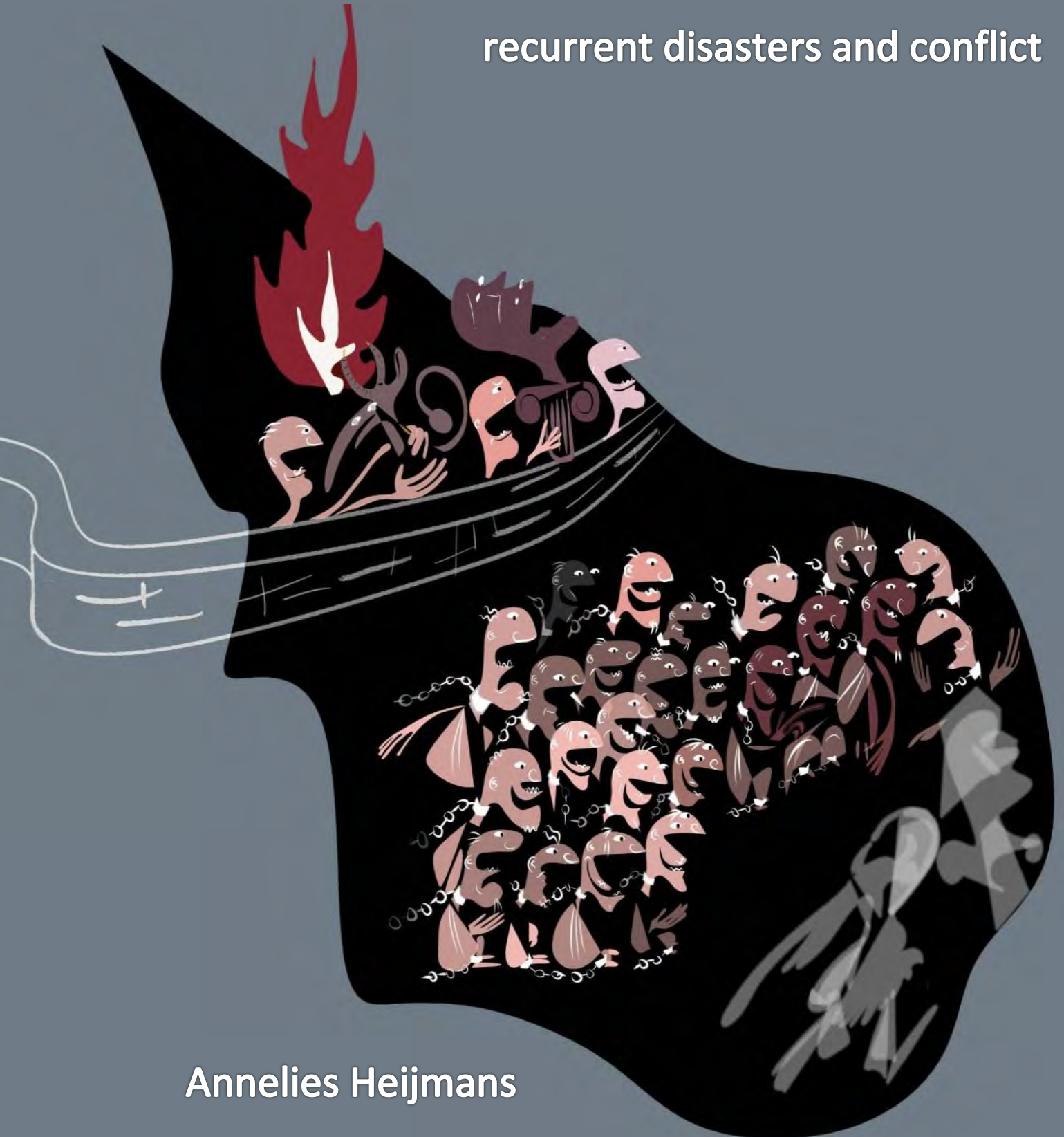


Risky Encounters

Institutions and interventions in response to
recurrent disasters and conflict



Annelies Heijmans

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This research was conducted under the auspices of the CERES graduate school and the Wageningen School of Social Sciences (WASS)

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**Institutions and interventions in response to
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Annelies Heijmans

Thesis

submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of doctor
at Wageningen University
by the authority of the Rector Magnificus
Prof. dr. M.J. Kropff,
in the presence of the
Thesis Committee appointed by the Academic Board
to be defended in public
on Tuesday 8 May 2012
at 16:00 p.m. in the Aula.

Annelies Heijmans

Risky Encounters: Institutions and interventions in response to recurrent disasters and conflict

312 pages

Thesis, Wageningen University, Wageningen, NL (2012)

With references, with summaries in Dutch and English

ISBN 978-94-6173-267-5

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Acknowledgements

Once upon a morning, I woke up with my mind racing with thoughts about the Allegory of Plato's Cave hinting that it somehow had a link to my PhD project. The allegory of the cave, as you may know, is about a group of people who live chained to the wall of a cave. They cannot move their heads for they are fixed to stare at a wall in front of them. The only things they can see are shadows projected on the wall by figures, people and things passing in front of a fire behind them. They can also hear echoes bouncing off the wall from noises produced outside the cave. The people in the cave take the shadows to be real things and the echoes to be real sounds and not just reflections of reality. The allegory continues with supposing that a person is freed and can leave the cave. That person would be struck blind by the light of the fire and the sun, confused by what he sees and keen to immediately return to the cave. Eventually, though, he would adapt and start to understand how these new things around him are the cause of all those shadows and echoes that he and his chained fellows had been seeing and hearing inside the cave. Were he to return and share his observations of the world outside, nobody would believe him. They would not understand his views and experiences, because their language only refers to shadows and echoes.

The allegory symbolizes the dividing line between different worlds, and refers to the difficulty and discipline it takes to cross such lines. This PhD project aimed to understand the local realities of populations affected by disaster and conflict, by crossing the line at the cusp of the world of aid agency headquarters – these bodies portray and (re-)construct local realities in a way that legitimizes their interventions. When my initial findings of fieldwork in Afghanistan and Indonesia were presented to managers and policy makers in the Netherlands, they initially did not believe me. They had to get used to the idea that views on local realities differ, depending on the varying positions in which actors experience and deal with the world around them.

Through the flow of time, there were more lines I crossed, caves I left and new realities I entered. Returning to the academic world, after 15 years of NGO work in the outside world, demanded my own acclimatization to scientific research practices and searching for well-founded arguments. Reflecting now on the process of how this research took shape, I realize how so many people supported me in crossing this line, leaving a mark on me and on this book's content. To them, I express my profound gratitude for having made the process not only possible but also enjoyable and profoundly fulfilling. My deepest appreciation is for Bert Bruins, my partner in life. It would be inappropriate to mention him merely at the end of these acknowledgements. He accompanied me to the Philippines in the 1990s, and always encouraged me to take extra steps beyond my comfort zone. Without his support, conceptual insights, humour and care, this research and book-writing would not have materialized.

I regard my work at the Citizens' Disaster Response Centre in Manila in the Philippines as the roots of the thesis. In 1993, CDRC staff introduced me to the literature of critical disaster theory, and consequently it felt quite natural for me to start viewing disasters as political events. Together with the colleagues of the Field Operations Department, I discovered the ins and outs of disaster politics in the Philippines, in an experience that shaped my career. I am particularly thankful to Zenaida Delica-Willison, Lorna Victoria, Eufemia Andaya and Celso Dulce, who were wonderful colleagues at CDCR and, later, at the Centre for Disaster Preparedness. In addition, they were immediately interested in jointly reflecting on our shared history in the Philippines and on experiences with CBDRR approaches in other Asian countries. These reflections were instrumental in writing Chapters 3 and 4. "The best of all possible worlds" merged when these Filipino friends hosted the CBDRR exchange visit in 2008 for the Afghan and Indonesian NGOs that were involved in this PhD project. I wish especially to thank Ritz Santos of CDP who happened to be in Pakistan for consultancy work at UNDP, and who could speed up the visa applications in Islamabad for the Afghan colleagues.

Actually, this PhD opportunity came about by chance whilst working at the European Centre for Conflict Prevention, and some humanitarian aid staff of three Dutch aid agencies approached the Disaster Studies Chair Group with a series of research questions. To this day, I am very grateful to my supervisor, Thea Hilhorst, for immediately seeing the opportunity to link my research interests with the requests from ICCO, Kerkinactie and Oxfam-Novib in an interactive PhD. She believed in me, and welcomed me back to the academic world after 15 years of NGO practice abroad.

That I was able to deal with the complexity of research relations is thanks to two people in particular, Evert van Bodegom (ICCO) and Sjoerd van Schooneveld (Kerkinactie). Their critical thoughts, moral support, humour, friendship and perseverance in influencing the aid policies of their organisations, all kept on motivating me to produce relevant findings that would contribute to better aid practices. Many other staff of ICCO/Kerkinactie contributed their views to this research or joined me during visits to Afghanistan and Indonesia (in order of appearance): Eric Roetman, Raymond Bernardus, Dick Kleinhesselink, Lin Tjeng, Rommie Nauta, Corry van de Ven, Henk Bakker, Carlos Morales, Mirjam Boswijk, Marieke Schouten, Kees van den Berg, Guus Paardekoper, Caroline Ort, Judith Kaspersma, Marietta Shimizu-Larenas, Patricia van Delft, Jeroen Jurriens, Mary Vlassak, Kees de Rooter, Alexandra Strand Holm, Orzala Ashraf, Kalamani, Kiswara Santi, Azada Hussaini, and all the other ICCO and Kerkinactie staff who attended CBDRR workshops. In particular, I want to thank Sicko Pijper, the security advisor of ICCO, who at times checked my mental condition after visits to Afghanistan. I am also grateful to Adriaan Ferf whose recommendations in his external evaluation of the CBDRR pilot programme for ICCO resulted in more realistic aims and outcomes for this research project.

The cooperation which I enjoyed with Oxfam-Novib was similarly rewarding. I am grateful to Tilleke Kiewied who remained supportive after my formal engagement ended. She was very helpful when we together organised a panel during the first World Conference on Humanitarian Studies in Groningen where we presented the initial findings of the fieldwork in Afghanistan. I would also like to thank Brigitte

Obertop, Jogien Bakker, Hans van den Hoogen, Carly Bishop, Lisa Reilly, Irina Ulmasova, Husnia Sadat and Nadeem Bashir together with Grace Ommer and Fazil Mohammad Hotak Rasoly of Oxfam-GB.

In Afghanistan and Indonesia, the list of people I really must thank is endless. They allowed me to have a good look into their kitchen where they prepare their aid programmes. They accompanied me to the field and, in doing so, took quite some risks. They, together with me, made sense of the various experiences related to the CBDRR pilot interventions. I have a deep respect in particular for field staff and community organizers who deal with local power dynamics, intimidation or resistance by community leaders. It is through my intense contact with local NGO staff that I could arrive at new insights on CBDRR.

In Afghanistan, I want to especially thank Esmatullah Haidary, Abdul Malik Rahmani, Mohammad Osman Hemat, Gulam Jailani and Palwasha Jan of ADA; Mr Waqfi, Mudassir Rasuli and Assadulah Ehsas of CHA; Dr. Ahmad Fahim of IbnSina, and Habibur Rahman of BRAC, who hosted the kick-off seminar in Kabul; Sayed Ihsanulla Dileri, Ghulam Farooq Usmani, Farzana Jan, Engineer Bashir, Ahmad Rashed Wassif and Aziz of SDO; Abdullah Ahmad, Mohammad Ali Vosuqi and Abdullah Zuhair of CCA; and the staff of CPAU. Additionally, I would like to thank the staff of the Netherlands Embassy in Kabul for their support, and particularly Hans Kynenburg and Marten de Boer for their frank discussions and useful contacts. I am thankful for having had the opportunity to visit Afghanistan and to discover the other side of everyday Afghan life and people's concerns than that propagated through Western media.

In Indonesia many people were enthusiastically involved in the CBDRR-pilots. I am grateful to their commitment which facilitated reflection and mutual learning. I especially want to thank the following people for sharing their insights and friendship with me: Andreas Subiyono, Timotheus Apriyanto, Suryono, Rina Wijaya, Husaini, Wahyu Wibisono, Adi Nugroho, Agung Setiadi and Kaswanto of SHEEP; Ahmad Badawi, Cecilia Tri Susetyorini, Achmad Makhali, Teguh Budi Utomo, Masyuri, Jazuli, Syarif Hidayatullah and Sri Wahyono (Mas Yono) from YLSKAR; Haryati Panca Putri and Hery Hendroharjuno of YAPHI; and Lilik Sudiyatno and Joko Legowo from YPL. In Halmahera, Northern Maluku, I am thankful to Victor Nahusona, Vines Tupan, Electronita Duan, Ibu Anna, Frets Rasuh, Joseph Korompis, Jance Burakiti, Boni, Pa John Patisiane, Rev. Mudiao, Rev. Martin Budimen, Demianus Ice, Ibu Sarce Papuli and Ibu Jerda.

Of course, I want to give special thanks to Thea Hilhorst for her supervision, for giving me the chance to do this research and for her intellectual support. Although our opinions and characters did not always align, I valued her unflinching drive in getting me through the final part of this PhD project. I particularly appreciate her optimism and ability to spot opportunities to start new endeavours, and to bring me in contact with new people and initiatives to further my own development. I enjoyed being part of the Disaster Studies Chair Group as the space to receive and provide moral support and comfort to each other to get through a PhD project. I particularly want to express my gratitude to Gemma van de Haar and Gerrit-Jan van Uffelen, my roommates, who always lent a willing ear to my dilemmas and doubts, helping me clear the sky. I further

appreciated the presence, the laughs, serious talks and moral support of my dear colleagues Matthijs van Leeuwen, Luis Arthur, Hilde van Dijkhorst, Maliana Serrano, Rens de Man, Georg Frerks, Jeroen Warner, Hilde Geerling, Aschale Dagnachew Siyoum, Patrick Milabyo Kyamusugulwa, Winnie Wairimu, Fons van Overbeek, Rens Twijnstra, Carlos Morales, Raymond Duijsens, Bram Jansen and Martijn van Staveren. Special thanks to Lucie van Zaalen and Wendy Ömerköylü who keep the Chair Group alive and kicking.

Charlotte van der Tak, Marian Meulenkamp, Karen de Hauwere and Lieke van der Zouwen, all four MSc students of Disaster Studies, did their fieldwork in Indonesia, respectively in Halmahera, Muria Region and in Pati district, Central Java. Their detailed studies provided complementary insights to this PhD research, and the empirical chapters benefited from their analysis. Bruno Haghebaert, John Twigg, Jessica Mercer, Terry Gibson, Marcus Oxley and Irene Guijt were instrumental in providing information, ideas and reflective thoughts about matters hard to find in literature.

My thanks are also due to Bert Bruins, Erik Heijmans, Jeroen Warner, Gemma van der Haar, Giel Ton, Sietze Vellema and Jaap Vuijk for reading drafts of several chapters, and for their insightful comments, suggestions for improvements and their encouragement to never give up. Special thanks go to John Holbo for granting permission to use his artwork *Plato's cave theatre* for the cover, and thanks too to Wilma van der Loo who offered her creative skills in its finishing touches.

The frequent trips to Afghanistan, Indonesia and the Philippines, and traveling in insecure areas, have had a deep impact on how I appreciate everyday life, and on the way I relate to others. There are a number of people who have been very important in keeping me balanced and grounded. In this regard, I would first like to mention my parents, Jan and Jeanne Heijmans, whom I thank for always unconditionally supporting my ambitions, despite the dangers involved. Their home has been a sanctuary for me to recover, to rest and to forget about academic work. In the last stretch of the writing process, I thank them too for taking care of the children during weekends and holidays. Equally important is 'Mama Bert', as I call my mother-in-law Joke Bruins-Berkman. She has always inspired and encouraged me to believe in my abilities, to stay optimistic and to focus on inner growth. Thanks to Erik, my brother, to whom I could run to share my angers and ridiculous thoughts, and who would first put things in a different perspective before comforting me with coffee and home-made chocolates or delicious meals. I am particular grateful to Eva and Beer, my two children, who initially had no clue about what their mother was doing and why she was away once in a while. They helped me to keep the thesis process in perspective and prevented me from turning insane. As they grew older, they increasingly commented on my work, and suggested that the job of 'dolphin-trainer' would be less stressful. Their remarks about peace and war, about stress and happiness, helped me to see the importance of living life in the present, and of accepting life in all its ugly and beautiful facets while staying gentle for one another. And once more, Bert, thank you for everything! New challenges in life are ahead of us and, together with you, I am not afraid to cross new lines.

