Constructing disaster response governance in post-conflict settings:

Contention, collaboration and compromise

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Table of Contents

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List of Abbreviations

CASEC	Conseils d'Administration de Section Communale [Managing Council of the Communal Section]
CDO	Chief District Officer
DDRC	District Disaster Relief Committee
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DPAE	Département Provincial pour l'Agriculture et l'Elevage [Provincial Department for Agriculture and Livestock]
DPC	Direction de la Protection Civile [Civil Protection Directorate]
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGEBU	Institut Géographique du Burundi [Geographical Institute of Burundi]
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
LDO	Local Development Officer
MINUSTAH	The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
NaCSA	National Commission for Social Action
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NNGO	National non-governmental organisation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD-DAC	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee
ONS	Office of National Security
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VDC	Village Development Committee
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit
WFP	World Food Programme

Tables and figures

Tables

Figures

Photos[1]

[1] All photos have been taken with explicit consent.

Abstract

What happens 'when disaster meets post-conflict'? After a disaster unfolds in a post-conflict environment, a myriad of state and non-state actors negotiate the conditions of the response. Although the co-occurrence of disasters and conflict has been increasingly recognized in the academic literature, disaster response policies and practices are seldom sensitive to the post-conflict governance setting, which is typically described as 'fragile'. In the response to disasters, contrasting governance systems — including the fickle processes of statebuilding and the international machinery of disaster response — become intertwined. International disaster governance policies, especially the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, accord a central role to the state, which is assumed to be clearly organized and capable. This contrasts with the reality of the hybrid nature of post-conflict governance that is in institutional flux and (internally) contested. In this thesis, I take an empirical, actor-oriented approach and set out to understand *how aid, state and societal actors socially negotiate the governance of disaster response in a post-conflict scenario*.

Using a qualitative, small-N, multiple case study I was able to construct a post-conflict 'scenario' of disaster response. I started the research with a review of current literature, which was complemented by an exploratory study in Burundi, to create a theoretical framework based on literature from conflict-, disaster- and humanitarian studies. I then selected three cases: the 2015 earthquakes in Nepal, the 2017 Regent landslide and floods in Sierra Leone, and the 2016 storm, Hurricane Matthew, in Haiti. Over twelve months of in-country research resulted in a total of 273 qualitative, semi-structured interviews and 18 community-based focus group discussions. Each of the case studies focused on a specific governance relationship, between international and national actors, within the state, and between state and society, enabling a deeper understanding of the research problem and the construction of the post-conflict scenario.

In the first case, Nepal (chapter 4), I focus on the more traditional aid–state relationship, finding that the main point of friction concerned the contradiction between post-conflict statebuilding and international humanitarian response. This resulted in what might be described as the 'wheeling and dealing' of aid; aid actors creatively complied with the state-centred response when the Nepali state increased compliancy measures to reclaim control over the response. In the second case, Sierra Leone (chapter 5), I focus on the complexities of intra-state relations, finding a tension between the state-centred policies that imply a certain homogeneity, and the hybridity of the state in practice. State actors on multiple governance

levels contend with each other for a larger role in the response, as a result of which there are limited roles for local authorities and community stakeholders. In the third case, Haiti (chapter 6), I take a more bottom-up perspective, finding that — humanitarian commitments for a more locally led response notwithstanding — the space for societal actors in disaster response remains limited due to the disarticulation they experience, particularly in relation to the state. To negotiate response outcomes, societal actors resist certain aid practices and seek out alternative forms of solidarity.

Finally, similarities between these cases in relation to the role of 'the local' led me to deconstruct the multiple dimensions of the local in post-conflict disaster response (chapter 7). The findings exposed three main constructions and their consequences; 'the local as locale', which ignored local power dynamics; 'the local as governance', where local–national relations and intra-national strife were not adequately taken into account and the focus on national actors excluded local actors from disaster response; and 'the local as legitimation', where responders used the discourse on local actors to legitimize their own role as response agents.

Based on the analysis of the case studies and the multi-local comparative focus, I conclude the thesis with the construction of a post-conflict scenario of disaster in which the convergence of different forms of governance produces three main points of tension: 1) an imbalance between statebuilding and humanitarian action; 2) a misunderstanding of state hybridity and the multi-local; and 3) a limited space for societal actors to take part in disaster governance structures. Response actors socially negotiate the conditions, roles and responsibilities of governance through tactics of contention, collaboration and compromise, which all actors deploy in different degrees and combinations, depending on inter-actor relationships.

With these findings, I challenge the social construction of post-conflict 'fragility' and the power relations between global, national and local actors in disaster response. In order for the governance of disaster response to practise what humanitarian commitments and disaster policies preach — namely a combined state and locally led governance of the response — these constructions need to be better understood by practitioners and reflected in such global policies and frameworks as the Sendai Framework and the Grand Bargain.

This research contributes to filling a gap in the humanitarian literature on the post-conflict and post-disaster nexus, with its inherent tensions and paradoxes. Further, it advocates for a more nuanced understanding in both disaster and humanitarian policies and frameworks of how aid, state or locally led governance is socially negotiated in practice.

Moreover, throughout the research, it was my goal to translate theory in order to contribute to practice by engaging with different humanitarian practitioners and policy-makers in workshops and meetings, producing research briefs of the case studies, working as a consultant in practice-oriented research, and supporting the creation of a free massive online open course (MOOC) on disaster response in different conflict contexts.

Keywords: *disaster response; post-conflict; governance; humanitarian aid; localization; Burundi; Nepal; Sierra Leone; Haiti*

Samenvatting

[to be added in final manuscript]

Chapter 1: Introduction

When disaster meets post-conflict

What are the ingredients for effective disaster response in a post-conflict scenario? In Sierra Leone, a research participant working for an international organization compared the response to the 2017 Regent landslide in that country to cooking a sauce; the right amount of ingredients work well together and result in a nourishing and balanced meal. However, the domination of one ingredient over another, a bit too much pepper or salt, would spoil the sauce. This is surely an interesting analogy, but what then is the *right* recipe and is there even *one* right recipe for disaster response?

After a disaster[2], different aid, state and societal actors co-govern the response and the conditions and outcomes of aid. Each actor brings along different visions and motivations for what the response could, or should, look like. In contrast to the old English proverb, 'what is sauce for the goose' is clearly *not* 'sauce for the gander': what works for one situation does not always work for another. During the response, the legitimacy of actors and the power relations between them are contested, strengthened and socially negotiated on multiple levels. While a seemingly exceptional governance mechanism is to be constructed in response to disaster, the manner in which different actors come together, or fall out, is also affected by long-term and everyday socio-political relations. After a disaster, different governance systems converge, collide or get entangled; in responding to a disaster, humanitarian governance often finds itself in competition with existing governance arrangements and practices. When a disaster unfolds in a *post-conflict scenario*, another layer of complexity is added, because these settings are usually characterized by a transitional governance space and a high level of institutional uncertainty, which results in a particular blending of ingredients.

This thesis centres around the investigation of a paradox in the governance of disaster response in a post-conflict setting[3]; while state-centred disaster response policies presume the homogeneity of the state, and humanitarian commitments work towards a uniformly locally led disaster response, these approaches run counter to the reality of hybrid post-conflict governance that is in institutional flux and (internally) contested. Violent conflict may have died down, but the socio-political and economic context continues to be fragile. As

[2] A disaster is defined as 'a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of vulnerability and exposure, leading to widespread human, material economic and environmental losses and impacts' (UNISDR, 2015b). Hazards can be, for example, earthquakes, torrential rains, floods, drought, hurricanes, etc. Natural hazards produce a risk for disasters to occur. However, it is the social, political and economic context that determines whether natural hazards become a disaster (Blaikie et al., 1994; Hewitt, 2013).

[3] This research is part of the research project 'When Disaster Meets Conflict', in which low-intensity conflict and high-intensity conflict settings also studied in relation to disaster response. For more information, please visit: https://www.iss.nl/en/research/research-projects/when-disaster-meets-conflict.

Hilhorst et al. (2017, p. 3) note, this fragility often finds expression in 'high levels of uncertainty and unpredictability'; this 'flux' is found at all levels and in different types of actors, whether referring to the capacity of state institutions, societal organization or the high influx of aid actors. Each of these may have a different vision of the future and how to shape, and govern, the post-conflict period. With the aid of the multidisciplinary approach of this research, I especially aim to contribute to humanitarian studies, policies and practices, through drawing from both the disaster and post-conflict literatures.

Why is it important to study the governance of disaster response in a post-conflict setting? The academic literature has increasingly argued that challenges for disaster response and conflict-specific issues become inter-related. Caso (2019) has shown that — calculated as a yearly average from 2009 to 2018 — 78 per cent of disasters occurred in countries with armed conflicts. Another study found that 50 per cent of disaster casualties and 30 per cent of people affected by disasters are living in countries listed as the 30 most fragile and conflict-affected states (Katie Peters & Budimir, 2016). Further, conflict, or a history of conflict, is often seen to increase people's vulnerability to disasters (Bankoff et al., 2004; Wisner, 2012) and, conversely, disasters have been seen to increase the risk of conflict and political unrest (Drury & Olson, 1998). In those cases where disasters have contributed to peace processes (Billon & Waizenegger, 2007; Slettebak, 2012), these effects have been argued to be short-term (Akcinaroglu et al., 2011; Evin, 2004; Nelson, 2010).

This raises the question: are the recommended policies and practices currently guiding disaster response governance sensitive to the different types of conflict contexts? Disaster governance frameworks such as the Sendai Framework (UNISDR, 2015a)[4] focus on Disaster Risk Reduction and other technocratic approaches to disasters, and tend to leave politically sensitive issues such as conflict out of the discussion. Similarly, humanitarian governance has traditionally been characterized by a mandate of exceptionality, resulting in top-town centralized interventions by international actors. Current frameworks and commitments, such as the localization agenda (The Grand Bargain, 2016), promote locally led humanitarian governance, but do not actively address the power relations involved and fail to distinguish between post-conflict and other governance contexts in which localization is envisioned to take place. While the humanitarian field is forever changing (Hilhorst, 2018), and conflict and disasters share an inextricable bond, the post-disaster/post-conflict nexus has received little

[4] The predecessor of the Sendai Framework was the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (UNISDR, 2007a)

attention. This is problematic. The goals, roles and responsibilities of aid, state and societal actors engaged in the response to disasters will be different in different periods, whether in a conflict setting, or quieter times. One-size-fits-all approaches to disaster response are completely inadequate, particularly where post-disaster meets post-conflict. When compounded by disasters that are seen as critical junctures or turning points for socio-political change (Gawronski & Olson, 2013), the situation becomes even more complex, as interrelationships between actors shift through the politicization of the response (Olson, 2000), and existing state–society disarticulation is exposed or increased (Pelling & Dill, 2010; Siddiqi & Canuday, 2018). What happens when the idea of this exceptionality encounters the pre-existing multi-actor, and multi-level, governance volatility of a post-conflict setting?

The research for this thesis has been conducted in three post-conflict cases where disasters meet conflict; Nepal after the 2015 earthquakes, Haiti after Hurricane Matthew in 2016, and Sierra Leone after the 2017 Regent landslide and floods. Each case is studied so as to contribute to the general research question, thereby helping to build a 'scenario' of post-conflict disaster governance that can be used as guidance for humanitarian practice. Through the main findings in each of the cases, a number of interrelated themes emerged that are important in this setting, such as the difficulties of localizing the governance of disaster response in a post-conflict state, the hybridity and heterogeneity of the different response actors, and the unbalanced power relations between them.

This introductory chapter starts with a discussion on the different governance systems that come together after a disaster in order to set out the foundations of the research problem, and continues with the specification of the research questions. Seven chapters follow: a description of the research approach and methodology; a literature review including a pilot study; the three empirical case studies; a comparative chapter; and the conclusions. The small-N case study research builds on a multidisciplinary literature and contributes to a post-conflict scenario of disaster response, in which the three cases probe into the main relational governance challenges that typified the response in that country. This means that different case studies centre on specific relations and shift the actor-focus; the first case interprets the more traditional, contentious aid–state relations, the second case examines the complexities of potentially conflictual intra-state relations, and the last case casts light on the impact of severe state–society disarticulation on the role of societal actors in disaster response. The comparative chapter then draws a link between the main themes encountered in all three cases and proposes a new multi-local lens for the humanitarian localization agenda

in a post-conflict scenario. The concluding chapter feeds these findings back into the research questions and discusses paths for further study.

1.1. The exceptionality of post-conflict governance

As noted above, the post-conflict setting is seldom taken into account as a separate category in statistics on disasters and conflict. But what is so particular about the post-conflict environment? In this thesis, I understand the concept of 'post-conflict' not as an undisputed and singular reality but as a complex and forever changing social construction that interacts with the governance of disaster response. While the term 'post-conflict' is widely used, there is no common definition. The 'post-conflict' space is not defined by one specific set of conditions, but is created, and recreated, with conflict drivers that often persist (Brinkerhoff, 2005). From literature and practice, it is possible to distinguish different constructs of post-conflict: *as a temporal state* — a place and time different from others; *as a set of conditions* — starting from a peace agreement; or *as a governance discourse* — legitimizing certain practices.

As a *temporal state*, post-conflict is determined and delineated by a preceding period of violent conflict, or conflicts, that have been (partly) resolved or subdued in the present. That is not to say that this condition is final, as the risk of recurrent conflict remains (Collier et al., 2008; Nathan & Toft, 2011; Walter, 2004). Partly, this relates to the difference between violent conflict, structural conflict and different scales of conflict. Following Galtung (1996), there is a difference between actor conflicts and structural conflicts. In a post-conflict environment, overt — often violent — actor conflicts might be subdued but hidden structural conflicts could continue; these pose a risk for violence to recur. Further, local conflicts may also be present, as well as national. As Kalyvas (2003) shows, local conflicts and violence are not just replications of the 'master' cleavage, but have their own dynamics. Since the post-conflict period often refers to the master cleavage, local conflicts may still be ongoing, either linked to previous large-scale conflict or separate from it. Both the temporal starting and ending points of a post-conflict period vary according to the subjective construct of conflict, depending on the actions and interpretations of the conflicting parties and the conflict issues. The ending of the post-conflict period is particularly difficult to pinpoint. Can Sierra Leone still be considered 'post-conflict' when more than 15 years have passed since the formal end of the civil war? Without recurrent conflict, or with waves of local violence, when does the

so-called post-conflict period become like any other? In my understanding, this is dependent on the other two constructs.

Post-conflict may also be constructed by *a set of conditions* that are in place, or taking place. The term 'post-conflict' was coined by UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in *An agenda for peace*, where he provided a framework for 'post-conflict peace-building' after the Cold War (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). This framework guided the subsequent professionalization of international humanitarian action, specifically in countries where peace agreements or settlements were reached or declared. There were recommended steps that would be internationally supported: disarmament, restoration of order, repatriation, capacity-building of security personnel, monitoring of elections, promoting human rights, reforming or strengthening governmental institutions, and promoting formal and informal political participation (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). Others have identified similar stages, including rehabilitation, reform and modernisation, and peace consolidation (Özerdem, 2016). There are also certain milestones to be reached, such as a negotiated settlement and post-conflict elections (Collier et al., 2008), or the creation of a new constitution, such as in Nepal.

Overall, in short, the ways in which 'post-conflict' is constructed have been affected by a paradigm of state-centred, top-down, liberal policies and practices since the 1990s (Paris, 1997). The liberal endeavour strongly shaped post-conflict practices predicated on externally designed and driven peacebuilding and statebuilding to strengthen institutions and reduce the risk of renewed conflict (Collier et al., 2008; Nathan & Toft, 2011; Walter, 2004), as a mostly 'imagineered' process, where an imaginative goal or vision is engineered through technocratic processes (Monk & Mundy, 2014). These interventions have been criticized for their top-down, liberal approach, and alternative discourses and practices have emerged (Chandler, 2013; Heathershaw & Lambach, 2008; Mac Ginty, 2010; Paffenholz, 2015). Still, the linking of top-down and bottom-up interventions and processes has been difficult (Hilhorst et al., 2010).

In the construction of post-conflict as *a governance discourse*, most of the different steps and policy recommendations concern external interventions, even though post-conflict societies themselves also undergo a process of change and recovery. As Moore (2000) argues, the post-conflict discourse can be used as a way to legitimize an interventionist governance, with seeds for future engagement in a post-conflict order being planted by external actors during conflict. This external construction of post-conflict can be seen, for example, in policy documents that refer to Haiti as post-conflict after the 2004 coup d'état, even though different political crises have emerged thereafter. International actors might thus use the term post-

conflict to justify changing their interventions from short-term humanitarian-based to long-term development-based activities. Jabri (2016) connects this institutionalization of 'the international' directly to post-colonial power structures and their impact on modern-day practices. Rather than the often-used term 'post-conflict reconstruction', governance in the post-conflict context can be seen as being 'constructed', often on international terms, and followed by interventions that have been criticized for their neoliberal, top-down approach (Balthasar, 2017; Chandler & Sisk, 2013; Heathershaw & Lambach, 2008; Sabaratnam, 2017). Politics *within* the post-conflict space can be considered as a process that is both fluid and structured, and that, while being influenced by, and shaping, temporal and spatial dimensions, is not strictly *bounded* by them. To understand the spatial and temporal dimensions of the post-conflict scenario in disaster governance requires a multi-layered gaze that extents to post-colonial and neoliberal discourses shaping power relations between and within different categories of responders in a globalized setting. In practice, how these various and varied relationships impact post-conflict processes can mean the difference between a 'negative peace', defined by the absence of violence that is superimposed by external interventions, and a 'positive peace' that is more constructive and focuses on the relationships between all actors (Addams et al., 2007; Galtung, 1996).

A post-conflict scenario may therefore be seen as a socially and politically constructed imaginative distinction that is followed by certain policies, reshaping institutions and transforming contentious politics between actors. While it might appear to be a discrete episode in time, these post-conflict imaginations have long-term impacts on political processes, including disaster response. That makes post-conflict governance a particular political field wherein the balance of power relations can often be seen and shown to shift, buffeted by complexity and contradiction. Political governance transitions may include adopting new constitutions or organizing elections, but the space itself is not transitional, and while vertical and horizontal power structures, and international and national actors, have different authority, they are also co-constitutive. As Heathershaw and Lambach (2008, p. 270) note: post-conflict spaces are 'complex figurations of networks and authorities and shifting local–global relationships'. They can be seen as spaces where power relations are important in negotiating the authority and legitimacy of these actors, and where these are continuously challenged. An intervention that fails to understand how this web of relationships takes shape when a disaster unfolds risks creating further tensions and power struggles between and within different local–global levels, in an already complex and changeable context.

1.2. The construction of disaster response

Similar to the ways in which post-conflict is conceptualized, *disaster response* can also be understood as a governance construct, which blends humanitarian and disaster governance. The emerging concept of *disaster governance* has become increasingly important in disaster studies, building as it does on changing paradigms in the humanitarian literature that have centred on relations of power as opposed to a solely technocratic understanding of disaster risk. Disaster governance connects with the way that disasters are socially constructed and the way that governance relations are shaped by politics between actors across global–local scales, placing disaster governance within existing societal governance systems. As Tierney (2012, p. 344) explains: 'disaster governance consists of the interrelated sets of norms, organisational and institutional actors, and practices (spanning pre-disaster, trans-disaster, and post-disaster periods) that are designed to reduce the impacts and losses associated with disasters arising from natural and technological agents and from intentional acts of terrorism'. Disaster response is thus a temporal moment of this governance process that is embedded in governance systems and power relations between different actors.

Traditionally, disaster studies have been — and continue to be — strongly connected to the ecological and geo-sciences. There is a prevailing tendency to focus on technocratic considerations in the context of disasters, situated within ecological systems theories and centred around a hazards paradigm (Burton et al., 1993).[5] Challenging this apolitical approach to environmental sciences, political ecology in the 1970s and 1980s explicitly linked environmental processes to political ones, which foregrounded socio-political issues regarding the production of disasters (O'Keefe et al., 1976). In disaster studies, this culminated in the vulnerability paradigm (Bankoff et al., 2004; Blaikie et al., 1994; Cannon, 1994) and the resilience paradigm (Alexander, 2013; Paton & Johnston, 2006) that centred on strengths and capabilities. Political ecology has continued to develop spatialized and temporal dimensions of the socio-political and economic impact on environmental processes, with scholars arguing for a 'decolonized ecology' (Ferdinand, 2019). But contrary to literature on the politics of disaster response (Hilhorst, 2016; Mascarenhas & Wisner, 2012; Olson, 2000) and current scholarship in disaster studies which understands disasters as being produced by socio-economic processes and power relations, disaster policy frameworks and humanitarian

[5] Cf. Wisner (2015, p. 59) on the 'technocratic and modernist biases' in 'natural hazards geography'.

practices continue to build on the construction of disaster as an 'exceptional event' instead of a product of long-term systemic developments.

When humanitarian aid actors[6] support the response to a disaster, they become part of the governance of the response along with the multitude of state institutions and (civil) society actors that are also part of the picture. *Humanitarian governance,* defined by Barnett (2013, p. 379) as 'the increasingly organized and internationalized attempt to save the lives, enhance the welfare, and reduce the suffering of the world's most vulnerable populations', has generally revolved around international actors, and has been characterized by a top-down, externally centralized, apolitical, paternalistic approach (Barnett, 2017; Donini, 2012; Hilhorst, 2018). Although it can be seen as a type of global governance encompassing different domains such as development, emergencies and peacebuilding (Barnett, 2013), this thesis focuses primarily on the governing of disaster *response* — specifically, humanitarian-led action as deployed and governed by both state and non-state actors (Hilhorst et al., 2019).

Humanitarian governance in a post-conflict environment differs from other conflict settings. High-intensity conflict settings are often seen as complex emergencies or as a state of protracted crisis, exhibiting moments of large-scale violence, high rates of migration, and a concurrence with other humanitarian crises (Mena, 2018). Humanitarian governance in these settings encounters challenges of security, access and humanitarian needs that cannot be met, all of which means the triage of aid (deciding who will or will not receive support) becomes a highly political process (Mena & Hilhorst, 2020). Low-intensity conflict settings in authoritarian states exhibit a lesser degree of violence, with fewer casualties, but involve structural violence being committed against marginalized groups (Desportes et al., 2019). This poses challenges to humanitarian governance, which is purposely depoliticized to balance humanitarian mandates and needs with the political engagement of the authorities (Desportes, 2019).

Disaster response in a post-conflict environment combines different governance systems; humanitarian, disaster and post-conflict governance. As disaster response does not focus solely on humanitarian actors, but includes collaborative humanitarian action, it becomes increasingly important to address the power relations between these actors and to take a longer-term, historical perspective, both as to a disaster's causes and the way in which it is responded to. This understanding has been embodied by 'resilience humanitarianism'

[6] Not all disasters attract aid actors or humanitarian aid; many everyday disasters are responded to by the affected communities, civil society groups and/or state institutions. This thesis specifically focuses on those responses in which international and other humanitarian aid supports the efforts of national and local responders.

(Hilhorst, 2018; Ilcan & Rygiel, 2015) that builds on the disaster literature's understanding of the resilience of local institutions and communities, in recognition of the roles that national and local actors have always had in disaster governance frameworks (Harvey et al., 2009) but not in humanitarian governance. In order to translate these disaster policies into effective humanitarian practices, the focus on inclusive and collaborative governance has also become increasingly important in humanitarian governance, as seen for example in the localization commitment of the World Humanitarian Summit and the Grand Bargain (The Grand Bargain, 2016), which aims to localize aid and shift the centre of traditional power relations. But in a post-conflict context where power relations are contested between national and local governance levels, this will pose further difficulties.

Governing disasters, therefore, is not only about controlling the environment; it must also be about socially negotiating power relations between multiple actors. But how *is* disaster response governance negotiated in a post-conflict scenario, where statebuilding and governance arrangements are already in flux and contested?

1.3. The research focus: Questions and analytical lens

Based on the identified gap in the literature and the societal importance of understanding disaster response in the post-disaster and post-conflict nexus, this research was guided by the following question:

How do aid, state and societal actors socially negotiate the governance of disaster response in a post-conflict scenario?

To answer this question, in each of the selected case studies of the post-disaster and post-conflict nexus, the following sub-questions provided a framework for the data collection and analysis of the findings:

1) What is characteristic for the roles of different aid, state and societal actors in post-conflict disaster response?
2) What are the main points of tension between these actors in the governance of the response?
3) How are the points of tension manifested in the discourses and social practices of post-conflict disaster response?
4) What is needed for a more effective governance of disaster response in a post-conflict scenario?

The research has adopted an *actor-oriented approach* and is largely influenced by a *constructivist paradigm*, in order to make sense of the multidisciplinary nature of the post-disaster and post-conflict nexus. In constructivism, 'realities are apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature (although elements are often shared among many individuals and even across cultures), and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the constructions' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, pp. 111, 112). The research is designed with a constructivist-interpretivist methodology and guided by the ontological assumption that there are multiple constructed social realities, not one single 'truth'; experiences and narratives vary between agents and 'truths' are 'intersubjectively constructed', whereby the interaction between the researcher and researched plays an important role in this construction and mutual understanding (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012, p. 4). This thesis thus understands disasters, post-conflict and humanitarian governance as socially constructed and embedded; as products or composites of social discourses, histories, power relations and social negotiations, often understood differently by different actors and changing over time. While structural factors may be 'observed' by external and other parties, they are produced and reproduced as internalized by the social actors primarily concerned (see chapter 6).

This also means that the *socially constructed relationships between actors* are central to the research question. Actors, as individuals or groups, process their experiences and act on them. They 'always face some alternative ways of formulating their objectives, deploying specific modes of action and giving reasons for their behaviour' (Long, 2001, p. 18). Agency can be seen in the way discourses and institutions are (re)produced through social practices (Demmers, 2012, p. 168); agents in this thesis are seen to '*construct* the social world, both through their interpretations of it and through the actions based on those interpretations' (Hammersley, 1992, p. 44). The actors frame an event in a particular way through discourse, giving meaning, justifying actions and gaining legitimacy. This interplay of power, discourse and legitimation is also represented in the idea of the humanitarian arena. The thesis sees disaster response as social practice where discourses are being constructed and reconstructed by agents and power relations are renegotiated through the response.

Actors are categorized in this thesis in three main groups; aid, state and societal actors. While aid, state and society are mutually constitutive concepts and actors can have multiple identities depending on their relationships, it is useful to make the following analytical distinctions between them. Aid actors in this research are actors with a specific humanitarian,

development or emergency assistance mandate, such as local, national and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), the International Federation of the Red Cross, various United Nations (UN) agencies, donor agencies and other organizations responsible for humanitarian assistance. State actors are part, either formally or informally, of state institutions on different governance levels. Societal actors comprise, but are not limited to, a multitude of social groups, civil society actors, media, the private sector and citizens. Actor identities across these categories are continuously in flux, with members contesting group boundaries, switching between groups or being part of multiple ones.

The humanitarian arena (Hilhorst & Jansen, 2010) provides an analytical lens to study interactions between state and non-state actors; in the context of the thesis, it limits the focus of the research to those governance processes that directly relate to the post-disaster aid response. The concept of the humanitarian arena argues that multiple actors, including the affected people, operate in the 'humanitarian arena' and negotiate the conditions and practices of aid (Hilhorst & Jansen, 2010). Therefore, humanitarian aid 'is the outcome of the messy interaction of social actors struggling, negotiating and at times guessing to further their interests' (Bakewell, 2000, pp.108-109). The concept of *negotiation* is important as different social actors have different views and approaches as to how and to whom humanitarian aid and assistance are provided and organized, and what form this takes, but they need to come to some kind of agreement in a multi-actor governance setting. As Hilhorst and Jansen (2010, p. 1120) explain: 'Social negotiation encompasses any kind of strategy, including coercive violence, written statements, formal interactions, schemes deployed in the shadows of the official process and the banalities of everyday gossiping.' Principles and politics are given meaning on the ground and are not dictated from the top or from outside. Aid is not just determined by humanitarian agencies or the state; rather, all stakeholders shape humanitarian action (Grace, 2020). This adds importantly to the governance of disaster response by highlighting the limited role and power of societal actors, in the ways in which INGOs impinge not only on the power of societal actors, but also on the legitimacy and authority of societal actors to respond.

Within the humanitarian arena, the thesis looks at the *everyday politics of aid* (Hilhorst, 2013). This is different from more conventional and advocacy forms of politics that centre on issues, organizations and structures, as Kerkvliet (2009, p. 232) explains: 'Everyday politics involves people embracing, complying with, adjusting, and contesting norms and rules regarding authority over, production of, or allocation of resources and doing so in quiet,

mundane, and subtle expressions and acts that are rarely organized or direct'. Although some more conventional forms are also part and parcel of the humanitarian arena, especially at moments when different actors exert their authority over the process, social negotiation processes in the humanitarian arena often have a more everyday nature and are not always visible.

As is further elaborated in chapter 3, in the humanitarian arena, aid, state and societal actors exercise their power to claim legitimacy and to provide humanitarian assistance. *Power* has a 'transformative capacity' to achieve outcomes, controlling others' actions and allocative resources, and controlling material objects, which determines the ability to exercise power (Giddens, 1984, p. 257). For an actor to achieve outcomes in disaster response, legitimacy is important (McCullough, 2015). *Legitimacy* in this research is not only considered as normative, but also as symbiotic and multidimensional (Beetham, 2013; Lamb, 2014). It is seen as the 'worthiness of support', a sense that something is right and should be morally endorsed. Further, it is in the eyes of the beholder, with legitimacy changing depending on the one who is evaluating it (Lamb, 2014). Power is produced and reproduced through the relationships between actors (aid–state–society); it is both a medium and an outcome, both constraining and enabling.

Governance is another complex term that refers to this process of interactions between the different actors involved in the response. It does not describe a system that revolves around the state, but a process that is continuously negotiated between state and non-state actors, formal and informal authorities, and is much shaped by the forms of communication used or denied; what is referred to as 'real governance' in practice (Titeca & de Herdt, 2011). As Colebatch (2014, p. 314) asserts, 'governing involves many hands, is grounded in interaction rather than direction, and is a continuing process marked by indeterminacy and ambiguity'. Governance is therefore inherently collaborative, albeit with contestation, and hybrid, with different forms of authority and a blurring of roles between them being part of the process. Especially in post-conflict contexts, this is an important distinction, as formal and informal governance structures are often in flux and legitimacy given shape through contestation and collaboration. This is further compounded by the multitude of actors involved in the governance of disaster response, who operate on different levels and need to socially negotiate governance arrangements. However, this hybridity (Albrecht & Moe, 2015; Boege et al., 2009), multiplicity of institutions (van der Haar & Heijke, 2013) and the way actors 'assemble' divergent institutional arrangements (Cleaver, 2002; Cleaver & De

Koning, 2015) are barely reflected in humanitarian policies, although they are central to the understanding of governance in a post-conflict setting (see chapters 3, 5 and 7).

1.4. Contributions and impact

In terms of *theory*, this research seeks to reduce an identified gap in the humanitarian literature where disasters coincide with post-conflict, which frequently fails to differentiate post-conflict settings from other humanitarian contexts, and ignores the particular challenges and contradictions of post-conflict disaster response. The disaster–conflict nexus has only recently begun to attract scholarly and policy attention. This research contributes to reflections on how post-conflict processes manifest in humanitarian practice and the importance of understanding power relations and aid politics.

Further, on the level of actor relations, the humanitarian literature has mostly focused on either top-down or bottom-up relations among international, state and community actors. But this research shows that it is essential to also look at the relations within the different actor categories and between different levels. The lack of conceptualization of the 'local' is a problem not only found in humanitarian policies. Humanitarian theory, as opposed to the peacebuilding literature, also requires a better understanding of what the local means and the politics that motivate the different uses of the local.

The research further shows that the way different actors relate to each other adds another element to the post-conflict context, namely a process whereby power relations are socially negotiated and relational conditions contested; this applies not only to the early post-conflict years, but can still be true many years later, as in the intra-state tensions in Sierra Leone. And it is these relations that impact the negotiated arrangements between different actors in disaster response governance.

In terms of *policies and practices*, this research advocates for disaster governance policies to become more sensitive to the complexities of relations between actors and shows the importance of doing so. This would require a clear differentiation to be made between the roles of national and local level actors in disaster governance frameworks such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and humanitarian commitments such as the Grand Bargain. Moreover, better understanding and definitions of localization, locally led and state-led disaster governance are needed in order to develop policies based on an increased awareness on the part of aid practitioners of intra-state and state–society governance

challenges, and a better understanding of the impact of their practices on other actor relations.

To inform policies and practices, I have sought to engage with practitioners and policy-makers throughout the research. Within the project 'When Disaster Meets Conflict', I have organized (often with colleagues from the team) discussions, workshops and brown-bag meetings with aid organizations in The Hague, Brussels and Geneva; engaged in consultancies for Partners for Resilience and the Core Humanitarian Standard Alliance; and supported the development of a free massive online open course (MOOC) that is geared towards practitioners from all over the world, based on our collective project findings. I have translated the findings of this PhD trajectory into practical briefs and blogs that were shared on the ISS website and on humanitarian platforms, as well as organizing interactive workshops in Nepal and Sierra Leone to discuss the research findings.

1.5. Outline of the thesis

The thesis is presented in eight chapters. Each chapter focuses on a specific element of post-conflict disaster response governance and makes a contribution to the research questions set out above.

CHAPTER	AIM	FOCUS	CONTRIBUTION
1. Introduction	Introduction of the research question	Identifying the foundational elements of the research	Setting the scene of the research
2. Research approach and methodology	Discussion of the research approach and methodology	Explaining how the research was designed and which approach was used	Building a strong foundation for the research implementation and analysis
3. Literature review and pilot case	Exploring the existing literature to build the foundations of a post-conflict scenario in disaster response governance	Combining different academic literature and concepts on post-conflict and post-disaster governance and applying this lens to a pilot study	Identifying the possible impact of a post-conflict setting on disaster response governance
4. Nepal Case Study	Understanding the main contradictions and tensions between policies and practices of post-conflict disaster response governance	The dynamics between aid–state and state–aid relations. Focus on consensus and compromise in state-led disaster governance	Main finding (1): how actors balance statebuilding vs humanitarian response
5. Sierra Leone Case Study	Understanding the national and sub-national contradictions and tensions between policies and practices of post-conflict disaster response governance	The dynamics of intra-state relations. Focus on competition and contradictions in state-led disaster governance	Main finding (2): how a localized disaster response takes shape in a hybrid 'fragile' state

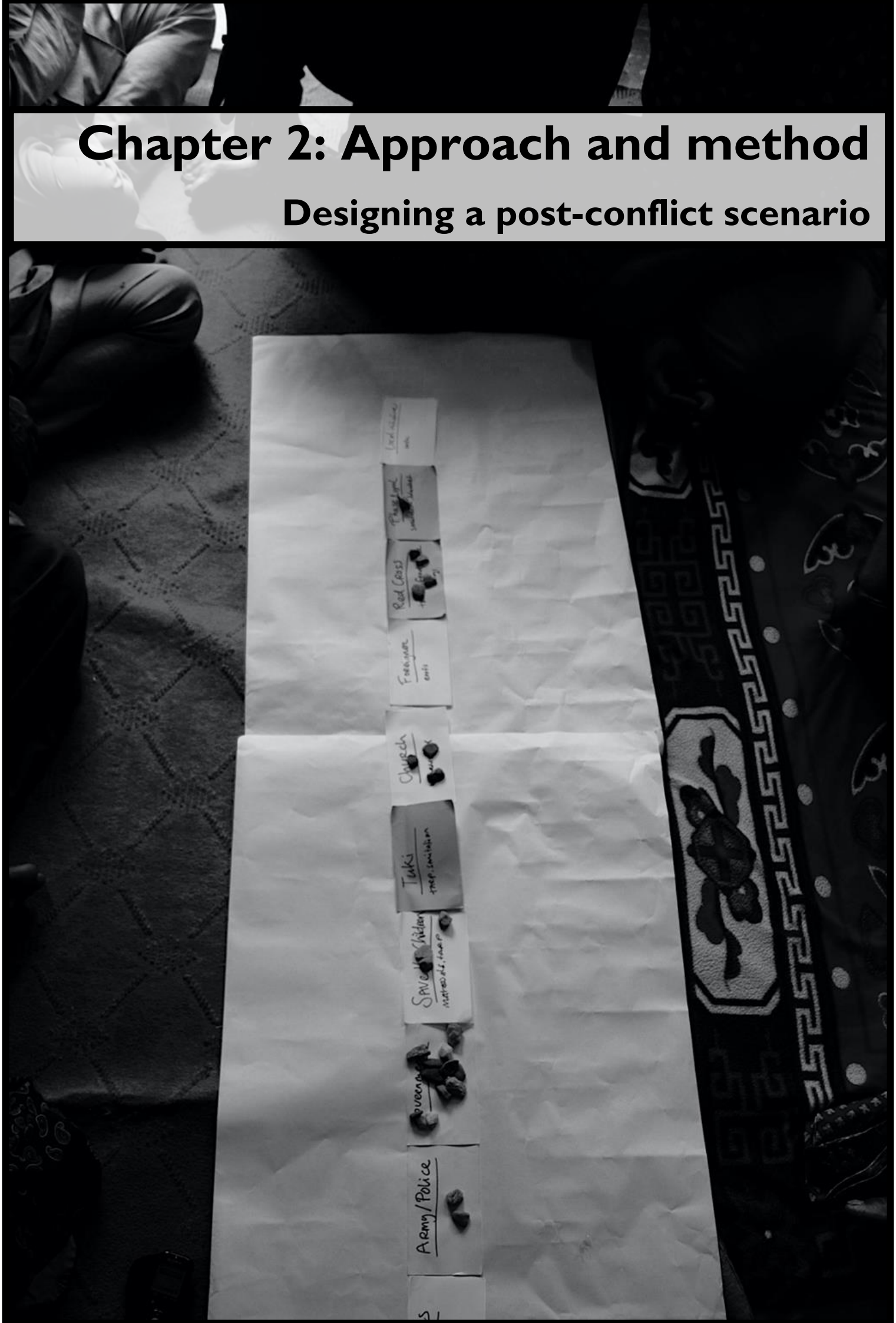
6. Haiti Case Study	Understanding the role of societal actors and tensions between them and other response actors	The dynamics of society–state relations. Focus on resistance and solidarity as societal power to contest state-led disaster governance	Main finding (3): how local actors challenge their limited role in disaster response governance
7. Multi-Local Resonance chapter	Analysing a major cross-cutting disaster governance theme in actor relations and providing a new lens for the post-disaster and post-conflict nexus	Linking different local perspectives throughout the case studies and identifying the dimensions of the local that pose difficulties in state-led disaster governance	Offering a new lens to understand why locally led disaster governance is at an impasse through usages and contradictions of the multi-local
8. Discussion and Conclusion	Answering the research questions by exploring the resonance between the empirical cases, and discussion of the next steps	Summarizing findings for each response actor and understanding how they socially negotiate the conditions of aid within the humanitarian arena of post-conflict disaster response	Discussing the building blocks, and main tensions, of a post-conflict disaster response scenario

Table 1. Outline of the thesis

At the beginning of this chapter I quoted a research participant from Sierra Leone who likened disaster response to cooking a sauce. I am not aiming to provide the 'right' recipe, but this thesis will hopefully contribute to understanding how the different ingredients of post-conflict disaster response typically blend together.

Chapter 2: Approach and method

Designing a post-conflict scenario



2.1. Research design

This thesis is based on small-N multiple case study research, which differs from other studies examining the disaster–conflict nexus. Previous studies have either focused on single cases, some of which were conducted in post-conflict settings such as Mozambique (Artur & Hilhorst, 2012) but where broader theorization is limited; or large-N research (Brancati, 2007; Nel & Righarts, 2008) where different conflict-affected countries were clustered to establish general linkages without understanding the processes that underlie them and relationships between different actors and the different conflict contexts. Actively integrating and distinguishing the conflict context provides insights into the processes behind each context, which is valuable not only for academic research, but also for humanitarian practice (van Voorst & Hilhorst, 2017).

For this research, I chose a small-N, qualitative approach with three case studies of one specific conflict phase, namely post-conflict, to combine the advantages of in-depth, focused research and comparability of results though a semi-structured methodology. A case study can be defined as 'the intensive study of a single case, where the purpose of that study is — at least in part — to shed light on a larger class of cases (a population)', and can encompass multiple cases (Gerring, 2007, p. 20). The three proposed cases, as described below, encompass a bounded phenomenon, namely the disaster response in post-conflict countries, observed at one period in time, namely post-disaster (cross-sectional) (Lavrakas, 2008), but with elements of analysis over a period of time — before, during and after the disaster. It is an analytical explanatory study, where relationships are explained and characteristics described (Khagram et al., 2010, p. 390). Explanations of each case feed into a wider, more complex theory, albeit on the meso-level, by asking standardized questions but also focusing on specific aspects of the cases (George & Bennett, 2005). This approach contributes to the building of a scenario.

