentionally, slipped back into his role as a governance expert and community organiser and was suggesting to participants who they *should* include (local politicians); or rather who policy and institutional structures dictated were responsible for DRR support. I was dismayed as this meant that the data from 18 networks was unusable and would have to be redone; this meant finding new

participants and staying longer in the field which was expensive and physically and emotionally exhausting. [10]

However, whilst disappointing at the time, it is an apposite example about the challenges of researching and working collaboratively. Each actor has their own understanding of what collaborations and networks look like. This can be seen from an extract showing an exchange we had during an interview:

RG: Okay, can you tell me one thing? Person A is a very good teacher and respected person in this community. But there are Ward members and the Ward chair as well. The Ward chair is more powerful here [*indicating to a position on the network diagram*] but Person A is a teacher. How should I distinguish whether we keep the Ward chair first or Person A?

Caz: Why do you ask this question?

RG: Because these two guys are from the Ward office.

Caz: Yeah, they are politically important.

RG: Yes, they are politically powerful. Normally, this person (Person A) is also very powerful, and all community members respect him and obey his suggestions. So, what shall I do? Person A important or Ward members?

Caz: It's up to them, ask them.

RG: No, I asked them. They are telling this person A is important. But again, we must think, this person or that person.

Caz: No, we do not suggest anything. We don't live here, and this is not our lives. It's their lives. So, who they say is important, it's who they want. This is what I am trying to find out. Why they find [Person A] important. It gives us more insights.

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[10] 3 days after this happened, following UK government advice the University of Birmingham recalled all overseas researchers home due COVID-19. All international flights were grounded a week later. I was unable to return to Nepal to finish my data collection.

This interaction highlights some of the challenges that I faced during my field work that mirror the literature on CG. Within the current CG landscape, multiple actors from different institutional backgrounds embodied different conceptualisation of what CG should look like. On the surface, the word collaboration is easily translated, yet the exchange of meaning is much more complicated. My understanding of collaboration is taken from the CG scholarship and my focus was on a wider set of different actors (both formal networks and informal networks) that have power in meaningful decision-making; from this position, I am assessing whether a network is collaborative or not based on my definition. For RG, his understanding of collaboration aligned with a more formal structure and viewed through a rights-based lens. His conceptualisation of networks of support had a prescribed set of actors that it should include. However, when his conceptualisation was challenged, he felt compelled to intervene and educate communities on their misunderstanding. In many ways his approach mirrors that of the national level actors I had previously interviewed. When a tension or challenge emerges surrounding how collaboration is understood the default seems to be that communities don't understand that they are at fault; instead of exploring the reasons behind the difference in understanding for e.g., the ability of communities to access different networks. It recalls what Simon, (1996) talks about in relation to the political nature of translation:

> "*Translators must constantly make decisions about the cultural meanings which language carries, and evaluate the degree to which the two different worlds they inhibit are the same*" (Simon, 1996 138)

If I reflect on my experience of working with RG, this quotation applies even beyond the translation of meaning between two languages; It could be applied to the misalignment of our understanding of collaboration and the resulting actions taken to address it.

Actors' conceptualisations are derived from their past experiences. These personal experiences are not limited to their current positions or roles, but are part of their historical engagement with an issue. This ideational history is shaped by the institutions and disciplines they have been part of, their culture and passions, and their hope for what the future could look like (Schmidt, 2008, 2010); This is particularly pertinent when working with extremely poor and marginalised communities as it can have a high emotional toll on interviewers and can lead to a range of emotive responses. For RG, his past work as a governance expert/community organiser, meant that he saw himself as an advocate and educator. When the participants shared a network that did not align with what he believed it should be it became an opportunity for him to educate; he wanted the participant to know their rights and know who they should hold accountable in the government. This is a common challenge that is faced when actors from different sectors are collaborating. With hindsight I could have spent more time explaining *why* I was collecting this data, and what value I saw in it as a human geographer than just explaining the data collection steps.

Secondly, the exchange highlighted an important balancing act that research and researchers must play in relation to their role in CG systems. For research to meet disciplinary standards, there are specific actors that I am expected to interview and engage with. Yet, the act of focusing on certain actors above others reasserts the legitimacy of those actors in that CG

network. This links to concerns raised by Morrison et.al who suggest that historical focus of research on polycentric systems can lead to *"skewed stakeholder representation and risk, reinforcing pre-existing elites while further marginalizing the vulnerable."* (Morrison et. al, 2017 p 10). This concern is pertinent to emerging CG systems as the state often relies on trusted and known actors whilst continuing to marginalise vulnerable communities and unknown actors such as the public sector (Morrison et.al, 2017). To me, this is a critical influence that researchers need to be mindful of. Particularly in places where the CG systems are novel and new patterns of collaborations are yet to be fully established.

This is one of the biggest challenges to CG in Nepal. There is a wide range of actors from different sectors with different agendas but no translation between them. The question this raises for me then, is what is the role of research in CG? Is it to act as a translator or facilitator of meaning making between the different actors? If so, is it possible to aim for a contextualised and unified conceptualisation of CG?

4. Chapter four: The history of collaboration in Nepal

4. Introduction

The belief that collaborative governance (CG) improves resilience and reduces disaster risk

has become an axiom of international DRR policy and scientific literature (Nohrstedt et al.,

2022). This is evident in the global move towards producing DRR institutions and policies

that increase collaboration (UNDRR, 2015); by encouraging practices of consulting and

working with a wide range of actors from different sectors (UNDRR,2015); and through

decentralising power and decision making around DRR across geographic scales

(UNDRR,2015). Yet, as discussed in the literature review, scholarship surrounding CG is

mired in ambiguity and tensions such as how to measure success (Koontz, 2006); concerns

surrounding the expert dominated roles and regulations that guide collaboration (Nohrstedt et

al 2022); how to address the lack of political and financial incentives to act on long-term

threats (Mechler, 2016); and encouraging community and citizen participation (Mall et al.,

2019). It is further complicated by the combination of in-practice evolution that differs from

policy and best practices guidelines; with the impact of international policy on how different

actors understand and implement concepts still unclear. This lack of clarity has resulted in a

multifarious approach to collaboration-in-practice, which is contributing to an erratic

grassroots environment where DRR actors often work in conflict with each other (Jones et al.,

2014).

Despite this ambiguity, few working within DRR are challenging this axiom; or reflecting on

the deeper ideational meaning of collaboration and, by extension, CG (Nohrstedt et al. ,2022).

This unquestioning commitment to the truism of CG is applied across differing geopolitical

and cultural contexts and by different actors within DRR. Yet, there is a lack of research exploring how these different contexts shape how collaboration is understood, and what impacts this has on policy and institutional reforms. What, for example, are the differences and commonalities in how collaboration is perceived in different national, regional, or local contexts? And what are the factors within socio-cultural and geopolitical contexts that influence how collaboration and CG as a concept evolves into a set of practices? I argue this represents a critical knowledge gap in countries such as Nepal, where large scale national institutional restructuring is taking place to facilitate greater collaboration; based, in part, on the international conventions that promote the *collaborative ideal* (Oxford Policy Management, 2021). It is this relationship between the socio-political contexts and the ongoing evolution of institutions and incorporation of collaboration in formal Nepali DRR that is the focus of this chapter.

I argue that one of the reasons for this dearth of research on the contextual/geopolitical impacts on institutional change in DRR is how disasters and their perceived role in change have been historically framed. When it comes to institutional change disasters and large-scale events are often represented as the catalyst for reform – the tipping point that highlight to citizens a need for action (Pelling, 2019) or used as *lessons learned* for government reforms; a position I am not fully disagreeing with. The 2015 Ghorka earthquake in Nepal is a good example of a disaster being depicted as a tipping point event[11]. After the 2015 earthquake

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[11] Pelling describes a tipping point event as a failing of the social contract between state on citizens *"In any one political regime the balance between competing security interests is presented as an extension of the social*

there was wide-spread condemnation of the ruling Constitutive Assembly and the years of stagnation relating to DRR policy reform and implementation. During this time, post-earthquake, citizens, NGOs, humanitarian actors, and DRR government departments used the aftermath as an exposé of institutional failure (Jones et al., 2016). This shift in public opinion concerning change can be seen in the media reporting at the time with numerous articles highlighting the *unnaturalness* of this disaster that overwhelmingly effected poorer communities compared to elites (see Deepak Chamlagain, 2015; Shradha Ghale, 2015; Burke, 2015). This public discourse in the years after the 2015 earthquake focussed on the need for policy reform and greater action on implementation:

> *"Nepal has developed many policies and strategies for disaster risk reduction at the central as well as local levels. Some of these were widely appreciated by the world community too. Regretfully, the implementation of such policies and strategies has been weak and was never monitored effectively.*

> *For the future, the government needs to come up with strong, implementable programmes that always put locals at the forefront"* (Chamlagain, 2015).

In line with this view of disasters as a catalyst for change, since 2015 there has been a large-scale programme of institutional reform surrounding how Nepal manages disasters. This has

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contract…disasters demonstrate a manifest failure in the social contract and open space for renegotiation in the values and structures of society" (Pelling and Dill, 2006 p27)

been attributed to the earthquake, an example of this thinking is shown during an interview with a key national DRR actor:

> *"After the 2015earthquake all the political parties were all getting some consensus to have a new DRM act, to act on the disaster mitigation. So, I think that if the 2015 earthquakes wasn't to happen then maybe we can't say whether we would have the new act or not"* (NGO_04)

As shown, disasters do act as catalysts for action and institutional reform. However, what I am arguing is that by focussing on this framing there is a risk of oversimplifying how reform in disaster related policies can occur. Perhaps exploring institutional reform in disaster management from a different angle might give new insights into how institutional reforms evolve, what challenges they may face in their cultural context, and what type of future these reforms will uphold. The 2015 earthquake may have been *the straw that broke disaster focused policies back*, but it cannot be fully responsible or give complete insight into the institutional reform currently occurring in Nepal. To understand where current institutional reform has come from, we need to also look at the history of collaboration in Nepal's political landscape. This is an uneven and patchy process with changes occurring at different rates, in different ways, and from different sources. Change here is not only the result of formal mechanisms such as policy changes, international treaties, or large-scale events. Rather, it is the result of hard-fought compromises between historically warring political factions, long term lobbying from advocacy groups and humanitarian aid organisations, and communities that have had to learn to function in the midst of a resolutely stagnant government.

To date, the DRM reforms in Nepal have been the focus of multiple studies looking at a range of issues; from impact, case studies focussed on both successes and 'failure' (Oxford Policy Management, 2021), exploring the role of resilience DRR policy change (Watson, 2017), and transnational comparative case studies of DRR policies and practice (Jones et al, 2016). A commonality within these studies is that the move towards collaboration is either represented as progress without questioning the concept or it is not acknowledged at all; collaboration is axiomatic within current DRR discourse. The genesis of the drive for greater collaboration and how it has been shaped by Nepal's political and geographical context is overlooked. This chapter takes up the challenge unpacking collaboration in the Nepalese context by examining the historical evolution of collaboration in DRR, specifically exploring how collaboration is framed and understood in documents produced by actors working in DRR (both State and (I)NGO). This body of formal documentation (how collaboration is perceived by actors) is then contrasted with interviews on how collaboration is implemented in practice, often through ad-hoc, incremental, or informal changes. The focus on uneven   change , I argue, is as equally important to understanding institutional change as a result of large- scale events and lessons learned. This is due to the fact that the cultural context in which changes occur, often lays the foundation for how that change will unfold (what policies will be accepted, and which practices implemented). This geopolitical context shapes how reform will look prior to the large-scale events that are seen to tip the balance towards that reform.

To do this, this chapter will examine the evolution of the concept of collaboration as it has been historically used in Nepali DRR through examining its framing over time (see Ch 3.6). In doing so, it takes the first tentative steps towards exploring the ideational evolution of CG

and questions what impact this may have had on institutional change and policy reformation in Nepal. As such, this chapter seeks to add novel insight into CG in Nepal that differs from previous scholarly engagement through its focus on the discourse of collaboration and its impact on institutional reform. To do this, I will draw from theories of discursive institutionalism to examine changing Nepali DRR policies and regulations. Specifically, this chapter looks to the past and explores the different conceptualisations of collaboration and examines how the roles of different actors in collaborative actions are framed and when collaborative action is described as most effective in DRR policies from the past 40 years. The intention is to deepen the understanding of the history of collaboration as a discourse in Nepal DRR, showing how the concept of collaboration has affected and been affected by ongoing institutional changes.

4.1. *Using discourse to understand institutional change*
To explore the relationship between institutional change and discourse I draw on discursive institutionalist (DI) thinking as a guiding analytic. Discourse within DI thinking is:

> *"The representation of ideas (how agents say what they are thinking of doing) and the*
> *discursive interactions through which actors generate and communicate ideas (to*
> *whom they say it) within the given institutional context (where and when they say it)*
> *(*Schmidt, 2008 p. 306)

According to Schmidt, defining discourse in this way allows for the force of ideas to be recognised and gives insight into how the ideas are conveyed between different actors. Understanding the power of discourse in this way means that causal influences of discourse on institutional structural change can be explored, evaluations can be made of why certain

ideas succeed or fail to come to fruition, and the discussion of power dynamics inherent in the promotions of certain ideas over others becomes central to the analysis (Majone, 1989; Blyth, 2002; Parsons, 2003; Russell et al., 2020, Carstensen, 2016; Zaller,1992). These facets are salient to this chapter as the concept of collaboration has been strongly promoted and advocated for by mainstream DRR actors with limited scholarship that speaks to these elements. The result of this lobbying can be seen in recent constitutional restructuring and the establishment of new DRR institutions in Nepal; both of which have greater collaboration as a main objective (GON,2015; GON, 2017).

When DI incorporates a historical lens, it allows for greater insight on gradual institutional change. Instead of path dependencies and trajectory changing events (that are primarily explored in historical institutionalist approaches) tracing the discursive evolution of collaboration shows how this concept has been framed as a public policy solution over time. This approach thus enables examination of how wider socio-cultural changes within societies inform *problem, definition, and resolution* within the public policy process, resulting in shifting definitions of *successes.* In turn, this informs who is included in collaborative efforts (which actors are seen as legitimate and which aren't and how this has evolved); which aspects or definitions of collaboration have been stable, and which have changed; and how and in what ways the discourses of collaboration result in institutional or policy change or simply reinforce the status quo. Consequently, I argue that drawing from DI offers a way to explore the deeper ideational understanding of collaboration and how it has become an axiom of resilience and sustainability in DRR.

4.2. *Methods*

I structure this chapter around a timeline of change in Nepali DRR governance that was explored in a paper I worked on with colleagues that evaluated evolving DRR policy paradigms (Vij et al., 2020). In this paper we identified 4 major paradigm changes in DRR policy in Nepal over the past 40 years; they are disaster response and recovery, disaster risk reduction, integrated DRR and climate change adaptation, and federalized DRR. These paradigm shifts follow similar changes in international policy and epistemologies concerning how disasters are understood, framed, and ultimately shape how they should be managed in the future (Vij et al., 2020). The paradigm study provides a timeline of change with each paradigm representing a different ideational period, that shifted over 10-year increments(Schmidt, 2016; Vij, 2020). The benefit of using this timeline is that it provides a structure of key touch stones against which the analysis of collaborative discourse can be explored. The structure gives a clear outline of how DRR thinking has changed and marks significant shifts in both international and national approaches to DRR. Within these periods of change this chapter examines how CG discourses evolve through each period (and what definitional elements stay the same), what institutions emerged and disappeared during these paradigms, and how different actors are viewed within each paradigmatic period. This will give insight into the role of discourse in shaping the trajectory of institutional change.

Data for this analysis have been sourced from two areas (Table 4). Firstly, policy documents (acts, plans of actions, and annual reports) were sourced from the disaster preparedness network Nepal (DP-Net) website. DP-Net is a consortium of NGOs that act as the secretariat for the MOHA's disaster related work. It has had this role for 30 years and provides

Table 4. List of documents

Document title	Authors	DOP	Institution
Natural Calamities Relief	GoN	1982	MoHA
National Action plan for Disaster Management	GoN	1996	MoHA
Environmental Degradation & Disaster Management in Nepal	DNCDM	2003	DNCDM
Guidelines On Non-Structural Measures In Urban Flood Management	IHP	2001	UNESCO
KYM valley earthquake management action plan	NSET Nepal	1998	NSET
NSDRM_2009	MoHA	2009	
Nepal Disaster report 2009	MoHA	2009	MOHA
Nepal Disaster Report 2017	MoHA	2017	MoHA
Nepal Disaster Report 2009	MoHA	2013	MoHA
Nepal Disaster Report 2015	MoHA	2015	MoHA DpNET
Nepal Disaster Report 2011	MoHA	2011	MoHA
National Position Paper on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management.	MoHA	2018	
National Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction-English	MoHA	2019	
Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, 2074 And Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Rules, 2076	MoHA	2019	
Disaster Risk Reduction National Strategic Action Plan 2018-2030	MoHA	2018	
Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World: guidelines for natural disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation	UNDRR	1994	
Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the resilience of nations and communities–to disasters - full text	UNDRR	2005	
The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030	UNDRR	2015	

secretariat support, expert consultation, and advocacy to the Nepali government. DP-NET

also keeps a comprehensive online resource library which dates back to the 1980s (DP-NET,

2022). In addition, further documentation was sourced from the UN disaster prevention web

archives and MOHA online archive).

As discussed at length in chapter 3.6 analysis of the documentation was conducted using

NVivo 12. Each document was coded to examine if the term "collaboration" (and its

synonyms) were used, how it was framed in relation to the problem (does collaboration

reduce risk), which institutions were formed and named as legitimate collaborative actors,

and which actors were not included in collaboration. (Saldana, 2016). In addition to the

archival and policy documents, this chapter draws on six semi-structured interviews with key

informants (KI) (see

Table 2). These are used as lived insights into how collaboration has been integrated into

DRR practice. Interview participants were selected due to their long-established careers

working in Nepali DRR as part of humanitarian NGOs', military, and intergovernmental

organisations. The participants selected for interview in this chapter were active lobbyists and

consulted by the government of Nepal as experts in reforming DRR and provided insight

into how DRR governance has evolved over the past 40 years. The main focus of the

interview data that this chapter draws on was to explore the personal history of the KI and

their previous role in the DRR. By focusing on this portion of the interview data I was able to

inductively explore evolving DRR in Nepal from the perspective of practitioners and policy

makers who have worked in these areas for many decades. This approach is in keeping with

DI thinking which draws on both how discourse is used (the way issues are framed) in the

policy documents, and between whom discourse is exchanged (which actors shaped policy). As this is an historical analysis the latter part is limited, however my hope is that by drawing insight from actors who have been actively engaged in policy change over time their interviews can add some context to the policy documents, and nuance to the analysis.

4.3. *Evolving discourses of collaboration*

The disaster paradigms identified in the Vij et al., (2020) paper show 4 distinct policy paradigms of disaster governance in Nepal over the past 40 years: these are disaster response and recovery, disaster risk reduction, integrated CCA and DRR, and federalized DRR (Figure
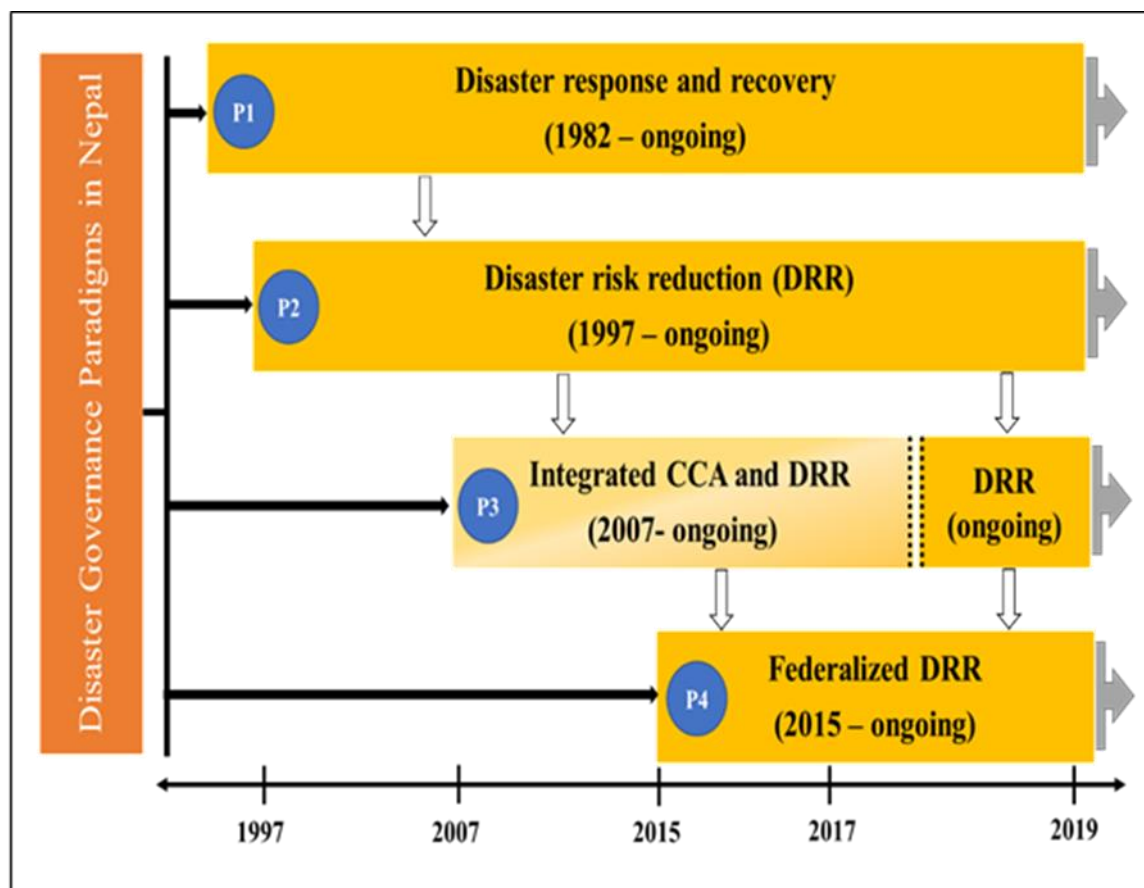
Figure 9. Disaster Governance Paradigms taken from Vij.et.al, 2021.

9). Our study showed that whilst there were distinct changes in how the disasters were managed over time, the previous paradigms still had influence even after the new paradigm

took over. We concluded that, in practice, the disaster response and recovery paradigm,

which focused primarily on post-disaster action and did not engage with other areas of the

disaster management cycle, still has a strong presence today in how DRR actors approach

disaster management despite being replaced, from a paradigmatic perspective, almost 40

years ago. There are key points taken from the paradigm paper that are pertinent to this

chapter; Firstly, the changes between policy paradigms are shown as incremental with

periods of transition between each paradigm. Secondly, there is a clear protracted legacy of

past paradigms that continue to have influence on current DRR thinking, resulting in a patchy

Policy paradigm	Conceptualization of collaboration in documents
Disaster Response and Recovery (1982-ongoing)	Collaboration was not part of disaster focused policies during this period. Action to address disasters was retrospective and managed through a top-down approach with the government and experts' opinions taking precedent. Policy document framed local government and communities as recipients of disaster recovery and response.
Disaster Risk Reduction (1997- ongoing)	The DRR policy documents begin to include the language of participation and collective action to reduce vulnerability to hazards. Policy documents call for a wider inclusion of participants and community knowledge and minority participation in documents and discourse.
Integrated CCA and DRR (2007-ongoing)	DRR discourse in the documents explored has similar framing to previous paradigm. The language of inclusiveness, by calling for of a wider range of actors is present yet it is focused on the need to improve development to reduce disaster vulnerability as part of CCA action. Communities, civil society, and business were framed as critical to reducing disasters and vulnerability to hazards. There is an increase in platforms built around collaboration between different sectors and at operating across different scales.
Federalized DDR (2015- ongoing)	Collaboration as a concept is represented as critical to successful disaster related policy and action. In policy documents from GoN and NGO's decentralization of power and wider inclusion of actors from all sectors is represented as essential to successful disaster related actions and policies.

Table 5. Conceptualization of collaboration in different policy paradigms

and uneven implementation of collaborative action for DRR. These points formed the rationale for this chapter by complicating the discourse of disaster induced institutional change i.e., tipping points and lessons learned. Instead, to understand institutional change and evolution of CG it requires an approach that focuses on discourse that reflects the context and nuances of the cultural and geopolitical changes that shape and impact change.

By depicting change as uneven, and patchy, with one set of ideas merging with the next, paradigms are shown to be co-evolving and influencing one another. It is this understanding of institutional change that aligns with DI's conceptualisation of how ideas and discourse evolve within, and shape change in institutional landscapes. Therefore, using DI as a guiding analytic allows for a focussed study on the role of discourse and its relationship to institutional changes. This perception of change reinforces my assertion that uneven and patchy progress has been a significant, and overlooked, pattern of change in Nepal. Further by concentrating on the discourse of collaboration and how it has evolved throughout wider paradigmatic changes it maps an historical narrative of collaboration in Nepal; this, when read against the wider international movements speak to the informal mechanisms specific to Nepal that impacted how collaboration is understood and implemented within DRR.

4.4. *Discourse on collaboration during the disaster response and recovery paradigm*
The disaster response and recovery paradigm was dominant from 1982 onwards with government and humanitarian actors focused on post-disaster scenarios. The aim of policies and plans during this period was to assist communities that had been affected by a disaster and help them to recover (Vij et al., 2021; GoN,1982). The disaster cycle, mitigation, and

prevention activities were not part of the thinking during this period. Most institutions worked in a siloed manner with the government and humanitarian organisations often working at odds with each other, replicating actions or working in contradiction to other response and recovery efforts. Policies were heavily top-down in focus with experts taking precedence and communities and local levels governments seen as the recipients of aid and disaster response efforts (Vij et al., 2021).

The policy objectives operational during the response and recovery paradigm are set forth in the Natural Calamities Relief Act (NCRA)(GoN,1982). This was the sole disaster focussed policy in Nepal during this period and remained so until the 1990s. The objective of this policy was to manage the response and relief efforts *after* a natural hazard had affected a community or in the event of a disaster. The scope of the Natural Calamities Act (NCA) was limited to formal institutions across the four scales of government operational under the panchayat national, district, town, and village [12]. This approach was highly centralised, with decision making power located at the national scale government, under service to the monarchy, who maintained the power to mobilise Natural Calamity Committees (NCC) and sub-committees to address disaster needs across the country. The sub-committees were comprised mostly of members from different government institutions who often worked in a highly siloed manner (Gautam, 2018). The notable exception to this was the inclusion of the International Federation of Red Cross/Crescent (IFRC) who were consulting members of the

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[12] Nepal was ruled under the Panchayat regime from 1960 to 1990. This was a monarchy whereby the parliament and cabinet operate under the authority of the king (Jha, 2016).

committees as well as the Nepal Red Cross who aided on implementation and relief work (NCA, 1982). Assessment and allocation of the recovery assistance, the needs of the affected communities, and plans of action were determined by the NCC at the national level and filtered down to the local level government who worked with Nepal Red Cross and volunteers to implement recovery actions.