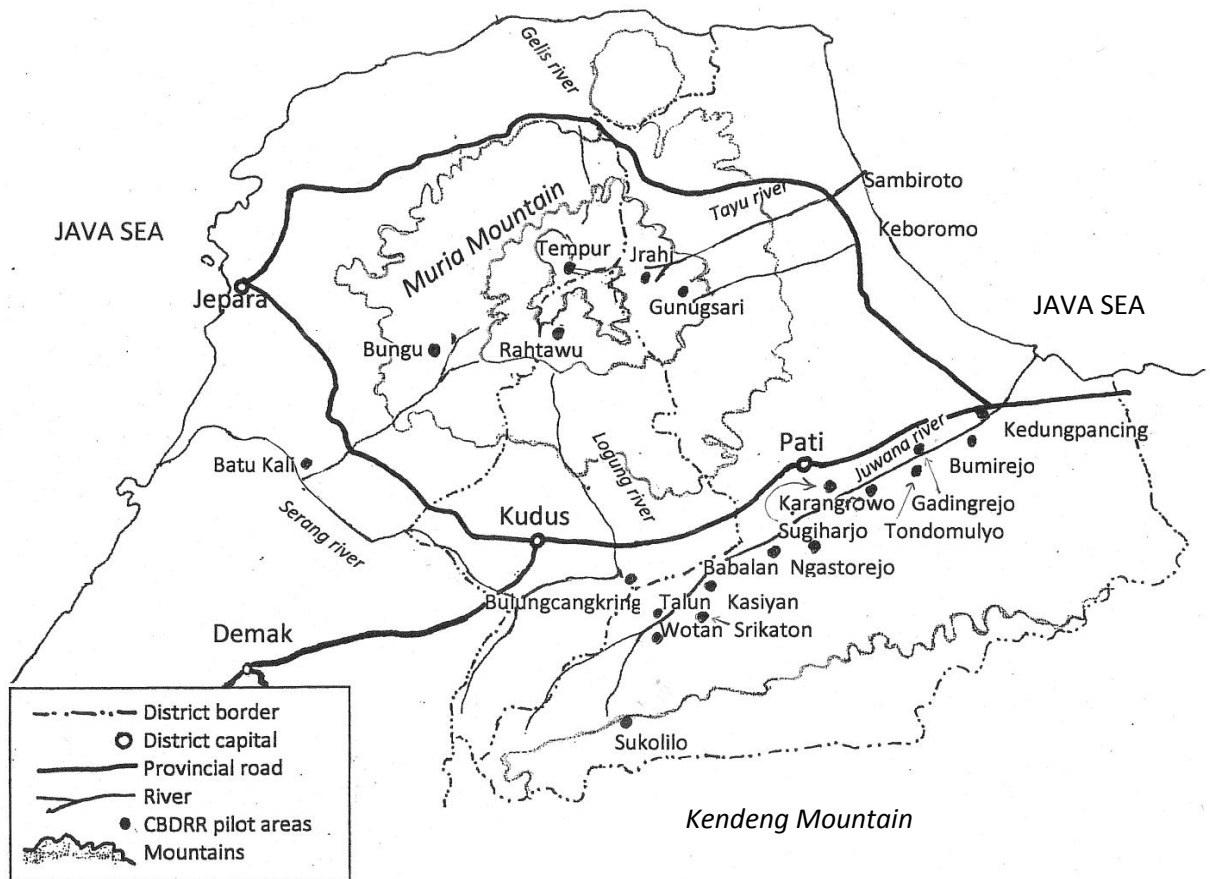
Map 1: Map of Afghanistan



Localities of research and CBDRR-pilots

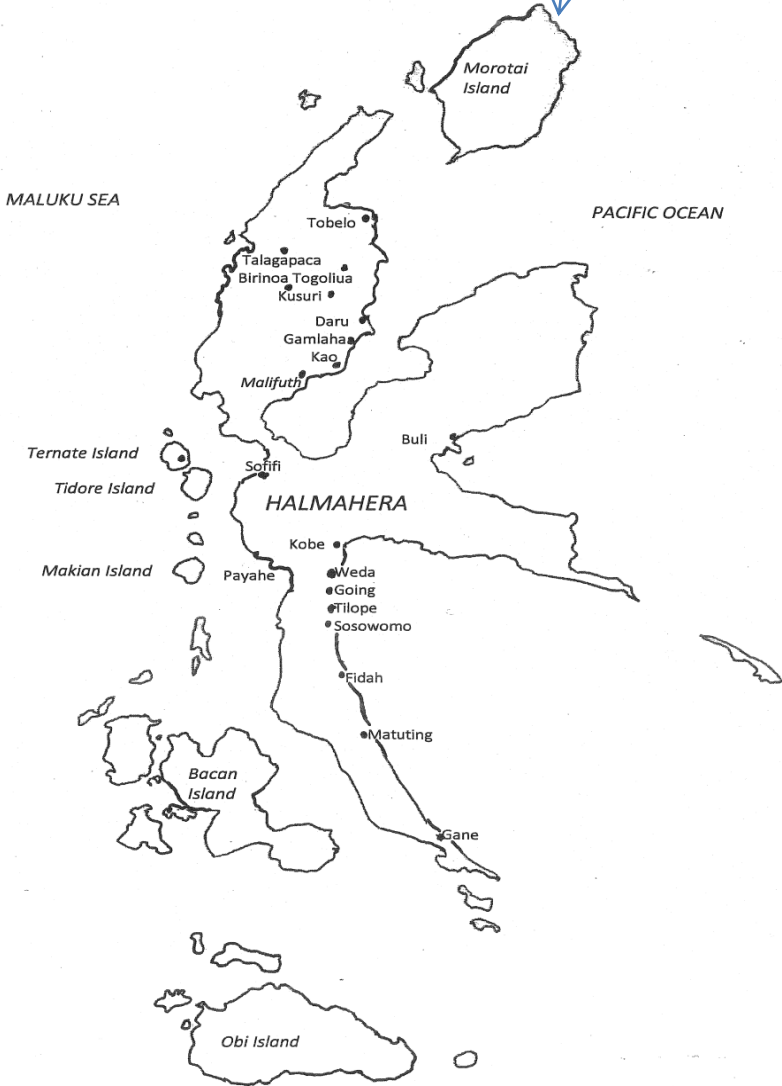
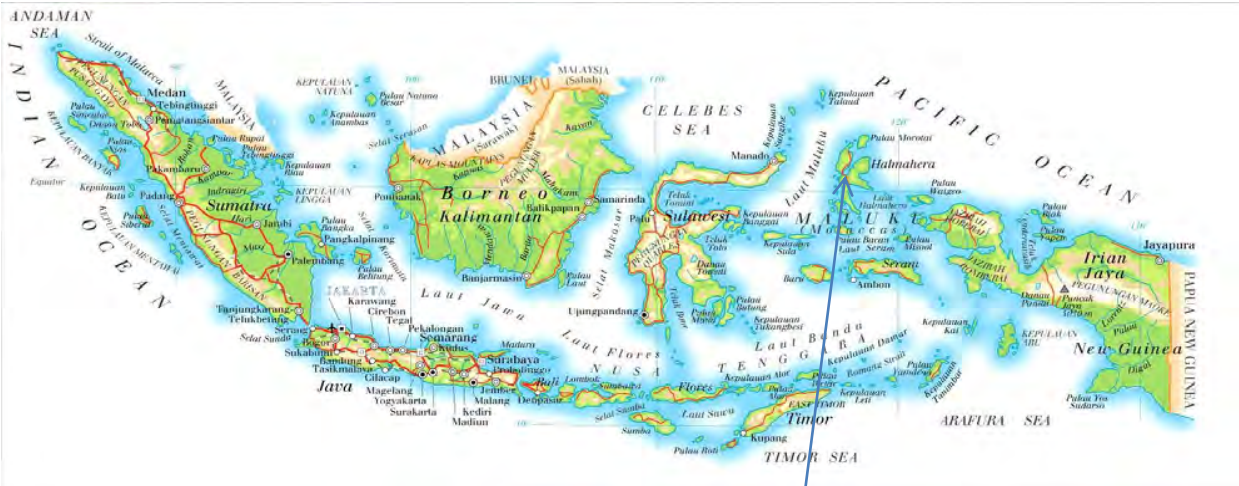


Map 2: Map of Indonesia



Localities of research and CBDRR pilots in Central Java

Map 3: Map of Indonesia



Localities of research and CBDRR-pilots in Halmahera

1. Responding to recurrent disasters and conflict

“Gifts are assumed to be used according to the wishes of the donor, not of the recipient. This is a strange form of giving”.

Vaux, 2001: 55

Over the last few decades, the frequency and intensity of disaster events has increased alarmingly, which particularly affected the livelihoods of poor people (Kim, 2011). In response, policy-makers and practitioners rapidly adopted Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR)¹ towards the end of the 1990s as an alternative to top-down approaches in disaster management. CBDRR approaches aim to build resilient communities. CBDRR refers to a variety of interventions aimed at reducing people’s immediate and long-term vulnerability to disasters by strengthening their capacities to better deal with the negative impact of disasters. Emphasis is placed on people’s participation and on the recognition of people’s existing capacities and local knowledge. A key characteristic of CBDRR is that local people produce risk maps of their surroundings. They use their knowledge to identify the multiple threats from economic, social, political and environmental angles. These maps serve as input to systematize early warning and evacuation, and help in finding appropriate risk reduction measures. CBDRR has proven its value and gained policy recognition. In Bangladesh, cyclones today only cause a fraction of the formerly experienced deaths, thanks to shelters, early warning mechanisms and involvement of community people in evacuation planning. Many more examples were collected in *Living with Risk*, the report prepared for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (UNISDR, 2004). The Hyogo Declaration concluding this conference attached central importance to the need of disaster risk reduction and community-based approaches.

Though CBDRR is on the rise in international policy circles, there are a number of important conceptual and practical questions which have not yet been adequately addressed. Serious and critical analysis of how agencies put CBDRR into practice is still lacking. According to John Twigg (2004), much of the literature on CBDRR projects is little better than agency propaganda. I have been a CBDRR-practitioner myself for about ten years, when I worked at the Citizens Disaster Response Centre (CDRC) in the Philippines, and later as consultant in Asia. I increasingly felt discomfort when confronted with the discrepancies between CBDRR policies of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and their practices at community level. I also observed inconsistencies between the general CBDRR models of governments and UN organisations and the diversity of CBDRR practices, and noticed the different interpretations the various actors attach to CBDRR. I particularly observed a tendency to elude the political nature of disaster risk reduction. This discomfort inspired the current research in which I aimed to understand the reasons for these discrepancies.

¹ I use CBDRR here as the most widely applied abbreviation to refer to community-based approaches for disaster risk reduction. Aid agencies use other abbreviations as well, like CBDM, CBDRM, or CMDRR.

This thesis opens the ‘black box’ of CBDRR, and seeks to understand what different interpretations of CBDRR policy exist and how these are operationalized in practice. Different actors like government agencies, NGOs and local people interact and negotiate to reduce disaster losses, and I am interested in what way these interactions reduce, produce, or reproduce people’s vulnerability to disasters. Could CBDRR indeed result in safer and resilient communities, as claimed in policy documents? Why does it fail to benefit the most vulnerable people? The focus of this interactive research is on localities experiencing recurrent small scale disasters and conflicts, and where the impact of disasters and conflict does not trigger (inter)national media attention or financial resources.

This chapter is divided into six sections. First, I introduce the central concern of the thesis through an experience that emerged during my work at CDRC. The second section briefly positions ‘CBDRR’ in the broader historical context of development policy and practice since World War II. The third section introduces the aid organizations involved in this research with their specific research questions and how this research evolved into an interactive research process. Section four defines the aim and scope of the interactive research and presents the core questions. Subsequently, I outline the theoretical concepts that are central in this thesis. I close this chapter with a brief look at the structure of this book.

1.1 The politics of drought response in the uplands of Panay, the Philippines

In 1994, the Citizens’ Disaster Response Centre (CDRC) in Manila, the Philippines, asked me to assess the effectiveness of its Citizenry-Based Development-Oriented Disaster Response (CBDO-DR) approach². One of the cases was a community seed bank program in response to drought in Central Philippines. The NGO field staff encouraged the drought-affected farmers to plant, harvest and store traditional rice seeds, while the farmers argued that modern high yield variety seeds were a more viable option. I concluded that local farmers interpret their circumstances different than outside NGO staff due to different risk perceptions. This led to inappropriate interventions (Heijmans, 2004). Later I realized that the ways interventions are shaped are as much a function of power dynamics, people’s motivations, values and hidden agendas. I decided to re-examine my notes and to review the story.

In the early 1980s upland communities in Maasin District, Iloilo province, Panay started experiencing drought periods, which became more frequent during the nineties. To cope with drought farmers slowly shifted from ‘slash and burn’ practice to permanent farming (traditional rice varieties and corn). In the eighties, they ‘discovered’ that through making ‘*kahon*’ (literally meaning ‘box’ and referring to a local version of rain-fed rice terraces) they could better cope with drought conditions. Farmers develop these boxes where suitable, and grow a combination of traditional rice varieties and high yielding varieties. The advantage of growing high yielding varieties is that it yields faster than the traditional ones, and by optimizing the available water in ‘*kahon*’, a second crop is sometimes possible. Farmers make risk-taking decisions to optimize usage of their resources: a traditional rice variety means less expensive inputs but only one harvest after 6 months. A high yielding variety means more expensive inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides, but you can gamble on two harvests in the same period and therefore producing more food than what is likely with traditional rice varieties. Most farmers risk growing high yielding varieties, while

² CDRC does not use ‘CBDRR’ as abbreviation for several reasons, which I will explain in chapter 3. It used CBDO-DR since its founding in 1985, and changed it into Community-Based Disaster Management in 2001 due to a changing political context.

on land unsuitable for '*kahon*' they continue to grow traditional rice varieties and increasingly corn. If it does not rain for the second crop of high yielding varieties, they plant mung beans and corn. For additional income families are involved in bamboo weaving, and charcoal production. During 1990-1992 farmers of these upland communities villages experienced a severe drought, causing their coping strategies to fail.

They sought outside assistance, and in 1991, the chairperson of the Community-Based Organisation (CBO) in *Subog*, called *Erning*, approached the local NGO belonging to the same NGO network as CDRC. *Erning* relayed the drought problem to the NGO as "a lack of seeds", while individual farmers (men and women) articulated their drought problem during my interviews as "a lack of food". This may be a subtle distinction, but had major consequences for the kind of intervention that was selected and for its success. Here politics entered the arena of defining risk, whose risk, and what should be done to reduce this risk.

The NGO regarded *Erning* as "the contact", treating him as the representative of all four organized upland communities. He lived close to the place accessible by motorbikes and public transportation; he regularly visited Iloilo City, passing by the NGO's office for a chat. Vice versa, he also acted as a messenger on behalf of other CBOs when contacting NGOs or officials in Iloilo City. *Erning* is a prominent figure in the area. He belongs to those few who own their own land, and although his land is not enough to produce sufficient food for his family, he has alternative sources of livelihood to make ends meet. Seeds are important for him to cultivate his land. For the majority of farmers however, reality is different. They cultivate land of others through a sharecropping system and have to pay the landowner in kind, namely part of their harvest, also for using farm machineries and post-harvest facilities. This means that $\frac{1}{4}$ till $\frac{1}{3}$ of their harvest is spent on rents. What is left is used for consumption although these sharecroppers face food shortage for several months a year. The NGO did not consider consulting all CBOs at this stage, assuming that all farmers were affected in the way expressed by *Erning*.

Since *Erning* defined the problem as a lack of seeds, the idea of a Community Seed Bank Program (CSBP) was born. The selected components of the program were identified by the NGO which attached particular value to three principles from its CBDO-DR framework: dispersal of traditional seeds since its staff believed in sustainable agriculture practices as opposed to the government's modern agricultural technologies; the construction of a central storage-place to keep the seeds for the next planting season as a mechanism to stimulate community cooperation; a repayment scheme to sustain availability of seeds, to strengthen people's livelihoods, and to expand dispersal to non-CBO members; and a training on project management to strengthen the CBO as an organization.

Shortly after the NGO consulted all CBO members about the Seed Bank Program, discussions started about whether traditional or high yield rice varieties should be distributed. The NGO did not recognize the farmers' strategy to drought, planting high yield varieties, as viable: it condemned the farmers' solution as environmentally and economically unsustainable. The NGO associated high yield variety seeds with the 'Green Revolution' ideology promoted by the Marcos regime, and therefore it clashed with the organization's values. The NGO field staff labelled farmers as backward, traditional, and stubborn. The NGO did not appreciate how farmers adapted strategies to mitigate effects of drought, despite their rhetoric that

interventions should recognize people's existing coping strategies. The Seed Bank Program was implemented in a total of eighteen villages. Only in one village farmers were able to store seeds - ironically farmers repaid to the seed bank through mainly high yielding variety seeds - but these were used to feed the family before the next planting season. The seed banks remained empty because of food shortage.

Despite the rhetoric of participation, partnership, and supporting the most vulnerable sectors, the majority of CBO members were excluded during the conceptualization of the program. Only chairperson *Erning* was taken seriously by the NGO. They together defined the problem, and controlled the solution to the drought problem. *Erning* was one of the less vulnerable persons in the area, and motivated to serve his private interests first above being accountable to the community. He once took five sacks of seeds from the storage without informing the CBO or repaying them.

This case illustrates that looking into different risk perceptions among the various actors is not sufficient. The NGO imagined the upland villages as traditional, backward, and relatively homogeneous communities, and represented by peasant organizations. This image hid the diversity in social positions of local farmers and sharecroppers and denied farmers' creative solutions to deal with drought. Additionally, whereas the NGO publicly claimed to consider people's participation as essential to reducing disaster risks, it failed here to listen properly to the people's arguments and to recognize their coping strategies. The NGO stuck to the kind of intervention that suited its ideological position, namely promoting traditional crops. This case made me realize that apart from focusing on *which* technical choices and measures are most appropriate to reduce risk for a particular disaster, it is equally important to focus on the *political process* that determines how these choices are made (Christoplos et al, 2001: 195). CBDRR interventions claim to support the most vulnerable groups in the community, but as the Seed Bank Program demonstrated, this is not always the case. Therefore I seek to investigate the political dimensions of CBDRR which is the central concern of this thesis.

1.2 The rise of 'community-based' approaches in response to failing development strategies

The rise of community-based approaches in development policy and practice during the 1990s³ is actually a response to the errors and failures of development work dominated by top-down approaches. This dominance goes back at least to the Marshall Plan⁴ to support the reconstruction in European countries affected by World War II, and to make Europe prosperous again. US policy to rebuild Europe became a model to solve problems of 'underdevelopment' around the world (Escobar, 1995; Chambers, 2010). Capital, science and technology were the main ingredients to replicate the living conditions of the 'advanced countries' to the economically 'less advanced countries' (Escobar, 1995:4). The idea was promoted that Third World countries had to catch up through capital investments in industries and infrastructure like roads, harbours, dams and irrigation systems, and through new technologies in agriculture, like Green Revolution technology. Engineers and economists were in charge putting primacy on 'things' rather than on 'people' (Chambers, 2010: 13).

³ In other disciplines like forestry, natural resource management, coastal resource management and in the health sector, a longer tradition of community-based approaches exists than in the field of disaster risk reduction.

⁴ Named after George Marshall, who was Secretary of State during Truman's presidency of the United States.

The view of economic progress and material prosperity became dominant since the 1950s in powerful institutions like the UN and the World Bank. Escobar points out that economists and politicians were very much aware that economic progress requires painful adjustments, and *“that large numbers of persons who cannot keep up with progress have to have their expectations of a comfortable life frustrated”* as stated in a UN document produced by the Department of Social and Economic Affairs in 1951 (1995: 4). These negative outcomes were regarded as side-effects of development interventions, aimed to increase production and export of goods (Ferguson and Lohman, 1994).

From the 1970s onwards, theorists and politicians increasingly debated about the kind of development that could solve social and economic problems in the world, resulting in a shift towards the ‘human basic needs approach’. This approach emphasized not only economic growth, but included the distribution of the benefits of growth in its view (Escobar, 1995: 5). Those who opposed the dominant economic strategies used terms like ‘alternative development’, ‘participatory development’ or ‘socialist development’ – but still viewing ‘development’ as something that is needed, as a certainty that should happen (ibid: 5). The dominant thinking on development constructed an image of Third World countries as backward and underdeveloped, and, according to Escobar, many countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America started to see themselves as such, and increasingly subjected their societies to western interventions.

During the 1980s and 1990s ‘participation’ and ‘empowerment’ were added to the development language and integrated in the dominant development thinking on markets and human development (Bebbington et al, 2007). People living in poverty, women, children, those who were vulnerable and marginalised were given priority in policy documents (Chambers, 2010: 13). Bebbington et al attribute the change in language particularly to the increased involvement of Non-Governmental Organisations and other civic organizations in development programmes of governments and the World Bank (2007: 598). The balance between ‘things’ and ‘people’ began to shift towards people. Yet, these people were still depicted as having needs and problems, living in conditions of poverty, powerlessness, hunger, illiteracy and oppressed by their own lack of initiative and traditions. This image universalizes and homogenizes Third World cultures in an ahistorical and apolitical fashion (Escobar, 1995: 8). That such an image is constructed and can exist is more a sign of power of western institutions over the South than a truth about it (ibid: 9).

During the 1990s development policy of governments, UN and World Bank started to promote community-based approaches in various fields like forestry, coastal resource management and health. Involving local people was assumed to make interventions more efficient, and to ‘empower’ people, mainly in terms of community organization, a type and level of empowerment that poses no serious threat to prevailing power relations (Bebbington et al, 2007: 598). Furthermore, an emphasis on community-based approaches may generate a greater support for governments’ programmes from development activists and NGOs from both the West and Southern countries. In many community-based programmes promoted by southern governments, ‘participation’ does not mean sharing in power, but that community people act as volunteers to do work on behalf of government to save resources (White, 1996).

In the field of disaster response, the dominant approach to render support to disaster affected populations was through top-down, single-event emergency operations, and through investment in technology to better forecast hazards, to warn the public and in physical infrastructure. Towards the end of the International Decade of Natural Disaster Reduction in 1999, much later than the development policy, the UN realised that if it wants to make disaster response more effective, it should step away from the technocratic approach and give more attention to local knowledge, traditions, religion, culture and to the involvement of local communities. This led to the proliferation of community-based approaches in disaster management and disaster risk reduction. Chapter 3 and 4 analyses the origins of CBDRR approaches in more detail, particularly how CBDRR approaches are shaped and embedded in particular state-society configurations. These chapters elaborate on the contested nature of CBDRR in the arena of explaining and responding to disasters.

1.3. Initiating the PhD research in an interactive research setting with aid agencies

Mid 2004, the Chair Group of Disaster Studies at Wageningen University received inter-related research requests from three Dutch funding agencies, namely ICCO, Kerkinactie, and Oxfam-Novib. These requests came from the respective humanitarian units, and dealt with questions to improve their aid practice and local level responses to disasters and conflict.

The humanitarian units of ICCO and Kerkinactie work closely together. Two staff, Evert who headed ICCO's Asia emergency desk and Sjoerd who was responsible for mainstreaming emergency response in Kerkinactie's regular development programme in Asia, got used over the years to looking at crisis situations from the perspective of disaster and conflict-affected populations. They observed a gap between grassroots realities and aid programming, and believed that a community-based approach to disaster risk reduction (CBDRR) would be more effective. CBDRR could possibly link relief to development efforts. They realized that while it is important to provide timely and appropriate humanitarian assistance, it is equally crucial to address underlying causes of vulnerability. They further stressed the importance of principles like participation, because in practice, survivors' active roles, their capacities and risk perceptions are hardly acknowledged.