The research was conducted in three post-conflict countries that have been affected by a disaster that attracted external aid. I chose the three cases based on the premise that one case cannot address all the different aspects of the phenomenon (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 70) as both disaster response governance and post-conflict express themselves differently, and also taking account of the time constraints of the research project. The selection of the three cases was made with a strategic vision of constructing a more multi-

faceted picture of disaster response in a post-conflict setting. In the following section, I will show how the different pieces of this picture fit together.

I use the small-N multiple case study as a comparative strategy, which does not aim primarily to compare each case to the others, but rather allows similarities, patterns and differences between the cases to inform the research question and to build a 'scenario', ideal-typical yet contextualized, of post-conflict disaster response. This approach made it possible to explore each case study in depth, so that each one has a focus that is particular to that context and case (see chapters 4, 5 and 6), but also to find resonance between the cases which helps to develop knowledge on the research phenomenon and to contribute to theory on the post-disaster and post-conflict nexus (George & Bennett, 2005; Lund, 2014). This is achieved through a more in-depth investigation into the common findings of the three cases (see chapter 7), and by situating the findings in relation to the research questions (see chapter 8).

Although scenario-building is more commonly used as a strategic planning tool in the military or in business development to deal with uncertainties, it has also become a learning tool for development policy (Kosow & Gassner, 2007) and humanitarian practice (Kirshbaum, 2019). It is part of an approach called 'Futures Thinking' — to create an informed image of what is possibly and probably going to happen in a future scenario, by studying developments and relationships in the present (and the past) (Kosow & Gassner, 2007); as Kirshbaum (2019, p. 11) states, 'forecasts must be rooted in reality, and be a serious attempt to look at what might happen in the future given what our research indicates in the present'. The aim is to build capacity and change behaviour in the present. In the context of this thesis, futures thinking involves critically examining current assumptions and practices; it is a type of mental exercise of what future response relations, points of tension and challenges might look like when disaster happens in a post-conflict setting, so that planning and preparedness can be improved.

2.2. Case study selection

Disasters and conflict are both dynamic realities and a certain degree of flexibility was needed in the research design. The cases were selected in three stages. First, a pre-selection took place in 2016, and a matrix of post-conflict countries which had experienced disasters was constructed (see Table 2); these formed the larger population of cases from which the final

selection was made. The definition of post-conflict was partly based on the signing of political agreements, but also on how aid organizations operate in a particular country. As aid–state–society relations are central to the research, this framing is important; policies and interactions differ in conflict or post-conflict contexts. The population of cases were all the so-called 'fragile' post-conflict countries that had experienced disasters in the past 5 years. These are all the positive cases (Byrne & Ragin, 2009) in which both the post-conflict and the disaster variables are present.

Country	Political Agreement	Disasters	Fragile States Index	World Risk Index	Global Peace Index	HDI	Humanitarian Funding Million USD
Angola	2002	Yellow fever, floods	High warning	Medium	2020	Low	1.3
Bangladesh	1997	Floods	Alert	Very high	2045	Medium	23.4
Burkina Faso	2015	Floods, drought	High warning	High	2063	Low	47.1
Burundi	2000-2004	Floods, landslides	Alert	Very high	2323	Low	16.7
Cambodia	1991	Floods, storms	High warning	Ver high	2161	Medium	1.3
Chad	2002-2007	Drought	High alert	Very high	2429	Low	206.3
Colombia	2016	Earthquakes, floods, landslides	High warning	Medium	2764	High	58.7
Cote d'Ivore	2007	Floods	High alert	High	2133	Low	7.6
Democratic Republic of Congo	2013	Drought, floods, earthquake	High alert	-	3085	Low	513.5
Guatemala	1996	Earthquake, storms, lanslides	High warning	Very high	2270	Medium	12.9
Haiti	1994-2004	Earthquake	High alert	Very high	2066	Low	63
Lebanon	1989	Floods, potential earthquake	High warning	Low	2752	High	1300
Liberia	2003	Ebola, floods	Alert	High	1963	Low	248.9
Mali	2015	Floods, drought	Alert	High	2310	Low	119
Mozambique	1992, 2014	Floods, drought	High warning	High	1960	Low	15.8
Nepal	2006	Earthquakes, landslides	Alert	Low	1882	Low	541.8
Rwanda	1993	Floods, landslides	Alert	High	2420	Low	57.8
Sierra Leone	2002	Ebola, floods	Alert	Very high	1864	Low	28.8
Sri Lanka	2009 (no CPA)	Floods, tsunami	Alert	Medium	2133	High	8.8
Sudan	2005, 2006, 2011	Drought, floods, earthquake	Very high alert	High	3269	Low	652.7
Timor-Leste	1999	Floods, storms, tsunami	Alert	Very high	1897	Medium	2.9
Zimbabwe	2008	Drought, floods,	High alert	High	2322	Low	12.4

Table 2. Overview of pre-selected post-conflict countries with disasters and associated indexes[7]

[7] Criteria for inclusion in the matrix were the rank of 'High Warning' or above in the Fragile States Index, and the absence of high-intensity violence. Indexes used for this matrix were: Fragile States Index 2015 (http://fsi.fundforpeace.org); World Risk Index 2015 (http://www.worldriskreport.org); Global Peace Index 2015 (http://www.visionofhumanity.org); Human Development Index (HDI) 2014 (http://report.hdr.undp.org); Humanitarian Funding UNOCHA tracking system (http://fts.unocha.org). The red indicates the 'worst' conditions; high alert in the Fragile States Index, very high ranking in the World Risk Index, high alert in the Global Peace Index, a *low* Human Development Index and high in humanitarian funding. Red, orange, yellow and green follow a spectrum from 'worst' conditions to 'better' conditions.

For the second stage, additional conditions were defined. From the matrix, potential cases needed to fulfil a number of requirements: 1) a political settlement (either officially or unofficially); 2) a degree of 'fragility'; 3) a medium to high risk of disasters; 4) a low development index; 5) medium to high humanitarian funding. To ensure that the countries could not be considered 'in conflict' or likely to revert to a violent conflict in the coming period, I decided that at least 10 years (or two election rounds) needed to have passed since the political settlement for the case to be eligible[8]. Further, the country needed to have been affected by a disaster that attracted external aid in the previous three years before the selection date. The aim of this timeframe was to ensure the feasibility of the research — which entailed interviewing different actors who were present during the response — and to avoid new developments influencing the way the response was viewed. As the phenomenon being studied is the disaster response in a post-conflict setting, it is both temporally and spatially bounded, the disaster response extending from the initial relief phase to approximately the first six months after the disaster.

At the start of the research, an exploratory study was conducted in Burundi, which was considered a post-conflict setting when small-scale disasters unfolded across the country as a result of the torrential rains of 2014/2015. This exploratory study helped me to further develop my theoretical framework and to combine the disaster literature and post-conflict literature in a systematic and applied manner that did not formerly exist. I had previously worked with a development-oriented international non-governmental organization (INGO) in Burundi for three years, and was therefore able to build on my network to organize a small-scale research that tested the validity of the post-disaster and post-conflict nexus and identified those selection criteria that were most relevant for the research.

Third, this being a project of analytical/explanatory, descriptive research, the three cases were then selected on the basis of a diverse case selection with three 'typical sub-types' of post-conflict (Gerring, 2017, p. 41), which would enable more insights into the typicality of the post-conflict and disaster nexus as a spectrum of different post-conflict settings and disasters. The choice was based on the type of conflict before the settlement: 1) a history of low-intensity conflict; 2) a history of high-intensity conflict or civil war; 3) an a-typical conflict history, such as political crises.

[8] As we have seen in section 1.2., there are different post-conflict 'stages'. This thesis focuses on a more 'mature' post-conflict environment and constructs the scenario accordingly.

Following this categorization, I then sought to include recent disasters, leading to the final selection of the case studies over three rounds. First, Nepal (2015 earthquakes) was selected in 2016 as a typical case of a post-conflict country with a history of low-intensity conflict, especially the insurgency contesting the state. Although the new constitution had not been adopted in 2015, the country met the requirement of having experienced at least two democratic elections of the constituent assembly. The second case, Sierra Leone, was selected in 2017 immediately after the Regent landslide. Sierra Leone fits the criteria for a post-conflict country with a history of high-intensity civil war, and affected by disaster. It has had three democratic elections, with low levels of violence, since the 1999 Peace Agreement. The third case, Haiti (2016 Hurricane Matthew), was selected in 2018. Haiti was representative of the third category: a more contested post-conflict country with a history of socio-political fragility and protracted tensions, and no official peace agreement, but a governance shift after the 2004 coup d'état and peacekeeping mission.

Figure 1. Map of the world with the three cases and exploratory study

These three cases were able to demonstrate both variety in how disasters were governed in post-conflict settings, and compelling similarities, which then strengthened the validity of the premise of a post-conflict scenario in disaster governance, even when contexts vary. The contribution of each case to the research objective was guided by the research questions and the semi-structured approach, but it was not identified beforehand. After starting with a broad focus so that major themes could emerge, each case study was analysed before starting the following one, allowing for shifts in focus depending on each context and the findings of each case (see Table 3).

	DISASTER FOCUS	CONFLICT	CONTEXT	INDEXES	CONTRIBUTION TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS
NEPAL	Earthquakes 2015	History of low-intensity conflict where the state was contested by the Maoist insurgency. A Comprehensive Peace Accord was signed in 2006.	- Frequent floods, landslides and smaller earthquakes - Assumed low levels of conflict and relatively stable peace - Smaller risk of renewed violence - Large amount of humanitarian funding after the 2015 earthquakes	- Fragile States Index: Alert - World Risk Index: Low - Global Peace Index: Low conflict - Human Development Index: Low - Humanitarian funding 2015: High	- Focus on aid–state disarticulation - Understanding how aid actors balance state-support with response and state actors in consensus-oriented disaster governance
SIERRA LEONE	Regent landslide and floods 2017	History of high-intensity conflict in the form of a civil war. The Lomé Peace Agreement was signed in 1999 and violence continued until 2002.	- Frequent landslides and floods in all parts of the country Recent large Ebola outbreak - Low levels of conflict and relatively stable peace - Small risk of renewed violence - Medium amount of humanitarian funding	- Fragile States Index: Alert - World Risk Index: Very High - Global Peace Index: Low conflict - Human Development Index: Low - Humanitarian funding 2015: Medium	- Focus on intra-state disarticulation - Understanding state actors' internal competition and cooperation in a locally led response
HAITI	Hurricane Matthew 2016	History of political crises, but no formal peace agreement. After the 2004 coup d'etat, UN peacekeeping mission (MINUSTAH) was established and international aid has focused on post-conflict reconstruction projects.	- Frequent tropical storms, cyclones, hurricanes, floods and earthquakes - Low levels of violence, and a more fragile peace - Higher risk of renewed violence - Consistently large amounts of humanitarian funding	- Fragile States Index: High Alert - World Risk Index: Very High - Global Peace Index: Low–medium conflict - Human Development Index: Low - Humanitarian funding 2015: Medium	- Focus on society–state disarticulation - Understanding the space for local actors to challenge the state and aid actors' control over the response

Table 3. Case study selection strategy and contribution to the research questions

2.3. Data collection and analysis

Data were collected using a combination of tools and sources. The results of the literature review and exploratory study are presented in chapter 3. For each case study, an additional focused literature review was conducted with both academic publications and grey literature (Lawrence, 2012). Data were collected and co-created by semi-structured interviews and (participatory) focus group discussions. In total, 273 qualitative, semi-structured interviews and 18 community-based focus group discussions were conducted.[9] Each case chapter further specifies these sources in terms of number of focus groups and interviews per type of actor in each country. I conducted the in-depth interviews with research participants who were involved in the response to the particular disaster, and whom I had categorized as either aid, state or societal actors. While the interviews were partially structured, they were conducted in such a way that the interview 'flows conversationally and accommodates digressions, which may well open up new avenues of inquiry that the researcher had not originally considered' (Angrosino, 2007, p. 11). Probe-questions allowed for a conversational approach and a build-up to more sensitive questions. The interviews provided 'depth, detail and individual perspectives to complex events' (Brouneus, 2011, p. 145).

The selection of the participants was initially based on the identification of aid, state and societal responders who were at the core of the response. The reliefweb.int website provided an overview of large responders and I initially searched for more information online. After the first round of interviews, a number of actors were often mentioned. As more nuances in the type of responders became clear, and the contact networks expanded, more 'non-traditional' and 'below the radar' responders were identified and approached. Within each case study country, at least two geographical areas were further selected in order to understand the sub-national dynamics and contrast them with the centralized response. This selection was based on regions and/or communities that were most affected by the studied disaster.

[9] Nepal: interviews with nine societal actors, 34 local and national state actors (three national-level actors, 31 district- and village-level actors, including local politicians), 33 international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), 20 international organizations (IOs), 12 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), seven private-sector actors and eight security forces; eight focus group discussions with community members. Haiti: interviews with 15 local state actors, seven INGOs, seven IOs, nine NGOs and 24 societal actors; six focus group discussions with community members. Sierra Leone: interviews with 14 INGOs, nine NGOs, two CSOs, 14 IOs, 30 internally displaced persons, 15 national state actors and four chiefs; four focus group discussions with community members.

Periods of participant observation further allowed me to become aware of the less overt dynamics between the research participants. In Nepal, for example, I joined a monitoring visit by one of the state institutions and closely observed interactions and discussed the inter-actor particularities. Although such observation was undertaken during visits and travel to the communities in all three cases, this method was particularly deployed in Sierra Leone, where the disaster response was ongoing at the time of the research. Here, I was able to join aid distributions, conferences and follow-up visits by different aid organizations. Also, spending time in the IDP (internally displaced person) camps and observing how these were organized by the state, provided meaningful context to the Sierra Leone case study.

Focus group discussions were held, ranging from participatory to group interviews, within the selected communities of the case studies, most often aided by community mobilizers. This was important as disasters are experienced as a group and the discussions between participants offer insights into internal group dynamics and the perception of groups about the disaster response process and other response actors (Özerdem & Bowd, 2010). During the participatory focus groups, it was important to be aware of the power balance and bias against me as an outsider, that could affect the degree to which I was accepted. In each case, a co-researcher took a leading role in the focus groups (see below) and allowed for a more in-depth discussion to unfold, both enabling and challenging participants. We were sensitive to power relations and tensions and adjusted the scope and method of the focus group depending on the context. I often engaged my co-researcher in reflections about the emerging narratives to place the discussions in a larger context. When particular themes emerged, I made sure to include an additional probing question in other interviews to verify if the assumptions were shared or proven wrong, such as those concerning the corruption of local politicians.

Where possible, participatory style focus groups were conducted that allowed more unexpected information to surface. In a number of focus groups, particularly in Nepal and Sierra Leone, the participants were invited to place the response actors on a timeline and voted, by means of stones or papers, on those actors that were most helpful and least helpful, after which the results would facilitate a discussion. The initial focus groups included more questions, but these were later dropped because of time constraints and consideration of what constituted the most salient questions. It was important to allow for a continuous cycle of action and reflection (Kindon et al., 2007) to select and adapt the tools and questions to

the specific group. Also, the techniques and questions were adjusted to avoid the exacerbation of divisions that were present in the groups (Bowd et al., 2010, p. 14).

The semi-structured approach of the data collection and the selection of the cases facilitated the analysis of the data in a relatively integrated and comparative manner. Content analysis was conducted using Nvivo software, wherein data was coded to identify categories and themes, from line-by-line coding to more theoretical coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). These codes were initially based on the structure of the interviews and were collaboratively validated by the project team of 'When Disaster Meets Conflict' at the start of the project. Then, taking account of the theoretical framework, additional research questions, the particular case study theme and the main dynamics that emerged from the data, other frames and categories were identified per case study (Entman, 1991; Leudar et al., 2004; Papacharissi & de Fatima, 2008; Scheufele, 1999). Discursive frames used by actors were also identified and coded, but not by a formal discourse analysis. Rather, this was based on an understanding that data are highly dependent on the interpretations and framings of participants, and uncovering how these frames are used by different actors to legitimize their role in the response, thereby contrasting the discourse with the practice. Interviews and focus groups were recorded and transcribed for this purpose, with the (recorded) verbal consent of the participants.

After the initial analysis, validation sessions were held in-country where possible. In Nepal, I discussed the research with a group of students (some of whom work with the Nepali security forces or government) at the Institute of Crisis Management. In Sierra Leone, Prof. Dr. Dorothea Hilhorst and I organized a small workshop with a group of aid actors from different organizations in Freetown. In Haiti, due to protests and lockdowns during the research period, I was not able to organize such a workshop. In 2020, I planned to visit Sierra Leone and Nepal again for a larger workshop that connected with other countries from the 'When Disaster Meets Conflict' research project. Here, local and national authorities would also have been invited. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to organize these events and changed the format to online workshops in which participants engage with the different conflict scenarios and current themes of humanitarian governance.

2.4. Ethical considerations and research conduct

While power dynamics in the groups are part of a natural process and can give insights into the research questions, they can also have negative consequences that need to be recognized

and prevented. Reflexivity and flexibility were key, and the safety of the research participants and facilitators were essential. Expectations of participants needed to be managed in a meaningful way, and the co-researchers' role towards ensuring that was vital. When there were incidents that indicated that the research participants' privacy and anonymity could be violated, or tensions existed, I took steps to mitigate these or discontinued that element of the research. In Haiti, for example, I intentionally limited the time and participatory nature of the focus groups due to the security context; I also discontinued two group interviews when a crowd started gathering, which posed a risk to the safety of the participants, my co-researcher and myself. The research methods and implementation were inspired by my own previous experience in conflict-affected countries and the manuals of other researchers (Hilhorst & Jansen, 2005; Höglund & Öberg, 2011; Stallings & International Research Committee on Disasters, 2002; van der Haar et al., 2013).

In each of the case studies, I collaborated with a student or young professional as a co-researcher for the community-based research. In Nepal, Prakriti Praks was recommended to me by Dr. Ram Thapaliya, a professor at the Institute of Crisis Management in Kathmandu. I visited the Institute, delivered a guest lecture, and Dr. Thapaliya facilitated access to government and military personnel to interview. Prakriti was a bachelor student at Tribhuvan University at the time and assisted the research in the Sindhupalchok and Gorkha districts. In Sierra Leone, one of the IDP camp managers directed me to Santigie Bangura, who was a student at Limkokwing University at the time; he himself was affected by the landslide and temporarily living in the camp. Santigie facilitated the research in the IDP camps and affected communities downstream of the Regent landslide. In Haiti, I was a guest at a community-based organization called Haiti Communitere, where Mikel Jean was recommended to me; he worked for a micro-finance organization called Fonkoze at the time and assisted the research in Jérémie and Les Cayes. Although the community-based research with the affected people and local authorities was conducted with the help of these students, I chose to do most of the political and aid actor focused interviews in the capital cities myself due to the limited free time of the co-researchers.

Each one of the research collaborators and facilitators played a vital role in the research; as Gaillard (2019) argues, these different perspectives are often overshadowed, but are crucial to the reimagination of the current top-down nature of disaster and humanitarian studies. However, with each of the collaborations, ethical implications also needed to be considered. It was important for the research collaborations to be as fair and equal as possible,

with appropriate remuneration and with joint decision-making on the conduct and subject of the research.

In Nepal and Haiti, the co-researchers did not live, or have family, in the affected communities that were included in the research. This gave a greater sense of distance from the research participants who saw us as relatively objective outsiders to local politics; in Nepal, the mixed caste background of the co-researcher provided an open space for all participants to voice their views, and in Haiti the co-researcher's non-involvement in local politics also encouraged the participants to freely express their opinions. However, at times this negatively impacted on access; in Nepal, for example, the Gorkha communities were more uniform in their ethnic background and somewhat suspicious of outsiders, keeping discussions at a more superficial level, and in Haiti, due to limited direct contacts, we relied more on snowballing and improvised interviews.

In Sierra Leone, the co-researcher was himself heavily affected by the disaster and had previously been living in one of the affected communities. Therefore, more care was needed in our collaboration. Firstly, because involvement in the research and interviewing other affected people could impact his own trauma, I made sure to speak openly and regularly about our collaboration and the boundaries of that collaboration. The project team provided support when I had questions about how to proceed. Secondly, his personal relationships (either directly or indirectly) with the research participants in the communities were both an opportunity and a risk. They created acceptance in the discussions, access to the chiefs, understanding of the rumours and the context, and safety for me as an individual researcher, but it was recognized that these relationships could also have had a negative impact. However, since the co-researcher did not hold a position of authority, and since the interviews were not too politically sensitive concerning local dynamics, this risk was mitigated.

In all cases, we also discussed academic authorship and the possibility to co-write the case study chapter. In both Nepal and Sierra Leone, the co-researchers found their engagement in the practical conduct of the research sufficient and I respected their choice. Also, the chapter focus had shifted from the communities, where the co-researchers were involved, to the aid and state actors whom I had mostly interviewed alone. Nevertheless, our daily discussions during the community visits strongly shaped my understanding of the research data, actor relationships and the governance context. In Haiti, the community focus was strong in the chapter and my co-researcher was keen to be involved. That chapter is therefore based on the discussions and reflections we had during our time in Haiti and

continued online afterwards. Although most of writing and the theoretical discussion was done by myself, partly due to language constraints, Mikel Jean provided valuable contributions to the planning of the chapter and its main arguments, the empirical section and revisions of the text.

I would further like to reflect on the impact of my own personal background and being on the research, the participants and the findings. I generally had good access to international actors, being a white woman. In Sierra Leone, my access to state officials was most likely increased because of my Dutch background; when I spoke to Sierra Leonean counterparts, they recounted that their access to the state structures was restricted. However, this background was challenging in Haiti, where there is an over-saturation, and a certain degree of non-acceptance, of international researchers and INGO staff. Further, it limited my access to local and national NGOs and civil society organizations, as they often operated below the international radar. These experiences contributed to evolving reflections on disaster research and humanitarian action over time, which become especially visible in chapter 6 on Haiti and chapter 7 on 'the local'.

Another consideration that I needed to be aware of is that research participants, much like the researcher, might have their own agenda when speaking to me; as my looks are representative of the average INGO worker, this impression could have affected the answers they gave, especially in the communities. Therefore, I always made it clear from the start what my background is, the intention of the research, and how their information will be used. Each research context being different, I adapted my strategies to what was customary and fair. In Sierra Leone, for instance, as the focus groups were held for an extended time, with people who were just recovering from the disaster, we decided to provide a small remuneration for their time.

In some cases, research fatigue and outsider bias was present, often quite entangled, particularly in Haiti. After a large-scale disaster external assistance is often stepped up, which can be seen as invasive, and consultants and researchers follow. Sometimes, this led me to feel I was 'part of the problem', especially in places such as the epicentre of the Nepal earthquake, Barpak, where this was a much-voiced critique of aid actors and other external groups that came in, took photographs or information, and left again. My research tried to find niches of new knowledge and reflection of the research participants that allowed space for participants to share what they found most important; this is also visible in each case study chapter. Acceptance was partially gained through the co-researcher in each country, through

spending time with the participants and staying in the villages and cities, grabbing windows of opportunity and gentle probing (Chakravarty, 2012). I reflected continuously about the collaborations and encounters, engaging in 'sense-making' (van der Haar et al., 2013) together with my co-researchers. In some cases, this proved more difficult and encounters remained superficial. This was part of respecting the wishes of the research participants, where I chose not to 'push' for information or 'demand' a certain type of participation. Within the research, a diverse range of opinions were therefore expressed and I accepted the limitations to try to make the research as unobtrusive and as cooperative as possible within the inevitable constraints. Overall, the most important guidance throughout the research was to respect research participants, their safety considerations, and their culture.

2.5. Limitations

Given the gap in the literature on the post-conflict and post-disaster nexus, this research aimed to contribute to uncovering the different elements that characterized disaster governance in this nexus. However, this also meant that the research started out in a more general and broad sense to allow the challenges and practices to emerge from the interviews and focus groups instead of guiding the responses. Therefore, the research identified and uncovered a variety of elements, but it was not able to go into greater depth for all of them.

This broadness also impacted a more gender-sensitive approach. Although I actively pursued a gender balance among the research participants, the findings are not specified by gender. This is not to say that disaster response did not impact different genders in different ways; the literature has shown that the more marginalized groups are often more affected. However, as this thesis focused on the general disaster governance challenges, I was also limited to the research participants that formed part of this group. I nonetheless ensured the focus groups were diverse and portrayed a variety of opinions.

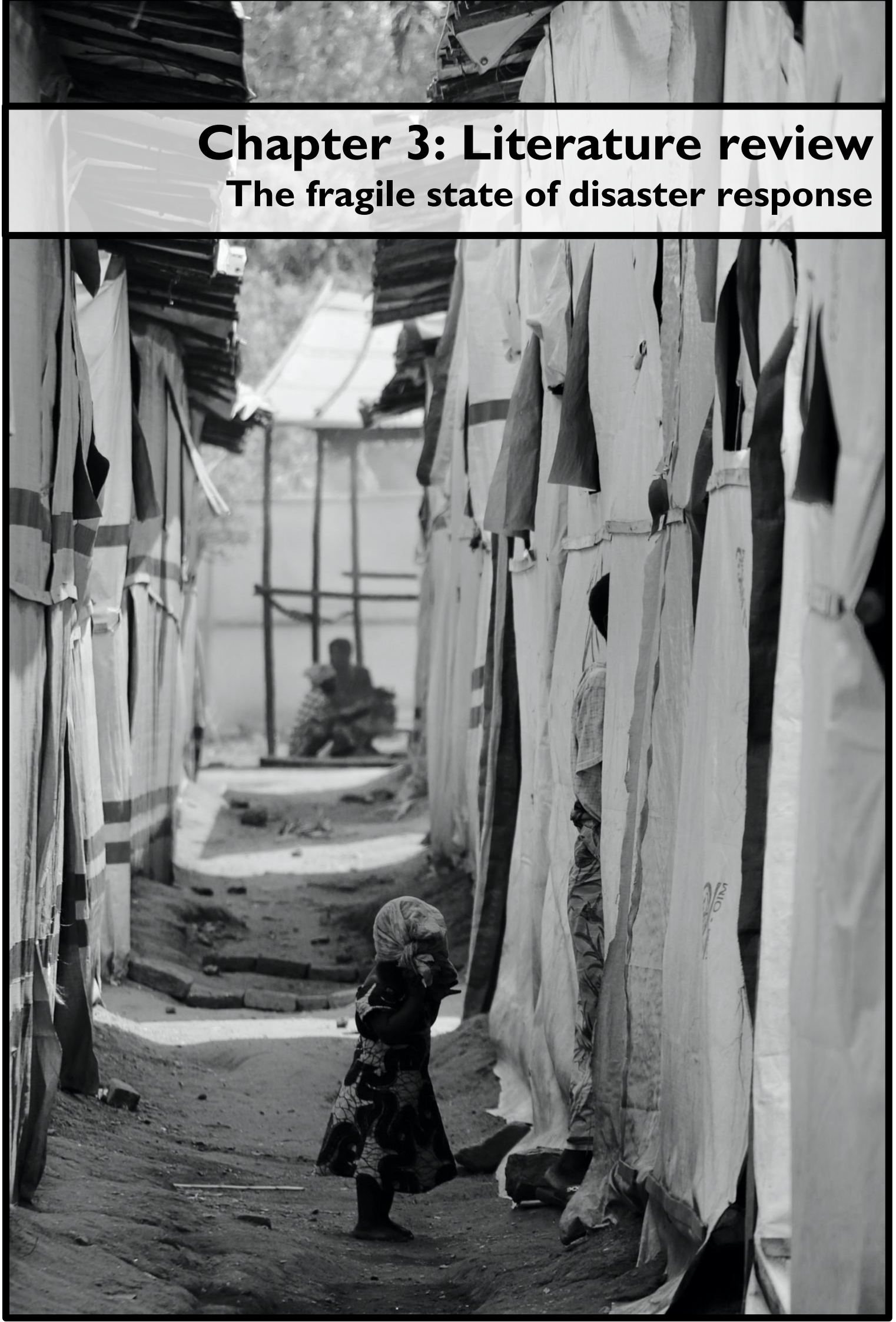
The time I spent in each of the case study countries provided both opportunities and limitations. Four months proved to be sufficient to gather a lot of data from different actors, but did not always allow for the gaining of acceptance or follow-up meetings. Due to my own background and access, I was able to achieve more depth in interactions with international organizations. This access is partly created by the nature of traditional top-down humanitarian studies that centres around international actors and the research focus on humanitarian governance. A change in how humanitarian studies is approached, stepping away from these

traditional structures, might therefore provide a more complete picture of other responders that operate in less visible spaces.

Finally, there is a more ethical question; who should be the researcher in this case? Although I tried to collaborate with national researchers and actors in each case study, and the focus of the research questions changed according to the interactions that I had, the research agenda was mostly set and the research largely organized from the top. Notwithstanding that this research has produced important findings that stand on their own, there is a need to complement these findings with other perspectives and methods.

Chapter 3: Literature review

The fragile state of disaster response



Abstract[10]

Disasters often unfold in conflict-affected societies, where the devastation is further compounded by the socio-economic and political context of these societies and the engagement of a complex web of actors. To respond to disasters, aid, state and societal actors enter the humanitarian arena, where they manoeuvre in the socio-political space to socially negotiate power relations and gain legitimacy to achieve their goals by utilizing authoritative and material resources. Post-conflict settings such as Burundi present a challenge for disaster response as actors are confronted with an uncertain transition period and the need to balance roles and capacity.

[10] This chapter is a slightly revised version of a peer-reviewed published book chapter: Melis, S. (2018). The fragile state of disaster response: Understanding aid-state-society relations in post-conflict settings. In H. G. Brauch, Ú. Oswald Spring, A. E. Collins, & S. E. Serrano Oswald (Eds.), *Climate Change, Disasters, Sustainability Transition and Peace in the Anthropocene* (pp. 67–93). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-97562-7_4

3.1. Introduction

Disasters[11] caused by natural hazards are a disruptive force with grave social, political and economic impact. In 2015, 574 reported disasters killed almost 32,550 people and affected over 108 million people, causing over USD 70.3 billion worth of damage (IFRC, 2016). Climatologists predict that extreme weather and climate events will increase in both frequency and intensity in the coming years (IPCC, 2012). However, not all populations are equally affected. Fragile and conflict-affected states experience a greater impact from disasters. Between 2004 and 2014, 58 per cent of deaths from disasters occurred in countries listed in the top 30 of the *Fragile States Index* (Katie Peters & Budimir, 2016, p. 5). Therefore, it is crucial to recognize the compounding risk factors of natural hazards and conflict-affected societies, and to better understand the way in which different aid, state and society actors respond to the disasters that ensue.

A natural hazard[12] does not always result in a disaster. Natural hazards contribute to the risk of disasters occurring; however, it is the social, political and economic context that determines whether a natural hazard becomes a disaster (Blaikie et al., 1994; Hewitt, 2013). In the aftermath of a disaster, the way different actors respond is strongly rooted in the socio-political context. When a disaster strikes in a post-conflict setting, the response will be heavily affected by this.

Disasters in conflict-affected countries add a layer of complexity to disaster response management. Kellett and Sparks (2012, p. 31) show that each year from 2005–2009, over 50 per cent of people affected by disasters lived in fragile or conflict-affected states, reaching 80 per cent in some years. When trying to understand the everyday politics of disasters, examining the response phase is particularly valuable. Disaster response is highly political (Olson, 2000), and occurs within an intricate socio-political context that affects the

[11] Disasters are 'a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources' (UNISDR, 2007b).

[12] EM-DAT (EM-DAT, 2016) classifies hazards in different sub-groups; namely, geophysical, meteorological, hydrological, climatological, biological and extra-terrestrial. Examples of hazards are earthquakes (including tsunamis), volcanic activity, extreme temperatures, storms, floods, landslides, droughts, wildfires, epidemic etc. The speed of onset of natural hazards can be either slow or rapid. While rapid-onset hazards are seen as the result of a sudden event, OCHA (OCHA, 2011) defines slow-onset hazards, such as droughts, as emergencies that develop from a combination of events over time. Some hazards, such as floods, are often the accumulation of several events. In theory, slow-onset hazards could be mitigated and prevented by early response, although in practice most responses to slow-onset hazards resemble those of rapid-onset hazards, with a large influx of aid, primarily food aid, and short-term solutions focusing on saving lives (OCHA, 2011, p. 4). Disasters are always slow onset as they are determined by the socio-economic and political context, and associated vulnerabilities, of societies, which are long-term processes.

implementation of the response by different aid, state and society responders. The multitude of actors in the 'humanitarian arena' (Hilhorst & Jansen, 2010) use the space opened by the disaster to advance their goals, whether by competition or cooperation. Different actors deploy different discourses as a strategy in their search for resources and authority, and to assert their power, gain legitimacy and socially negotiate the arena's values and structures. Post-conflict countries can prove to be especially challenging environments in this regard. While the conflict is assumed to have been largely resolved, the legacy of violent conflict and underlying conflict dynamics continues to have an impact on both social and political processes.

Post-conflict settings often undergo an uncertain transition that is characterized by continuous political and societal changes, while relationships are still rooted in their conflict history. However, existing disaster response frameworks do not distinguish between different governance contexts and therefore risk increasing tensions between response actors. This chapter presents a literature review, illustrated with findings from initial fieldwork in Burundi, on disaster response in post-conflict societies. The transitional nature of the state and the fragility of governance in these settings pose specific challenges in the context of disaster response by a range of actors.

This chapter explores the role of aid, state and societal actors[13] who manoeuvre in the humanitarian arena, and identifies several challenges to disaster response in post-conflict settings. These challenges call for a new research agenda to develop effective policies that situate the response to disasters within the conflict context.

3.2. Methods

This chapter is based on a literature review of peer-reviewed articles and books from the humanitarian aid, disaster response and (post-)conflict literatures. It further includes reports from humanitarian agencies and knowledge institutes focusing on humanitarian aid. The

[13] Aid actors are those who have development and emergency assistance as their core mandate, such as various United Nations (UN) agencies, local, national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), regional inter-governmental organizations' agencies responsible for humanitarian assistance, and donor agencies providing funding and coordination. State actors are formally part of state institutions, whether on a national, regional, district or local level, including national government agencies in charge of crisis response. Society encompasses a vast array of groups and identities, such as civil society, media, the private sector, volunteers, traditional leaders, beneficiaries, citizens and individuals.

chapter combines literature and data collected until December 2016, using primarily WorldCat, Google Scholar, Scopus and sEURch.[14]

In addition to the literature review, a three-week pilot study was conducted in Burundi in August 2016, as an analytical application and illustration of the framework discussed above. This was needed since there is limited research that explicitly links the post-disaster and post-conflict literature. Burundi was chosen as an exploratory study as it is considered a post-conflict setting and it has experienced a number of disasters. Since I had previously worked in Burundi for three years, I was able to use my network and quickly set up interviews.

In Burundi, I conducted 31 interviews with actors from different INGOs (international non-governmental organizations), NGOs (national non-governmental organizations), national, regional and local humanitarian agencies, relevant national, regional and local state representatives, religious institutions, affected communities and representatives of IDP (internally displaced persons) camps. These semi-structured interviews included open-ended questions on the organization of the response, coordination with other actors and the main challenges encountered.

The interviews focused on the response to the 2014 flood in Bujumbura and the 2015 floods in Rumonge and Bujumbura. Data were analysed with NVivo through a thematic content analysis and coding of the interview notes.[15]

Figure 2. Bujumbura (top) and Rumonge (bottom) provinces

3.3. Disasters: A socio-political force

Although disasters in conflict-affected countries are strongly linked to vulnerabilities, the main policy frameworks do not include a direct relation to the (post-)conflict context. The disaster management cycle is an organizational and policy tool that deals with disasters and categorizes

[14] To minimize the selection bias of each individual search engine, the combination of these engines was used.

[15] Nodes included 34 emergent categories of different challenges encountered, such as coordination, beneficiary selection, mistrust, differences in response, relations between actors, communication, accountability, etc.

different phases in which the activities of projects and interventions take place.[16] With the *2005 Hyogo Framework for Action* and the *2015 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*, important steps were taken towards a focus on disaster prevention and preparedness. Policy frameworks take into account the extent of peoples' vulnerability, their exposure to natural hazards, and the nature of the hazard, along with mitigation factors such as capacity and resilience, when determining the risk of disasters (INFORM, 2016; Wisner et al., 2012). With the *Disaster Risk Reduction* (DRR) paradigm, emphasizing risk reduction includes a focus not only on mitigating hazards, planning preparedness and response and post-disaster recovery, as in the disaster management cycle, but also on resilience and the root causes of vulnerabilities. However, for political reasons, there is no explicit reference made to conflict in any of these frameworks, obscuring the interconnections between conflicts and disasters.

There is much inequality in the way people are affected by disasters in low- and middle-income countries.[17] This poses a risk for post-conflict settings, with conflict compounding the effects of disasters, leaving people more vulnerable to hazards and weakening institutional response capacities (Wisner et al., 2012). Nel and Righarts (2008) found that disasters, especially those caused by rapid-onset hazards in low- and middle-income countries, significantly increase the risks of recurring civil conflict. A history of conflict also leaves tears in the societal fabric and mutual mistrust, which negatively impact DRR activities that require a community to combat environmental degradation.

Various factors influence the vulnerability of people to natural hazards, and in turn, to disasters. Vulnerability has been used as a concept in different contexts, each with a specific interpretation of its characteristics (Bankoff, 2001; Brauch, 2005; Hilhorst et al., 2004; van Voorst, 2016; Wisner, 2016). In this chapter, vulnerability is seen as a socio-political concept in relation to natural hazards. Factors influencing vulnerability are often related to the characteristics of different socio-economic groups and a group's recovery capacity is affected by its access to resources and coping mechanisms (Blaikie et al., 1994). Vulnerability is strongly determined by socio-political processes, context and history, and thus is continuously in flux. Further, factors such as gender strongly affect the vulnerability of disaster-affected groups

[16] The disaster management cycle is mostly focused on the disaster itself, as it includes measures taken before, during and after the disaster to 'avoid a disaster, reduce its impact or recover from its losses' (Khan et al., 2008, p. 46). The pre-disaster stage includes activities for mitigation and preparedness, and the post-disaster stage starts with emergency response and moves into rehabilitation and reconstruction (Khan et al., 2008, p. 47). Although the cycle presupposes a linear timeline, in practice the phases overlap.

[17] From 1996 to 2015, low-income countries experienced five times more deaths per 100,000 inhabitants compared to high-income countries, while high-income countries feature in the top 10 list for economic losses (UNISDR & CRED, 2016).

(Ariyabandu & Fonseka, 2009). As Wisner et al. (2012, p. 27) show, root causes linked to political, economic and social structures, including gender discrimination, affect access to resources for certain people, leading to marginalization and ultimately increased vulnerability.

Therefore, as Hilhorst et al. (2004) note, although vulnerability is often considered as a characteristic or a property, it is actually an outcome of social relations. Bohle et al. (1994) also identify vulnerability as a social outcome of three dimensions: human ecology (the environmental risk in relation to people's resources), social entitlements (and the way they are secured, or expanded), and the structural characteristics of the macro-structure of political economy in which the first and second dimensions are situated (Bohle et al., 1994, p. 40). Vulnerability, then, is determined by the position of an individual or group within each of these dimensions. Lewis and Kelman (2010, p. 194) found that the vulnerabilities of some people may be created by what others have done in the past, and these vulnerabilities can be sustained and reproduced by external actors in the present. In post-conflict settings, vulnerability is also an outcome of the conflict history, the evolving socio-political changes, and the more long-term transnational power relations.

In addition to vulnerability, resilience, or the ability to 'bounce back' (IFRC, 2016), is another key concept in DRR, and a challenge in post-conflict settings. The capacity to adapt is an important factor in the resilience of people at risk of disasters; however, the concept of resilience has become a meaningless buzzword in both the disaster and humanitarian sectors. The focus on resilience in DRR is not new (Alexander, 2013; Manyena, 2006). Resilience focuses on strengths and capabilities, rather than on vulnerability, which emphasizes victimhood and needs. However, as Paton (2006, p. 7) argues, 'bouncing back' does not reflect the reality of a disaster, where communities' pre-disaster state is fundamentally changed and new realities need to be faced. Therefore, 'resilience' means the capacity to adapt to the new reality and capitalize on new opportunities (Paton, 2006, p. 8). This capacity to adapt of individuals and communities affected by natural hazards differs for different social groups. In post-conflict societies, where inequalities and marginalization are often widespread, bouncing back would legitimize unequal pre-conditions. Therefore, a more transformative interpretation of resilience is necessary.

The aspiration to 'build back better' has been an attempt to better link relief, rehabilitation and development, and address the root causes of inequalities and marginalization. Disaster response does not just require quick recovery efforts, but improvements to the previous state. However, different actors have their own interest

agendas, questioning whose 'better' is being built (Fan, 2013). On a local level, strengthening capacities and focusing on resilience can be easier than actually reducing vulnerability and addressing unequal power relations that prevent moving forward (Wisner et al., 2012, p. 29). The concept of resilience in the current frameworks and practices risks shifting the responsibility to disaster affected people to address root causes of vulnerabilities without critically examining and addressing the impact other actors have on resilience, resulting in increased marginalization.