The discourse of collaboration is absent from policy documents during this period. This is due to the international understanding of the causes of disaster during this paradigm. Disaster were still predominantly seen through the hazard lens[13]. As such disasters were addressed through response and recovery with little understanding of disaster prevention or risk management. In the documents assessed, the sole responsibility for response and recovery action was overseen by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA). The role of international humanitarian organisations were discussed only as aid providers who should assist the relevant government committee:

> *"All governmental, non-governmental offices, organisation and individual of the*
> *concerned area and in the vicinity should help the central, regional district and local*
> *committees providing assistance in the relief work" (GON, 1982 p.9)*

 International aid was channelled through a government run financial instrument the Central Natural Calamity Aid and distributed by the NCC. NGOs did assist in response and relief

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[13] The hazard paradigm, as outlined in the literature section of this thesis, viewed disasters as a direct result of hazard encountering humans. Disaster were an unfortunate inevitability of humans living on a hostile planet.

work but had to defer to the remit of NCC, which is represented as the main co-coordinating body for disaster relief and response action. Communities appear as recipients of aid only. Whereas the private sector do not appear in the document. The paradigm was the predominant way that disasters were understood and managed in Nepal from the 1970's until the 1990s, when there was a major shift in intergovernmental thinking and approaches to disaster risk management.

4.5. *Discourse on collaboration during the disaster risk reduction paradigm*
The disaster risk reduction paradigm became dominant from the 1997s onwards through the UN's International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) the spirit of which is embodied in the Yokoyama Plan of Action for a Safer World (UNISDR, 1994). The paradigm was marked by a shift away from response and recovery towards a holistic approach to managing disasters that included an emphasis on preventative measures, early warning, a focus on development to reduce vulnerability of poorer communities, and guidance that introduced the concept of collaboration as a key approach to managing hazards:

> *" Community involvement and their active participation should be encouraged to gain greater insight into the individual and collective perception of development and risk, and to have a clear understanding of the cultural and organizational characteristics of each society as well as of its behaviour and interactions with the physical and natural environment."* (UNISDR, 1994 p.3)

> *"Preventive measures are most effective when they involve participation at all levels, from the local community through the national government to the regional and international level."* (UNISDR, 1994 p.7)

In 1995 Nepal became a signatory to the Yokoyama plan and the government proceeded to make National Action Plans on Disaster Management (NAPDM), the first of which was published in 1996 (MOHA,1996). The NAPDM follows the spirit of collaboration in the Yokoyama plan by acknowledging the need for:

> *"Policies on the roles of NGO's, local communities, private sector and also policies on people's participation especially women and socially disadvantaged groups"* (MOHA, 1996 p. 7).

However, despite the discourse of greater inclusion of a wider field of actors within international and national policies, from an implementation perspective there continued to be a siloed approach to disaster risk reduction. The MOHA remained the main government institution in charge of disaster management and the SCC the formal instrument used to manage disasters. Whilst newly established institutions were forming, they focused on specific hazards such as the Water Induced Disaster Prevention Technical Centre (DPTC); which was funded by outside sources, the Japanese embassy. This siloed approach resulted in poor collaboration between government institutions and ineffective institutional network for managing hazards and disasters (Jones et al., 2014).

4.6. *Geographical and political context during the DRR paradigm*

The discourse of collaboration that was seen in international DRR policy documents during this time was situated within calls for greater reform that were occurring in Nepal at the time. This trend was embodied in the Local Self Governance Act of 1999. Beginning in late 1980's, particularly in response to the 1988 earthquake, there was a lobbying drive by INGO/NGOs for a replacement of the Natural Calamities' Relief Act. The aim of this

lobbying was to make DRM more collaborative and shift the focus from response and recovery towards more preventative action. This was a concerted effort from non-governmental organisations and those who worked in areas focused on hazards and disaster, who wrote and proposed new policy, applied for funded research that reflected current international and scientific knowledge, and promoted the changes that were occurring at the international policy level (Jones et al., 2014). However, despite efforts of lobbyists little was achieved due to the siloed institutional landscape and lack of political motivation to address concerns with the NCA. This lack of political will to improve disaster governance was characterised by one participant of our interviews as ineffective, and bogged down in bureaucracy and a lack of urgency from the government:

> *"I told you before that it's really tough to convince the higher authorities the importance of disaster risk reduction or disaster because it's not in their priority, that's why they dissolved the department, full-fledged department of water induced disaster prevention so that proved that, it's not in their priorities."* (GON_01)

The reluctance for change in disaster related governance at the national level seems to align with the wider trend of decentralisation across Nepal that occurred during the 1990's. This focus on decentralisation aimed at making local governments autonomous, dispersing responsibility across scales, and encouraging greater collaborations between government bodies and citizens, business, and NGOs (Acherya, 2014; Cheema & Rondineli, 2007; Chesire, 2000; Scott, 2009). Yet despite the push for decentralisation and DRM reform in Nepal, formal policy and institutional reformation didn't improve during the latter half of the decade. This stagnation is understandable considering the conflict between the Royal Nepalese government and anti-monarchist Maoist factions that ran between 1996-2006(Jha,

2019). The Nepal conflict resulted in major restructuring of the country's political landscape, including the end of 70 years of monarchy, a move towards democratic rule via multiple caretaker governments whose job was to oversee constitutional reform (Jha,2019).

During the conflict years most disaster related projects, such as prevention or capacity building, were undertaken by international and national NGOs (Jones et al., 2014). NGO's working in remote areas of Nepal were increasingly subjected to the regulations of the informal Maoists governments, that had been set up in occupied areas of far western Nepal. According to one of our participants who were working for NGO's during this time, many Maoists held areas had become inaccessible to the Royal Nepali government and army, with NGO's frequently barred from working there. When disaster related work was present it was as a supplement to the focus on pro poor development and conflict resolution:

> *"That was the time that this Maoist insurgency started, you know in 96. So that was another disaster, you know the conflict was one of the prime issues to the development worker, it was very hard to work. So, we started working simultaneously on the conflict management as well as the disaster management."(NGO_04)*

During the conflict period updating disaster related policy in line with international changes was not a priority (Jones, 2014; Jones et.al, 2016). However, while there was inertia in terms of DRR policy reform during the conflict years that does not mean that collaboration did not occur. In fact, throughout this period collaboration had started to become an integral part of the Nepali political psyche. This emerging collaboration was the result of the Maoist conflict that left many rural areas cut off from central government; with no local elections being held between 2002 and 2017. During the conflict years, local and district governments in Maoist

held areas operated parallel governments, running counter to Nepali held areas (Byrne and

Shrestha, 2013). The communities in the rural areas were caught between the governments

and armies of the Maoist insurgency and the royal Nepalese government leaving a void where

NGO's, communities, and the private sector began to work together to make day to day

decisions (Byrne and Shrestha, 2013).

4.7. *Discourse on collaboration during the climate change adaptation paradigm*
This paradigm starts around 2007 onwards and, based on available documentation (Table 4.

List of documents) shows an increase in the number of DRR policies, dedicated disaster

related organisations, and cross-sectoral platforms that were formed and publishing during

this period. This increase of formal action on disaster management was the result of a

convergence of three international agendas that impacted the institutional landscape of DRR

in Nepal. The first of these agendas is international development aid which has an historically

strong presence in Nepal but increased greatly throughout the 1990-2000s (Vij et al., 2020).

International development aid has historically shaped institutional structures, legitimised

actors, and framed what effective DRR looks like in Nepal (Jones, et al. ,2014; Nightingale,

2015). A major impact that the international development agenda had was promoting the idea

that DRR is a development problem; as shown in the UN Hyogo framework for action

(UNISDR, 2004). Priority 1 of the framework suggests greater integration of states' needs

with international development agendas. This international thinking is reflected in Nepal

through the various disaster related documents throughout this period. Development is

represented as a common goal to help address DRR needs and starts to lay the groundwork

for collaborative discourse entering the mainstream DRR policies. An example of this

connection between development and collaboration can be seen in this quote from the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management (NSDRM), published in 2009.

> *"Objectives of this Strategy… [are to assist in] gradually developing the culture of safety, having positive impact on poverty reduction, and transforming Nepal into a Disaster resilient community, will be achieved if all partners at all levels of socio-economic development effectively apply this Strategy by accepting development as their lifestyle" (MOHA, 2009)*

However, as can be seen from this quotation this conceptualisation of collaboration is set within very tight parameters. Collaboration here is framed as a consensus towards a specific goal set by the government as opposed to truly collaborative approach which would be an iterative process with multiple voices. Further, the emphasis on development as *the* way for Nepal to achieve its DRR goals shows how preferred approaches to DRR were evolving in line with global neoliberal agendas. Contextually this makes sense as during this period there was an influx of international aid into Nepal for development purposes. Jones et al. (2014) states that during the 1990s NGO's presence in Nepal expanded by 250%. However, across this timeframe there was also a marked move in NGO engagement in Nepal, shifting from development to a more humanitarian focus, particularly in years where major flooding become a real concern in areas of Nepal in 1993 & 2008 (see Gautum, 2008); essentially resulting in amalgamation of these two agendas.

The second international agenda that influenced how the discourse of collaboration evolved during this period emerged around 1997, and was heavily influenced by the UNFCCC; the spirit of which is embodied in the Kyoto protocol (UNFCCC, 2005). The main impact that

the UNFCCC agenda had on DRR policies is the emphasis on the interconnection between climate change adaption (CAA) and DRR. Primarily, the framing focussed on how adaptation could increase resilience and reduce disaster risks for vulnerable communities (Vij, et al., 2020; UNFCCC, 2005). In line with this thinking, the government of Nepal established platforms, formal institutions, and policies that would promote climate sensitive disaster management and risk reduction; an example of this are the plans for actions (NAPAs/LAPAs) (MOHA, 2007). Collaborations were formed regionally and internationally, to address climate induced disaster risk needs. However, when looking at the discourse of collaboration in CCA, it is primarily consultative in nature.

> "*Consultations with the civil society and private sector groups, including youth, forestry groups, indigenous communities, and disaster risk reduction networks were conducted*" (NDR ,2009 p.3)

These consultations had multiple iterations and were designed to assess vulnerabilities and needs. Even with the site-specific local adaptation plans of action, indigenous and local collaborations are framed more as a participation with a scientific expert lead. Although there was a drive to promote greater collaboration through the language of participation, often very little was done to implement it and there remained confusion and criticism of the NAPA/LAPA engagement with communities(Vij, 2018).

Despite the challenges of this period there were moves towards embracing this new polycentric governing landscape, that focussed on creating organisations and platforms that championed collaboration; examples of this shift can be seen in statements from various national disaster reports from this period:

"Disaster management and risk reduction, again, are only possible if all individuals and organisations work together towards a common goal: to have a safer and disaster free Nepal." (NDR, 2009p.7)

"Nongovernmental organizations, the private sector, experts, intellectuals and the media can contribute to the rebuilding and disaster-preparation efforts and working collaboratively and effectively." (NDR, 2015 p.14)

However, the implementation was often plagued with difficulties. A good example of the emerging new platforms for collaborative DRM and some of the challenges they faced can be seen in the Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium (NRRC). The NRRC was a platform set up in 2009 with the help of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The aim of the NRRC was to assist the GON in developing a long-term strategy for DRM. The consortium consisted of over one hundred contributing organisations and addressed gaps left by the government in DRR: particularly in relation to five flagship programmes (school and hospital safety, emergency preparedness and response capacity, flood management, integrated community-based disaster risk reduction, and policy and institutional support for DRM) whilst translating international policy objectives for Nepal's specific disaster risk reduction needs. The NRRC was successful in advancing DRM in many of its flagship areas but suffered from bureaucratic hurdles and challenges between the different types of actors working together effectively. Jones et al., for example, reported complaints from members of the NRRC that the committee was not *"run in a participatory way and was very much led by the UN"* (Jones et al., 2014 p). Although set to continue until 2020 the consortium was discontinued after the DRRMA was passed in 2017. However, the role of the UN in the

NRRC is indicative of a trend in NGO/UN driven DRR that was seen in the last paradigm and continued in a more concentrated way during the integrated CCA and DRR period.

4.8. *Political context during the CCA and DRR*

The period from 1996 to 2015 represented a combination of rapidly increasing international funding for international development, climate change and disaster risk management. The increased influence of the international community, as shown in the creating of cross sector organisations and platforms, such as the NRRC, and (N) LAPA, fulfilled Nepal's commitments to different UN conventions, namely the millennium development goals, Kyoto treaty and Hyogo framework. It is this crossover from international policies that resulted in an institutional landscape with multiple actors from multiple sectors and backgrounds working on different aspects of DRR, and from varying framings. Scholars characterise this period in Nepal as heavily donor driven with organisations and agendas duplicating DRR activities, with little understanding of externalities, and without coordination (Jones et al., 2014, Jones, 2016; Watson 2018).

However, despite the flurry of activity in forming new platforms and cross sector committees and workshops there was still little movement on reinventing the main governing mechanism for disaster management, the NCA. Without such re-invention many of the smaller advancements towards greater collaboration that were being made had little impact and could be characterised as nothing more than paying lip service to international agendas. One of the main approaches to addressing this gap, according to our interview data from people working in these areas at the time, was a sustained period of targeted lobbying from the IAC and the

UN. This lobbying focussed on replacing the NCA with an up-to date disaster management act. This new act would need to highlight the preparedness and mitigation rather than solely response and recovery, and provide a framework for greater collaboration and inclusion of non-state actors. One of our interviewees, who was instrumental in this lobbying, characterised the DRR landscape and challenges that non-state actors faced in pushing for policy reform during this period:

> *"We started talking about the policy region[in]...2003/2004. And after negotiating with the MOHA, because at the time it was his majesties government, because the king was there, the monarch. The bureaucracy... it was so hard [for the Government] to listen against the policy, the existing policy [NCA], or the laws, that's how it was at that time. Then the ministry people, though they were very good friends, they are very strict on reviewing the existing policy because they do not want to hear anything against the existing/old policy and law because that was the how the political system was." (NGO_04)*

This stagnant policy landscape was further compounded by government and legislature that was rapidly changing and did not understand the urgency of DRM reform. Like many countries, Nepal did not take disaster risk reduction or disaster risk management needs seriously until it was too late.

> *"So, it took almost 10 years, and during these 10 years we have hundreds of meetings, consultations, workshops, lobbying and the government is changing, and the parliament, and the constitutional assembly was formed. So, we have lobbying with the constitutional members, then the parliament members, we started lobbying them, coaching them, mentoring them, educating them on the DRM...So, you know the*

journey is very interesting, challenging and sometimes very harsh, you have to

advocate the same things to different people. I have tackled with almost 10 joint

secretaries, heading the disaster risk section, and some ministers [during] the

journey." (NGO_04)

This relationship that NGO's and the UN had with the government during this period was acknowledged to an extent in policy, shown in this extract from the MOHA's 2009 strategy for disaster risk management:

"The role and activeness of national NGOs in disaster risk management in Nepal has

been appreciative. These organizations are active especially in mitigation, reduction,

preparedness, and countering disaster. In addition, these organizations have been

playing valuable roles in the operation of new policies, plans, and programs;

community-based risk management; and raising public awareness. Their contribution

to joint participatory work has been result oriented." (NSDRM, 2009 p.18)

Although this is an understated version compared with what interview participants told us, during this period there emerged a stronger sense of collaboration between Government actors and NGO's and the UN. However, as shown in both quotes, there is disparity between how these actors viewed each other's role; with both viewing themselves as a driver for action with the other being only a contributor. This dynamic is one that is still seen to date as shown in quotes from these interview participants (both GON and NGO's):

"P2: the government is not only doing the policy making, so its inviting all of us in the

*country, so NGO_06 **[name omitted]** is one of the main bodies of the government, the*

*auxiliary body. Especially the NEOC … **NGO_06 [name omitted]** is part of NEOC,*

and other the UN and other organisation are invited to policy with the government, so government is open its not narrow, its inviting to all agencies working in Nepal.

P1: In the preliminary phases [of writing the DRM Act] they invited all of us, but at the end of the day the decision is government. I can't say now, maybe they address all the things that we explored at the meeting, maybe they not [wont] but the good thing is that they are more democratic, they want to participate all the agencies in a democratic way, they listen to us to all voices, it's a beauty. But the decision is theirs." (NGO_07)

From Government officials this relationship is characterised differently:

P: The NGOs INGOs, the civil society, if you go to our act then there is a representation of civil society in the executive committee, the central committee there is this representation of humanitarian actors, there is the representations of journalism. And all the three independent members that can be selected for the representations. So, this is the, we have the committee approach" (GON_02)

However, whilst there were formal institutional reforms that advanced disaster governance towards greater collaboration for DRR, it's important to note that these changes did emerge against the backdrop of an ongoing state of conflict in Nepal. This conflict inevitably had an immense impact on the way in which collaboration was shaped and understood. During this period, in 2006, the ceasefire agreement between Maoist insurgents and Nepali Royal government was signed ending a 10-year war and beginning a further ten years of political instability (Jha, 2016). From 2006-2015, Nepal had one interim government and two constituent assemblies, before finally holding federal elections in 2015. This interim period after the Nepalese war was one of the main catalysts for the gaps in governance of DRR that

were consequently filled by NGO's and the UN. However, whilst the failing of the state led to national level collaborations it isolated the local government and communities sowing the seed for future conflicts across scales of governance (Byrne and Shrestha, 2013). Paradoxically, it is in this environment of political neglect from the state that informal collaborative practices started to form at the local and community scale.

Throughout the decade of post-conflict instability in Nepal there was a suspension of local elections. Local decision-making bodies comprised of members of the past Maoist regime, Nepali government officials, and community leaders; none of whom were elected. Whilst the interim governments debated the future of the country in terms of constitutional reform, the day to day running of local governments became centred around consensus politics (Byrne and Shrestha, 2013). Decisions at the local level were made through compromise between Maoist actors and local Nepali government. This continued throughout the demilitarisation period (2006 - 2011) whilst previously Maoist held areas were transitioning back into ones run by the Nepali state (Byrne and Shrestha, 2013). Politics of consensus is typified by actors from different parties putting aside contentious issues to focus on the day to day needs of local government. This approach embodied the spirit of collaboration by different parties working together with NGO's, private sector, and citizens to fulfil local needs. However, this led to a lack of *politics* in the sense that conflict was avoided, with many bureaucrats or local politicians simply voting with the majority to avoid conflict (Byrne and Shrestha, 2013). A result of this was that minority positions and needs were often ignored or sacrificed in the name of the consensus and conflict avoidance (Byrne and Shrestha, 2013). This meant that

non-elected officials, individuals who had high social capital in the area had undue influence and sway on the running of day-to-day local politics in the areas (Byrne and Shrestha, 2013).

The dynamics of national level collaboration between specific actors from IAC and UN operating separately from local scale continues to this day. Despite efforts to reconnect governance across scales, the local scale continues to rely on informal networks with non-state unelected citizens holding power with and authority in the current system (Morrison et.al, 2017). One exchange between myself and a participant captures the ongoing the disconnections between local communities and government:

> *"I told you governance, of course the municipalities and the federal government, the provincial governments there, but ...it ...could be... because Nepal has recently turned into a federal mechanism, that could be the reason... but yet the system, mechanisms and the linkages between the community and this whole government bodies is yet to develop."(NGO_01)*

In the rural, often neglected, areas of Nepal these informal actors and governing mechanisms can hold more sway than official channels (Nightingale and Ojha, 2013). As one of our participants suggested when discussing indigenous knowledge of local hazards:

> *"The western part of Nepal actually it was more cut off from the rest of the country for many years, so they survive on their own. So, they have their survival skill."* (GON_01)

This is particularly relevant to newly passed DRR policy and governance which was characterised as being plagued by the same concerns that have been prevalent throughout the past four decades, as shown in this quote from a leading GON official on DRR:

> *"I don't think that the lack of acts is the issue. But the collaboration, co-operation and implementation on the same platform is the challenge. They are working on their own and there is great collaboration that is lacking on some issues." (GON_02)*

The federalised disaster risk reduction paradigm is currently the dominant formally endorsed approach to DRR in Nepal as such is afforded more focus and is explored in depth in the next chapter.

4.9. *Discussion*

This chapter shows that the discourse of collaboration in Nepali DRR has evolved over time to include a wider set of actors. This evolution has followed trends in international policies which has greatly influenced how collaboration in DRR is understood in Nepal. During the first two paradigms , Disaster Response and Recovery and Disaster Risk Reduction, from 1970-1997, there was little shift in how collaboration was understood from formal institutional policies and frameworks. The discourse of collaboration did start emerging towards the latter half of the 1990's but there was a marked gap between the policies and agendas that promoted more inclusive and collaborative approaches to DRR and the implementation of these suggested practices. Further, the type of collaboration that was promoted during these years was heavily regulated to fit into the international development agenda that viewed development as the key mechanism for effective DRR measures. As such, collaboration during this time could be characterised more as different actors being

encouraged to co-operate with international development agendas. This discourse left very little room for a collaborative approach to DRR that captured the multifarious complex disaster needs of Nepali people. Further there was little mention of indigenous voices, marginalised communities, or the private sector. This was due to indigenous people and marginalised communities being seen as recipients of DRR and not valid decision makers.

During the more recent policy paradigms of disaster governance in Nepal(integrated CCA and DRR and federalised DRR between 1997-2015), I found that there was greater inclusion of collaboration or related terms in policy documents that also correlated with a marked increase in cross sector platforms, organization, and workshops being established and publishing documents during this time (Table 4). In the documents explored in this chapter, the beginning of this period focused on collaboration through the lens of CCA. In line with the international treaties from the UNFCCC the understanding of collaboration between actors placed a heavy emphasis on experts being the main driver of CCA action. The result of this was that the role of non-expert actors in CCA focused DRR could be characterised more as consultations surrounding adaptation needs but not explicit inclusion in collaborative decision making. The latter half of this period saw the merging of the previous development and CCA international agendas leading to a DRR landscape where documents suggests that multiple actors were operating according to different understandings of what effective DRR should look like, and without any clear prescription of who should be involved in collaborative action for DRR; this is an assertion that is substantiated by scholars such as Jones et al. (2014), Watson (2018), Gautum (2008). This was a period of rapid growth in terms of reports, plans of action, and international funds coming into the country as well as

much confusion and corruption(Jones et al., 2014). Despite the progress shown in policy documents and reports, and academic literature towards a more collaborative approach for DRR, little progression was made in relation to replacing the main governing mechanism, the NCA. This stagnation can be seen in both Jones et al. (2014) and further substantiated through interviews I conducted with policy actors who were directly involved with the lobby during that period in Nepali history.

The lack of movement on replacing the formal DRR policy instrument led to a major lobbying drive from UN and IAC. This lobbying is shown in the interview exerts and is reflected in government documents throughout this time, where the role and work of the IAC and UN is regularly acknowledged as an effective collaborative partner in DRR action. However, what emerged from this relationship is that the roles that IAC/UN play in relation to the government reform is presented differently by the different actors. The government view the IAC/UN as supporting the agenda that is set by the government, whereas the IAC/UN see their role as much more instrumental in institutional changes, arguing that it was their knowledge and tenacity in the face of government arrogance and refusal to admit error that eventually led to the large-scale reform that is seen today (NGO_04). What emerged from these periods is an uneasy collaborative relationship between the government and IAC/UN, with contested power struggles continuing to date (Jones, et al., 2014; Nightengale, 2018; Watson, 2019); as characterised by one of our participants:

> *"people they come to us for collaboration and partnership with their priorities. And we say please come to us with the national priorities, so we can work together for the common goals." (GON_02)*

The uneasy collaborative relationship between the state and UN/IAC that was seen during this time in both policy documents and in interviews, grows more prevalent across the four DRR paradigms but interestingly seems to be the extent of collaborative partnerships in DRR. In contrast to this advancement in collaborative action between IAC and GON, the discourse surrounding the role of indigenous/ local populations in collaborative action for DRR remains relatively stagnant in policy documents. The main shifts are seen during the integrated CCA and DRR period where consultation and participation with local populations is presented as important for successful DRR. However, the role of indigenous and local populations continues to be framed as a receiver of DRR, not an active partner for DRR actions (which I examine in more detail in the following chapters).

In relation to the history of collaboration, one of the major events that emerged from interviews and scholarship that has shaped how this relationship is understood, is the 10-year Maoist conflict. Data showed that this greatly impacted which actors had access to Maoist held areas and shaped what type of work was allowed to be conducted there. Further, scholarship that explored this period in Nepal history showed that the communities that were cut off from the royal Nepali state developed an informal politics that revolved around social capital and local power dynamics to address everyday needs including disaster related vulnerabilities. This informal politics continued after the conflict years particularly during the decade of unstable government leading to federalisation in 2015. During this unstable period, a politics of consensus emerged as the main approach for the governance of local needs and remained detached from national level politics, and by extension from developing definitions of collaboration at the national level.

I argue that these two trajectories of conceptualisation of collaboration have set the groundwork for the current institutional landscape of collaboration for DRR in Nepal. It is this history of collaboration in Nepal that helps us understand the gaps that are currently seen between IAC/UN/national scale government forming a collaborative relationship for DRR governance, whereas indigenous/local communities and the local scale government are still viewed as recipients and not included in collaboration.

4.10. *Conclusion*

This chapter has drawn on discursive institutionalism as a guiding analytic to explore how the discourse of collaboration in Nepal DRR has evolved over the past 40 years. Thematic analysis was conducted to explore the changing way in which collaboration was discussed in policies, road maps, and officials reports. I supplemented this analysis with interview extracts from DRR actors who have a history of working in the DRR institutional landscape, many of whom have been part of changes through their work within and for the government. These interviews were focussed on their historical engagement with DRR practice in Nepal and the different actors they have worked with. Further, using information about events or historical relationships from the interviews and policy documents, review of academic literature was used to help contextualise and explore the recent political history of Nepal. This gives a context against which this evolving conceptualising of collaboration and institutional changes had emerged. In doing so I showed how two distinct trajectories of conceptualising collaborative action for DRR have emerged: national and international formal collaborations that value established relationships between the state and trusted international actors (NGO's and the UN); and local and indigenous informal collaborations that emerged through the need for local governance to function despite wider national crises.