They requested Disaster Studies to facilitate a CBDRR pilot programme and an interactive research involving selected local partners in Afghanistan and Indonesia. They wanted to learn from past failures, and to improve ICCO's and Kerkinactie's aid practice to better serve people at the grassroots. In 2005, Disaster Studies approached me for this task. I had been looking for an opportunity to reflect on my experience as CBDRR-practitioner in Asia, and wanted to better comprehend the dynamics that produce and reproduce a policy-practice gap, preferably together with aid agencies. My research interest matched with the request of Evert and Sjoerd, and my experience matched with the researcher's profile. They explicitly asked for a researcher with practical hands-on experience who could act as advisor, facilitator, capacity builder and researcher. Initially, 'interactive research' meant here that all actors involved contribute their specific situated knowledge and experience, discuss and reflect on research findings, and adjust research directions if necessary, while I was made responsible for the research methodology.

In 2005, Oxfam-Novib also approached the Chair Group of Disaster Studies with a similar request, although its motivation slightly differed from ICCO's and Kerkinactie's request. Oxfam-Novib intended to strengthen the humanitarian capacities of its local Afghan partners to enable them to provide timely and appropriate humanitarian aid to Afghans in case large disasters occur in conflict contexts. In January 2006, I conducted a Humanitarian Capacity Assessment in Afghanistan involving four local partners. Instead of strengthening their NGO capacities in contingency planning and humanitarian assistance, they preferred to learn about how to integrate disaster risk reduction and conflict-sensitive programming in their regular development programs through piloting CBDRR. Some Afghan partners no longer wanted to provide relief since it did not solve people's livelihood problems, and it was believed to have a disempowering impact on aid recipients. After discussions with Oxfam-Novib's humanitarian unit staff, the idea to pilot CBDRR with four Afghan partners was added to the Humanitarian Capacity Building Programme. In 2009, it accepted CBDRR as an approach to promote resilience of communities and to strengthen their capacities for self-reliance. The arrangement with Oxfam-Novib consisted of short-term contract research in which I acted as a consultant who complied with a 'terms of reference' for each visit, whereas with ICCO and Kerkinactie I engaged in long-term interactive research. Initially I treated these requests as separate research activities, but they got linked through joint workshops and learning.

The three Dutch aid agencies selected Afghanistan and Indonesia for specific reasons. Within the international Oxfam family, Oxfam-Novib got the lead function in Afghanistan, which implies that Oxfam-Novib leads the humanitarian operations in this country in case large impact disasters happen. Therefore it was interested in strengthening the local humanitarian capacity of its Afghan partner NGOs and to explore the interplay of disasters and conflict. ICCO and Kerkinactie selected Afghanistan because it experiences natural threats, on-going conflicts, major access problems to land, water and health facilities, and its government is weak. Staff of ICCO and Kerkinactie got familiar with the local context and their partners through relief and recovery programs. Convinced of the idea that continuing providing relief would not be a solution, but that more attention should be given to structural solutions, the need to formulate a new country program for 2006 -2010 served as an opportunity to explore and introduce new approaches like CBDRR.

The choice to select Indonesia – and more specifically Maluku – has a more sensitive historical background. Kerkinactie has strong historical ties with Indonesia through the protestant churches. The relationships with local churches in Indonesia are quite complex, and not always harmonious. Specifically the role of local churches in providing emergency relief to communities affected by the communal violence in Maluku in 1999-2000 was problematic, due to the perceived involvement of church-related actors in the emergence of the violence. Kerkinactie formulated the challenge of the CBDRR-pilot in Indonesia as to contribute to improving relationships with local communities and to innovate their approaches and practice. Unlike in Afghanistan, ICCO and Kerkinactie each have a different history in Indonesia: whereas Kerkinactie historically operated through the institutional church relationships - which were closely tied to the governmental elite in Jakarta during the colonial past -, ICCO related to partners that challenge the policies and performance of the Indonesian government. Since the beginning of 2007, ICCO and Kerkinactie, to be further referred to as I&K, merged their worldwide programmes. They jointly selected Afghanistan

and Indonesia, and these were in fact political choices that the organizations made with a specific agenda. These agendas became explicit during the research, which influenced the research process, the encounters and outcomes.

Whereas the countries were selected before I entered the interactive research setting early 2006, the selection of local partners and CBDRR-pilot areas became part of the discussions, debates and negotiations, which went on until 2008. In Indonesia two partners joined, one in Central Java and one in Halmahera, Northern Maluku, while three more NGOs operating in Central Java joined in 2008. In Afghanistan, four Afghan NGOs joined the interactive research: two partner NGOs of Oxfam-Novib, and two of ICCO and Kerkinactie. The process of selection of local partners and communities will be further discussed in Chapter 2 and 6. The CBDRR pilots started with kick-off seminars in Kabul (Afghanistan), Yogyakarta (Central Java) and Tobelo (Halmahera) followed by 'doing CBDRR' in a total of 44 villages. The pilots consisted of testing a new approach to respond to recurrent disasters in conflict settings beyond relief, and to reflect on the intervention processes and varying outcomes.

1.4 Sources of research questions – experiences, dilemmas and assumptions

Staff of ICCO, Kerkinactie and Oxfam-Novib, and their local partners formulated multiple questions, triggered by experiences and dilemmas they felt they could not address alone. I had my own research interests. To arrive at the aim of this research and its overall research question, I made a 'living document' to collect and process all ideas in order to better define what is part of this PhD thesis, and what is consultancy work. During 2006, I reviewed everyone's expectations and research interests, searched for overlapping interests and priorities, and clustered them in three themes presented below. By the end of 2006 I presented the research design to the aid agencies and shared it with the selected local partners in Indonesia and Afghanistan.

- (1) The policy-practice discrepancy in the aid chain.
- (2) Politicization and de-politicization of CBDRR interventions.
- (3) Potential of CBDRR in conflict contexts.

The policy-practice discrepancy within the aid chain

The first theme relates to observations of a discrepancy between policy and practice. Evert and Sjoerd from I&K had noticed the problematic relationship between the policy models and prescriptions at donor level, and the practices they are supposed to generate at grassroots level. Through their work experience in crisis contexts, they realized that people's priority in crisis situations is often not emergency relief, but support to strengthen their livelihood opportunities. They had come to the belief that continuing providing emergency relief to people in need is not the appropriate response; structural solutions should get more attention through linking relief to development through disaster risk reduction. However, in practice they found this quite a challenge to realize, both in terms of mandate and operational structures within I&K.

An additional explanation for the mismatch between policy and practice, according to Evert, is that most local partner NGOs are not organized such that they can channel and manage large amounts of emergency relief budgets and goods in times of crisis. He therefore proposed to mainstream risk reduction into the organization's regular development programmes. Although many of his colleagues in various departments supported his

proposal, the higher ranks of the organization argued that ICCO and Kerkinactie are basically 'development organizations' funded through the co-financing system of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Disaster risk reduction is not part of the Ministry's funding policy, and therefore, the directors and boards were not really interested in new policy on disaster risk reduction, or linking relief to development.

Evert and Sjoerd emphasized the need to critically reflect on the workings of the aid chain, to identify constraints that cause the mismatch between aid programming and local realities. Their concerns corresponded with my experience in the Philippines as described above in the 'community seed bank' case. Our experiences motivated us to look at interventions differently, particularly to understand how interventions are embedded in the broader institutional context, and how policy is being translated into practice along the aid chain.

Politicization and de-politicization of CBDRR interventions: considering state-society relations
Together with former CDRC staff, we 'exported' the Philippine CBDO-DR framework to Asian aid agencies through the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) in Bangkok. As training facilitators we used training materials from the Philippines. These materials were originally developed for CDRC and its network which view disasters as an opportunity for social change. Increasingly, we wondered why the political dimensions of 'CBDRM'⁵ and its social change perspective were negated by the majority of the participants and, later, why it disappeared from ADPC's CBDRM course handbook. Participants of the CBDRM courses interpreted concepts like 'vulnerability', 'risk assessment', or 'community organizing' as technical properties and systems without a political agenda like CDRC has. Subsequent visits to Bangladesh, India and Vietnam to facilitate tailor-made CBDRM courses locally, revealed how INGOs, local NGOs and government officials interpret and do CBDRM in varying ways, and I increasingly felt the need to better understand the origins of the various political perspectives on CBDRM.

I further wanted to know why the concept of 'vulnerability' appears everywhere with its material, physical, economic and social dimensions, while often omitting its political qualification. Also Evert and Sjoerd stressed the importance to not ignore the broader political context in CBDRR interventions, and to be aware of local power dynamics which shape CBDRR outcomes within and beyond villages. Inspired by the Philippine experience and practice of CDRC (Heijmans and Victoria, 2001), Evert and Sjoerd wanted to explore what the CBDRR approach could add to survivors' agency, to enter the broader political context to negotiate for risk reduction measures that address the structural causes of their vulnerability, specifically in its political dimension.

Potential of CBDRR in conflict contexts

ICCO, Kerkinactie and Oxfam-Novib are concerned with addressing disaster risk reduction in situations of conflict or chronic instability⁶. Dynamics of conflict, the interplay with disasters and their specific impact on people's livelihoods are poorly understood by aid practitioners and their donors. Most humanitarian aid agencies treat disasters and conflicts as distinctive fields of operation which simplifies reality and makes aid programming less effective. There

⁵ The Asian Disaster preparedness Centre (ADPC) uses the term Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM).

⁶ Conflict refers here to the use of violence to kill people, burn properties and destroy livelihoods. Conflict can entail communal violence, but also conflict between armed groups involving government army and rebels or international troops.

is a lack of empirical research on the potential of community-based risk reduction approaches in environments where communities are divided, disintegrated or displaced. It is a challenge to implement disaster risk reduction measures in a way that they also address divisions and grievances leading to violent conflict (Wisner, 2003).

The three aid agencies would like to explore whether community-based approaches are appropriate in environments where communities are divided, disintegrated or displaced. Staff further expressed their interest in how local people and aid agencies respond to the issue of governance, particularly in situations of chronic conflict, when states are seriously weakened, contested or non-existent. Does CBDRR fill gaps where the government is absent or dysfunctional? Or how to engage the government in the process when it is possible and desirable?

As stated earlier this research focused on localities experiencing recurrent small scale disasters and conflict, and where the impact of disasters and conflict does not trigger (inter)-national media attention. As a consequence, generating financial resources at the national level or internationally fail to occur. Affected people then largely rely on their own resources to cope with or survive adversity. The occurrence of recurrent small scale disasters forms a gap in policy-action, according to the head of UNISDR, Margareta Wahlström⁷. This research pays attention to recurrent small scale disasters and conflict in situations where government's attention at the various political sub-systems is minimal, absent or antagonistic towards disaster and conflict affected populations. Antagonistic refers here to a sense of negligence or repression, like pursuing development projects causing people's displacement and increased disaster risks.

The CBDRR approach is believed to be a promising approach in such contexts and fits the idea of 'strengthening local capacities', recurrently promoted by researchers and evaluation exercises to reduce the amount and scale of ineffective humanitarian relief aid (Cosgrave, 2007; IFRC, 2004; Anderson and Woodrow, 1989). The purpose of the pilots was to find out whether this belief has sufficient ground. A logical consequence of the idea of 'strengthening local capacities' is the research choice to focus on *local* NGOs and not on INGOs. Local NGOs are often overlooked in humanitarian aid literature and research which is mostly written and conducted from the perspective of INGOs.

A strategic research choice to manage security issues and institutional dynamics

Initially I intended to focus my research on one CBDRR pilot area through an in-depth case study, and to treat the other localities as satellite-cases. I increasingly realised however, that both security dynamics in particularly Afghanistan and the reorganization that I&K started in 2007, which coincided with my research period, could become a threat to my project.

Towards mid-2007, I wasn't completely sure if I could continue visiting all communities in Afghanistan when I&K management temporarily put all travel to Afghanistan on hold due to the kidnapping of Korean aid workers. I was allowed to travel to Afghanistan only after a security policy was formulated and approved by the management, which took about a year. Meanwhile I could visit Oxfam-Novib partners in Afghanistan, who had a different security

⁷ She made this remark in her presentation during the Global Conference of the Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction in London, January 25th-27th, 2010

policy. However, regular visits and systematic data gathering in the various localities could not be guaranteed.

In 2007, the reorganization within I&K started with a complete overhaul of all departments and staff, resulting in a shift from geographically organized units, towards thematic ones. Staff changed positions and portfolios of local partners. The reorganization further aimed to change the nature of relationships with local partners. Instead of bilateral relationships around project funding, I&K started to promote a programmatic approach, encouraging partners to work and apply for funds together around a thematic programme for increased effectiveness through joint action. Soon after, the first steps were taken to decentralize offices from Utrecht, the Netherlands, to the regions. This reorganization required a lot of energy, focus and time of staff and partners away from the CBDRR pilot. In some cases, local partners received the change towards themes and the new financial relations with suspicion or anger. In Afghanistan new local partners were selected, excluding some partners that were selected for the CBDRR pilots in 2006. We started from scratch again.

I therefore shifted from a geographical case-study approach to an empirically-inspired exploration of CBDRR policy and practice in various contexts taking a historical perspective. I reviewed the CBDO-DR approach of CDRC in the Philippines (Chapter 3), and analysed how locally emerged CBDRR-traditions elsewhere relate to the community-based approaches to disaster risk reduction promoted by the international community (Chapter 4). Central in the analysis is how governments and local NGOs attach meaning to CBDRR – and to all the concepts that make-up CBDRR - and why they differ. I decided to research and document the CBDRR pilots according to their process and outcomes viewed through the eyes of local people dealing with adversities (Chapter 5) and local NGO field staff (Chapter 6 and 7). The CBDRR-pilots resulted in a re-examination of the current definitions of CBDRR concepts and the implications for aid agencies. In this way I could still study the policy-practice discrepancy, the de-politicization of CBDRR and its potentials, *and* I could manage the many uncertainties surrounding area selection, security risks, and the dynamics between villages, NGOs and the donor. Even if the research would shift to other villages or another country, I could still use the data collected so far, analyse them and search for patterns and differences.

1.5. Aim of the PhD research and research questions

An interactive research allows different bodies of knowledge to interact, with the aim to produce, translate or transform knowledge to address problems that no longer could be solved through routine practices (Bersselaar, 2006). Usually, interactive research has a dual aim: theory building and raising the competencies of practitioners (Boog et al, 1996).

The overall aim of this thesis is to theorize and re-examine what CBDRR is, and secondly, to generate solutions for the aid practitioners' questions and dilemmas. The theorizing part of the research aim seeks to review the current definitions of the various concepts that make up CBDRR like 'disaster', 'community', 'community-based', 'local knowledge', 'risk', 'vulnerability', 'participation', 'empowerment' and 'resilience' and what these mean in various disaster and conflict affected contexts. This thesis concerns 44 CBDRR pilot areas in Afghanistan and Indonesia together, and considers CDRC's CBDO-DR practices in the Philippines. Although these CBDRR pilots and practices follow a seemingly similar process of entering the village, conducting risk assessments, organizing the community, identification

of risk reduction measures and implementing them, the CBDRR outcomes varied substantially in terms of reducing risk and people’s vulnerability. From the previous section on the sources of research questions, I arrived at the following overall research question and sub-questions:

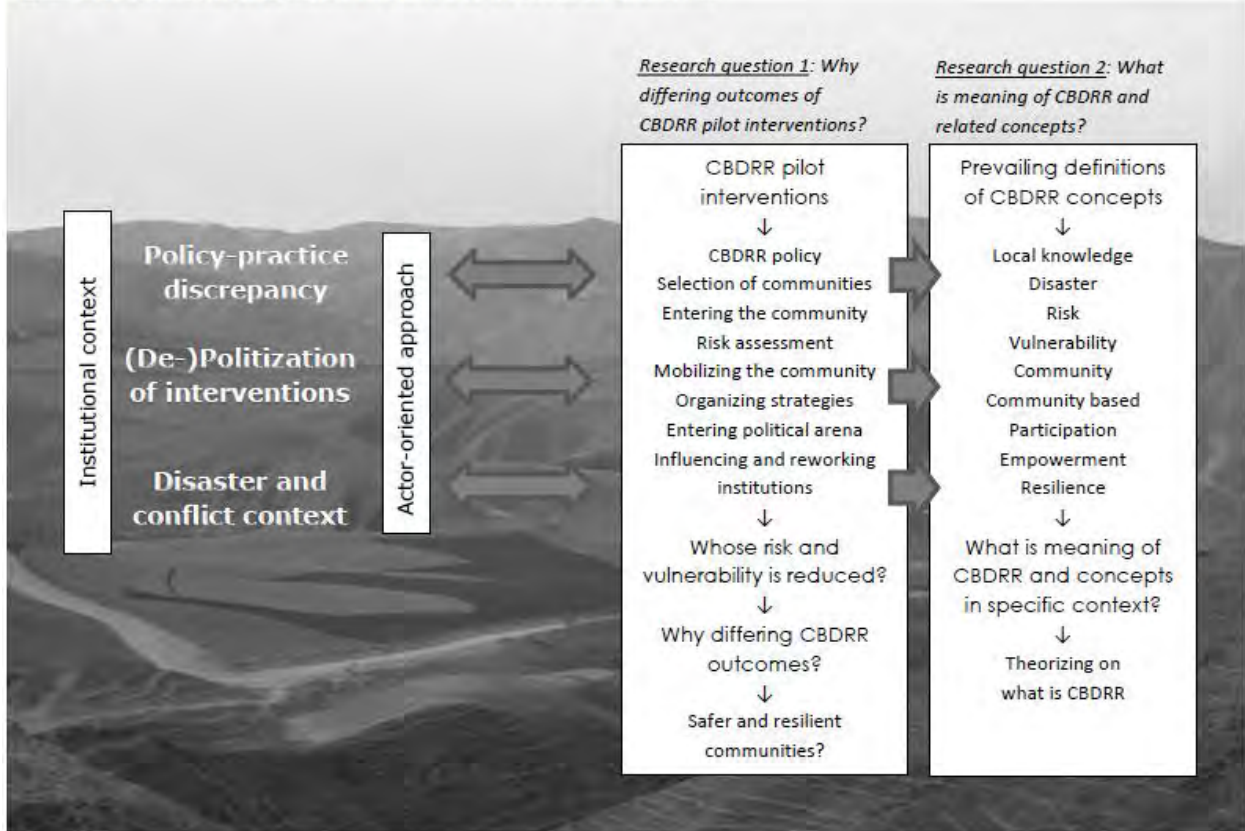
“What are the reasons for the differing outcomes of CBDRR interventions in disaster and conflict affected contexts in Afghanistan, Indonesia and the Philippines?”

- 1) *How is CBDRR defined by different actors and operationalized in practice?*
 This sub-question investigates how the various actors like local people, religious leaders, government agencies, military, and other actors conceive, negotiate, and implement CBDRR policy, and determine which choices for risk reduction are made. This question deals with the CBDRR *process*.

- 2) *How do the various actors perform their different forms of power to shape CBDRR interventions?* This sub-question investigates the power dynamics among the various actors to maintain the status quo, to take advantage of the intervention or to rework power relations in favour of marginalized groups to create safe and resilient communities. This question deals with CBDRR *outcomes* in terms of whose risk and vulnerability is reduced.

- 3) *How does CBDRR enable disaster and conflict affected people to influence and change institutions that constrained them in reducing their vulnerability?* This research question deals with CBDRR *potential* and *implications for aid programming*.

Figure 1.1 Dual research question in relation to three research themes



Aim of the CBDRR pilot programme

Oxfam-Novib, ICCO and Kerkinactie and their local partners wished to learn from local realities, to reflect on their routines, to become more conscious about local perspectives on risk and vulnerability, and to improve their aid programming. ICCO and Kerkinactie expected additionally to enhance downward accountability through CBDRR interventions, and to reveal the institutional constraints that cause the discrepancy between policy and practice (ICCO-Kerkinactie, 2006).