On a more relational level, 'strengthening capacity' requires addressing the social, political and economic root causes of vulnerability, which can be challenging, not only for the states which are signatory to the Sendai Framework, but also for humanitarian agencies in post-conflict settings as they aim to stay neutral and impartial as part of their humanitarian principles. The IFRC (2016) recognizes that addressing resilience in conflict-affected settings goes against the humanitarian principles of impartiality and neutrality. In a post-conflict setting, the question arises as to whether these principles are still relevant, considering the large number of multi-mandate organizations that engage in disaster response and longer-term development programmes.

The emergence of the concept of disaster governance has underlined the importance of a more holistic approach. The social construction of disasters and multi-actor practices during the pre-disaster, trans-disaster and post-disaster periods, requires an integrative and collaborative governance approach. Different norms and frameworks are socially negotiated across global and local scales and guide the practices of both state and non-state actors in reducing the impact of disasters (Tierney, 2012). The actor constellations and relationships in disaster governance are highly dependent on the overall governance setting of a particular context. Therefore, a post-conflict governance setting will also impact how disasters are governed.

3.4. The 'post-conflict state': Fragility and disaster response

The term 'post-conflict' presupposes an end to conflict and the beginning of a peaceful period. However, this assumption is contradicted by the reality of most post-conflict societies, where tensions and even violence continue. Since the post-conflict governance setting determines the way in which actors respond after a disaster, it is essential to understand the particularities and the risks involved.

The term 'post-conflict'[18] was first used in the political discourse by UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in 1992 in *An Agenda for Peace*. Boutros-Ghali defined post-conflict peace-building as 'action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict' (Boutros-Ghali, 1992, para. 21). At the request of the Security Council, Boutros-Ghali presented recommendations on how to move forward with conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and, in particular, *post-conflict peacebuilding,* after the Cold War period (Hozić, 2014, p. 22). His recommendations, divided into four post-conflict pillars of security, justice, democracy and development, are still illustrative of the aims of current post-conflict interventions.[19] If a disaster occurs in this transitional period, it will impact, and be affected by, these processes. For example, in security sector reform, the security forces such as the army and police may play a central role in emergency response after a disaster. However, these armed actors were usually involved in the conflict, affecting the trust between them and disaster-affected communities. This problematizes their involvement in the response.

After a conflict, different state and non-state actors shape the formation of the state. As governance systems and other pre-conflict conditions were themselves among the drivers of the conflict and 'fragility', reconstruction often includes reforms and the redistribution of rights and entitlements, promoting an agenda of change (Brinkerhoff, 2005). Much of the external reconstruction effort centres around the state, which has strong implications for the scope and type of interventions, where the emphasis is on statebuilding to prevent a 'relapse' and build stronger and more effective governance institutions to provide services and protection to citizens. Therefore, statebuilding is often at the core of peacebuilding efforts.[20] However, the DRR frameworks are centred around a strong state. Non-state actors need to

[18] Others have preferred the term 'post-war', referring to a period directly after the end of a war, which makes it easier to define than 'conflict'. However, as the 'post' discourse refers to an outcome of the preceding period, 'war' does not do justice to the complexity of the 'post' situation: war was not the only or primary defining factor, but rather an outcome in itself. Further, a post-war period can also be a pre-war period and it does not reflect the reality of a history of multiple conflicts and wars, or a conflict with less than 1,000 battle-related deaths annually (a common definition of 'war'). This chapter sees neither of the terms — post-conflict or post-war — as truly reflecting the processes and state after peace agreements or other types of political settlement. As post-conflict is a policy term used by the humanitarian actors, this chapter will continue using it to facilitate understanding of the type of period being referred to.

[19] Some of the recommended actions are: disarmament, restoration of order, repatriation, capacity-building of security personnel, monitoring elections, promoting human rights, reforming or strengthening governmental institutions and promoting formal and informal political participation (Boutros-Ghali, 1992, para. 55).

[20] However, liberal peace theorists have strongly critiqued statebuilding interventions focused on the construction of a liberal democratic state through strengthening markets and through promoting democracy, civil society and the rule of law (Barnett et al., 2014; Chandler, 2013; David, 2001; Paris, 2004).

balance the formal role of the state, its actual capacity, and the statebuilding agenda when responding to a disaster.

The state is often seen in a centralized way along the lines of the Weberian notion of the state, which has a monopoly on the use of legitimate physical force in a defined territory (Weber, 1978, p. 164). However, in many conflict-affected countries, the state's use of physical force is not seen as legitimate, or there are other groups that have a degree of legitimacy in their use of violence. In these cases, the 'state' continues to exist, but institutions or governance bodies are contested.

One of the main challenges in responding to disasters in post-conflict settings is the state's capacity to respond and the strategies adopted by the aid and society actors to deal with this. Often, post-conflict states are considered fragile states. In its original usage, fragile states denoted a threat to international security and regional stability, making them a priority in both humanitarian and development policy (François & Sud, 2006; Fukuyama, 2004; Krasner & Pascual, 2005). The state was seen to lack the capacity, or be unwilling, to provide basic functions for its citizens (DFID, 2005; OECD/DAC, 2007). Or in Weberian terms, it has lost its monopoly to use legitimate force (Weber, 1978). However, this 'fragility' needs to be further unpacked for the post-conflict environment.

Not all developing states are considered 'fragile' even though most lack these capacities (Putzel, 2010, p. 2). Brinkerhoff (2016) underlines the importance of recognizing the multidimensional character of fragile states, that states are not uniformly fragile but can have stronger and weaker aspects, and that both structural conditions and agency influence fragility. State institutions often continue to operate, in one form or the other, in times of crises and 'significant pockets of capacity' remain functional (Brahimi, 2007, p. 16). This also adds a temporal dimension to the fragility, which could increase and decrease in certain periods. To determine the extent of fragility, Rocha Manocal (2013) identifies capacity, authority and legitimacy as the three key dimensions of the state and argues that 'fragile states' often have weaknesses in one or more dimensions (Rocha Monocal, 2013, p. 389). Call (2011) and Brinkerhoff (2016) identify similar 'gaps'. In disaster response, some state institutions might be more capable and resourceful than others. Furthermore, certain institutions could use the response itself to strengthen their capacity through the influx of aid and their authority and legitimacy by providing assistance to the disaster response.

As these dimensions are relational, in disaster response they are affected by the relationship between state, aid and society. The complexity and degrees of fragility within a

post-conflict state pose a challenge to disaster response. Weaknesses in different state institutions, and their development in the transitional period, affect both their capacity to respond and the strategies that other actors adopt to deal with them, often seen in the degree of collaboration or competition with the state in the humanitarian arena.

Another challenge in disaster response in post-conflict states is that the state is not a uniform entity, but rather a composition of state institutions, formal and informal. Traditional socio-political orders continuously interact and share authority and legitimacy with state institutions (Boege et al., 2008, 2009; Lund, 2006; Meagher et al., 2014). Hybrid governance is a tautology, as the definition of governance is the way in which governments and non-state actors relate to each other, including the blurred roles and responsibilities and interdependency in complex organizational forms (Colebatch, 2014).[21] Nevertheless, the concepts of state and political hybridity are analytically useful, as they show the power dynamics between different actors and the differences between institutions. Although this hybridity has long been acknowledged, humanitarian actors have not yet fully integrated it in policies and practices. This is particularly important for post-conflict settings, where institutional multiplicity is the rule rather than the exception. In situations of institutional multiplicity, a variety of actors lay claim to authority and all have sources of legitimation (van der Haar & Heijke, 2013). As the state institutions usually cannot provide the required services, other authorities often coexist to provide core functions of the state, as a 'mediated state' (Menkhaus, 2007). If they are not in competition, they even gain legitimacy from the state through acting as local mediator. However, when humanitarian aid arrives after a disaster, these other bodies can also compete for resources and authority. This will affect their legitimacy and reflect on the legitimacy of the state. In disaster response, the different political orders operate in a specific manner, with or without collaboration, and pursuing their own and common goals and interests.

When a disaster strikes, the responsibility of the state to respond is a core tenet of the DRR frameworks. In a context of transition, where statebuilding is ongoing in an atmosphere of distrust, this poses major challenges. One of the dynamics in this situation is that pre-existing aid relationships with the state come into play, affecting the way and the extent to which humanitarian actors cooperate and support the state in the response.

[21] As Reyntjens (2016, p. 358) notes, hybrid governance is not only applicable to fragile state settings, but is universally applicable.

This relationship between the post-conflict state and humanitarian actors is partly shaped by the peace process. Peace agreements and political settlements,[22] or the process towards them, are seen as the starting points of the post-conflict period, even if post-conflict countries are considered to be vulnerable to the conflict-trap, with increased chances of recurring conflict and violence after a settlement (Collier et al., 2008; Collier & World Bank, 2003; Nathan & Toft, 2011; Walter, 2004).[23] The success or failure of settlements and the 'relapse' into conflict, the proliferation of 'new' conflicts, or the creation of a partial peace, depend on a variety of factors (Fortna, 2004; Nilsson, 2008; Sørbø, 2004). Peace agreements can be seen as a certain type of social contract, where the focus lies on the mutually accepted agreement of political power and legitimacy by society to promote stability and peace (Hellsten, 2009, p. 96). However, mediated peace agreements add much complexity as external power relations and politics come into play. The strategy of peace conditionalities can be an instrument for donors to influence and promote the peace process and the consolidation of peace (see Barnett et al., 2014; Boyce, 2002; Frerks & Klem, 2006), but the pressure of 'deadline diplomacy' and the threat of sanctions raise the question of ownership of the peace settlement and negatively affect the confidence building between parties in conflict (Nathan, 2006).

Different types of societal actors play a large role both in the conflict and in strengthening state–society relations. In the end, change needs to come from within. The citizens and leaders of post-conflict countries are ultimately responsible for governance reforms, with a supporting role for the international agencies (Brinkerhoff, 2005; Chandler, 2013). Local actors have the power to resist, disregard or adjust the peace processes and to present alternative forms of peace (Mac Ginty, 2010). It is important to realize that the question of who sets peacebuilding or statebuilding goals is related to a number of factors, including power relations and the resources of the actors involved.

Disaster response in post-conflict societies may also be affected by the history of the conflict and its causes. Often, structural conflict continues after a political settlement, where underlying tensions and attitudes are still present, but violent behaviour has ceased (Galtung,

[22] Although peace agreements are types of political settlement, political settlements are also more than that. Here, the terms are used somewhat interchangeably to denote the political arrangement (either mediated or not) that defines the start of the post-conflict period. Peace agreements are usually mediated by external actors, either regional or international, and political settlements can also take the form of victory of one party over the others or a divided peace.

[23] Although the methods and numbers Collier uses for his arguments have been critiqued (Suhrke & Samset, 2007), his work does show the vulnerability of post-conflict countries to further conflict.

1996). This affects the way different actors respond to a disaster and, in turn, the response itself impacts these dynamics. Vulnerability is often reproduced by the disaster, with the increasing needs of marginalized communities and unsuccessful recovery increasing marginalization (Wisner et al., 2012, p. 30). This can instigate sentiments of 'relative deprivation' (Gurr, 1970) in such a way that tensions are aggravated. Aid and recovery increase people's expectation; when these expectations are not met, or when the situation declines further, grievances are strengthened. Grievances can also be increased by a weak government response (Drury & Olson, 1998; Gawronski & Olson, 2013).

The ways in which these different factors play out is affected by the understanding and narratives that different actors weave around them. These narratives will impact both response implementation and the relations between actors. To understand the challenges of disaster response in post-conflict settings, it is therefore crucial to focus on the interplay of actors and the way they manoeuvre in the humanitarian arena.

3.5. Humanitarian governance: Actors, power and legitimacy

Humanitarian governance can be conceptualized in different ways, each reflecting the way in which actors relate to each other and how they use their power and capacity to legitimize disaster response. The humanitarian world has been described variously as a system (ALNAP, 2015; Walker & Maxwell, 2008), an empire (Barnett, 2011; Donini, 2012), or an arena (Hilhorst & Jansen, 2010).

As a system, a network of complementary parts consisting of UN agencies, INGOs, NGOs, donors and other (local) actors functions by the guidance of an internal logic of principles, standards, norms, values and interests (ALNAP, 2015). Although there is a type of systems logic to humanitarian assistance, in practice this 'systems logic' is questionable. The complementarity of agencies, including coordination mechanisms, falls short. Values, given the variety of local and international actors and donors, are often at odds with each other, particularly in post-conflict settings, where the transitional period signifies profound changes in policies and standards guiding the response on both national and local levels.

The empire view argues that aid is mostly self-interested, instrumentalized and controlled by a powerful few (Donini, 2012), which can be seen in the concentration of aid in certain countries (Koch, 2009; Koch et al., 2009) and the channelling of funds to a select group

of agencies.[24] While aid is sometimes instrumentalized for certain goals, this view suggests a largely top-down structure. It ignores the many ways in which aid gets translated and altered throughout the chain of implementation and it underestimates the power and role of local organizations, the private sector, digital humanitarians, civil society, diaspora groups, communities and the state to negotiate the terms of the humanitarian response. Especially in post-conflict disaster response, the large influx of aid and organizations often poses a serious challenge to coordination and control. Moreover, there is often no central governance and organizations are self-regulating, creating a 'network-based governance' in practice, without an overarching 'empire' (ODI-HPG, 2016, p. 62).

Neither the system nor the empire perspective give sufficient consideration to the complexity of changing relations and (post-conflict) contexts, or to the reflexivity of the actors involved. Humanitarian governance can be better understood as an arena. This concept brings out that multiple actors, including affected communities and neighbours, operate in the 'humanitarian arena' and socially negotiate the conditions and practices of aid (Hilhorst & Jansen, 2010). Principles and politics are given meaning in practice and are not entirely imposed either from the top or from outside. Aid is not determined solely by humanitarian agencies; rather all actors shape humanitarian action. Power, in this theoretical approach, is given and performed by the actors involved, legitimizing their response. Without denying the importance of power inequalities, where especially local actors face barriers when it comes to financing and partnerships, this approach emphasizes that all actors manoeuvre in the arena.

The arena perspective on humanitarian governance also dovetails with developments in humanitarian practice, which is slowly moving away from classical humanitarianism towards resilience humanitarianism following global changes (Dijkzeul & Sandvik, 2019; Hilhorst, 2018). The exceptionality of the humanitarian mandate with its international gaze and paternalistic approach are increasingly questioned (Barnett, 2017). The World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 came at a pivotal point in time, and generated various commitments, such as The Grand Bargain, which promised changes to address these critiques and culminated in a localization agenda for humanitarian aid. The Grand Bargain reiterated 'the need to work together

[24] Donors are important actors who often delineate humanitarian aid. They are increasingly seen to instrumentalize and politicize humanitarian aid and to privilege agendas of stabilization (ALNAP, 2015, p. 13). Government donors channel two-thirds of their funds to multilateral agencies, primarily UN agencies, with six UN agencies receiving 46 per cent of the total funds. INGOs receive 19 per cent, of which ICRC receive almost two-thirds (Development Initiatives, 2016, p. 66). Only 1.2 per cent is channelled directly to governments, with non OECD-DAC (The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee) donors channelling 70 per cent of their funds to governments (Development Initiatives, 2016, p. 73).

efficiently, transparently and harmoniously with new and existing partners, including the private sector, individuals and non-traditional sources of funding' (The Grand Bargain, 2016, p. 1), and committed to providing 25 per cent of global humanitarian funding to local and national responders. Besides these financial commitments, it also called for a 'participation revolution' (The Grand Bargain, 2016, p. 1) to include affected people in decision-making processes. This inclusion of local and national actors in humanitarian governance is particularly important for post-conflict settings, where a long-term governance approach is taken. However, this 'shift' in power has been neither easy nor straightforward (Geoffroy & Grünewald, 2017) (see also chapter 7).

3.5.1. Aid–state–society power relations in post-conflict settings

In the humanitarian arena, humanitarian, state and societal actors[25] have various claims to legitimacy, capacity and authority to respond to disasters. In humanitarian assistance for disaster response, international law, tools and standards are important to gain access to an area and distribute aid effectively.[26] However, actors also need to have the power to do so. Disaster response in post-conflict contexts is defined by the interrelations between the different responders and the way in which they exert their power to manoeuvre in the arena and legitimize their actions.

Often, power is understood in the Weberian sense of coercion and authority (Weber, 1978). However, power is complex, interrelational and performed in discourses, actions and resistance, and strengthened by both material and authoritative resources (Berger & Luckmann, 1991; Bourdieu, 1989; Foucault, 1984; Frerks, 2013; Gaventa & Cornwall, 2008; Giddens, 1984; Hayward, 2000; Jabri, 1996; Latour, 1984; Lukes, 2004; Weber, 1978). Power is a social construct; it is produced and reproduced by actors to achieve certain outcomes. Its embeddedness in social relations also means that power relations between actors are co-

[25] Although a distinction is made between aid, state and society, they are in fact mutually constitutive and it is often problematic to identify them as separate entities in practice. However, as DRR roles are generally different for aid agencies, states and societal actors, this distinction is upheld to facilitate analyses of the processes within and relations between different groups of actors in the humanitarian arena.

[26] While international humanitarian law is applicable to armed conflict and occupation, disaster response does not have an overarching legal framework. Instead, it relies on various multilateral treaties, resolutions, declarations, guidelines and bilateral agreements as instruments, known as 'international disaster response laws, rules and principles' (IDRL) (IFRC, 2007, p. 15). In practice, much depends on the individual state's integration of disaster response in their national law, and their willingness and capacity to accommodate interventions after a disaster. The Core Humanitarian Standard and the Sphere standard are recognized by humanitarian actors as benchmarks and the Good Humanitarian Donorship principles and practices provide guidelines for donors to follow.

constitutive and reinforced through practices. As Giddens (1984) argues, people construct their social reality. Structural power relations, in this sense, are not unchangeable, but they are often internalized and reproduced through discourses and institutions (Berger & Luckmann, 1991).

Aid, state and society actors are both autonomous and dependent on each other, to varying degrees. While the renegotiation of power relations occurs continuously in everyday politics, actors change and opportunities can be more apparent after a disaster. Pelling and Dill (2010) argue that after a disaster, when the social contract between actors is contested or breaks down, a 'space for negotiation on the values and structures of society' is opened (Pelling & Dill, 2010, p. 27). Aid, state and societal actors renegotiate within this vacuum, and power can be redistributed. In post-conflict settings, the political stakes may be more complex and often higher, as this space for social negotiation coincides with and affects the ongoing reshaping of power relations in the transition after a peace process. The room to manoeuvre depends on the various material and authority resources that actors control.

Material resources can contribute to the bargaining power of each of the actors and are related to their institutional capacity to respond. Material resources in relation to the state can be understood as the ability of the state 'to provide its citizens with basic life chances' (Rocha Monocal, 2013, p. 389). Humanitarian agencies also rely on their material resources to provide humanitarian assistance. The extent to which the state is autonomous or dependent on another actor for control over services indicates its capacity and level of power in the arena. All the actors can influence the resources of others. States can influence the material capacities of aid agencies by, for example, enforcing bureaucratic rules and regulations for organizations to obtain visas, pay taxes etc. On the other hand, humanitarian agencies can affect the state's resources by including or excluding the state as an intermediary recipient of aid. And as Hilhorst and Jansen (2010) have shown, local authorities and affected populations can also strengthen their material resources by manoeuvring within the humanitarian arena. They can, for example, control the list of beneficiaries and 'define' the rules of aid allocation. They can block the influx of material resources, through blockades or protests. Power relations are seen in the degree of autonomy and dependency each of these actors have and the way they use their resources to respond to disasters.

Authority is another resource that actors use to manoeuvre in the humanitarian arena. Authoritative resources in relation to the state can be seen as the security and 'the extent to which the state controls its territory and national law is recognized' (Rocha Monocal, 2013,

p. 389). These resources are reflected in the extent to which the state, non-state actors, or traditional authorities have control over others. In post-conflict settings, state authority can be fragile, becoming more dependent on the resources of other actors and thereby losing authoritative resources. Humanitarian agencies need authority to negotiate safe access for humanitarian assistance, while societal actors exercise control over different social groups, by controlling who interacts and negotiates with humanitarian agencies and the state after a disaster. They hold a certain power over agents from humanitarian organizations and the state when these need access to certain communities or sites. Information is also an authoritative resource, as it can be used for strengthening control. All actors can withhold information to gain more control or material resources. Actors who have access to information while others are restricted also have more control over the type of information that is shared.

With authoritative and material resources, actors can manoeuvre and act in the arena, but their legitimacy determines whether their actions are accepted or resisted. Legitimacy is a term that has been mostly used in relation to the state, where it entails a normative belief of a political community that rules or institutions should be obeyed. The concept is sometimes extended to include performance as well (Levi et al., 2009; OECD, 2010; Papagianne, 2008; Rocha Monocal, 2013; Stel et al., 2012; Weber, 1978). However, legitimacy can also be seen as more symbiotic and multidimensional (Beetham, 2013; Lamb, 2014; Lister, 2003). Besides a normative dimension, legitimacy is socially constructed through beliefs and practices. To Lamb (2014), legitimacy is 'the worthiness of support', a sense that something is right and should morally be supported, and illegitimacy is 'the worthiness of opposition'. This does not only pertain to the state, but also to other organizations, institutions or entities. Lamb (2014) emphasizes that not only the entity of perceived legitimacy, or the 'conferee' is important, but also — or especially — the one who is evaluating, or 'the referee'. As Lister (Lister, 2003, p. 184) notes, it is important to understand 'which legitimacy matters' and the relative 'weights' of different actor referees. These weights can be related to the material and authoritative resources of the actors. The entity will therefore adjust its strategies to gain legitimacy appropriately, depending on the legitimacy which the entity attributes to the referee. A state or humanitarian agency might act differently towards one societal group than another. Humanitarian agencies often grant more legitimacy to more vulnerable groups when distributing aid after a disaster.

3.6. Disaster response in post-conflict Burundi

This section applies the core concepts and relationships discussed above to the case study of Burundi, a country recovering from a civil war that formally ended in 2005 when Pierre Nkurunziza was sworn in as president.[27] Burundi has also been affected by different types of disasters and is considered to be a fragile state.[28] Brittle transitional governance, as well as the statebuilding agenda and post-conflict politics, impact disaster response and the relations between aid and state actors.

Burundi is exposed to a variety of natural hazards, including droughts, floods, landslides, torrential rains and earthquakes. On 9 February 2014, torrential rains caused flooding, mud- and landslides in five communes (districts) in the capital of Bujumbura, killing 64 people and leaving an estimated 12,500 people homeless. In March and November 2015, and throughout the rainy season of 2015–2016, heavy rains and floods associated with El Nino affected over 30,000 people, destroying more than 5,000 houses and resulting in 52 deaths. In Rumonge, 276 households were settled in two IDP camps (UNOCHA, 2016). The response to the floods in Bujumbura differed from that in Rumonge, but the main challenges were indicative of disaster response in post-conflict settings.

The (centralized) state is responsible for disaster preparedness, risk reduction and response, which have been institutionalized through the Sendai Framework. In general, the roles and responsibilities of the state in disaster response are as follows: 1) declaring the crisis and issuing an emergency appeal for assistance; 2) providing assistance to and protection of the affected people; 3) coordinating the response; and 4) ensuring a conducive legal environment (Harvey et al., 2009, p. 6). These roles are part of the rules of the game within the humanitarian arena, but the way they are given shape in practice can be contested by the different actors, particularly in conflict-affected countries such as Burundi. In each of these roles, material and authoritative resources, and the way in which the different actors use their power vis-à-vis each other, affect the legitimacy of the state and other responders, posing challenges to post-conflict disaster response.

[27] The Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement was signed in 2000, while the CNDD-FDD signed a power-sharing agreement in 2004 and Palipehutu-FNL signed a ceasefire in 2006.

[28] Alert ranking in *Fragile States Index* 2015 (FFP, 2015)

3.6.1. Appeal and assistance

In Burundi, although an appeal was made after the 2014 Bujumbura floods and November 2015 Rumonge floods, there was no emergency appeal for the floods of 29 March 2015 in Gitaza, Muhuta;[29] instead, the president called for national solidarity and for the communities to help each other.[30] The likely reason for this difference is that the state did not want foreign interventions in the highly politicized pre-election period (INGO3, 30 August 2016)[31], with contested elections held in July that year.[32]

Whether an emergency is declared and an appeal is made directly affects aid actors' material and authoritative resources to respond in post-conflict settings. With the post-conflict statebuilding and governance agenda, humanitarian agencies will find it difficult to justify assistance without the state's request. Resource mobilization and room for control of the response are thereby limited. While the post-conflict agenda increases the authoritative resources of the state in terms of control over other actors, it does not directly benefit the state's material resources and capacity to provide assistance. Still, the state-centred agenda does foreground the assistance that the state provides to the affected communities, which are more reliant on existing social capital, people's relationship to the local state institutions and the degree of access to their services. This foregrounding of assistance can be used for political reasons, particularly in post-conflict settings, in which actors need to establish their legitimacy in the transitional period.

The way in which aid agencies respond depends on the relationship between the donors and the state. In Burundi, the president visited the affected sites in March, during the pre-electoral period, foregrounding his support to the affected population as an election strategy. However, after the protests and presidential elections in 2015, various donors suspended their cooperation and bilateral aid to Burundi, which relies on aid for around half

[29] Previously part of Bujumbura Rural, but became officially part of Rumonge after the creation of the latter province on 26 March 2015.

[30] See: <http://www.iwacu-burundi.org/gitaza-le-president-nkurunziza-en-appelle-a-la-solidarite-nationale-pluies-torrentielles/> . The victims of the March floods were displaced amongst host families or lived in makeshift shelters, with limited support from the Ministry of Solidarity, local churches, political parties, the Burundi Red Cross and UN agencies. After the establishment of IDP camps following the November floods, some victims from March were also included.

[31] These codes refer to interviews, accompanied by the interview date. All interviews were held in Freetown and the affected communities.. GOV = State actor (including local authorities), INGO = International non-governmental organization actor, NGO = Non-governmental organization actor (local NGO), IO = International Organization actor, SOC = Societal actor. Interviews are anonymised for ethical reasons.

[32] This is also a view expressed by other actors in informal conversations in the same research period.

of its national budget. Although humanitarian assistance was exempt from such suspensions, the number of organizations responding to the disaster in 2015 was less than in 2014.

How the second role of the state — to provide assistance and protection — is translated into practice exposes the evolving relations between the actors and their levels of legitimacy in the humanitarian arena. The state does not always have the capacity and resources to respond; furthermore, the state is often partisan in the conflict or responsible for social inequalities, complicating the principle of equal protection. The relations between state, aid and society actors often crystallize in the way they cooperate to provide assistance, using their different material and authoritative resources to legitimize their actions and themselves.

Societal actors are the first responders after a disaster. After the Bujumbura floods, the affected people were assisted by neighbours and family members who provided clothes and food, the local churches and youth and women groups, followed by the Burundi Red Cross (SOC4, 25 August 2016; FGD 2, 29 August 2016). Afterwards, other community and private initiatives were organized around the country and donations sent to Bujumbura. However, beneficiaries of aid are often only seen either as victims and vulnerable people, or as people who want to profit from the system.

In the humanitarian arena, affected communities actively seek survival and co-shape the realities of aid delivery, even if their manoeuvring power might be limited by the lack of resources or organization. As Hilhorst and Jansen (2010) note, beneficiaries actively seek out aid and strategize to acquire it. They see 'the humanitarian encounter as an interface where aid providers and aid-seekers meet each other' (Hilhorst & Jansen, 2010, p. 1122). Even when recipients portray themselves as passive, this constitutes a form of agency which Mats Utas (2005) calls 'victimcy'. People socially navigate the humanitarian arena by representing themselves in such a way to actively claim aid, using their agency contextually to foreground or background aspects of their identities which they consider most appropriate or effective for that specific situation, gaining legitimacy as being 'worthy of support'. This can take the form of foregrounding 'vulnerability' or 'identity', increasing access to goods and services and engaging in a type of 'forum shopping'. In Burundi, people from neighbouring communities presented themselves as victims to different organizations in order to access aid. A local government official acknowledged this practice and accepted that all Burundians are vulnerable, so when a non-affected person asked for aid during the distributions, they would also receive it (SOC4, 25 August 2016; GOV2, 22 August 2016).

State institutions are not always included in the response by aid agencies. During the civil war in Burundi, humanitarian aid often bypassed the state and depended on local authorities, who frequently took advantage of the supplied aid, weakening local governance and consequently reinforcing patrimonial systems (Uvin, 2008). After the flood of 2014, local leaders were also given the responsibility to identify recipients, and creative list-making was rampant, through which favouritism privileged political party members who had a sum of money to share (SOC1, 25 August 2016; SOC2, 29 August 2016). This view was also shared by the local communities and reinforced by numerous accounts of corruption at the level of the volunteers and their close collaboration with local governance structures, where lists were enlarged through the addition of names and some aid distributors requesting money for materials. Various actors, from INGOs to individuals and community groups, responded directly without coordination and cooperation with the National Platform or the Burundian Croix Rouge. These organizations preferred to distribute aid without cooperating with others, out of fear of corruption (SOC4, 25 August 2016). Direct implementation is used as a strategy by agencies to deal with the lack of trust in the state institutions and the complexity of institutional multiplicity at the local level, where different local leaders have varying relations with the communities. Some larger INGOs therefore distributed aid based on their own recipient lists. But the multitude of lists generated a high chance of some names being duplicated, as most actors did not have an overview of what assistance others had provided (SOC4, 25 August 2016). However, INGOs self-organized locally, which facilitated the co-creation of one beneficiary list that other actors followed (NGO2, 17 August 2016; SOC5, 25 August 2016). As the government had requested all aid to be transferred through the Platform and the Croix Rouge, actors who did not use the Croix Rouge as a medium defied the state's request. The majority of research participants (both organizations and community members) expressed the belief that they could not trust the Platform or the Croix Rouge. This affected both the legitimacy of the Croix Rouge and the government, as they were not considered 'worthy of support', strengthening agencies' authority over the response and guarding material resources.

Communication and information are both an essential and challenging part of disaster response. They directly relate to power relations, as information, or the withholding thereof, can be a way to control both people and material resources and to include or exclude groups from formal decision-making. Although information flows from the state to its citizens through various media, the capacity for state institutions to collect, manage and diffuse vital climate

information accurately and on time is often weak. In Burundi, the Geographical Institute of Burundi (IGEBU) has limited means for the collection and communication of climate data (GOV4, 18 August 2016). Furthermore, the roles are not always clear; even when IGEBU has information about an impending hazard, they can only share this information with the state, which has the responsibility to act. If the state does not communicate this information, warning becomes problematic.

Most humanitarian agencies produce strong discourses on beneficiary accountability. In practice, however, beneficiary accountability is often challenging, and gaps in quality information, communication flows, and the inclusion of affected people persist (Alexander, 2015, p. 99). Beneficiary accountability has been promoted in humanitarian assistance and included in the Core Humanitarian Standard. It involves 'taking account', through listening and participation, 'giving account', through transparency and information, and 'responsibility', by taking ownership of successes and failures (Serventy, 2015). However, as Hilhorst (2015) argues, patronizing forms of accountability, taking the aid agencies as starting points and 'granting' accountability, are dominant, while the 'co-governance of aid' and reciprocal relations are at the core of a more transformative accountability. Without a reciprocal relation, agencies are not giving 'weight' to how the beneficiaries view the legitimacy of their response, depending on a unilateral definition of legitimacy. As Heijmans (in Hilhorst and Bankoff, 2004, p. 125) notes, most agencies define the situation of victims for them, even though the manner in which local communities perceive and calculate disaster risk, and adapt their strategies, can be different. In this case, communities are not seen as legitimate actors themselves. Especially in conflict settings, the way in which participation is practised has exposed challenges, such as the reproduction of existing power inequalities, participants who do not have a real voice or influence, or the legitimization of the elite's voice (Alejandro Leal, 2007; Cornwall, 2008; Pelling, 1998). By limiting accountability, an actor limits the authoritative resources of another.

An important part of beneficiary accountability in Burundi is two-way communication between the aid agencies and the communities. The main feature of this is the complaints mechanism, either through phone communication lines, suggestion boxes or directly with staff in the affected areas. As local leaders often have a strong presence in the community, depending on their power, they can also control other community members' complaints. Further, corruption and mistrust between community members and their leadership is often a restraining factor. After the 2014 flood, affected community members did not feel free to

register a complaint, as they regarded the local leaders and humanitarian volunteers as part of the corruption. One person addressed a complaint to an expatriate humanitarian worker and hoped to receive assistance, but when assistance arrived, a volunteer at the distribution level blocked the release of materials to the complainant; as one interviewee put it, for complaints, community members would rather 'address themselves to god' (SOC1, 25 August 2016). Moreover, the criteria for the receipt of aid were not sufficiently communicated, as some potential recipients heard that aid was only for widows and therefore did not make any aid claims. During the emergency response, there was a sense of powerlessness within the community. They did not participate in any of the project phases. In the IDP camps, the committees, who do participate in the distribution of aid, did not have any information on the date or length of continuation of food deliveries by the World Food Programme (WFP), even though they are dependent on them (FGD3, 24 August 2016; FGD4, 26 August 2016). As humanitarian agencies try to collaborate with local structures such as the local leaders as focal points for information, this selective information-sharing risks reproducing local inequalities by giving more resources to leaders who receive more information and who are therefore seen as more legitimate by some community groups.

3.6.2. Coordination and legal environment

The third role — coordination — also faces many challenges. As Harvey et al. (2009) note, there is often friction between the government's system of line ministries and sectors and the systems set up by humanitarian agencies, who do not always perceive the state as an equal partner and who are unwilling to relinquish responsibilities and power.

Post-conflict countries that are focusing on statebuilding and governance reforms are often not prepared for a large-scale disaster response. In countries where the UN cluster system[33] is not permanently established, the activation and functioning of the clusters is slow. In Burundi, the UN and the government work together following a sectoral approach along the lines of the different ministries. All sectoral ministries are part of the National Platform for Disaster Management, which falls under the responsibility of the Civil Protection Agency, and is chaired by the Director-General of Civil Protection, under the Ministry of Interior and Public Security. But the ministries do not have autonomy over their own funds. While

[33] A coordination mechanism in which state authorities and UN agencies co-lead 'clusters'. These clusters are groups that each specialize in a particular sector (such as water, sanitation and hygiene, health, infrastructure, housing etc.).

disasters often weaken state capacity, they further increase the demands placed on the state's limited resources (International Alert, 2015). To gain material resources, the state is dependent on the international organizations, creating friction through the interdependency of the authoritative resources of the state and the material resources of the donors and humanitarian agencies.

In post-conflict countries, building capacity of state institutions is an important part of the reconstruction endeavour. However, humanitarian agencies do not always fully cooperate and coordinate with the state, particularly if the state is seen as fragile. In Burundi, communities *and* agencies expressed their mistrust of the state and its institutions. Humanitarians actively manoeuvre in the humanitarian arena. As Hilhorst and Jansen (2012, p. 894) put it, 'principles and policies get translated, altered, co-opted or circumvented in everyday practice'. Humanitarian actors themselves take on roles to actively cope with challenging environments. Hilhorst (2016) calls this type of agency 'ignorancy': actors who manoeuvre political spaces by choosing to deploy their technocratic approach to achieve their goals and consciously choose naivety as a strategy.

In Burundi, humanitarian actors with material resources also adopted a strategy to gain more authoritative resources through coordination. Although the National Platform for Disaster Management, chaired by the head of the Civil Protection Agency, is responsible for inter-agency coordination together with the line ministries and related UN agencies, the UN has attempted to take more of a lead, as they felt the government was trying to keep too much control over the platform, despite lacking the resources to coordinate and implement interventions. Exercising their 'ignorancy' by telling the government that the state authorities were probably too busy, the UN agencies gained more authority as they were allowed to coordinate the sector meetings with the ministries attending; the sector meetings are where decisions are made, while the Platform meetings are used to exchange information (IO2, 27 August 2016).

Burundi's post-conflict state and its relation to aid actors and the affected communities must be understood through its conflict and peace history. As discussed above, the conflict period and the peace process have an impact on post-conflict aid–state relationships. In Burundi, this manifests in the relationship between the CNDD-FDD, as the political party in power, and foreign aid actors. Curtis (2013) relates the mistrust of donors in Burundian institutions to the peace process wherein the goals for stabilization and control were favoured over social justice and a liberal peace, turning a blind eye to governance abuses benefiting the

power holders, and allowing some leaders to gain more authority and control. Violence continued throughout the peace process and was often used as a bargaining chip. The main rebel group, the CNDD-FDD, was not involved in the Arusha peace process, but signed a power-sharing agreement in 2004 and won the 2005 elections. Curtis (2013) argues that violence and control continued to play a central role in the post-conflict Burundian state. This makes the Burundian government actors less 'worthy of support', or less legitimate, in the eyes of the international aid agencies, which in turn legitimizes the latter's increasing control over the coordination of the response through a technocratic discourse. Furthermore, as Curtis (2015) notes, international donors were more accustomed to working with the other Burundian parties who were part of the Arusha negotiations.

Internal state authority to coordinate can also be weak. In Burundi, attendance by the focal points of the line ministries in the Platform meetings is usually very low (GOV3, 18 August 2016, INGO1, 17 August 2016). These focal points are perceived to be chosen through favouritism and motivated by the additional premium they receive. After political changes, these staff are exchanged, which does not benefit human resources (NGO1, 17 August 2016). On a local level, government staff of technical institutions, such as the Provincial Department of Agriculture and Livestock (DPAE), also change frequently, making it more difficult to build capacities and become more professional, with staff having 'two heads', both political and technical (INGO1, 17 August 2016). With the multiplicity of local authorities, each with its own base of authority and legitimacy, coordination is challenging.

Finally, the fourth role — the legal environment — can either facilitate or hamper aid assistance, with strict rules and registration defining the allocative and authoritative resources of humanitarian agencies. Although the National Contingency Plan for Disaster Management already existed, and the National Platform for Disaster Management had been established in 2007, the Platform was not active at the time of the 2014 floods in Bujumbura. Furthermore, the lack of a separate budget for the Platform and the limited means of the government to respond are seen as major constraints by the government (GOV1, 17 August 2016; GOV3, 18 August 2016). And even though the National Platform has been decentralized on a provincial and district level, its implementation is still in process. Because it does not have the material resources at its disposal, the government is more reliant on the aid agencies to provide assistance, affecting the control and authority that it can exercise over the response. Still, the state can influence the authority and material capacities of humanitarians by enforcing strict tax or visa rules, or restricting international interventions altogether. In Burundi, the

state has applied additional taxes for international staff and controlled the visa procedure, delaying immediate staff support when the organizations needed it (IO3, 30 August 2016).

3.7. Conclusion

Disasters are social constructions, produced by a myriad social, political and economic factors and involving much inequality in the way people are affected by them. When a disaster strikes in a post-conflict setting, the response will be shaped by the conflict history. However, the embeddedness of aid organizations in the conflict context is not included in their policy frameworks. Although each disaster and context are unique, there are specific challenges that are exacerbated by the nature of a post-conflict setting, in which the transition period creates a tension between the statebuilding agenda and the disaster response.

To respond to disasters, different aid, state and societal actors enter the humanitarian arena, where they manoeuvre in the space opened by the disaster to socially negotiate power relations, using material and authoritative resources, and to gain legitimacy, as part of their everyday politics and the political nature of disasters. The way in which disaster response is implemented is affected by the discourses, actions and resistance of the actors in the arena. Post-conflict settings are challenging environments for disaster response, with a complex web of compounding vulnerabilities on both social and political levels. The state, aid and society actors face challenges in dealing with the socio-political fragility of the transition period, when the capacity to respond is often diminished. The way in which different actors respond to a disaster, each with their own agenda and resources, is affected by the conflict history and the peace process.

Although this chapter is limited to a literature review, the Burundi exploratory study allowed an analytical reflection on the theory. This reflection was important due to the novel combination of the post-conflict and post-disaster literature in one framework. The application of the case using the Sendai Framework illustrates the applicability of disaster response theories in post-conflict scenarios. The response to the floods in 2014 and 2015 showed how different actors find strategies to manoeuvre in the arena, using their material and authoritative resources in relation to the resources of others affected by the post-conflict context. The response roles of the state to the disasters have been contentious in a context where the state is considered fragile and in need of capacity-building. This perceived capacity gap resulted in the different actors taking on their own strategies to deal with other actors,

centring around the challenges of capacity, coordination, implementation, mistrust and accountability. To locate the state as central to the framework has proven to be relevant, as the examples showed that one of the most important challenges to be faced is the friction between policy and practice. For policy-makers, the state is central to post-conflict statebuilding efforts and responsible for the implementation of the DRR framework; in practice, however, it is often bypassed by donors and humanitarian agencies, who limit the state's material and authoritative resources.

Chapter 4: Nepal

One-door policy, multiple-window practice

Abstract[34]

After the 2015 earthquakes in Nepal, the response was nearly as overwhelming as the magnitude of the disaster itself. Tensions between the humanitarian imperative and the post-conflict statebuilding agenda soon became evident. Many actors opened different windows for responding by creatively complying to support the state's approach, whereas others bypassed the official channels completely. In post-conflict settings such as Nepal, the situation is especially complicated because of the contradiction between policies underscoring the importance of the state in the response and the reality of the fragile state, which often creates a large role for aid actors. In Nepal, the post-conflict political landscape shaped the contours of the response, as well as how actors decided to operate within them. Based on empirical findings from four months of research, this chapter contributes to a better understanding of the intricacies of the post-disaster and post-conflict nexus in the context of a state-led response.