I argue these two arcs are still present today and continue to shape governance despite institutional reforms for DRR. The impact of these arcs is seen in the distinct divides between the local and national scales that remain in Nepali DRR governance. I argue that exploring the history of collaboration in Nepal allows for a deeper understanding of the dynamics and relationships that are shaping the current governance system. As I will show in the following chapter (Chapter 5) these past tensions and conventions surrounding collaboration can be seen in the narratives that are currently influencing the newly federalised system; and represent a key barrier to the emerging collaborative governance regime in Nepal.

Chapter 5 published paper information sheet.

The following chapter *Towards a collaborative governance regime for disaster risk reduction: exploring scalar narratives of institutional change in Nepal* was published in the Journal of Applied Geography in 2021:

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What is presented in this thesis is an early iteration of the published journal article before reviewers' feedback had been received and addressed. The Authors of the published article and their roles in writing and editing are as follows:

Caroline Russell: Main author, data collection and analysis, conceptualization of article, writing first full draft of text.

Dr Julian Clark: comments on text and discussion of ideas.

Dr Fraser Sugden: comments on text.

Professor David Hannah: comments on text.

5. Chapter five: Towards a collaborative governance regime for disaster risk reduction: exploring scalar narratives of institutional change in Nepal

5. Introduction

Increasingly, collaborative governance (CG) is lauded as a pertinent means to address

complex social-ecological challenges such as natural hazards and sudden catastrophic events

(UNISDR, 2015). Notably CG is a key mechanism to implement the UN's Disaster Risk

Reduction programme (UNDRR), as set out in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk

Reduction (SFDRR). The SFDRR makes frequent reference to coordination, participation,

and collaboration across scales and sectors to increase community resilience to natural

hazards (UNISDR, 2015). This shift towards CG can be seen as an advancement of

decentralisation and participatory approaches that have long been established in DRR and

disaster response strategies. The aim of this advancement is to formally institute a practice of

collaboration in the disaster risk management cycle (UNISDR,2015). The UNDRR's position

is that CG approaches to DRR will increase actor capacities, allow for more transformative

actions, and increase resilience to complex multi scaled challenges (UNISDR,2015).

Therefore, CG seen as highly appropriate to achieve the SFDRR's priority actions, as it maps

onto key attributes of resilience including diversity, heterogeneity and self-organisation, as

well as innovation and learning (Ansell and Gash, 2008).

To date, most studies on CG have focused on minority world countries, in particular the US

and Canada (Emerson et al., 2017). This poses a challenge when exploring CG as a means of

tackling DRR since disasters overwhelmingly affect majority world countries; many of which

have a contentious and complex history of relations between the state and non-state actors

working in humanitarian and disaster relief (Nightingale 2017; Jones et al., 2014). Many CG

studies are mechanistic in focus, for example exploring system elements that hinder

collaboration (Huxham,2003; Emerson and Nabatchi, 2015), or institutional frameworks to

operationalise CG (Ansell and Gash, 2008; Bodin et al. 2016). Less work examines how

discourses of CG are mobilised and executed. There are empirical gaps in our knowledge of

how collaborative discourses are implemented and how they impact and shape disaster risk

reduction in majority world countries. This is particularly so in countries such as Nepal that

rely heavily on international development aid and humanitarian disaster relief and response. I

therefore contend unpacking how CG is implemented by and through state action to facilitate

or enhance DRR can greatly strengthen the future success of policy in this area.

This chapter explores these gaps in CG scholarship through the lens of recent reforms in

Nepal's DRR approach. While many countries rely to some extent on disaster relief and

response after disasters, Nepal's dependence is systemic at all stages of the disaster cycle.

This makes it a paradigmatic example for examination of how CG in DRR is emerging

among state and civil society groups. Specifically, the chapter contributes to this literature by

examining the role of the Nepali state as both actor within, and arena for, collaborative

governance through its recent changed approach to DRR.

Drawing on 17 semi-structured interviews, I examine the federal government's use of scalar

narratives (González, 2006) to promote a particular type of collaborative DRR based around

enhancing actor capacities and knowledge dissemination and production, through the

introduction of new formal and informal institutional frameworks. I examine how these state-

driven narratives are used by government and international NGO policy influencers as anchor

points for a type of collaboration focused on the mantra of inclusive sustainable development. Alongside the discussion of narratives this chapter draws on the semi structured interviews and field notes taken during field visits (see 3.3) to Sunkuda to examine how practice interacts with these narratives; does, for example, practice mirror what has been said, or does it contradict narrative intent? In doing so our aims are to explore *how* these narratives of collaboration are being used; *if* the policies, reforms, and institutional restructuring they advance align with other elements needed for CG systems; and *what* impacts this might have on embedding a CGR for DRR in Nepal.

The chapter is structured as follows. First, I engage with key literature on collaborative governance and define what I mean by CGR. I then set out the methodology that I employed for data collection and analysis. Contextualisation of the study follows, where I explore Nepal's recent DRR experience with particular focus on the shocking event of the 2015 earthquake that has, in part, prompted recent institutional changes in DRR governance. Drawing on semi-structured interviews, the chapter then identifies and analyses the engagement of key policy actors with the new state scalar narratives. In concluding, I discuss the significance of these scalar narratives and potential impact on national DRR policy and practice.

5.1. *Building collaborative governance through scalar narratives*
CG emerged as a response to addressing 'wicked problems' which are defined as complex, multiscale public policy challenges that require action beyond the capabilities of the nation-state alone (Rittel and Webber, 1973; Ansell and Gash, 2008). CG is an approach that has its genesis in a variety of disciplines such as public policy, organisational sociology, and

behavioural economics (Ansell and Gash, 2008; Emerson and Nabatchi, 2015; Bodin, 2017; Huxham, 2003; Ostrom,2009). As such, the characteristics of CG and how collaborative systems are assembled varies greatly. To date the majority of studies are focussed in minority world countries (Emerson et al., 2017). The multidisciplinary background of CG scholarship has led to a spectrum of definitions that range from formal state-led systems where non-state actors are engaged directly by public agencies in collective decision making (Ansell and Gash, 2008), to broader definitions more aligned with polycentric thinking (Emerson and Nabatchi, 2015).

I engage with CG at the polycentric end of the spectrum, using Nabatchi and Emerson's definition: "the processes and structures of public policy decision making and management that enable people to engage across boundaries" (Emerson and Nabatchi, 2015, 10). To operationalise this definition, they develop the idea of a collaborative governance regime (CGR) – "a system for public decision making in which cross-boundary collaboration represents the prevailing pattern of behaviour and activity" (Emerson and Nabatchi, 2015, 10). A CGR has four characteristics distinguishing it from other forms of collaborative action: 1) it must be concerned with a public service or policy; 2) it involves a range of autonomous actors that have different interests; 3) it develops rules and customs specially designed to boost collaboration; and 4) it is designed for repeated exchanges between actors, with longevity in mind (Emerson and Nabatchi, 2015).

Emerson and Nabatchi's framework allows for examination of emergent forms of CG, i.e., exploration of systems where a regime is in its infancy, via a categorization of formative

types of CGR. These are threefold: "self-initiated", "independently convened", and "externally directed" (Emerson and Nabatchi, 2015, 19). Using these categories allows a more nuanced understanding of the evolutionary stages of a CGR, and the role of actors in these emerging systems. I argue that the emerging CGR in Nepal is most akin to the "externally directed" category. Externally directed CGRs are usually instigated by state actors through mandated participation or incentives. Examples of incentivisation and mandates in CGR are requirements for stakeholder involvement in state convened committees, or stipulations attached to grants and funding opportunities. Externally directed CGRs also display a propensity for higher levels of formalisation which can hinder group autonomy (Emerson and Nabatchi, 2015)

To explore the resulting political dynamics of this externally directed CGR, it is necessary to engage with how collaborative projects are realised and mobilised by and through the Nepali state. Here I turn to work on the concept of scalar narratives. Scalar narratives are a means by which actors engage in political strategies, and are defined by González as the "stories that actors tell about the changes in the scalar localisation of socio-political processes" (González, 2006, 839). González argues that by exploring these narratives it is possible to unpack the role of discourses in structuring understanding, meaning, and ultimately the transference of values through political interactions. Scalar narratives are thus much more than descriptive; they are rooted in causal explanation or "plot" (González, 2006, 839). Causal explanations can be used to link events through narratives that are beyond a simple temporal sequence; for example: *In 2015, Nepal experienced an earthquake and passed new legislation on DRM*, compared to *in 2015 Nepal experienced an earthquake which led the Government to enact long-awaited DRM policy reform*. The causal explanation then becomes the reason for those

events being connected, which in turn creates a normative understanding that carries specific political and ideological implications.

In this way narratives allow for complex circumstances to be reduced to linear chains of events. From a political perspective, they are powerful tools with which the state communicates how people should ground their values, ideas, and actions (González, 2006; McGuirk, 2004). Narratives may also be used to shape possible futures by providing the context in which hazardous events are framed, policies are formed, and subjectivities are legitimised and mobilized (González, 2006). Thus scalar narratives are "stories about changes in the spatial patterns of socio-political processes that are uttered by actors or groups embedded in specific historic and political contexts and which reduce the universe of political choices" (González, 2006, 840). Using scalar narratives as an insight into possible futures is critical when working in rapidly transitioning states as it allows researchers to grasp potential trajectories of yet-to-be implemented policies. Given recent decades of political unrest in Nepal and the 2015 institutional restructuring, I argue scalar narratives potentially play a significant under-researched role in how collaborative processes of DRR are shaped and how public policies towards DRR are formulated, not least in terms of how collaboration is to be understood nationally, provincially, and locally.

5.2. *Methods*

Primary qualitative data was collected during two extended spells of fieldwork in Nepal from April-August 2019 and January -April 2020. The purpose of the fieldwork was to conduct semi-structured interviews with key DRR actors at national, provincial, and local scales. Participants were selected using a combination of purposive and snowball sampling methods.

For the purposive sampling, participants were chosen based upon academic and 'grey'
literature searches of active and past DRR projects in Nepal; using LinkedIn searches;
'known' international NGOs (INGOs - e.g., Red Cross); and government departments
working at national, provincial, and local scales for details on interview participants (please
see Chapter three: Methodological exploration).

Most of the interviews were conducted in English by the lead author, with the option of a
Nepali translator if the participant preferred. Interviews were transcribed from audio
recordings by the lead author or by a Nepali speaking research assistant. The transcripts were
coded using NVivo 12 software. The initial codes used were selected based upon five key CG
variables identified in the literature as crucial to successful CG. These were actor roles, actor
capacities, knowledge production and dissemination, formal and informal structures, and
scale (see Ansell and Torfing, 2015; Biddle and Koontz, 2014; Scott, 2015; Walsh-Dilley,
2016). These codes were analysed to find the framing and intent and then sub-coded based on
the three main narratives that emerged. These narratives are the focus of this chapter, and are
1) actor capacities and tendencies in DRR; 2) knowledge production on DRR and its
dissemination; and 3) formal and informal institutional DRR roles and responsibilities (Table
6). In addition to the semi-structured interviews, field notes were used as grounding data.
Alongside primary data, key 'grey' literature was identified through the interviewees
recommendations and via the online archive of disaster prevention network Nepal (DpNET),
which maintains a register of relevant Government documents published since the 2015
earthquake.

Table 6. Description of narratives and their scalar engagement.		
Scalar Narrative	**Description**	**Scalar engagement**
Actor capacities and tendencies in DRR	This narrative presents a story of the local level formal actors struggling with effective DRR due to their low capacity and inability to transfer knowledge into action, formulate strategies, access services, and manage funds and networks. At the local level DRR is still a very siloed issue, with local municipalities and NGOs and other formal actors working separately sometimes at cross purposes. According to this narrative the best way to address this is enhanced capacity training at the local level bringing municipal in line with national level standards.	The scalar relations in this narrative are unidirectional. The focus is on the local scale. It is routed in the drive for decentralization that is prevalent currently in Nepal. The transfer here comes from the top down and there is limited discussion of learning from the local to the national.
Knowledge production on DRR and its dissemination	This narrative surrounds the reformation of DRR in Nepal. The focus is on how recent institutional changes are aimed at increasing state funded and owned knowledge production. According to this story the newly established federalized DRR institutional platforms will bring coherence to the current siloed knowledge production landscape. This can only be achieved if NGOs, academia, and private sector align their interests with those of the Nepali state. These aims will be achieved by making the state-run knowledge gathering platforms that have been formed across different scales the main point of knowledge production and transference. As well as creating coherence this new knowledge production and transference system will strengthen the state in the future DRR actions.	The scalar relations that are present in this narrative relate to shifting horizontal governance. Whilst decentralization is prevalent through the emphasis on the newly formed institutional scales, the focus is on how actors from NGO, academic and the private sector can best support the state in knowledge production. In contradiction to the policy aims of greater collaboration the relations depicted in this narrative are focused on ensuring that the state is central to the DRR knowledge network. The State sets the targets for knowledge generation and manages how it is gathered and stored.
Formal and informal institutional DRR roles and responsibilities	This narrative speaks to the implementation of DRR in Nepal. It is predominantly focused on the local Municipality scale as the primary site of implementation and action. This scale is presented as the best for implementation as local government and communities	The scalar relations in this narrative are focused on rescaling action to the local. Whilst similar to the actor capacities narrative in that it focuses on the local, this narrative is not about scalar relations or transference between scales. Rather it refocuses

	are in the best position to assess their needs. This is contradictory to the previous narratives on capacity that suggest the local level is ill equipped to implement DRR effectively. The crucial part of the narrative is that it places responsibility for implementation and execution at the local and community level.	attention away from the national and reimagines the role of the local in DRR.

5.3. *Nepal's emergent CGR for DRR*

Nepal is classified as a LMIC country, with a human development index (HDI) score of 143 (GoN, 2017a). It is located on the active Indus-Yarlung fault and is susceptible to strong seismic activity. Recently the country has seen increased exposure to natural hazards (both climatic and seismological) and is regularly ranked as high risk on disaster and climate vulnerability indices (HDR, 2019). The whole Himalayan arc region also shows increasing susceptibility to climate-related hydro-hazards such as glacial lake outburst floods, shifting monsoon precipitation patterns, flash flooding, and landslides. According to recent GoN figures, up to 80% of the population is at risk of being adversely affected by natural hazards (GoN, 2017b). In 2017/18, for example, 968 people were killed, and an estimated 27,265 families were affected by hazards (GoN 2019, 4). After earthquakes, landslides and flooding represent the most impactful hazard, often resulting in large scale damage to infrastructure and livelihoods.

The country's differentiated physiography with its complex multi-hazard exposure is compounded by its unstable socio-political composition. The recent history of Nepali DRR governance is entwined with the struggles of a post-conflict state striving to introduce federalisation, whilst negotiating the global landscape of international development agendas, and dealing with the need for greater resilience to hazard exposure (Jha, 2014; Nightingale,

2017). In fact, the presence of multilateral and international development organisations has played a crucial role in shaping DRR. Research shows much national policy draws heavily on intergovernmental bodies, including the UNDRR and UNDP and INGOs (Jones et al., 2016, 2014, 2013; Yates, 2012). This close GoN-INGO relationship encompasses knowledge sharing, policy formation and financial support. Jones et al. (2016, 2014) characterise the pre-2015 DRR landscape as having minimal government input, with change coming through lobbying from INGOs and bi/multilateral agencies. They also show one of the biggest challenges to successful DRR is lack of coordination between intergovernmental agencies, INGOs, and the segmented tiers of the GoN. Thus, both civil society organisations and state agencies cite instability and frequent churn of government officials within departments as critical issues thwarting effective DRR. As a result, Nepali DRR is mired in uncertainty over whom has authority to act, with shifting political structures and competing agendas among a wide spectrum of actors, resulting in little cohesion over policy aims and claims of corruption (Nightingale and Rankin, 2018; Watson, 2017; Yates, 2012). However, on the surface at least, this situation started to change in 2015, which became a significant year for DRR nationally.

In April 2015 Nepal was hit by an 8.1 Mw earthquake. The earthquake centred on the Gorkha region just beyond the Kathmandu valley, but caused widespread destruction nationally, killing almost 9000 people (GoN, 2017b). As a result of the severe aftershocks and landslides that followed, 811,154 were made homeless and GoN declared a state of humanitarian emergency. The effects of the earthquake are still evident at the time of writing, almost six years on, with an estimated 463,337 still without permanent shelters and major restoration works of world heritage sites in Kathmandu bogged down in bureaucratic disputes (GoN,

2019; NRA, 2017). In the aftermath, questions were rife over lack of preparedness. While there were plans in place for an anticipated major earthquake, these applied only if the epicentre had been in Kathmandu. The Government was unprepared for a seismic event with an epicentre outside the capital. The post-disaster assessments of the GoN response to the Gorkha earthquake paint a picture of a complex, multi-stakeholder network that struggled with poor co-ordination and lack of political will across political-administrative scales (Bisri and Beniya, 2016; GoN, 2017b; Watson, 2017).

In September 2015, the Constituent Assembly (CA) voted to pass all articles relating to the national constitution, making Nepal a federalised state. This act was emblematic of the end of a long struggle for political stability in a country that has been deeply divided by caste systems, warring political ideologies, and Maoist paramilitary insurgencies (for a detailed history of Nepal's recent political transitions, see Jha (2014). The CA used a causal explanation of the Gorkha earthquake as a catalyst to pass the new constitution after a decade-long standoff between the central faction of the Communist Party and Nepali congress, and other mainstream parties. This action caused widespread national protests as ethnic minorities, who felt unrepresented in the constitution, accused the parties of using the disaster to push through undemocratic policy reforms (Watson, 2017).

Despite these protests, the past five years since federalisation have been marked by major institutional changes and policy reforms that have relocated political authority to three main scales - the federal, the provincial, and the local. In relation to DRR, the spirit of the constitution places responsibility and authority locally, with provincial and federal scales occupying a position of support if and when they are needed (GoN, 2015; Oxford Policy

Management, 2020). The aim is to promote resilience and capacity building, particularly at the local scale (GoN, 2015). However, as suggested in the Oxford Policy Management report, and reflected in our field interviews, the decentralisation of power and authority for DRR is plagued with confusion about roles and responsibilities. This is in part due to contradictions between the constitution and the new DRRM act which was passed in 2018.

In the 2017 National Disaster Report the key lessons learnt from the Gorkha earthquake focused on poor collaboration and communication during the earthquake and suggested that a new co-ordination mechanism was essential for effective response. Further, the report stated that "co-ordination, collaboration and co-operation among governmental, non-governmental, private sectors and the affected communities is a challenge" to recovery (GoN, 2017b, 32). In bids to address this during and after the earthquake, major shifts were made by the Nepali state to reform disaster-related acts and policy. First, the government introduced the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act (DRRM Act) which replaced the National Calamities Act of 1983 (NCA); a move which sought to align Nepal more closely with global paradigmatic shifts in disaster management (Vij et al., 2020). The DRRM act focuses more on preventative measures and resilience building as opposed to solely response and recovery. The Act sets out formal structures and institutions that manage hazards and disasters and details their roles and responsibilities across the new federal, provincial, and local government scales (GoN, 2017a). Three new federal agencies have been created – the National Council for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, the Executive and Expert Committees, and the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (DRRMA). Each of these newly formed bodies collaborate with a diverse set of actors as mandated in the

organisational structure. For example, the DRRMA has a key responsibility to include NGOs, private sector, and communities in DRM activities and plans (GoN, 2017a).

The DRRM Act also established provincial, district, and local scale Disaster Management Committees that work in conjunction with the federal scale. The intention is for provincial and district level committees to meet regularly, with membership including NGOs, elected representatives, private sector, and community volunteers. In addition, the DRRM Act has acknowledged the district scale as a co-ordination mechanism to assist the province and local scales through a District Disaster Management Committee (GoN, 2017a; Oxford Policy Management, 2020). The district is part of the old governing structure and represents the bureaucratic arm of the Nepali government, however it retains authority over the police and armed forces who are crucial actors in DRR.

The second major policy from the government is the Disaster Risk Reduction National Strategic Plan of Action 2018-2030 (DRRNSPA). This policy document is a roadmap for DRR priority actions for the next decade based in part on lessons learned from the 2015 earthquake. This is a marked departure from the NCA and previous approaches to DRM in its emphasis on the critical role of collaborative action to Nepali DRR. The DRRNSPA is guided by the SFDRR and focuses upon i) understanding risk, ii) strengthening governance, iii) investing in resilience and risk reduction, iv) enhancing preparedness for response (UNISDR, 2015). Priority action vii explicitly mentions building collaboration and partnerships and priority area 3 focuses on public and private investment to increase resilience (MoHA, 2018). Combined with the DRRM Act, this document creates the scalar narrative pushed by the Government of Nepal that seeks to communicate the state's importance , at all scales of

government, in managing all aspects of the disaster management cycle from disaster preparedness and humanitarian and disaster relief work. This is achieved through attempts to reduce the governance of complex multi-scaled events to a series of operations that are routine and manageable. Interventions in preparedness and mitigation efforts as well as response are depicted as best coming from the state, with an emphasis on the local government (taking its instruction from the national government) as the primary site of action. Collaborating partners should work towards the state's interests; this promotes a very specific type of collaborative action with the government placed as the key actor across all scales of engagement.

As Gonzalez observes, this narrative has "ulterior political implications" (2006, 840) by assuming GoN's ability to enhance the capacities of disparate actors to tackle complex DRR activities; to instil a collaborative vision among these actors through knowledge production and dissemination; and to put in place institutional reforms sufficient to address the range of wicked problems triggered by events of this magnitude. Our analysis provides the first account of whether the institutional changes put in place by GoN are up to this task by examining the ongoing scalar struggles over embedding this new form of DRR nationally. To do so, next I outline how scalar narratives were identified from our primary fieldwork around actor capacities and tendencies; knowledge production and dissemination; and formal and informal roles and responsibilities. As I show, actor positionality in relation to the new GoN policy on DRR alters depending upon their interests, perspectives, and resources, providing a new perspective on the political dynamics of externally directed CGR. I argue this complicates considerably the future development of a genuinely collaborative DRR, requiring

due attention by GoN to the varied scaled responsibilities and understandings of actors

revealed here.

5.4. *State scalar narratives and unfolding institutional responses to DRR.*
    5.4.1.   *Actor Capacities and Tendencies*

Since 2015, policy and official government narratives have refocussed DRR action primarily

to the local scale. This thinking was evident during our interviews:

> *"Decentralising the capacity, decentralising the knowledge, decentralising the skill,*
>
> *and decentralising the resilience, everything we have to go to the local level, to the*
>
> *local people, to the individual." (GON_02)*

Yet concerns arose among interviewees in response to questions about administrative

capacities at different scales to engage with this new DRR mandate. Interviewees commented

on how these capacities reflected a track record of poor policy implementation. Current

concern focused on the ability of the newly formed local level government to be fully

operational and to work at full capacity. 'Capacity' was used by interviewees in this sense to

denote the ability to transfer knowledge into action, formulate strategies, access services, and

manage funds and networks:

> *"We have not taught our local leaders, our local employees, our local people about*
>
> *the planning, we asked them to submit the plan, but we have not taught them how to*
>
> *develop the plan." (NGO_04)*

It was evident that since the 2015 earthquake, there has been a dearth of staff training around

the newly introduced policies directly aimed at DRR needs, such as the DRRNSPA and the

National Building Code (2015). This training is needed to increase actor capacities across

different scales to benefit DRR. Other policies have also been introduced for capacity

building as part of the federal restructuring, such as the Local Government Operationalization

Act. Yet despite this, many of our interviewees highlighted a chronic lack of policy implementation:

> *"We have legal frameworks but the implementation still we have to do more."*
> *(GON_02)*

Interviewees were virtually unanimous that capacity building - specifically training that focuses on enabling local level government bodies to implement nationally inflicted DRR policy – was imperative to address this problem. The federal restructuring was presented as providing the perfect structure for this as it promotes the local municipalities as the platform for collaborative action through community workshops, and increased stakeholder engagement. If local capacity is enhanced, then grassroots actors and NGOs can begin to engage with the state's newly established norms for DRR. Our interviews with NGOs confirmed this tension between potential for future work with local governments and current capacity related constraints, as the following comment shows:

> *"Federalisation process is an opportunity for us to work but also the challenge is*
> *there because we are not able to capacitate all the local level representatives of 753*
> *local levels." (NGO_02)*

Alongside concerns about variable capacities across scales, interviewees across all sectors highlighted actor tendencies to work independently rather than collaboratively as another DRR-related challenge that the federalisation programme had attempted to address. Focussing on a wider range of scales, cross-sectoral collaboration between GoN and NGOs is a key strategy in moving towards a CGR. Better collaboration is a key lesson learned from the 2015 earthquake response and recovery, where GON/NGO interaction was characterised as more consultative than collaborative, with some NGOs I interviewed now playing both the role of lobbyist and adviser. Whilst interviewees identified examples of small-scale

collaboration between NGOs and the GoN in areas of the country, they spoke of a lack of

meaningful collaboration between GoN and NGO networks:

> *"One institution is working here, other one is neglecting that result and working in*
>
> *their own way, so it's not integrated at all" (GON_01)*

The notable exception to this was DpNET and the International Federation of the Red

Cross/Crescent (IFRC) who are the secretariat to the MOHA and provide data collections

functions to GoN. This relationship was characterised as more collaborative, but ultimately

the GoN maintains final decision-making power.

This general unwillingness to work collaboratively was depicted by interviewees as affecting

all actors in DRR; so, poor interdepartmental collaboration was noted by them within GoN,

and poor cross-sectoral working and low levels of collaboration between GoN and civil

society, business, and NGOs. Our respondents advanced two main reasons for why this was

the case. The first is Nepal's historical reliance on international assistance. The vast network

of international actors working on DRR follows global disaster paradigms of risk reduction

and resilience building in line with the SFDRR. However, the lack of co-ordination results in

different interpretations of disaster approaches and duplicated effort. NGOs often have their

own agendas guided by their donors and funding objectives, as one government official

noted:

> *"The people they come to us for collaboration and partnership with their priorities…*
>
> *we say please come to us with the national priorities, so we can work together for the*
>
> *common goals." (GON_02)*

Whilst some NGOs we spoke to highlighted collaborative work, often they only did so for the

duration of a specific project, making longer-term collaboration unsustainable. Further,

according to our interviews, the private sector has little or no place in collaboration due to no limited experience of working in risk and resilience as opposed to post disaster relief:

> *"In Nepal, the collaborative approach is comparatively new in the DRM. And people are very much interested to support people in the time of crisis but there is less attention or interested to invest, or work on or collaborate on pre disaster scenario."* (NGO_01)

To combat this lack of collaboration, respondents spoke of the need for formalised co-ordination mechanisms to help align actors, in large part, to prioritise the state goals above their own:

> *"By 2020 if we could be able to make the national strategies to the local level as well then, the problems of coherence could be reduced."* (GON_02)

This struggle between different types of collaboration that we are seeing links back to the different types of collaboration that we examined in Chapter 4. Historically tested relationships between certain NGO's (the IFRC) and the government remained strong whilst novel forms of collaboration that has been called for in recent policy did less well.