The expected outcomes of the CBDRR pilot are multi-fold and were supposed to manifest themselves at the various levels of the aid delivery chain. ICCO and Kerkinactie formulated the expected outcomes in a funding proposal for PSO⁸ as follows:

- ICCO, Kerkinactie and the partners gained knowledge and experience on CBDRR.
- Local communities in Afghanistan and Indonesia actively participate in CBDRR. Together with the partner organisations they became aware of their risks and are capable to address their vulnerability to disasters and chronic conflict.
- The partner organisations adopted the CBDRR approach to reduce risk and include the concepts of risk reduction in their policies and programming within two to three years.
- This pilot programme achieved a noteworthy change in the policies and programming of both ICCO and Kerkinactie and their partner organisations.
- In time, the partner organisations who are involved in CBDRR will share their knowledge about CBDRR at a national level. Although the organisations operate in different contexts, their experience and knowledge gained through the CBDRR pilot is relevant to share with other partners that were not part of the pilot (ibid: 8).

These expected outcomes do not tell much about what CBDRR means, what it is, or does. Evert and Sjoerd assumed that CBDRR inherently is a good approach with positive outcomes referring to experiences in Bangladesh and the Philippines (ibid: 1). They initially had a different view of CBDRR. Whereas Evert viewed the pilots as an emerging research process, Sjoerd considered CBDRR as ‘a medicine to cure the aid chain’, a bottom-up methodology to enhance people’s participation. In the course of the CBDRR-pilot programme, Sjoerd realized that the CBDRR pilots have to emerge and evolve in a specific context, and that they do not follow a planned predictable path from conception to results. The original research aim, formulated as “changing the institutional arrangements within the aid chain”, shifted to “studying aid practices”, assuming that concrete findings and cases could influence policy makers and managers. I&K wished to assess the outcomes of the CBDRR pilots according to criteria that were considered essential to improve I&K’s accountability to local communities: *needs-based interventions*, ‘*participation*’, ‘*empowerment*’ and ‘*resilient communities*’. I assessed CBDRR outcomes in terms of *whose* risk and vulnerability is being reduced, with special attention for the most vulnerable and marginalised groups in the village.

The next section sets out the theoretical framework starting with the prevailing definitions of the various concepts that make up CBDRR. Then I discuss the actor-orientation to explain how I conceptualize the policy – practice discrepancy using the notions of ‘agency’, ‘institutions’, and ‘political arenas’, distinguishing between ‘the political’ and ‘politics’. I continue

⁸ PSO approved the funding proposal for the CBDRR-pilot programme and supported the programme from 2006 till the end of 2011.

with a framework to study the political arena of disaster risk reduction, how actors use different forms of power, and the conceptual link between disaster and conflict theories.

1.6. Theoretical concepts

Concepts that make up CBDRR – prevailing definitions

I aim to explore the meaning that actors attach to concepts that make up the CBDRR approach like *'disaster'*, *'community'*, *'community-based'*, *'local knowledge'*, *'risk'*, *'vulnerability'*, *'participation'*, *'empowerment'*, and *'resilience'*. Many of these concepts have a multifaceted nature and the research aims to elicit these facets as they appear in a specific cultural and political historical context. There does not exist one definition of these concepts that are considered correct for everybody. People define concepts in such a way that they become meaningful to them.

I used 'prevailing definitions' to start with, which I took from ADPC's Field Practitioners' Handbook on Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (Abarquez and Murshed, 2004). ADPC is a prominent training centre on CBDRR throughout Asia, and consequently many CBDRR practitioners use this handbook as a reference. Concepts that are not part of ADPC's Handbook, I took from UNISDR publications 'Living with Risk' (2004) and 'Indigenous Knowledge for Disaster Risk Reduction' (2008) which are other prominent reference sources. Many INGOs and local NGOs copy these definitions into their CBDRR policies.

'Disaster': The serious disruption of the functioning of society causing widespread human, material or environmental losses, which exceed the ability of the affected communities to cope with using their own resources. Disasters occur when the negative effects of the hazards are not well managed (Abarquez and Murshed, 2004: 6).

'Community': People living in one geographical area, who are exposed to common hazards due to their location. They may have common experience in responding to hazards and disasters. However, they may have different perceptions and exposure of risk. Groups within the locality will have a stake in risk reduction measures – either in favour or against (ibid: 8).

'Community-based': at risk communities are actively engaged in the identification, analysis, treatment, monitoring and evaluation of disaster risks. People are at the heart of decision-making and implementation of disaster risk reduction activities. The involvement of the most vulnerable is paramount and the support of the less vulnerable is necessary. In CBDRR, local and national governments are involved and supportive (ibid: 9).

'Local knowledge': Practices developed by a group of people from an advanced understanding of the local environment, which has been formed over numerous generations of habitation (UNISDR, 2008: vii). The UNISDR distinguishes local knowledge from other types of knowledge in that it originates from the community, that it is disseminated through informal means, it is collectively owned, subject to adaptation, and embedded in a community's way of life as a means of survival.

'Risk': The probability that negative consequences may arise when hazards interact with vulnerable areas, people, property and environment (Abarquez and Murshed, 2004: 6)

'Vulnerability': A concept which describes factors or constraints of an economic, social, physical or geographic nature, which reduce the ability of a community to prepare for and cope with risks (ibid: 6).

'Participation': ADPC's Handbook does not provide a separate definition of 'participation' but uses 'participation' and 'involvement' interchangeably which means that the community takes responsibility for all stages of the program – from risk assessments, analysis, action-planning and decision-making (ibid: 12-13).

'Empowerment' is no longer part of ADPC's Handbook, and also the UNISDR publications make no reference to empowerment or to the transformative nature of CBDRR. For Evert and Sjoerd it was important to include *'empowerment'* as a concept for the CBDRR approach, because this concept belongs to the key-values of their organizations. *'Empowerment'* refers to changing power relations in favour of marginalized, excluded groups in society (ICCO Alliantie, 2006: 16).

'Resilience': the capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to adapt, by resisting or changing in order to reach or maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure. This is determined by the degree to which the social system is capable of organizing itself to increase its capacity for learning from past disasters for better future protection and to improve risk reduction measures (UNISDR, 2004: 6 volume II).

In the CBDRR pilots, local people, NGO field staff, government officials and donor staff use these concepts, and interpret them in different ways. Through on-going and conscious reflection on these concepts, this interactive research intends to understand how definitions alter and are embedded in a specific cultural and political historical context.

An actor orientation

An actor orientation is chosen because it offers an analytical framework for studying policy-implementation-outcome discrepancies. This research involved very different actors, and studied the interactions between local people, local NGOs, and their donors, among others, through aid interventions. Additionally, the actor-orientation offers a framework to study both the specificities of particular local settings, and the broader forces and processes of institutional and societal change (Booth, 1994: 10).

An actor orientation helps to clarify how policies and interventions are shaped by the various actors involved in the CBDRR pilots. The actor-oriented approach starts from the premise that each actor has 'agency': this means that people are able to reflect upon their experiences and what happens around them, and use their knowledge and capabilities to interpret and respond to their environment (Long, 1992: 22). People devise ways of coping with life, *"even under the most extreme forms of coercion"* (ibid). They use their knowledge, skills, influence, aspirations, and organizing capacities in their problem-solving, survival and development strategies. Although people have alternative options to shape their coping strategies and to formulate their objectives, these strategies are culturally embedded in different perceptions, interests and power relations. The case of the Community Seed Bank Program in Panay illustrates how local farmers perceived and acted upon drought differently

from how the aid agency interpreted the situation and responded. Even *Erning* defined his risk problem differently from the majority of farmers, and was able to articulate his perspective to the NGO, while the view of the other farmers was ignored. This implies that people's options are favoured or constrained by their social position in society. This is what Long (1992) refers to as that people are *social actors*, meaning that they draw their strategies from their individual rationality, but equally from their structural position in society. People's agency and consequently their chosen coping strategies are related to their position in society and prevailing cultural norms. Local people's perspectives on risk therefore vary greatly across countries, within villages, and between men and women, among others. This results in competing risk and knowledge claims.

'Effective agency' or social action

In the light of affecting change towards safer communities, I am interested in what CBDRR interventions can add to people's agency to enable them to realize safety and protection by entering the broader institutional and political context. Long (1992) elaborates on 'effective agency'- which gets recognized when specific actions make a difference to pre-existing state of affairs or course of events – and which requires organizing and mobilizing capacities. Agency operates through social relations and can only become effective through them. This requires more than an ability to influence and convince others, charisma, or persuasive forms of power. Effective agency has to be organized, mobilized and depends on 'the actions of a chain of agents each of which 'translates' or 'frames' its goals in accordance to his or her own project' (Latour, 1986: 264). Effective agency rests on the emergence of a network of actors who become partly, though hardly ever completely, enrolled in the project of somebody else or other persons (Long, 1992: 23). Social action therefore, takes place in networks, whether formal or informal, through routines or new organizing practices, and is bounded by prevailing norms, values and power relations (Long, 2001).

However, structural constraints are not absolute or static but are themselves outcomes of people's interaction as well and therefore changeable. "*An actor-oriented approach recognizes that people operate within the limitations of structural constraints, but emphasizes that such constraints operate through people as well*" (Hilhorst, 2003: 5). I like to stress here that these structural constraints or enabling conditions occur, among others, within households between men and women, within villages, between ethnic groups, and in state-society relationships that are embedded in societal history. Taking a local perspective, one looks 'upwards' for room for manoeuvre in the broader institutional context where actors interact with different and changing amounts of knowledge and power (Booth, 1994).

An actor-oriented approach offers clues to understand social and institutional change in conflict-affected societies like Afghanistan, Indonesia and the Philippines, where at the same time processes of state-building, democratization or decentralization occur. In such contexts multiple institutional arrangements get new forms or co-exist, and actors give different meaning to institutions, rules and traditions resulting in competing frameworks for action like between rebel groups and the Philippine government, between the formal central government in Kabul and local power holders, and between Indonesian bureaucrats, reformers and civil society groups with their constituents. In these contexts people find room for manoeuvre to further their agendas when new governance systems do not function properly due to lack of knowledge, understanding of new responsibilities, credibility

or legitimacy. An actor-oriented approach stresses the need for the contextualization of actors' behaviour put into a historical perspective (Long, 1992; Hebinck et al, 2001).

Actors and institutions

This research is not limited to the local realities of communities, and to the room-for-manoeuvre. I equally want to understand the constraints put upon 'social action' that may emerge, and to understand the larger structures in society, which is needed to put the CBDRR-outcomes in the proper context (after Booth, 1994: 18). To analyse the larger structures and constraints, I use the concept of 'institutions'.

The broader institutional context involves many institutions like culture, social norms, values and traditions, but also policies, laws and judiciary systems regulating power relations which are influenced by historical trajectories (Jütting, 2003). These are referred to as "the rules of the game", whereas "the players of the game" refer to structures, authorities and organizations (Bingen, 2000; Jütting, 2003). Field studies from Afghanistan, Burundi, Nigeria, Sudan and the Philippines indicate that institutional arrangements largely contribute to differing vulnerability outcomes locally (Heijmans et al, 2009). Institutions are crucial in regulating, for the better or the worse, the maintenance of social order, the handling of disputes, access to resources, social protection, and livelihood security at the local level (Alinovi et al, 2008). Institutions include power relations, and it is important to understand who benefits from the institutions, who sets the rules, and who is excluded. Disaster and conflict outcomes can change these institutions and re-order power relations, the rules and interaction between people (Hilhorst, 2007; Bathia et al, 2003). This research focuses on exploring multi-level institutions and how these change or not as a result of conflict or disaster, and for identifying strategies to build resilient communities (Twigg, 2007).

Institutions are locality specific, influenced by historical trajectories and culture. Consequently, particular institutional arrangements work in one context but fail in another (Jütting, 2003). Jütting (2003) argues to pay attention to the hierarchy level of institutions at stake, and to how institutions at different levels affect each other. Table 1.1 presents a hierarchy of institutions and their time horizon for change.

Table 1.1 Hierarchy of institutions and their time horizons for change (adapted from Jütting, 2003)

Level	Examples	Frequency of change	Effect
Institutions related to the social structure of society (level 1)	Traditions, social norms, values, gender norms, customs.	2 – 3 generations but may change faster in times of shocks/crisis	Defines the way a society conducts itself
Institutions related to the rules of the game (level 2)	Rules defining access to resources, property rights, judiciary system	10 – 100 years	Defines the broader institutional context
Institutions related to the players of the game (level 3)	Rules defining governance arrangements, authority, contractual relationships	1 – 10 years	Leads to the formation of organizations
Institutions related to allocation mechanisms (level 4)	Rules related to resource allocation, like social security systems, humanitarian aid,	Short term horizon and continuous	Adjustments to prices, outputs, incentives

I made some adjustments to Jütting's framework though: I deleted the distinction between formal and informal institutions, since this distinction is not always clear in contexts like Afghanistan, Indonesia and Philippines, where, for instance, local government officials blend official law with customary law to settle disputes, or shift to traditions when defining land access. Further, Jütting's time horizon for level 1 is quite long (100-1000 years), especially in contexts where shocks like disasters and conflict happen regularly. In developing countries like Afghanistan and Indonesia level 1 is crucial for local people, where the other levels do not function properly. Especially in areas of uncertainty, informal risk sharing institutions based on reciprocity (level 1) seem to be most effective, according to Jütting. Traditions, norms and values further largely affect the functioning of more formal institutions (level 3).

As said earlier, institutions are not static, but change and evolve continuously. The relationship between institutions and actors is mutual and dynamic. People respond to changing contexts and rules. They create, reproduce and adapt institutions, while at the same time institutions govern people's behaviour and perceptions. Institutions act as a point of reference for actors and they only become effective in everyday practice. People defend and mobilize around practices and institutions that are meaningful to them, or resist institutions and practices that convey or embody meanings they find disagreeable (Bebbington, et al, 2004). Because social actors evoke, negotiate and manipulate the meaning of institutions in their everyday life, institutional change happens all the time (Christoplos and Hilhorst, 2009).

The policy – practice discrepancy: what do interventions do?

Aid agencies and their interventions are part of the institutional context as well. Local NGOs and their donors do not operate in isolation, but are embedded in their respective societies. To improve the conditions of disaster and conflict affected populations, aid agencies formulate policy to express what they want to do and what results they intend to achieve. This section aims to provide an understanding of how to look at the discrepancy between policy and practice.

What is policy?

Policy is first of all about 'objectives' and the way to achieve them. Usually, aid agencies put their interventions in logical frameworks⁹, translating policy into the implementation of activities followed by certain results, assuming a linear relationship between policy and results (Long, 1992). Colebatch (1998) notes that policy implies more than an expression of what people want to do. Policy is for a large part about 'framing': this refers to how people use language to give meaning and make sense of events and experiences around them, and how they use language as discursive means to shape people's beliefs, and to convince others (Gaventa, 2006). People use 'frames' strategically to deal with actors who do not necessarily share the same values or views, but with whom it is crucial to maintain relationships. NGOs relate to various different actors like donors, government officials, NGO networks, media, and local communities, each with their own language, rules, routines and demands (Hilhorst, 2003: 217). NGO staff use multiple 'frames' to find legitimacy and to deal with multiple accountabilities (ibid).

Using policy to find legitimacy is crucial in building trusted relationships between local NGOs and local community people in the context of the CBDRR pilots, particularly in conflict set-

⁹ Logical frameworks are called 'logframes', in short.

tings. Local people often raise questions about the organization's presence, agenda or field staff's self-interests. Legitimation is about making certain representations of organizations more acceptable than others (ibid). For instance, policy statements emphasizing principles like 'participation', 'shared-values', 'empowerment' and 'partnerships' serve to legitimize the organization's existence, and to stay eligible for funding and donations, while these principles may mask problematic relationships in the aid chain. Aid agencies need to convince others that what they do is relevant, indispensable and appropriate, and that a situation or population needs the organization's assistance (ibid). Or, they represent themselves as neutral and independent actors when dealing with the military or government actors in order to obtain access to populations affected by conflict or disasters. Another way aid agencies attempt to maintain legitimacy is to convince donors about their successful achievements, through producing 'best practices' documents, or by distinguishing themselves from other organizations by claiming to fill a particular niche. The question is how staff deals with the different demands and life worlds in which they operate, and how they try to find certain coherence between the NGO's policy and practice.

Understanding the policy-practice discrepancy

In the previous paragraphs it appears that policy – when put into practice – is influenced by multiple realities, interests and demands of the various actors involved. NGO staff are exposed to different 'pulls and pushes' that result in non-linear relationships between policy objectives, action and results. To explain the policy-practice discrepancy, Argyris and Schön (1978), concerned with organizational learning or the lack thereof, make a distinction between the *espoused theory* and the *theory-in-use*. The espoused theory refers to what is written in policy documents or spoken publicly, and "*are words used to express what we think we do and why, or what we like others to think we do*" (Guijt, 2008: 109). The theory-in-use defines what people actually do, and this may be different or not from the espoused theory. Theory-in-use refers to theories that people use in their everyday practice, based on routines, tacit knowledge, or on their accumulated knowledge-in-action. These theories-in-use can lead to intended results, consistent with the espoused theory, and unintended outcomes. Argyris and Schön suggest that the more congruence there is between 'the espoused theory' and the 'theory-in-use', the more effectiveness there is. Applying the theory-in-use to aid interventions, then it refers to the actions – shaped through norms, values, skills, and systems - that have become routines, are taken for granted and go unchallenged. Argyris et al (1985: xi) therefore argue that because these routines are taken for granted, because skills are automatic, and because values are internalized, "*the status quo and the individuals' personal responsibility for maintaining it, cannot be studied without confronting it*". Only then these implicit assumptions and tacit knowledge become explicit.

Greenwood (2002) who reviewed Argyris and Schön's work, found these concepts and thoughts useful to understand processes of organizational learning, but noticed that their theory lacked a social and political conceptualization of organizations. Learning and interactive research processes within organizations cause tensions and conflicts. New insights and good ideas may not necessarily result in better practice, due to constraining organizational institutions.

The idea to confront staff with their routines and theory-in-use was exactly one of the aspirations the initiators of the CBDRR pilot programme had: to reflect with staff and their

directors on the contradictions that the aid system generates, in the hope that this would lead to learning and organizational change within the donor organizations towards effective aid programming. During 2009, the Steering Group¹⁰ found that the timing¹¹ and the ambitious nature of such a task were no longer found appropriate to have it included in the CBDRR pilot programme. Instead, the Steering Group decided to focus on piloting CBDRR locally, and to empirically investigate the practice of how various actors involved in the 44 CBDRR pilots feel obliged to comply with the existing routines and norms, and how far they feel able to challenge and change practice and aid systems to attune the CBDRR intervention to local realities.

The incompatibility of the 'idealistic logframe model' with the 'political arena model'

I stated that new insights and good ideas, like Evert's proposal to shift from relief to include a disaster risk reduction approach in development programmes, may not necessarily result in better practice, due to constraining organizational institutions. I further referred to the various 'pulls and pushes' that NGO staff face which result in non-linear relationships between policy objectives, action and results. Quarles van Ufford (1993) ascribes such institutional constraints and the discrepancy between policy and practice to the incompatibility between the 'idealistic logframe model' and the 'political arena model'. He points to at least two levels in the aid chain where this incompatibility is most felt: (1) the interaction between NGO field staff and the local population, and (2) the interaction and relations between the NGO project staff with the sponsoring agencies who have authority over funding and the continuation of the programme (ibid: 137).

NGO projects staff uses language and frames like 'vulnerable groups', 'bottom-up approaches', 'local participation', 'community organizations', and 'empowerment', in official documents to create the image of an active involvement of disaster or conflict affected people in the project's activities, and that the project goals are taken seriously. Logframe models are used by those who set policies in motion and who are responsible for the NGO's interventions. Logframe models take an idealistic view on the desirability and manageability of social change as a point of departure (ibid: 138). These logframe models do not problematize the relationships between the different actors along the aid chain, and assume that the project activities and means will lead to the expected results. Because this model "*provides an image of efficiency and manageability, of internal coherence and argumentation, as well as integration between the different organizational levels, and therefore effectiveness*" (ibid, 139), the model helps to create trust with the funding agency and the wider public.