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4.1. Introduction

When devastating earthquakes hit over 30 districts in Nepal on 25 April and 12 May 2015, almost 9,000 people died and over 21,000 were injured. This disaster affected millions of people, with families losing their homes and livelihoods. It was clear that the magnitude of this disaster required an equally large response, and the role of the Nepali security forces and many public and private initiatives have been widely praised.

However, the Nepali state needed support to respond to people's needs. The immediate influx of international humanitarian actors overwhelmed national and local governance. Coordination and cooperation between the different actors involved became increasingly challenging (Boersma et al., 2016), and the response further crystallized existing governance struggles between the Nepali state and international actors (Bhatta, 2013). The earthquakes in Nepal therefore demonstrate the importance of understanding collaborative disaster governance premised on state–non-state collaboration (Tierney, 2012) in the context of the post-conflict and post-disaster nexus.

Previous work has shown a strong relationship between disaster and conflict (Spiegel et al., 2007), with mutually reinforcing dynamics (Nel & Righarts, 2008) underscoring the political nature of both disasters and disaster response (Olson, 2000; Pelling & Dill, 2010). However, little research has examined what this means specifically for post-conflict settings, which are characterized by social change and political reform (Brinkerhoff, 2005). In Nepal, the disaster unfolded in a contested political landscape; the finalization of the new constitution had been postponed multiple times, and local elections had not been held for 28 years. A transitional period was set in motion in 2006 by the end of 10 years of armed conflict, and, in 2015, unresolved socio-political challenges and continuous political reform impacted both the population's vulnerability to the earthquakes and the national response.

Because disaster governance centres on the state's role (Harvey et al., 2009), institutional changes in post-conflict settings pose particular challenges to aid actors balancing the humanitarian imperative with a supporting role in strengthening state institutions. Harvey (2013) argues that even when states cannot fulfil their role, humanitarians should continue to engage them. This has become even more important after the World Humanitarian Summit and the Grand Bargain (2016), in which international humanitarian actors have committed to localize aid to national and local responders. The centrality of the state often creates a tension between the humanitarian principles and state sovereignty (Kahn & Cunningham, 2013). In

practice, various challenges arise in translating disaster governance policies into outcomes (Jones et al., 2014) and disasters can become political instruments (Warner, 2013).

In Nepal, this led to contestation over control of the response and tension between aid and state actors. Although the everyday politics of humanitarian aid are rarely addressed in the disaster governance literature, understanding how aid and state actors balance the politics of strengthening the state's response and the humanitarian imperative can provide valuable insight. This is especially important given these states' often limited capacity to fulfil the roles and responsibilities defined by international disaster response policies and different political institutions' attempts to establish their legitimacy in an uncertain transitional space.

This chapter aims to address often overlooked questions regarding the post-conflict and post-disaster nexus. How do state and non-state actors socially negotiate a state-led disaster response in a contested political environment? How does this affect local-level disaster governance? The chapter critically analyses aid actors' space for responding to disasters in post-conflict settings, where state-centred disaster response policies are negotiated in practice.

4.2. Statebuilding in post-conflict emergencies

4.2.1. Collaborative or contentious disaster response governance?

International involvement in post-conflict and post-disaster processes takes a state-centric perspective. However, whereas post-conflict interventions are often situated within a politics and statebuilding discourse, post-disaster action suggests humanitarian, apolitical practice. When these spheres converge in collaborative, consensus-oriented disaster governance, tensions arise.

Post-conflict statebuilding primarily focuses on strengthening weak state institutions to prevent a relapse (Collier et al., 2008; Doyle & Sambanis, 2000; Nathan & Toft, 2011; Nilsson, 2008; Walter, 2004). These state institutions are often in transition, with legitimacy and power being continuously negotiated. This period is accompanied by a large influx of actors and resources. Post-conflict and post-disaster processes are mutually constitutive. The post-conflict context of a state in transition legitimizes the participation of many non-state actors in the response governance. This poses challenges when the political motives and social frameworks of state and non-state actors diverge.

Post-disaster contexts are often characterized by complexity in humanitarian politics and in non-state actors' roles — especially in (post-)conflict settings. In international humanitarian law, humanitarian assistance revolves around sovereignty, consent and legitimacy. The imperative to intervene is generally accepted in times of crisis (Bellamy, 2004). Unlike international humanitarian law's legal framework, the 'international disaster response laws, rules and principles' rely on multilateral and bilateral treaties, resolutions, declarations and guidelines (IFRC, 2007). While significant progress has been made to formalize international disaster response laws, when the earthquakes struck Nepal in 2015, response actors were still guided by a framework that was mostly based on 'soft law'. The humanitarian principles legitimize and guide the conduct of humanitarian and multi-mandate organizations in 'consented space' and are presented as apolitical. However, these principles are not absolute; they depend on context and on actors; for example, faith-based organizations legitimize their actions through a religious mandate (De Cordier, 2009). Scholars have shown that the principles are often used instrumentally (Bennett et al., 2016; Dijkzeul & Hilhorst, 2016; Hilhorst & Jansen, 2010; Leader, 2000; Salomons, 2014; Weiss, 1999). Much as disaster-affected people use a 'victimcy' strategy to increase their aid access (Utas, 2005), non-state actors deploy 'ignorancy', where more technical approaches are foregrounded over other motives (Hilhorst, 2016).

In practice, disaster response is socially negotiated through everyday politics in the humanitarian arena (Hilhorst & Jansen, 2010), with actors continuously re-negotiating the roles, legitimacy and outcomes of humanitarian aid, translating policies into practice. This is especially important in post-conflict settings because of the involvement of many multi-mandate organizations that, in addition to providing humanitarian assistance, also actively pursue objectives that require an overtly political and rights-based approach to address disaster vulnerabilities (Bennett et al., 2016, p. 52). In disaster governance, compromises are inevitably made between state and non-state actors on the modalities of aid (del Valle & Healy, 2013).

Under international law, the sovereign state must consent to other actors assisting in disaster response (Venturini, 2012). In practice, the power imbalance between aid actors and the state and the resulting tensions involved in assisting the state become visible during and after a disaster. State-centred disaster response policies often do not translate into state-centred practices to overcome this imbalance. Humanitarian aid provided by non-state actors is often directed to other non-state actors. Western government donors direct most of their

funding to multilateral agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs); only 2.5 per cent of this funding is channelled to states (Development Initiatives, 2016, 2018), compared with 60 per cent to multilateral agencies and 35 per cent to NGOs (Development Initiatives, 2018). These resources strengthen NGOs' power in the humanitarian arena, where collaborative disaster governance is socially negotiated.

4.2.2. Post-conflict politics shaping disaster policies and practice in Nepal

In Nepal, research has shown strong post-conflict socio-political challenges in disaster governance. As Harrowell and Özerdem (2018) have argued, the politics of the post-conflict process shaped the political setting for the earthquake response. Nepal's 2006 comprehensive peace agreement was followed by a decade of political reform. Nevertheless, the post-conflict period, when the disaster unfolded, was characterized by: 1) the increasing permanence of international aid actors in the governance landscape and the accompanying tensions; 2) enduring social marginalization; and 3) an unstable political environment, creating challenges for aid actors seeking to support the Nepali state's response to the earthquakes.

First, international aid actors and external funding have become intrinsic parts of governance in Nepal, creating tensions vis-à-vis state power even before the earthquakes struck. Since the comprehensive peace agreement was signed, foreign aid has increased in Nepal. The country received over 39 per cent more aid per capita in the first five years after the conflict ended than during the conflict period (Ndikumana, 2016). In 2014, external aid represented around 20 per cent of the national budget, and there were approximately 200 international NGOs (INGOs) and over 40,000 NGOs working in Nepal (Ministry of Finance, 2015). The disaster risk reduction agenda was also largely donor-driven (Bulkeley & Jordan, 2012; Jones et al., 2014). Furthermore, international actors' liberal statebuilding agenda created multiple power centres and strengthened non-state actors' position, making consensus more difficult (Bhatta, 2013). The Nepali state and society have been critical of outside influences. A strong counter-discourse on the state's sovereignty is supported by mistrust of the intentions of India and other outside influences (Adhikari, 2014).

Second, continued exclusion and marginalization of lower caste and non-caste groups have affected social negotiations between state and non-state actors in the response. According to the 2011 national census, Nepal had 126 caste and ethnic groups (Government of Nepal, 2012). Many groups have political representation, but the high caste dominates power in Kathmandu (Lawoti & Hangen, 2013). The earthquakes disproportionately affected

marginalized communities and lower castes and the politicization of aid created conflicts within communities (Shah & Acharya, 2017). As Koirala and Macdonald (2015) have noted, the earthquakes were most devastating in rural areas because of centralized politics and poor development outside Kathmandu.

Third, the volatile political environment of Nepal's post-conflict period impacted disaster management policies and practice. After the war, political reforms safeguarding equal rights and inclusion were promised, but the process had been slow and highly contested. The earthquakes gave this process a new impetus, and the new constitution was fast-tracked. From the end of September 2015 to the end of February 2016, protests erupted, and a blockade of the Indian border resulted in a fuel crisis and delayed earthquake relief and reconstruction materials, directly affecting the response and recovery activities.

Moreover, because the earthquakes struck during the pre-constitutional period, political structures and institutions were operating in a transitional system under an interim constitution and acts pre-dating the conflict, such as the Local Administration Act of 1971, which encouraged local self-governance. All the primary leadership positions were centrally appointed from Kathmandu rather than being elected,[35] reproducing an elitist governance structure in a decentralized fashion. This affected the response because the District Disaster Relief Committees (DDRCs) were headed by district leaders, the Chief District Officers (CDOs), who regularly changed positions, largely following national-level political developments. Thus, these officers' party affiliation was important in their role and represented part of a larger system in which the central government's control is seen in a decentralized politics.

Aid actors faced these challenges in the response to the 2015 earthquakes, with the post-conflict political environment strongly shaping post-disaster governance practices. For the state, legitimacy partly depended on service delivery; thus, controlling aid resources was important for statebuilding (Melis, 2018; Rocha Monocal, 2013; Stel et al., 2012). This led to wheeling and dealing of aid between state and non-state actors.

[35] In this system, the Chief District Officer (CDO) was appointed by the Ministry of Home Affairs to head the District Administration Office and acted as a representative of the government at the district level. The Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development appointed the Local Development Officer (LDO) at the district level to lead the District Development Committee, and the Secretary of the Village Development Committee (VDC) at the village level.

4.3. Methods

This chapter is based on fieldwork conducted in Kathmandu and selected Village Development Committees (VDCs[36]) in Sindhupalchok[37], and Gorkha[38] districts, in February to May 2017. Data were collected through 123 semi-structured interviews[39] and eight focus group discussions (FGDs), with 10 participants in each, in Tauthali, Mankha, Laprak and Barpak. A student from Tribhuvan University assisted in negotiating with gatekeepers and acted as an interpreter. A collaboration was formed with the Institute of Crisis Management in Kathmandu to discuss the findings throughout the research period.

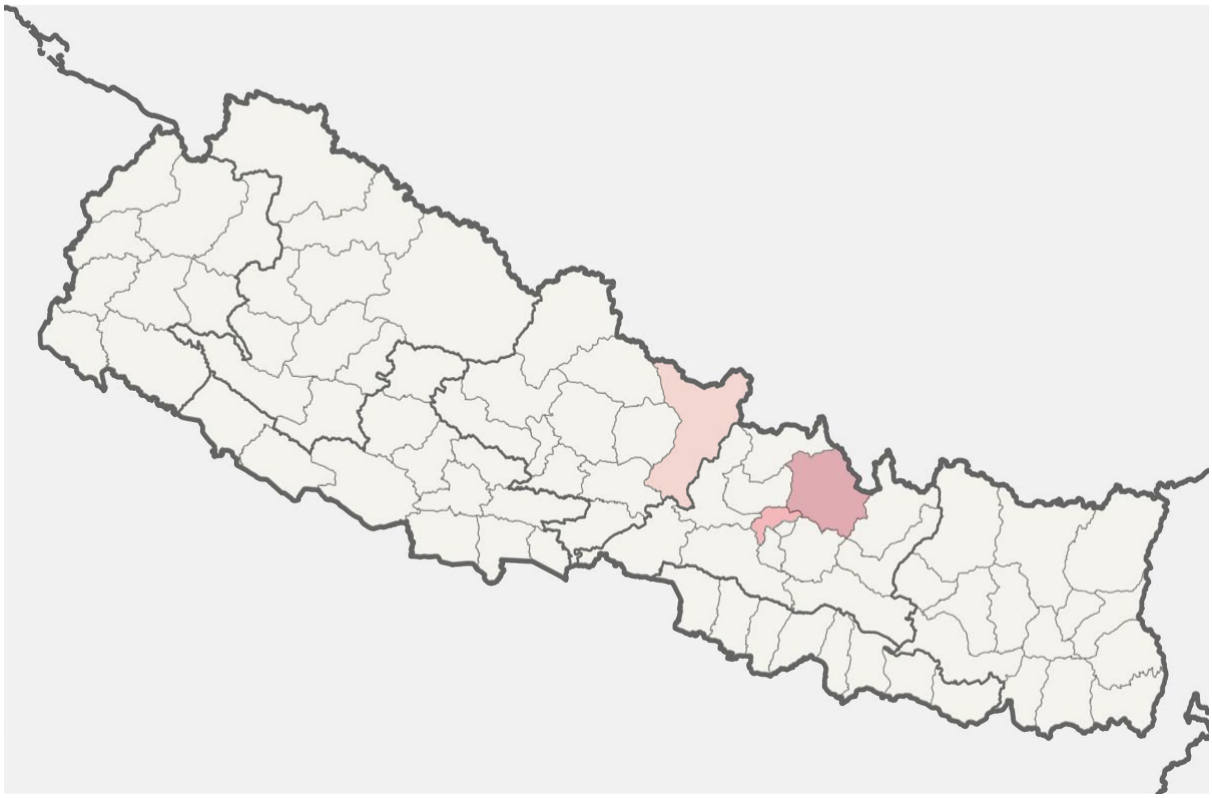


Figure 3. Map of Nepal with – from left to right – Gorkha, Kathmandu and Sindhupalchok districts

The interview participants were selected to represent a wide array of actors who were actively involved in the response. The INGOs, international organizations (IOs) such as

[36] Village Development Committees were administrative units under the district level, comparable to villages. The VDC was further divided into several Wards.

[37] Chautara municipality, Thautali, and Mankha VDCs

[38] Gorkha municipality, Laprak, and Barpak VDCs

[39] Interviews were conducted with two research institution representatives, six community members, 34 state representatives (three national-level and 31 district- and VDC-level), 33 INGO representatives, 20 international organization representatives (including United Nations agencies and donors), 12 NGO representatives, one journalist, seven private initiative or organization representatives, and eight security forces officials.

donors, and NGOs were contacted directly by e-mail or phone. The state representatives were approached by phone and by visiting their offices. The FGD participants were assembled by each VDC's social mobilizer, who generally facilitates community development activities within the community. The interviews focused on the organization of the response, inter-actor coordination, roles and responsibilities, and the main challenges confronted. The FGDs included a participatory timeline mapping the different responders and evaluating them with ranking and scoring.

The main challenges encountered in the research related to access and participation at the VDC level and the influence of the reconstruction period on the participants' views of the response. Although the FGD participants included a mix of different castes and ethnicities, it is possible that there was a slight bias towards the political affiliation of the social mobilizer who organized the participants. However, multiple opinions were expressed and met with respect in most FGDs. My background as a foreign researcher may have affected the responses both positively and negatively, sometimes creating a safe space for political opinions to be voiced but also potentially creating a trust barrier. The student partially mitigated this limitation; she was of mixed caste, which increased trust from the lower caste participants. Additionally, having a local interpreter increased access in VDCs with more uniform ethnicity and caste distributions, as was the case in Gorkha, where limited Nepali is spoken.

Because the research was conducted two years after the earthquake response, the reconstruction period may have influenced the participants' opinions. To the extent possible, I included participants who were involved in the actual response or recovery. The time that had passed may also have allowed participants to reflect on the entire post-disaster period and see the progression of inter-actor relationships over time.

A thematic analysis was performed by coding the interview and FGD transcripts to nodes using NVivo. Codes were identified through a grounded approach, allowing nodes to emerge from the data. These were then divided into the themes of actor relations, challenges, discourses, and social practices of disaster response governance. These themes are discussed below in terms of: 1) the main challenges of the state-led policies and practices; 2) the social practices of non-state actors navigating these challenges; and 3) variation at the local governance level. The large number of interviews allowed me to triangulate research participants' opinions and cluster the data to identify more generalized challenges and practices that were shared among the participants.

4.4. Aid–state relations challenging response paradigms in a post-conflict setting

Aid responders had diverging motives and sometimes bypassed official channels. To increase control, the government imposed a one-door policy, meaning that all non-state responders had to pass through state institutions in their response. In practice, however, this policy was negotiated, reinterpreted and sometimes circumvented, allowing the provision of assistance through multiple windows. With response resources and power mostly wielded by international aid actors, their decisions regarding supporting the one-door policy or bypassing state institutions through multiple windows had a profound impact. The Nepali state preferred the strengthening of state institutions through the one-door policy because the multiple-window approach required compromises and produced varying degrees of support for the post-disaster statebuilding agenda.

This section begins by discussing the most challenging state policies and approaches for non-state actors, namely, the one-door policy and the blanket approach to aid distribution, which are examined as state tactics to control non-state actors and manage the impact of the aid response on the state's legitimacy. Next, non-state actors' tactics to manoeuvre within or outside the state system are analysed, considering these tactics on a continuum from compliance to alienation. Finally, discrepancies observed between different districts and VDCs are discussed to explore the intricacy of the political context of the response in practice and to show how aid–state relations affected local governance.

4.4.1. The state challenging aid: Beating around the bush

Political motives of control were laid bare in the state's response, as seen in the one-door policy, the blanket approach to aid distribution, and humanitarian assistance restrictions. Non-state actors questioned these motives, but the Nepali state saw these policies, approaches and restrictions as part of the statebuilding agenda, aiming to support social cohesion and the legitimacy of the Nepali state.

4.4.1.1. The one-door policy: Confined coordination

Although the state was open to support, controlling the multitude of non-state actors involved in the response was difficult. Research participants representing state structures strongly critiqued INGOs' lack of transparency. The state had to balance the need for aid with the accompanying influence. The one-door policy became a cornerstone of the state's response;

by formally requiring all non-state responders to inform and include state institutions in their response, this policy controlled disaster governance and ensured that all responders fell in line. Although non-state actors saw it as a political measure of control, the one-door policy was rooted in national policies pre-dating the conflict. The Natural Calamity Act of 1982 stipulated that the government of Nepal could require 'foreign nationals and agencies to take the approval of the Government of Nepal to enter into any area for any purpose affected by natural Calamity' (Government of Nepal, 1982, p. 4). In the relief phase, there was confusion regarding whether the one-door policy applied only to organizational registration and coordination or also to the distribution of aid items. Because aid agencies preferred to be involved in the coordination but to maintain control over their operations and resources, the one-door policy was contested and re-negotiated in practice.

The district-level translation of the one-door policy was largely dependent on the CDO and took different forms over time. In some districts, aid items were stored by the state. In others, a state representative simply needed to be present. This direct control over aid items resulted in accusations of misuse by both state and non-state actors, and the practice was renegotiated. An INGO officer explained this as follows:

> In the beginning, the government said NGOs and INGOs who come here with relief materials should distribute with [the] government's one-door system. It should distribute in front of government representatives. The relief materials were stored for a week because of the government one-door policy, and finally the government realized that is not possible and let us do it ourselves. […] Sometimes they said NGOs and INGOs were not transparent and so on. They said the materials and money were misused. But the money [was] not misused but stuck because of [the] lengthy process. (INGO6, 12 February 2017)[40]

Handing over aid items to the state presented a dilemma because non-state responders could not secure accountability outside their organization. However, the state's legitimacy partly depended on service delivery, making control over these material resources important for statebuilding objectives. Allowing other parties to control these resources would diminish the

[40] These codes refer to interviews, accompanied by the interview date. GOV = State actor (these include local authorities), IO = International Organization actor, INGO = International non-governmental organization actor. Focus group discussions are coded as FGD. Interviews are anonymised for ethical reasons.

state's power. Some CDOs therefore insisted that aid items be stored and distributed by the state.

The government initially accepted non-state actors opening multiple windows. Nevertheless, within a month, the one-door policy was translated into a regulation and coordination policy requiring organizations to register and coordinate with the appropriate state institutions. However, no transfer of resources to the state was required. A national state official noted that the policy aimed to ensure the equal distribution of aid: 'If we would not have introduced the one-door policy, there's high risk that [a] few places may receive two or three times relief support, and some places may be deprived of such support' (GOV22, 14 March 2017). In addition to being an argument for the one-door policy, equality in aid also supported the state's blanket approach to aid distribution, wherein aid would be distributed to everyone equally instead of being targeted to specific groups.

4.4.1.2. The blanket approach: A social cohesion measure or elitism?

In humanitarian aid, the choice between targeting the most vulnerable and providing universal coverage is often made after analysing the needs and vulnerabilities of specific groups. Both options have political consequences. The Nepali state aimed for assistance or all, with interviewed state representatives reiterating that this would protect social cohesion. In contrast, many organizations preferred a targeted approach, following the humanitarian principles and acknowledging social groups' differing needs.

A district-level state representative argued that targeting reflects negatively on the state's role in providing assistance:

> If you go to the community with limited resources and choose the persons, it just disturbs the people's harmony. People complain: 'you provided, but not for me'. So many complaints were registered at the CDO office. […] You must provide anything in a blanket approach. So if you have limited resources, you just choose one VDC, and you go and cover the whole [village]. When we established that policy, we avoided the complaints. (GOV2, 13 February 2017)

This statement shows several reasons for the blanket approach. Complaints were directed towards state institutions seen as unable to provide the necessary services. In addition to impacting social cohesion, this also influenced assessments of the state's legitimacy.

An INGO research participant in Sindhupalchok explained that the blanket approach was also motivated by political reasons that their organization could not accept:

> We did not do the blanket approach. […] We will not give goods to the state or government and tell them to do it instead. That would be problematic because most of the committee were the elite bodies in the VDC, and the targeted approach means they would not be receiving anything because it would go to the vulnerable ones. (INGO5, 16 February 2017)

Another INGO participant in Kathmandu further explained the politics of universal aid versus targeting:

> Targeting drove the government insane. […] Even now, studies are coming out that people left behind are from specific caste backgrounds. It is not surprising, but those are the people the state never really supported. So humanitarian logic flew in the face of that. Also, why [do] you see the government, in many areas, declaring blanket targeting? It was the only way to get [the] political compromise that local institutions made. Even if a house is standing, then still target it, because that person is probably politically connected. (INGO8, 9 May 2017)

The state and political parties were accused by some research participants, primarily from IOs, of preferring a blanket approach because this would ensure the inclusion of higher castes and politically affiliated households, who tended to support the elitist state. The state, however, argued that the blanket approach promoted social cohesion. This created tension between state and non-state actors, as humanitarian objectives were seen as conflicting with the state's statebuilding agenda.

4.4.1.3. Measures of control: Compliancy as agency

Political pressure from the state to conform to their statebuilding objectives during the response was also seen in various restrictions aimed at regaining control. Some restrictions allowed emergency aid for only one month, after which tax exemptions were revoked and registration and approval through multiple state institutions became mandatory. After six months, state institutions no longer accepted any projects designated as 'humanitarian'. Haiti's experience as the 'Republic of NGOs', with the international earthquake response lingering without strong state intervention, was cited as a negative example. State officials who participated in the research saw non-state actors as not always respecting the Nepali state and culture, whereas it became clear in discussions with INGOs that they saw the requirement to work with local partners as politically motivated. Research participants from

aid organizations noted that many Nepali NGOs were aligned with a major political party and expressed mistrust of the district authorities, who influenced the choice of the NGOs with which aid organizations were allowed to work.

The response to the earthquakes was presented as apolitical by both state and aid actors. However, this discourse and the ensuing decisions were based on political choices aimed at strengthening state support and institutions. Actors were accused of 'beating around the bush' by not mentioning the political nature of the conflict and tensions that were present, providing the state with a discourse of compliance and bureaucracy supporting the implementation of political measures. Based on its mandate as a policy-maker and authority, the state used the strategy of 'compliancy' as a type of agency, advancing political motives to control other actors. To fit within the state's compliancy, non-state actors used multiple tactics of creative compliance and non-compliance.

4.4.2. Aid balancing the state: Creative compliance and non-compliance

The role of aid actors in post-conflict settings depends largely on the position of the sovereign state, and their compliance or non-compliance with the state's approach affects their legitimacy as responders. Different tactics of compliance are part of a 'spectrum of compliancy' (Figure 4); at one end, non-state actors are fully compliant with the state's approach, risking humanitarian principles, while at the other end, non-state actors completely bypass the state, negatively impacting statebuilding goals. In Nepal, most non-state actors adopted different approaches and tactics to manoeuvre within state structures. On the spectrum of compliancy, these tactics can be defined as 'creative compliance', which sought to balance compliance and non-compliance, supporting the state while also adapting to fit the aid actors' mandates.

Figure 4. Spectrum of compliancy, by author

On the non-compliant end of the spectrum, several aid actors — particularly those who were new to Nepal or had small projects — shared the strategy of 'perpetual non-compliance'. An INGO worker in Kathmandu described this strategy as an intentional response tactic:

> The operating logics were different; the humanitarians couldn't figure it out. It's funny, they were here and saying 'this government is worse than Syria' [and] 'it's easier to work in Syria than it is to work here'. Okay, they are not shooting at you, but you don't have a line of NGOs waiting outside a bureaucrat's door for seven days to try to get a piece of paper signed so you can go ahead with things. The more time went on, the more that was mandatory. In the beginning, everyone was coming saying: 'general chaos' [and] 'the humanitarian imperative mandate', but how long can you use that? How long can you keep on hiding certain activities [that go against the government's approach, such as direct intervention and targeting]? […] People who knew Nepal better could manage a bit better with what I call [the] 'perpetual non-compliance of INGOs'. We are always non-compliant, no matter what we do. And that's intentional. (INGO8, 9 May 2017)

On the compliant end of the spectrum, aid actors with long-standing relationships with the state shared a vision of cooperation. A research participant from an IO in Sindhupalchok stressed the importance of complying with the state structures: 'Without collaboration with the government, we can't do anything. I mean we have to constantly keep local government bodies informed about our plan. […] They suggest where to go because they have structure up to the ground level. And we have to go through that' (IO1, 14 February 2017). Although these two participants seem to express opposing ideas, in practice, there were varying degrees of compliance, even within organizations. This took shape through the adoption of different creative compliance and non-compliance tactics, pursuing either rapprochement with or alienation from the state.

Relying on close relationships with national and local authorities was the most common tactic for responding to the disaster and strengthening organizational power to negotiate the terms of the response. Here, legitimacy as a responder was based on aid actors' role in supporting the state's response. Organizations that were active in Nepal before the earthquakes noted that this strength set them apart from newcomers and generally provided easier access and collaboration with district authorities.

Consensus-oriented rapprochement tactics took several forms, including using the right language. This eased the mistrust and perceived lack of transparency between the authorities and foreign organizations. Some organizations even had staff specifically dedicated to relationship building and compliance:

> We have a dedicated team with people who engage specifically with the government. We don't try and go around any of their rules and regulations. We put a lot of time and effort into actually getting MOUs [memoranda of understanding] signed — getting approval, reporting back, having meetings, and building relations with those different people. (INGO1, 13 February 2017)

Close collaboration with the authorities was believed to ease governance challenges such as obtaining approvals.

To deal with differences between humanitarian objectives and state policies, some organizations adopted a compromise-based tactic operating through consortia and alliances, where agencies negotiated as a group. This strategy increased the agencies' power to influence response outcomes, strengthening their authority by becoming one larger unit. An example of a semi-successful attempt occurred when a group of ambassadors pushed for tax exemptions for humanitarian items after the government re-imposed customs duties six weeks after the disaster. Although no extension of the tax exemptions was granted, the process for applying for exemptions became clearer. When a blockade resulted in a supply shortage, these ambassadors advocated prioritizing humanitarian goods.

As a creative compliance-based tactic to resolve differences in state and organizational approaches, the organizations adapted the state's approach to fit within their own strategies. This was especially apparent regarding the state's blanket approach, which provided universal aid coverage regardless of socio-economic background, in contrast to non-state actors' targeted approach, which prioritized vulnerable groups. Some organizations involved in this research agreed with the blanket approach, particularly during the relief phase; others insisted that the humanitarian imperative requires a targeted approach to reach the most vulnerable. However, because this targeted approach went against the state's preferences, many organizations adopted a blanket approach, but only in heavily affected or remote areas. This 'targeted blanket approach' was an example of creative compliance and a compromise to gain rapprochement with the state. When organizations did choose a targeted approach, mostly after the initial relief period, local governance structures were included to avoid tensions.

The approval mechanism presented a major challenge. To deal with this, tactics of flexibility and partial non-compliance were adopted. These tactics ranged from starting with approval still pending to working with approval from one authority but not others. As one INGO worker explained:

> The local authorities, like the line ministries … We have permissions from those people. So we continue to work regardless of what happens and try to get the approval along the way. Most of these agencies don't have approval for a lot of things that they have already started or have to start with good intentions. They cannot wait forever. If you wait, then nothing will be done. (INGO16, 17 May 2017)

Others reported tacitly seeking approval from a certain authority:

> I'm trying to make sure the government does not think we are as large as we are, through all different sorts of ways. For example, there are two ministries to get projects approved. They have the same authority level […], so you can put half [of the] projects to the one [and] half of the projects to the other. (INGO8, 9 May 2017)

A related tactic was for organizations to creatively frame their projects. For example, a religious organization downplayed their faith-based mandate. The government was suspicious of all faith-based actors' motives because proselytizing is illegal in the formerly Hindu country. An interviewed state representative asserted that Nepal's secularity was only established because of demands from international actors involved in the constitutional process. Another organization recounted deleting the word 'humanitarian' from a project proposal to avoid antagonizing the government, which had closed the emergency period, halting the related relief operations and tax benefits. Some organizations worked together to reach solutions to duplication and approval problems, outside of the scope of the state. When two organizations discovered that they worked on similar projects in the same VDC, even when both had approval for their projects, they often worked together to find solutions.

Notably, these creative compliance tactics required significant time and resources. Organizations and initiatives that were not well established in Nepal (and were therefore less invested in statebuilding) often completely bypassed the official channels, choosing to alienate themselves from the state — a non-confrontational, contentious approach. A research participant working for a non-registered organization asserted that approval processes and bureaucracy took too long and that they wanted to avoid political involvement. This

organization even bypassed the local authorities. Initially, the authorities allowed direct implementation; when registration was later required, many aid organizations left. For example, in Sindhupalchok, local authorities estimated that around 200 organizations initially came, but only 103 were later registered with the DDRC (GOV2, 13 February 2017).

This highlights the differences between the organizations and their approaches. Generally, national NGOs felt more capable of dealing with the authorities and local political dynamics. Nepali workers in INGOs also discussed influencing local authorities as part of the response. National organizations and staff members with more local personal relations knew how to work the system. However, although they were able to manoeuvre more easily within the state system, Nepali NGOs and private organizations did not find the humanitarian coordination mechanisms inclusive. Research participants from the private sector and other new responders faced the most difficulties in navigating both the state and humanitarian structures, often avoiding involvement with both. Established organizations and United Nations (UN) agencies tended to see their legitimacy as more reliant on good relationships with state institutions in a development and post-conflict context requiring long-term commitments. This resulted in UN agencies becoming stronger supporters of state authorities than were INGOs or NGOs, which had more space for creativity in this relationship.

The scale of the disaster, combined with the lack of clarity and political bureaucracy in both state and humanitarian mechanisms, created a need for non-state actors to tactically manoeuvre either within or outside the established systems. Close relationships with the state were seen as very important, and aid actors with a vision involving long-term engagement in Nepal strengthened their legitimacy in the response structures. Therefore, in collaborating with the state, responders adopted the tactics discussed in this section to balance humanitarian objectives with the goal of strengthening state institutions in post-disaster governance.

How did marginalized groups experience the results of the aid negotiations?

The blanket approach also included marginalized groups and many research participants recounted how they tried to distribute more to those who are more in need, and some organizations distributed to Dalits exclusively. In general, many local authorities reiterated this sentiment. However, in the Focus Groups that included a variety of social groups, people felt that distributions were far from equal. Especially women and Dalits were critical of the aid distributions that were coordinated in collaboration with the (higher caste) authorities, who were seen to privilege their supporters.

Within the community, there are large differences in the socio-economic standing of certain groups. This was also seen in the language some of the (higher caste) research participants used to describe these groups. The Dalits were sometimes seen as a nuisance, always demanding and expecting more, arguing over 'the small things'. But these demands were also found to be grounded. A social mobilizer recounted how the Dalits irritated her as they were never satisfied. However, when she monitored the aid distributions, she found that the educated people with power and connections (mostly to the local politicians) received the relief, but the Dalits didn't (GOV 11, 26 June 2017).

In my research encounters with the Dalits, it became clear that while the emergency response might have included those groups with higher needs in certain areas, the long-term recovery approach has left marginalized groups feeling more excluded. The Dalit research participants noted that it remained difficult for them to rebuild their houses with the government's support scheme but no additional income, and with some Dalits living in rented houses. Also, Dalits living in Barpak were living in the red zones that are vulnerable to landslides and where they are not allowed to build. They felt that the government is not doing enough to rescue them from this precarious situation.

Vignette 1. How did marginalized groups experience the results of the aid negotiations?

4.4.3. Post-conflict aid politics: Navigating differences on the ground

Gorkha and Sindhupalchok were among the most affected districts and attracted significant international aid. These districts' socio-political contexts created differences in how the local state responded and how non-state actors dealt with local politics in a setting of decentralized statebuilding. The influx of aid affected state–society relations, and aid actors dealt with this in different ways. Balancing statebuilding with humanitarian objectives was challenging because many local authorities and politicians were heavily involved in local-level aid governance. This empowered them to act as responders, but it also created tensions with both aid actors and community members — precisely the threats to social cohesion that the Nepali state wanted to avoid. The community members observed organizations coming to the VDCs through the VDC Secretaries and the political parties, who were also often involved in the distribution of aid. This created a politicized environment for aid at the VDC and ward levels.

The one-door policy increased the authorities' control and resources on multiple levels, ranging from national and district to VDC and ward levels. At the VDC and ward levels, the one-door policy was used as a measure to control the distribution of aid. Research participants recounted many examples of creative distribution: if aid items were insufficient for a whole VDC or ward, they were stored locally until more items arrived or divided into

smaller packages and distributed to everyone. Community members in both Gorkha and Sindhupalchok argued that conflicts regarding aid distribution were created when there were not enough aid items for the community. Therefore, distribution outside local systems was discouraged by local governmental stakeholders, such as local politicians, ward leaders and social mobilizers. However, community members preferred aid distribution directly to the wards without involving local authorities, who were seen as complicit in corruption and in diverting aid items. The aid distribution challenges generally led to negative perceptions of the state.

Post-conflict politics: The dimensions of contention

In 2015, political contention was especially strong between the three largest parties of the Second Constituent Assembly, the Nepali Congress (NC), the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) (CPN-UML), and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (CPN-M) — the last of which was signatory to the Comprehensive Peace Accord with the Nepalese Government led by the NC. In addition, an armed splinter group of the CPN-M had emerged in 2014 under the leadership of Netra Bikram Chand, better known under his rebel name 'Biplav'. In general, the legacy of the Maoist insurgency had continued to transform along new political lines. Needless to say, these post-conflict politics also left their mark on the governance of the earthquake response at the local level, where different dimensions of contention were observed.

The first dimension concerned relationships between local authorities. Local-level politics and politicians were strongly affected by the national-level politics. As stated previously, CDOs were often changed depending on the political mood of the day, as they were centrally appointed representatives. And local politicians were seen to have much power, depending on their political affiliation to the CDO, LDO, or VDC secretary. The one-door system would only increase their power by the control over material resources.

The second dimension concerned the relationships between local authorities and the communities. The trust of the community members in their local politicians was dwindling. When aid needed to be distributed among the population, politicians presented themselves as 'social workers' and mediators between the organizations and the community, but many community members reported rampant corruption by these politicians; taking advantage of aid by holding back relief items or accepting aid in the VDC while actually living in Kathmandu or Pokhara. Also, anyone with suspected political allegiances was also blamed; a social mobilizer in one of the Sindhupalchok VDCs recounted how she coordinated the response, but was herself accused of giving aid only to Maoist party people as the community knew her family's Maoist background, even though she had not distributed aid herself. She described the important role that power played; she tried to convince people and politicians, but they became very angry and threatened her, especially NC supporters. Political parties, such as NC and the Maoists, were taking credit for distributing aid and convincing aid actors to distribute in their VDC. But they were seen to give to their supporters.

The third dimension concerned the relationships between the local authorities and certain community groups; namely, between the older generation of politicians and the youth. When I arrived in one of the VDCs, I stumbled upon a heated discussion between youth representatives and the NC. When asked about the response, they said they felt excluded from the local aid governance; they wanted more responsibilities, and they felt the aid actors favoured collaborating with the politicians over the youth. They clearly distinguished themselves; 'politics and social work are different things' — political representatives do something for the party but social work is in service of the community. In contrast, the NC representative accused the youth of not distributing aid equally. In another VDC, these sentiments by the youth were shared and resulted in actively chasing away the VDC secretary with the threat of violence. Both in the heated discussion and in the critique on local politicians during the response, youth demanded more accountability and transparency from their leaders.

Vignette 2. Post-conflict politics: The dimensions of contention

In both Gorkha and Sindhupalchok, acts of resistance against the local authorities were observed when aid arrived. As suggested by the complaints regarding aid distribution through the local authorities, these acts mainly targeted state representatives. In one Sindhupalchok VDC, the VDC office was locked up by a group of protesting widows demanding a larger share of the aid. FGD participants believed the VDC Secretary to 'always listen to powerful persons', and many blamed politicians for corruption (FGD3, 29 June 2017). There was great mistrust between the politicians and the communities. Politicians were seen as the gatekeepers to organizations and as sometimes able to direct aid to their areas. In another VDC in Sindhupalchok, a community leader explained how politicians threatened her: 'They would say "My party did all this, so you need to do what we are telling you"' (GOV 11, 26 June 2017). Community members, in turn, accused the community leader of diverting aid. Most accusations against the political parties concerned corruption or mismanagement, either during the aid distribution or with regard to incentives taken from organizations.

In Gorkha, community members' stronger ties with ward-level representatives and social mobilizers resulted in these officials being less vulnerable to accusations, but political leaders were still viewed negatively and aid agencies were criticized. In one VDC, the Secretary was driven out and replaced with someone with better relations with the community. Additionally, some politicians involved in aid distribution were threatened. Even without local authorities' involvement, unequal distribution between wards caused conflicts. As mentioned above, community members preferred aid to be delivered directly to the wards and distributed equally to avoid tensions. Especially in Barpak, the epicentre of the first earthquake, organizations were criticized for performing assessments and taking pictures rather than providing sufficient aid. In both Gorkha and Sindhupalchok, the district-level authorities questioned the transparency of the responding organizations, and aid agencies had to negotiate their access.

Non-state actors dealt with political parties' influence at district and local levels by either accepting or balancing political pressure, including political structures in the response and through negotiations. In one incident, a threatened INGO which was put under pressure to support a political party leader accepted this: 'Sometimes we have to kneel down before those people. That cannot be avoided. But that cannot be more than 5% [of the cases]' (INGO16, 9 May 2017). However, when another party in Sindhupalchok (Biplav) threatened INGOs, the organizations joined together, overcoming the pressure to accept corruption. In

most cases, political parties were included in the response, directly in the VDCs during aid distribution, during beneficiary identification, or as part of monitoring mechanisms.