5.4.2. *Knowledge production and dissemination*

Since 2015 there has been a concerted effort by the GoN to create government operated data platforms via building a national data base which will be run by the Emergency Operating Centre (EOC). These centres are currently part of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) but will shortly come under the remit of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA). The EOCs are in the process of being set up at each government scale, i.e., national (NEOC), provincial (PEOC), and local (LEOC); with an additional branch at the district level (DEOC). These centres aim to provide a platform for collaborative data

collection and storage that is accessible to scientists, INGOs and government agencies

working on DRR. Data is uploaded in a standard format by the Local Municipalities and

publicly accessible via government websites. The national platform attempts to streamline

knowledge production that can be created and accessed collectively by DRR actors:

> *"We have developed this one disaster information management system, that will be*
>
> *used for the local levels, government, and by the province and by the federal*
>
> *ministries. "(GON_02)*

The goal is to assert state ownership of knowledge production on DRR to address the current

dearth of Nepali-led research and data collection, and to impose a more 'joined-up' approach

to its organization:

> *"The data is discrete here; we cannot find all the data at this place. This new*
>
> *information management system may gather the data. Because it is open. And the*
>
> *organisations they have to put their data and other organisation they have to put their*
>
> *data in the system… the priority one is know your risk, increase your resilience"*
>
> *(GON_02)*

The current uncoordinated approach was attributed by our interviewees to the historical

relationship between INGOs and the GoN, with much of the research conducted in Nepal

funded by international organisations, consultancies, and foreign researchers. This gap in

state-led research into DRR is due to economic constraints, civil and political unrest, and

persistence of outdated policy paradigms that focus on response and recovery. As such the

dominant form of knowledge production and management of DRR is influenced by

international organisations, namely the UNDRR and UNDP:

"Nepalis are committed to implement all those international commitments even the Paris agreement even the sustainable development goal. So, Nepal in committed to watch those international policies." (NGO_02)

According to our respondents, the GoN's reliance on global paradigms of knowledge production conducted by international researchers has detrimentally affected the adoption and incorporation of local knowledge, which is seen as incompatible with the more scientised expert knowledge of agencies such as the UN:

"We have ancient and our traditional knowledge. But the modern knowledge we have not adapted in our context, and the traditional knowledge also we have ignored, so this is the transition." (GON_02)

Consequently, there are ongoing discussions on how the EOC structure can make knowledge production more inclusive and improve knowledge dissemination nationally. Specifically, this focuses upon improvements to knowledge transfer that is affected by the lack of collaboration between actors. This is particularly so between civil society groups, NGOs and GoN, and between different tiers of government. Here, low capacity and differing levels of understanding of key DRR principles between newly formed local municipalities and the established bureaucratic branches of the higher levels of government have emerged as a substantial challenge:

"The knowledge and data of the stakeholders working at the national level is quite different than in the community level. These are so many gaps in knowledge sharing, still we need to sensitize them about what is the DRR." (NGO_02)

"They have an understanding ... disaster is natural, but it's not always ... I'm talking about the local minds and the ground communities. They know there could be a disaster, they know, ok I have flood every year in my country or I could have earthquake

anytime in my country, but they don't know what could actually make it less, make them less vulnerable" (NGO 05).

Partly to address these gaps, the DRRM act has introduced Disaster Risk Management Committees (DRMC). The DRMCs are committees that have been or are in the process of being formed via directives from the DRRM act. They follow the same format as the EOCs, existing at each level of government barring the national; provincial (PDRMC), local (LDMC), and with an additional district (DDRMC) to help with the co-ordination between local and provincial levels. DMCs are intended to be the co-ordination mechanism bringing together actors from all sectors, community members, the state, NGOs, and development sector, and security forces, in regular meetings to update on risks and preparedness of a given area. Moreover, the DRMC is a forum to disseminate knowledge upwards from the communities, in the case of LDRMCs, to the larger district and provincial chapters. The DRMC also disseminate knowledge downwards facilitating training and knowledge transfer from the national scale. Crucially, during any response to a larger scale hazard event, the DRMCs will act as co-ordination mechanism for response and relief activities:

> *"If the committee can handle the role, they can do by themselves. They only coordinate with CDO when they need, and solving the problems related to the endorsement which is not solved at the local level. Then they come to the DDRMC committee because the DDRMC must endorse the problems to address the community high level problems. The DDMC endorses and it shares to the headquarter. So, that time they come to the DDRMC, otherwise they can manage their problems by themselves." (NGO_07)*

However, in practice , most of these are new structures and throughout the fieldwork (in 2019/2020) I was told by actors from local NGO and government that to date many were not functioning due to lack of understanding around their remit and purpose; this was confirmed by community members in Sunkuda during interviews that are explored in Chapter 6. Further, despite acknowledging gaps and challenges incorporating local/indigenous knowledge around DRR, it is still framed as a need to make communities resilient through the top-down transfer of national/ international knowledge and understanding:

> *"... there are traditional knowledge, people used to build their houses on the raise's infrastructure, and the lower part of the house used to be vacant for the free movement of water, you understand. And they would remain safe ... but people are losing those ideas now. And others, they used to migrate, if in the cold season to the hot area, in the hot areas in the summer they used to go to the cold area, and now people go they are left to migrate, and they face the problems" (GON 02).*

> *"Now our priorities, policies they have focused on the communities, there we have sensitised the communities, we have to make them resilient, we have the to use our knowledge, capacity, the policy there. And some of the organisation the government partners they are working for this. But we have not become 100% successful to reach every community yet, every people to the date."(GON_02)*

Whilst training and capacity building is critical to DRR, the focus on one-way top-down training continues to not address the need to incorporate indigenous and local knowledge.

5.4.3.   *Formal and informal institutional roles and responsibilities*

Throughout our interviews, the DRRM act was presented as a road map to clarify the function and remit of state institutions and apparatus. According to participants from within

and outside the government, the main achievement of the DRRM act is the creation of
disaster-focused formal institutions- namely the DRRMA and executive and expert
committees. These new DRR institutions take over DRR responsibilities from the MOHA
where it has been located for the past decade:

> *"Now every DRR document, every log of the act have defined on every stage of the*
> *government of DRR." (GON_04)*

The benefit of streamlining DRR governance, according to our interviewees, is to create a
stable institutional structure that is not subject to the problems of transient bureaucratic
placements. By establishing a dedicated DRR focused department at the main levels of
government the act will ensure that action can be co-ordinated and implemented by staff with
specialisms in DRR. Further by defining responsibilities of the local level and its
relationships with and to the provincial and federal it should provide increased autonomy.
The logic behind this decision, based on interviews responses, is that local level government
and communities are best suited to assess their own needs and implement capacity and
resilience building measures. This was strongly expressed by participants from multiple
sectors, asserting that local level decision making autonomy and tailoring their specific needs
would lead to increased resilience:

> *"In this process the country is trying to make people, the local…responsible to decide*
> *their own destiny. (NGO_03)*

Yet these new formal bodies will only be as effective if they work with the mosaic of
informal norms, beliefs, and attitudes towards DRR that exists locally. These assertions are
also frequently contradicted within the interviews; whilst local autonomy is deemed critical
for DRR, the solution for attaining it often lacks a real exchange of knowledge and ideas
between local and national actors, and instead mirrors top-down approaches that have

historically been prevalent in Nepal. Deciphering these informalities was more challenging methodologically because of this specificity. Certainly, when addressing individual citizens' DRR roles and responsibilities, it becomes less obvious how they will 'fit' with state scaled narratives of CGR. While some interviewees suggested that DRR is the individual's own responsibility, there was consensus that effective DRR requires specialists:

> *"There are certain institutions who are primarily responsible for DRM, and they*
> *think that is government responsibilities, they think that is the municipalities*
> *responsibilities, but it is not that. Disaster management is the responsibility of*
> *everyone." (NGO_01)*

While some interviewees stated that DRR was the duty of every citizen, there was consensus that individuals don't have clearly defined responsibilities within the state's vision for collaborative action. Instead, they are seen as passive recipients in its implementation: for example, it was striking how interviewees seldom mentioned citizens' roles in DRR activities. A similar trend was evident when I discussed in DRR with many respondents not mentioning private sectors actors when discussing CG. The respondents who did discuss the private sector saw potential for future private sector involvement, but due to a lack of historical engagement expressed uncertainty over what form this might take.

Nonetheless many interviewees believed that government and its dedicated DRR institutions were now the best way to approach to DRR, and that private sector and other non-state actors should work through these newly formed organisations to achieve shared goals:

> *"The civil society, the researchers, the students can help the government to help*
> *change their policies, to change their laws and to change their actions. But we have*
> *to go through the government." (GON_02)*

Indeed, many interviewees hoped that if the policies and institutional changes are implemented, then more effective collaborations can be developed:

> *"If we look at the new policy, the government has put the Red Cross in a high profile. Before, it was said that a member from the community but now within the organizations the Red Cross has been made mandatory. The Red Cross is also in the local government body." (NGO_09)*

5.5. *Narratives in practice*

The narratives I identified during our interviews form part of what I believe is a national movement to create a CGR around DRR in Nepal. According to our data, this CGR aims to instil cohesion in the previously uncoordinated system and to decentralise decision making autonomy and power to the local municipalities to increase resilience through sustainable DRR actions. Yet, these narratives present a set of paradoxes which are hindering the success of the emerging CGR. In this section I shift the focus onto how these narratives have been impacting practice by drawing on field notes and interviews; focussing on practices allows for an exploring of the contradictions that have emerged in the scalar narratives surrounding CG in DRR

To date moves towards CGR have focussed more on retaining power of government institutions at all scales in the network of actors than exploring how state and non-state actors can work together in a collaborative approach. A key example of this is seen in the positioning of the local level as the main scale for DRR action. This move is in line with international CG approaches and part of the drive for greater decentralisation that has been prominent in post-federalised Nepal. Portraying the local scale as the closest to the

grassroots it becomes important to have a strong functioning local government as it can facilitate collaboration with the needs of the citizens, business, and NGOs in their area (Acharya, 2018). In Nepal, this focus on 'the local' is seen in the narratives surrounding actor capacities, knowledge production, and formal and informal roles and responsibilities. However, it is apparent through our analysis that there are tensions between narrative intent and effect on the ground in practice. For example, capacity building and knowledge production and dissemination narratives focus primarily on the failings of the local municipalities and how to improve the recently formed local governments. This is a point that has merit; training and capacity building is a key responsibility of the national government and critical in DRR policy. However, the improvement suggested is a top-down capacity training aimed at making the local municipalities meet the requirements of national policy and data that meets an externally directed scientised format. This is crucial in terms of implementation of the policy aims and objectives. Yet, this is spoken of as a one-way transfer with the local positioned as the receiver. Paradoxically this serves to reinforce a top-down approach to DRR that undermines autonomy at the municipal level and risks rendering indigenous and local knowledge obsolete. According to narratives, the local should be the primary site of DRR but only if local actors are trained in the aims, objectives and knowledges of the national level.

Further, the narrative of 'the local' presents the recent changes in federalisation as leading to greater access for citizens, and increased voice for community concerns. Yet, our data suggests there is limited engagement with how to make local level government more accessible to citizens as the local disaster risk management committees (LDRMC) are represented as being democratic and a sufficient pathway for citizen engagement. When

looking at the on-ground implementation of this narrative there is a marked contradiction as at the time of writing (2022) many LDRMC were not active. In areas where they were formed, I was told by community members that very little had been done since, with members unsure as to the purpose. This gap between narrative and practice is salient as many of the DRR actors I spoke with pointed to this policy initiative as being evidence of progressive and inclusive DRR: despite it not being implemented in a meaningful way.

A further point of contention has arisen within national DRR policies, which seek to clarify roles and responsibilities of newly formed institutions and their place in a CGR. Yet there is a conflict between the DRRM Act and the constitution of Nepal which is centred around retaining the district as a functioning level of government. From a narrative perspective, this move allows for additional co-ordination and collaborative assistance between local municipalities and the provincial level institutions. But in practice according to our data it has caused confusion and power struggles about knowledge transfer and formal roles and responsibilities between the district and the municipalities. The district, specifically the chief district officer (CDO), retains authority over the armed forces and the police, as well as running monthly DDRMC and a small DRM fund. The purpose the of the DDRMC is to hear the assessments from the local municipalities and assist in transferring that knowledge up to the province, whilst transferring information down from the national levels concerning DRR activities and policy. However, under the new federal system, the local municipal chairs rank higher than the CDO. This has resulted in local municipal leaders refusing to attend the monthly DRMC meeting at the district level and asking for help only in post-disaster

scenarios when they cannot cope[14]. The tension is further compounding the tendency for local action to focus on response and recovery and not work towards risk reduction. The policy documents and position of the GoN is that the local scale is the best platform to co-ordinate DRR action, but our findings when it comes to action and implementation suggest not enough attention has been given to helping resolve the political tensions resulting from this assumption. The sentiment behind the state narrative seems to be that municipalities will need to fall in line with national structures and policies, again feeding into the previously discussed paradox that suggests that 'the local' is the problem thus reinforcing and legitimising the need for a top-down non-collaborative approach to DRR; which undermines local autonomy.

Lastly, the drive for greater collaboration with non-state actors is represented as a chance to increase knowledge, awareness of risk, and ensure sustainability by mandating INGO partnerships in GoN-DRR action. An example of this is the perceived role and responsibilities of INGOs who have historically led DRR actions in Nepal and lobbied strongly for the policy changes that have been seen in the last five years. Within the new institutional landscape, some INGOs have transitioned to working alongside the GoN in consultative roles, providing expert input on policy reforms and future DRR action. The collaborative relationship is evident in the examples of the IFRC who staff EOC gathering data and supporting district offices and local municipalities to implement training and

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[14] I was told this on 3 different occasions by local ward chairs, NGO's and KI in the Sunkuda area. This was not during a recorded interview but was information taken from my field notes.

preparedness action within communities. However, our analysis suggests that the scope for INGO engagement is still limited by conflicting agendas, with the GON taking the position that civil society should play a supporting role for its aims. This on-the-ground experience conflicts with the purported greater collaboration that is promised by the state narrative; in fact, it again risks the potential CGR in Nepal being rendered ineffective by heavy-handed top-down enforcement of GoN objectives.

5.6. *Conclusion*

I have explored institutional changes in Nepali DRR since the 2015 earthquake. These changes have been attributed, in part, to the lessons learnt from past disasters and extreme events that are increasing in severity and frequency in Nepal due to climate change. Nepal's new institutional and policy landscape is geared towards enabling greater collaboration between state and non-state actors. This follows international trends of CG approaches to DRR for greater resilience building. I examined this trend towards CG through the lens of scalar narratives, which are the stories told about scalar localisations and changes in social-political process (González, 2006). Drawing on empirical data from transcribed semi-structured interviews with key state and non-state actors in DRR, I identified three scalar narratives surrounding 1) actor capacities and tendencies in DRR; 2) knowledge production on DRR and its dissemination, and 3) formal and informal institutional DRR roles and responsibilities.

My analysis showed that these narratives create paradoxes and contradictions that further disrupt implementation and action around the emerging CGR. One of the central narratives we identified tells a story about how state-based change – namely federalisation - has defined

the local municipal scale as the most effective site for DRR action. This narrative is now being embedded through targeted policy reform and institutional remaking aimed at supporting greater autonomy at the local scale. The aim of this is to provide a preeminent geographical site at and from which collaborative action is performed. This move marks a major shift from previous top-down, uncoordinated DRR actions involving a myriad of international and national actors. Yet in contradiction to this narrative of the local is the perception that local municipalities are inadequate and lacking in capacity. As a result of this perception building capacity has been placed at the forefront of current DRR action. Whilst this is an essential step in advancing DRR knowledge and practice in the newly formed local municipalities, capacity building is spoken of in specific terms of bringing the local up to the standards of national priorities and needs. This is a one-way transfer where the local needs and local knowledges are not taken into consideration; Paradoxically, this reinforces the previous top-down approach to DRR that this narrative purports to be addressing.

In terms of advancing CG, transfer of DRR management is not just spoken of in terms of decentralisation of power between different state scales. There is also an emphasis on greater collaboration with a wider set of actors (such as NGO, community groups and private business). However, in practice the institutional and policy changes have been concentrated primarily upon centring the newly formed provincial and municipal DRR institutions within the wider network of DRR actors. In terms of horizontal collaboration, it highlighted that state and non-government actors do not fully align with each other, with the state narrative pushing for non-state actors to work towards national goals, and not their own agenda; this is a formal approach to collaborative governance that undermines its sustainability and success.

Overall, the GoN's action is in keeping with traits of an "externally directed" CGR (Emerson and Nabatchi, 2015). However, this version of CGR has been shown to struggle with low levels of autonomy which runs contrary to the aims of policy objectives to create an autonomous local scale. In leaning towards this form of CGR, priority has been given to top-down objectives that inform local DRR institutions, with non-state actors expected to play a supporting role to state interests. Furthermore, little attention has been given to address local political tensions that have arisen due to partial retention of pre-federal structures. Combined, these tensions threaten to undermine the autonomy and efficacy of the newly formed local scale by emphasizing top-down state-led prescriptions. In turn, this leads us to question the viability of the emerging governance regime as a truly collaborative project.

Narrative scholars suggest that the world is understood and interpreted through the stories we tell. Stories have the power to shape how we distinguish problems, frame our policies, impact how subjectivities are mobilised, and determine what knowledge is legitimised. While I acknowledge the changes are promising first steps in Nepali DRR, I contend that further actions are needed in future to ensure a genuinely collaborative DRR regime. To do this I suggest less emphasis on state-driven scalar narratives and state centred practices as they threaten to impede the potential for transformative sustainable action in Nepal. Instead, I suggest a narrative and practice that embraces a more nuanced approach to DRR needs, including meaningful engagement with the complexity of local political tensions. Critically, this engagement with local political tensions should extend to grassroots narratives told by those at the community level. In this chapter I presented the top-down discourse of collaboration; future work will examine other narrative perspectives within the DRR network. Nepali DRR is still in the process of transition and the move towards embracing greater

collaborative action is cause for hope that this policy is now being placed on a more

sustainable and resilient footing.

6. Chapter six: Perceptions on community coping strategies and resilience

6. Introduction

There is a popular expression in Nepal, *Ke garne?* ("What to do?") which is often misconstrued from the outside:

> *"This question is rhetorical, usually rounding out a story of some hardship. The bus didn't show up in the village for two days, ke garne? Your husband has spent most of your children's lives working overseas to pay for their schooling, ke garne? Your village house is small and has no power, ke garne?*
>
> *Although the English translation gives a sense of futility in the face of adversity, it does not quite have this function. Instead, it is about resilience in the face of adversity – you still got to town, your husband is doing the right thing for the family, and your house is all you have. There is nothing you can do to prevent these events, but that is not a reason to let them stop you." (Gowne, 2015)*

This misunderstanding highlights a divide between how a communities' capacity and resilience are viewed by DRR actors in the Nepali government and international aid community (IAC) and the on-ground informal resilience building practices within communities. Much like the Nepali colloquialism, the meaning of community resilience in Nepal is often lost in translation between national level DRR actors and everyday experience of people living with hazards. Communities, during my interviews with formal actors, were often spoken of as lacking in knowledge or not prioritising DRR practices and

implementation that could increase their resilience; they were viewed as the end user of a system and were waiting to be helped by the GoN and IAC. This framing was contradicted during interviews with communities in Sunkuda who suggested that the problems with DRR implementation and resilience building related more to non-functioning GoN committees, informal power dynamics and networks, and corruption.

This chapter builds on themes explored in Chapter 5 that identified an emerging CGR which pushed for an externally directed approach to DRR where knowledge was generated and held centrally by the GoN in line with international experts, despite policy goals of greater collaboration. Instead, engagement with a wider pool of actors and decentralisation to the local scale has been realised mostly in relation to questions of responsibility for DRR and resilience building. Responsibility has been diverted away from the central government through decentralisation and policy reforms to the local and community scale; critically this has been done without valuing the knowledges present at this scale. This is a tension that this chapter explores by focusing on DRR actors from the GoN and the IAC and their perceptions of communities' ability to participate in the CGR for DRR.

Whilst the justification from the GoN for keeping knowledge centrally held is rooted in the idea that capacity building is needed for the new local municipal government to help them align with national policy aims; the same cannot be said for communities who aren't required to meet policy standards and who have survived in hazard prone areas for generations. Yet as we will see later in this chapter DRR experts in the GoN and IAC consistently suggest that communities need and are waiting for interventions; much like the local municipalities.

However, where this perception comes from and how it impacts community inclusion in CGR is still not widely engaged with. To help try and understand this I turn to the concept of resilience which is deeply rooted in the policy agendas of the GoN and the IAC and argue that the answers may lay in this concept.

Resilience as an aim for effective DRR has been implemented in Nepal through the government and IAC who view communities living with hazards as not resilient or not resilient in the *correct* way[15]. This framing by actors who understand resilience through an international lens is important as the push for CG in the international DRR agenda is based on the axiom that CG reduces risk and increases community resilience; resilience is the goal and therefore sets markers for success and failure. In Nepal, this truism has led to large-scale institutional reform that is focused on making the local the primary geographical site for collaborative action for DRR, as shown in Chapter 5. Yet, what resilience looks like at the local scale is mostly derived from international definitions, that often do not translate to the day-to-day reality of living in hazard prone areas.

 As shown in chapter 5, little attention is given to the political dynamics of the local scale and communities are still mostly absent from meaningful participation in the decision-making process; they are still seen as the recipients of DRR initiatives. In this chapter, I explore

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[15] Framing in this chapter relates to the study of how a problem is constructed and understood by different actors (see Dewulf, 2013; Entman, 1993; Chong, 2007; Nisbet, 2010)

contributing factors for this and argue that international resilience building approaches have defined what community level engagement with resilience should look like; overlooking informal resilience practices and barriers that don't fit this international understanding. This leads to a risk of communities being left out of the state-led CG process as they are deemed unable to be meaningful partners. By framing communities as unable to effectively build resilience DRR actors from the IAC and government are focusing on trying to instil a particular type of internationally defined resilience building on a social system that already has a long history of informal resilience practices (Russell, et al, 2023). Yet the type of resilience they wish to instil has limited impact on the everyday realities of living in disaster-prone areas. Instead, DRR governance is currently focused on the shortfalls within communities and overlooks indigenous/ local knowledges about the community's ability to cope with the risk. Further by focusing on where communities are lacking this governance approach disregards the political and cultural barriers that are occurring which impede DRR actions that could help communities increase their resilience to hazards.

In this chapter I explore how resilience has been implemented to date in Nepal, drawing on scholarship that explores the recent history of resilience as a policy aim, advanced through international treaties and by actors working for the government and IAC. I then introduce data collected from semi-structured interviews with national-level DRR actors and communities in Sunkuda. This focuses on how national-level actors perceive remote communities and their ability to engage with DRR activities that could improve their resilience. My findings are consistent with previous scholars' observations on the role of resilience in Nepal currently (Nightingale, 2015; Watson,2017). I then examine what impact this has on remote communities by drawing on data from Sunkuda on the types of support

they receive and explore informal coping strategies that exist. Lastly, I add to this growing field of research in Nepal by examining the impact of this resilience framing and action on the emerging collaborative governance regime for DRR, and what barriers to successful CG arise from viewing communities as non-resilient. Firstly, in the next section, I sketch out two important concepts for this discussion, resilience and community, and set out what they mean and how they have been implemented in Nepal.

6.1. *Resilience*

Resilience is a concept that originally evolved from engineering and is now most associated with human ecological systems research, climate change adaptation and DRR. The most widely used definition of resilience is a system's "*ability to absorb change and disturbance and still maintain the same relationships between populations or state variables*" (Holling, 1973 14). In DRR the internationally accepted definition of resilience is:

> "*The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions*" (UNDRR, 2022)

However much like CG, resilience is a contested concept that has been critiqued for being too vague, with multiple definitions; it does not capture or reflect the on-ground nuance of everyday life in hazard-prone areas, and it does not do enough to address ongoing poverty

and livelihood needs[16] (Nightingale, 2020). Anderson (2015, p. 65) says that "we do not know what resilience is and we do not know what resilience does". What we *do* know is that there has been international acceptance of the concept as *the goal* that international development, climate change, and DRR agendas aim for. The result of this widespread acceptance of resilience is a drive to operationalise it through the creation of frameworks and indices that aim to make resilience quantifiable (Mishra et al., 2017; Keating et al., 2014). Yet despite this drive, there is still a dearth of *"empirical evidence on how resilience understanding is adopted and applied by practitioners, managers, community leaders and policymakers in disaster risk management"* Matyas and Pelling (2015, p 65). This contradiction has led to resilience as a concept being widely critiqued within the academy and beyond (Sudmeier-Rieux, 2014).

In Nepal specifically, improving resilience is the main goal of recent policy reforms for DRR and climate change. In the 2018 Disaster Risk Reduction and Management policy the term resilience features heavily and is described as "*The long-term vision of this policy is to contribute to sustainable development by making the nation safer, climate adaptive and resilient from disaster risk.*" (MoHA,2018 5) The DRRM Policy states that it aims to do this by

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[16] In areas where people are impoverished and survive on the minimum level of income/food security for subsistence it is not enough to be able to return to a previous state after a hazard. In these scenarios the ideal is to be able to continue to develop despite set back from hazards. This logic has resulted in calls for resilience science to include the idea of "bouncing forward;" using DRR and post disaster recovery to enhance communities' ability to not just withstand but advance in the aftermath of a disaster (Manyena et.al 2011).

"*Reducing disaster damage to means of livelihoods as well as critical infrastructures and disruption of basic services such as agriculture, industry, roads, communication, water supply and sanitation, education and health facilities, and reduce direct disaster economic loss.*" (MoHA, 2018 5)

As well as diversifying livelihoods (MoHA,2018 17) and encouraging private sector investment (MoHA, 2018 7). Nepal's definition of resilience is taken from the Sendai framework (above quote) which Nepal became a signatory to in 2015. Crucially, resilience, in DRR focussed policy, is an economically focused and expert-led resilience. Throughout the policy documents, there is little mention of promoting ways to include tacit or informal practices that already exist in the communities themselves. Whilst Indigenous communities are often the focus of resilience practices, they are viewed as recipients, not active participants in many policy documents. When it comes to policy, Indigenous or grounded knowledge of a specific geographical location is not given the same importance as scientised international knowledge that comes from IAC.