The 'political arena model' does not view the policy process as an integrated whole, but as a series of encounters throughout the aid chain, where different actors pursue, negotiate and struggle for their interests and agendas to deal with multiple realities (Quarles van Ufford, 1993; Bakewell, 2000; Colebatch, 2002; Fernando and Hilhorst, 2006). As stated earlier, actors interpret and define the circumstances differently, and risk perspectives vary greatly. As a consequence interventions are continuously re-defined and re-shaped according to those actors who can best negotiate their risk definitions and interests. 'Arenas' are social

¹⁰ The Steering Group consisted then of Evert, Sjoerd, a programme officer responsible for Afghanistan, one for Maluku, a coordinator for the CBDRR-pilots, and myself. Chapter 2 will elaborate on the organizational practices of this interactive research.

¹¹ In 2009 the decentralization process started shifting responsibilities to regional offices resulting in discharging head quarter's staff.

locations or situations, where actors, including the researcher, confront each other, debate about issues, resources, and values, and try “*to resolve discrepancies in value interpretations and incompatibilities between actor interests*” (Long, 2001: 59). An arena is not limited to a clearly demarcated location or face-to-face meeting place. Also geographically distant actors and institutional contexts shape the interactions that take place in localized settings (ibid).

Consequently, ‘interventions’ shouldn’t be viewed as planned projects with a defined time-space setting that starts in a village on a blank page, but regarded as part of the flow of events and experienced history. The seed bank case study is a good illustration of how the NGO’s responses are embedded in the wider context. The NGO ‘ignored’ the local people’s adaptation strategies to drought, since these did not match with the NGO’s idea of what is supposed to happen locally. Promoting sustainable agriculture is part of the NGO’s identity and its ‘logo’. This identity provides the NGO with means to gain political support and access to funding from like-minded donors. “*The images of the local scene must be made to fit organizational needs*” (Quarles van Ufford, 1993: 140). That is why the NGO disapproved of the farmers’ practice to plant high yield variety rice in response to drought, and labelled this practice as ‘doing wrong’. This image was important to convey, while at the same time the NGO’s *ignored* the principles of ‘participation’, ‘recognizing people’s existing capacities’ and ‘addressing people’s urgently felt needs’. The NGO carefully chose *which* facts about the local situation it wanted to share with the different publics, and which ones to ignore. Images or official frames are in fact political statements, which are used as instruments during the interactions, negotiations, and debates in the political arena with the various actors involved. Chapter 3 and 4 deal with how state and non-state actors frame and explain disaster events in the Philippines, and in the international DRR communities.

The political arena, through which interventions get shape, produces inherently unpredictable outcomes as opposite to the constructed predictable outcome of goal-oriented logframe models (Leeuwis, 1995:19). As a consequence, a discrepancy between policy intentions and practice seems to be inevitable, or at least tensions exist to achieve congruent outcomes between espoused policy and practice.

In order to understand the policy-practice discrepancy, I studied how and why the policy intentions are transformed, resisted, adjusted or implemented over time, how different perspectives on risk and risk reduction shape and reshape interventions, and how the various actors use different forms of power at the different levels of the aid chain. This question is dealt with in Chapter 6 and 7 where I discuss the CBDRR policy-practice process and outcomes of the CBDRR pilots in Afghanistan and Indonesia.

A further look into the policy-practice discrepancy: depoliticizing aid interventions

Through my experience as CBDRR consultant in Asia, I built up the impression that DRR interventions tend to protect the wealthier segment of society, rather than the majority of poor, marginalized and most vulnerable people as stated in policy documents. This raises two questions: (1) why do the aid agencies’ strategies fail to bring out action that benefits the marginalized and vulnerable groups in society? And (2) is the local elite perhaps in a better position to influence and shape the outcomes of interventions to their benefit?

Ferguson (1994) demonstrates, based on fieldwork in Lesotho, investigating development projects of the World Bank in the agricultural sector, how local realities are portrayed in project proposals to justify specific interventions, and how 'politics' is taken out of these 'development' interventions. He sets a step further than Quarles van Ufford (1993): whereas Quarles van Ufford focuses on contradictions within the levels of the aid chain, Ferguson focuses on the broader political context, on state-society relationships in which specific interventions have to contribute to development and social change without clearly stating for whom. It are these omissions and hidden intentions he aims to uncover.

In Ferguson's study, the World Bank portrays Lesotho as a nation of 'farmers', and not of wage labourers and thereby leaving out issues as underemployment, low wages and political subjugation by South Africa (ibid, 177). Additionally, the Bank portrays the government as an impartial instrument to provide services to the poor, and excludes the political nature of the state from its analysis, as well as the advantages of government's inefficiency and corruption for itself. Local people appear as a 'collection of individuals' and 'decision makers' through which they are disconnected from the structural and political causes of poverty and marginalization. The explanation of why people are poor is then related to their values, attitudes and motivations. Hence 'awareness raising' and 'educating the people' are promoted as appropriate interventions to change people's minds and behaviour.

The World Bank and governments are not the kind of social actors that are expected to advance the empowerment of the poor. Ferguson notes, however, that it seems likely that such apparent political naivety is not a conscious intention of development planners, but simply a low-level manifestation to refuse to face local politics, which for institutional reasons, occurs in the entire development and aid apparatus (1994: 178-180). This remark implies that perhaps the NGOs involved in this research portray local situations in a way that has little resemblance to reality but to justify their aid interventions. During the CBDRR intervention process I have to be aware of how aid agencies depict local populations and portray local realities, when and why aid agencies tend to leave 'the political' out of their policies, ignore 'politics' in their aid programmes, or when they selectively put it in.

Making a distinction between 'the political' and 'politics'

The observation that actors take out 'the political' and ignore 'politics' in their analysis and the everyday aid practice, requires a further explanation of what constitutes the 'political'. Chantal Mouffe refers to the 'political' as the dimension of antagonism that constitutes human societies, a space of power, conflict and antagonism, while by 'politics' she means the set of practices and institutions through which a social order is created (2005: 9). The empirical field of institutions and practices of 'politics' refer in fact to what Long (1992) calls a 'political arena' where actors 'deal with the political' ranging from escaping it, denying it, neutralizing or canalizing it, to exploiting and confronting it (van der Zweerde, 2008).

Mouffe's definition is in itself 'political' since she refers to a second political thought, namely liberal thought. Liberal thought recognizes the existence of multiple perspectives and values, but it has difficulties to adequately grasp the pluralistic nature of society, especially with the conflicts that pluralism entails. Mouffe makes a distinction between two main liberal paradigms that explain how different perspectives and values can be brought together while 'escaping politics' (2005: 10-13). The first paradigm views politics as the establishment of a

compromise between differing competing forces in society, where individuals are portrayed as rational beings, driven by a maximization of their own interests. In this view, economic market-thinking is applied to the domain of politics. The second paradigm – important for this research - believes that consensus can be reached through free discussion and political debate. It is this second paradigm that I see prevailing in current disaster risk reduction thinking of the UN, on how governments, civil society actors, affected populations and the private sector are supposed to join multi-stakeholder platforms to deliberate their views and opinions of why disasters happen, and to reach consensus on what should be done (UNISDR, 2005). The potential antagonism between the various actors at the table is supposed to be diffused or tamed, by stressing a ‘harmonious cooperation’ (ibid; van der Zweerde, 2008).

The actors involved in this interactive research would like to know, if and how disaster and conflict affected populations in all their diversity, could affect change towards safer communities by entering the political arena. Earlier, I used the notion of ‘effective agency’ and ‘social action’, stressing that these have to be organized and mobilized. Acknowledging that antagonism can never be eliminated, Mouffe offers a third kind of relationship situated between the two extremes of enemy/friend antagonism on one hand, and harmonious relationships on the other. She refers to a tamed version of antagonism through the establishment of legitimate institutions that can channel dissent voices in an agonistic way (Mouffe, 2005: 20-21). The notion of ‘agonism’ means that the conflicting parties, although acknowledging that there is no rational solution for their conflict, nevertheless recognize the legitimacy of their opponents, and they play out their conflict under conditions regulated by procedures accepted by them. (ibid). They are adversaries, not enemies. Mouffe’s notions of antagonism, agonism and liberalism are used in this research to assess interactions in the political arena, especially between vulnerable and marginalized groups and government authorities.

Studying the political arena of disaster risk reduction

So far I elaborated on theoretical concepts - ‘actors’, ‘agency’, institutions’, ‘interventions’, ‘political arena’, ‘politics and the political’ - without putting them yet in the context of disaster events. I regard disasters as more than ‘natural’ or catastrophic events. Their emergent outcomes are embedded in a societal history which produced “*patterns of vulnerability, evidenced by location, socio-political structure, production patterns and ideology that characterize a society*” (Oliver-Smith, 2010: 33). Disasters are events to which political systems must respond, and therefore “*within minutes after any major impact, disasters start becoming political*” (Olson, 2000: 266). The way governments manage disaster risk, respond to and explain disasters, influences their interaction and relationship with its citizens. Governments may see disasters as a window of opportunity for social and spatial reordering, including the permanent displacement of what are labelled the most vulnerable (Adams et al 2009; Klein, 2007). Governments that lack the capacity or will to respond adequately tend to rely on brute force and repression, or on (I)NGOs and private organizations that provide public services, like in Haiti and Afghanistan.

The literature dealing with the politics-disasters connection focuses on two different aspects. The first category focuses on state-society relationships before and after disasters happen, and investigates how and when disasters have the potential to threaten the powerful elite, or where elites capture the space created after the disaster (Drury and Olson, 1998; Klein,

2007; Pelling & Dill, 2009). Pelling and Dill (2009) particularly point to how major disasters spur political events which eventually led to the downfall of presidents or trigger peace negotiations between warring parties. The incapacity of the state to respond adequately to major disasters can create opportunities for political action and social change. The question is for whom, in what way, and for how long?

The second category of literature focuses on the process of how disaster response outcomes get shaped, and on *who* decides *whose* risks are prioritized and *which* risk reduction measures will be implemented (Christoplos et al, 2001; Slovic, 2003; O'Brien, 2005; Lebel et al, 2006). These questions deal with 'politics' as a decision-making process of who gets what, where, when and how; as a contest over the distribution of scarce resources (Laswell, 1935). There are many conceptualizations of what constitutes 'politics', ranging from party politics to the everyday politics of all human interaction (Kerkvliet, 1991). Olson (2000) refers to *disaster politics* as how actors frame and explain disaster events, questioning who can be held responsible, and how resources are allocated to whom, where and for what after disasters hit. He offers a framework which in my view facilitates the combination of the two categories of disaster literature to deepen the understanding of the political arena of disaster risk reduction. He proposes to ask three fundamental questions after a disaster event:

- 1 "What happened?". This question starts the process of defining the event and the social construction of meaning, "*which is political at least as much as it is scientific or technical*" (ibid, 266). This question refers to how actors frame and interpret disaster events. The way disasters are framed has implications for how goals of disaster responses are formulated.
- 2 "Why were the losses high/low?". This question is political since they refer to the fundamental pre-event and post-event public policy decisions associated with accountability and responsibility issues. What are the existing policies, laws and regulations to reduce disaster risks, and are these implemented by the responsible authorities? Who can be held accountable for the losses? These questions relate to understanding *why* people affected by the disaster are affected in the way they are, referring to their vulnerable conditions.
- 3 "What will happen now"? After the immediate emergency period, people engage in recovery efforts which involve resources, and decisions on how to use and distribute these resources. This involves politics, the everyday politics of disaster risk reduction. "*Aid seeks to channel resources and power in a certain direction and in a certain way*" (O'Brien, 2005: 203).

Olson's focus is, however limited to state-actors. Conventional studies on politics usually limit the analysis of disaster politics into what government authorities, states, political parties, their supporters and lobbyists do, putting politics in a realm far removed from most citizens (Kerkvliet, 2009). Kerkvliet refers to government authorities, states, political parties, labour unions and so on as actors involved in 'official politics' (2009: 231). They hold authoritative positions and are authorized to take decisions on policies, regulations and laws.

Such a restricted view of politics misses a great deal of what is politically significant when one tries to understand what affected populations do to survive or cope with disaster events; resources are also distributed by (1)NGOs, corporations, religious organizations, media,

universities, unions, and other institutions (ibid). Therefore, I ask Olson's questions to not only state-actors, but also to disaster and conflict affected people, to NGOs, and other actors involved in disaster response. I argued earlier that various actors interpret events, their circumstances and what is happening around them differently. Therefore local people, NGOs and state-actors will reply to Olson's questions in various ways considering their social position, and use their agency to convince the other of *their* explanation of events, their risk definitions, whom to blame and how to allocate resources when they negotiate, confront each other, negotiate about issues, resources, and values.

Kerkvliet (2009) distinguishes two forms of politics beyond the 'official politics', namely 'advocacy politics' and 'everyday politics'. Advocacy politics involves direct and concerted efforts to support, criticize and oppose authorities, their policies and programs, whereas 'everyday politics' refers to how people comply with, adjust and contest norms and rules regarding authority over production of, or allocation of resources (ibid, 2009: 232). Everyday politics can take various forms - support, compliance, modifications, evasions, and resistance – involving little or no organization. Examples are people refusing to obey government's evacuation orders during a volcanic eruption, or Afghan women challenging prevailing gender norms by entering the public domain in search for food. Although these people probably do not regard their actions as political, these everyday forms of resistance and modifications may eventually feed into more organized and confrontational forms of advocacy politics, or contribute to authorities rethinking programs and policies. The impact of everyday modifications and resistance may actually be quite significant in political systems that are weak, lack the resources to perform well resulting in an eroding legitimacy of government authorities. Ordinary citizens like in Haiti and Afghanistan should not be stigmatized as powerless (Fordam 2007), since their everyday actions to cope with adversity, may have political consequences for the 'official politics'. Everyday politics is therefore equally significant as other forms of politics.

Actors, institutions, politics and now 'power'

The previous sections of the theoretical framework - on actors, institutions, the political and politics – do not make the notion of 'power' explicit. When CBDRR interventions proclaim to empower local people, meaning to change existing power relations, then a further exploration of the way power operates within the everyday interactions between actors and institutions involved in disaster response, is required (after Long, 1992; Jütting, 2003).

Very often, power is perceived as a 'property' that persons or groups can 'possess', and which can be 'enlarged' like suggested by the notion of 'empowerment'. "*This 'property-notion' of power ignores the fundamental fact that power is always 'relational' and the result of the working of multiple, intertwined institutions*" (Nuijten, 2005: 1; Foucault, 1980). Foucault (1980) argues that power is something which has to be constantly performed rather than being achieved. He defines power as a set of relations which are dispersed throughout society – in family relations, within an institution, or an administration - rather than being located within particular institutions of the state or government. Instead of seeing power as oppression - curtailing freedom and constraining individuals –, he views power as constructing a set of relations which tend to position people in ways which make the political system work (Mills, 2003). Power can be performed to reach consensus, or to

enrol others in mobilizing concerted action to accomplish more than people should be able to do individually (Few, 2002).

Not only between the state and its citizens, but in each interaction power is negotiated and one's position in a hierarchy is established, recognizing that positions are flexible, changing while hierarchy is not necessarily precisely defined. Within a certain set of power relations there is space for resistance and change. All forms of dependence offer some resources whereby those who are subordinate can influence the activities of their superiors (Giddens, 1984: 16). An actor-orientation assumes that actors are capable in affecting change through negotiation, innovation or experimenting, even if their social space to manoeuvre is restricted (Long, 1992: 24-25). I distinguish three forms of power that actors perform or encounter in the political arena, which I refer to as *discursive power*, *institutional power*, and *publicly performed power*.

(1) Discursive power

Power operates, amongst others, through discursive means which relate to the actors' value perspective, worldview, identity and meaning given to issues. This form of power shapes people's beliefs, sense of self and acceptance of the status quo. "*Processes of socialization, culture and ideology perpetuate exclusion and inequality by defining what is normal, acceptable and safe*" (Gaventa, 2006, 29). Discursive power is closely related to cultural values and norms, and shapes the ideological and psychological boundaries of participation. Nuijten (2005) calls this structural power which is difficult to reverse. It refers to hierarchical, antagonistic power relations in which the subordinated persons or groups have little room for manoeuvre. Discursive means can be deployed to mobilize and organize 'effective agency'. For instance, "*social arrangements that are ordinarily perceived as just and immutable must come to seem unjust and mutable*" (Snow, 2004: 383). Different actors struggle to secure support for *their* definition of reality.

(2) Institutional power

The construction of power relations takes place through institutions like policies, laws, regulations which regulate people's behaviour (Nuijten, 2005). They refer to "the rules of the game" as well as to "the players of the game". Certain powerful actors and institutions have authority and maintain their influence by controlling who gets to the decision-table and what gets on the agenda, and happen from local to global level to exclude or devalue the concerns and representation of less powerful groups (Gaventa, 2006). Institutional power is performed through discursive rituals and administrative routines (Nuijten, 2005).

(3) Publicly performed power

This refers to more visible manifestations of power like observable decision-making, procedures of decision making about resource allocation, involving the '*who, how, and what*' of policymaking and interventions. However, power in relation to space and place also *works to put boundaries on participation, to exclude certain actors or views from entering the arenas for participation* (Gaventa, 2006: 29). Nuijten (2005) refers to this third form of power as *strategic games*, which can be observed in the many daily interactions between people and groups aimed to influence the action of others. This occurs through ideological manipulation, rational argumentation, moral advice, or economic exploitation.

These various forms of power are closely linked and cannot be seen separately from each other. 'Individual power' is always part of wider institutions and structural processes, and therefore, *"power relations can only be studied and analysed in the context of institutions and the practices of organization"* (Nuijten, 2005: 2). Going back to Long's notion of 'political arenas' where various actors debate, negotiate and struggle to further their interests, these various forms of power should be considered and related to the broader institutional context.

Summarizing, Jütting's table (1.1) reflects the institutional context in which CBDRR interventions take place, in which government authorities, NGOs, community organizations and social networks operate and manoeuvre. The table visualizes the connection between the micro everyday disaster 'politics' to the macro 'political' context in which disasters and conflict occur – acknowledging the existence of antagonism in society. Olson's three questions should be asked to the relevant actors involved in CBDRR interventions, and serve as an entry-point for the analysis of power relations and institutions around certain risk and resource problems. This analysis reveals how and why the policy intentions are transformed, resisted, adjusted or implemented over time, and in what way the CBDRR processes reduce, produce, or reproduce people's vulnerability to disaster and conflict.

1.7 Exploring conceptual and theoretical commonalities in disaster and conflict discourse

This research explores CBDRR interventions in contexts of recurrent disasters, and violent conflict. The reason to select these complex contexts is because disasters increasingly happen in contexts of conflict or chronic political instability. Buchanan-Smith and Christoplos (2004) identified at least 140 incidents where 'natural' disasters occurred in countries experiencing complex emergencies between 1998 and 2003 alone. Since then, the occurrence of the Asian tsunami in Aceh and Sri Lanka, and the earthquake in Kashmir triggered renewed interest in the nexus between disasters and conflict. In recent years, several studies have cross-analysed datasets like the EM-DAT International Disaster Database to various conflict datasets like those of the Peace Research Institute in Oslo (PRIO), the Uppsala conflict database, the Centre for International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM), and the Integrated Data for Events Analysis (IDEA) dataset (Bhavnani 2006, Spiegel et al, 2007; Nel and Righarts, 2008). They all show that natural disasters significantly increase the risk for civil conflict.