In general, when the organizations noticed interference by political parties, they successfully negotiated with them, convincing them to let the aid activities continue. Being transparent and open eased political pressure:

> [The] communication and sharing part is very important. That's the best way to deal with political parties. We don't directly deal with them, but we provide all the information through the DDRC and district offices. If there is great dissatisfaction, they request the DDRC for a meeting with all NGOs, in [the] presence of [the] CDO and NGOs, etc. […] And in that meeting, all the political parties are present. […] If there is any question regarding our spending [or] our response, we answer them. (INGO16, 9 May 2017)

Political influence was evident at district and VDC levels, with non-state actors experiencing it in many different ways. Collaboration was generally regarded as easier in Sindhupalchok than in Gorkha, where an organization's reputation depended heavily on its relationship with the CDO and Local Development Officer. The research participants from aid organizations regarded Gorkha district authorities as more politically biased towards INGOs, compared with those in Sindhupalchok. A district authority representative in Gorkha stressed that controlling INGOs was important because 'Everyone wants their supremacy. They want to be in the spotlight. But we control them through mechanisms' (GOV28, 11 April 2017). The authorities saw the organizations as lacking transparency. A faith-based organization was criticized and blocked by the authorities for supposedly engaging in religious activities. After publishing a report containing a critique of the state's response, an IO was banned and a collaborating INGO's reputation was damaged. This set a precedent for others to be more careful. A Gorkha-based INGO worker explained, 'It puts pressure on us because today they are saying it to them, but tomorrow it may happen to us' (INGO21, 12 April 2017). A district authority confirmed that organizations had to be vigilant in Gorkha: 'They knew that Gorkha is a Maoist-prone area, so if they did more irregularities they would be punished by the public level' (GOV6, 9 April 2017). In collaboration with some INGOs, the Gorkha authorities and political parties created NGO guidelines and a code of conduct including monitoring mechanisms. The authorities were proud of the 'Gorkha Model' as an example of a well-coordinated response, but the organizations saw their space restricted and felt pressure

from local political parties in the DDRC, who were seen as directing aid towards their constituencies.

4.5. Conclusion

The response to the earthquakes in Nepal was situated within a larger shift in international humanitarian policies and practices. In 2016, the World Humanitarian Summit and the Grand Bargain argued for a more inclusive and participatory approach to aid governance, prioritizing national and local actors. The present findings contribute to understanding the challenges of a locally led response in the post-conflict and post-disaster nexus, where compromises are made in social negotiations between state and non-state actors.

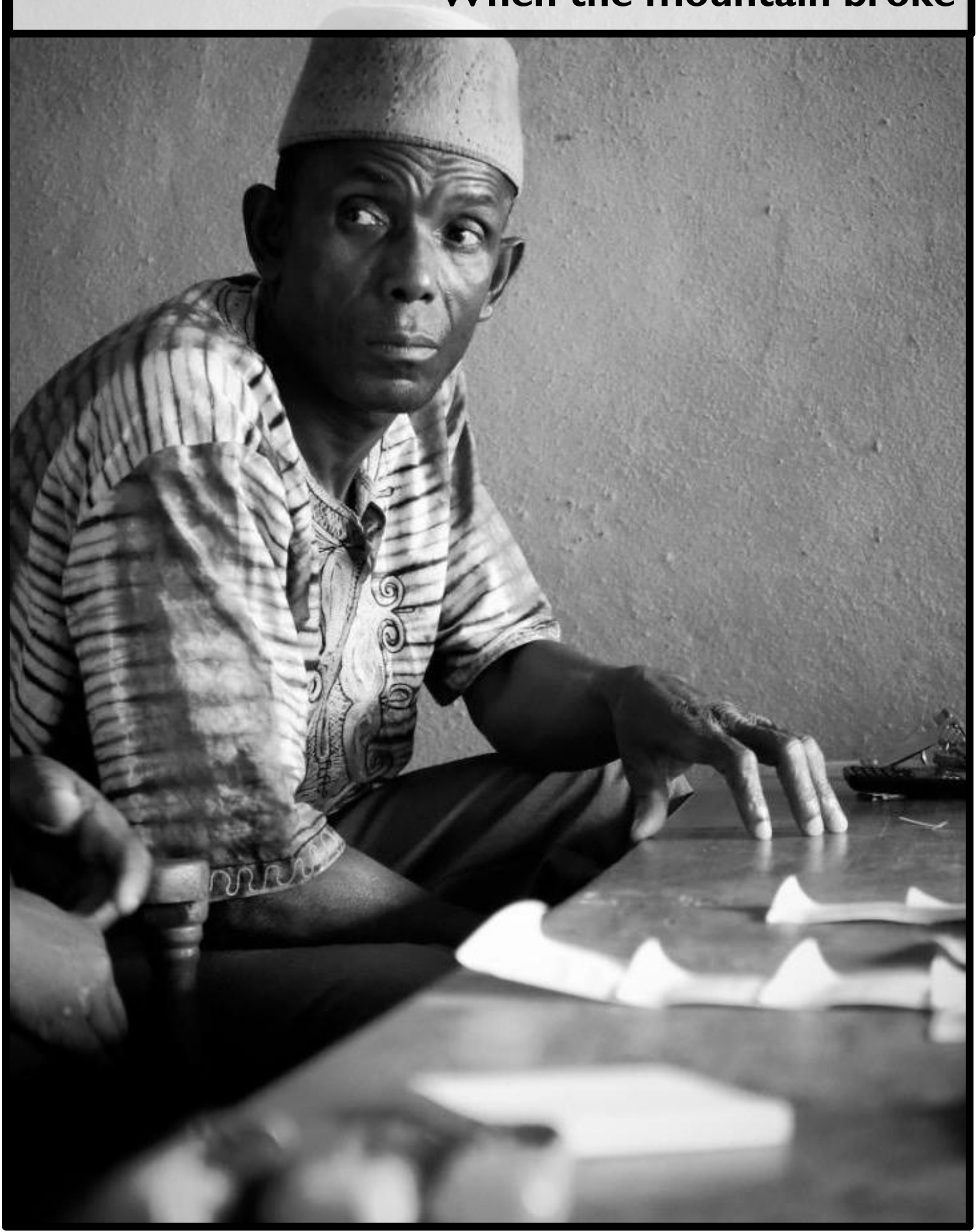
When the disaster unfolded in Nepal, the post-conflict context was characterized by a volatile political environment and a large influx of non-state actors. The Nepali state therefore became increasingly controlling during the response, using 'compliancy' to regain power. The tension between statebuilding and humanitarian objectives was primarily seen in the state's blanket approach and one-door policy. Although the earthquake disproportionately affected marginalized groups, the blanket approach included higher classes, who generally supported elite state officials. This ran counter to the humanitarian imperative of targeting the most vulnerable, given limited resources. However, in the state's view, the blanket approach was important to preserve social cohesion, and the one-door policy would empower and strengthen state authorities' role in the response. Tensions were exposed when bureaucratic processes were slow or when state officials were thought to be diverting aid. To balance different objectives and accommodate the state's response, non-state actors made compromises with the state, using tactics of 'creative compliance' that ranged from rapprochement to alienation.

Tensions did not manifest only at national level. The decentralized nature of response responsibilities affected how non-state actors operated at the local level, as well as the impact of the influx of aid on society–state relations. The resources coming to the VDCs and wards were sometimes insufficient for all community members, and the involvement of local politicians in aid distribution created local-level conflict. For the communities, this generally resulted in negative perceptions of the state and its legitimacy. These cases highlight the challenge of supporting a decentralized response, which resulted in the politicization of aid at the local level and complicated collaborative governance with non-state actors. In both

Gorkha and Sindhupalchok, state and non-state actors exhibited mutual mistrust regarding transparency, influenced by the local personalities in charge. To overcome these challenges, aid actors accepted a certain degree of political influence to negotiate community access. Further research would be needed to explore these relations of mistrust more systematically, as they might prove important in other humanitarian contexts.

In post-conflict contexts such as Nepal, integrating humanitarian and statebuilding objectives is a primary goal for long-term disaster governance. Although this research has shown that all actors make compromises in a consensus-oriented approach to disaster response, misunderstandings surrounding underlying motives and politics persist. This encourages contentious aid tactics and negatively impacts responders' legitimacy. These problems must be overcome to enable a response that is more locally led, internationally supported, and collaborative.

Chapter 5: Sierra Leone
When the mountain broke



Abstract[41]

When a major landslide and floods devastated Freetown, Sierra Leone had just overcome the Ebola crisis, which left its mark on socio-political relations between different disaster response actors. With international disaster response frameworks increasingly shifting to local ownership, the national government was expected to assume a coordinating role. However, in 'post-conflict' settings such as Sierra Leone, intra-state and state–society relations are continuously being renegotiated. This chapter aims to uncover the complexities of state-led disaster response in a hybrid governance setting at national and community levels in the response to the 2017 landslide and floods. During four months of fieldwork in Freetown in 2017, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with various state, aid and societal actors. The findings show that a response policy building on the idea of a uniform state response did not take into account intra-state power politics or the complexity of Sierra Leone's hybrid governance. The chapter argues for a more nuanced debate within humanitarian governance and practice on the localization of aid in post-conflict and fragile settings. The findings contribute to the literature on the disaster–conflict nexus, identifying paradoxes of localized disaster response in an environment with heightened national–local tensions. The study highlights intra-local state dynamics that are usually overlooked but have a great impact on the legitimacy of different state authorities in disaster response.

[41] This chapter is co-authored with Prof. Dr. Dorothea Hilhorst and has been accepted for publication in *Disaster Prevention and Management:* Melis, S., & Hilhorst, D. (2020) When the mountain broke: disaster governance in Sierra Leone. *Disaster Prevention and Management: An International Journal* (ahead-of-print). DOI: 10.1108/DPM-03-2020-0076.

5.1. Introduction

Worldwide, 318 disasters were recorded in 2017, affecting 122 countries and 96 million people (CRED & IRSS, 2018). One of these disasters did not attract much attention but impacted many lives. On 14 August 2017, Regent's Sugarloaf Mountain in Sierra Leone 'broke'. The ensuing landslide and floods swept through a densely populated area in Freetown, killing over 1,000 people and destroying hundreds of houses within minutes. The Sugarloaf Mountain disaster hit a country still impacted by the civil war that ended in 2002 and recovering from the Ebola epidemic that lasted until 2016.

Disaster response is generally organized in a top-down manner, but the international disaster governance literature has questioned the reliability of authorities and formalized response organizations (Comfort, 2007; Norris et al., 2008), increasingly emphasizing that disaster response should involve multiple actors. The internationally recognized preferred response model proposed in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR, 2015a) views the state as the central coordinating body, working closely with civil society, communities and other non-state actors in disaster response and disaster risk reduction. This model, which is generally reflected in national disaster policies, is anchored on a well-functioning state; this chapter asks how this plays out in fragile institutional environments such as Sierra Leone.

In countries with a recent history of conflict, state institutions often lack the required resources and capacities to respond to disasters. Ongoing institutional changes and socio-political tensions complicate their legitimacy to coordinate disaster response. Relations between different layers and domains of the state are in flux and are impacted by state–society relations. Furthermore, post-conflict states are usually subject to a strong international presence engaging in programmes for statebuilding, peacebuilding and recovery.

A key premise of this thesis is that disaster response models are translated and socially negotiated in practice. Although different parties may agree on roles and responsibilities, how these work out in practice is negotiated, potentially with highly divergent outcomes. Therefore, it is important to use empirical case studies to explore how disaster response evolves, seeking potential patterns and broader lessons. With this aim, this chapter presents a detailed analysis of the response to the landslide and floods in Sierra Leone. As the case unfolded, our focus was drawn to the central importance of intra-state competition and the issue of vertical linkages in how disaster response is translated from the national to the local.

These issues underlay many mundane contestations over aspects of the response, such as the registration process, the introduction of cash relief, item distribution and the screening of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to determine camp eligibility.

Our study thus aimed to understand how state, aid and societal actors negotiated the terms of a state-led response in Sierra Leone after the 2017 landslide and how this affected the legitimacy and institutional capacity of a multi-layered state.

5.2. Sierra Leone's triple 'posts' in perspective

Sierra Leone is considered a post-colonial, post-conflict and post-disaster state, reflecting key periods during which intra-state and state–society relations have been challenged and redefined. These three 'posts' have shaped present-day Sierra Leone and continue to affect the state of the country and its multi-layered governance.

After gaining independence in 1961, Sierra Leone's post-colonial state embodied many remnants of colonial relations. The country's hybrid governance structure comprises continued interaction between the formal state, Paramount Chiefs, ceremonial chiefs and other community stakeholders. Authority rests on a mix of state and traditional sources that have become mutually constitutive, but this has also resulted in a governance culture of distrust and resentment (Albrecht & Moe, 2015; Jackson, 2007; Keen, 2005). In addition to formal recognition of their positions, the legitimacy of the Paramount Chiefs in the provinces and the ceremonial chiefs in Freetown comes from their traditional roles, which are partly rooted in strong patron–client politics which took on particular importance under colonial governance (Harrell-Bond et al., 2019), when the chiefs functioned as gatekeepers between communities and the state (Cooper, 2002 in Anderson and Beresford, 2016). The political and social control of the state and traditional leaders marginalized young people against the backdrop of an economic crisis, leading many of them to join the rebel forces in the ensuing civil war (1991–2002) to fight the patrimonial structures (Peters, 2011; Tom, 2014).

The period after the civil war redefined power relations within the state. To facilitate peaceful transitions, with international support, institutional reforms and reconciliation processes were enacted. Of particular relevance in the context of disasters are the Office of National Security (ONS), the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, and the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA), all of which were established post-civil war. Statebuilding processes revolved around the decentralization of the state, where

scholarly attention has focused on the contentious relationship between Paramount Chiefs and other formal state structures (Albrecht, 2017; Clayton et al., 2015; Jackson, 2007; Keen, 2005). However, much less is known about the roles and relations of ceremonial chiefs — customary leaders in the Western Area including Freetown. Generally, contention continued after the civil war, and young people, supported by the international human rights discourse, gained space to negotiate with and challenge traditional leaders, questioning their legitimacy (Tom, 2014).

The Ebola crisis (2014–2016) had both negative and positive impacts on Sierra Leonean institutions and state–society relations. Positive influences were seen in the organization of disaster management structures; however, because of the scale and nature of the disaster, the newly established National Ebola Response Centre took over the coordination and control of these structures from the ONS and the ministries. Further, tensions between society and the state were evident as the population ignored government messages on Ebola, perceptions of corruption persisted and confidence was eroded by the militarization of the response (Anderson & Beresford, 2016; Lind & Ndebe, 2015). Chiefs played a pivotal role in the Ebola response at a community level (Wilkinson & Fairhead, 2017), but this role has sometimes been contested by youth questioning their authority (Marcis et al., 2019).

When the landslide and floods struck in 2017, a relatively well-established response structure remained in place from the Ebola crisis. Nevertheless, the roles and relations in this structure continued to be fluid, and relations of trust and accountability were still uncertain.

5.3. Post-conflict states and international disaster response

Although national states traditionally play a major role in disaster response, in conflict-affected and fragile states, this often becomes primarily the domain of international humanitarian action. International actors and the national state are generally seen to operate in isolation from each other (Cunningham, 2018). In reality, there is constant interaction between the two governance systems, although humanitarian agencies often seem to take control in disaster response (Barnett, 2011; Donini, 2012), undermining the state's authority. One challenge of post-conflict disaster governance is therefore how to break the pattern that evolved during conflict, in which international actors dominate disaster response and tend to bypass the state.

The Sendai Framework and national-level disaster risk reduction frameworks and laws give prominence to the state in disaster response. However, post-conflict settings create many challenges for state-centred disaster response (Harrowell & Özerdem, 2018; Melis, 2018). Despite the focus of international policy on states, in practice, states are often bypassed by humanitarian donors. In the 1970s and 1980s, international disaster aid usually consisted of budget support to the government, but from the 1990s onwards, international organizations increasingly took over disaster management (Harvey, 2013b, p. 153). In 2017, only 2.5 per cent of international humanitarian funding was channelled through national governments (Development Initiatives, 2018, p. 51).

The Sendai Framework mentions 'states' 37 times, 'government(s)' 33 times and 'authorities' 17 times. Although it centres around the state, it focuses on the role of national governments, generally failing to differentiate between different layers and parts of the state. The state does not equate to the government. A state is made up of different institutions, and leadership and authorities can also be found outside the government (Miliband, 2009). To some extent, this is recognized in the Sendai Framework's inclusive view of governance, which includes national and local authorities and communities (UNISDR, 2015a, p. 13), but this disaster governance policy model seems to assume that governments form the centre of a network of disaster response with clear roles and responsibilities.

In contrast to this idea, ethnographic studies in post-conflict and post-colonial settings have revealed a far more complex situation than a uniform central state system, finding that the state comprises different entities and hybrid institutions (Boege et al., 2008) competing for authority and legitimacy at different governance levels. At national level, state entities are part of post-conflict statebuilding and the accompanying institutional changes (Brinkerhoff, 2005). At local level, different modes of local governance co-exist, particularly in states where traditional authorities function as mediators between the state and society (Menkhaus, 2007; Olivier de Sardan, 2011). In patrimonial societies such as Sierra Leone, traditional structures occupy both formal and informal governance roles and are reshaped to accommodate modern state structures (Albrecht, 2017; Albrecht & Moe, 2015). Rather than the central state's will simply being translated through decentralized bodies, the state is also shaped from below through interaction between the central state and local authorities (Titeca & de Herdt, 2011). Disconnects between parts of the state may be more pronounced in post-conflict settings than in more stable areas. This study sought to understand disaster response governance at, and between, the national and community levels.

5.4. Methods

This chapter is based on fieldwork conducted by the first author in Sierra Leone from September 2017 to January 2018. As the official response to the 2017 Regent landslide ended on 15 December 2017, a substantial part of the fieldwork consisted of real-time research of the response. This allowed great access to current information and made it possible to follow up on leads regarding movements by responders and discussions in the IDP camps.

Data were collected through interviews, focus group discussions, participant observation and attendance at a 'lessons learned' workshop organized by the ONS and the International Organization for Migration. The semi-structured approach, multiple methods and variety of participants allowed for the triangulation of data. In total, 88 semi-structured interviews were conducted and audio-recorded with 37 aid actors: nine national non-governmental organizations (NGOs), 14 international organizations (IOs) (e.g. donors, United Nations (UN) agencies), 14 international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), 32 community actors (27 IDPs, two civil society organizations, three volunteers) and 19 state actors (nine ONS representatives, four chiefs, two representatives from the Ministry of Social Welfare, and one representative from the NaCSA the military, the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources and the Environmental Protection Agency). Four focus group discussions, each with 15 participants, were held with community stakeholders, whereby a timeline of the response was created and the participatory tool of ranking and scoring was employed.

A grounded thematic analysis was conducted using NVivo qualitative data analysis software and centred around themes of actor relations, challenges, discourses and response practices. Participants were categorized by type of responder (aid, state and societal actors) to allow for multiple perspectives to emerge and inter-actor relations to be further analysed.

A research assistant living in an IDP camp provided translations for the community interviews. The communities of Mortormeh, Gbangbayila, Kamayama, Kaningo and Pentagon and the Juba and Old School camps were visited frequently to collect data. The research assistant's status as a flood-affected person from one of the communities risked introducing bias but also provided better access to the affected communities and, through close collaboration, increased our contextual understanding. In May 2018, a follow-up visit was made by both authors to validate the findings with research participants.

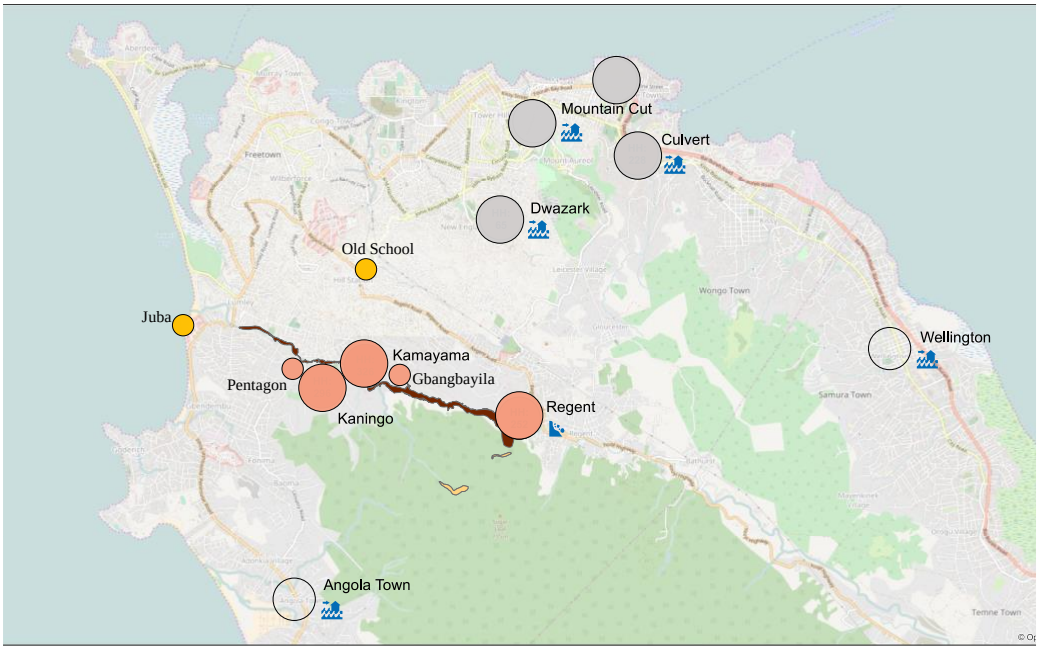


Figure 5. Map of the landslide and floods in Freetown, including the research area of Regent (Mortormeh), the downstream areas of Gbangbayila, Kamayama, Kaningo and Pentagon, and Juba and Old School IDP camps

5.5. The state meets disaster: Connecting the national and local

The landslide and floods in Sierra Leone occurred in the capital city of Freetown; as a result, the response was structured in a relatively simple way, with a national, centralized response and the implementation of relief and recovery efforts in the affected communities.

5.5.1. National state-level governance: Internal competition and international support

As the disaster unfolded, all departments and ministries relevant to the response were called to meet in the situation room at the ONS. The sectoral response pillars that had been active during the Ebola response, with dual governmental and international agency leadership mirroring the UN cluster system, were reactivated. However, despite the discourse of unity, competing interests and power politics within the state and in collaborations with non-state actors revealed how different authorities within the state socially negotiated for position and power over and through the response.

The ONS has the mandate to coordinate emergency responses. As an interviewed national state official asserted, 'It's like a sharp knife running through a ripe banana', meaning

that the roles were clearly defined (GOV10, 12 January 2018).[42] However, tensions between the different roles of the ministries and state institutions continued to play a role. One national state official explained the sources of these tensions:

> The issue is that of mandates. Even though institutions may have the responsibility, for example that of social welfare; in a normal situation, it's their responsibility to seek the welfare of all citizens, but when it becomes an emergency, the responsibility of coordinating all of this rests with the ONS. […] so we also have an issue of institutions not wanting to surrender some of their [power], subjecting themselves to be coordinated and given instructions. (GOV10, 12 January 2018)

To resolve this, 'the president had to intervene and admonish every ministry that the responsibility of coordinating the emergency lies within the Office of National Security. Nobody should go there and give counter instructions' (GOV10, 12 January 2018).

In terms of mandates and capacity, confusion and contention arose especially between the ONS, the Ministry of Social Welfare and the NaCSA. In the initial days after the landslide, these institutions all began to register affected households, with all three considering this to be within their mandate. The NaCSA was later informed, with the authority of the president, that the Ministry of Social Welfare was in charge of registration. The tasks of each institution then became more defined.

However, the legitimacy of the Ministry of Social Welfare was still questioned, especially because it was thought to be incapable of the task, as seen in the following comments from a national state official: 'With all due respect to their commitment, but the expertise was not there for us to get the kind of data that we wanted. So it affected the whole intervention' (GOV9, 10 January 2018). And another national state official insisted, 'We can't accept them anymore. [The Ministry of] Social Welfare cannot handle registration in the future. They cannot. We can do it together' (GOV8, 18 December 2017).

Conversely, the Ministry of Social Welfare felt that the ONS, as the leader in disaster issues, was trying to control everything and was stepping on its turf. A national state official

[42] These codes refer to interviews, accompanied by the interview date. All interviews were held in Freetown and the affected communities.. GOV = State actor, IO = International Organization actor, CSO = Civil Society Organization actor, CH = Chief or Community stakeholder, IDP = Internally Displaced Person. Interviews are anonymised for ethical reasons.

explained, 'There has been some amount of beef between the two institutions'[43] (GOV7, 17 December 2017), referring to conflict between them. As a symbol of protest, the Minister of Social Welfare did not attend many coordination meetings, and the ONS, as a coordinating body, was unable to enforce its coordination efforts in the different ministries.

Although tensions were highest between the ONS and the Ministry of Social Welfare, challenges in intra-state coordination were also visible between different sectoral response pillars. Pillar leads from the different ministries were supposed to remain in the ONS situation room to facilitate all parties signing off on requisitions. However, as a national state official recounted, some pillar leads stayed in their own ministries, which delayed the process (GOV4, 07 November 2017). Not all pillar leads were present during meetings or they would arrive late. Overall, there was significant reluctance to accept coordination by another institution within the state.

The ONS was the paramount body coordinating the disaster response. This required the temporary suspension of the mandates of other ministries, but the reaction of these ministries showed that they did not trust the process and feared that the disaster response would lead to a permanent loss of their mandates. A narrative of capacity was used by both the ONS and Ministry of Social Welfare to discredit each other and strengthen their own authority. Tensions were also built into the system because, although the ONS had authority, they lacked resources, which remained within the ministries.

The disaster response structure was further complicated because of roles allotted to the military and to a fiduciary agency, BDO. The military was in charge of logistics, but before items could be taken out of storage they had to be registered and signed off by both the ONS and BDO. BDO was hired at the beginning of the response to prevent a repetition of the corruption practices prevalent during the Ebola response. The intra-state bureaucracy and hierarchical systems led to delays in the release of aid items so that by the end of the response period, only a fraction of the donations had been used. Besides the friction this arrangement caused for the logistics pillar, which was in charge of the storage but did not have authority to move the items, it also affected the ONS managers of IDP camps, who had to deal with the bureaucracy.

[43] Accused of corruption, the then-Minister of Social Welfare was fired by the president on 23 November 2017. This was an outcome of political tensions within the government and likely affected the Ministry's role in the response.

To complicate matters still further, a hierarchical decision-making and implementation system was developed. The National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, chaired by the president, which was called the 'platinum level', was responsible for policy decisions. The National Strategic Situation Group (the 'gold level'), which included the situation room, analysed, synthesized and interpreted policy decisions. The 'silver level' designed planning and operations, and, finally, the 'bronze level' was tasked with implementation. The names of these levels mirror military terms for different hierarchical levels of command. Communication between levels and decisions that were taken up and down the ladder caused delays and friction in response efforts. The 'silver level' found that decisions sent to the higher levels were often returned without a final answer. At the 'bronze level', policies were not always well understood, and responses from the 'silver level' were seen as slow, with some decisions being overturned or redirected back to the 'bronze level'. From outside the state, as an IO representative stated, it seemed they were 'working in silos' (IO9, 19 January 2018).

Post-conflict politics: Constructing vulnerability?

The Sierra Leonean civil war was a major risk driver as rapid urbanization in Freetown during and after the war resulted in haphazard construction and building in disaster-prone areas. Although laws exist, there has been weak enforcement of construction permits or prevention of deforestation.

The Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), claiming to have ended the war, won the first post-conflict elections in 2002, leaving the All Peoples Congress (APC), who had been the target of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels, behind in the opposition. After the victory, the newly elected government vowed to clear houses that were built in landslide-prone areas. In the area of Regent, Operation 'Break House' was launched and bulldozers from the Ministry of Lands entered the area. However, this attempt was stopped when one of the officers was murdered by community members who had glued the officer's lips together. When the APC regained power from 2007 to 2018, they left matter of houses built in dangerous areas alone. When asked about land permits, research participants often mentioned the selling of land permits to connected and politically powerful people, further creating risk. One of the research participants saw this as a political move, since the Western Area (where Freetown is located) is considered to be an APC stronghold.

With the general elections being scheduled just half a year after the disaster, and the SLPP having gained considerable popularity, political interests were also seen in the response to the landslide; a short response period was set for the IDP camps to be 'dissolved' as quickly as possible and politicians from the different parties representing the ministries found it hard to coordinate their efforts. These post-conflict politics have increased the vulnerability of people living in the red zones and indecisiveness of the government in the response leading to delays in humanitarian assistance.

Vignette 3. Post-conflict politics: Constructing Vulnerability?

5.5.2. Donors' power to negotiate response parameters in a divided state

Aid actors seeking to support the state in the landslide response had to navigate the different, conflicting units of the state. They had to determine with which state institution to collaborate and how to negotiate the terms of the state response.

Sierra Leone's government has always collaborated with international partners. These partners, primarily donors, were able to negotiate a number of conditions in the response. This was seen especially in the prioritization of cash transfers. As a national state official stated, 'That is how they [donors] wanted it because they have contributed a significant portion of that money. And we had no option [other] than giving in to them and do what they want to do' (GOV10, 12 January 2018). For one of the donors, the decision to use cash transfers was based on their own commitments and plans to include more cash transfers in emergency programming (IO14, 26 January 2018). Discussions and negotiations were conducted at the pillar level between different organizations and state institutions to design a cash transfer programme that would fit into other state-supported schemes. This programme included a mobile money scheme instead of the state-preferred cash scheme because of donor requirements of accountability and fears of corruption.

In these discussions on cash transfers, the donors used their authority and material resources in a push-and-pull manner, which further divided the state. At the 'platinum level', the president initially rejected the mobile money scheme. The scheme was only approved and implemented after a high-level diplomat intervened. Resources were then shared directly with the international implementing partner — not the government — because, according to this donor's assessment, the government did not fulfil the partnership conditions. The international donor was decisive in implementing a mobile approach; however, when a new round of registration necessitated new cash transfers, the donor pulled out, and the state moved to a cash-based, non-mobile approach, motivated by the unused response funds and a more unified approach by the state institutions.

Many aid agencies were supportive of the state's approach, which was carried out by the ONS, but others bypassed state institutions. A national state official reported that the extent to which organizations distributed aid directly presented a challenge to the state's authority: 'There were ground rules that no single organization would go and engage IDPs without going through an official channel. But there were people that were going straight to the IDPs. For us, it actually undermined every effort we are doing towards the response' (GOV10, 12 January 2018). Some of the NGOs and civil society organizations, especially, were less inclined to work closely with state structures. One national NGO set up a small project to support individuals, and contacted these people directly to avoid involving the state, including the chiefs. Similarly, a church hosted IDPs at its school and provided assistance, with limited collaboration with a local state representative. These organizations believed that their

power to influence the state was limited, as a civil society representative stated: 'For the state, I don't see that room for taking recommendations of churches or NGOs. We don't have much force' (CSO2, 10 January 2018).

Especially in post-conflict states, how aid agencies balance their approach with the state is important. Most interviewed national state officials agreed that international assistance was welcomed and that it remained within the parameters of the state's response (GOV8, 18 December 2017). However, INGOs referred to the slowness of the state's response and donor requirements as a reason for maintaining control over aid items themselves to assure efficiency and accountability. The general consensus regarding direct assistance was that the state authorities had to be informed but that distributions could be organized by the organizations themselves, provided this was done in the presence of state representatives.

Not all aid agencies had the same level of influence over the state's response. It was clear that the voices of actors at the central table had more weight than did those of other actors. As an IO representative explained, this was strengthened by both resources and relationships: 'Big donors can raise big voices' (IO4, 11 May 2017). In a divided and hierarchical state structure, an aid agency's direct relations could create a larger space for socially negotiating response outcomes. Many organizations collaborated directly with their ministerial counterparts and had little influence in the overall coordination meetings. Others, especially high-level diplomats, had direct influence at the higher state levels. Still, the 'big voices' were not always decisive, and strong counter-discourses were also observed. The initial state–donor tensions subsided over the course of the response, as the state was able to control more of the response. As an INGO representative elaborated, 'In the end, as in all disasters, people go through a learning phase and eventually the authorities became stronger and took their role. So what was happening was that the authorities increasingly put their feet down and stated exactly what was permissible and what not' (INGO9, 16 January 2018).

All interviewees agreed that the state should be in charge of the response. Although the state's capacity was seen as inadequate, the authority and legitimacy to lead remained with the state. In the co-governance of the response, everyone had a role to play, including international partners. However, as one state official remarked, 'you do not run an emergency in a democracy' (GOV8, 18 December 2017). Some international donors had more power to influence the response, compared with other actors, and this influence was mostly determined by their material resources and ability to work closely with high-level state officials.

International partners have a long history in Sierra Leone, which is tied up with post-colonial and post-conflict aid relations and the accompanying power differences.

5.5.3. Community-level response: Hybrid governance and the chief–state contention

At the local level, some national issues were reproduced, with specific contextual dynamics adding to the complexity. Ceremonial chiefs and community stakeholders acted as mediators of the state at local level. Although they defined their role as part of the local state, they also functioned as societal representatives. This was seen in the contentious relationships between the chiefs and the national state institutions and in the tensions between the chiefs and other stakeholders in some communities. The generational conflict between the traditional authorities and youth became particularly significant in the response, which partly affected the chiefs' role and authority.

Governance at the community level included different state authorities (e.g. representatives of the ONS and the sectoral response pillars) and socio-political authorities representing the youth and women's groups (e.g. chiefs and community stakeholders), and other community-based organizations, religious institutions and benefactors. The authority of local structures was recognized by many organizations, which included them in their response. This meant that these local structures functioned at times as a 'gatekeeper state', controlling access to aid. However, in the registration process, this gatekeeper responsibility was limited by the national state, creating contention between state levels.

The internal competition between different state institutions extended into local governance systems. Chiefs and community stakeholders had started the identification of affected people within their communities before the Ministry of Social Welfare arrived. However, when the official registration started, the community lists were not taken into account, and some people were excluded. As an assistant to a chief recounted, 'When [the Ministry of] Social Welfare came in, they said they are the eligible institution that is responsible for registration. And no other institution or individual can do registration without them. So they forced us to put aside our registration' (CH3, 17 November 2017). The community leaders thus felt bypassed by the state. As outsiders, the state's registration officers were not seen as legitimate or capable authorities to identify affected community members.

The tension between the ONS and the Ministry of Social Welfare was strongly felt at the community level. The authority of both chiefs and state officials is partly derived from

controlling resources. Although the ceremonial chiefs consider themselves the local state, their role is not completely formalized and remains unclear. Therefore, both chiefs and state officials had a lot at stake in the landslide response. Controlling the list of eligible beneficiaries, and thus directly or indirectly allocating resources, was important for their political standing. Towards the end of the Ebola crisis, the formal and informal roles of the chiefs were strengthened, but now, the state's ONS and the Ministry of Social Welfare took full control, undermining the ceremonial chiefs' authority in the community and limiting their gatekeeper role.

Chiefs form part of the internal state at local level as a hybrid institution, but they are often viewed with scepticism. In the interviews, chiefs were accused of partisan behaviour by national state actors: 'People were dishonest and the chiefs supported them' (GOV8, 18 December 2017). In contrast, organizations that assisted after the landslide often privileged the authority of community stakeholders to identify those affected, as one INGO representative stated, 'We don't know the communities; they know themselves' (INGO9, 16 January 2018). This sentiment was shared by many, although INGOs were also sceptical about the chiefs' role: 'It is an advantage and an added value to have them. But it is also a big risk. Because normally, they have their own interests' (INGO1, 16 October 2017). Aid agencies both strengthened and weakened chiefs' gatekeeper role, as these agencies preferred the chiefs' involvement and participation but also waited for the state's official list.

Whereas the chiefs' authority in relation to the state diminished during the landslide response, their traditional authority persisted. To community members, the state's control was an external infringement on their own patrons' authority. However, support for the role of the chief varied by community and depended on the chief's relationship with the state. The manner in which the chiefs handled their mediating role affected the part they played in the response.

One chief's role was considered very positively by community members, neighbouring chiefs, state officials and organizations. In this community, local stakeholders were able to connect with national and international responders and advocate for their needs. Nevertheless, even in this community, the stakeholders felt bypassed in their role as responders. Research participants asserted that the state institutions did not include the stakeholders enough, describing this as though a right had been taken away from them. The stakeholders praised the chief's transparency, which was welcomed by the various state and non-state actors who collaborated with him in the response. However, taking away the

responsibility for registration infringed on the role of this chief.

In contrast, in a neighbouring community, the chief's role was contested by the community members, state officials and organizations. Although this chief hosted internally displaced community members at his compound, the role of coordinator of the response was transferred to a community committee, primarily comprising politically engaged youth, which demanded more accountability. The chief was accused of corruption and bias, and he also accused others, blaming the takeover by the committee on the ONS. Although chiefs of neighbouring communities usually collaborate, the neighbouring community chiefs chose not to cooperate with this chief. This chief's inability to control his community members reflected negatively on him, and, with the community committee questioning his authority overall, his authority in the response was also questioned, and his role in the response was limited.

Exclusion in the registration process: Constructing 'genuineness'?

In the first days, the registration process in the affected areas was seen to be very chaotic. To the community members, it was not clear who was in charge of registration. Different institutions and organizations came, such as the Ministry of Social Welfare, NaCSA, and the ONS, but also some international organizations who did their own identification. To be included on one of those lists did not mean that person was officially registered, which created confusion. When the Ministry of Social Welfare started the official registration, the government decided it should be concluded within 48 hours. Although a brief registration period was thought to prevent non-affected people from registering, it resulted in many genuine survivors failing to register and others being accused of taking advantage.

'After the incident I was so traumatized that I did not have a chance to go and register. Because I was crying a lot because of the loss of my family. After I recovered from the tears, I felt sick. So that's why I failed to register' (IDP12, 18 November 2017). Survivors suffered immense trauma from the disaster and many people recounted that they were not in the right mind to be able to register. Others immediately went to family in the rural parts of the country for support, only to return after the initial registration period was closed. Some even argued that many who registered in the initial period were actually not affected, but came from neighbouring communities and since they were not traumatized, they were able to take advantage of the situation. The fact that the registration offices were not situated in the affected communities themselves made it easier for outsiders to claim benefits.

Social accountability within the community prevented some of these cases, as other community members were asked to verify a claim. However, power dynamics and social cohesion also resulted in people not speaking out against fraudulent registrations. And if someone was not identified by a community stakeholder, they would become angry. One chief recounted that during the registration, the chiefs made a lot of enemies (FGD1, 2 January 2018). Still, even non-affected people are generally seen as affected by both community members and organizations, as most are living in poor conditions. Poverty is seen by many to be the main cause of the registration fraud by individuals. Who was really 'affected' or not became dependent on the constructs of either the 'outsider' government or the 'insider' community.

Vignette 4. Exclusion in the registration process: Constructing 'genuineness'?

In addition to affecting the chiefs' status, the state response also brought the national state closer to the communities, resulting in friction and resistance. This was mostly seen in the camps, where many IDPs asserted that the selection process was biased and prioritized

those who presented themselves first, whereas the ONS insisted that the selection was needs-based. IDP participants argued that connections to either government officials or to people associated with the camp increased one's chances of getting in. In Juba camp, one IDP estimated that 80 per cent of the people there were not actually affected by the disaster.

There was a difference in the relations between the ONS management and the IDPs in the two studied camps. Akin to the differences between community views on the two chiefs presented above, the experience of the relationship between state institutions and the people affected how the camp communities viewed the state authorities. The state was seen either as part of the local level or as an outside force infringing on local governance. One camp manager was positively received by the IDPs, but there were tensions with the other camp manager, as one IDP recounted: 'When the supply comes, she [the camp manager] will cease it. […] The relationship is not good now because the ONS people, and more especially the leader, has not been nice to us. She has not been treating us with respect' (IDP12, 18 November 2017). This resulted in resistance and the non-acceptance of the representation of the state institution at the community level. In this camp, a protest directed at the president was organized in a bid to address community grievances. However, the protest was violently put down by security forces, with one interviewee recounting how she had a miscarriage after experiencing the electric shocks meted out by the security forces. In their response to this protest, the state was accused of targeting IDPs with whom they had had problems before.

This exemplifies the disconnect between the state, in the form of the ONS, and the IDPs. National state governance at the local level, as seen in the camp management, mostly reinforced a negative perception of the national state, although this differed between the camps. This shows the importance of interactions between local state structures and society. The outcome of the protest reinforced the perceived illegitimacy of the role of the camp management, and therefore also the ONS and even the nation state by extension. The protesters addressed their requests directly to the president, who had the power to change the realities of the response. This underscores the importance of the understanding of the multiplicity of the state and the complexities of a state-led response.

5.6. Conclusion: The local–national conundrum of a state-led disaster response

The response to the landslide affected the legitimacy and institutional capacity of the Sierra Leonean state and its hybrid institutions. The colonial, conflict and Ebola periods have had a

major impact on internal state and state–society relations in Sierra Leone. These dynamics were visible in the response to the 2017 landslide. This chapter has shown that the policy discourse of state uniformity in disaster response is problematic and that the centralized multi-level governance setting affected state institutions in different ways, with internal state and state–society politics being socially negotiated in the response arena.

Governance is not only centred on the state, and questions of power do not concern only state vs. non-state actors. When a policy calls upon 'the state' to take up its role in disaster response, different authorities within the state socially negotiate their legitimacy to do this. The central focus on governments as the responsible entity of the state in disaster response policies is particularly challenging in post-conflict states, where newly formed governance structures and governments are trying to consolidate the distribution of power. This invites power struggles not only between the central government and other authorities, but also within the national structures themselves.

At the national level, we found that authority between state institutions was negotiated and was a source of contention. Non-state actors had to balance the state-centric support discourse with space for their own interests and voices, raising the question of which state constellation they supported: the unified one in the policies, or the divided one seen in practice. The hierarchical nature of governance also created many obstacles in the disaster response, including those concerning the relations between the national and local state.