Nepal's policy approach to resilience is critiqued by Rusczyk, 2019, who suggests that the discourse of resilience is internationally driven and utilized to promote the importance of NGOs and GoN in DRR. This has led to an institutional landscape that is heavily influenced by the *needs of the donor*. In practice donor driven resilience favours approaches that can be operationalised in frameworks and that are implemented via a systematic approach to DRR; the value of this method is that it fits in with the accountability measures that donors require in exchange for funds. However, practising resilience with a heavy top-down approach results in little regard for the actual needs of the communities on the ground (Rusczyk, 2019).

Importantly this phenomenon is not unique to Nepal; donor-driven resilience models have had an impact across the Global South where "*increasingly [resilience is the] dominant mode of Western intervention in the Global South*" (Pugh, 2014, p. 314). Whilst this approach to development, DRR, and climate change is of immense value in the IAC, many scholars have noted that it does little to add value to the lives of people living in hazard-prone areas (Ruszyk, 2019; Nightingale, 2015). Nightingale (2015, p. 194) suggests that the IAC are "*devolving responsibility for resilience to locally based populations, and yet how they propose to do this, and what support is required to achieve these goals, is very different*" from what the communities feel they need. It is in this critique of resilience practice in Nepal that some similarities with how communities are perceived in relation to CG start to emerge. Nightingale (2015) goes on to argue that locating the responsibility of resilience to the local scale, risks absolving the state and IAC of their duty and accountability for their lack of action towards DRR. This is a concern that also came across during my interviews as shown in this response from a participant who has worked in IAC in international and national organisation, and academia in Nepal for over 15 years. Concerning resilience, they said:

> *"We [the Nepalese people] have a lot of hopes. That kind of makes us resilient in a way because you know we never had to depend much on the government, on the whole system. We always grew up fixing things ourselves, so even if there is a disaster and the system collapse, we found our way, just the same. but…being resilient can also be a weakness…because [if] someone thinks you are resilient, they don't want to work for you, because you're the resilient person so you should work for them…if you're the government and you see that people don't defend, or they don't shout or they don't revolt even if they have a problem …they kind of get neglected… I read*

somewhere don't call me resilient if you think that's a way to escape from your

responsibility, don't call me resilient." (NGO_05)

Rusczyk agrees, saying that in Nepal "*The language of resilience allows international and national policymakers to hide behind people who are accorded responsibility for helping themselves in times of hardship*" (Rusczyk, 2019 833).

This lack of accountability that is seen in resilience practices in Nepal becomes reinforced when coupled with the new DRRM Act and the emerging CGR. Whilst the DRRM Act promotes state-led actions that include all actors working collaboratively, it emphasises the local as the ideal site of effective DRR action. Thus, it places responsibility on the local and community actions, often without accounting for the barriers to implementing DRR measures that could help to build resilience; as shown in Chapter 5. The lack of acknowledgement of the restrictions and barriers that the local scale still faces is often neglected; with the mindset that it is the responsibility of 'communities' to ensure DRRM at the local scale; thus, the state cannot be held accountable for failure. Consequently, to understand this complex dynamic further it is important to unpick the concept of 'community' used in international resilience practise by the IAC and GoN, to understand why it is focused on the local and why despite this attention, communities continued to be overlooked in Nepali DRR.

6.2. *Community Resilience*

Community has a contentious position in disaster resilience scholarship both as a focus of governance and a concept. For some scholars understanding the complexity of community governance is critical for effective resilience building (Bankoff et al., 2015; Morrison, 2017;

Pandey, 2019; Rusczyk, 2019). Bankoff et al. (2015, p. 8) suggests that *"power relations are almost always present (in a wide variety of configurations) [in communities], especially on grounds of gender, class, ethnicity, caste, patron- relations or age-group bonding"*. These complexities are often tacit but have a significant impact on the resilience of households (Rusczyk, 2019). It is for this reason that community resilience is often referring to multiple forms of resilience that can exist in contradiction with and undermine other groups' efforts to become resilient (Wilson, 2012). As such, when exploring informal practices, it is crucial to explore the power dynamics of informal networks and their effect on resilience (Morrison, et al, 2017). This is often overlooked by researchers who tend to focus on traditional governance dynamics such as institutional power (Morrison et al., 2017). Similarly, social capital in communities' networks is shown to have a notable impact on resilience and is seen as central to Nepali culture. For example, Pandey (2019) suggests that Nepal's socio-cultural dynamics are built on informal relations and that they operate on a "*collectivist social model"*; this is particularly true in rural remote communities that are not easily accessible by IAC or the Nepali state. In these communities, social capital and community power dynamics are critical during a disaster and the initial recovery effort as one of my interviewees, who worked in primary disaster response internationally, pointed out:

> "*The army was the primary responders, they call them the first responders. I have reservations about that because army response is not at the first time - maybe it's the primary responders,–the main responders - but the first responders are always the community.*" (UN_01)

As such, understanding how informal power relations and social capital can shape a communities' prevention and mitigation, and response and recovery, is key for resilience building. This insight is critical in terms of both the positive impacts and the barriers to increasing resilience cultural and political dynamics can uphold, such as support networks and access to knowledge and services (Sotiropoulos, 2005; Pandey, 2019). As Pandey (2019, p.2) suggests, social capital can have "*downsides in terms of exclusionary practices and negative consequences, as well as the benefits within the local context*". Yet community social capital is still seen by GoN and IAC through a top-down lens that focuses primarily on positive aspects in relation to resilience building (Bownas, Bishokarma,2019; Pandey, 2019, Ruszyk,2019).

In addition to a lack of nuance in how community governance and cultural dynamics are understood and function in relation to increasing resilience, many scholars argue that the concept of community itself does not reflect the everyday lived reality of people living with hazards. This is something I came across in Sunkuda where even self-defined communities(see 3.1) used sometimes vague and flexible definitions, and did not reflect the national federal structure . 'Community' to these scholars is seen as a myth (Cannon, 2014); an assumed pre-existing unit that requires capacity-building interventions (Ride and Bretherton 2011); or a romantic idea formed by NGOs and the IAC (De Beer, 2013). The result of this is that little attention is given to how communities are formed and function in relation to national DRR structure, policies, and top-down interventions. In Nepal in particular, the lack of attention given to community's informal governance and resilience building practices by the IAC and GoN have led many scholars to suggest the idea is purely conceptual (Pandey, 2019). According to Rusczyk (2019), the concept of communities and community resilience

in Nepal has become a "*spectacle*" that bears little resemblance to the everyday realities of people living in Nepal. The community, in Nepal, is viewed as

> "'*this other thing at the end, which they then try to shove into a box for measurement purposes'… Communities formed organically by residents fall away as an object of analysis in this disaster-resilience discourse of the IAC*." (Ruszyck, 2019 p. 830).

Crucially, according to Rusczyk, communities are not provided a formal mechanism to allow for self-definition or have meaningful input into voicing their resilience-building needs; this is true of the new DRR institutional structure and the emerging CGR.

The concerns raised about the IACs' resilience practice in Nepal surrounding community governance and how communities are understood (as a conceptual unit) are also evident in the emerging CGR in Nepal. The newly formed local municipal level is a top-down classification that emerged in 2017 after local elections were held for the first time in over a decade. Prior to this (as discussed in chapter 4) remote communities had adapted and become self-reliant due to a lack of a functioning government during the Nepali war. Communities based within these municipalities vary in terms of social capital, networks, informal power dynamics, and access to resources (Pandey, 2019). But, in a similar way to how communities are treated by the IAC and GoN in resilience building endeavours, the nuances and dynamics of communities in the emerging CGR are often overlooked. This is compounded by the slow implementation of policy functions and mechanisms that would give a voice to communities such as the LDRMC. Together this results in expert-led assessments of the needs of the community having more input in governance decisions; and communities being treated as a

unit of measure at the end of a system (Ruszyk, 2019). To explore these similarities further the next section focuses on how communities are framed by members of the IAC and GoN.

6.3. *Top-down perception of communities from the GON and IAC*

Thus far, as shown in chapter 5, institutional reforms have focussed primarily on making the local the main site of action for DRR and management in Nepal. However, my data suggests that there is a lack of engagement with local politics and power dynamics, notably with community engagement in DRR decision-making. On paper, there are plans to address this with the DRRM Act (2018) providing a structure for LDRMC, the purpose of which is to assist in bridging the gap between the state and communities. By doing so, in theory, communities will have a voice in decision-making about their DRR needs and will be included as meaningful participants in Nepal's emerging CGR. However, as stated by a DRR expert who has worked for the UN, INGO and GoN, this is still a challenge for collaborative DRR:

> "*As of now the community, their role is of the recipient rather than the decision-making body in Nepal.*" *(NGO_03)*

This comment was said as a critique of the current approach to DRR by the Nepalese government and highlighted work that still needs to be done. Yet according to another respondent, who has been part of the bureaucratic wing of the government, an elected official , and is currently working in a key DRR focussed ministry in the Nepal government, when it comes to community engagement in CG for DRR:

> "*Now our priorities, policies they have focused on the communities, there we have to sensitise the communities, we have to make them resilient, we have to use our knowledge, capacity, the policy is there.*" (GON_02)

In line with previous scholarship, this quote suggests that communities are still seen as an *object* that is on the receiving end of DRR activities; this sentiment was seen throughout data collected from actors working at the national scale. In part, my interviews suggest, this is due to the framing of communities as non-resilient. The primary reason for this framing that emerged during this analysis is that there is a gap between how experts define resilience (the components that contribute to it and the barriers that impede it) and how communities practice resilience. As suggested by an NGO DRR specialist that had worked in Nepal for over 20 years:

> *"Community people have one set of problems, issues, and challenges that they are facing in their everyday life. Which has not yet been analysed deeply by the policy-making bodies, or the political bodies even. So that is why we are seeing the differences. When we talk about DRM, we find a different set of understanding at the community level; that is why their capacity to cope with disaster is low because they are not provided with sufficient knowledge and they are not trained; they are not linked to policy institutions; they are not linked to the formal body who is responsible to provide all support to the community people, they are not formally linked."*
> *(NGO_01)*

This respondent makes several salient points. Firstly, they acknowledge the gaps that remain in the institutional structure between communities and the local government, in which they emphasise the lack of effort that the policy makers (in this case GoN) have made so far to understand the community dynamics; this links back to how communities are viewed in international resilience practice. Yet, despite acknowledging this failing they suggest that this disconnection has led to low capacity in communities. Interestingly the emphasis is on the

lack of expert knowledge making communities vulnerable as opposed to the lack of knowledge about community dynamics making formal DRM practice ineffective. This framing is complicating the idea of responsibility for low resilience or capacity. Whilst the interviewee acknowledges that the IAC and GoN are responsible for educating communities, it is the communities lack of 'understanding' which is responsible for their low capacity. Communities are again framed as an end user that resilience is bestowed upon.

Secondly, the respondent depicts the challenges that communities face as *everyday* occurrences. When asked further about the nature of 'community challenges', they said:

> *"Community people, they all want to see the solutions in their life; they want something that will immediately help them to solve their problems… the national level, or federal, or provincial level they are more political bodies, they are more bureaucrats, and they are more on the policy front…on the institutional set of fronts; which is not necessarily applicable to the community people…(NGO_01)*

Interestingly, this quote reinforces the assumption that is pervasive throughout the interviews, that communities are not part of governing DRR. They are repeatedly represented as separated from the concerns of DRR policy. According to our respondent the everyday experiences of living with hazards is different from international knowledge that can assist in making communities more resilient. Everyday experiences are framed as not coordinated with the GON/IAC understanding of DRR challenges and its policy aims. This was echoed by another respondent who has worked as both an academic and INGO DRR expert when they said:

*"DRM was not that big a concern for local people, maybe to their local government as well because … unless you… see things happen to you, [you] don't really feel happy to [have] incidents policy" (*NGO_05)

Instead, the GoN and IAC see communities' everyday understanding of living in hazard-prone areas as not valuable to DRR governance or resilience building.

The same interviewee suggested that grounded knowledge of living in hazards prone areas was attributed as part of the cause for community vulnerability. Communities were portrayed as focussed on the immediate hazard in front of them, but could not conceive of the wider disaster cycle; nor could they foresee the externalities of poorly implemented multi-hazard prevention. They suggested that:

*"The challenges that comes to really understanding the whole dimension of disaster, because how the local community, or how the local government perceives disaster is something like, like building big blocks, that's how they see. Like in Terai there is a frequents flood, since I am an NGO, I might think a different way, how they see building a huge dyke, or like forest can control flood. But the research has shown that in Terai because of constructing a lot of dams that have actually increased flooding's. But that's not yet been understood by local community …because they are still, that well if I block the river at this portion its actually stopping the flood, that's what they see. They don't see the impact what's causing downstream. So yes, there is also, that is more about less clarity on the looking at the entire dimension of the entire disaster risk management"(*NGO_05)

This quote reaffirms the position taken by some actors in the GoN and IAC that the

responsibility for the lack of effective DRR and resilience building is the community's non-scientific understanding. This is reinforced through the solution offered by the DRR expert; that communities must be trained to reframe their understanding of their needs to be in line with the expert-led definitions of DRR problems. Whilst greater incorporation of scientific understanding of holistic DRM is critical, it is not a collaborative process or co-evolution of knowledge, but top-down dissemination of the "*correct*" problems that are suggested by the two interviewees; or, as Rusczyk (2019) suggests, fitting in with donor-driven definitions of what a resilient community should look like. This is not a two-way process, and little is mentioned about improving expert understanding of community knowledges.

This separation of community and IAC/GoN definitions of DRR needs in Nepal is not ignored or unknown to actors in the IAC/GoN; but solutions to this concern rely heavily upon the implementation of DRM Act. The interviewee who first highlighted the problem went on to express hope that this would change:

> *There is no welcoming environment …in Nepal, particularly with the government bodies, so that people can come and ask their questions and may seek solutions from the authorities, it is not being practised yet. Hopefully, in the future, it can be improved but it's because of that the thinking level of the situation…the problems associated with the community, government and the policy-making bodies, the challenges are at completely different, at two different levels" (NGO_01)*

However, this is not a guaranteed result and leaves rectifying the disconnection between the communities and the GoN and IAC to chance. As multiple NGO's I spoke with suggested that implementation is historically poor:

"Well in the case of Nepal, and I work in almost all South Asian countries, Nepal is a good country to develop policy, they are very good on making policy however they are very weak on implementation" (NGO_03)

Additional perceptions of causes of low community resilience that arose in interviews with the IAC and GoN were the loss of 'traditional'/indigenous knowledge that had previously allowed communities to continue to live in hazard-prone areas for generations.

"… there is traditional knowledge, people used to build their houses in the raised infrastructure, and the lower part of the house used to be vacant for the free movement of the water, you understand. And it would remain safe... but people are losing these ideas now and others, they used to migrate, if in the cold season to the hot area, in the hot areas in the summer they used to go to the cold area, and now people go they are left to migrate, and they face the problems." (GoN_02)

Migration was posed by other government officials a being a big cause of vulnerability and lack of resilience for community and individual Nepalese citizens:

"If you migrate one … group of people [they cause] harmful from the disaster area, that migrated population, because they don't know the local risks. So, people living from generations, they know what are the risks but when they are in a new place, they don't know the risks" (GoN 01).

Interestingly, according to these two GoN actors here Indigenous knowledge, as well as being lost due to migration is also incompatible with modern approaches to DRR. The result of this framing is that whilst there was once value in indigenous knowledge for resilience building its value is limited in the current modern DRR landscape. What's pertinent about this framing is that it again focuses responsibility for lack of resilience building on communities; and not

on other reasons such as lack of access to resources arising from political corruption or nepotism, or nonfunctioning policies and committees. This trend becomes salient in the next section where I explore community perceptions of the GoN and IAC through the stories community members in Sunkuda shared about the impact that recent policy reforms had had on their community at the time of fieldwork[17].

6.4. *Community perception of national DRR governance.*
Much of the focus of surrounding community engagement with DRR and resilience building from formal actors is on incompatibility of knowledge and priorities between communities and the GoN/IAC. However, communities suggest that there is more nuance to the lack of action and implementation of effective DRR and resilience building practices[18]. Based on interviews I conducted in early 2020 with community members in Sunkuda, little had been done in terms of implementing DRR committees or policy actions that are part of the national reforms:

> *"Research Participant: Government has been doing some work on this [LDRMC]. Women used to go to the meeting in Sunkuda about disaster awareness-based programmes where they were told about how to save their lives by themselves during the disaster.*

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[17] Field work took place in 2020, but based on conversations I have had recently (2023) with colleagues working in country some local municipalities are now functioning, but not all. This is an area of research I hope to go back to soon to map the changes.

[18] Communities in this study are self-defined collections of houses in Sunkuda. please see chapter 3 for more information .

CR: Was that helpful?

Research Participant: Not at all. They just told us that's all. They have formed a committee with twenty-five members two years ago, but the committee did nothing." (S141)

Whilst some residents confirmed that LDRMC did exist, most households did not know they had been set up, with many households that were interviewed saying they had not heard of them. As an elderly resident told me

*"This is our birthplace and we have been living here since our birth, but we have not seen anything given by the government. A long time ago, during the earthquake, it could be 1980 (2073 BS), the government had distributed tarpaulins… they [we] don't know any sort of support." (*S032)

I was told about some attempts by the municipality and Red Cross to inform residents about disaster prevention. We were told that some residents did get occasional information from the ward chair. However, this information seemed to be sporadic, limited in its usefulness, and would not be classed as comprehensive DRR as the focus was only on small risks and did not address the main hazards in the area:

"[The municipal chair] suggests during the dry season there will be a risk of fire and keep lighters away from children and during monsoon he tell us to be aware and stay safe when it heavily rains because of the possibility of the landslides. " (S131)

"People [from the government] also came to observe and document the damages and losses [from a large landslide in Sunkuda]. They also mapped out which places are

at risk of landslides and which places are safe to live. But we did not get any support

*from the (local) government." (*S141)

These accounts are in line with the type of activities that the CDO informed us about, but could not be classed as inclusive DRR activities that the DRRM Act has called for. Based on the accounts from the communities in Sunkuda, disaster-related work in the area followed the top-down model of expert-led action; with outside actors coming with pre-designed programmes and little to no consultation with communities. Unsurprisingly, the lack of assistance that the people of Sunkuda have had from the Nepali government has led to low approval of government actions and scepticism around the role of the state in DRR, as one resident told us:

"Even if some work is done such as building walls, it's mainly done for showing and

they earn profit from it." (S026)

Many households echoed this sentiment, with most residents in Sunkuda expressing low confidence in the government's ability in DRR (for a statistical breakdown of community perceptions of government action in Sunkuda see Martin et al, 2021). As shown in the quotes from communities in Sunkuda, the GoN and IAC have limited to no presence in terms of DRR and resilience building in the area. As such, Communities have critical insight into the challenges they face and are not just waiting for support from the GoN; they have developed their own support networks and coping strategies. However, this knowledge is being overlooked by the GoN/IAC which I explore in the next section.

6.6 *Informal practices and barriers to resilience in Sunkuda*

As shown in the previous sections, DRR action and resilience building is being hindered at the community level in Nepal. Communities have stated that they have received little, or no help from the local and national governments; and no change in support since the creation of LDRMC; which is non-functioning at the time of writing (2022). As such, knowledge of the needs and barriers that exist in communities is not engaged with in a meaningful way by the GoN/IAC; this is in line with critique from Ruszyk (2019) and Nightingale (2015) about how communities are treated in the GoN/IAC resilience practice.

A good example of the barriers that are faced by communities is the LDRMC. Policy documents and interviews conducted with a government official on the 2017 DRRM Act, reiterated the call for LDRMC to be created across Nepal. The purpose of these committees is to represent the 'community voice' to the government, bridging the gap between the Nepali people and the state. This is a key policy goal aimed at making DRR more inclusive and fostering greater collaboration for DRR in Nepal. However, to date, little has been achieved in implementing this policy goal. According to a district officer (DO)[19] [20] I interviewed in 2020 they were still in the process of implementing administrative changes across many districts in Nepal with some having made more progress than others. This includes setting up and training staff for the newly formed District Emergency Operating Centres (DEOC); the formation of LDRMC; and fully utilizing the 10 lakh NPR (£6,500) disaster fund per district

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[19] the old district office has been retained for bureaucratic support. About DRR the CDO has control over the army and police who are key actors in prevention, search, and rescue (refer to chapter 5 for a more in depth look at the current structure of Nepal).

[20] This data is paraphrased from notes taken during a semi-structured interview with a GoN official, we were not permitted to record the interview, but we were told we could use the information in papers.

to provide rescue equipment (boats and helicopter use, stock emergency provisions, and fund workshops about how to cope during a disaster and awareness building concerning local hazards). At the time of writing 2022, in Bajhang district the fund was mostly used to fund information workshops on local hazards in schools and disaster simulations run by the army and police. According to the CDO, the LDRMC in Sunkuda was functioning, yet we know from interviews with members of the community this was not accurate (see S141 and Martin, et. al, 2021). This raises concerns about how engaged the GoN (at all scales) are with the on-ground reality of community collaboration, and links back to criticism by Ruszyk that communities are just viewed as a unit of measurement, without meaningful engagement.

This lack of engagement with communities overlooks resilience building practices that already exist within communities. An example of this is the statements of self-reliance from residents of Sunkuda, who like many communities in remote areas in Nepal, have been overlooked by the central government (Watson, 2018; Nightingale, 2018).

> *"Afnai khuttama ni, aba kasle garcha (we stand on our own feet, who does help for us?)."(S130)*

In response to limited GoN presence, communities have developed informal support and coping strategies that have allowed them to continue to live in a remote region that suffers frequent landslides and monsoonal flooding:

> *"Yes, they [other community members] 100 % support us. If they have, they will support us…it's our traditional practices, which is still exists and I hope will exist for long time in the future too."* (S130)

These informal support networks were described as a cultural practice between ten tightly knit communities that make up Sunkuda. These communities were self-defined (see 3), and are located along geographical boundaries across the sides of the valley where Sunkuda is located. Individual communities are mostly made up of kinship groups[21]. Informal support networks and coping strategies that we were told about ranged from information sharing between communities and community-based organisations, access to the community forest, and *ad hoc* labour exchange networks for properties that were damaged by landslides, including relocation. As one resident noted who had to relocate from Sera community because of land subsidence close to an active landslide site:

> *"During the time of house construction villagers also contribute free labour and we paid half of the labourers. One or two days they helped us by providing free labour… everyone in the village will come to help for one or two days. They will help carrying woods, making roof. Everyone in the village work together helping each other specially in building a house."* (S139)

Additionally, communities discuss and make informal plans for hazards in the event they happen. Some residents shared that they slept outside during monsoon season due to fear of landslides:

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[21] There is an exception with a member of an old community, known locally as the Sera community, which had to disperse and relocate further up the valley due to a large landslide that occurred over 20 years ago, resulting in ongoing slope instability in that area (Fig 1).

"During the monsoon we have to live in a fear because the earth it trembles when there is heavy rain. You see this place is surrounded by rivers and all our cattle are locked within this territory." (S026)

However, other community participants I spoke with, particularly in highly vulnerable communities close to the two active landslides in the valley, felt that planning was redundant and would have a negligible effect on their ability to survive and cope with future landslides due to the magnitude of the problems. This is compounded by the lack of disaster shelters, the risk to livelihoods, and the high density of the support network[22]:

"We do have discussion about where to go, what to do. But when there is no place to go, what to do?" (S135)

"Although they [Community members] are helpful, during the time of hazard they are also equally affected and at risk because their house is also in landslide area."
(S026)

These households had support networks similar to other communities in Sunkuda, but their networks were less effective, as the people in their networks also faced the same risks and vulnerabilities from the landslide:

"Because if we are in disaster, we all are including neighbours will be affected. They have their own family to take care of." (S135)

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[22] high density in support networks may keep people in hazardous areas as they have limited support or knowledge networks outside of the hazard risk area.

These quotes raise a critical issue about how community resilience building is practiced in Nepal by the GoN and IAC. Contrary to the predominant use by GoN/IAC, community resilience building is not just about what knowledge and practices can be instilled in communities from outside. Based on these quotes, it is also about understanding the differing resilience building needs within communities; whilst communities have support networks the vulnerability of these networks vary due to the different variables of vulnerability in Sunkuda.

Another critical barrier to resilience building that was highlighted during my time working in Sunkuda, are examples of political corruption, caste-based discrimination, and nepotism. I was informed of multiple examples of these problems that the communities face. Most notable, for example, access to decision-makers was characterised as dependent on personal relationships:

> *"Yes, they might have budgets for this [referering to the district disaster fund]. But they will provide it who has source force [meaning lost in translation] and aafno manchhe (political connection and network as well as their own people)."[23](S130)*

 Or based on political party connections:

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[23] [] brackets are my insertion to give context. () are notes made by the person who transcribed the audio.

"*Nothing has been provided from the municipality. But even if they give, they give it to their own party's people.*" (S026)

Further barriers include caste and social standing:

No support is available. I think it's just because we are pichadiyeko manche" *(backward people) [this phase is common in Nepal and usually refers to people of the Dalit caste or people with low levels of education, wealth, and social status].* (S026)

Barriers such as these are crucial to engage with as they are sometimes beyond the power of communities to address. Many community residents described how these barriers affected their access to resources such as the community forest (which requires a permit), and to decision-makers in the local municipality.

In villages such as Sunkuda political barriers are further compounded by the geographical distance (the Local Municipality is a 40 min motorbike ride from Sunkuda, whereas the district office was a 3-hour ride away). If a resident does not have a personal connection with people in power, it is extremely hard to build one and gain access. This was further exacerbated by gender, migration, and death of heads of households, which all affected access to those in power according to interviews with residents.

Further, according to community participants, the relative size of communities and villages in the area also impacted access to resources and government support:

"*Ward nine is big and ward's support is focused on where the large settlements are. This cluster has few households, and they are less prioritized…look at there, there is*

a landslide and there is a river, but no one has asked once that you are at risk, and we will help you. We have not heard a single word from any person [referring to political persons] here" (S026)

The effects of poor social capital and its impact through political affiliations and corruption are well documented in Nepal (see Nightingale 2017; Watson,2017), yet when it comes to building community resilience for DRR these barriers are overlooked by the GoN/IAC. Instead, as shown in the interviews with actors from the GoN and IAC (see section 6.3)the focus is on the communities' knowledge differing from international resilience building knowledges.

The lack of engagement with the barriers that are highlighted by communities is crucial, as noted by many scholars, Nepalis are as resilient as they can be, the critical missing step in building resilience now is having the correct support from the government and IAC (O'Malley, 2010; Evans and Reid, 2013; Rusczyk, 2019). However, for this support to be effective, it needs to be defined by the community, and solution sought with community input; this cannot happen if the GON and IAC continue to treat communities as end users and not engage with them in a meaningful collaborative way.