These studies concluded that approaches to reduce disaster risk and conflict prevention should be integrated. One angle to this is the idea of disaster diplomacy. It maintains that large disasters can create opportunities for peace since people suffer across existing divides, and joint relief efforts and reconstruction could act as a catalyst for building mutual trust and reconciliation (Renner and Chafe, 2007). A prime example offered in this line of thinking is how the Asian tsunami of 2004 facilitated the peace process in Aceh. Bhavnani (2006), however, observes that in most cases, natural disasters do not dampen conflict but trigger them. He suggests looking beyond the emergency period into the root causes of people's vulnerability, inequality, grievances and resource scarcity. Likewise, Buchanan-Smith and Christoplos (2004) suggest to focus on the vulnerability that underlies both conflict and disaster.

While the plea to integrate disaster and conflict response has an intuitive appeal, it is not common in practice. While many aid agencies started engaging with conflict prevention and peace building in the 1990s, they continued to separate this from responding to natural disasters (Christoplos et al, 2001). There are several explanations for this continued divide. The first one relates to the timeframes used: natural disasters are perceived as short-term, temporary emergencies, while conflict and political instability are regarded as long-term and sometimes 'permanent emergencies'. A second reason is a difference in perception of what causes disasters, and what the causes of conflict are: the dominant view on disasters is that they are caused by natural phenomena, while conflicts are viewed as rooted in complex social and political interrelationships, requiring fundamentally different responses. The natural disaster discourse emphasizes technological and scientific solutions to forecast or withstand the impact of disasters, perceived by those who implement them as politically neutral. These differing views hamper the integration of disaster and conflict responses in practice.

This section explores similarities or common elements between the disaster and conflict discourse with the purpose to find conceptual linkages between disaster and conflict studies. Especially those theories related to the different ways of 'seeing' disasters and conflict. Both fields developed dominant theories that 'see' disasters and conflict as external events: the hazard-focused theory on disasters perceive grassroots people as being prone and susceptible to damage or injury caused by sudden external natural phenomena, while conflict theories in this category mostly portray the violence of civil wars as being externally imposed from the top rooted in social and political interrelationships affecting innocent citizens (Kalyvas, 2003: 482). Further, both views perceive grassroots people mainly as victims. These views reduce people to passive recipients, and innocent victims, and ignore that local people have 'agency' or capacities (Anderson & Woodrow, 1989), which has a disempowering impact and erodes people's dignity. These theories of 'seeing' disasters and conflict as external events continue to exist and are in fact debit to the disconnection of both fields because of their differing causal explanations and proposed solutions. Therefore in order to find commonalities between the two fields, we need to explore the critical literature on disasters and conflict theories.

Review of critical disaster discourse

Since the 1970s, critics on the dominant hazard-focused viewpoint emerged, challenging the argument that disasters are external, natural and unforeseen events (O'Keefe, 1976, Hewitt, 1983; Cuny, 1983, Wijkman, 1984: 125; Blaikie et al, 1994; Quarantelli, 1998; Pelling, 2006: 4). The critics stress that disasters are linked to problems of underdevelopment, to processes of marginalization and of failing government responses to disasters. In this view, the increasing number of disasters is attributed to the mounting vulnerability of people to extreme events and shocks. Reducing the vulnerability of marginalized and poor people is therefore seen as a development question, ... "and such question should be answered politically" (Cuny, 1983:7). Maskrey (1989) stated that disaster response is not only the responsibility of governments and scientists but that ordinary people have a role as well: "*nothing will happen unless people themselves who are actually affected by disasters and who actually suffer, politically start demanding safety and protection*". Also Anderson and Woodrow (1989) promote in their "vulnerability and capacity" framework the view that disaster-affected people as active, creative actors who have agency, and that addressing

people's vulnerability has a long-term perspective than is usually associated with humanitarian aid. The disaster pressure model of Blaikie et al (1994) further contributes to an understanding of why people are vulnerable to disasters by relating people's exposure to hazards, particular unsafe conditions locally to deep-rooted causes like limited access to power and resources. The model encourages to look beyond the immediate needs of affected populations to understand trends in society that generate vulnerability locally. In this view, disasters are not natural but political events (Olson, 2000).

The political nature of disasters increasingly gets clearer. Upland communities in the Philippines, for instance, blame the government's logging policies, mining operations and the construction of hydroelectric dams for the increasing occurrence of flash floods, landslides, pollution of water and fish kill. Here, vulnerability can no longer be understood as how people are prone to sudden unexpected events, but also as "a measure of the impact of society on the environment" (Oliver-Smith, 1996; Hilhorst, 2004). The differing impact of a typhoon (hazard, extreme event) and of monsoon rain (normal climatic condition) on these upland communities has become negligible (Heijmans, 2004). Here, the conceptual difference between hazards as 'exceptional events' and 'normality' is difficult to define. Both have the potential to cause a disaster at the local level due to a rise in vulnerability. Disasters are the result of development as well. Therefore, normal development cannot be considered so normal after all.

As elaborated earlier in this chapter, Olson proposes to ask three fundamental questions after a disaster hit, focusing on the roles and responsibilities of governments to not only respond to disasters but also to explain the event. I proposed to ask these questions not only to government officials, but also to affected populations, civil society organizations, (I)NGOs, *de facto* rulers, and the private sector which all respond and try to make sense of disaster events. The three questions – the framing, blaming and resource allocation – have a history rooted in socio-political relations, and in turn shape or deepen future inequalities, which could increase the risk for conflict.

Review of critical conflict discourse

Like the critics on the dominant hazard-focused viewpoint on disasters caused a shift to 'see' disasters as a matter of vulnerability linked to processes of marginalization and limited access to resources, similar debates are on-going in the field of conflict studies. Majority of theories focus on the question of what causes conflict? Homer-Dixon (1994) sees scarcity of resources as a cause for conflict, while others view 'greed' or 'grievance' as motivation for violence (Collier, 2000), or inequality and marginalization (Duffield, 2001). Although above question is valid, 'seeing' conflicts as simple binary struggles neatly arrayed along a single issue, simplifies reality (Kalyvas, 2003): conflicts are often portrayed as if local conflict dynamics are manifestations of the divide at the top. However, reality is more complex and ambiguous. Conflicts seem to be a "*convergence between local motives and supra-local imperatives, spanning the divide between the political and the private, the collective and the individual*" (Kalyvas, 2003: 475). Kalyvas shows how local actors can have different motives - personal, private feuds, ideology - to take up arms. He refers to an interaction between political and private identities and actions. Actions "on the ground" often seem more related to local or private issues than to the war's driving cleavage. Secondly, individual and local actors can take advantage of the war to settle local or private conflicts often bearing little or

no relation to the causes of the war or the goals of the belligerents (Kalyvas, 2003: 475; Anderson, 1999). Chapter 5 focuses on people's perspectives and motivations to use violence or to make peace in Afghanistan and Indonesia.

Afghanistan is a clear example of this complexity where local rivalries and global aims seem to feed off each other. Local commanders swap sides in alliances of convenience that have shifted with the conflict dynamics since the Soviet invasion in 1979. Kalyvas, therefore suggests to view violent conflict as a process that provides a medium for a variety of motives to be realized within the larger conflict context. Approaching conflict as a '*process*' rather than focusing on its causes, allows for a focus on changes in power relations in one place or group compared to other places taking a historical perspective. It further allows to ask why certain people are affected by conflict or crisis in the way they are. Richards (2005) explains this '*conflict as process*' perspective as the 'war-peace continuum': he proposes to explore how people make war and peace, approaching local people as social agents. Empirical research (Richards, 2005; Kalyvas, 2003; Korf, 2006) suggests that violence often (but not always) grows from within communities, and that grassroots people participate in making war or peace in very direct ways. War, like peace, is organized by social agents who mobilize others, and train those (Richards, 2005: 3).

As it has become difficult to distinguish the conceptual difference between hazards as 'exceptional events' and 'normality', likewise, the distinction between war and peace cannot be clearly demarcated either: conflict contexts like Afghanistan and the Philippines can be characterized by "no peace no war" situations. Ceasefire agreements, peace agreements or, for instance, the overthrow of the Taliban in the Afghanistan case, are national or international markers to start post-conflict interventions which differ from humanitarian emergency aid responses (Hilhorst, 2007). However, conflicts have no single cause or explanation, and formal peace agreements do not necessarily include all warring parties or views, leaving space for renewed conflict dynamics of varying intensity, particularly at the local level (Hilhorst, 2007; Kalyvas, 2003; Korf, 2006). In fact, "war and peace are concurrent and competing, not alternating phases in the maintenance of ordered social relations" (Richards, 2005: 3). Mindanao, in the Philippines, for instance, experienced long periods of uneasy peace interrupted by occasional eruptions of violence. There, efforts to make war (violating ceasefires) exist next to attempts to stop violence drawing on the social institutions and networks people deploy to reach their objectives. Instead of focusing on what issue(s) triggered war or peace it is important to explore how people make war or peace, approaching people as active and creative individuals.

Seeing both conflict and disasters as processes and political events

Concluding, instead of 'seeing' disasters and conflict as external events, I view them both as political processes in which local people, civil society, government officials, (I)NGOs, military, combatants, *de facto* rulers, among others, actively make choices that correspond with their motives, interests, and the options they have to shape their actions (after Anderson & Woodrow, 1989; Richards, 2005). There is a need to better understand what people affected by both disasters and conflict actually do in unstable circumstances, and with whom in society they entertain economic, social and political linkages. Despite crisis and chaos, people try to continue their daily life as usual, although their livelihood strategies may have changed and diversified due to a change in social relations. Chapter 5 provides a picture of

how disaster- and conflict-affected people do this, and focuses on how within and between villages people produce various risk constructs – within a certain setting of power relations – negotiate, struggle, or resist change towards protection and safety. It is these contexts in which CBDRR pilots are brought in, and where NGO field workers interact with the local population.

1.8. Outline of the book

Chapter 2 sets out the research design using an interactive research methodology. It explains how the interactive research got shaped through the involvement of different actors, considering issues like inter-subjectivity, evolving reciprocal relationships, and positioning and roles of the researcher. This refers to the ‘interactive’ part of the research. It further critically reflects on the ‘research’ part on knowledge construction and how I dealt with partiality and multiple perspectives. Some research encounters led to tensions and conflict among the actors involved which needed to be constantly managed to maintain reciprocal relationships with the research subjects. The chapter provides insights for why I regard this interactive research as a continuous negotiation process, its findings as negotiated outcomes, and what value they have. I further elaborate on the relevance, appropriateness and ethics of doing interactive research in real-time disaster and conflict settings. The general academic argument is that insecurity makes it impossible to secure valid data. I argue that research in disaster and conflict settings is possible through the right contacts, access through local NGOs and flexibility and creativity in research methods.

The outline of the book follows the three sub-research questions posed earlier in this thesis, which basically express a chronological sequence of first studying the origins of various CBDRR traditions and their particular interpretations from a historical perspective. I then elaborate on the CBDRR process in several pilot areas in Afghanistan and Indonesia followed by the outcomes and discussion on what CBDRR actually is, and its potential in complex contexts.

Additionally, the outline considers a study-up approach aimed to unravel the policy-practice discrepancy, where I focused on the interaction between local populations and NGO field staff, which is the level in the aid chain where the incompatibility between the idealistic logframe model and the political arena model is felt most. The interaction between NGO project staff and the funding agency is inserted in those crucial moments in the CBDRR process where the funding agencies strongly steered the CBDRR process in favour of their interest. All chapters are empirically grounded, but draw on existing literature as well for analysis and validation, and link field experiences to broader trends in aid programming and debates on CBDRR.

Chapter 3 analyses how CDRC strategically framed and re-framed its CBDO-DR policy in the socio-political context of the Philippines since Martial Law in 1972 till now. This chapter further makes sense of what constitutes ‘political vulnerability’, and why this contradicts to people’s agency and the notion of ‘everyday politics’. The chapter concludes that disasters can be viewed as an opportunity for social change, but for whom and in what way is contextual, time-bound and contested in local and national arenas.

Chapter 4 is a historical account of various other 'home-grown' CBDRR approaches like promoted by *La Red* in Latin America, and *Duryog Nivaran* in South Asia. These home-grown CBDRR approaches already existed before the UN declared the International Decade of Natural Disaster Reduction from 1989 to 1999. By the end of the 1990s, the international community started to promote community-based approaches as a complementary strategy to national and international efforts to reduce risk. However, the meaning governments attach to CBDRR rather refers to efficiency, than to genuinely addressing social injustices underlying people's vulnerability. The chapter reveals how the various strands of thinking about CBDRR got increasingly intertwined since the Hyogo Declaration in 2005. I argue that CBDRR is a contested approach: beyond its relevance to reduce risks of affected populations, CBDRR is also a political and ideological construct, with its discursive interpretations and justifications.

Chapter 5 explores local people's perspectives on risks stemming from disasters and conflict, the notion of 'local knowledge', and how people deal with uncertainty and crisis in Afghanistan and Indonesia. CBDRR-literature assumes that the use of local knowledge will improve disaster risk reduction policies and project implementation. However, the many stories from men and women in Afghanistan and Indonesia revealed that local knowledge is differentiated, partial, contested and sometimes dangerous like in Maluku, where local beliefs justified the use of violence. When outsiders, like CBDRR-practitioners, say they aim to recognize local knowledge in their interventions locally, they should be aware and acknowledge the differentiated nature of local knowledge, the diversity in risk constructs and the local institutional arrangements that influence them. How this raises problems and dilemmas in practice is subject of the next two chapters.

Chapters 6 and 7 elaborate on how CBDRR approaches got shape and meaning in new contexts like Afghanistan and Indonesia. Through sequential case analysis and regular action-reflection cycles (Chapter 2) the researcher encouraged local NGO staff to reflect on their routines that have been taken for granted, and to uncover assumptions, norms, values, skills and systems. Chapter 6 particularly focuses on the NGOs' assumptions and values applied when selecting, entering and organizing communities and the reasons behind. Despite conscious efforts to reach the most vulnerable groups in a village through creative, flexible and context-specific approaches, the benefits still seem to drift towards village elites. This means that the elite forces are strong, and that withstanding these pressures is difficult for CBOs and vulnerable groups, and for the NGOs which claim to support the latter. The chapters reveal the mechanisms in the CBDRR process that reduce, produce, or reproduce people's vulnerability.

Chapter 7 particularly deals with two cases, one in Central Java, Indonesia and the second one in Herat province, western Afghanistan, where local people and NGOs entered the 'political arena' to negotiate and struggle for their risk solutions beyond community level. The chapter discusses how local people and NGOs mobilized and organized 'effective agency' and engaged – in one way or another - with the broader institutional context of norms, traditions, the judiciary system, the governance structure and institutions related to allocation of resources. The chapter analyses the tactics and strategies local people used to debate, confront and negotiate with authorities to get their risk problems solved.

The final chapter brings the conceptual insights and conclusions together. It discusses firstly what CBDRR actually is and means in the various disaster and conflict contexts, and re-examines the definitions of the key CBDRR concepts. I conclude that *the* CBDRR approach does not exist. Empirical findings show that there are different processes through which organizations – CBOs, local NGOs, funding agencies, government in Afghanistan, Indonesia and the Philippines – arrived at a specific framing of local realities and their responses in the context they live and work, and consequently they attach different meanings to CBDRR. These are related to their histories, current state-society relationships, and how they legitimize their interventions. Actors either underscore the politics of their interventions or rather de-politicize them. From the experiences of this research it is plausible to conclude that when one ignores to view CBDRR interventions in a political and institutional manner, the outcomes of the interventions are likely to reproduce institutions and people's vulnerability. This is one of the main explanations for the varying outcomes of the CBDRR pilots.

Chapter 8 further reflects on the potential of CBDRR in conflict settings. The case from Herat, Afghanistan, offers valuable prospects for how to support disaster and conflict affected communities in a context where government is weak or contested. By taking an institutional and political approach to analyse responses to disaster and conflict, I uncover some of the complexities and the political nature of disaster risk reduction practices. The implication for aid agencies is that they should invest considerable time and effort to find out who cooperates and who opposes particular risk reduction measures and why, and to deal with these power plays in such a way that marginal groups could succeed in their demands for protection and safety. This practice substantially deviates from most current CBDRR practice.

2. “Designing the plane while flying it”

Negotiating an interactive research with aid agencies in disaster and conflict settings

This chapter is an account of how I shaped my PhD research through a process of continuously re-negotiating research priorities and commitment with the actors involved, and adapting the research to social dynamics and security issues in Afghanistan and Indonesia. The initiators of this research opted for an interactive methodology to be accountable to stakeholders in the field. They proposed to take a view from below as a mirror for aid agencies to encourage a process of reflexive learning about their everyday practices and assumptions. Interactive research is believed to be a way to make research more accessible and relevant for the questions and dilemmas confronting humanitarian aid agencies, and thus resulting in better-informed and more sensitive policy and practice of responding to disasters and conflict. Interactive research breaks through the boundaries of disciplines, but also through the distinction between scientific knowledge, practitioners’ expertise, and local knowledge of disaster and conflict affected populations (Hilhorst and Heijmans, 2011).

My motivation to opt for an interactive research stems from my previous work where I was directly confronted with local people’s critical questions regarding outsiders’ intentions like those of NGOs, government, and donors. I consider the role of local people to be more than just ‘informants’. They are subjects to whom the researcher is accountable and who can contribute valuable knowledge to the research process. I like to give local people a stronger voice towards aid agencies and their donors to influence aid practice, and this voice is more likely to be heard when aid agencies themselves join the research process than when they remain outsiders.

A second reason to opt for an interactive research is that I will have the opportunity to study humanitarian organizations from *within*. For outsiders it is difficult to get access to the workings of an aid agency, especially to sensitive issues: information is a private good rather than a public asset (Mosse, 2005). Information is then given strategically or filtered to secure the organization’s reputation, and poor performance is concealed. Agencies do not want to put their external funding at risk. This makes it almost impossible to sustain long-term participant observation in the absence of making a contribution (Mosse, 2005). My commitment is to encourage aid practitioners – particularly local NGO field staff and programme officers of donor organizations - to jointly reflect on their routines, hidden assumptions, and to take more consciously critical decisions to improve aid programming. These actors are the frontline-workers and tasked to translate policy into practice through their interaction with villagers.

However, interactive research methodologies encounter many challenges and do not go uncontested. The immediate challenge I faced was how to combine interactive research with a PhD dissertation: interactive research is often represented as a collaborative endeavour among various stakeholders, whereas the culture of PhD dissertations demands individual

demonstration of competence, and the need to maintain an independent role. I experienced this interactive research as a continuous negotiation process, involving institutional politics in (re)defining research directions, localities, methods and about whose knowledge, values and norms count. At the same time I was concerned to do good social research dealing with issues of theory, method and validity.

This chapter is structured in five sections. The first section addresses the backgrounds and various traditions of interactive research, and explains from which tradition I developed my project. Section two deals with the theory of knowledge construction with a focus on producing knowledge that is relevant for both practice and theory, and how this evolves in practice. Knowledge construction creates tensions and conflict among the various actors involved. Instead of considering these tensions as distortions of the research process, I regarded them as an inherent part of the process of knowledge construction and as opportunities to deepen the analysis. The third section reflects on doing interactive research in (post) conflict settings. I highly relied on local NGOs and populations to gain access to research localities and protection in contexts where security conditions are dynamic. This raised issues of ethics, accountability, and appropriate research methods to ensure validity and relevance of findings. The fourth section explains the organisational set-up of the research, the subsequent roles and positioning of the direct actors involved, its specific principles, and interactive research methods. As an invited researcher you cannot fully set the research arrangements like directions and localities since the stakeholders – on and off stage - have their ambitions and interests as well. I will close this chapter explaining how I kept an eye on the quality of interactive research outcomes, and what value they have for whom: how do you know that the quality of interactive research outcomes corresponds to good social research dealing with issues of ‘rigor’ and ‘validity’, while at the same time the research findings are relevant for practitioners and local contexts.

2.1 Traditions of interactive research and knowledge interests

Disaster Studies uses the term ‘interactive research’ for the kind of research which takes shape through interactions between the researcher and staff from aid agencies. It characterizes ‘interactive research’ as a step-by-step approach, where research questions and direction are iteratively discussed, reflected and decided upon by the actors involved. ‘Interactive’ refers to the different roles, interests and agendas of the actors, opposed to terms like ‘collaborative research’ or ‘action research’ which do not necessarily make these differences explicit from the start. Interactive research usually involves the study of on-going actions, like in this case CBDRR interventions, that are brought in a certain setting and context. In this perspective, Disaster Studies regards scientific knowledge as socially constructed and inter-subjectively validated (Haar, Hilhorst and Heijmans, forthcoming).