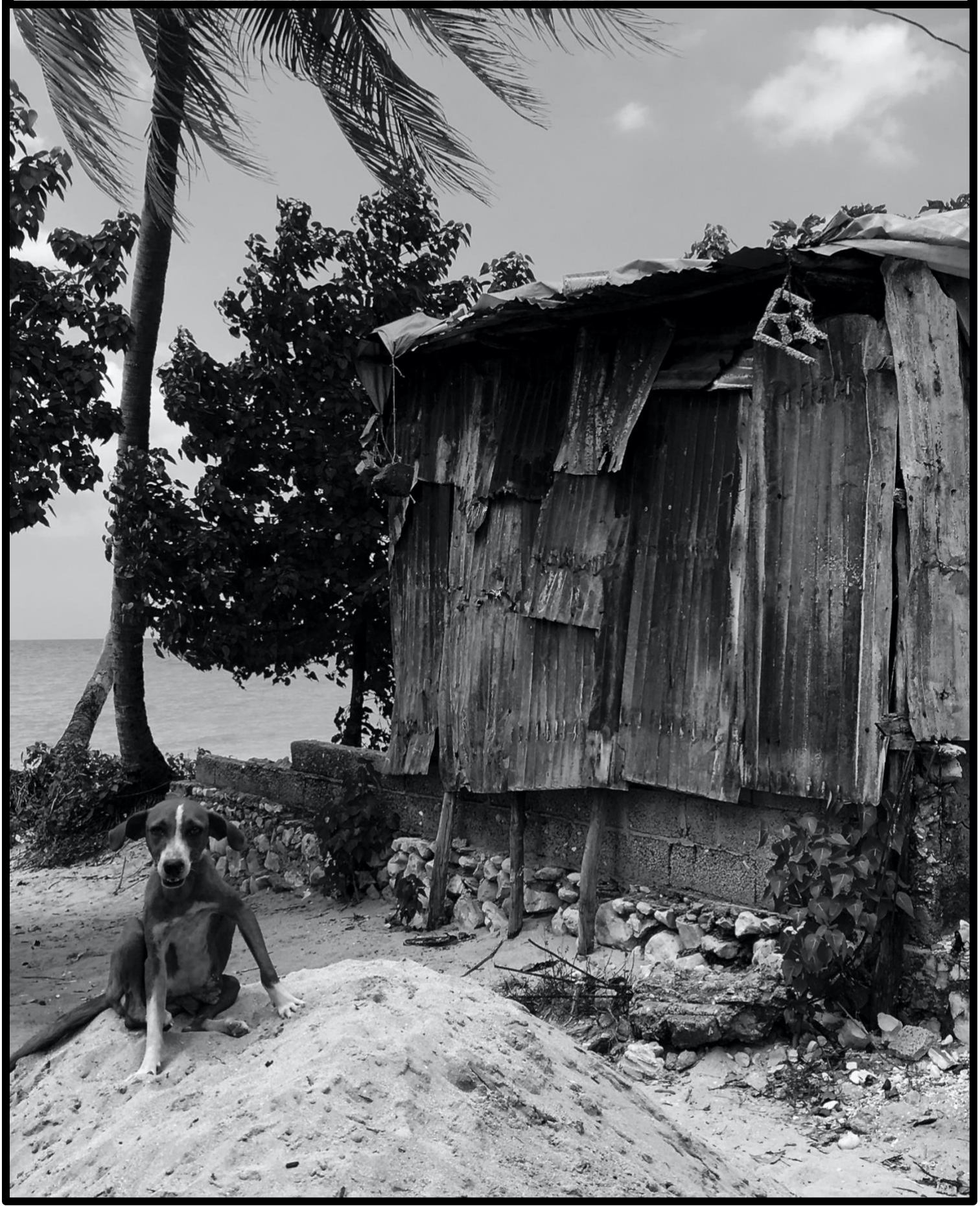
At the community level, each actor's role in the response was socially negotiated between the chiefs and the state institutions. The chief's authority as a gatekeeper between the state and society is based on both top-down and bottom-up support. In terms of top-down authority, the chiefs were generally challenged by a state discourse which stressed their corruption; however, the chiefs' bottom-up support was largely strengthened by communities' negative perceptions of state restrictions on them. The intermediate form of national state governance found in the camps intensified some state–society tensions, culminating in resistance. Our findings demonstrate that state–society relations are a crucial component of disaster response and that the lines between these two entities are blurred.

These findings are especially important in view of current shifts in international aid paradigms (Hilhorst, 2018). The Sendai Framework accords the central role in disaster response to states. In addition, since the Humanitarian Summit of 2016, international aid actors have emphasized the importance of national actors in emergency response, which further underscores the commitment to respect the central role of governments in disaster

response. This thesis poses several pertinent questions regarding what this means in other post-conflict settings. The themes of intra-state competition and a lack of linkages between different response levels are relevant in all contexts, but especially in situations where state and other institutions are still in flux and the international community has a large role to play. In Sierra Leone, intra-state competition allowed for a strengthening of institutions after the landslide. However, the disarticulation between the national and local state levels, and state–society tensions, have not been adequately addressed.

This chapter has demonstrated that disaster response affects, and is affected by, a multi-layered state with strong internal state power politics. Current disaster response policy directions are therefore not sufficient. A sensitivity to the internal divisions and competition between state institutions is currently lacking, which may have grave consequences for the internal workings of the state in disaster response.

Chapter 6: Haiti
Weathering the storm



Abstract[44]

As a disaster unfolds, survivors' experiences, actions and motives often become overshadowed by the humanitarian response. This is especially the case in contexts where the national state and international organizations are seen to reproduce (colonial) power structures. This chapter is based on four months of fieldwork in Haiti, where the authors conducted interviews and focus group discussions with people affected by Hurricane Matthew and with a variety of state officials and humanitarian response actors in Port-au-Prince, Jérémie, Les Cayes and Dame Marie. This study aimed to understand the role and power of societal actors in a context where there is a strong disarticulation between the state and society. The findings show that state–society tensions have been intensified, leading to the politicization of aid, which limits the inclusion of affected communities in disaster governance. In this context, society-based actors socially negotiate the conditions of aid through resistance and solidarity, with strategies ranging from public protests to everyday resistance and from social networks to alternative aid structures. The chapter argues that disarticulation between society and the state needs to be addressed to make a more locally led response possible.

[44] This chapter has been co-authored with Mikel Jean and is currently under review with the *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*.

6.1. Introduction

> *The eye of the cyclone stayed here for one hour. We thought everything would be destroyed. There was much damage. The city became like a wilderness. […] I remember the calm, so I went to see what happened, and then the wind and rain came again. The eye of the cyclone is like that. No unidirectional wind, but it came from all directions. Even the water came far from the sea. You were able to taste the saltwater on your lips.* (Mayor of Dame Marie, 5 March 2019)

The response to disasters can be likened to the chaotic winds in the eye of the storm, stirring up the troubled waters underneath. Previous work in humanitarian studies has shown that societal actors seeking a larger role in the governance of disaster response continue to struggle, which is often attributed to their limited access to humanitarian resources and to the concentration of power in international structures (Barnett, 2011; Donini, 2012; Fast, 2017; Geoffroy & Grünewald, 2017). The motives of these actors are quickly questioned by aid actors, as they are seen as passive 'recipients' yet they are also actively using their agency to increase their access to the incoming aid (Utas, 2005). The mistrust and the battle for control between aid and societal actors seem to conflict with international disaster governance policies seeking solutions with (or within) communities through a focus on the localization of humanitarian aid (The Grand Bargain, 2016), disaster risk reduction (UNISDR, 2015a), and the strengthening of resilience (Tiernan et al., 2019).

The contrast between international policies and the experienced reality of people affected by disasters highlights the importance of understanding the structures that shape the power relations limiting society's role in disaster response. Although scholars have critically examined the international aid system and aid–society relations (Barnett, 2013; Cunningham, 2018; Hilhorst, 2013, 2016) and explored community perspectives and understandings of disasters (Bakewell, 2000; Bankoff, 2003; Krüger et al., 2015), the relationship between societal actors and the state within a disaster governance framework has attracted less attention. Lack of knowledge on this topic is problematic because it is through society–state relations that the role of and space for societal actors is shaped before and after disasters.

After a disaster, people's relationships with both state and aid actors are impacted by perceptions of the response and of people's power to socially negotiate the conditions of aid. These relationships have sometimes reflected an acceptance of the existing power structures.

At other times, major rifts have been observed, with powerful social movements arising or gaining momentum after disasters. In these cases, the disaster serves as a 'tipping point' for socio-political change through the breakdown of the social contract between the state and society (Pelling & Dill, 2010). However, in practice, the effect of disasters on state–society relations might not always be so extreme. Haiti has experienced multiple crises and protests, including the recent anti-government blockades in 2018–2019, but the period immediately after Hurricane Matthew in October 2016 did not directly cause a rift in society–state relations. Rather, the disaster can be said to have created ripples. The period could be described as exceptionally normal in the sense that something as seemingly exceptional as a disaster was shaped by the normal power relationships between different actors.

This study aimed to understand the 'in-between', everyday politics of society–state–aid relations, which are not broken or entirely contested, but rather expressed in purposeful societal (in)action towards state and aid structures after a disaster, exposing undercurrents in troubled waters. Through exploring the everyday realities and motives of people affected by disaster, this research shows the importance of asking how societal actors experienced structural society–state relations in response to Hurricane Matthew and how they wielded and socially negotiated their power to challenge the system to reshape aid conditions. The findings contribute to understanding disaster governance in settings described as 'post-conflict' or not considered to be conflict-affected — settings in which humanitarian 'emergencies' often stem from structural vulnerabilities.

6.2. Society–state relations in disaster governance

6.2.1. Societal power within society–state relations

People living in the affected areas are the first and last responders after a disaster. These people are both affected by the disaster's impact and working to reduce this impact — saving lives, providing shelter, sharing food, clearing roads. These actors do not operate in a vacuum; they are connected to other actors and structures operating in this shared space. 'Society' is a relational term, with people who are inherently interconnected acting both as individuals and as groups or organizations.

Society can be described as a web, with multiple power centres or fragmented control centres that are connected (Migdal, 2001). This conception reflects an understanding of

society as comprising semi-structured relations between individuals, groups and institutions, as opposed to an aggregation of disconnected parts. The idea also shows that there are power centres connecting different parts of society and that multiple authorities exert control, either through society's governance structures (state actors) or through a more civil societal role (societal actors).

State–society relations concern the interactions and power relations between state and societal actors. These relations are generally discussed in the form of a 'social contract', in which explicit or implicit rules and agreements determine people's behaviour. After a disaster, state–society relations are often (con)tested, but there is disagreement as to how the social contract is impacted. Pelling and Dill (2010) have argued that a social contract can break down after a disaster, especially in conflict-affected contexts. In contrast, Siddiqi and Canuday (2018) have shown that the social contract is quite resilient, with state–society relations being reproduced in the wake of a disaster and conditioning how state actors respond. In both of these perspectives, it is clear that state–society relations affect the response to disasters and determine the space for societal actors to challenge this response. State–society relations are continuously (re)negotiated after a disaster.

Instead of looking at state–society relations, which take the state's responsibilities and functions as a starting point for societal action, this chapter examines the inverse, society–state relations, approaching the relationship through a social lens. Taking this society–state–aid relations approach, with its focus on societal actors, we analyse the social negotiations between these actors in the wake of a disaster, when people navigate different power centres and negotiate the outcomes of aid (Hilhorst & Jansen, 2010).

In a post-disaster response, (re)negotiated power relations affect the role and legitimacy of societal actors serving as response agents in the disaster governance framework (Tierney, 2012). Here, the inter-relational aspect of power is crucial and often finds expression in discourses and practices and in processes of resistance and acceptance (Foucault, 1984; Giddens, 1984; Hayward, 2000; Lukes, 2004). Resistance takes many forms, has multiple objectives, and includes a variety of actors. In the public arena, it often takes the form of organized or spontaneous protests, and it can be a one-time performance or a continuous social movement (Gurr, 1970; McAdam, 1982; Tarrow, 1998). In the private arena, individuals or groups of individuals may engage in resistance without overt displays. Such forms of 'everyday resistance' and 'infra-politics' (Scott, 1976), which are relatively difficult to observe

and understand because they become ingrained in the social consciousness and habits, are also seen in disaster governance (Wisner, 2016).

Disaster governance is one site where power relations are navigated. It poses a challenge when societal actors' relationships with state and aid actors are tense. Although Haiti has not been 'at war', as Donais and Knorr (2013, p. 57) note, 'the Haitian conflict may be considered an ongoing crisis in state–society relations'. Focusing on the relations between societal actors and the state is therefore particularly important in the Haitian context. Disaster governance is shaped by the socio-political and economic contexts and discourses that constitute power structures — the disarticulation between societal and state actors, how society's power is framed, and which alternative structures are formed.

Society–state–aid relations are rooted in historical pathways that continue to shape power structures. When these types of drivers of vulnerability are not acknowledged, they can even lead to disaster risk creation (Lewis, 2012; Wisner, 2016). A growing body of literature in development studies situates these power structures in the discourses and practices of colonialism, neocolonialism and neoliberalism. Although these concepts are not interchangeable, they are characterized by similar features: namely, dominant power and a dichotomy between the elite and the rest of society. Colonialism has been argued to be a fundamental problem (Césaire, 2000), and decolonization, including changing power structures, remains an ongoing process (Maldonado-Torres & Cavooris, 2017; Mignolo & Escobar, 2010; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). In the tradition of decolonial theory, Quijano (2000) coined the phrase 'the coloniality of power' to describe a certain type of structural power. Coloniality is, in essence, the internalization and structuralization of colonial power relations after colonialism, observed in social, political and economic domains, reproducing and maintaining racial and social classifications (Quijano, 2000). Viewing humanitarianism through this lens can contribute to a better understanding of the position of societal actors vis-à-vis state and aid actors in disaster response.

6.2.2. Disaster governance in Haiti: Politics of coloniality and crisis

The discourse and internalization of colonialism have shaped the literature on Haiti. In the scholarly research, Haiti has become a prime example of a country whose colonial past continues to shape its present (Dubois, 2013; Lundahl, 1989). Scholars working on Haiti have argued that its colonial history has contributed to vulnerability and tense society–state relations in different ways. As Schuller (2016, p. 23) has noted, Haiti's vulnerability is rooted

in ‘a long-term process of exploitation by foreign powers’, both during and after the colonial period. The indigenous population was decimated by the end of the colonial period and replaced through the slave trade, which resulted in a loss of indigenous knowledge on how to manage disasters. The situation in Haiti differs from some other post-colonial contexts, where the colonial regime integrated some form of disaster risk reduction, as Artur (2011) demonstrated in the case of Mozambique, for example.

It is important to interpret the Haitian people’s relationship with their state through this historical perspective. In the Haitian colony, governance was centralized and operated in a bureaucratic, authoritarian manner, and the plantation system created racialized political structures. This system, which was largely based on class divides and a form of the state that people would ‘use’ rather than serve, became the ‘new normal’ from which revolutionaries built after the colonial period (Casimir & Claypool, 2012). In this way, colonial structures were carried over into post-colonial social organization and continued to define much of the society–state tension, with societal actors experiencing the state’s ‘*politique du ventre*’[45] (Fatton, 2002) in everyday realities.

Whereas the Haitian state is centralized and elitist from the perspective of the people, in relation to international actors, the state becomes subordinate, shifting from the position of the ruler to that of the ruled (Fanon, 2002). The state is accountable to the international community but not to its own people. As Fatton (2011, p. 171) argued, decades of policies have ‘emasculated the state’. Several root causes set in motion the perpetuation of risk drivers and power dynamics in society–state–aid relations in Haiti and strengthened society’s perception of the state as dependent on foreign actors.

The dependency of both the state and societal actors in Haiti on external actors has often worsened after disasters. Disasters have increased imports and destroyed businesses through the free or subsidized distribution of goods (Jean-Louis & Klamer, 2016). The increased dependency has strongly affected how aid actors are viewed in Haiti. In times when the humanitarian presence is felt particularly strongly, INGOs (international non-governmental organizations) are seen as ‘thieves’, stealing the resources that are supposed to be for the Haitian people (Schuller, 2016, p. 154).

[45] An expression that refers to a form of post-colonial governance in which the state is seen as elitist and ‘consuming’ resources at the expense of the people. It encompasses a type of patrimonialism that is characterized by corruption.

Some scholars have criticized the decolonial perspective (Vickers, 2019). Indeed, the dependence observed in Haiti cannot be blamed solely on external actors; corrupt regimes have often facilitated the imposition of neoliberal policies, and class struggles have further marginalized the rural population (Casimir et al., 2011). Nevertheless, it is useful to critically interrogate how historically influenced power structures continue to take shape through internalized discourses and interactions (Berger & Luckmann, 1991).

The narrative on Haiti has been dominated by the ideas of crisis and exception (Jenson, 2011). According to Svistova and Pyles (2018), dominant discourses have constructed an image of the Haitian people as violent 'savages' involved in looting and stealing (Mason, 2011; Solnit, 2010). These images have perpetuated representations held since the 19th century (Ulysse, 2015), expanding the rift between the elites and others in society, as well as resulting in societal actors experiencing these social constructions as structural violence. The crisis narrative around disasters is not unique to Haiti; discourses of crisis and exceptionality are also found in traditional humanitarianism worldwide (see Hilhorst, 2018).

Instead of focusing on how aid and state actors dominated the disaster response, in this chapter we aim to show how Haitian actors experienced and challenged the disaster governance of the state and aid actors, co-shaping the response to Hurricane Matthew.

6.2.3. Navigating troubled waters after Hurricane Matthew

On 4 October 2016, Hurricane Matthew made landfall in southwest Haiti, leaving a trail of destruction in its path. Although the hurricane affected the entire country, the Sud, Grand'Anse and Nippes departments[46] bore the brunt of the disaster. The hurricane affected over 2.1 million people, 1.4 million of whom were in need of humanitarian assistance (OCHA, 2016). Over 500 people died in the hurricane and its aftermath, and more than half a million were forced to seek refuge with friends, families, or neighbours, or in shelters.

Before Hurricane Matthew reached the Caribbean coast, preparedness and response mechanisms were activated. The National Emergency Operations Centre (Centre des Operations d'Urgence National)[47] was activated on 1 October, and the interim president of Haiti issued a warning to prepare for the hurricane on 2 October. Members and volunteers of the Civil Protection Directorate (Direction de la Protection Civile; DPC),including the

[46] Haiti is divided into 10 departments, 41 arrondissements, 146 communes, and 571 sections communales.

[47] On the level of the commune, there was a Centre des Operations d'Urgence Communale to coordinate disaster response efforts.

Conseils d'Administration de Section Communale (CASEC),[48] were responsible for informing communities of the impending threat. Many people heard about the approaching hurricane from DPC volunteers with megaphones on the street, radio announcements, social media and messages from family members or friends; however, in remote areas, not everyone was reached.

Keeping the lessons of the 2010 earthquake in mind, state and aid actors involved in the Hurricane Matthew response took a different approach to the disaster and to each other. Whereas the response to the 2010 earthquake was characterized by the state and societal actors being overpowered by the international humanitarian system (Bhattacharjee & Lossio, 2011; Farmer, 2012; Rencoret et al., 2010), the response to Hurricane Matthew was largely led by the Haitian state, which did not declare an emergency that would have triggered the activation of the United Nations (UN) clusters and thus international control over the response.

With the response to Hurricane Matthew also being marked by donor fatigue that affected the available resources (Grünewald & Schenkenberg, 2017), state actors played a dominant role. Society–state disarticulation intensified, as seen in the divide between the political elite and others, for example. As Hsu and Schuller (2019) have argued, the limited response to Hurricane Matthew was largely caused by the 'Republic of Port-au-Prince' neglecting the rural *moun andeyo* (a common phrase to denote 'people outside' or the rural communities). Questions remain regarding how this divide was experienced in practice in the affected areas and how societal actors challenged it.

6.3. Methods

The authors conducted the research for this article over the course of four months from January to April 2019. Author 1 (Samantha Melis) was based in Port-au-Prince to conduct interviews with response actors at the national level. The selection of districts and communities to be included in the research into the societal response was guided by meetings and discussions with response actors. The focus areas of Jérémie, Dame Marie and Les Cayes were badly affected by the hurricane and attracted considerable international attention. We interviewed 24 society-based actors (such as representatives of community-based

[48] The CASEC is local governance body for the sections communales.

cooperatives and associations, religious leaders and private sector actors), 15 local state actors, and 23 aid-based actors from nine non-governmental organizations (NGOs), seven INGOs and seven international organizations (IOs). We also conducted three group interviews and three focus group discussions with community members and community-based associations. The interviews were interpreted from Haitian Creole into English to allow both researchers to engage with the participants.

Figure 6. Map of Haiti with Dame-Marie, Jérémie, Les Cayes and Port-au-Prince

The Dutch background of Author 1 may have negatively impacted the group discussions and the interpretation of the contextual nuances, because of the way that external researchers are sometimes perceived. However, this risk was mitigated by the Haitian background of Author 2 (Mikel Jean), who also had professional experience conducting and organizing focus group discussions. At times during the research period, nation-wide protests inhibited the authors' movements. However, this situation also provided an opportunity, as it opened a space to discuss the contextual and structural issues more broadly in everyday encounters.

After the data collection, the interviews were transcribed, stored in NVivo and thematically coded by Author 1, who performed line-to-line coding to identify themes. The main themes revolved around actor relations, challenges, discourses and social practices.

6.4. In the aftermath of disaster

6.4.1. Society meets state: Societal space limited by politics and power

Most Haitians encounter the state in the form of the CASEC, mayors and the commune branches of different ministries. After Hurricane Matthew, the politicization of aid increased the divide between society and powerful state and aid actors. When Hurricane Matthew struck, newly elected mayors had recently taken office, CASEC elections would follow in a few months, and the presidential election period was in full swing.

The mayor's office in each commune became a centralized point for distributing aid items to the communal sections. In this setting, the state's influence was strong but also contested by societal actors, with CASEC members forming a bridge between the state and societal actors. However, a CASEC representative asserted that one mayor's office did not share aid items equally over the communal sections and that most items stayed in the communal centre 'because when you are not on the mayor's team, he will not call' (GOV15,[49] 7 March 2019). This view was echoed by other community leaders, such as a voodoo priest who felt he was left out of the coordination meetings so that aid items could be distributed to the more 'fortunate ones and the unfortunate find nothing' (SOC4, 8 March 2019).

Most communal section members who participated in the focus groups near Dame Marie and Les Cayes strongly believed that the mayors did not distribute aid equally but instead gave priority to their partisans from the commune, neglecting residents of smaller villages. One example mentioned by the participants concerned a mayor who distributed cards that could be redeemed for tarps and food but then took the cards back to distribute to his friends and supporters. Another example concerned a mayor not openly selecting names for distributions, resulting in a lack of transparency regarding who would receive aid (FG2, 8 March 2019). Some community members who explicitly mentioned having a close relationship with the mayor received more help through this office, thus confirming the popular opinion regarding partisan practices (SOC21, 22 April 2019). This centralized sphere of influence

[49] Interview codes; SOC: societal actor, GOV: state actor, NGO: non-governmental organization, INGO: international non-governmental organization, IO: international organization. Focus group discussions are coded as FGD and Group Interviews as GI.

caused remote communities to receive less support, and aid actors who included the mayor's office in their distributions were consequently viewed relatively negatively.

At the community level, how communal leaders acted in the response as intermediaries between society and the state affected their legitimacy and the social cohesion in the community. A CASEC member elected post-Matthew, who was from a different political party to the mayor, had been very active in the response, whereas a former CASEC member from the mayor's party was accused of partisanship during the response (GOV14, 8 March 2019). Another CASEC leader was not re-elected after being found to have withheld aid items, as recounted in an interview with a Haitian NGO representative (NGO2, 4 April 2019). Publicly challenging partisan practices could strengthen the legitimacy of individual leaders, as we observed in the case of a popular CASEC member. This man was critical of the urban power centres, and his attempts to bypass state structures and contact aid actors directly was met with enthusiasm in the community (GOV15, 7 March 2019). From the stories of CASEC members and their communities, we observed that more people would suspect a CASEC member of bias when this person was seen as being closer to the power centres and farther removed from their societal foundation. As mentioned above, the national election period coincided with Hurricane Matthew, and CASEC elections also followed within a few months. In this context, people viewed the politicization of aid as infiltrating all levels of governance.

Post-conflict politics: Constructing fragility?

Political instability and violence had plagued Haiti for many decades before president Jean Bertrand Aristide was removed from office in 2004. The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) was subsequently established to stabilize the country and support the transitional government. This was a peacekeeping mission, even though Haiti had not experienced a 'typical' armed conflict. Still, after the coup, Haiti followed a reconstruction process that is typical for conflict areas: a transitional government, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration programmes, strengthening rule of law and the organization of democratic elections. The post-conflict discourse was adopted by large donors — mainly following the UN — and international support was geared towards statebuilding and developmental programmes for security. This, in turn, brought (international) legitimacy to subsequent elections, even though the root causes for the political instability and violence had not been sufficiently addressed. The political landscape continued to be defined by uncertainty and elite capture, constructing a fragile socio-political environment.

This uncertainty in the political landscape increased the incentives for politicians on all levels to take advantage of the hurricane response to strengthen political support from their partisans. The elections planned for October had already been postponed three times after allegations of fraud and violent protests; an interim government was in charge when the hurricane hit. With the new elections on the horizon in November, and only a slight margin between candidates, the space for contention was large. The previous ruling party of Michel Martelly (PHTK) was not the only one that needed more visibility and support. However, when people in the affected areas — already suspicious of their (central) government — experienced instances of political partisans being favoured, this reproduced fragility in state–society relations.

Vignette 5. Post-conflict politics: Constructing fragility?

Community members believed that national-level political candidates used aid distributions for campaign purposes and that they failed to follow through on their promises. Research participants mentioned that the party of the interim president distributed water packs and aid items bearing the party's logo. Jovenel Moise, then a presidential candidate, flew to the affected area to show his support. A church leader in Les Cayes eloquently conveyed a sentiment that was often expressed in the research: 'Candidates have three horses. First, they will promise to do something for you. Second, they will give some of you something. Third, they don't care about you' (SOC13, 23 April 2019). Many interviewees recounted losing confidence in politicians. Rumours accusing politicians, mayors, senators and deputies of diverting aid were abundant. One CASEC leader used powerful words to express how society experiences the *politique du ventre* of the Haitian state: 'They use the misery of people for politics' (GOV8, 22 April 2019). Another CASEC leader offered advice: 'The government should take the situation to its foundation. If the government keeps doing things on the top, it won't have any improvement because the foundation is the most important part of the house' (GOV15, 7 March 2019). Community members felt that aid was stuck in the political centres and that it needed to be transferred to all people, including in the more rural areas, to strengthen society's foundation.

Although most community members participating in the research did not see the state as acting in their interests or feel they had the power to negotiate with the state, they also did not see much room for social negotiation with aid actors. Many aid distributions were experienced as chaotic and badly organized. Furthermore, not all aid was considered appropriate for the needs of the affected people. As one cooperative member pointedly explained:

> They came to improve the life of people, but they make these people poorer. They came with something, and they went back with the thing again. They came with employees, and those employees found the best jobs with high salaries. They rented big buildings at a high price. And the primary objective was not met. […] The NGO brought seeds and just told the population what they want. But if they were local seeds, that could have brought better results. (SOC8, 6 March 2019)

When people contacted aid organizations, they were asked to fill out forms but then did not receive any follow-up communication. Community members wanted these organizations to come to them to ask what their needs were before distributing aid. From

the interviews we conducted, it could be concluded that community members saw the aid actors as distant, unresponsive and corrupt. Further, given people's perception that the state was appropriating aid on different levels, as described above, international organizations can be argued to have perpetuated the society–state divide in Haiti.

The influence of other societal actors, such as Haitian aid organizations, in co-shaping the response was also limited by the superior power of international aid actors. Many Haitian organizations were the implementing partners of these international aid actors, but such partnerships were not on equal terms. Some Haitian NGOs that had worked with international aid organizations before the hurricane were quickly mobilized, as recounted by an NGO staff member working with a large donor agency (NGO2, 4 April 2019). However, even when there were strong pre-existing relationships, Haitian NGOs did not enjoy the same benefits of aid funding, compared with international aid organizations. A debilitating complaint voiced by NGO staff members involved the exclusion of overhead costs from project budgets. Working as implementing partners, NGOs were unable to continue to pay their staff members' salaries and had to pay for logistics costs themselves (NGO2, 4 April 2019; NGO3, 10 May 2019). The NGOs experienced this situation as unsustainable, but they also did not feel that they had the space to negotiate other terms with their international partners.

Although societal actors did not think that they could influence communal-level state actors, these state actors themselves felt that the people had power over them because being seen as failing to act on their constituents' behalf could negatively affect the position of these state actors. State officials at the mayors' offices in Jérémie and Les Cayes noted that INGOs informed the mayor's office of their presence but that this was done only in terms of sharing information on the type and organization of the response; the INGOs had already received permission at the national level. The limited space communal-level state actors had to negotiate the terms of the response coming from aid organizations put them in a difficult position. There was little room for them to react if these projects were badly executed (GOV4, 4 March 2019; GOV5, 5 March 2019; GOV9, 24 April 2019). One example of this mentioned by multiple state actors was the distribution of rice that was considered to be spoiled and had to be thrown out. A commune official said they had no choice but to accept the programmes because if they did not accept them the people in the commune would be angry and blame the mayor for blocking aid (GOV4, 4 March 2019). This would negatively affect their relationship with the community.

6.4.2. Societal actors challenging the response through different forms of resistance

With state and aid actors keeping the sphere of influence and power vertically organized, societal actors resisted them in different ways to change certain conditions of the response. From foot-dragging to protests and from theft to creative transformation of aid items, the research participants made clear that survivors challenged the dominant power structures from below.

Despite stark differences between the urban centres, most notably Port-au-Prince, and the rural areas, protests and resistance to the political order manifested throughout Haiti. The rural areas might be overpowered by the state, but they are not powerless. Societal actors contribute to shaping disaster response outcomes and challenge (post-)colonial power structures, both operating in the dominant systems and using them to resist and increase solidarity — not only through overt action in the public space, but also through more covert forms of resistance.

6.4.2.1. Resisting state power: Reluctance and protest

The warnings of the impending hurricane reached people a few days to a few hours before Hurricane Matthew made landfall. In some areas, people were encouraged to seek shelter in schools or churches. However, from the narratives of the research participants, it appeared that a large majority of people ignored these messages.

The security of their belongings was an important factor, but another significant reason that so many decided to stay in their homes was that they did not believe the messages. This can be seen as a 'boy who cried wolf' effect, as previous warnings were not followed by such devastating consequences. Additionally, the division and mistrust between society and the state made the population less receptive. In an interview, a DPC officer recounted how she tried to call young fishermen to the shore, but they ignored her and said, 'We don't care about you; you do a political job, not us' (GOV12, 10 March 2019), seeing her only as a politician with ulterior motives. Only when she called the police and hid in their truck did the young fishermen leave the tumultuous sea. Defiance of the state's messages was also seen later, when the state wanted people to leave the shelters and reopen the schools. In one commune, the state was only able to close the school building when people went out during the day looking for aid; they found the building closed upon their return (SOC21, 22 April 2019).

Discontent with the state's response was reflected in demands for accountability in the media, where various instances of corruption were publicly discussed. For example, a political deputy was accused of keeping aid items instead of distributing them to the community (SOC15, 23 April 2019). Some people also used the media for their own political motives, such as discrediting communal leaders of opposing political parties (GOV8, 22 April 2019). Radio broadcasts were an outlet for people to raise a critical voice regarding the power of state politicians, and many rumours about the abuse of this power were spread through this channel. However, the radio broadcasts rarely followed up on these rumours, leaving the people even more frustrated with some of their leaders.

Many state and aid actors saw these public expressions of discontent with the state as the result of ignorance and reluctance to listen to authorities. However, such manifestations can also be viewed as part of a larger pattern of societal defiance of the state, which people viewed as self-interested. Because people felt powerless to address their marginalization by the state in a public manner, other forms of resistance became part of everyday life as a means of socially negotiating power; Scott (1985) has referred to this as 'infra-politics'. Occupying public buildings by refusing to leave the shelters can be seen as a way of pressuring the state to continue providing aid because what has been supplied has not been sufficient. Additionally, not following the instructions of the state, for example by remaining at home when advised to evacuate, puts more strain on the state's resources, including time. Various external sparks have the potential to shift these patterns of everyday resistance to more overt expressions of discontent. In the response to Hurricane Matthew, chaotic distributions resulting in deaths served as such sparks, triggering public protests.

In both Dame Marie and Les Cayes, the distribution of aid items from ships caused chaos and ended with security officers killing young people in the crowds. By the time the ships arrived, people had not received any aid for weeks. In Les Cayes, a group of Scouts recounted how officials and political leaders were seen taking food to their own houses, while most people received nothing (SOC11, 24 April 2019). Another resident described a protest by community leaders when food did not reach them after food trucks were seen coming and going, despite the mayor's responsibility to distribute this aid (SOC17, 23 April 2019). A fisherman reported that the local children formed a chain in the water, linking hands, to try to reach the ship and find aid for themselves; when the police tried to stop this behaviour, the children attempted to get away, and one teenage boy was shot and killed (SOC21, 22 April 2019). Afterwards, people blocked roads, set tyres on fire, and took the body of the

boy into the street to show to the mayor, paralysing the city. Although the family was compensated, the results of the investigation of this incident were not made public.

A week before the above-mentioned protest in Les Cayes, a similar incident took place in Dame Marie. Ships tried to reach the remote commune, but the dock had been destroyed by the hurricane. Some aid was transferred from the ships to land by helicopter, and other items were transported on small private boats. When the crowd arrived to receive items from these small boats, chaos erupted; a young woman was fatally shot, and five others were injured. At the time of the fieldwork, people were still unsure about whether it was a police officer or an officer from MINUSTAH (The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti) who fired the fatal shot, as a long investigation had failed to yield conclusive results. People took to the streets to protest and demand justice for the young woman who was killed. Their anger was further fuelled by rumours that the mayor had asked for aid items from this distribution to be brought to him while children were left hungry (FGD2, 8 March 2019).

In both protests, people saw the distribution of aid from the ships as poorly organized, which resulted in the challenges encountered when unloading the aid items. People in Dame Marie and Les Cayes were not informed about these aid distributions; rather, they saw the ships close to the shore — in the case of Les Cayes, the ships were there for three days. Although this aid came from neighbouring countries and aid organizations, the people's demands for justice regarding the violent consequences were directed towards Haitian state officials. People felt that the state had to be held responsible, and resistance in the form of protests was a way to exert their power over the state.

6.4.2.2. Shifting power over aid: Increasing access by re-appropriation

In relation to aid actors' power to determine the response to Hurricane Matthew, societal and local state actors renegotiated outcomes differently. At the level of the communes and communal sections, authorities felt that they were not included in the aid response decisions and, according to many people, these authorities consequently appropriated aid for their own use. Both societal and local state participants in this research argued that aid organizations should come directly to the communities first to identify their actual needs and that they should be transparent and fair in how they distribute aid. Organizations that included community members in their distributions and that organized these distributions publicly, for example, were often well received. However, as the need was too great for the available

support to address and the distribution of the aid through communal authorities was perceived as unfair, people tried to increase their access to aid in various ways. One way of doing this was by increasing pressure on the staff of aid organizations. For example, in Les Cayes, aid responders recounted moments when they felt that the affected people's anger regarding the slow and inadequate response was directed at them. One aid worker noted that, one evening, people went to random houses, knocking on the doors and making noise as a way of pressuring aid actors to help them (INGO1, 21 April 2019).

Another way of attempting to change the conditions of aid included the illegal act of stealing relief items. The research participants felt that people selectively targeted certain entities for these robberies. Both community members and aid agency representatives asserted that trucks from aid organizations were particular targets for theft. Other trucks carrying much-needed food and construction items, such as those owned by stores or other businesses, were often left alone. Haitian organizations and individuals carrying aid items to the affected regions did not report experiencing these security threats, and most community members did not feel that the security situation had changed after Hurricane Matthew.

Instances of theft also occurred around aid distributions. For example, the people on the small private boats unloading relief items from ships sometimes took these items for themselves instead of delivering them to the people waiting on the shore, and physically stronger people in distribution queues would sometimes take aid items away from more vulnerable community members. The disorganization of aid distributions was seen by the research participants as the major cause of these kinds of thefts. Unequal or insufficient distributions also caused intra-societal tension, as was seen in a communal section near Dame Marie where a limited number of bags of rice were distributed. A community member recounted how they received 10 bags of rice, which was not enough to share with the four other neighbouring localities, resulting in people from one of the neighbouring sections coming, armed with machetes, to threaten them. In response, the people of this section promised to share the items next time. This community member noted that 'if there is no food, then the fighting stops' (GI2, 7 March 2019).

In contrast to the 'everyday resistance' transforming into public displays directed towards the state, resistance to the conditionalities of aid was largely observed at the personal level. To increase individual access to relief items or to make these items more appropriate to their needs, people bent the rules. Some people described how they made sure they received food during the distributions: one woman put clothes underneath her shirt and

pretended to be pregnant and was given rice and beans by the police. Another woman pretended to have a heat stroke after standing in the sun and 'fainted' in order to receive relief items. A young man behaved as though he had a mental disability to get food. This sort of deception was a tool for people to use the system in a way that worked better to address their needs.

A common complaint among the research participants was that the aid provided was not appropriate for their needs. Therefore, the re-appropriation of relief items, for example by exchanging these items for other items or selling them for cash, was used as a way for people to receive the support they needed. For instance, the distributed tarps were sometimes resold for 'pocket money' (FG3, 7 March 2019), and vouchers or cards for seeds might be exchanged for cash (FG1, 6 March 2019; INGO5, 10 April 2019; NGO8, 24 April 2019).

6.4.3. Solidarity: Alternative resistance within the system

Given that the available aid was insufficient to meet the needs of the affected communities, social networks were especially crucial for people after Hurricane Matthew. As Schuller (2016) has pointed out, community associations are flexible in nature but have often been overlooked by INGOs. In the present study, such associations were described as useful by many people. A religious leader commented, 'Between the rice, little stones taste fat' (SOC13, 23 April 2019), describing a beneficial side effect in a difficult situation in which neighbours also benefited from the support that affected people received. Solidarity groups were seen by the community members as positive forces in their communities, in contrast to aid organizations, which were often seen as obstacles to overcome.

'*Tout moun se moun, men tout moun pa menm*' is a common Haitian Creole proverb that translates as 'Every person is a person, but not all persons are the same'. This saying reflects both strong solidarity and the substantial inequality based on racial and class divisions among people in Haiti. Despite the significant inequality between the (political) elite and others, Haitian communities have strong solidarity networks to provide mutual assistance in response to the absent state, particularly in rural areas. Although the state has marginalized those living outside of Port-au-Prince, a counter-narrative has been built on the need to be self-reliant and to 'use' the state without being a part of it. Because societal actors could not rely on the state for support, people sought to carve out larger societal spaces in response to Hurricane Matthew as a way to shape the conditions of the response.

6.4.3.1. Community-based aid structures

In the disaster-affected communities, people relied on many solidarity structures that operate as the foundation of everyday solidarity and are strengthened in times of crisis. The members of Village Loans and Savings Associations (VLSAs) and cooperatives, in particular, were able to rely on these kinds of networks. Moreover, traditional practices such as the *Konbit* (where a group of people come together to work for a community project) brought people together, and family connections — both within Haiti and beyond — were vital in the disaster response.

VSLAs are important solidarity groups in Haitian communities. These groups were often initially set up by development programmes to encourage community-based micro-loans and support. After Hurricane Matthew, VSLA group members found that such support 'helped them to survive' (FGD3, 7 March 2019). These people had nothing after the hurricane, and the VSLA provided them with the opportunity to access funds (FGD2, 8 March 2019). The 'strength of the group is themselves' (FGD3, 7 March 2019); even with very little means, they were able to put money together to help each other, although some of these groups struggled. As everyone was affected by the disaster, the groups needed to prioritize the allocation of support. To accomplish this, they analysed individual cases and attempted to serve the most vulnerable first (FGD2, 8 March 2019). Groups with ties to aid organizations were able to access additional money from these organizations; they then set up loans for their members to assist them with commerce, gardens and school fees (FGD1, 6 March 2019). Different organizations have come into the area, but only the VSLAs have remained (FGD3, 7 March 2019).

Cooperatives were another powerful network node. Such organizations often had pre-established relationships with external donors, and they were able to use these connections to increase their access to aid. Cooperative members often benefited from aid kits and also supported each other during the recovery period. In an interview, a Cacao Cooperative member explained that the cooperative helped with providing the first necessities for their members, which numbered over 600, with the help of their donor partners. Cooperatives also encouraged members to replant their gardens so that they would later provide sustenance (SOC8, 6 March 2019). Therefore, the cooperatives were helpful not only in the short term, but also for medium- and long-term recovery.