6.5. *How is the concept of resilience impacting Nepal's CGR?*
One of the key concerns impacting CG in Nepal is the lack of meaningful engagement with communities about their resilience building practices and needs. As shown in interviews with members of the IAC/GoN and community members in Sunkuda there are multiple barriers to collaboration between these actors. This is despite targeted policy reforms to increase

collaboration across all scales and sectors. However, it's important to note that building resilience is the aim of these DRR reforms, with greater collaboration only a means to help achieve that goal. As such, how resilience is understood and practiced has a marked impact on what collaborative approach is best suited to achieve this.

In Nepal, community resilience is defined by and serves the purpose of the IAC and GoN agenda (Ruszyk, 2019, Nightingale, 2015). Nepali resilience has been characterised as a top-down form of resilience that does not reflect the needs of the communities; or give communities an opportunity to define themselves and share their needs (Ryszyk, 2019; Pandey, 2019). I argue that this treatment and approach to communities has been replicated in the emerging CGR in Nepal. This replication has occurred due to the continued perception of communities as unable or unwilling to engage with resilience building activities without intervention, which is a key criticism of the IAC/GoN resilience practice to date. Data explored in this chapter from key actors from the IAC/GoN frame communities as disconnected from DRR governance with differing knowledges and lack of expertise. Yet the type of knowledge and expertise the interviewees speak of align with resilience as defined by the state not by community needs; it was mostly focused on increased economic security and risk reduction at a larger scale.

 However, by framing communities in such a way the GoN and IAC are overlooking the complexity and informal practices and support networks of communities living in hazard-prone areas that have developed over generations. These practices show that communities are not passive and simply waiting to have DRR and resilience bestowed on them, but have

critical coping strategies that need to be understood. Yet, by replicating established resilience practices and treating communities as end users, important nuances of lived experience are missed that can affect the ability of a community to build resilience. Critically, whilst these informal coping practices have been effective in communities living in harsh environments, they do have limits and barriers that need to be factored into DRR reforms. The result of not engaging with on-ground complexities and community knowledge can be seen in the context of the emerging CG regime for DRR where effective implementation of collaborative action has yet to be achieved (Russell et al., 2021).

An example of this lack of effective implementation is the dedicated DRR funds and the LDRMC. Instead of providing a platform for communities to define their needs and access to the local municipality the LDRMC is seen as non-functioning; with community members either unaware that there was one present in Sunkuda or if known about community participants stating that little or no action had occurred since it was set up in 2017(interview extract S141). In contradiction to the intended purpose of the LDRMC, communities continue to feel as though they are not listened to. Our data suggest that in communities in Sunkuda there is a majority consensus that the government do not provide effective DRR assistance, training, or prevention activities, and as such communities do not rely on the GoN or IAC. This lack of action has further deepened distrust within the communities with multiple residents in Sunkuda suggesting the state's motivation for DRR action is unscrupulous and/or corrupt (interview extracts S026, S130, S141).The lack of trust directly effects future collaborative action as communities will be less likely to engage, when the LDRMC do become functional.

The disconnections between the GoN/IAC approaches and community needs are reinforced by false dichotomies that were stated by GoN/IAC actors; these revolves around successful DRR, and scientised knowledge versus community 'knowledge(as seen in the quotes from GoN_03 and NGO_05). The representation of communities as having the incorrect knowledge has led to a lack of reflexive thinking in the IAC/GoN about their own resilience knowledge and practice. As mentioned, in Chapter 3, the scale of landslides in Sunkuda are significant. Communities who live with them day-to-day understand this better than most; they also know what does not work. What I mean by this is that a community's inability to be resilient to landslides can be telling in and of itself. The scale of landslides means that the more common DRR and resilience approaches that are deployed by the IAC and GON are deemed to be expensive and ineffective (for example hillside stabilisation polders and improved drainage, improving knowledge exchange, capacity building, or adaptation). Therefore, a community's inability to become more resilient in that location can act as an indication that current DRR strategies need to be reviewed. However, if the prevailing framing of communities is that they lack effective knowledge, or do not see the value in resilience building, then failing to achieve resilience is viewed as a community problem by the IAC/GoN and not as reflective of issues with the DRR approaches being taken.

For example, in Sunkuda we interviewed two households in the Dhokla community where the only option to increase their resilience was to relocate the community. The limitation on resilience that this community faced was not due to their lack of *correct* DRR training, or GoN prescribed knowledge on prevention and mitigation procedures; it was because their

community was less than 20 ft from an extremely large and active landslide. In this instance standard landslide mitigation activities such as hillslope stabilisation polders would not produce effective DRR outcomes; other mitigation strategies such as land use mapping, and vulnerability capacity assessment could only be useful if they were used to help relocate the community. Novel ways of addressing community needs, ones that are transformative and have a greater impact on the everyday lives of people are needed, yet they are being overlooked in Sunkuda due to the current lack of collaboration with communities, in part, because there is no functioning mechanism for their voices.

The impact that the current IAC/GoN approach to resilience has on the emerging CG in Nepal has also been criticised at the international level. Recently the wider DRR community has called for DRR to be "reimagined" to have less emphasis on siloed interventions which are seen as unsustainable. According to recent work by Payne et al. (2021), DRR needs to move towards more sustainability in DRR. However, international resilience practice still lends itself to an expert-led technocratic approach that excludes non-experts, the public sector, and communities (Nordstrom, et al., 2021). Which, as shown in Nepal, underpins siloed approaches that excludes communities, which can undermine the sustainability of future DRR. This suggests that to meet the targets of sustainable DRR more active work on implementing collaborative approaches to DRR governance, in both Nepal and internationally are needed. A key part of this is challenging IAC/GoN resilience discourses to be more inclusive and accepting of the value of local knowledge and the intricacies of communities, without reducing them to an amorphous unit of engagement.

These contradictory assessments of communities' ability to be resilient place them in an indeterminate space between top-down resilience they feel excluded from and devaluing/erosion of their indigenous knowledge. It is a very bleak picture of how communities are viewed by the GoN and IAC which unsurprisingly reinforces the perception that communities are unable to meaningfully participate in CGR for DRR governance. This results in communities being placed in a position in which the categorisation of administrative boundaries, knowledge of their DRR and resilience building needs, and decision-making power and funding are held by outside actors (in the form of the GoN and IAC). Meanwhile the responsibility for increasing resilience and reducing vulnerability to hazards is being placed on the local scale and community level through targeted policy aims of decentralisation and greater collaboration.

This I argue, could lead to a culture of *responsibilisation* within Nepal where communities are simultaneously held responsible for their resilience whilst not being given support to overcome the barriers they face to increase their resilience; some of which are simply beyond their control (King et al., 2021). The result of this is that communities get no help from the government and IAC but shoulder the burden of failure, whilst the IAC and GoN are not held accountable. It is a catch twenty-two that communities in Nepal cannot win. Ultimately, this reinforces disconnections between government interventions and communities despite the recent policy drive for CG; which paradoxically undermines the aims of decentralised DRR decision-making and autonomy at the local/municipal levels.

6.6. *Conclusion*

When I started this PhD, my original intent was to try and understand if collaborative governance was an effective way to increase community resilience in remote mountain communities. However, throughout the process, it has become clear that the answer is not that simple. The root of this complexity is due to the novelty of Nepal's national reform, how resilience as a policy aim has been understood and implemented by the GoN and IAC, and whose knowledge is drawn on to achieve this policy aim. It is not because CG is an intrinsically ineffective form of governing, nor that resilience building is the wrong aim for increased collaboration and DRR reforms. The problem lies in the way that the concept of resilience has been understood and implemented in Nepal by actors in the government and IAC. Like many countries in the majority world, the approach to resilience building in Nepal is focused on expert knowledge and the needs of donors. This focus is summed up well in the relationship Nepali citizens have with the concept of resilience. Nepali resilience is often misunderstood by the perception that they have a *ke garne* attitude toward hazards and DRR whereby they admit defeat and wait for help. This misconception has led many in the IAC and GON to frame communities as not resilient without outside intervention. However, this is only one form of resilience which does not account for communities' and individuals' priorities and needs when it comes to DRR. Scholars have shown that *"people, power and politics are lost in the grand plan of (disaster) resilience"* (Rusczyk, 2019 p. 833). Resilience and communities have become a spectacle in Nepal with donors' and practitioners' targets, strategies and priorities taking precedence over the safety concerns of the people living in hazard-prone areas.

Yet the concept of internationally defined resilience is a powerful and well-established one and achieving the goal of greater community resilience remains high on the agenda for the Nepali government, IAC, and internationally within DRR. A key part of the internationally defined resilience that this chapter focuses on is the framing of communities by the GoN and IAC. Drawing on data collected in semi-structured interviews with national and municipal level DRR actors in Nepal, my findings reflect recent scholarship on internationally defined resilience in Nepal. GoN and IAC actors that we spoke with view communities as not resilient. More than one interviewee suggested that communities did not have the capacity or knowledge to understand why they are vulnerable to hazards. The solutions that were suggested by interviewees are that communities needed expert-led intervention, training, and resources to understand the challenges they face living in hazard-prone areas. Whilst resources, training and support are critical to improving the lives of remote communities, this was presented as a one-way approach that framed communities as on the receiving end and not collaborative actors. This view is in keeping with many of the concerns raised by scholars about current resilience building approaches in Nepal.

The framing of communities as not resilient without intervention is often linked to disconnection between indigenous/ grounded knowledge and coping strategies and support and scientised knowledge of DRR practices. This disconnection leads to communities being framed as not-viable collaborators in DRR reforms. This understanding of communities is exacerbated by a stalemate in policy implementation, particularly about the DRRM Act mandated LDRMC which was designed to bridge the gaps between communities and the newly formed local municipalities. The disconnection between communities and GON, DRR

experts in the IAC has led to informal on-ground knowledge, coping strategies and insight into the barriers that could lead to greater resilience being overlooked. This was shown in data from community-level interviews which depicted that there was low engagement with communities surrounding DRR needs and poor implementation of recent DRR policy initiatives. The lack of community engagement and understanding of their needs by the GoN and IAC has resulted in communities having elevated levels of distrust towards the GON initiative, with the little that has been implemented seen as self-serving and corrupt. This I argue is a critical gap in knowledge that affects resilience building in communities as the knowledge that is being ignored by the GoN/IAC is not just about current coping strategies but also relates to political corruptions and geophysical barriers that require novel and transformative mitigation interventions; not just the standard landslide mitigation which is currently implemented in Sunkuda. Whilst it could be argued that these challenges should be addressed through the DRRM Act, it's important to note that many of the DRR actors we spoke with from (I)NGO and the UN told us that Nepal has a history of poor policy implementation, this claim is backed-up by scholars (Vij ,2018, Jones et al., 2014,2016).

Further the emerging collaborative governance regime for DRR in Nepal lacks connection and fosters distrust between communities and DRR actors; this poses a real problem for the successful implementation of collaborative actions. This is a concern that threatens to continue as actors from the IAC and GoN are gaining no experience of working with communities in a genuinely collaborative way because they are bound by donor-driven definitions of resilience; this undermines the sustainability of collaborative efforts. As shown, the relationship between collaborative governance and resilience is complex. It is not a linear

process in which implementing greater collaboration will result in higher levels of community resilience. In countries like Nepal and across the global south, resilience is defined by donor-driven agenda making, it a siloed, and an expert-led concept. This history of technocratic prominence in resilience building has had a significant impact on which actors are deemed viable collaborators and who are seen as end users. The impact of resilience discourse on the emerging CGR in Nepal is noticeable and risks placing the responsibility for resilience building on the local and community levels but without valuing their knowledge and input. I argue that more attention needs to be given to the relationship between CG and the different definitions of resilience in Nepal. A good start is to change the question; instead of asking how can CG increase resilience, we should be asking how is current resilience practice and discourse shaping CG?

7. Chapter seven: Conclusion

7. Introduction

This thesis argued for a deeper engagement with the concept of collaborative governance (CG) to gain insight into how it has influenced the emerging institutional reforms in Nepal. In doing so this research contributes to the conceptual and empirical study of CG and its evolving position in the wider DRR policy agenda. This study used thematic analysis to explore the narratives and framing of collaboration and CG in interviews with DRR actors and communities, and historical policy documents. In doing so I challenged the axiomatic representation of CG as the best way to increase resilience and reduce risk to hazards in Far-Western Nepal. I explored how institutional reform in Nepal is promoting a specific type of externally directed collaborative governance regime (CGR), one that favours top-down interventions and state control over knowledge generation and distribution. I then highlighted how this type of CG can actually create barriers to sustainability and viability of a governance system, and question if, what we see emerging in Nepal, is a truly collaborative endeavour.

In Chapter 4, I utilised a range of literatures from disaster studies (vulnerability, risk, and resilience), CG, governance, and scalar politics to understand how and if the emerging CGR could impact communities' resilience and reduce risk to landslide hazards. I focused on the discourse and practices of collaboration, tracing its emergence in Nepal over the past four decades and the cultural and political aspects that could impact how it had been historically understood. Viewing the CGR as part of a larger historical project allowed for new interpretations on how it has formed and been implemented over time; it highlighted the roots of historical relationships between different DRR actors (their tensions and successes);

showcased historical preconceptions of roles and capacities of actors and their evolution over time; and questioned if this history of collaboration could give an insight into what the CG landscape in Nepal may look like in the future.

I then explored how collaboration is currently implemented in a project of national institutional reform around DRR in Chapter 5. CG is novel in Nepal with departments, mandated collaborative platforms, knowledge transfer, and action still in the initial stages. As shown in data presented in chapters 5 & 6 there are many examples of government offices, formal committees and knowledge exchange platforms still not functioning. However, I identified emerging CGR in Nepal whose aim is to relocate decision making authority to the municipal level making the 'local' the primary site of action for DRR. In doing so, new social networks and politics are evolving at this scale with new relationships forming and old power dynamics shifting or being reinforced. Rather than focussing on the structural aspects of CGR, this study focused on the narratives of CG, complicating, and unpacking the stories that promoted a move towards a specific type of collaboration. I explored the stories surrounding scale and the local to assess what they showed about the relationships between state and non-state actors and if historical relationships and patterns of collaboration (identified in chapter 4) were being replicated or reinvented. Narratives identified in chapter 5, are shaping the current emerging CGR. They do this by justifying a need for knowledge to be generated and held centrally whilst decentralising responsibility for DRR to the local level. I asked if this status quo approach to DRR could lead to the local and community scale knowledges being overlooked and limit participation in the emerging CGR?

At the local level, I explored how the concept of resilience has impacted the emerging CGR in Nepal. Specifically, I looked at the poorly defined and highly contested resilience practices in Nepal and asked how they shaped DRR actors in the IAC and GoN, perceptions of communities. I explored the connection between normative resilience approach in Nepal and how that has impacted the perception of communities as potential collaborative actors in DRR governance. This is imperative to understand as CG has been lauded as the best approach to increase resilience to hazards. Increased resilience is the goal of CG in DRR in Nepal, therefore how resilience is understood and implemented has a big impact on what collaborative methods are used to achieve it. I argued that understanding resilience practices in Nepal can give further insight into the type of CGR that will emerge in the future. Having insight into the likely trajectory of the emerging CGR allows for discussion on barriers and concerns that may arise in the future.

The following conclusion is a summary of my findings and contributions to this research area. I evaluate the approach I took for this study and suggest future considerations for policy makers in Nepal and CG governance research.

7.1. *Research findings*

My PhD project set out to answer three research questions. Firstly, I wanted to understand how the concept of collaboration has evolved in disaster-related policies and institutional reforms in Nepal over the past four decades. The thematic analysis I carried out in chapter 4 showed that, historically, the concept of collaboration has evolved nationally during this period in two distinct ways. First, policy documents and national/international grey literature

showed a steady increase in reference to the terms 'collaboration' and 'collective action for DRR'; for example, in the early 1980's disaster management was viewed as the purview of the Government and no one else, compared with the latest DRR policy document that suggested successful DRM depended on collaborative efforts (GoN, 1982; GoN, 2019). I showed in Chapter 4 how this has corresponded closely to change in intergovernmental DRR agendas, and how it led to the establishment of new Nepali Government departments and organisations, and national policy platforms & initiatives for DRR that, on paper at least, served as more clearly defined structures for greater collaboration among stakeholders in this policy area. However, I argued this is a particular *type* of collaboration that is largely confined to members of the international aid community (IAC, NGOs, UN), and that, paradoxically, it mostly excluded actors from the private sector such as business and religious organisations and, crucially, those individuals and social groups in marginal communities directly affected by disaster risk. However, there were indications in more recent documents of this changing, with communities becoming more frequently mentioned as critical partners in DRR in policy documents and growing calls for a more participatory approach.

The second trajectory of collaboration that has emerged is in the growth of informal collaborative networks consisting of NGO's, local state representatives, community leaders, and political parties. I showed in the chapter that these developed through necessity due to the gaps left by the Nepali state during the political-administrative upheavals of the ten-year civil war, and the turbulence of the immediate post-war period. I drew attention to research articles from this period that documented the rise in informal consensus decision making between local government officials, Maoist informal governments and community leaders.

These informal collaborations grew out of the pressing requirement to address the day-to-day governing needs of rural Maoist held communities cut off from the Nepali state. Whilst the conflict is over these informal relationships and networks did not disappear, and the need for informal support networks in rural areas remained. Drawing my analysis together, I argued that the tensions arising between these two distinct collaboration trajectories has had an impact on national DRR policies today, despite the passing of the constitution in 2015. These tensions were the focus of the second research question, which explored how historical institutional power dynamics were taking precedence over the new institutional reforms for DRR.

Specifically, the second research question I explored was how the discourse of CG shaped the implementation of recent institutional reforms in Nepal? Following on from Chapter 4, I addressed this question by focusing on the formal emerging CGR in Nepal in Chapter 5. I drew on semi structured interviews I conducted in 2019/2020 with Nepali national/provincial and municipal state officials, and members of the IAC to identify three dominant narratives that were being utilised to support the implementation of institutional reform that locates decision making at the local scale. These narratives were 1) actor capacities and tendencies in DRR; 2) knowledge production on DRR and its dissemination; and 3) formal and informal institutional DRR roles and responsibilities. In Chapter 5 I argued that whilst these narratives do focus on decentralising DRR action to the local scale (for example by placing emphasis on the importance of municipal action) it is done in a way that pools knowledge centrally, and leans towards a continuation of top-down intervention. This is shown in the quotations used in Chapter 5 from the semi structured interviews with actors from the GoN and IAC who

consistently framed the local as incapable of effective DRR due to poor capacity and knowledge generation and dissemination skills. The story that emerged was that the local municipal actors lack knowledge or understanding of the main principles of DRR (for e.g., understanding what the disaster cycle is and the benefits of preventative actions); or that the local scale actors lack the capacities to function in the new federal system e.g., how to write effective local DRR plans of actions.

 It is important to acknowledge that there is a certain level of validity to these claims i.e., that newly formed municipal governments and local scale actors will need to be trained as part of the day-to-day learning practices inherent in governance. However, when capacity building is essential for advancing DRR actions and increasing resilience then that capacity building should be based on the needs of the local scale and not come solely from the national level. Further I argued that this focus on what the local *lack* has resulted in solutions that validate and emphasize the importance of centrally held expert knowledge, which focused on top-down interventions to make the local aligned with nationally dictated aims. What emerged from this narrative drive were paradoxes and conflicting policy agendas. Firstly, one of the critical goals of the DRRM Act was to generate autonomy at the local scale through the process of decentralisation and greater collaboration with non-state actors. However, the narrative emphasis on the value of centrally held knowledge meant that the emerging CGR is highly formalised and controlled by the national level actors and expert knowledges, rendering it non-collaborative and threatening policy goals around autonomy building in the local municipalities.

Secondly a paradox emerged relating to the implementation of the DRRM Act, by focussing on the local municipalities' lack of expertise and capacity to implement nationally dictated aims, the locally grounded challenges to effective collaboration and policy implementation were being overlooked. A key example of this is the lack of recognition from national actors of the local political tensions that the municipal and provincial/district offices were encountering; namely this relates to divided authority surrounding DRR funds, and police and army deployment. Many national scale actors discussed at length the misgivings of the local municipalities, but did not recognise the failings in national policy which played an instrumental part in the lack of its implementation to date. I argued that grounded politics and tensions between local actors were not being addressed, which led to a bottleneck for DRR action and represented a major barrier to implementation in remote areas with highly vulnerable communities such as Sunkuda, where access to services was already extremely limited due to geographical location.

The third question that this research addressed was how did the concept of resilience impact the emerging CGR in Nepal? This research question focused on the relationship between the emerging CGR and its ability to enhance resilience to hazards for remote communities in Far-western Nepal; with a focus on my field site in Sunkuda. The critical point I argued in the chapter is that a new perspective on the relationship between CG and resilience is needed. Chapter 6 drew on current scholarship, policy documents and semi structured interviews with DRR actors from the IAC and GoN and communities in Sunkuda that focused on resilience to hazards. I highlighted the prominence of scholarship treating this relationship as *cause-and-effect* process i.e., that CG will increase resilience to hazards. That way of thinking

concerning the CG/resilience dynamic was part of the international DRR agenda and prevalent in Nepal. That understanding overlooked critical ways in which these two concepts were impacting and influencing each other. Instead, research on CG should aim to increase insight into how the concept of internationally defined resilience to hazards has shaped how CG as an effective approach to DRR governance was understood.

Drawing on scholarship I examined how resilience as a concept has been shaped by the IAC through investments in Nepal. The IAC has promoted a specific type of resilience, one that is shaped by the interest of the donor and not by the needs of the people. However, this donor driven resilience has had a huge impact in Nepal due to the large and powerful IAC, making it a dominant aim for the decision-making actors in the government. As such, this form of resilience impacted heavily on how Nepali DRR looks; how actors' roles and abilities were framed; what knowledges were recognised as valuable, and which were not; how resilience should be implemented; and what successful resilience building means. Resilience is the goal and thus shaped the approaches that were taken to achieve it. Critically this form of resilience did not ask what resilience means and to whom as it was led by the needs of the donor. This was problematic as IAC defined resilience building in Nepal has been linked to practices that were widely criticised by scholars for reducing the liability of the government and encouraging status quo power dynamics whilst providing little support for communities who were in need (Nightingale, 2015, 2018; Rusyzk, 2019).

My findings, in Chapter 6, aligned with scholarly critiques of resilience practise in Nepal. Using community level interviews from Sunkuda I showed two critical elements. The first,

that communities have developed their own coping mechanisms and networks of support to help them cope and survive in a hazard prone area. These have arisen from a historical lack of engagement by the GoN in this area (as discussed in Chapter 4). Secondly, that these community practices were currently being overlooked by DRR actors in the GoN and IAC. I argued that this was linked to the historic implementation and understanding of resilience practice in Nepal, that was shaped by the needs of the donor and perceived communities as being receivers of resilience. The historical framing of communities as the recipients and non-active participants in their resilience building has been transferred to the emerging CG regime, with community knowledge being overlooked by DRR decision makers. This was comparable with findings from Chapter 5 that suggested the local scale was incapable of meeting centrally defined DRR needs due to low capacity .

 However, a key difference was that for communities the solution to this perceived inability to contribute to DRR included an aspect of responsibility. In both cases the local municipality and communities were framed as needing intervention or training, which I do not disagree with; however, suggested training and interventions were one sided in their framing, and did not promote knowledge exchange. Further, communities, unlike the local municipalities, were framed as being uninterested or having different priorities than GoN/IAC led resilience building; as such were, to some extent liable, for their own lack of resilience. An example of this was shown in the quotations in Chapter 6 where interviewees from the IAC and GoN suggested that citizens were not interested in DRM and have different priorities, that unless they can see a hazard it does not concern them, and even that their actions (migration for work) could increase their vulnerabilities(NGO_05, GoN_02, GoN_01). Critically I argued

that this focus on communities as non-resilient actors distracted from the very real problems

they faced, relating to lack of access to services, corruption, and non-functioning government

bodies, that were needed to improve their resilience. I argued that the framing of community

as responsible for their own lack of resilience was indicative of trends of responsibilisation

that has been linked to international resilience practice in the Global South (Nightingale,

2015).

 A secondary point I made in Chapter 6 related to blind spots in knowledge concerning the

challenges to implementation of the DRRM Act that arose from the lack of engagement with

communities. I highlighted multiple examples taken from community level interviews that

stated a deep distrust towards government officials from community members. This was

important as many people I spoke with in Sunkuda informed me that there are practices of

corruption in Sunkuda; with community members stating that government officials favour

those in their own political parties, family members and locally powerful figures within the

communities. Whilst this is well known in Nepal (see Watson, 2018), in the context of CG

the distrust from communities and lack of engagement with community knowledge on

corruption was not conducive to progression towards an effective CG system; it is an issue

that needed to be addressed if CG is going to be effective and sustainable.

In combination, the findings from this study identified a move towards a CGR for DRR in

Nepal. Whilst this institutional reform was still in its infancy, with CG best characterised as

an aim for the future of DRR in Nepal, evidence from interviews with actors from the IAC

and GoN suggest the emerging CGR will be an externally directed system. This highly

formalised approach to CG was rooted in a historical understanding of what constituted an effective collaborative relationship and ideas about who should be involved in CG as highlighted in Chapter 4 these revolve around the national GoN working with selected NGOs. Whilst these assumptions were challenged through the new DRRM Act they were also being upheld by narratives explored in Chapter 5; this created a series of paradoxes and contradictions in the policy reform landscape in Nepal. Through the DRRM Act there was a move towards a decentralised and more collaborative approach to DRR, with the local municipalities now seen as the pivotal/key scale at which collaborative action should take place. However, this institutional reform was being mired by scalar narratives calling for knowledge to be held centrally; through top-down capacity building and interventions at the local scale. The result of these narratives was the reinforcement of the status quo whereby the national level government remains the prominent decision-making actor in DRR. Not only did this threaten to undermine the viability of the emerging CGR it also runs counter to the formal policy changes and the new constitution that seeks to decentralise decision making and calls for wider collaboration amongst actors from the IAC, private sector and communities in Nepali DRR.

The conflicted outcomes and paradoxes continued when looking at the community scale, in Chapter 6, where expert defined resilience practices places responsibility for failure on the communities. Taken in line with other findings this resulted in an emerging CGR that holds knowledge centrally at the national level but without the responsibility for action. Meanwhile action and implementation was expected from the decentralised local and community level, without their knowledges being valued. This was indicative of arguments surrounding

responsibilisation in Nepal. The concern was that critical indigenous and grounded knowledge of local customs and politics is essential for effective collaboration and decentralisation. Yet by operating in this way the national government and key DRR policy actors in the IAC continued to overlook salient information that could actually help to break down barriers at the local level between the new municipalities and the district and provincial level, and between the communities and GoN and IAC at all scales. This was the critical missing step for an effective CGR.