‘Interactive’ research is actually an umbrella term covering several approaches that emerged from different traditions, and therefore ‘interactive research’ has many faces. It’s most important feature is perhaps that it shifts its locus of control in varying degrees from academic researchers to those who have been traditionally called the subjects of research like practitioners or community people (Herr and Anderson, 2005: 2). The most common terms are *action research*, *activist research*, *participatory action research*, *collaborative research*, *action science*, *participatory rural appraisal*, *practitioner research*, and *feminist action research*. Each of these terms refers to different purposes, positionalities, ideological

commitments, and in most cases they grew out of specific social contexts. A lot of 'action research' is inspired by Freire's '*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*' (1970), which refers to emancipatory practice, aiming to support an oppressed group to identify and act on social policies and practices that keep unequal power relations in place. Here the researcher is not conceived as a 'neutral observer', but aligns with an oppressed group and acts as change agent to solve local problems against injustices people may suffer (Herr and Anderson, 2005; van der Haar, 2005). 'Action research' and 'participatory research' as liberation particularly emerged in Latin America during the late 1960s and 1970s. Its aim is to contribute to progressive social and political transformation.

Linked to the Latin American protest movements, criticism against the dominant, quantitative social science research methodology started to emerge in academic circles as well, particularly criticizing the value neutrality, the structural separation between theory and practice, and between the expert researcher and research objects (Huizer, 1973). During the late 1970s and 1980s women scholars involved in the women's movement started to develop new methodological approaches for feminist research, bringing women's repression and their invisibility in the male-dominated social science into the full daylight of scientific analysis (Mies, 1983: 121). They argued that female social scientists should use their own experience of oppression and discrimination into the research process: value-free research has to be replaced by *conscious partiality* (ibid: 122). They further promote to establish reciprocal relationships between the researcher and the researched, to correct distortions of perceptions on both sides, and to ensure a 'view from below' (ibid: 122). Like Huizer and other activist researchers, also feminist researchers promote the researcher's active but critical involvement in actions, movements and struggles aimed to orient the processes towards progressive emancipation.

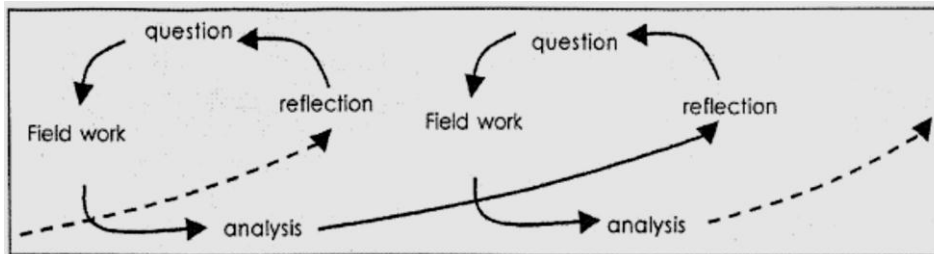
Although this interactive research empathizes with disaster and conflict affected populations and their efforts to cope and reduce risks, it takes its inspiration from a different tradition: 'action science'. This tradition is associated with the work of Argyris and Schön (1991) whose concern is the ability of organizations to learn. They view 'action science' as studying questions, puzzles and problems from the perspective of *practitioners* within specific local contexts. Practitioners, however, are not necessarily interested in developing theories or in the truth, but rather in finding practical solutions to problems that arise in complex, changing or unknown situations in which they operate. The researcher, on the other hand, may prioritize theorizing over practical solutions.

Argyris and Schön's 'action science' stresses the importance to not only solve problems, but also to generate new knowledge or theory that is useful. 'Action science' builds descriptions and theories within the practice context itself, and tests them there through *intervention experiments* – meaning that the experiments both tests hypotheses and effect some desired change in the situation (ibid: 86). These intervention experiments consist of a spiral of action- reflection cycles in which the following steps are taken:

1. To develop a *plan* of action to improve what is already happening
2. To *act* to implement the plan
3. To *observe* the effects of action in the context in which it occurs
4. To *reflect* on these effects as a basis for further planning, subsequent action and on through a succession of cycles.

In this research the CBDRR pilots are considered such intervention-experiments: practitioners start ‘doing CBDRR’ in their particular context, as a way to facilitate reflection and learning, to transform knowledge and improve practices. Figure 2.1 visualizes these action-reflection cycles as an iterative process.

Figure 2.1 Research as spiraling cycles



I mentioned in Chapter 1 that Argyris and Schön’s learning cycles – aimed to make the espoused theory congruent to the theory-in-use – offers a framework that is useful to understand processes of organizational learning, but that their theory lacked a social and political conceptualization of organizations (Greenwood, 2002). Learning and interactive research processes within organizations are largely “*collective, noisy and conflict-filled processes*” (ibid: 127). New insights and good ideas may not necessarily result in better practice, due to constraining organizational institutions that curb new ideas or innovation. People then reframe the problem and try other ‘moves’ and assess the consequences till they have found a solution that works. This is not necessarily the best or the only solution, but a solution that is appreciated (Berselaar, 2006: 7).

Building on the work of Argyris and Schön, Berselaar (2006) adapted the ‘learning cycles’¹ into ‘knowledge cycles’ to fulfil the specific knowledge interests of both the practitioners and the researcher. I therefore use Berselaar’s three knowledge cycles to explain the process of knowledge construction and theorizing, which is subject of the next section.

2.2 Processes of knowledge construction in interactive research

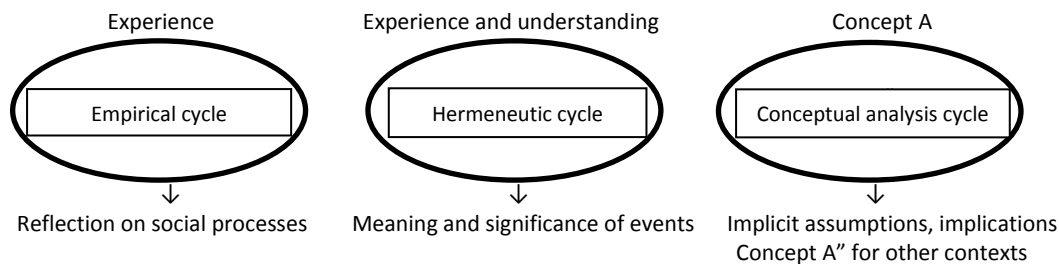
Interactive research methodologies are significant and of interest for research questions that particularly deal with social interventions, with topics of translating theory and policy into practice, with social change, and to inform the thinking of policy-makers, practitioners, program participants and public (Tromp, 2006). They start from the view that all research is value-laden, subjective, connecting theory and practice in a dialogical way, in contrast to positivist research which views science as neutral, objective and separates theory construction from application. In positivist research, it is the researcher who is recognized as the only knowledgeable person, and who produces recommendations for the end-users, drawing a distinction between ‘local knowledge’ and ‘scientific knowledge’. Whereas in interactive research, all actors are recognized to bring with them their specific everyday forms of knowledge, whether they are scientists, aid practitioners or local villagers.

Knowledge should not be equated with some professional, specialized set of data, ideas or accumulated facts (Arce and Long, 1992). Knowledge involves ways in which people construe the world, how they absorb and rework outside ideas. People use their skills, orientations,

¹ The learning cycles refer here to the ‘triple loop learning cycles’.

experiences, interests, resources, patterns of social interaction to decide which ideas, beliefs and understandings are useful, and which ones are no longer valid. Knowledge is “*fragmentary, partial and provisional in nature and people work with a multiplicity of understandings, beliefs and commitments*” (ibid, 211-212). An interactive research methodology allows different bodies of knowledge to interact with the aim to produce, translate or transform knowledge to address problems that no longer could be solved by routine practices (Bersselaar, 2006). Bersselaar’s three knowledge cycles are (1) empirical cycle, (2) hermeneutic cycle, and (3) conceptual analysis cycle, visualized in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Knowledge cycles leading to new theory (Bersselaar, 2006: 6)



The first cycle is the ‘empirical cycle’ and enables practitioners, local people and the researcher to reflect on on-going social processes and CBDRR practices. For instance, local people experience disaster events or conflict and respond to these events in a particular way. Likewise, aid agencies, governments, and other actors respond to these events in their specific manner. These observations are still at the empirical level, since they do not explain why these specific responses were chosen. A deeper level of reflection is required. As soon as disasters or conflict occur, the various actors start to attach meaning to these events and experiences, and interpret them. They make sense of what happened, and why it happened, referring to the questions of Olson (2000). Therefore, the empirical cycle is followed by a *hermeneutic cycle*, aimed to understand why actors interpret the events and their circumstances in a particular way. In my theoretical framework in Chapter 1, I elaborated on the concepts that are central in this interactive research - ‘institutions’, ‘politics’ and ‘power’ – to understand the social processes and how these affect and shape the CBDRR interventions. Through reflection on these real-time CBDRR experiences, the research actors will interpret their experiences, and think further on the meaning they attach to concepts that make-up CBDRR like ‘disaster’, ‘community’, ‘community-based’, ‘local knowledge’, ‘risk’, ‘vulnerability’, ‘participation’, ‘empowerment’ and ‘resilience’. The third cycle reflects on these meanings, on the implicit presuppositions and implications of the concepts, and considers more deeply what the concepts could mean in varying contexts, referred to as the *conceptual analysis cycle*. Abstract conceptualization means to find theoretical concepts that explain empirical phenomena which at the same time can be applied to similar phenomena in different contexts.

The three cycles intend to blend knowledge from the practical wisdom of grassroots communities with knowledge from aid practitioners developed through their interaction with these communities. These are then linked to formal knowledge systems which all together aim to bring about a positive outcome for local vulnerable and marginalized people affected by disasters and conflict, and secondly to generate new theories on CBDRR. Interactive research requires the use, the construction of concepts and definitions that

consider how actors involved identify, understand and give meaning to these. This will enable them to take a next step to understand – in this research - what CBDRR means in new contexts, where current, mainstream interpretations of CBDRR are no longer obvious. This implies that knowledge generated in a specific context needs to be translated to a higher level of abstraction, in order to enable aid organizations to apply it in similar situations elsewhere (Tromp, et al, 2009: 223). Going through the process of the three cycles: of experience/action, towards reflection on practice from different angles (*empirical cycle*), towards understanding, interpretation, analysing meaning and abstract conceptualization (*hermeneutic cycle*), towards developing theories or adapting concepts which could be applied in other contexts (*conceptual analysis cycle*), I looked for patterns, similarities and differences in processes of social interactions between the various stakeholders in disaster risk reduction with the aim to look for some degree of generalizability.

From an idealistic towards a naturalistic perspective

Initially, the CBDRR pilots were conceived with an idealized image of what the CBDRR approach should achieve, taking the Philippine experience as the exemplar. Soon the initiators of the CBDRR pilot programme discovered this was not the way to go about it, especially not in complex, unstable environments like in Afghanistan. It became clear that the CBDRR intervention-experiments would follow uncertain and unknown paths. Kurtz and Snowden (2007) make a distinction between *naturalistic* and *idealized* thinking in responding to uncertainty. Those with an *idealistic* way of thinking seek to close the gap between an ideal future state and their perception of the present. Those with a *naturalistic* view intend to understand enough of the present in order to stimulate its evolution. Once such stimulation is made, - in our case starting to pilot CBDRR – analysing emergent patterns becomes essential so that desired patterns can be supported and undesired ones addressed (Guijt, 2008). The CBDRR interventions will evolve to a future that is unknowable in advance, but will hopefully be more contextually appropriate when discovered (after Kurtz and Snowden, 2007). Taking a naturalistic approach means that together we explore and increase our abilities to gather the right information in order to make sense of what is going on in real time life and then adjust interventions accordingly.

Processes of sense-making

Knowledge construction and learning in the hermeneutic cycle happens interactively through the process of 'sense-making'. Klein et al (2006:71) define sense-making as “a motivated continuous effort to understand connections - among people, places and events- in order to anticipate their trajectories and act effectively”. Explicit efforts at sense-making occur when the current state of the world is perceived to be different from the expected state of the world, or when there is no obvious way to engage with the world (Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld, 2005: 409). Particularly in complex and dynamic contexts, the iterative process of probing/action and reflection/sense-making may best suit unpredictable processes, stressing the importance to engage with those involved to understand and explain the significance of events, and to generate ideas about possible responses (Guijt, 2008). In this process new knowledge is jointly constructed instead of transferred from an expert to practitioners through training or reports. However, also sense-making involves power that is expressed in acts that shape what people accept, take for granted or reject (Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld, 2005: 418). Which story is plausible, which perspectives are singled out, which cues are highlighted or suppressed? Sense-making is not about truth and

getting it right, but about continuing redrafting of an emerging story so that it becomes more comprehensive, includes more observed data, is consistent with data from other sources, and becomes resilient in the face of criticism (ibid: 415).

Guijt stresses to look for surprise, the unexpected, and the little clues: *“look for evidence that disconfirms [the organisation’s] cherished expectations, and see beyond its simplifications”* (2008: 253). Surprises happen when ‘bits of knowledge’ do not tally with one’s assumptions. The Seed Bank experience discussed such a ‘surprise’ referring to the kind of adaptation strategies of the farmers that did not tally with the assumptions of the outsiders. The inconvenience people feel when discovering aspects that differ from their assumptions, may lead them to revise their understanding and attitude. New knowledge will then be internalized and increases people’s motivation to change institutions like norms, values, beliefs and policies. ‘Surprise’ and ‘sense-making’ are important sources for learning. Surprises can also refer to positive experiences as astonishment, for instance, the realization of local people in Nahreen, Afghanistan, that they could effectively respond to floods by doing things differently, something they could not have thought of beforehand. Hence, seeking surprises will be part of the sense-making process to enhance reflective learning and organizational practice.

Internal validity

The actors involved in the interactive research are considered competent in articulating their views and opinions, while projecting and accepting critical remarks during discussions and debates (Tromp et al, 2009: 232). However, we cannot assume that all will adopt or have an open attitude, or are equal partners in the debates. Sharing experiences, open communication, admitting weaknesses, trust should be regarded as goals in the research process in order to attain reciprocal relationships – *“communicative symmetry in the discussions”* (ibid), and adequacy of findings. The research findings generated through interactive research are considered adequate or valid, *“when they are recognized and preferably accepted as such by both the researcher and co-researchers”* (ibid, 233). This principle is called ‘reciprocal adequacy’ as a criterion for internal validity of the research, and for reliability of data interpretation (Tromp et al, 2009).

This differs from constructivist research where the researcher may aim to present and analyse multiple perspectives of various stakeholders, added with his or her own interpretation without the necessary consent or knowledge of those ‘researched’. Interactive research, in its most idealized form, creates the opportunity for the actors involved to make sense of data, events and processes themselves or with the researcher, assuming that this will enrich the analysis and that the results will be useful for their own purposes (Hale, 2001:14). However, it should not be taken for granted that everybody agrees or accepts the findings right away, or agrees to each other’s interpretation. Tensions and conflicting interpretations lead to on-going sense-making and new sets of questions or areas to explore. Even validation of findings is subject of negotiation and debate. Research encounters in real-time settings show more likely real behaviour of the actors involved, rather than expected behaviour (Mies, 1989; Burawoy, 1998).

The occurrence of tensions and conflict demonstrates that interactive research is more than collecting and analysing data in close collaboration with practitioners and other stake-

holders, which emphasizes the 'interactive' side. But interactive research is 'research' when it develops "*habits of counterintuitive thinking, questioning definitions and premises, linking findings and process analysis to other cases, and attempting to subject favourite interpretations to harsh collaborative critiques*" (Greenwood, 2001: 131). Multiple readings of a single event are collected, discussed, and are subject for various interpretations, debates and sense-making. As researcher I interpret the interpretations of the other actors, present their multiple perspectives and unresolved issues, and provide *my* interpretation and understanding of reality which may differ from the others. The process of interpreting the interpretations of others is referred to as 'double hermeneutics' (Tromp et al, 2009: 231). My interpretations of local dynamics, aid practices, reflection sessions, workshops, case studies were always fed back for discussion to the local partners and staff within the Dutch aid agencies. Even the chapters of this thesis have been discussed with the initiators, while the local NGOs read and commented on the empirical chapters and the conclusions. Through these steps I aimed to achieve internal validity, and reciprocal adequacy.

The politics of knowledge: whose interpretation counts?

Interactive research methodologies tend to represent research encounters as 'collaboration' or 'teamwork', which share a common interest in enhancing knowledge and practice. However, in the course of this interactive research I experienced research encounters varying from discussions to tense debates, agony and even antagonistic positioning where actors could not reconcile their views and interpretations of on-going events. Discussions, debates and conflicts are inevitable. The researcher has to deal with multiple perspectives, power dynamics, institutional politics, partiality and tensions among the research subjects.

Below I share two research encounters. The first deals with tense debates about interpreting 'local knowledge' among community organizers from three different local NGOs aligned in a coalition in Indonesia. Their debates revealed tacit knowledge about community organizing strategies and about the way they work together in the coalition to reduce disaster risks. Tensions and sense-making resulted in a deeper analysis into the donor's funding conditions and assumptions. The second case deals with an evolving antagonistic relationship between a local partner and the programme staff of a Dutch aid agency. During a field visit and a short period afterwards, the researcher and a newly hired programme officer suddenly played the role of mediator, trying to maintain reciprocal relationships, which would otherwise threaten the internal validity of research findings.

Case 1: The political meaning of 'local knowledge' and disclosing 'tacit knowledge' of practitioners

During a joint reflection workshop in April 2011, community organizers of three local NGOs working in nine different villages in three districts on the slopes of Muria Mountain in Central Java, debated about the meaning of 'local wisdom' and 'local knowledge'. They researched local people's understanding of why landslides and flash floods occur in their localities. Local people's explanations varied and changed over time as well: "*It is up to God to decide if a disaster happens*", "*it is a punishment from God because we shouldn't steal from the forest*" are responses often heard when community organizers start their work in a village. The field staff interprets these answers as that people know very well why floods happen but that they do not feel responsible for protecting the environment. The sense-making process constructed an image of people's beliefs, and explained people's views in

such a way that these matched the NGO's community organizing strategies like awareness raising and promoting environmentally sound practices.

In two other villages, village authorities responded along the lines of *"Here, disasters do not happen"*, while ordinary villagers said *"Here we do not talk about disasters"*. Community organizers interpreted these remarks as a signal that talking about disasters is very sensitive. In such cases, it appeared that village authorities were involved in illegal mining practices and intimidated people so they wouldn't protest and keep silent. Also these replies triggered a sense-making process that brought out tactical community organizing strategies aimed to break the silence over time and to deal with powerful opponents.

"The mountain is old and tired, and gets wrinkles, and this causes landslides", was narrated by village authorities in another village who blamed nature for disasters, while in another setting, they articulated that cutting trees and planting corn on steep slopes are destructive environmental practices. They were not willing to take responsibility for landslides or change their practice. They legitimized their argument further by referring to the expert-knowledge of a local geologist who visited the villages in 2007 with the NGO staff². The geologist explained the unique magmatic composition of layered rocks due to violent eruptions in the past. In his view Muria Mountain is a volcano, while the local population wasn't aware of this. It has a low water absorbing capacity and because the area experiences a high rainfall level (500-5000), water runs off fast. The villagers translated the 'multiple layered rocks' as the 'wrinkles of the old mountain'. The NGO community organizer in this village had difficulty to convince the village authorities that landslides and flash floods occur as a result of both the geological composition of the mountain and people's farming practices. In the various villages, the authorities attributed disaster events to Nature or God, to escape 'the political' of these events. They did not want to be held responsible, and to quit their profiting but destructive practices.