In terms of social structures, the *Konbit*, family and diaspora were important foundations of the response. In conversations about aid actors, community members would often say that aid 'killed the *Konbit*'. According to these research participants, because aid

agencies offered local people cash payments for work, people engaged less in the traditional *Konbit*, in which residents performed community work. After Hurricane Matthew, some affected communities were initially cut off from the rest of the country. As mentioned at the start of this chapter, during and after any disaster, the community members in an affected area are the first responders, helping each other in many ways. As a young man from the Scouts asserted in an interview, 'Living here, where the government is absent, all the things they [community members] did [were done] by themselves' (SOC11, 24 April 2019). Multiple examples of such 'things' emerged in the community members' narratives about the post-disaster period: people went to find refuge in the more strongly built houses of their neighbours before and during the hurricane; community members and leaders hosted displaced families; people worked together to clean up fallen trees and debris, and they cleared roads using shared tools to allow the resumption of traffic and to enable aid to reach all areas; food was shared with neighbours, family members and friends. If someone did not receive aid, others often shared what they received.

Similarly, family members, friends and social connections in Port-au-Prince were vital for support after Hurricane Matthew. Although the aid organizations could not immediately reach remote communities, individuals were able to make their way to these locations with supplies and aid items. For example, a man living in Port-au-Prince who had not heard from his family members in a remote commune in the affected region travelled to help them by car, bringing mattresses and supplies. This man did not bring items only for his family; other people staying at the shelter housing his relatives were also helped by these items (SOC25, 4 May 2019). When asked what people had done to recover from the disaster, community members stressed this type of sharing: 'We shared and worked together. If someone else had family members in Port-au-Prince and if they sent rice, they shared the rice' (GI1, 8 March 2019).

The Haitian diaspora was another important source of support after Hurricane Matthew. Diaspora organizations raised money and supported communities in Haiti. Some organizations, particularly in the United States, did so on a relatively large scale. All this help was much needed and appreciated: 'Haitians, when they are in a difficult situation, they help each other. Not in a formal way to plan to do it, but they did it', a youth representative asserted (SOC14, 8 March 2019). Before and after Hurricane Matthew, 'Haitians send aid to their families. That's what supports them' (SOC5, 5 March 2019). However, this did not always translate into direct help, and it could not always be expected: 'Even if you have [family

in the diaspora], then they don't care about us. When I called my cousin in the United States, she told me, "Don't you have Jehovah? Go and pray"' (FGD3, 7 March 2019).

6.4.3.2. Resisting the society–aid divide: Religious actors and the private sector

In terms of alternative sources of aid, religious institutions and the private sector were crucial for the affected communities. Churches opened their doors and supported the communities. Like schools, churches were used as shelters, both during and after the hurricane. However, many church buildings were also greatly affected themselves, with their roofs not being able to withstand the force of the hurricane, as one community member explained: 'Yes, they helped. But they also couldn't do anything because the church was also destroyed' (GI1, 8 March 2019). Additionally, churches and their leaders served as connectors — mediators between the communities and aid actors — and were included in aid projects by many aid organizations because church networks were seen as knowing the communities well. As one INGO representative stated, 'They [pastors] have the ability to mobilize people' (INGO1, 21 April 2019). The churches that were used as shelters also provided meals for community members. Religious leaders, in turn, tried to mobilize support in the cities, and churches received support from associated (mother and sister) churches in Port-au-Prince and other places that were not affected by Hurricane Matthew, as well as from the Haitian diaspora. For example, one church used international charity funding to rebuild houses for its members, and another fundraised with sister churches in other Haitian cities (SOC12, 24 April 2019; SOC20, 21 April 2019). Especially in Les Cayes, the presence of many churches aided the response for church members and neighbours. However, not all churches were well organized or wanted to coordinate with other churches: 'In Catholic churches yes, but not Protestant ones. There was no coordination there' (IO1, 15 May 2019). Furthermore, the power of religious leaders to increase people's access to aid varied between local churches and the international churches with a strong presence in Haiti.

The role of international religious actors can be seen as an extension of aid, especially US-based aid. International churches were also able to connect people with essential funding, serving as an alternative to the state and aid actors, which were viewed with mistrust. An IO representative described people's trust in churches as follows: 'They respect churches. They are well known and trustworthy, working for the community's well-being. None of those assumptions exist with international actors' (IO2, 16 May 2019). After Hurricane Matthew, international churches with a strong presence in the country were able to quickly mobilize

resources through their charities, assess the situation, and respond, mostly in areas where they had already been operating. These international churches collaborated with Haitian churches and were strongly rooted in the communities. One international church leader asserted, 'We had communities totally engaged with us' (IO2, 16 May 2019). Additionally, the churches established by international movements were able to quickly obtain international funding and provide aid — not only for their members, but also for others living in the area. Furthermore, despite the comment on one interview quoted above, a group of Protestant churches organized as an alliance. Overall, these church networks operated mostly in parallel to the aid organizations and in collaboration with the United States and with Haitian state structures. Although it could be argued that these international churches are part of the neocolonial power structures, they also experienced the domination of aid agencies, which were not always willing to connect with church networks. This negatively impacted the church networks' attempts to collaborate with aid organizations.

Many private businesses also responded to Hurricane Matthew, either through an alliance or individually. Alliances of companies were involved in official aid mechanisms, but businesses operating individually worked outside these mechanisms and chose to resist coordination efforts. The private sector is important for disaster response in all contexts, both in their role as contractors and though corporate foundations and forms of philanthropy. In this research, it became clear that businesses in the affected region were also able to capitalize on the response through initiatives such as hardware stores supplying kits purchased by a business participating in the response (SOC10, 24 April 2019), seed distributors selling seeds to an INGO (INGO5, 10 April 2019), or a small mattress shop selling a large quantity of mattresses at reduced prices and making a profit (SOC18, 20 April 2019). These examples also illustrate aid organizations acting on their intention to source goods locally.

Some other businesses with international partners were able to mobilize resources quickly because of the trust their international partners already had in them. As one private sector employer recounted, 'People sent money because they are in business with us, so they could trust us. Many times they hear stories that aid is not reaching the beneficiaries [but used] to pay for the salaries and housing of the staff. So people didn't want to give to the Red Cross or INGOs, but rather to help local people directly' (SOC10, 24 April 2019). Another person working in the private sector reiterated this point: 'Maybe people trust us more. People are wary about INGOs after the earthquake. We make things available right away, whereas INGOs would be bothered by bureaucracy behind it because they work with

government agencies' (SOC1, 14 May 2019). By finding their own way and operating outside the aid structure, businesses were less often targeted by people blocking trucks and stealing aid items. Although private businesses mostly limited their support to their employees, other people in the communities also benefited from aid distributions.

6.5. Conclusion

In disaster response governance, societal actors are the first responders. However, as humanitarian practice has shown, their impact is limited in terms of deciding how the response is organized. Previous work has focused on aid–society relations as a limiting factor; this thesis argues that this is especially problematic in a context where there is strong state–society disarticulation. Viewing crises as catalysts for change that allow structural tensions to be overcome implies that the inevitable result will be increased societal engagement in disaster governance. Our research findings suggest that the situation is more complex than this.

Instead of serving as a 'tipping point' for change, Hurricane Matthew intensified society–state relations through everyday politics. Societal actors in Haiti faced challenges in socially negotiating power relations in disaster governance because of the strong politicization of aid that strengthened people's lived experience of the *politique du ventre*, which served to fill the bellies of elites and partisans, sometimes quite literally. Internalized discourses of colonialism and crisis shaped how different response actors defined their relationships. The self-serving nature of aid contributed to further eroding society–state–aid relations and to limiting the space for societal actors to take a larger role in disaster governance.

The society–state disarticulation strongly impacted people, reducing their trust in the state across all phases of disaster governance. Many state and aid actors saw societal actors' lack of trust and consequent behaviours as ignorance and reluctance to follow instructions on the part of societal actors. However, this reaction among the people follows a larger pattern of societal defiance of the state and the international system seen in Haiti and beyond. Acts of resistance observed included public protests which sought to hold the state accountable and demonstrate the people's power over the state.

Re-appropriation strategies were another form of resistance. When people lack information on aid support but see aid items pass them by although they are in need, or when people must accept the type of aid and method of distribution dictated by external aid actors, power is imposed. People demonstrated their concerns through their actions in a context

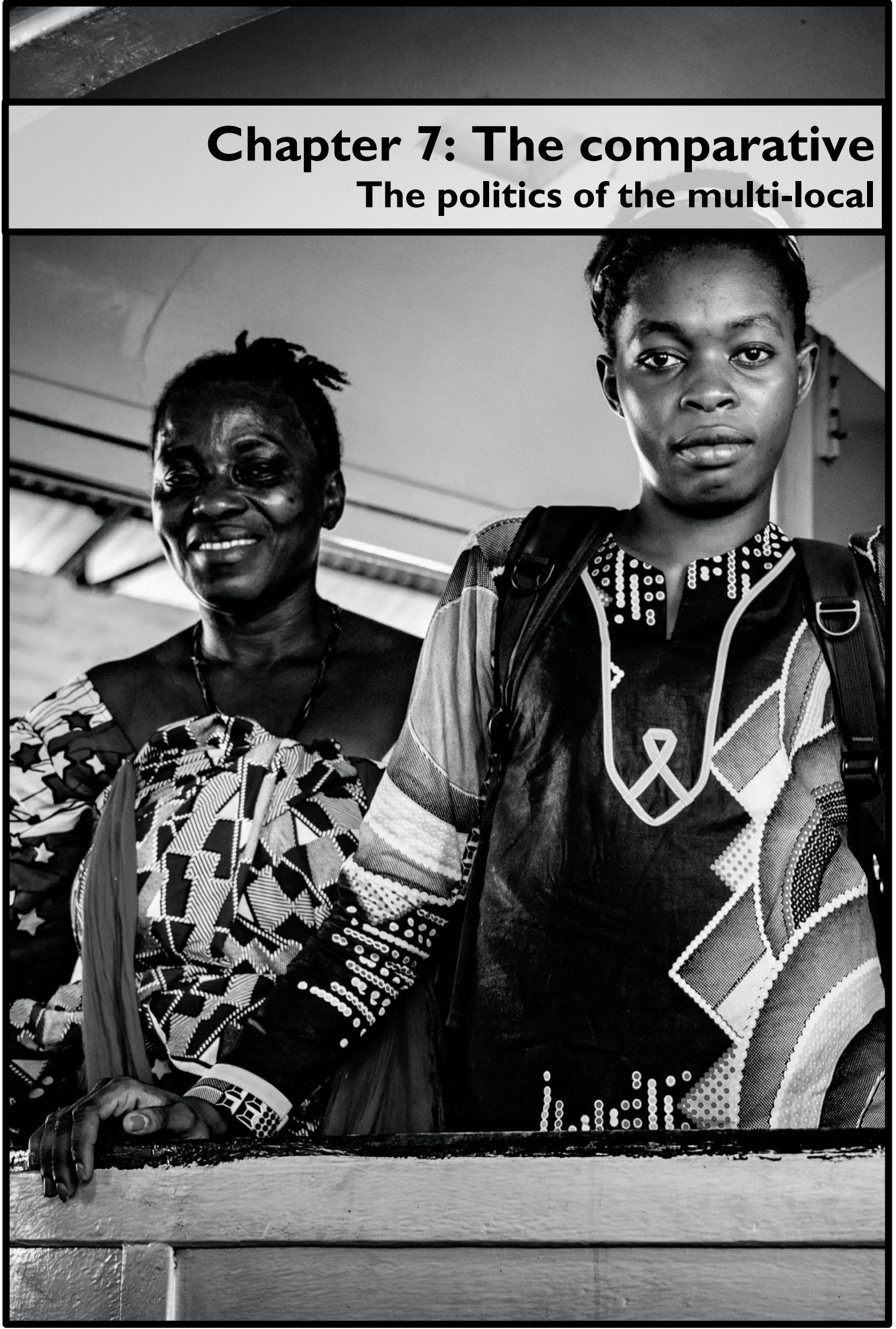
where space for socially negotiating the response was limited. These actions in response to Hurricane Matthew contested the structural society–state–aid power relations.

Societal actors needed to carve out their own space in the social realm. Outside of traditional state–aid structures, disaster response took different forms, and solidarity was mostly found in the support offered by religious actors, private sector institutions, and community-based associations. Here, solidarity can be seen as part of the resistance to the dominant state and aid structures — a counter-narrative in which societal actors define the conditions of aid on their own terms.

This chapter also adds to the understanding of changes in disaster response policies and practices more generally, where the desired localization of humanitarian aid faces challenges in practice. Our findings show that the extent to which power and politics are centralized in a given context is an important factor to consider when exploring the space different actors have to socially negotiate the outcomes of aid. Therefore, to achieve a more locally led disaster response, structural relations between society and the state ned to be addressed, and alternative aid structures must be supported.

Chapter 7: The comparative

The politics of the multi-local



Abstract[50]

'Localization' became the new buzzword after the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. Since then, however, the nature of the commitment to localization has been questioned. What is 'the local'? How does localization work in practice? With little empirical research, generalities in theory and practice have prevailed, preventing a nuanced approach to conceptualizing the local. This chapter aims to build a foundation for the understanding of connotative, nuanced 'locals' and to explore the multiple dimensions of the local in both theory and practice. The methodology of a case study research, with a semi-structured and flexible approach, facilitated the identification of different elements of a locally led response in each of the cases. Combined with a literature review, this chapter aims to answer the questions: what underlying assumptions regarding the local are found in localization rhetoric, and how do multi-local dynamics challenge locally led disaster response in practice? Answering these questions necessitates deconstructing the multi-local in theory and critically examining expressions concerning the local in practice. The multi-local lens provides a perspective with potential to change current practices and contribute to a more transformative agenda.

[50] This chapter is co-authored with Raymond Apthorpe and has been accepted for publication in a special issue of the journal *Politics and Governance* (vol. 8, issue 4).

7.1. Introduction

When the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) concluded in 2016, one of the major goals for the future of humanitarian aid was to be 'as local as possible, as international as necessary', meaning that international actors would play a supportive role and only when needed (United Nations, 2016, p. 30). A concept of localization rose to the top of the humanitarian agenda following the Summit, with commitments made by international donors and humanitarian organizations towards increasing local leadership, building capacity and directing funds to local- and national-level actors to realize these goals, particularly in the field of disaster response.

The prevailing usage of the term 'localization' suggests that the international is the default setting and that there should be some shift to the local, or the national as local. Even the criticisms of the humanitarian system — describing it as a top-down, centralized, neoliberal, neocolonial, paternalistic and overpowering aid industry that has been shaped by imperial histories (Barnett, 2011; Bräuchler & Naucke, 2017; Donini, 2012) — maintain a perspective that is quite international-centric. Clearly, if international donors and humanitarian organizations act upon the localization commitment, this would mean a complete transformation of international humanitarianism. However, given the lack of explicit conceptualization in the WHS resolution as to how more localization would improve aid effectiveness, there is much further work to be done on the idea of the local. The local is a strongly multivalent, even ambiguous, notion that means different things to different people, in different contexts, and for different purposes.

Scholars and practitioners have begun to express concerns about the lack of critical discussion of the practical implications and (im)possibilities of the localization agenda. These voices have contributed to reflections on locally led responses that recognize current capacities and leadership, shifting power relations and the conceptualization of the local itself — elements that have often escaped debate (Apthorpe & Borton, 2019; Bennett et al., 2016; DuBois, 2018; Geoffroy & Grünewald, 2017; Hilhorst et al., 2010; Kuipers et al., 2019; Roepstorff, 2020; Wall & Hedlund, 2016). Nevertheless, two major shortcomings remain in the existing literature. First, there is minimal empirically based research analysing the production of the local in cases of locally led disaster response, which has resulted in a lack of attention for the plurality of perspectives of local and non-local actors engaged in disaster response. Second, the discussion has been limited to generalities, failing to take a more

nuanced approach to what the local means in practice, in contrast to the literature on the local in peacebuilding, which is well developed (Lederach, 1997; Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013; Paffenholz, 2015). This chapter aims to contribute to bridging these gaps in previous work.

Our starting point was the recognition that very different notions about why the local is considered strategic for humanitarian action prevail, and the objective of challenging these notions on the basis of locally led disaster response experiences. The empirical section of this chapter focuses on the post-conflict settings of Nepal, Haiti and Sierra Leone. Given that the aim of international actors working in peacebuilding and development is to support local and national actors with a long-term vision, the local is central for the governance of disasters in these settings. Discussing the different experiences and dimensions of the local in these contexts can serve as a first step towards achieving clarity regarding the challenges of localization and has the potential to inform a different frame for humanitarian politics.

This chapter proposes a new concept: the 'multi-local'. With this approach, the local in localization is understood as a plural concept, comprising a range of locals, each of which tends to be a code for different, if interrelated, meanings and references. The framing of the local in this chapter is simply an unpacking exercise to identify the range of rationales and options that underlie the localization debate. Unless these options are made explicit, communications about localization will remain abstract and obscure. Examples of the most common locals include a *level* in a hierarchy; a *locale* or a *location* such as a neighbourhood, district or region; a locus of *ideological legitimacy*; a source and form of *knowledge and other resources* such as tradition, heritage, culture or leadership; and a form or focus of *governance*, including non-governmental and civil society actors. Importantly, even simple references to 'local', as in 'the local level', may connote very different things in terms of, for example, scale, extent, or relations to other levels and components of a polity or economy (e.g. pre-conflict, during conflict and post-conflict). The concept of the local is also included in the ideas of 'local ownership', 'local government', 'act locally (but think globally)', and 'local knowledge', each of which itself has multiple meanings, and all of which differ from each other. What is best for the 'national interest' is always contested or contestable (politically and otherwise), and this is equally true for the 'local interest'. Whereas the international is often seen by humanitarians as universal and scientific, the local is viewed conversely. The local also looks different from below than from above. However, in much international humanitarian thinking and writing about intervention and aid, the local is increasingly portrayed as uniform, and 'local' and 'national' tend to be used interchangeably.

This chapter aims to contribute to answering the following two questions: 1) What are the underlying assumptions about the local in localization? 2) How do multi-local dynamics challenge locally led disaster response in practice? The chapter illustrates the importance of deconstructing the multiple dimensions and uses of the local in disaster response, recognizing that the expression of politics across spaces and governance levels where the multi-local is produced and contested is one of the main challenges. Here, the deconstruction and empirical application of multiple interconnected 'locals' centres on those that are crucial in disaster response, namely the local as a locale, the local as governance and the local as a source of legitimacy. After describing these three key dimensions of the multi-local, we apply the multi-local lens to three empirical case studies of local realities, namely, the locally led responses to the 2015 earthquakes in Nepal, Hurricane Matthew in Haiti in 2016 and the 2017 landslide in Sierra Leone. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how a more nuanced framework of the local can contribute to the humanitarian localization agenda.

7.2. (De)constructing the multi-local

This section presents a critical discussion of the different dimensions, or underlying assumptions, of what is meant by 'the local', as well as the associated risk to a transformative localization agenda. Here, the focus is on dimensions that are most relevant to locally led disaster response: the local as locale, the local as governance and the local as a source of legitimation.

The first dimension of the local — *the local as locale or locality* — involves boundary-setting for the localization debate. This dimension represents an ostensibly pragmatic approach looking at geographic locations, where disasters are traditionally seen as technocratic problems (Hewitt, 1983), aid effectiveness is among the main reasons for localizing aid to actors who are close to the locale (de Torrenté, 2013), and access to localities is often mediated by local actors (van Voorst & Hilhorst, 2017, p. 24). For actors outside the locale, relating to this dimension provides a sense of being 'on the ground' or 'in the field', references that signify the level closest to the affected location. Localization in this regard looks at the locale and the actors associated with it from a top-down, external perspective; it strengthens the understanding of the local, in its locality, as a separate, somewhat 'pure' or 'untouched' entity. This dimension of localization presents local (and national) actors in binary opposition to the international and in terms of 'insiders' and 'outsiders' (Abu-Sada, 2012).

Viewing the local as a single locale leads to a homogeneous vision that overlooks differentiation within the local and thus neglects important questions regarding who is (and who is not) considered part of the local. This essentialization of the local (Bräuchler & Naucke, 2017) gives rise to the problem of representation (Appadurai, 1988). There is a risk that this understanding of the local could legitimize (mis)representation of local people by locals who are actually viewed as outsiders. For example, local elites or authorities may be individuals who are able to capture power despite the fact that they do not speak for others in the locale (Pouligny, 2005). Previous work has shown that insider/outsider status is not based solely on geographical 'rootedness' in the local or international locales and that a single actor can simultaneously be both an outsider and an insider (Roepstorff & Bernhard, 2013). Visoka (2018) has demonstrated that these identities are fluid, socially constructed and changing over time. This also relates to how international actors are viewed by locals in a particular locale. Some external actors have had a long-term engagement in the local and have become 'behavioural insiders' (Visoka, 2018) who work closely with insider actors, whereas others, particularly in the humanitarian sector, continue to be perceived as outsiders (Jayawickrama, 2018).

This binary interpretation of the local also ignores how local places and actors are shaped by relations outside the locale. A historical view of international relations demonstrates that colonial, imperial and conflict histories have contributed to the production of disaster vulnerability on both local and national levels (Fatton, 2011; Oliver-Smith, 1994; Wisner, 2012). These external interventions have also become ingrained in everyday socio-political life and are used by different local actors to advance their own goals (Hameiri & Scarpello, 2018). The interface between the local and the international forms a hybridity, where both are co-constitutive and socially negotiate contestation and accommodation (Hameiri & Jones, 2017; Mac Ginty, 2010; Richmond, 2015). These insights construct the locale as a political place that is constantly evolving.

The second dimension pertains to *the local as governance*. Although disasters may unfold on a local scale, the response is not restricted to actors in the affected locale. From the international perspective, localization concerns everything that is happening in a country; thus, the national becomes the local. This is encouraged by a state-centric governance (Harvey, 2013). Here, the ambitions of localization are to decentralize disaster governance, to be more inclusive (Zyck & Krebs, 2015), to support local ownership (Wall & Hedlund, 2016) and to increase accountability (IFRC, 2015). A crucial element in accomplishing these

aims is the local and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) — actors who are already engaged in humanitarian governance.

The desired shift in disaster governance from the international to the local can lead to romanticizing the local (Richmond, 2009). Academic literature has cautioned that local governance, like any form of governance, brings together actors who have their own interests and pre-existing power relations. Multiple local government institutions — either formal or informal — may play competing and contentious roles (Hirblinger & Simons, 2015; Van Leeuwen et al., 2019) and modes of local governance can co-exist with their own bases of authority and legitimacy (Olivier de Sardan, 2011), especially in post-conflict settings where governance arrangements are in flux (Melis, 2018). Furthermore, although national and local governance levels are both included in the local in localization initiatives, these levels may be at odds with each other. The focus on national governance in disaster response becomes problematic when this level of governance is seen as illegitimate or when local governance is characterized by relatively informal institutions and is not a formal decentralized extension of the national level.

The level or scale of governance that takes the lead in disaster response largely determines the balance of power because it shifts actors' alliances and resources (Hameiri & Jones, 2017; Hameiri & Scarpello, 2018; Swyngedouw, 1997; Van Leeuwen et al., 2019). Therefore, the choice of governance level is a political choice that has practical consequences in terms of which actors are included or excluded. When the selected scale of governance remains at national level, it often excludes actors who are not traditionally seen to be involved in governance, such as other public- and private-sector actors and religious institutions that are important response actors (Cook et al., 2018; Gingerich et al., 2017; Jean-Louis & Klamer, 2016; Nurmala et al., 2018).

The reason the local is essentialized and romanticized by international actors is illustrated by the third dimension: *the local as (de)legitimation*. Because national and local actors play a central role in disaster response policies, their participation, for example in the form of partnerships (Christian Aid et al., 2019), is crucial in the legitimation of external interventions. These external interventions often take the form of capacity building (Fabre, 2017), albeit with insufficient investment (Cohen et al., 2016), where local capacities are seen as a resource to be strengthened. The local becomes a site of power (Hirblinger & Simons, 2015) from which legitimacy is gained.

The way capacity is defined may thus simultaneously undermine the legitimacy and equal participation of local actors, who are not consulted on the conceptualization of what capacity means or which capacities are needed, and whose capacities are not recognized in their own right (Barbelet, 2019). It has been argued that this pattern is part of 'structural relations of colonial difference', focusing on the 'incapacity' of local actors (Buba, 2019). Setting the agenda and dominating the production of knowledge is a type of power (Foucault, 1984; Maldonado-Torres, 2017; Mignolo & Escobar, 2010; Quijano, 2000), and, in the case of these external capacity-building interventions, capacities are pushed to conform to the norms of the international system (Fast, 2017). In this process, discourses matter. The prevailing discourse of the incapacity of local actors is followed by practices that treat local actors as lacking in capacity. Further, the legitimation of humanitarian actors through the humanitarian principles risks delegitimizing the local. The humanitarian principles put forward a universalist approach, but many scholars view them as being used as a source of power for top-down paternalistic endeavours (Barnett, 2017). The universalist approach affects the relationship between humanitarian and local actors. National and local authorities, in particular, are often portrayed by humanitarian actors as political, and thus non-neutral, and are seen as 'illegitimate' as humanitarian partners. Humanitarian actors therefore often fail to support national and local authorities as leaders of the response (Harvey, 2013).

These three dimensions of the local, while not exhaustive, show the danger of loosely interpreting 'the local' in locally led disaster response practice and in scholarly research on localizing humanitarian action.

7.3. Methods

This chapter draws on the empirical research on disaster response governance in post-conflict settings which forms the basis of my thesis, and which included case studies of locally led disaster responses in Nepal, Haiti and Sierra Leone (see chapters 4, 5 and 6). Each case study contributed elements to the creation of wider theory on locally led disaster response governance in post-conflict settings, by using semi-standardized questions while also focusing on the specific contextual elements that each of the cases presented. This facilitated a continuous cycle of action and reflection (Kindon et al., 2007), through which tools and questions were adapted for each of the cases. The small-N multiple case study is a comparative strategy, which does not compare each case to the others, but lets the resonance between

the cases inform the general argument (Lund, 2014). This combines the strengths of an in-depth exploration of a single case study and the analytical broadness of a cross-case study (George & Bennett, 2005).

In the three case study countries, a total of 273 qualitative interviews and 18 community-based focus group discussions were conducted.[51] Of these, 170 interviews and all 18 focus groups were conducted with local and national state and non-state actors. The following section will focus primarily on the perspectives expressed by these interviewees. This study does not present a full picture of the multiple dimensions of the multi-local, but rather discusses a number of outcomes resulting from the analysis of the interactions, observations, perspectives and opinions expressed by the research participants. The interviews were semi-structured to allow for a degree of comparability while remaining open and flexible enough to be relevant to the particular contextual dynamics. In each country, the research was completed with the assistance of an academic research partner from either the locality or the capital city. The interviews and focus group discussions were conducted by Samantha Melis, audio-recorded and fully transcribed into English or French.

Content analysis was conducted using Nvivo qualitative data analysis software, in which data were coded to identify themes, from line-by-line coding to more theoretical coding. This grounded approach allowed codes to emerge from the data. The themes addressed the main actor relations, challenges, discourses and social practices of disaster response governance. Discursive frames used by the response actors were identified, but not through a formal discourse analysis. Rather, the analysis was based on an understanding that data are highly dependent on the interpretations and framings of participants, and on uncovering how these frames are used in practice.

The case studies presented an opportunity to gain an understanding of the workings of responses that were, to different degrees, locally led. The responses to each of these disasters aimed to support the national and local governance structures, but how did the multiple dimensions of the local find expression in these responses in practice, and what were the most important challenges faced by the local actors?

[51] See chapters 4, 5 and 6 for details.

7.4. Perspectives on multi-local disaster response governance in Nepal, Haiti and Sierra Leone

Nepal, Haiti and Sierra Leone, while differing substantially from one another, also share many commonalities: each of these countries has experienced periods of conflict or political crisis, is facing developmental and governance challenges, and is at high risk of disasters. Additionally, when disasters have struck in these contexts, the ensuing responses have largely been seen to be 'locally led' (i.e. led within the country). The national governments have led the responses and, viewed superficially, international and national actors have supported their efforts. However, the case studies showed that, beneath the surface, there was contestation over roles and legitimacy within and between the national and local levels, complicating locally led responses, challenging the uniform understanding of 'the local' and showing different expressions of 'the local' in practice.

In all three countries, one form of the local that emerged from the interviews was that of *the local as locale*, where the local connoted primarily national actors (as opposed to international actors) and those closest to the affected population. However, it was not only international actors who were seen as outsiders: the research participants in the affected communities often viewed national and local state actors in a similar way, largely because of the metaphorical — rather than physical — distance between themselves and these actors. This was especially pertinent in Haiti, where people felt 'left behind' by their government. As one member of an agricultural cooperative recounted, 'the authorities did not help. That shows how the system is: they do not care about the communities' (H-SOC10, 24 April 2019).[52] The discourse of state actors taking advantage of the response to strengthen support from their constituents was strong. In terms of the central state, presidential candidates were described as making promises but not keeping them: 'They took advantage of [the disaster] to politicize. That's the reason he became president' (H-FGD2, 8 March 2019).

These kinds of ideas also extended to outsiders in the affected locales themselves; community members did not always accept political elites or local authorities as representatives of the community. In Nepal, people were critical of their local authorities, as

[52] The following codes are used to describe the country and actor type for individual interviews: N: Nepal, H: Haiti, SL: Sierra Leone, SOC: societal actor, GOV: state actor, NGO: non-governmental organization, INGO: international non-governmental organization. Focus group discussions are coded as FGD. A number is appended to each code to differentiate individual interviews and focus group discussions. The interviews were anonymised for ethical reasons.

was described by the following focus group participant: 'The secretary did not give priority to those types of people [poor people, Dalits, women, etc.]. He always listens to powerful persons' (N-FGD3, 29 June 2017). Politicians were seen as self-interested and corrupt and were viewed as having a large role in the response because international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) were thought to 'give responsibility to political parties, but there was no transparency; all are engaging in corruption' (N-FGD4, 27 March 2017). The acceptance of local leaders varied, even across neighbouring communities within a country. For example, informal leaders in Sierra Leone who were able to collaborate closely with the national state and international actors increased their legitimacy with community members, whereas another informal leader, who was seen as corrupt, was quickly replaced.

In the locally led responses in the three cases, a myriad of local, national and international actors socially negotiated aid outcomes, leading to a relatively complex understanding of the *local as governance*. This understanding underscores how intra-national and local–national strife challenges the notion of a uniform local that takes the lead in the response. With the focus on the state as connoting the local, competition between different institutions and authorities ensued. In all three cases, the central state maintained control over the disaster response, although the coordination of the response was largely decentralized in Nepal and Haiti. In Nepal, intra-state tensions were primarily felt at the local governance level, where local and national politicians needed to establish their legitimacy and where they contended with and put pressure on the local authorities. Tensions were also evident between the local and central state levels; faced with central control, the local authorities tried to socially negotiate their power by going on strike or by implementing initiatives without permission. In Sierra Leone, state institutions at the central level were in competition with each other over the division of response roles, which, in turn, led to local authorities feeling excluded. In Haiti, tension was seen between the local authorities in the communities and the municipality, with the local authorities' legitimacy largely shaped by the extent to which they were able to withstand politicization. There was also a schism between the municipality and the central state regarding their respective power, with the central state being seen as providing limited space for local initiatives. In all three cases, authority was continuously being negotiated within the state at different local levels; therefore, from the point of view of local, informal authorities, what would be seen as a more locally led disaster response differed from the national responses that were supported by international actors.

In each of the case studies, international actors collaborated closely with the state, but the humanitarian–state coordination mechanisms were experienced as exclusionary by local actors who are not usually involved in governance. A multitude of local actors, such as traditional authorities, community stakeholders, religious actors, community-based associations, cooperatives and the private sector, engaged with each other and with aid and state actors in different ways, but these local actors mostly sought to respond outside the humanitarian–state response mechanisms. The private sector, for example, played a major role in the response in Nepal. In Haiti, participants from the private sector saw their strength as providing aid more effectively, compared with INGOs, 'as INGOs would be bothered by the bureaucracy behind it because they work with government agencies' (H-SOC1, 14 May 2019). For this reason, the private-sector actors reported that they mostly engaged with local authorities rather than with national authorities.

In terms of governance, co-governance as such was not seen as sufficient to achieve a more locally led response. International actors were described as often using their power, supported by their resources, to shape the response. State actors had trouble with collaboratively determining the agenda, and smaller NGOs were further limited in their participation. For example, in Haiti, the response was generally dominated by international aid actors, and NGOs struggled to access funds, which raised questions regarding the sustainability of the aid system. Local and national NGOs criticized INGOs' funding schemes, noting that these organizations only covered direct implementation costs and not overheads. One participant asserted that the financial structures 'don't prioritize the local organizations. They prioritize the internationals' (H-NGO3, 10 May 2019). Although locally led disaster response by both the state and local civil society was a primary aim, local actors continued to face challenges in shifting the power centre to the local level.

INGOs, NGOs, and state and local actors all used their relations to *the local as legitimation* of their roles in the response. Community participants in this study stressed the importance of response actors including them more fully in the response because 'the community knows best', and they felt that their knowledge should be valued. Although the discourse of 'the community knows best' and 'we work with the community' was also shared by many of the state actors, division between the perspectives of the state and community members also surfaced. At times, the legitimacy the state drew from the local was accomplished by discrediting the local. In Sierra Leone, state–society mistrust was especially pronounced, with one state official explaining, 'Some community people were very deceptive.

They were never straightforward' (SL-GOV10, 12 January 2018). In Nepal and Haiti, this mistrust was geared towards the international actors.

Similarly, a commonly shared sentiment of humanitarians across the three countries was that 'the state is in charge', and local and national NGOs were valued as 'partners' who were embedded in society. However, instead of valuing their knowledge, humanitarian actors disputed the capacities of these local and national actors and accused them of corruption. Likewise, local actors criticized the government, but they felt they were not in the position to address these issues. The relationships between local actors and the authorities were conflictual. Particularly in Haiti and Sierra Leone, NGOs experienced difficulties because of the control that the national authorities had over the response. However, NGOs were also able to collaborate relatively well with authorities, especially local-level authorities, which set them apart from some of their international counterparts. A research participant from an NGO in Haiti recounted that 'several organizations' responses were led by emergency response teams from someplace else. That would not facilitate that relationship [between aid and state actors]. So it is much easier for us to manage' (H-NGO5, 14 May 2019). This point illustrates how the national sometimes functioned to legitimize the local.

7.5. Conclusion

Ambitious claims made for localization and critical commentary on these, share the common characteristic of speaking of 'the local' as a singular phenomenon. But as illustrated in this chapter, localization is far from being a singular idea. Rather it comprises multiple spheres of senses and references, each of which is multi-dimensional. The multi-local must be considered, recognizing the diversity between communities, differences between local and national state and non-state actors, and variations within bodies such as the different layers and institutions of the state.

Understanding the importance of the multi-local leads to the question of what a locally led response would look like when adopting a multi-local lens. This type of locally led response would be achieved mostly by addressing and strengthening communication and cooperation between national and local responders. Instead of international bodies localizing a system to be implemented 'below', local–national integration of disaster governance could be supported. This would also entail opening response governance, with the state taking the lead, to other types of actors who are not usually included, such as private-sector and religious institutions. It would also mean integrating formal and informal institutions, with response roles that are

clear and defined before disaster strikes. This is important because a disconnect between these actors leads to an ungovernable situation after the initial disaster.

Although 'the local' is imbued with historical power-narratives and politics, we cannot — or should not — do away with the term completely. Simply changing the terminology of 'the local' will not automatically do justice to the diversity of actors and power structures that identify, or are constructed, as local. As arguing for a complete overhaul of the discourse is overly ambitious and impractical (and perhaps also not warranted), a fruitful next step would be to recognize the multi-local and be aware of the types of diverging perspectives described in this chapter.

In light of the above-mentioned dynamics between multiple locals and national actors, the localization agenda becomes even more complex, raising multiple questions. Who is supported? How? What impact does this have at the local and national levels? Additionally, instead of questioning the legitimacy of local actors, the legitimacy of international actors in the response needs to be re-evaluated. What role can international actors play in bottom-up localization, respecting the diversity of local actors who are engaged in disaster governance and strengthening rather than dismantling the bonds between them? Addressing these questions is required in order to critically value a multitude of local actors in the co-governance of disaster response.

Chapter 8: Discussion & Conclusion

The post-conflict scenario

8.1. Introduction

When I started this research in February 2016, humanitarian policies and practices were at a moment of significant change. The World Humanitarian Summit was planned for May that year, which represented a major milestone in mainstreaming notions of resilience humanitarianism (Hilhorst, 2018). Although there was a general recognition that humanitarian governance does not operate in a vacuum (as seen in the localization agenda and the humanitarian–development nexus), the commitments continued to be unnuanced and insensitive to the different governance contexts in which humanitarian governance finds itself.

Humanitarian governance has always been socially embedded in other governance systems, each with their particular actor constellations and power relations. Social negotiations in the governance of disaster response in a *post-conflict* environment will therefore be different from those in other contexts. Contrary to the traditionally aid-centred approach of humanitarian governance, both post-conflict governance arrangements and disaster governance policies have a state-centred approach and a long-term vision for change. *Post-conflict governance* is often guided by a paradigm of statebuilding (Brinkerhoff, 2005; Chandler, 2013; Heathershaw & Lambach, 2008) and characterized by uncertainties in a transitional space, heightening everyday politics and contention between actors (Hilhorst, van der Haar, et al., 2017). *Disaster governance*, on the other hand, has become increasingly centred on inclusive governance and a more holistic paradigm underlining the long-term processes of disaster creation (Kelman et al., 2015; Tierney, 2012; Wisner et al., 2012). During disasters, different governance arrangements converge, with their own routines, rationales and structures, and when humanitarian governance encounters both post-conflict and disaster governance in the humanitarian arena of *disaster response*, actors socially negotiate the intrinsic tensions that arise and the governance arrangement that emerges. Depending on the inter-actor relationships, I found that response actors use three main tactics in these negotiations; namely, contention, collaboration and comprise (see section 8.4.).

I started the introduction to this thesis with an analogy from a research participant in Sierra Leone, comparing disaster response to making a sauce. He provided a warning; the wrong blending of ingredients — too much pepper or too much salt — would be a recipe for (another) disaster. Previous chapters have shown that multiple response actors contribute to the sauce of disaster governance in post-conflict settings; their contrasting visions, competing mandates and different governance arrangements come together in a particular way. This has

formed the basis for the construction of a post-conflict scenario of disaster response; not one that is 'the best' or 'most effective', but one that is typically evolving, one that can be expected to be present, to differing degrees, in other cases of disaster response in a post-conflict environment.

8.2. Building the scenario: Case by case

The main research question I set at the outset for this research is: *How do aid, state and societal actors socially negotiate the governance of disaster response in a post-conflict scenario?* On the way to answering this, a number of sub-questions aimed to provide the necessary insights into the workings of disaster governance in a post-conflict scenario: 1) What are the roles of different aid, state and societal actors involved in post-conflict disaster response governance? 2) What are the main points of tension between these actors in the governance of the response? 3) How are the points of tension manifested in the discourses and social practices of post-conflict disaster response? 4) What is needed for a more effective governance of disaster response in a post-conflict scenario? The answers to these questions provide the building blocks for a post-conflict scenario of disaster response, which can help us 'to look at what might happen in the future given what our research indicates in the present' (Kirshbaum, 2019, p. 11). Besides the theoretical contribution to the post-conflict and post-disaster nexus, this scenario can be used as an educational tool for humanitarian practice.

Let me first recapture the previous chapters of this thesis. Chapters 1 and 3 provided a foundation and framework to better understand the main elements and challenges of the post-conflict and post-disaster nexus. I set the scene contextually by asking what disaster governance and post-conflict mean in theory and practice and how humanitarian governance defines the parameters of disaster response. A literature review on post-conflict and disaster governance confirmed that both frameworks accord central importance to the state, despite the (perceived) fragility of the state. Using the Burundian case as an exploratory study, I found that different actors adhered to the state-centred policy of the Sendai Framework, but developed strategies to manoeuvre in the response arena that in reality took (financial) power and control away from the state. Throughout the case study research, multiple constructions were found beyond what the 'fragility' lens alone could reveal of national and international actors as opposite sides of a power divide. This required me to look more closely at the socially negotiated power relations on, and between, different levels of governance.

In chapters 4 to 7, I identified a number of characteristics of disaster response in the post-conflict settings of Nepal, Sierra Leone and Haiti, illustrating the way that different aid, state and societal actors socially negotiate and navigate the everyday politics of disaster response. Using an interpretive form of constructivism, it was important for me to understand the different social constructions of the governance of disaster response. Therefore, the actor-focus of the case studies shifted from one case to another, placing a magnifying glass on a particular type of actor relations and practices. Each case study built on the knowledge generated by the previous one, using the same research questions to guide the study. With this, the research has created a structured focus on components that reflect tendencies of post-conflict disaster governance.