7.2. *Research contribution*

The primary contribution of this research came from examining the discourse of collaboration and its influence on how a CGR has evolved nationally and is currently implemented in Nepal. This was a novel approach in CG research, which tends to be mechanistic in focus, and does not challenge the axiom that greater collaboration will increase resilience. I achieved this by drawing from work that comes under the umbrella of discursive institutionalism (Schmidt, 2008,2017; Wahlstrom, 2018; Gonzalez, 2006) which explores the role of discourse in institutional change. Based on my analysis on the discursive evolution of CG, I showed that collaboration in Nepal did not emerge in a vacuum, but was subject to historical and institutional tensions and context. I argued that by exploring the discourse of CG and the stories embedded in them it can provide insight into CG concerning the contextual/historical factors that shape the concept; this approach I argued fills a gap in the scholarship surrounding collaboration for DRR, some of which assumes that generalisability is still a goal (Ansell, 2008) . Further my approach in chapter 5 expanded on the value in researching the stories of CG through an exploration of narratives that currently

promote and uphold it; by doing so, I argued we can gain insight into how CG will evolve in the future.

This thesis also contributed to research on collaboration in DRR by exploring CG in DRR across the disaster cycle (Warganegara,2020; Uhr,2017; Xing, 2020). Whilst collaboration has long been connected to DRR and disaster risk management (DRM) practices, research in this area normatively focussed on post disaster recovery and not across the wider DRR cycle. This is understandable as large-scale disasters require collaboration across multiple sectors and at multiple scales to distribute aid and rescue victims. However, by keeping the focus in the post disaster events this runs counter to what CG is; long term sustainable collaboration (Nabatchi and Emerson,2015).I argued that Nabatchi et al. framework on CG is a useful tool in understanding Nepal's attempt at a CGR as it aligns with Nepal's longer-term goal for sustainable governance of DRR that has collaboration at its centre. By approaching CG in the above way, I contributed to wider calls for the concept of CG to be challenged (Norhdsets et al., 2022).

In addition to the conceptual contribution, this thesis explored an empirical data set that investigated the recent transitions in Nepal national policy landscape; notably the initial implementation stages of the new DRRM Act, passed in 2017. The DRRM Act replaced the 30-year Natural Calamities Relief Act, and brought Nepali DRR policy in line with international approaches to DRR, as seen in the UN Sendai framework (Vij, et al., 2021). The data set captures keys actors' understanding and perspectives on ongoing institutional changes and the challenges and success of these reforms which contributed to a growing body

of literature documenting this transition (OPM, 2021; Vij, 2021). Studying an emerging regime offered a unique contribution to understanding the differing definitions of collaborative governance and how these differences could be used in best practice and as lessons learned.

However, unlike many of the studies that have focussed on the recent institutional changes in Nepali DRR this thesis went further by incorporating an analysis of how these changes have impacted remote communities. Chapter six is dedicated to presenting the challenges and concerns of communities living in Sunkuda; a remote area that suffers active landslides and monsoonal flooding. In doing so I presented insight into the progress of implementation that was happening in remote regions in relation to DRR reforms. This information was not readily available as it is difficult to get due to location, time, and cost, with most policy documents and national level government actors not forthcoming with this information. Although it is important to note that NGO's and UN members did speak to these concerns freely and are able to critique the government.

Finally, a key contribution I made is questioning the relationship between resilience and CG in chapter 6. Resilience remains a highly contested topic within environmental social sciences, particularly in relation to discussions surrounding the complex relationship between governing organisation and communities in Nepal (Nightingale, 2019; Ruszyk, 2019; Watson, 2018). My engagement with informal acts of resilience such as labour exchange and knowledge dissemination that have emerged in communities in Sunkuda contributed to the debates surrounding resilience and who decides what it means. This thesis captures this

debate and added to the wider discussions particularly in relation to how indigenous knowledge is valued or not in normative resilience practice by the IAC and GoN.

7.3. *Reflecting on my research approach*

This research has shown me the value of turning to discourse during uncertainty to understand complex and contested concepts. CG is the latest environmental buzz word in an ever-increasing complex governance landscape. Much like other buzz words such as resilience and pro-poverty development the uncertainty behind it has led to its misuse to the detriment of vulnerable communities. The qualitative methods used in this research included semi structured interviews, quantitative household surveys, group interviews, photography, and field notes. I worked at multiple scales with a focus on the national scale and community scales to capture a snapshot from areas across the governance network. I sought interviews with a range of DRR actors from government officials, NGOs, the UN, academia, and community members. I was able to gain rich insight from NGOs and the government on the international and national policy landscape and how it is transforming in line with new policies. From communities I acquired an understanding of local scale support networks and political stalemates and inaction between the newly formed municipalities, communities, and the district and provincial departments.

This project has taught me the importance of remaining flexible in research to better capture a rapidly changing environment. If I could start afresh, I would have allocated more of my budget to increase my time in the community sites, splitting my visits to Sunkuda over two trips and conducting one of those in the first visit to Nepal in 2019. This would have avoided

having all my data collection at the community sites focussed in one trip. Although the Covid-19 pandemic was the ultimate cause for a drastically impacted data set, which could not be foreseen, I was conducting research in country that is a high risk for large seismic events, landslides, and monsoonal flooding. Yet I had only accounted for this with a margin of error of a few months (I had planned a 4-month window to conduct 1 months' worth of research); if a seismic event the size of the 2015 earthquake had happened during this window, I would not have been able to get to the data. Further by splitting my field site visits I would have had the opportunity to test out the network surveys and been able to adjust my approach to be able to get a richer data set instead of a limited one not suitable for its intended purpose. Spending more time in Sunkuda would have also allowed me to employ different methods such as ethnographic approaches which would have given a richer picture of the challenges faced by communities. This is critical as policy and decision makers in Nepal are currently overlooking communities who have limited platforms to voice the challenges and needs of the day -to-day living in hazard prone areas.

From these experiences I have questioned more the practicality and ethics of Western researchers conducting work in the Global South. Whilst large international research projects who can employ researchers from within the focus country can produce great work (Landslide-Evo being an example of this) there is an incongruity to working in remote communities in the Global South. As an international researcher you spend thousands of pounds to collect data on some of the poorest communities in the world. This is a tension that I'm questioning and wondering how I can navigate this uncomfortable truth in the future. This unease was compounded by the pandemic, whereby international research was unable to

continue and projects across the globe had to be drastically rewritten; whereas if more research was conducted in collaboration with researchers from the country of focus, then travel restrictions and unforeseen obstacles could mitigate that uncertainty in the future.

7.4. *Research Limitations*

The limitation around this research mainly came from the limited sample size, that was significantly reduced due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Having a smaller sample size meant that there was a potential for bias in my sample set, which arises from low saturation and risks over emphasis of certain opinions whilst not capturing other opinions from sectors. The result of this potentiality was that I have tried to hedge my language throughout the thesis, and make claims that can be substantiated in the data. Whilst I have been careful in how I state my conclusions from the data, I do have a level of confidence that my data provides an accurate snapshot of prevailing opinions from the IAC and GoN. This is due to the level of experience my interviewees had, and the density of National DRR network in Nepal at the time of data collection (2019/2020); many research participants had held multiple position within the government and in international NGO's and the UN. As such their opinions and framing of the challenges and issues were representatives of expert policy makers in Nepal.

Other limitations came from the timing of the study. This data set and thesis speaks to a specific moment of transition and reform to the formal institutions of DRR in Nepal; at a time when the MOHA was transitioning DRR decision making to a new institution, the DRRM Authority. Whilst there is value in capturing this moment it does mean that this research must be taken in such context. This project is reflective of the historical position and norms of DRR that were prevalent in the run up to large scale changes. The novel approach to DRR that the DRRM Act has promised to deliver is not fully captured in this study. As such, I

have had to tread a line between concerns I have seen in the data set and problems that exist just because the formal policy hasn't had time to be fully implemented. This is further complicated by the multiple assertions by policy actors surrounding Nepal's poor history of policy implementation. I believe this data set has value as a base line for the changes and reforms that were starting to take place in Nepal, but without the addition of further data collected at a later date in time, its value is yet to be fully realised.

7.5. *Policy and practice recommendations*
<u>Policy recommendation 1</u>

Nepal's DRR policy and institutional landscape has undergone large scale transformations in the past 8 years, starting with the 2015 constitution and then followed by the local elections in 2017, the local self-governance act in 2017, and the DRRM Act in 2018. While these documents represent a road map for a decentralised Nepal, where local municipalities and communities have the legal tools to be in control of their own future in relation to risk reduction and resilience there is a noticeable lack of implementation; As one of our interview participants noted:

> "*Nepal is a good country to develop policy, they are very good on making policy however they are very weak on implementation*" (NGO_03)

This lack of implementation was seen at all scales of government, with stalemates observed at the national level between transfer of power from the MOHA to the newly formed DRRM authority; at the provincial and local levels there were stalemates in action due to confusion around the local politics and power dynamics; and between local municipalities and communities. This lack of implementation is demonstrated in the non-use of DRRM funds, low attendance to DDRMC and the non-functioning LDRMC as shown in chapters 5 and 6.

This is a critical situation to address as currently the political stalemate is leaving vulnerable remote communities exposed to hazard with little or no mitigation of adaptive measures open to them.

To address this situation more targeted interventions are needed on the blockages between the local and provincial scale (including the district). Training is needed to address confusion surrounding who has authority at different magnitudes of disaster (OPM, 2021). Further, there needs to be a consultation on the urgent matter of whose remit the police and army (crucial actors in response and recovery) are under; this should not be the district. Rather the local municipalities should have purview over these bodies in their area to reduce the power struggles that were described in Chapter 5. This would have the added benefit of helping to build capacity and knowledge exchange at the municipal level as currently the army and police are the main the bodies that provide DRR training. With these challenges removed relationships between newly formed governing bodies and remnants of previous institutional structures should be able to work together effectively.

Policy recommendation 2

A focus on the local political and community relations is also pertinent to ensuring that communities are given the opportunity to participate in the decision making and are genuinely part of the collaborative approach to DRR; this means more than just consultations and participatory workshops that do not go further. As shown in data in Chapter 6, the LDRMC were not functioning at the time of data collection despite claims from the CDO that they were. Active and prolonged engagement with community members needs to become the

norm in Nepal's new institutional landscape. A system of regular checks and balances needs to be put in place to ensure that these committees are running and getting the support they need from the local government. This could be outsourced to the remit of the Red Cross who currently have a better working relationship with communities than the local municipal bodies. If better engagement with communities can be formed it would have two benefits; firstly, it could help repair the low level of trust communities have in the municipal and provincial government (shown in Chapter 6); Secondly, it will encourage participation in the LDRMC and knowledge transfer of community needs around DRR.

Policy Recommendation 3

The third policy recommendation speaks to the prevalence of calls from the IAC and GoN for top down, expert training for communities and the local municipalities. As stated multiple times throughout this thesis, comprehensive DRM training that comes from scientists and policy experts is a critical aspect of reducing risk to hazards in Nepal. The concern that I have raised in this thesis is that this is spoken of as a one-way process, not a co-generation of knowledge to address needs that are identified by the local municipalities and communities themselves. Whilst this is a daunting task, considering the size and variability of needs, more attention is required to ensure that the local level can direct and receive the training that they need. Currently, there is a database (mentioned in chapter 5) that records hazard related data from the local municipalities, this could be adapted to help guide training from the national level to where it is needed most and help match local and community needs with expert knowledge.

7.6. *Further research recommendations*

Conceptually, it is critical that CG continues to be interrogated and not remain an axiom of

risk reduction and resilience. As shown from the case study in Nepal, the framing and

narratives of collaboration have been used as a tool to promote a swathe of policy reforms

and institutional changes. Yet as shown in chapters 4 and 5, what collaboration means to key

decision-making actors in the GoN and IAC in Nepal varies with certain types of

collaborative relationship favoured over others. Based on historical relationships actors who

were deemed worthy of being a collaborative partner with the government (NGOs and the

UN) are given preference over other actors, such as communities and private sector. This

risks replicating and reinforcing previous power dynamics to the detriment of vulnerable and

marginalised communities (Morrison et al, 2017; Nightingale, 2015). Further this threatens to

undermine the emerging CG regime as the benefits of CG (increased adaptive capacity,

transformative changes, and increased autonomy) were lost in a regime plagued by historical

relationships.

Chapter 5 highlighted the dynamic relationships between narratives and scalar politics

(Gonzalez, 2008). Narratives and the stories told about the roles of scales and actors in

governance systems are not neutral and can have a real impact on institutional reforms

(Gonzalez ,2008, Schmidt, 2015). There is a need to understand these narratives and be aware

of who is promoting them; how it may benefit their positions; how different actors are framed

and to what effect; and what solutions these narratives promote. Within the institutional

landscape there needs to be more reflection around the stories that are told, particularly when

these stories are concerning specific vulnerable groups or minorities. Based on the

conclusions from chapter 5 I argue, if CG remains the aim of the decentralising policies and

international change then the solutions to challenges in implementation should be aligned with collaborative ideals. However, in order for this to happen future research needs to explore further how context shapes collaborative ideals of a country and ways of understanding this process. As a result of how the narrative of CG was being used in Nepal (to promote a specific type of collaborative relationship between actors) I showed how the axiom of CG for increased resilience requires a more rigorous engagement.

Upon further interrogation of CG, it became apparent that the emerging CGR in Nepal could be classified as an externally directed CGR which are defined as highly controlled by the state with collaborators working towards a formal shared goal dictated by the government; Nepal's approach has taken its lead from international DRR documents from the UN. This form of CGR is known to be unsustainable in the long term due to poor buy in from communities and other non-state actors (Nabatchi and Emerson, 2015). Effective governance of risk and resilience needs to include a variety of actors and institutions in a meaningful way (Carabine et al., 2016). As such more consideration needs to be given to the type of CGR that would benefit Nepal's wider governance goals and not just to assume that CG is a one size fits all approach to addressing complex problems; this is salient particularly considering there is yet to be a consensus on an operationalised framework for CG.

Increasing resilience requires addressing vulnerability across the full disaster cycle not just in post disaster response and recovery. The stories that shape how governance views resilience and the role of CG in achieving it are vital to address the relationship between these two concepts. Reflecting on various interpretations of CG and how they mobilise and exclude

actors, temporalities and scales can allow for a deeper understanding of how collaboration can work to address wicked environmental governance problems in hazard prone countries. This understanding, I argue, is critical for embracing complexity of addressing the challenge in an equitable and just way that incorporates the needs and knowledges of all actors involved. This remains a challenge for the research community with no one body of work fully challenging the discourse of collaboration and the voices and interpretations it embodies and what that means for future institutional change. This thesis hopes to be a step in the direction of beginning to address that gap.

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9. Appendices

9.1. *Appendix 1: Semi structured interview track*
<u>Semi structured interview (National level DRR actor)</u>

<u>Name:</u>   <u>Date/Time:</u>

<u>Organisation:</u>   <u>Location:</u>

<u>Name of interviewer:</u>   <u>audio code:</u>

<u>People present:</u>

Has the information about the interview been given and consent taken for interview? Yes ☐
No☐

Interviewer observations:

Section 1- Organisational history and DRR

1. Can you talk about your previous roles of working in DRR, what your current position is, and what this entails on a typical day in your job?
2. How do you define DRR?
3. Where is your primary focus in the disaster cycle?
4. What are the main challenges that face DRR in Nepal?
5. Does this differ between scales regional, national, provincial and community levels? how?
6. How important is DRR in Nepal? Why?
7. Do you think DRR relates to other challenges like climate change, poverty, development?
8. How Is this reflected in your work?
9. To what extent is your work shaped by national and international policy and actors, can you give an example?

Section 2: Collaboration

1. What does collaborative action on DRR look like to you?
2. Can you give an example from your work?
3. What role do (the following actors) have in the current governance landscape?

    a. NGO's
    b. Communities
    c. Business
    d. Government

4. Is collaboration happening in Nepal?
5. what are the challenges?
6. Who is the main driving force for policy and action in Nepal?
7. Whose responsibility is DRR?
8. How important is collaboration to successful DRR action?

Section 3- Perspectives on institutional change

1. What are the key changes you have noticed in your work since the federalisation of Nepal?
    a. What are the challenges and achievement of this process to date?
2. The new DRM act has recently been passed:
    a. So far how has this document influenced the work you do here?
3. There have been trends in decentralisation in governance of environmental concerns, do you think that the role of the state is changing?
    a. Is this positive or negative in your opinion? Why?
4. Are you hopeful for future improvements under the current system?
    a. Why?

Section 3- network questions

1. Do you work with other organisations/ departments on DRR/climate change?
    a. Can you provide details of these organisations?

	Name of organisation	Type of organisation *	How long have you been involved with them?	Affiliation*	List of work undertaken	Contact details
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						

9.2. *Appendix 2: PhD information sheet.*

Project: Actionable Knowledge for disaster risk reduction: Collaborative Governance to increase community resilience in Western Nepal

The University of Birmingham in collaboration with the SHEAR consortium and Practical Action is conducting a study on the collaborative governance of disaster risk reduction (DRR) in the Bajhang district of Nepal.

A high number of DRR projects/policies have been implemented across Nepal over the past few decades. But the decision-making process of different agencies differs in implementation and design and suffers from a lack of coordination. Our aim is to conduct a network study of DRR projects/policies that have been/are being implemented by agencies of all sectors (government, international donors, local NGOs, and civil society organisations).

The objective is to identify the formal and informal networks of actors involved in DRR practices in locations that are highly vulnerable to extreme events such as landslides and flooding. The meta-goals are to highlight key actors, as well as the vulnerable/marginalised within the network. This information will be used to create a framework that can increase the efficacy and equality of the growing number of DRR policies and projects; thereby improving implementation, access to resources and to improve resilience within the communities that are affected.

Project duration: four years (Jan 2018 – Nov 2022)

Sponsor: This research is funded by the NERC/Dfid Science for Humanitarian Emergencies and Resilience (SHEAR) grant.

Core researcher:

Ms Caroline Russell (University of Birmingham, UK)

Contact persons:

UK

Dr Julian Clark (University of Birmingham, UK)

NEPAL

Practical Action

जानकारी पत्र

परियोजनाको शिर्षक: विपद जोखिम न्यूनीकरणको लागि कार्यात्मक ज्ञान: पश्चिम नेपालमा सामुदायिक रेजिलियन्स बढाउनको लागि सहकार्यात्मक शासन।

बर्मिंघम विश्वविद्यालयले SHEAR संघ र प्राक्टिकल एक्सन (Practical Action) को सहकार्यमा विपद जोखिम नियुनिकरण को सहकार्यत्मक साशन मा नेपालको बझाङ र बाजुरा जिल्लामा अध्ययन गर्देछ।

नेपालमा विगत केहि दशकदेखि धेरै संख्यामा विपद जोखिम न्यूनीकरण सम्बन्धित नीति/योजनाहरु कार्यान्वयन भैरहेका छन्। तर योजना निर्माण र कार्यान्वयनमा विभिन्न निकायहरुको निर्णय गर्ने प्रक्रियाहरु फरक छन् र उनीहरु विचमा सहकार्य एकदमै फितलो छ। हाम्रो उद्देश्य भनेको विभिन्न क्षेत्रका निकाय (सरकार,अन्तरराष्ट्रिय दाता, स्थानीय गैर-सरकारी संस्था, र नागरिक समाज संगठन) हरुले कार्यान्वन गरेका/गरिरहेका योजना/नीतिहरुको अन्तरसम्बन्धको अध्ययन गर्नु हो।

यो अध्यनको उद्देश्य, विभिन्न निकाय/कर्ताहरु जो उच्च जोखिमका घटनाहरु जस्तै पहिरो र बाढी जस्ता विपद जोखिम न्यूनीकरण कार्यमा संलग्न छन् उनीहरु विचको औपचारिक र अनौपचारिक संजालहरुको पहिचान गर्नु हो। अन्य उद्देश्यहरु भनेको त्यस्ता संजालभित्रका मुख्य कर्ताहरुका साथ साथै जोखिमयुक्त/सिमान्तकृतहरुलाई जोड दिनु पनि हो। यो सुचानाहरु एउटा ढांचा (फ्रेमवोर्क) निर्माण गर्नको लागि प्रयोग गरिने छ जसले बढ्दो विपद जोखिम न्यूनीकरण नीति र योजनाहरुको प्रभावकारिता र समानतालाई बृद्धि गर्दछ। त्यसद्वारा प्रभावित समुदायमा योजना/तिनीहरुको कार्यान्वयन, स्रोतहरुमाथिको पहुँच र रेजिलियन्सलाई सुधार गर्दछ।

परियोजना समयावधि: तीन वर्ष (सन् २०१८ जनवरी - सन् २०१९ जनवरी)

प्रायोजक: यो अध्यनलाई NERC/DIFID Science for Humanitarian Emergencies and Resilience (SHEAR) grant ले आर्थिक सहयोग गरेको छ।

मुख्य शोधकर्ता:

क्यारोलिन रसेल (बर्मिंघम विश्वविद्यालय यू.के.)

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सम्पर्क व्यक्ति:

डा. जुलियन क्लार्क (बर्मिंघम विश्वविद्यालय यू.के)

नेपाल

प्राक्टिकल एक्सन

+ ९७७ १-४४२३६३९

9.3. *Appendix 3: Information and consent form: semi structured interviews*

Project title: Actionable Knowledge for disaster risk reduction: Collaborative Governance to increase community resilience in western Nepal**.**

Name of researcher: Caroline Russell

Name of interviewer:

This research is focussed on the Disaster Risk Reduction and management of landslides and related hazards in the Bajhang district of Western Nepal.

My aim is to understand the context and dynamics of people and organisations (State and NGO) that are involved in DRR and how they interact with each other. To do this, I would like to ask you about the relationships and connections you have with other local government departments and NGO's. These questions will focus on the effects of the landslides on the area, and the changing role of DRR action in this area.

I hope to understand and explore your organisation's role and views on knowledge generation, project development and implementation, and how these translates to the needs of the communities, and local DRR policies.

With your permission I will record this interview and a transcript will be produced. I will send a copy of this transcript for you to verify. I will also be taking observational notes which will be included in my field diary and potential future publications. No information will be produced within the project that will allow you/your organisation to be identified by anyone other than myself and Practical Action. You/your organisation will be assigned an identifying marker within the project that will be used instead of your name. The only other information regarding you/your organisation will be categorising details, such as role and institution type e.g. (I) NGO, Civil Society, and State dept.

Participation in the project is voluntary. If, at any time, during this interview or afterwards you/your organisation changes their mind about participation for any reason, then you are free to withdraw consent. In this instance, all information regarding you/ the organisation and your participation will safely be destroyed.

The Information that you provide today Is Intended for use in academic publications from January 2020. If you/your organisation change their mind about being part of this project after 2020 there is a chance that any published work will not be able to be amended- any information not already published can still be removed and destroyed after this point.

All information gathered will be held securely for 10 years following the study, following the University of Birmingham's regulations. Anonymised data may be used in further studies, subject to ethical approval, however any data that can be traced to you will not be shared without first obtaining your permission to do so.

If you have further questions, please ask the researcher conducting this survey or contact Caroline Russell on ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ or Dr Julian Clark at ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓. If you are happy to participate, please fill in and sign this consent form. This will be kept in the strictest confidence so that your details remain secure.

Your participation is very useful and greatly appreciated.

Consent
Please initial the boxes (to the right) to confirm you have read and agree to the following statements:

☐

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the statement for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time up to 01/01/2020, without giving any reason. I understand that after this date I am still able to withdraw from the study however any information already published may not be able to be removed. ☐

3. I consent to this interview being audio-taped. ☐

4. I am aware that transcripts will be made from the audio-tape recording. ☐

5. I understand that my name or any information that may allow me to be identified will not be included anywhere within the project or further academic publications. Instead, a pseudonym will be used to identify me.

6. I am aware that the information provided will be stored securely for 10 years following the study so that it may be shared with other researchers. I am also aware however that no information will be shared without my express permission. ☐

7. I consent for this information to be used in future studies. ☐

I agree / do not agree (delete as applicable) to take part in the above study.