In Nepal, the wheeling and dealing by aid actors vis-à-vis the state became a central issue in a post-conflict context that is undergoing political reforms and has been struck by a large-scale disaster. The main point of friction I observed was in terms of contradictory paradigms of post-conflict statebuilding and international humanitarian response. As the state took measures to reclaim control over the response, aid actors adapted in different ways to creatively comply and continue to balance a consensus-oriented disaster governance with the humanitarian imperative to support those most in need. Here, I also observed internal state struggles between the national and local levels, but these were overshadowed by the magnitude and power of the aid actors and were restricted to this smaller space.

The second case, Sierra Leone, provided an opportunity to better understand these internal state dynamics, as the response was more localized and state-led, with the state now also shaping the framework in which the response was implemented. The main challenge here revolved around the contradictions of state-centred policies of disaster governance and the hybridity and multiple levels of this state in practice. While looking at the state, the gap between the state and societal actors also became more evident. In Sierra Leone, the role of societal actors after the disaster was still limited due to the small scale of the response and the state's presence.

In Haiti, therefore, I took a more bottom-up perspective to the research question. The space for societal actors in the governance of the response was found to be limited due to the disarticulation they experience with state and aid actors. The power of societal actors to socially negotiate the response outcomes was seen in the way they resisted certain aid practices, and the solidarity initiatives that took an alternative approach. This challenges the understanding of what should, or should not, constitute aid and support in the wake of a

disaster, when a politicized state response disregards the people's needs and wants — where 'bouncing back' translates into fighting back.

Although different dynamics carried more weight and played a more central role in each of the cases, the three studies revealed similarities in the everyday politics of disaster response, especially in relation to state-centred policies vis-à-vis international humanitarian governance and the localization agenda. I found a number of contradictions between the discourse of the local, which includes the national, in policies, and the multiple dimensions, levels and usages of the local in practice. Deconstructing the multiple dimensions of the local contributed to understanding why it has been difficult to break the impasse in the relations between different international, national and local actors.

The cases were not intended to be compared in every aspect but were to be discussed in relation to a number of themes that arose from the findings. Each case study, and the similarities and differences between them, fed into a larger picture, constructing a post-conflict scenario of disaster response. The following sections of this concluding chapter will sketch a picture of this scenario.

8.3. Constructing a scenario of post-conflict disaster response

8.3.1. The post-conflict humanitarian arena: Roles and responsibilities

The first step to constructing the scenario is to provide an answer to the first sub-question of this thesis: what is characteristic for the roles of different aid, state and societal actors in post-conflict disaster response? What the research has shown is that both the post-conflict and the humanitarian governance contexts share a characteristic of volatility and a transitional nature that *opens up the political space in which response actors compete over disaster response roles, which often leads to an overt politicization of the response.* The post-conflict environment embodies a space with 'shifting local-global relationships' (Heathershaw & Lambach, 2008, p. 270), forcing actors to continuously renegotiate authority and legitimacy.

First, the case studies have shown that *the role of aid actors in a post-conflict disaster response scenario is highly contested and power relations remain unequal between international and national/local organizations*. This is especially true when viewed in a historical perspective, when discourses and practices of coloniality, either as remnants of actual colonial histories (Haiti and Sierra Leone) or as the continued Western control of disaster response in a neoliberal fashion (Nepal), are internalized in the practices and power relations that different actors have

to negotiate in the response. Both the conflict and colonial histories therefore strongly shape inter-actor relations, showing how 'the international', which partly derives authority from post-colonial power relations, is institutionalized in current practices (see also Jabri, 2016).

In the research, I found that the roles and responsibilities of aid actors in the response are increasingly contested by the very actors they aim to support. In a context where policies have solidified commitments towards bottom-up approaches that support local/national NGOs, power is continuously renegotiated in practice. The diversity amongst aid actors, each with their own mandates, make this even more challenging. The case studies showed that the concentrated presence of different types of aid actors intensifies competition and makes coordination difficult; this was especially evident in Nepal between international aid actors due to the large influx of aid actors, and in Haiti with the exclusion of national and local aid actors by the international aid mechanisms. One of the tension points lies between development and humanitarian staff, either within an organization or between organizations; development practitioners normally have strong relations with state actors, local authorities and societal actors, but humanitarian practitioners, who are only temporarily engaged, are often seen to take over the response, undermining this trust and knowledge. This negatively impacts local/national NGOs that mostly engage in longer-term development projects and are not focused on humanitarian responses.

Second, *the role of state actors is generally undermined by the paradox between state-centred disaster response policies and international aid-centred practices.* While the role of the state is central in disaster governance policies, the case studies have shown that the role and responsibilities of the state are challenged in the context of humanitarian governance. The governance of the response remains 'constructed' on international terms. The capacity discourse views the state and its institutions as homogeneous when in practice they are hybrid agents operating on, and between, different levels. I found that was particularly striking in Sierra Leone, where traditional authorities are part of the state but played an intermediary role that was characterized by contentious politics.

In this research I found that the state's response is shaped by post-conflict politics and power relations that have developed over decades of external interventions. This was very clear in Haiti, where post-colonial discourses are internalized and shape the disarticulation between the state and society. In responding to disasters, the state is further reshaped by the contention and collaboration between authorities and institutions on multiple local governance levels and by the disarticulation with societal actors. The effects of competition

on the state's horizontal power relations impact in turn on the vertical power relations that influence the ways in which local or non-state institutions relate to the authorities. The transitional character of the post-conflict period results in a high turnover of staff and changes in response mandates, creating space for contention over responsibilities that strengthen the legitimacy of one state actor over another.

Third, *the role of societal actors is overshadowed by the centrality of international aid and national state actors.* Societal actors are often presented in the literature as either being victims or as deploying their 'victimcy' to increase access to humanitarian aid (Utas, 2005). Contrary to the good intentions of the international humanitarian community, the case studies have shown that societal actors continue to be largely excluded from disaster governance in practice. Local service providers are only accorded minor roles, usually as sub-contractors of external aid actors, and experience their power mostly as non-inclusive. This was especially evident in the exclusion of societal actors from decision-making platforms; private sector actors in Nepal, for example, felt ill at ease in aid–state coordination meetings. When disaster unfolds, it is accompanied by both solidarity and contention between societal actors in horizontal and in vertical relations, and strong claim-making towards state and aid actors expresses itself in public as well as everyday resistance, challenging the legitimacy of the state and humanitarian governance, and socially negotiating power in multi-local politics. The multitude of local actors, such as traditional authorities, community stakeholders, religious actors, associations, cooperatives and the private sector, engage with each other and often challenge the roles of state and aid response structures.

8.3.2. When disaster meets post-conflict: Contrasting discourses and practices

When a disaster unfolds in a post-conflict environment, the roles described in the previous section create points of tension between response actors. The second step in creating the scenario is to answer my second and third sub-questions that identify typical points of tension between actors and show how they manifest in the discourses and practices of post-conflict disaster response.

In chapter 3, a number of important challenges were pre-identified in Burundi; vulnerability to disasters, coordination between aid actors, a weak capacity of the state to respond to disasters (related to contested internal authority and limited resources), corruption within local structures, limited accountability and tensions in the communities following aid distributions. Although these issues were also seen in the case studies, I aimed

to delve deeper in the research, to understand what the root problems of these challenges were and how different actors navigated these issues through the discourses and social practices of disaster governance. Each of these issues is illustrative of the obstacles to a balanced blending of governance systems.

Imbalance between statebuilding and humanitarian action

The literature review at the beginning of my project already revealed that contestation over the response between aid and state actors would be common. Following disaster governance policies and the aim of strengthening the post-conflict institutional context, the discourse in a post-conflict disaster response scenario centres around 'supporting the state' and 'the state is in charge'. Aid actors describe their ideal scenario as one in which the government is prepared and takes the lead if a disaster strikes; the case of Sierra Leone was being considered by some aid actors as a pilot to test a more locally led response. But after explaining this policy, aid actors often immediately went on to stress the state's incapacity, lack of transparency and potential corruption. By foregrounding these issues, aid actors are able to legitimize their control of aid resources, and this, in turn, leads to increased decision-making power for aid actors to determine the conditions of the response.

This semi-acceptance of the state's role leads aid actors to either bypass (certain levels) of the state structures or to creatively comply with the state's approach; the extent of such practices differed across the case studies. It was most evident in Nepal, as the great number of aid actors prompted more control measures by the state, and aid actors experienced this as an obstruction. While many chose to work creatively with the state, such as taking a blanket approach in a targeted area, or purposefully sharing information with one state institution rather than another, others chose to bypass state structures completely. In Sierra Leone, a large donor who collaborated closely with the state was able to press for a change in the parameters of cash assistance in the response. Other examples saw aid actors bypassing the state because they perceived the state response to be too slow, leading them to implement projects directly, or smaller organizations working outside of the formal channels. These reactions also occurred in Haiti, but to a lesser extent. In contrast to the 2010 earthquake response, after Hurricane Matthew hit the country, many aid organizations did work with and through the state structures. Nevertheless, with approval from the central level of the state, aid actors still circumvented the local state actors, negatively affecting the authority of the latter.

From the perspective of the state, this implies the need to regain control over (external) aid actors that are felt — despite international governance commitments and frameworks — to take over. While state officials in the cases studied agree that their own capacity to fully respond to the needs of the affected population often falls short, the assumption of control by aid actors does not result in strengthening of the state's response. The control exercised by aid actors is experienced differently by state actors at national and local governance levels, and disquiet is further compounded by a perceived lack of transparency of aid actors in their communications with the state. In the case studies, this sentiment was most strongly felt in Nepal, with aid organizations being accused of not being transparent and of not understanding Nepal's culture. State actors maintained their image of being strong enough to withstand foreign influence, but nonetheless experienced increased external control as time went by. In Sierra Leone, while the narrative by the state was more positive, stressing the partnership with international aid actors, state actors still felt that, at important junctures, they did not have sufficient power to challenge aid actors when their views on how to distribute aid differed. In Haiti, local state actors shared that they felt they did not have much power to influence aid programmes that were approved on higher state levels.

When aid actors are seen to increasingly dominate the response, the state tries to regain control. State actors focus on 'compliancy' (see chapter 4) to get the aid actors in line, through bureaucracy, rules and regulations. These measures are often presented as apolitical, but are challenged for being political in nature. They can therefore be seen as a strategy by the state to not only increase control and strengthen legitimacy, but also to use aid for political gain. In Nepal, this took the form of restrictions through a 'one-door policy', insisting on a blanket distribution instead of targeting the aid response to vulnerable groups, and through limiting capacity-building and advocacy programmes that would influence the population in ways that the state found undesirable. In Sierra Leone, these measures were less forceful, but focused on bureaucratic procedures to control aid items. In both Haiti and Sierra Leone, the state chose not to declare an emergency that would activate the UN cluster system, ensuring that control could formally remain with the state.

Misunderstanding of state hybridity and the multi-local

Humanitarian policies and literature often construct the state and the local as uniform entities, which produces a discourse of 'the local as governance', in which the national and local

governance levels are treated as equals in a — desired — decentralized response. The differences and the hybridity that characterize both national and local actors in post-conflict societies are generally ignored. However, intra-national and local–national strife directly challenges this understanding in practice. While intra-state relations are characterized by a discourse of collaboration, in reality the power and legitimacy of state institutions are being contested and socially negotiated. In each case studied, the central state kept control over the response even when — as in Nepal and Haiti — the coordination of the response was largely decentralized as part of the post-conflict statebuilding agenda. In Nepal, intra-state tensions were primarily felt at the local governance level, where politicians needed to establish their legitimacy and contended with — and put pressure on — village development committees (VDCs). But tensions were also evident between the local and central state levels: while the national government retained central control regarding response conditions, the local authorities tried to negotiate their authority by going on strike or implementing operations without permission. In Sierra Leone, state institutions at the central level were in competition with each other over the division of response roles, which, in turn, led to local authorities feeling excluded. In Haiti, this tension was seen between the local authorities and the municipality, with the formers' legitimacy largely shaped by how much they were able to withstand politicization. But there was also a schism between the power of the municipality and the central state, with the latter seen to provide limited space for local initiative. In the post-conflict scenario, authority is therefore continuously being negotiated within the state on different local levels.

Within the local level of the post-conflict disaster response scenario, the relationship between the state and societal actors is largely patriarchal. While the discourse suggests that 'communities' have the legitimacy to know what is best for their members, in practice, state actors claim that people at the local level try to take advantage or do not want to follow instructions and therefore need to be more strictly controlled. In Nepal, the discourse focused on 'dependency', with the state fearing that people would become dependent on (external) aid. In Sierra Leone, the state–society mistrust was more pronounced, and societal actors would be portrayed as 'deceptive' and 'taking advantage'. In Haiti, this type of language was less prevalent, but the state experienced a clear demonstration of non-acceptance by societal actors immediately before the disaster; the population was seen as 'not obedient' in the preparedness phase when people failed to follow the state's instructions to evacuate.

The 'local as legitimation' in aid–society relations mostly focuses on technocratic discourses of how to address the needs of the affected population and the inclusion of societal actors in the response. Aid actors have a strong discourse of community participation and they often include local leaders and community members in their response. But again, this varied between the cases due to the different relationships of aid actors with certain local actors over others. In Nepal, it was important that the selection of aid recipients was carried out by all community stakeholders, including those seen as more political, to ensure social cohesion. In Sierra Leone, aid actors reiterated the slogan 'the community knows best', but some communities were seen to know better than others and aid actors preferred the collaboration with one chief over another. This was not uncommon: depending on their relationships, aid actors had preferences for which local leaders to collaborate with. In Haiti, aid actors would include some local actors over others; local authorities would be mistrusted, so other stakeholders such as religious leaders became central to the aid response.

The limited space for societal actors to take part in disaster governance structures

While there was a large societal response to the earthquakes in Nepal, and communities in Sierra Leone and Haiti quickly mobilized to support their neighbours and families, the role of societal actors in the formal disaster governance structures and mechanisms — where decisions are made — remains limited. In the research findings, I show that the legitimacy of the authority of both aid and state actors in disaster response policies increases their power to control the response and encourages the politicization of aid. This limits societal actors' power to shape aid outcomes, which contributes to the reproduction of vulnerabilities in disaster resilience.

Society–state relations in the case studies reflect a shared discourse by societal actors that the state is responsible for the response, but this co-exists with a strong non-acceptance of this situation; the local is not merely a locale, but it includes the perception of 'insiders and outsiders'. In general, the farther the state authorities were removed from the communities, the more they were seen as outsiders who were both corrupt and responsible for wrongdoings in the response. In Haiti, the municipality and central state politicians were seen to take advantage of the response to serve their own personal and political goals, the former stealing aid resources and the latter using the disaster to win votes in the upcoming elections. But there were also different perspectives, as those with stronger ties to these political figures provided a more positive view. In Nepal, I observed a similar dynamic between local politicians

and VDC authorities. The widespread belief that local politicians are corrupt and influence VDCs affected their legitimacy in a negative way. Local authorities had diverging legitimacy in all cases, depending on the extent to which they liaised with other actors to increase access to aid. In Sierra Leone, this was particularly visible in the way that different communities supported, or stopped supporting, their leaders based on how they perceived their leaders' transparency. Community perceptions of central state authorities who operated on the local level also differed depending on how people experienced their treatment. In general, in the post-conflict scenario of disaster response, the closer the authority is situated to the local level, the more intensely they are scrutinized; and the more they are regarded as 'outsiders', not 'one of us', the more they are criticized. This also poses a risk to the stability of the post-conflict environment, where increased discontentment, combined with other socio-political vulnerabilities, can create a further schism in the state–society relationship.

Although many categories of societal actors do not feel they have much power to address these issues effectively, there are instances of resistance and claim-making that are directed at the state on different governance levels; this resistance is a way to renegotiate the centre of power through bottom-up localization. In Nepal, these events were primarily directed towards VDC authorities, including one occasion when the VDC secretary was chased away by youths, and another in which the VDC building was blocked by a group of widows who felt they were being left out. In Haiti, protests followed chaotic distributions that led to the deaths of a number of young people and the protestors' demands were directed at the mayor's office. In Sierra Leone, while internally displaced persons (IDPs) were dissatisfied with a state representative of one of the camps, their organized protest was directed at a higher state level, namely the president. These differences in the object of claim-making can be explained by the perceived or experienced distance between these state levels and the communities.

Society–aid relations in the post-conflict scenario are most clearly illustrated in the discourse of acceptance which suggests that societal actors within the communities preferred interventions of aid actors over those of the state. However, civil society groups and private sector responders generally do not share this view and often opt out of collaboration within the state–aid coordination systems. In practice, people often feel excluded and aid is not always seen as appropriate. In Nepal, affected communities were especially disappointed by international NGOs supporting existing power inequalities by involving corrupt politicians in aid distributions, by aid items which were at times felt to be culturally inappropriate, and by

measures which left marginalized populations, such as the Dalits, more vulnerable in the long term. In Haiti, the mistrust of aid actors was stronger, as most were considered to be self-interested or working with corrupt state authorities. In Sierra Leone, there was a stark difference in the number of aid actors who were active in the affected communities, with aid centring around the IDP camps. The sense that aid is unequally distributed is therefore a powerful thread in the scenario; this is both due to the mis-organization of aid and the intra-societal differences between multiple local actors that translate into differences in access.

8.4. Answering the main research question

These points of tensions and their manifestations in practice contribute to the final step in constructing a post-conflict scenario of disaster response; answering my main research question on *how aid, state and societal actors socially negotiate the governance of disaster response in a post-conflict scenario*. As Colebatch (2014, p. 314) explains, 'governing involves many hands, is grounded in interaction rather than direction, and is a continuing process marked by indeterminacy and ambiguity.' In the humanitarian arena, the everyday politics of aid are socially negotiated, with 'people embracing, complying with, adjusting, and contesting norms and rules regarding authority over, production of, or allocation of resources and doing so in quiet, mundane, and subtle expressions and acts that are rarely organized or direct' (Kerkvliet 2009, p. 232). In constructing the scenario, I aimed to clarify these governance practices that are expressed in 'subtle acts', and I identified three social negotiation tactics that are used in the humanitarian arena of post-conflict disaster response; namely, tactics of contention, collaboration and compromise. In their interrelationships, actors contest each other, collaborate with each other, and make compromises to their goals and roles in disaster response governance (see Table 4 for a summary). As the governance of disaster response is socially negotiated, different choices are made at different stages by the same actors; often there seem to be contradictions, where one actor carries out contentious actions while also findings ways to collaborate or to reach compromises.

Given their large-scale presence and conflicting humanitarian–development mandates in a post-conflict scenario, it is not surprising that both collaboration and contention can be witnessed between aid actors. There is considerable collaboration in the different mechanisms and consortia that have a long-term commitment. But there is competition between humanitarian-oriented INGOs, who often 'parachute' in for short-term humanitarian

governance after a disaster, and development-oriented organizations that have an ongoing presence in the country to develop post-conflict governance. Within the aid mechanisms, actors compete over limited resources. Local and national NGOs may be portrayed by international organizations as having weak capacities or being corrupt, following the institutional changes that the post-conflict context brings. However, this can also be seen as a contentious tactic to retain control over the humanitarian response. Nevertheless, compromises can be and often are made by both international and local/national NGOs in the partnerships in which they engage so as to share control over the division of resources.

Both international and national/local NGOs emphasize their collaboration with the state to legitimize their role in post-disaster governance, which is state-centred in a post-conflict scenario; they are often present in state–aid coordination mechanisms and include local state actors in aid distributions. However, they may also foreground technocratic approaches and, at times, deploy a competitive tactic of avoidance of the state, bypassing state structures and competing over legitimacy of the response. Here, the discourse of a weak state capacity is used to increase control, choosing humanitarian over statebuilding goals.

The contention between the aid and state structures results in the exclusion of society-based structures, such as religious institutions or the private sector, in disaster governance, even though a more locally led response is sought after in a post-conflict scenario. The strict conditions of the response limit the space for societal actors to access aid or renegotiate the terms of engagement. One collaborative tactic employed by aid vis-à-vis societal actors is to intervene directly at the level of the community and to stress that the 'community knows best'. Within the framework of more locally led responses in post-conflict disaster governance, being seen as community-focused increases the legitimacy of aid actors' role in the response. Between the exclusion of societal actors in aid governance and collaboration at the community level, compromises are made to include community stakeholders in aid distribution and needs assessments, although true participation in decision making remains top-down.

The state in a post-conflict scenario pursues a strategy of contention with aid actors by gaining control through 'compliancy' and using the threat of sanctions, while the lack of transparency of the aid system is stressed as a legitimation issue. At the same time, aid actors use state–aid coordination mechanisms as a collaborative tactic to keep control of disaster governance, or pursue compromises that give more space to aid actors, albeit temporarily, to share the lead in disaster governance. These compromises are often based on previous

governance arrangements that aid and state actors have reached in the post-conflict scenario and can be affected by long-term historical relationships, such as in a post-colonial setting.

Amongst state actors, and between state and societal actors, contentious politics are observed where different institutions clash over roles and mandates. On a sub-national level, this leads to competition over aid resources with the affected population, the politicization of aid and elite capture. To legitimize this contention, communities and local state officials are then portrayed by the other party as taking advantage, or being corrupt. Collaboration is evident when local leaders are included and actors cooperate within the state structures, following a longer-term vision of the post-conflict scenario. However, this tactic can also lead to an increased state presence at the local level in the form of national officers being involved in local response processes. Compromises within the state structures, and on different governance levels, are made when roles and responsibilities are redistributed; but compromises with societal actors often only follow after acts of protest and resistance. Within the post-conflict scenario, there is space for all this contention and renegotiation to openly take place, as part of the changing institutional context.

The diversity of societal actors is also seen in the use of different tactics; some choose primarily contentious ways to strengthen their legitimacy or increase access to aid, such as affected groups using their 'victimcy' or stealing aid resources, either from aid actors or from neighbours. Generally, however, collaboration is sought, such as religious institutions, private sector organizations, or community-based groups that reach out to the affected communities through solidary structures or to aid and state actors via local leaders. Negotiating compromises, meanwhile, often necessitates accepting aid that does not fully address need, negotiating who will be included and excluded in aid distributions, or sharing limited aid resources amongst each other.

Although all three categories of actors deployed each tactic in different ways, depending on how they socially construct their perceived relationships with other actors, it became clear that contentious tactics are mostly found between aid and state actors and that compromises tend to be limiting for state and societal actors. Consensus-oriented governance thus risks benefiting those actors that have greater authority and more resources, strengthening their position in contentious aid politics and reproducing power relations.

		AID	STATE	SOCIETY
AID	**Contention**	- Foregrounding humanitarian imperative over development - Competing resources staying with international aid actors over local aid actors, portraying the latter as corrupt/weak capacities	- Tactic of avoidance in some cases bypassing state structures - Deploying 'ignorancy' to foreground technocratic approach over political motives - Foregrounding weak capacities and corruption of state to increase control	- Continued exclusion of society-based structures involved in disaster response, such as private sector and religious institutions - Strict conditions of aid
	Collaboration	- Coordination mechanisms and consortia - Inclusion of a number of local/national NGOs	- State–aid coordination mechanisms on all levels - Including local state actors in aid distributions	- Direct intervention in community and 'community knows best'
	Compromise	- International–local partnerships	- Balancing humanitarian action with statebuilding by creative compliance	- Inclusion of community stakeholders in the distribution of aid and needs assessments
STATE	**Contention**	- Gaining control through bureaucratic 'compliancy' measures - Threat of repercussions in case of non-compliance - Foregrounding lack of transparency of aid	- Contentious politics over roles and mandates between institutions and between local–national levels, keeping control in own hands	- Politicization of aid and elite capture - Making promises, but breaking them - Portraying people as taking advantage
	Collaboration	- State–aid coordination mechanisms on all levels	- A central institution bringing together different ministries during the response	- Inclusion of local leaders in the response to increase state's presence at the local level
	Compromise	- Balancing statebuilding with humanitarian action by allowing aid actors to temporarily take over service provisions	- Redistribution of roles and responsibilities in emergencies	- Making limited changes after protests and resistance
SOCIETY	**Contention**	- Increasing access to aid by 'victimcy' and stealing	- Public resistance (protests) and infra-politics (foot dragging)	- Incidents of (threat of) violence to capture aid
	Collaboration	- A number of societal actors, such as private sector, reach out to humanitarian actors	- Local leaders who are gatekeepers to the state negotiate on the communities' behalf	- Solidarity structures and initiatives providing support
	Compromise	- Accepting the provided aid even though it does not meet all needs	- Negotiating conditions for who is eligible for support	- Sharing of aid items after distributions with other groups/individuals

Table 4. The three tactics of socially negotiating disaster response, by author

Following the findings and resonances between the different cases, a generalization can be made for the post-conflict scenario: response goals of different international, national and local responders often collide or are politicized, and bottom-up and top-down governance is

continuously (re)negotiated. State-led or locally led responses that centre around national and local actors may result in a more inclusive disaster governance and improved response capacities, but can also strengthen existing intra-state and society–state tensions, leaving societal actors in a precarious position. With post-conflict governance being 'in flux', disaster response becomes a vehicle to socially negotiate different arrangements.

Therefore, I firmly believe that disaster response practices in a post-conflict scenario need to reconcile the different visions of locally led governance that both the shifting aid policies and the post-conflict period bring, and find ways to connect the bottom-up push towards different aid modalities with centralized aid–state disaster practices.

8.5. What is needed for a more balanced blending of governance in post-conflict disaster response?

This brings us to the fourth, and last, of the sub-questions posed at the start of the thesis. The research findings show that humanitarian, disaster, and post-conflict governance converge in the response to disasters. However, the case studies also show that achieving a blending of governance is challenging. One of the reasons for this can be found in the way certain governance concepts are socially constructed and given meaning by the response actors. Therefore, it is important to address them openly.

The literature on post-conflict settings has mostly focused on three aspects: the 'risk' within these settings for a return to violent conflict (Collier et al., 2008); external 'statebuilding as peacebuilding' (Heathershaw & Lambach, 2008); and a vast body of literature on 'fragility' which explores the socio-economic recovery processes that follow conflict (Barakat & Zyck, 2009; Boege et al., 2009; Cousens et al., 2001; François & Sud, 2006; Hilhorst, Weijs, et al., 2017; Rocha Monocal, 2013). There has been little attention paid to how this environment shapes the governance context in relation to disasters. The post-conflict environment that was originally constructed as a policy discourse after the Cold War led to certain external interventions and long-term assistance, based on a premise of 'fragility', which have left their imprint in post-conflict societies. I believe it is time to question what 'post-conflict' means in this decade and beyond, but that does not diminish the validity of understanding it as a separate context. Post-conflict can be understood as an unfolding reality that is socially constructed through interactions between actors at, and between, different governance levels. As a specific governance category, my research found definite similarities

in the three post-conflict case studies in the ways that different actors related to each other, reinforcing the relevance of identifying post-conflict settings in disaster response.

As a case in point, a number of findings shared in the case study chapters challenge what 'vulnerability' to disasters means in this context and contribute to the critical literature on vulnerability in disaster studies (Bankoff, 2001; Blaikie et al., 1994; Hilhorst, 2004; Wisner, 2016). Vulnerability is not a property of a society, state or system, but is created by everyday practices and politics. For example, in Sierra Leone, the disaster unfolded in an area that was susceptible — and whose people were vulnerable — to the transformation of a hazard or natural phenomenon into a disaster. This was an outcome of a historical process related to rapid urbanization during the civil war, poverty leading people to search for affordable housing, and weak implementation of policies. Although this is similar to accounts of disasters in other governance contexts, such as Peru's 500 year earthquake (Oliver-Smith, 1994), such vulnerabilities are also reproduced in the post-conflict environment. A volatile political context in which power sharing is socially negotiated — often between parties previously in conflict — prioritizes political power over people's security. Furthermore, the disarticulation and distrust between society and state authorities, combined with immature institutions, results in a general non-compliance when it comes to measures to reduce disaster risks.

This vulnerability was reproduced in the response in all three countries through post-conflict politics (see vignettes 2, 3, and 5); with a strong focus on decentralization, national and local authorities negotiated their role in the response, leaving certain authorities behind. Further, the open politicization of aid (especially with elections on the horizon) led to the widening of the gap between state and society when partisanship in distributions was observed. However, this disarticulation in the wake of disaster cannot be equated to the 'critical juncture' for socio-political change that Gawronski and Olson (2013) have suggested. Much like Siddiqi and Canuday (2018) have shown, the social contract is quite resilient and state-society relations were reproduced rather than transformed. When humanitarian actors enter this environment and are not sensitive to statebuilding processes and the state's internal dynamics, their power in the response increases at the cost of both the state's legitimacy and the space for societal responders to participate in the response on an equal footing.

The question is how post-conflict disaster response practices and policies can be adjusted in such a way that the tensions discussed in section 8.3.2. may be resolved or used to advance the agenda of peacebuilding by balancing statebuilding with humanitarian action (see chapter 4), understanding state hybridity and the multi-local (see chapters 5 and 7), and

opening the space for societal actors to take part in disaster governance structures (see chapter 6). However, to start this process, the research found that specific conditions need to be in place.

First, the construction of post-conflict 'fragility' needs to be overcome. Disaster response in this scenario is strongly influenced by processes of change, with a plurality of visions for what this change should look like and the motives that come with it. Although these societies can also be constructed as strong and able to manage these uncertain processes without reverting back to moments of violent conflict, post-conflict settings are still most often seen as 'fragile'. This delegitimizes the role of the state and local actors, and instead legitimizes external interventions. Fragility is socially constructed by the response actors as the inability to effectively respond to and coordinate the response, or the corruption that is attributed to national and local actors. However, the research found that fragility lies both externally, in the continued inequality between the power of international aid actors and the state, which requires international actors to practise their power differently for a more inclusive response (regarding the levels of governance, material resources and authority to decide how to use these); and internally, in the relationship between the state and societal actors that requires more downwards accountability from the state to open the space for increased societal collaboration.

The tension between the statebuilding and humanitarian goals in disaster governance requires not only an increased understanding of the main issues that emerge when these goals collide, but also a clear vision (before a disaster) of what a blending of goals would look like. Otherwise, there is a risk of continued dependence on international assistance and domination of the response by powerful donors. Local, national and global disaster response arrangements (in laws and policies) could better clarify the roles for the different response actors, or at least set a framework for collaboration that is agreed upon in advance, after which practices are communally evaluated.

However, simply negotiating these mandates is not sufficient; they have to be accompanied by the appropriate resources and decision-making power. A temporary humanitarian takeover negatively affects development processes and long-term relationships between aid and state actors that are crucial within the post-conflict scenario. When the state takes counter measures to regain control — described in chapter 4 as a 'compliancy' tactic — this increases bureaucracy and slows down the response. Furthermore, there is a negative

impact on the legitimacy of the state, or certain state actors, and an increased mistrust of the state's motives.

This brings us again to the tensions between the state and societal actors. These require a greater sensitivity within disaster response practices, as 'fragile' state–society relations might be reproduced in disaster response, further marginalizing the role of societal actors, increasing vulnerability and giving contested state actors a greater political advantage (see for example vignette 3). This also directly limits the power societal actors have to respond to disasters, as they are constrained by their disarticulation with the state.

As described earlier, the humanitarian field is also changing; from being centralized, with a short-term vision, and focused on international interventions, it is becoming decentralized, embracing a longer-term vision, with an emphasis on responses. However, the case studies have shown that this decentralization is socially negotiated on multiple local levels. In this process, aid actors are being pulled in different directions, with humanitarians legitimizing their role by emphasizing the humanitarian principles and multi-mandated aid actors trying to find a balance between the humanitarian imperative and sharing control of the response with other actors who have diverging motives. What is most needed is a convergence of both non-state and state actors in the service of the affected population.

Second, the reproduction of power relations between the local and the global needs to be transcended. Within the humanitarian arena of disaster response, different governance systems encounter each other, and actors need to socially negotiate their roles and legitimacy while reconciling their differences. Yet, a tension remains between authoritative and material resources: authoritative resources are shifting towards national and local actors in the response due to the current state-centred disaster policies and humanitarian localization agenda, but material resources often remain centralized in the international aid system. The power imbalances between the local, national and global actors have not been redressed in practice. In the end, the blurred definitions of the state and the local as governance constructs enable the wheeling and dealing of aid and prevent power relations from being truly transformed.

As shown in chapter 7, the usage of the different 'locals' is a legitimation strategy that is deployed by all response actors, where a discourse of supporting societal actors — and the perceived 'closeness' to them — legitimizes the role of other actors in the response. The post-conflict scenario is characterized by contentious collaboration between and within different governance levels and actors. However, the national and the multiple local levels are

often seen as one. If these paradoxes of post-conflict disaster governance are not addressed by integrating multi-level hybrid governance arrangements in disaster response, there is a risk that unequal power relations between local and global scales will continue to be reproduced. The implications of these discourses and practices are likely to inhibit the strengthening of local disaster governance capacity that goes beyond the national level, further increasing the existing disarticulation between society and the state. Moreover, the politicization and elite capture of aid will continue, leading to increased societal vulnerability.

Relationships between the binary 'local' and 'global' are constructed and reproduced in everyday discourses and practices. The localization of humanitarian governance, in its current form, is therefore inherently contradictory; to 'localize' is a top-down and non-local action targeting those 'local' actors that (are made to) fit within a global system, regardless of how different local governance structures already function. What is needed is to recognize and listen to voices from outside of the system. Practices of downward accountability can provide spaces for transformational contention, where policies and practices can be reconfigured by the people whose lives are most impacted by disasters and the response to them. Only when these contradictions are redressed, can further steps be taken to transcend the local–global divide and turn the humanitarian system upside down. In order to operationalize these understandings, humanitarian actors must work with differentiated response strategies.

8.6. Looking to the future

The ways in which post-conflict, disaster and humanitarian governance interact, and actors socially negotiate the conditions and outcomes of disaster response, constitute a broad topic that does not restrict itself to the findings and conclusions presented above. Due to the high incidence of disasters in conflict-affected settings, and the continued lack of scholarly attention to post-conflict settings in particular, further research remains crucial.

First, in order to operationalize the findings of this thesis, humanitarian actors could research and develop differentiated response strategies, in which the specific characteristics of post-conflict (and other) scenarios provide a foundation for a certain type of response model (that is also contextualized with specificities of the disaster and country).

Second, more research on the cross-cutting theme of disaster risk reduction (DRR) is warranted. During my research, it became clear that DRR and disaster response share similar challenges in the post-conflict scenario. Delving more deeply into this topic was beyond the

scope of the thesis, which focused on the specificities of disaster governance after disaster happens; nevertheless, vulnerability to disasters is highly impacted by the socio-economic and political environment. We must deepen our knowledge of these interdependencies to achieve a holistic understanding of how disasters are produced and managed, in order to approach them in an integrated way, also in relation to other factors that might be shared between a post-conflict and any other type of 'fragile' setting.

Third, acknowledging that disasters affect social groups in different ways can better inform the response to disasters. In many countries, women are still excluded from decision-making processes, such as in state institutions, even though women are well represented in the international aid environment. Marginalized groups are similarly excluded, and might not even find a place at the governance table with international organizations. This could seriously affect the way that disaster response is governed. Therefore, including a focus on gender or particular marginalized groups could provide valuable new insights and contribute to bridging the post-conflict and post-disaster nexus gap in the humanitarian literature and practice.

Fourth, although this research has used the humanitarian arena as an analytical lens and included a variety of state, aid and societal actors, there are many more responders after a disaster that are relevant to the way that the governance of disaster response takes shape in practice. Global donors (such as the BRIC[53] countries or Gulf states), neighbouring countries, philanthropists, other civil society organizations and the media, for example, play a large part in the response to a disaster. However, these actors are often excluded from (or play a smaller role in) international and state-centred response mechanisms. A broader integration of these, and other, response actors would therefore be crucial in understanding disaster response governance in an integrated manner.

Finally, as research on the disaster–conflict nexus is growing, we must create space and opportunities for different critical voices to challenge current practices. This thesis has laid a foundation for research that goes deeper into some of the nuances of post-conflict disaster response and can further enhance the voices of affected communities and societal actors. This requires a restructuring of humanitarian studies. In future research, I would also strongly advocate for exploring alternative forums, outside of the formal aid–state response structures, and finding ways to better connect the formal with the informal aid structures.

Humanitarianism in a post-conflict environment finds itself at a crossroads. Further research on how and why different roads are taken — and the implications of these choices

[53] An acronym to describe Brazil, Russia, India and China.

— will help the humanitarian field to move forward and better connect to socio-political developments that are constantly changing. By understanding the power relations between different response actors, how these are socially negotiated, and the impacts they have, different types of compromises can be made, and collaborations sought, to 'leave no one behind' in the governance of disaster response.

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Appendix I: Semi-structured interview guide

(Excluding additional probing questions, nuances and contextual differences)

1. Information about the interviewee: organization and role
2. Cause of the disaster
3. How was the response organized? (Focus on the roles of aid/state/societal responders)

   For example:
   a. Who were the actors?
   b. Who did you collaborate with the most? Why?
   c. Who coordinated the response? (+ evaluation)
   d. Decisions taken: Who? What? (+ agreement/contention?)

4. How do you evaluate the response? What could be done better? (focus on different aid/sate/societal responders)
5. What were the main challenges? And how were these resolved? Or, why could these not be resolved? (focus on inter-actor challenges)

   For example:
   a. Resources
   b. Distribution
   c. Information and accountability
   d. Space to negotiate
   e. People taking advantage
   f. Inclusions/exclusion
   g. Acceptance/resistance
   h. Localization

6. What are your main strengths? (compared to other actors)
7. Were there unforeseen/surprising opportunities?
8. What would be the ideal response? (focus on different aid/sate/societal responders) Why was it not possible to achieve this?
9. Potential harm/conflict sensitivity in the response?
10. Were there changes in actor relationships because of the response?
11. What are the future plans related to the response?

Checks: Legitimacy (predictable, justifiable, equitable, accessible, respectful)

Appendix II: Focus group basics

(Excluding additional probing questions, nuances and contextual differences)

1. Introduction
2. Narratives about disaster
3. Who was affected by the disaster? Are there any differences? Why?
4. Participatory list of response actors and their actions (on flipchart with post-its)
    a. List of actors and actions (discuss more about them)
    b. Timeline of the response (first to last to respond)
    c. Voting (with stones) and discussion on questions, such as:
        i. Biggest/smallest impact
        ii. Appropriateness of response
        iii. Equal/unequal distributions
        iv. Access to aid/actor
        v. Most/least respectful
5. What were the main challenges/problems in the response? (+ probing)
6. How were the distributions organized? (e.g. inclusion/exclusion/advantage taking/collaboration)
7. What could aid/state/societal actors do to improve the response?

About the author

Samantha Melis is a humanitarian researcher and practitioner. Her academic background shows her keen interest in research that combines conflict, disasters, development and humanitarian studies. Throughout her studies, she has always looked for spaces where different theories and practices meet. Samantha holds a BA in Liberal Arts and Sciences (2008, University College Utrecht), an MA in Conflict Studies and Human Rights (2009, Utrecht University) and an MSc in Cultures and Development Studies (2010, KU Leuven). Over the course of her studies, she took on multiple international internships to engage with humanitarian, peacebuilding and development organizations in practice; working with the Palestinian Hydrology Group in Ramallah, the Carter Center in Atlanta and as a research assistant in Liberia.

After her studies, Samantha became a programme quality advisor for ZOA in Burundi. This professional experience provided her with a strong drive to contribute to the humanitarian imperative. Samantha sees her role as a mediator and facilitator, creating a safe space for people with different backgrounds to work together, supporting each other's strengths, to achieve a common goal. Throughout this experience, Samantha continued to seek a more in-depth understanding of international aid to contribute to improving humanitarian practice. She was granted this opportunity during her PhD, where she conducted, in total, over twelve months of qualitative research on disaster response in the post-conflict settings of Nepal, Sierra Leone and Haiti as part of the research project 'When Disaster Meets Conflict'. Besides the knowledge and experience she has gained in her PhD, what she enjoyed the most was working together with a range of different responders, from international donors and INGOs, to state authorities and community members, listening to and understanding different perspectives and voices. As a PhD researcher, Samantha presented her research findings at various international conferences and engaged with research dissemination and uptake activities for the 'When Disaster Meets Conflict' research programme. Besides these and other academic outlets, such as guest lectures at Cambridge University, the Institute of Crisis Management Studies and Wageningen University, she has always made sure that the research stayed close to practice and translated the academic results through research briefs, blogs, workshops, consultancies (with Partners for Resilience and the Core Humanitarian Standard Alliance) and relevant projects. When disaster does not meet conflict, Samantha enjoys bringing her camera on hikes in nature and the urban jungle.

Peer-reviewed publications

Melis, S. (2018). The fragile state of disaster response: Understanding aid–state–society relations in post-conflict settings. In H. Brauch, Ú. Oswald Spring & A. Collins (Eds.), Climate change, disasters, sustainability transition and peace in the Anthropocene (The Anthropocene: Politik—Economics—Society—Science, 25) (pp. 67-93). Cham: Springer.

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Other professional publications and blogs

Hilhorst, D., Van Voorst, R., Mena, R.A., Desportes, I. & Melis, S. (2019). Disaster response and humanitarian aid in different conflict scenarios. United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

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