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   **Date**   **Signature**

_____   _____   _____
Name of Person giving consent (if different)   **Date**   **Signature**

_____   _____   _____
Researcher   **Date**   **Signature**

सूचना र सहमति फारमः अर्ध-संरचित अन्तरवार्ताहरु (अनौपचारिक नेटवर्क/ संजाल)

परियोजनाको शिर्षक: विपद जोखिम न्यूनीकरणको लागि कार्यात्मक ज्ञान: पश्चिम नेपालमा सामुदायिक लाचिलता बढाउनको लागि सहकार्यात्मक शासन।

शोधकर्ताको नाम: क्यारोलिन रसेल

अन्तरवार्ता लिने व्यक्तिको नामः

यो अध्ययन पश्चिम नेपालको बाजुरा र बझाङ जिल्लामा पहिरो र सम्बन्धित जोखिमहरुको विपद जोखिम न्यूनीकरण र व्यस्थापनमा केन्द्रित छ।

यस अध्यनमा मेरो उद्देश्य विपद जोखिम न्यूनीकरणमा संलग्न भएका मानिस र संस्थाहरु (राज्य र गैर सरकारी संस्था) को सन्दर्भ र गतिशिलता, र उनीहरु एक-अर्को बिचमा कसरी अन्तरक्रिया गर्छन भनेर बुझ्नु हो। त्यसैले म तपाईको समुदायमा रहेको अन्य व्यक्ति स्थानीय सरकार र गैर सरकारी संस्थाबीचको सम्बन्धहरुको बारेमा प्रश्न सोध्न चाहन्छु। ती प्रश्नहरु तपाईको जीविकोपार्जन, आर्थिक स्थिति (आय-आर्जन र ऋण), तपाइको घर परिवारमा पहिरोले गर्दा परेको असर, र यस क्षेत्रमा विपद जोखिम न्यूनीकरणका मुद्दाहरुलाई सम्बोधन गर्न तपाई वा यस समुदाय संलग्न हुनु भएको कार्यमा केन्द्रित रहने छ।

म स्थानीय विपद जोखिम न्यूनीकरणमा परियोजनाको विकास, कार्यन्वयन र ज्ञान उत्पादनमा तपाईको बिचार र भूमिका र आवश्यकता आकंलनको बारेमा बुझ्ने र अन्वेषण गर्ने आशा गर्दछु।

म तपाइको अनुमतिमा यो अन्तरवार्ता रेकर्ड गर्नेछु र यसैको आधारमा ट्रांस्क्रिप्ट/प्रतिलिपि तयार पारिने छ। पछि त्यो प्रतिलिपि सहि-गलत के छ भनेर जाँच गर्नको लागि म तपाईलाई पठाउछु। साथै म अवलोकन नोटहरु पनि लिनेछु जुन मेरो फिल्ड डायरीमा हुनेछन् र भविष्यमा सम्भावित प्रकाशनहरुमा समावेश गरिने छ। यो परियोजना अवधिभर म र प्राक्टिकल एक्शन (Practical Action) बाहेक अरु कसैद्वारा तपाईको बारेमा पहिचान हुने खालका सूचनाहरु उत्पादन गरिने छैन। तपाईको नामको ठाउमा तपाईलाई पहिचान गर्ने चिन्ह(identifying marker) प्रयोग गरिने छ। तपाईसंग सम्बन्धित केहि सूचनाहरु जस्तै: उमेर समुह सामाजिक लिंग मात्रै बिस्तृत रुपमा वर्गीकरण गरिने छ।

यस परियोजनामा तपाइको सहभागिता स्वैच्छिक हुनेछ। यदि तपाई यस परियोजनामा भाग लिन चाहनु हुन्न भने त्यो तपाइको इच्छा हो र त्यसको कुनै नराम्रो परिणाम हुने छैन। अन्तरवार्ताको अवधिमा र पछि कुनै कारणले तपाईले यस परियोजना सहभागी नहुने विचार गर्नु भयो भने तपाईले कुनै पनि बेला सहमति फिर्ता लिन सक्नु हुन्छ। यस्तो अवस्थामा, तपाई र तपाईको सहभागिता सम्बन्धि सबै सुचनाहरु सुरक्षित तरिकाले नस्ट गरिने छ। तपाईले आज दिनु भएको सूचनाहरु सन् २०२० को जनवरी महिनाबाट प्राज्ञिक प्रकाशनहरुको लागि प्रयोग गरिने छ। यदि तपाई र तपाईको संगठनले सन् २०२० पछि यो परियोजनामा सहभागी नहुने विचार गर्नु भयो भने कुनै पनि प्रकाशित लेखहरु परिमार्जन गर्न सकिने छैन तर सुचनाहरु जुन प्रकाशित भएका छैनन् त्यसलाई भने हटाउन र नस्ट गर्न सकिन्छ।

संकलन गरिएका सबै सूचनाहरु बर्मिंघम विश्वविद्यालयको (University of Birmingham) नियम अनुसार अध्यन गरेको १० बर्षपछि सम्म सुरक्षित रुपले संग्रहित गरिने छ। यसले गर्दा, यो सूचना समान क्षेत्रका अन्य सोधकर्ताहरुसंग पनि प्रवाह गर्न सकिने छ। पहिचान नखुलाइएको तथ्यांक/सूचनाहरु (Anonymised data) आगामी अध्यनको लागि पनि प्रयोग हुन सक्छन। यद्पी, नैतिक अनुमोदनको हिसाबले यदि कुनै पनि सूचना/तथ्यांक तपाईको पहिचानसंग जोडिने किसिमको भए तपाईको अनुमति लिएर मात्रै त्यस्तो सूचना प्रवाह गरिने छ।

यदि तपाईसंग अन्य कुनै प्रश्न भए, कृपाय यो सर्वेक्षण गरिरहनु भएको सोधकर्तालाई सोध्नुहोस् अथवा क्यरोलिन रसेललाई + ९७७९८०४६५९६५७/ इमेल: ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ मा सम्पर्क गर्न सक्नुहुनेछ। अथवा डा. जुलियन क्लार्कलाई ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ इमेल मार्फत सम्पर्क गर्नु सक्नुहुनेछ। यदि तपाई यस अध्यनमा सहभागी हुन चाहनु हुन्छ भने यहाँ तल सहमति फारम छ। यो निकैनै गोपनियताका साथ राखिने छ त्यसैले तपाईको विवरणहरु सुरक्षित रहने छन्।

तपाइको सहभागिता धेरै उपयोगी छन् र यसको लागि धेरै आभारी छु।

सहमति

तल दिएका बुँदाहरु मैले पढेको छु र यसमा मेरो सहमति छ भनेर कृपया दाँयातिर रहेको बक्समा चिन्ह लगाउनुहोस्:

१. मैले माथि उल्लेख गरेको अध्ययनको बारेमा सबै विवरण पढेको छु र बुझेको छु।यदि मैले नबुझेको अवास्थामा मलाई प्रश्रहरु सोध्ने अवसर पनि थियो। ☐

२. यस अध्यनमा मेरो सहभागिता नितान्त स्वेक्षिक रहनेछ र सन् २०२० को जनवरी १ सम्ममा कुनै पनि बेला विना कारण यो अध्यानबाट म स्वतन्त्ररुपले बाहिरिन सक्छु। यो मिति भन्दा पछि पनि म अध्यनबाट बाहिरिन सक्छु तर जति पनि सूचनाहरु पहिलेनै प्रकाशित भएका छन् भने त्यसलाई हटाउन सकिने छैन भनेर पनि मैले बुझेको छु। ☐

३. म यो अन्तरवार्ता रेकर्ड गर्नको लागि सहमति दिन्छु। ☐

४. यो अडियो रेकर्डबाट नै ट्रान्सक्रिप्ट/प्रतिलितिप बनाइने छ भन्ने कुरामा म सचेत छु। ☐

५. मेरो नाम अथवा मेरो पहिचान खुल्ने कुनै पनि जानकारी यो अध्यन परियोजनामा र अन्य प्राज्ञिक प्रकाशनहरुमा समावेश गरिने छैन भन्ने बुझेको छु।तर मेरो पहिचान खुल्ने काल्पनिक नाम प्रयोग हुनेछ। ☐

६. मैले दिएको सुचनाहरु १० वर्ष सम्म सुरक्षित तरिकाले संग्रहित गरिने छ र यो अन्य अनुशन्धानकर्ताहरुसंग पनि प्रवाह गरिने छ भन्ने कुरामा म सचेत छु। कुनै पनि सूचनाहरु मेरो बिशेष अनुमतिविना प्रवाह गरिने छैन भन्ने कुरामा पनि म सचेत छु। ☐

७. म यो सूचना भविष्यमा गरिने अध्यनमा प्रयोग गर्नको लागि सहमति दिन्छु। ☐

यो अध्यनमा सहभागी हुन म सहमत छु/म सहमत छैन।

_____   _____   _____
सहभागीको नाम   मिति   हस्ताक्षर

_____   _____   _____
सहमति दिने व्यक्तिको नाम (यदि फरक भएमा) मिति   हस्ताक्षर
_____   _____   _____
शोधकर्ता   मिति   हस्ताक्षर

9.4. *Appendix 4: Information and consent form: Network Survey*
Project title: Actionable Knowledge for disaster risk reduction: Collaborative Governance to increase community resilience in Western Nepal.
Name of researcher: Caroline Russell
Name of interviewer:

This research is focussed on the Disaster Risk Reduction and management of landslides and related hazards in the Bajhang districts of Western Nepal.

My aim is to map the networks of people and organisations (State and NGO) that are involved in DRR and how they interact with each other.

I hope to understand and explore how different people and organisations in this network are positioned to generate and collaborate on knowledge generation, project development and implementation, and needs assessment. To do this, I would like to ask you about the relationships and connections you have with other people in your community, local government and NGO's. These questions will focus on your livelihood, economic status (income and loans), the effect of the landslides on your household, and any actions you or the community are involved in to address disaster risk reduction in this area.

With your permission I will record this survey and a transcript will be produced. No information will be produced within the project that will allow you to be identified by anyone other than myself and Practical Action. You will be assigned an identifying marker within the project that will be used instead of your name. The only other information regarding you will be categorising details, such as age bracket and gender.

Your participation in the project is voluntary. If you do not wish to be a part of this project that is your choice and there will be no consequences. If, at any time, during this interview or afterwards you change your mind about participation for any reason, then you are free to withdraw consent. In this instance, all information regarding you and your participation will safely be destroyed.

The information that you provide today is intended for use in academic publications from January 2020. If you change your mind about being part of this project after 2020 there is a chance that any published work will not be able to be amended- any information not already published can still be removed and destroyed after this point.

All information gathered will be held securely for 10 years following the study, following the University of Birmingham's regulations. This is to allow for information to be shared with other researchers in similar areas. Anonymised data may be used in further studies, subject to ethical approval however any data that can be traced to you will not be shared without first obtaining your permission to do so.

If you have further questions, please ask the researcher conducting this survey or contact Caroline Russell on + or Dr Julian Clark at
. If you are happy to participate, then there is a consent form below. This will always be kept in the strictest confidence so that your details remain secure.

Your participation is very useful and greatly appreciated.

Consent

Please initial the boxes (to the right) to confirm you have read and agree to the following statements:

1.   I confirm that I have read and understand the statement for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2.   I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time up to 01/01/2020, without giving any reason. I understand that after this date I am still able to withdraw from the study however any information already published may not be able to be removed.

3.   I consent to this interview being audio-taped.

4.   I am aware that transcripts will be made from the audio-tape recording.

5.   I understand that my name or any information that may allow me to be identified will not be included anywhere within the project or further academic publications. Instead a pseudonym will be used to identify me.

6.   I am aware that the information provided will be stored securely for 10 years following the study so that it may be shared with other researchers. I am also aware however that no information will be shared without my express permission.

8.   I consent for this information to be used in future studies.

I agree / do not agree (delete as applicable) to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant	**Date**	**Signature**

Name of Person giving consent (if different)	**Date**	**Signature**

Researcher	**Date**	**Signature**

संजाल सर्वेक्षण : जानकारी तथा सहमति फारम

परियोजना शीर्षक : विपद् जोखिम न्यूनिकरणका लागि व्यवहारीक ज्ञान : नेपालको सुदुरपश्चिमका समुदायमा उत्थनशिलता बढाउनका लागि एकिकृत सुशासन
अनुशन्धानकर्ताको नाम : कारोलिना रसेल
शोधकर्ताको नाम:

यो अनुशन्धान सुदुरपश्चिमको बफकाड र बाजुरा जिल्लामा पहिरो तथा अन्य विपद् जोखिम न्यूनिकरण तथा व्यवस्थापनमा केन्द्रित छ ।

मेरो उद्देश्य भनेको विपद् जोखिम न्यूनिकरणमा संलग्न व्यक्ति र संस्थाहरुको (सरकारी र गैर सरकारी) सञ्जालहरुलाई नक्साङ्कन गर्ने र यस्ता व्यक्ति तथा संस्थाहरु कसरी एक अर्कासँग अन्तरक्रिया गर्छन् भनेर बुझ्नु हो ।

म यो सञ्जालमा कसरी विभिन्न व्यक्ति र संस्थाहरू ज्ञान उत्पादन, परियोजना विकास, कार्यान्वयन र आवश्यकता मूल्याङ्कन तथा सहकार्य गर्छन भन्नेकुरा बुझ्न चाहन्छु। यसका लागी, म तपाईलाई तपाईको समुदाय, स्थानीय सरकार र गैर सरकारी संगठन र समुदायका अन्य व्यक्तिसँग सहयोग र सम्बन्धको बारेमा प्रश्न सोध्न चाहन्छु यी प्रश्नहरू तपाईको जीवनशैली, आर्थिक स्थिति (आय र ऋण), तपाईको घरमा पहिरोको प्रभाव र यस क्षेत्रमा विपद् जोखिम न्यूनिकरण सम्बन्धि समुदाय स्तरमा केकस्ता प्रयासहरु भैरहेका छन् भन्ने सम्बन्धि केन्द्रित हुनेछन् । तपाईको अनुमतिमा म यो सर्वेक्षण रेकर्ड गर्नेछु र यो रेकर्डलाई पछि लेखन कार्य गरिनेछ । यस परियोजनामा हजुरसँग सम्बन्धितकुनैपनि जानकारी यो परियोजना बाहेक अन्य कुनै प्रायोजनको लागि प्रयोग गरिनेछैन । हजुरसँग सम्बन्धित जानकारीहरु यस परियोजनामा प्रयोग गर्दा तपाईको पहिचान गोप्य राखिने छ र नामको सट्टा अन्य कुनै पहिचान प्रयोग गरिने छ । यस बाहेक तपाईको उमेर र लिङ्गको आधारमा सुचनाहरु वर्गिकरण गरिने छ ।

परियोजनामा तपाईको सहभागिता स्वैच्छिक हुनेछ । यदि तपाई यस परियोजना र यो सर्वेमा सहभागी हुन चाहानुहुन्न भन्ने तपाईको रोजाईको विषय हुनेछ जसको कुनै किसिमको परिणाम हुनेछैन। यो अन्तर्बार्ताको दैरान अथवा यसपछिको कुनै पनि समय कुनै पनि कारणले तपाईको सहभागीताको बारेमा आफ्नो मन परिवर्तन गर्नु सक्नुहुन्छ । यो अवस्थामा, तपाई र तपाईको सहभागिताको बारेमा सबै जानकारी सुरक्षित रूपमा नष्ट गरिनेछ ।

तपाईले आज प्रदान गर्नुभएको जानकारी जनवरी २०२० मा गरिने शैक्षिक प्रकाशनको लागि प्रयोग गरिने छ । यदि तपाईले २०२० पछि यस परियोजनामा आफ्नो सहभागिता बारे आफ्नो मन परिवर्तन गर्नुभयो भने कुनै पनि प्रकाशित कार्य परिमार्जन गर्न सम्भव हुने छैन् तर यो समयमा कुनै जानकारी पहिले नै प्रकाशन गरिएको छैन भने उक्त जानकारी लाई हटाइनेछ र मेटाइनेछ ।

सकंलन गरिएका सबै जानकारी बर्मिंघम विश्वविद्यालयको नियमानुसार अध्ययनपछि १० वर्षको लागि सुरक्षित रूपमा सँग्रह गरिनेछ । जसका कारण समान क्षेत्रहरूमा अनुसन्धान गर्ने शोधकर्ताहरूसँग साभेदारी गर्न सजिलो हुनेछ । पहिचान गोप्य गरिएको डाटा थप अध्ययनहरूमा प्रयोग गर्न सकिन्छ, तथापि तपाईलाई पत्ता लगाउन सक्ने कुनैपनि डाटालाई तपाईको अनुमति बिना अन्य अनुसन्धानकर्तासँग आदानप्रदान गरिनेछैन् ।

यदि तपाइँसँग केही प्रश्नहरू छन् भने यो सर्वेक्षण सञ्चालन गरिरहेका शोधकर्ता अथवा तलको बिवरणमा सम्पर्क गर्नुसक्नुहुन्छ ।

कारोलिना रसेल +९७७९८०४६५९६५७, ईमेल :   वा
डा. जुलियन क्लार्क ईमेल :

यदि तपाई भाग लिन चाहानुहुन्छ भने तल एक सहमति फारम छ कृपया सहमति जनाउनुहोला । यो सधैँ गोप्यरुपमा राखिनेछ ताकि तपाईको विवरण सुरक्षित रहनेछ ।

तपाईंको सहभागिता धेरै उपयोगी छ र धेरै सराहना गर्दछ ।

सहमति

तपाईं निम्न बुँदाहरु पढेर सहमत हुनुहुन्छ भने दाँया तिर दिईएको बाक्साहरुमा ठिक लगाउनुहोस् ।

१. म पुष्टि गर्दछु कि मैले माथिको अध्ययनको लागि जानकारी तथा सहमती फारम पढ्न, बुझ्न र प्रश्न सोध्नको लागि मौका पाएको छु।

२. मेरो सहभागिता स्वैच्छिक छ भन्नेकुरामा म अवगत छु र म ०१/०१ /२०२० सम्म कुनै पनि समयमा बिना कुनै कारण कुनैपनि बेला आफ्नो सहभागिता फिर्ता लिन सक्नेछु । तर पहिले नै प्रकाशित कुनै पनि जानकारी हटाउनभने सम्भव नहुन सक्छ ।

३. म यो सर्वेक्षण रेकर्ड गर्न सहमति दिन्छु ।

४. यो रेकर्डलाई पछि लेखन कार्य गरिनेछ भन्ने कुरामा अवगत तथा सहमत छु ।

५. म अवगत छु कि मेरो नाम वा कुनै पनि सूचना जसले मलाई पहिचान गर्न अनुमति दिन सक्नेछ यो प्रोजेक्ट वा थप शैक्षिक प्रकाशनहरूमा कहीं पनि समावेश हुनेछैन । यसको सट्टामा मलाई पहिचान गर्न फर्जीनाम प्रयोग गरिनेछ ।

६. म अवगत छु कि मसँग सकंलन गरिएका सबै जानकारी अध्ययनपछि १० बर्षको लागि सुरक्षित रूपमा सँग्रह गरिनेछ । जसका कारण समान क्षेत्रहरूमा अनुसन्धान गर्ने शोधकर्ताहरूसँग साझेदारी तथा थप अध्ययनहरूमा प्रयोग गर्न सकिनेछ । तथापि म सम्बन्धि कुनैपनि डाटालाई मेरो अनुमति बिना अन्य अनुसन्धानकर्तासँग आदानप्रदान गरिनेछैन् ।

७. म यो जानकारी भविष्यका अध्ययनहरुमा प्रयोग गर्न को लागि सहमति जनाउछु ।

म यो अध्ययनमा सहभागी हुन चाहन्छु ।

_____   _____   _____
सहभागीको नाम   मिति   हस्ताक्षर

_____   _____   _____
सहमति लिने व्यक्तीको नाम(फरक भएमा)   मिति   हस्ताक्षर

_____   _____   _____
शोधकर्ता   मिति   हस्ताक्षर

9.5. Appendix 5:*Interview questions for community members after Egonet survey*

1. Do you know what support is available to you form the ward/municipality?
2. Has the municipality provided any workshops or training on landslides?
3. Have the municipality done anything to prevent landslides here?
   a. Are you happy with the government's actions towards disaster assistance?
4. Does your network help you access decision makers in this municipality?
5. Does you network make you feel (more/less/no difference) able to cope with the challenge of living in a hazard prone area?

9.6. *Appendix 6: summary of semi structured interviews*

Interview code	Role/Position	Recorded	Location /Date	Language	Interviewer	Interview Notes
NGO_01	DRR director	Yes	Kathmandu, 23/04/2019	English	CR	The Participant is an expert in DRR and has worked for organisation NGO_01 for about two years. They have worked in human rights and DRR in Nepal and other countries South Asia for over 20 years. The organisation is an international faith-based humanitarian organisation working in the areas of DRR, community development, WASH. The organisation works with both international donors and national level NGO's.
NGO_02	Programme co-ordinator	Yes	Kathmandu, 24/04/2019	English	CR	This interview was conducted with an organisation (NGO_02) that runs a network of NGO's focused on DRR in Nepal. This organisation was founded in 1996 and has 96+ members. This organisation has close working connections with the MOHA.
NGO_03/UN	National co-ordinator	Yes	Kathmandu, 05/05/2019	English	CR	Participant has worked in DRR for over 20 years within intergovernmental organisations in the UN system, and across SARRC region with an INGO. They have advised and worked closely with ministries in the Nepali government on the formation of key DRR policies. The interview was conducted in a café with heavy background noise at times- this is reflected in the [unclear] annotations throughout, this pertains to when I did not feel confident that I could hear correctly what was being said.
NGO_04	DRR Director	Yes	Kathmandu, 22/05/2019	English	CR	Participant has worked in DRR for over 20 years, they are one of the founding members of key advocacy networks in Nepal. Throughout their long career they have worked for multiple NGO's focussing on DRR and humanitarian relief.

						They have a strong history of lobbying for policy change in DRR and have consulted for the GON and the UN on a regular basis.
NGO_05	DRR consultant/ DRM lecturer	Yes	Kathmandu, 24/06/2019	English	CR	The participant works as a consultant for INGO and is also a lecturer in DRM in a KTM based university. Alongside teaching they are a contributor to national curriculum for DRM and training manuals for students and practitioners. They consult for the GoN on policy reform.
GoN_01	Engineer	Yes	Kathmandu, 18/06/2019	English	CR	Interview was conducted with high level employee working in a ministry within the GoN. The main scope of this dept is to train ministry officials in the DRR and water related hazards. They have worked in water related hazards for the GoN for over 21 years.
GoN_02	Chief Officer	Yes	Kathmandu, 24/06/2019	English	CR	Interview was conducted with high level employee working in a department within the MOHA. They have worked for the government at different scale for 15years as a chief district officer, chairmen of the DDMC in their home district.
NGO_06	Head of DRM	Yes	Kathmandu, 09/08/2019	English	CR, Sumit Vij	The participant is head of DRM for an INGO that plays a pivotal role in the GoN disaster management. They have worked for this organisation since 2008 in different DRR related roles. Participant 2 works as part of the same organisation focusing on their CDRM programmes.
UN_01	Logistics Officer	Yes	Kathmandu, 04/02/2020	English	CR	Interview was conducted with high level employee working for the UN in disaster preparedness- they have a close working connection with the MOHA and are head of the one of the national DRR clusters. The participant has a military

						background and has worked in disaster response across the globe. Alongside their work for the UN and GoN they also teach in DRM in a KTM based universities and provide training for military and police.
NGO_07	• Branch officer • Organisational development officer • Secretary • Active programme officer • Finance officer	Yes	Nepalgunj, 24/02/2020	Nepali/English (Translated by RG transcribed by MS)	CR, RG	Interview was conducted with 5 members of the an INGO district branch. Members had been involved in DRR and humanitarian work in the area for NGO's and other organisations, some were also part of the district and municipal departments.
GoN_03	Head of DRM	Yes	Nepalgunj, 24/02/2020	Nepali/English (Translated by RG transcribed by MS)	CR, RG	The interview participant worked for both the GoN and an INGO. In many of the district and municipal levels participants have multiple positions as experts are in high demand. This participant also works with the CDO and is a member of the DDMC, they work in coordination with the 10 clusters on disaster preparedness and response.
GoN_04	Officer	Yes	Dhangadi, 28/02/2020	English	CR, RG	This interview was conducted with the programme officer in the DRR focused department in GoN. Their main job is the record and disseminate information on disaster preparedness. The department act as the secretariat for the DDMC. They have been involved in DRR since 2002. They also work as an officer in the local chapter of an INGO.
NGO_08	Head of DRR	Yes	Dhangadi, 28/02/2020	English	CR, RG	This interview was conducted with the head of DRR in an International NGO working at provincial level. They are

						involved with district level DRR and work closely with the red cross, and by extension the DDMC. This NGO was the only example of genuine DRR work going on. However there projects where small scale.
NGO_09	Head of DRR	Yes	Dhangadi, 28/02/2020	Nepali/English (Translated by RG transcribed by MS)	CR, RG	This interview had worked for the NGO for 10 years. Most of the interview was focussed on new structures. the participant seemed unwilling to into much detail or discuss changes openly, it felt very scripted.
GoN_05	Redacted for anonymity	No	Dhangadi, 01/03/2020	Nepali	CR, RG	The participant was working for the province in a key DRR related role. They did not want to be recorded. The interview conducted by RG with small amounts relayed to me during the interview and then written up from memory afterwards by both CR and RG. The participant was very guarded throughout and did don't disclose much.
GoN_06	Redacted for anonymity	No	Jaitapur, 04/03/2020	Nepali	CR, RG	The participant was working for the government in a key DRR related role in the district. They did not want to be recorded. The interview conducted by RG with small amounts relayed to me during the interview and then written up from memory afterwards by both CR and RG. The participant had worked in various position in the district offices throughout their career. They had been in this job for 3 years.
NGO_10	officer	yes	Jhiatpur, 04/03/2020	Nepali/English (Translated by RG transcribed by MS)	CR, RG	The interview participant has multiple hats, working for the NGO and also as part of the DRRMC and with the DEOC. They provide response and training in the area. Working with both municipalities and the district.

9.7. *Appendix 7. Chapter four documents reviewed*

Resource ID	Document title	Authors	DOP	Institution	Affiliations	URL
R1	Natural Calamities Relief	GoN	1982	MoHA	NCRC, MoHA	https://dpnet.org.np/resource-detail/34
R2	National Action plan for Disaster Management	GoN	1996	MoHA	IDNDR national committee, national disaster management council, national disaster management centre, disaster management committee.	https://dpnet.org.np/resource-detail/504
R3	Environmental Degradation & Disaster Management in Nepal	Department of Narcotics Control & Disaster Management	2003	DNCDM	the Conference of the Fourth SAARC Environment Ministers	https://dpnet.org.np/resource-detail/391
R4	GUIDELINES ON NON-	IHP	2001	UNESCO	UNESCO	https://dpnet.org.np/resource-detail/560

	STRUCTURAL MEASURES IN URBAN FLOOD MANAGEMENT					
R5	KYM valley earthquake management action plan	NSET Nepal	1998	NSET	NSET, UNIDNDR, Nepal National Committee for IDNDR	
R7	NSDRM_2009	MoHA	2009			https://www.preventionweb net/publication/nepal-national-strategy-disaster-risk-management-2009
R8	Nepal disaster report 2009	MoHA	2009	MOHA		https://dpnet.org.np/resource-detail
R9	Nepal Disaster Report 2017	MoHA	2017	MoHA		https://dpnet.org.np/resource-detail/7

R10	Nepal Disaster Report 2009	MoHA	2013	MoHA		https://dpnet.org.np/resource-detail/8
R11	Nepal Disaster Report 2015	MoHA	2015	MoHA DpNET		https://dpnet.org.np/resource-detail/10
R12	Nepal Disaster Report 2011	MoHA	2011			https://dpnet.org.np/resource-detail/11
R13	National Position Paper on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management.	MoHA	2018			https://dpnet.org.np/resource-detail/4
R14	National Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction-English		2019			https://dpnet.org.np/resource-detail/21

| R15 | Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, 2074 And Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Rules, 2076 (2019 | MoHA | 2019 | | | https://dpnet.org.np/resource-detail/1119 |
| R16 | Disaster Risk Reduction National Strategic Action Plan 2018-2030 | MoHA | 2018 | | | https://dpnet.org.np/resource-detail/22 |

| R17 | Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World: guidelines for natural disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation | UNDRR | 1994 | | | https://www.undrr.org/publication/yokohama-strategy-and-plan-action-safer-world-guidelines-natural-disaster-prevention |
| R18 | Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters - full text | UNDRR | 2005 | | | https://www.undrr.org/publication/hyogo-framework-action-2005-2015-building-resilience-nations-and-communities-disasters |

| R19 | The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 | UNDRR | 2015 | | | https://www.undrr.org/implementing-sendai-framework/what-sendai-framework |