During the workshop, the community organizers debated about how to interpret and value local knowledge. Whereas staff of two NGOs attached a political meaning to people's stories that would legitimize their community organizing strategies, one NGO remained puzzled about how to interpret the 'wrinkle story' and how to proceed discussions and community organizing in the village. This NGO was in fact unable to deal with irresponsible village authorities and to break through taboos. Its inability to transform local knowledge into community organizing strategies, caused irritation among the two other NGOs. Asking why they were irritated, they expressed their worries about the future. They brought out their tacit knowledge about their intention to synchronize lobby efforts as agreed with the donor. In their view, different interpretations about local knowledge could cause a delay in community organizing and hamper alliance building among the villages. Consequently, targets may not be achieved in time according to the plan. The three NGOs are aligned in the Muria Coalition, and together they jointly pursue an environmental lobby and advocacy campaign to influence government policies and forest institutions, supported by I&K. The tensions further disclosed their tacit knowledge about the internal functioning of the coalition, which otherwise would not have been discussed here. The NGOs partly related the weak functioning of the coalition to donor policies, funding conditions and assumptions about how coalitions should operate. These tensions provided me with valuable insights into

² Dr. Bambang Prastitho who presented his analysis during a CBDRR workshop in November 2007 in Yogyakarta.

the workings of aid agencies, bringing out the multiple realities of NGO staff. As of this writing, an external evaluation was being conducted which would look into the functioning of the coalition and its strategies.

Case 2: Reciprocal relationships under threat: consequences for internal validity

At the start of this chapter I stated that I viewed this interactive research mainly as a continuous negotiation effort, and its findings as negotiated outcomes. There were, however, a few research encounters that evolved into conflict and antagonistic relationships between some key-actors. These occurred in Halmahera, Northern Maluku. Negotiation and mediation efforts were sometimes interrupted by periods of shelving any interaction till the donor – after making sense of what happened – decided to pick up the communication again. Considering the motivations of Kerkinactie to select church-partners in Halmahera, with which it had a sensitive historical background, we did not expect the interaction to be harmonious.

Kerkinactie's relationship with the protestant churches in Indonesia was complicated. Sjoerd described Kerkinactie's partners in Halmahera as hierarchical, top-down, and not connected to the everyday realities of community people who still deal with unresolved issues from the communal violence. Box 2.1 describes the historical background of the complicated relationships and the flow of events that eventually led to conflict and eroding reciprocal relationships.

Box 2.1: CBDRR pilot in Halmahera: sequential research encounters evolved into conflict

Halmahera, Northern Maluku, experienced communal violence between Muslims and Christians in 1999-2000 resulting in divided and displaced communities. There are various explanations about what caused the conflict and how current economic and political dynamics could trigger violence again. Halmahera was selected as location for the CBDRR-pilot partly because of its complex context, and because of Kerkinactie's discomfort of how humanitarian assistance was provided to internally displaced people during the conflict. In order to understand the difficulties in the CBDRR pilot in Maluku, one has to know the history of how relationships developed over time.

The history goes back to the nineteenth century when Dutch Protestant missionaries settled in Halmahera to serve the Dutch colonial community of traders. Later they started to convert the indigenous population to Christianity and established the Protestant Church of Halmahera. In 1881, the "Dutch-Indonesian Mission Association" was founded which aimed to strengthen cooperation among Dutch and Indonesian Protestant churches and at the same time to engage with the Dutch colonial government in Indonesia, regarding education, health, *adat*-law and to discuss how the churches should position themselves vis-a-vis Islam.

In 1984, years after Indonesia became independent from the Netherlands, all Christian Churches in Indonesia united into one Council of Churches in Indonesia of which the Protestant Churches of Indonesia (PGI) has the largest representation. Its aim was to get rid of its old image of being collaborators of Dutch colonizers by openly supporting the new Indonesian Government. During Suharto's administration, church, government and military institutions were closely related from Jakarta to village level. The Protestant Church sided with the powerful elite. Only 10% of the Indonesian population are Christians, while the majority is Muslim.

Although PGI wanted to earn an independent reputation, salaries were still paid by the Protestant Churches in the Netherlands (PKN). Over time salary support shifted towards programmatic financing for grassroots projects, channelled through Kerkinactie which generated funds through donations by local congregations in the Netherlands. The synods, i.e. elected church boards, were made responsible to formulate development policies and aid proposals, and were supposed to implement these. And so was the synod of the GMIH. However, Kerkinactie faced several dilemmas, and I&K still do: the synods have no professional background in doing development work, synod members change every five years, and they hardly relate to grassroots concerns.

Kerkinactie seeks partnership with capable and professional organizations, but due to the historical ties between the Protestant Churches in the Netherlands (PKN) with those in Indonesia, it is ambivalent in selecting its partners. To solve the dilemmas, the local churches created foundations tasked to provide humanitarian aid while still part of the church

structures. PGI created the Foundation for Disaster Management – YTB in 1991 (later called YTB Indonesia), whereas the GMIH created the Crisis Centre and SANRO, a foundation to develop farmers' capacities. However, roles and responsibilities of each institution were not clearly defined. When Kerkinactie wanted to provide humanitarian aid to displaced people during and after the violence in 2000, internal conflicts and tensions arose involving PKN, Kerkinactie, PGI, YTBI, GMIH and SANRO. The PKN perceived the GMIH as an actor involved in the violent conflicts, with the consequence that Kerkinactie felt reluctant to channel aid funds through the GMIH. Issues about who manages the funds and who is in charge could not be settled and Kerkinactie created – against its own principles - a Working Group of professional staff to get the humanitarian assistance to those in need.

During my first visit to Halmahera in September 2006, I heard different versions of what happened and why. Oral histories of local people affected by the violence revealed the inappropriateness of the aid provided by the YTBI-GMIH-SANRO. Sjoerd from Kerkinactie insisted to have the CBDRR pilot here, because she hoped that tensions could be reduced through a process of reflection and learning together with community people.

Together with people from YTBI, the GMIH and SANRO I visited many villages in Halmahera from North to South in September 2006. While traveling with them, I became aware of the past and probably unresolved tensions. Nevertheless, they expressed their interest in piloting CBDRR, and I could reach a cautious commitment that they would start thinking about possible localities. In 2007, the GMIH appointed new synod members, I&K changed its geographical approach into a thematic approach, and hired a new project-officer who was not familiar with the church history. The combination of these three changes resulted in a research encounter in November 2007 that can best be described as a 'battlefield'. Discussions on the aim of the CBDRR pilot were highly distorted. YTBI had prepared the meeting in advance with all actors, including the agenda and list of attendants. However, two days before our arrival in Halmahera, the GMIH synod had changed the agenda, cancelled the field visits and had not invited SANRO staff.

The newly appointed synod viewed the CBDRR pilot as an opportunity to access funds – to survive. For them it was a project to be implemented and a way to restore GMIH's credibility in the eyes of Kerkinactie. Due to the shift from a geographical to a thematic approach, all local partners received a thematic label from I&K which I think, can be considered an administrative exercise rather than a well-thought programmatic choice. In this light, GMIH-SANRO were labelled as an "Access-to Basic-Services"³ partner, which did not match with the historical ties it had with the Mission Department of Kerkinactie. The GMIH interpreted this label as that their institution had become irrelevant. This hurt. When the new project officer explained that ICCO will relate directly to SANRO regarding the CBDRR pilot, and the Mission department with the GMIH, the GMIH stated that the CBDRR pilot will be implemented by them, or not at all. They told us that our field visit programme had ended here, and that the GMIH would determine how to proceed with the CBDRR-pilot. We could go home.

Later, during 2008 and 2009, relationships between the local partners and I&K were restored and improved.

When people and institutions are under stress or in crisis, they reveal much about themselves (Burawoy, 1998). As a researcher I met with the synod board in 'real-world' settings where they negotiated with their donor on how to shape the CBDRR pilot. However, the narratives of the different synod members and SANRO staff, with whom I met afterwards, were all contextualized and circled around unsettled problems from the past in which money seemed to be a defining quality of the relationship. Although I&K were aware that the institutional environment of the local partners wasn't conducive for learning and reflection, they wanted to continue with the CBDRR-pilot for several reasons.

The initiators of this research still wished to improve the aid practice of its church-partners and to challenge the top-down culture and church-doctrine of the GMIH which has limited commitment to the concerns of grassroots communities. The Steering Group further felt accountable to the communities involved in the pilot which could not be promptly abandoned. A second reason was vented by the Mission Department and is situated within the relationship between the PGI and PKN. The Protestant Churches in Maluku felt abandoned by PKN and Kerkinactie in 2000, when the latter perceived them of taking sides against the Muslim population during the violent conflicts in 1999-2000. After '9/11', the

³ Access to basic services refers to health, water and sanitation, education, food security and hiv/aids interventions

Protestant Churches in Maluku regained some confidence to restart a dialogue with the PKN about the 'Islamisation of Dutch society', which, according to the Christians in Maluku, could become a threat for the Christian community in the Netherlands. Christians in Maluku felt strengthened by the increasing fear among Dutch Christians. The PKN seemed to be perceptive to these sentiments. It must be noted that the Mission department of Kerkinactie directly facilitates exchanges between Christian congregations in the Netherlands and those in Maluku through visits and e-mail correspondence. For this department it is important that distorted church relationships will be restored. The CBDRR pilot had the potential to achieve this.

The third reason relates to the institutional embedding of I&K in the international ACT ALLIANCE, which channels humanitarian and development aid mainly through protestant church organizations like YTBI, GMIH and SANRO⁴. The interactive research methodology proved to be an appropriate and effective methodology to get access to the workings of aid agencies – the processes, contradictions and tensions –, and the Steering Group still hoped to uncover constraints, to jointly reflect on them in order to improve the aid practices in Halmahera, or to reconsider their aid relations with the GMIH, depending on the outcomes. I&K intended to allow an uncertain CBDRR process to evolve in Halmahera and to theorize on CBDRR in a post-conflict setting, but the circumstances led I&K to engineer a process to allow the GMIH synod to reflect on their way of delivering humanitarian and development aid. For this purpose, it used an outside researcher to unravel the constraints, gaps and contradictions in this part of the aid chain including the organizations in the Netherlands, and to propose improvements.

I increasingly felt uncomfortable in this role, questioning whether it would be ethically correct to uncover information and analysis about specific powerful actors in this particular pilot that could be detrimental to them. Not because I was afraid for their repercussions on me, but because they use their authority to transfer the responsibility of malpractices on to their lower ranks. My documentation in 2006 of several open and honest discussions with field staff of YTBI and previous GMIH-synod members about the aid practices in Maluku, was perceived as critique by the leadership, and had as consequence that field staff was discharged or not re-elected into the synod. I found it ethically incorrect to risk more discharges of staff, and in consultation with the initiators of the research we decided to use less public means to report constraints and malpractices to I&K. Compared to the CBDRR pilots elsewhere, the research encounters in Halmahera revealed more about the complex donor-partner relationships and the internal power dynamics within church institutions than about the meaning of CBDRR in the (post) conflict context of Halmahera.

Hale (2001: 15) raises this concern of "*studying powerful people and institutions, with whom you do not identify ethically or politically*". In the case of Halmahera, it was difficult to maintain trusted reciprocal relationships with *all* actors, as the inter-subjectivity between the researcher and the researched started to erode, which undermined the internal validity of those research findings that dealt with donor-local partner interactions. The relationship with field staff remained good, but they also increasingly felt distanced from the debates going on at higher levels in the aid chain.

⁴ Since 2010 it became more critical to downward accountability and ends partnerships when this is problematic

The two cases demonstrate that tensions and conflict are part and parcel of an interactive research methodology, and that these are instrumental for deepening the analysis on the workings of aid agencies. The cases further demonstrate how knowledge construction and the tensions are embedded in institutional histories and settings, related to organizational political agendas. The instrumentality of tensions applies as long as the research subjects stay on speaking terms. However, when research subjects enter antagonistic relationships with distorted communication, eroding trust and respect for one another, an interactive research methodology focusing on organizational learning and improving aid practice is no longer appropriate.

2.3 Relevance, appropriateness, and ethics of interactive research in disaster and conflict settings

My fieldwork took place in so-called 'difficult' environments referring to (post) conflict settings like in Maluku, to unstable security settings like in Afghanistan and to environments where the police, military or powerful elite are present to protect the vested interests in mining and logging operations and who intimidate local people and NGO staff like in Central Java. Wall and Mollinga (2008) argue that field research in difficult political environments brings to light several methodological difficulties very prominently, but in the end these are part of any development research. Their message is that these difficulties are not just isolated problems to overcome, but features that continue to present themselves during fieldwork and which need to be constantly negotiated and managed.

References exist about studying conflict, and equally, a lot of references exist about interactive research methodologies. However, very little literature can be found on doing interactive research in real-time conflict settings. The general academic argument is that insecurity makes it impossible to secure valid data and that serious research has to wait till the fighting stops (Goodhand, 2000: 12). Goodhand argues that if researchers wait until violence and fighting ends, knowledge and understanding tend to be stuck at pre-war level. Conflict in Afghanistan has been going on for about three decades, and humanitarian responses that would be based on pre-war understanding, ignore the fact that Afghan society has moved on, and are likely to be inappropriate (ibid). The local Afghan NGOs that are part of this research have been working in the country since the 1990s, even before and during the Taliban era. They expressed that their current aid practices and understanding fall short in a fast changing security environment, and requested to learn how to integrate disaster risk reduction in their development programmes in conflict contexts. From the perspective of these Afghan aid agencies, doing interactive research in conflict settings is relevant and appropriate.

During the period of this interactive research, however, the way NGOs are perceived by Afghans has changed considerably. During the 1990s NGOs were regarded as the main providers of basic services in the absence of a functioning central government, whereas in the 2000s they were increasingly perceived as being part of the political and military agendas of the international community. In addition, the security in the northern and western provinces worsened since 2009 and as a result the NGOs adopted a more conservative security policy to protect foreigners and themselves. We shifted to low profile visits, and in Herat I shifted to a remote control research methodology, because the local NGO did not dare to take the risk to travel with me to the communities. As a foreign researcher I relied on

trustworthy local information on security dynamics to make informed decisions about where, when and how to do research, and equally had to accept the decisions of local partners when travelling was found too risky.

Security information was offered by the Afghan NGO Security Office (ANSO) and the local partner NGOs who relied also on information from villagers. During field visits, this information was checked every morning before departure to the field, and by communicating my whereabouts every hour to the NGO's security officer during road travel. We tried to stay away from military convoys and police escorts, and always travelled with at least two cars without NGO logos and keeping low profile. In this way the security risks could be managed. Of course these measures highly limited the intensity of field research. The time I could stay in the village was limited to two to three days to reduce the risk of kidnapping. For the same reason we could not stay overnight in or close to the villages, and were required to travel daily back and forth between the villages and the provincial towns before dark, which consumed valuable time we could not spend in the village. However, these measures are part of the researcher's own survival strategies. Additionally I needed to be sensitive to the needs and fears of NGO staff and community people (Kuzmits, 2008). Because of these constraints, Barakat and Leslie (1996: 152) recommend researchers spread fieldwork over a series of short case studies in different locations to reduce the amount of time spent in each area. That is what I did.

Flexibility and creativity in adapting research methods

Research in conflict settings is possible with the right contacts and access through local NGOs, and flexibility and creativity in adapting research methodologies (Barakat and Ellis, 1996; Goodhand, 2000; Wall and Mollinga, 2008). There are many factors though that require the attention of the researcher to keep a flexible approach to research methods. The research methods I used in Afghanistan differed from the ones I applied in Maluku and from those in Central Java. Although I prepared an initial checklist with general topics for semi-structured interviews to understand local situations and how people deal with their environment in Afghanistan and Indonesia, I soon realized that I had to adopt different methods for different contexts. This had to do with culture, the nature of the conflict, the political environment, how local NGO staff is perceived by different actors locally, and whether the research would lead to tangible benefits for local people or not.

My fieldwork in Maluku, for instance, took place six years after the violent conflict, which raged over Halmahera from 1999 till 2000. When I visited Halmahera in 2006 my first intention was to understand how and why people living in a (post)conflict zone act as they do, and what options they have to shape their life. I had to obtain prior permission from the provincial government and the police to be able to enter the southern part of the island, and I had to report to military posted in the district. Many people were reluctant to talk about the violence when others were present, and I noticed that most people I talked to were still in the process of making sense themselves of what actually happened. I decided to forget about the checklist and to use oral histories or story-telling as a method to understand how people ascribe meaning to events like disasters and conflict, and how to interpret silence or distortions in stories (Leydesdorff et al, 1999). To follow-up on the individual oral histories to investigate "*the conflict setting as inhabited and understood by individuals, households and communities*" (Boås, et al, 2006: 74), I focused on their coping strategies referred to as

'coping strategy approach' by Boås. Both methods recognize that people have agency and do not passively accept their fate. They actively create ways to deal with adversity. I met with Christian and Muslim villagers to hear stories from both sides although I knew in advance⁵ that not religion but other issues like land, jobs, ethnicity and transmigration triggered violence. However, fear still exists that tensions can become again a vehicle to mobilize supporters according to religious lines, hence my interest to get both perspectives.

In Afghanistan, this approach did not work. It was quite difficult to talk to people individually, since it is the *shura* (customary village council), or the *malik* (village head) who is considered by Afghans the proper institution to represent the villagers to the outside world (Johnson and Leslie, 2004). Only in a few occasions I could negotiate time to talk to people individually, and maximized my time during breaks, travel or other occasions to talk to people informally and in unstructured ways. The 'coping strategies approach' was then more appropriate than oral histories. Since I am a female researcher I could negotiate access to the stories and views of Afghan women and I always requested to organize separate meetings with women. The practice was that the meetings with male *shura* members and female *shura* members were often organised simultaneously, because it is culturally not accepted that Afghan women walk in public without male relatives, or attend "public" meetings. By organizing both meetings simultaneously in different but nearby localities, women could travel with their male relatives, and meet with me. Consequently I had to divide my time between the two groups resulting in less in-depth discussions. I accepted this constraint, since the benefit of this arrangement was that at least this interactive research could fill the gender gap which is unfortunately present in most NGO interventions in Afghanistan. In several instances I was invited for tea and lunch inside their houses to discuss 'women-things', leaving the male NGO staff outside who then continued talking with the men, if time and security allowed. For such reasons, I preferred to have female translators, if possible, since these moments were precious to learn more about the everyday life and concerns of Afghan women. Aside from visiting all the villages that were selected for the CBDRR-pilots, we also met with the provincial and district authorities to assess the level of engagement, commitment and institutional opportunities and constraints.

In specific parts in Indonesia, military and police monitor the movements of NGOs, CSOs and foreigners, and the researcher should be alert that they can be present during community meetings, especially in localities where mining companies are operating or seek access to new exploration sites. At a smaller scale, in villages where the village elite is involved in quarrying and logging, local people are intimidated to not oppose these practices, and may be reluctant to speak freely. Both in Halmahera and Central Java, I experienced that villagers did not feel safe to discuss sensitive issues related to mining and logging, and therefore alternative places were arranged to meet outside their villages where they could speak freely. Or I checked in advance with community organizers and field staff what issues could be discussed and which ones not, since I did not want to upset villagers or destruct the community organizing processes. Community organizers would then inform me when time was right to discuss these issues openly without fear for repercussions. In most occasions,

⁵ Through my work as coordinator at the European Centre for Conflict Prevention, and co-editor of A. Heijmans, N. Simmonds and H. van der Veen (Eds), 2004, *Searching for Peace in Asia Pacific: an overview of conflict prevention and peace building activities*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, Colorado

also NGO field staff and community organizers are target of intimidations like text messages with death threats. In this context it is important to raise that in this research the NGOs are not the 'host' of my research, but 'partners' in both the intervention and research part. They are committed to engage in complex and politically sensitive processes and are willing to take these risks.

'Do no Harm' and 'Do some good'

Oral histories and the coping strategies approach aimed to collect data about local realities and people's risk narratives and to understand how they deal with disasters and conflict. These interactions between the researcher and local people were non-threatening and generated valuable insights (chapter 5). Interactions between local people and the NGO staff, including myself, changed as soon as the CBDRR-interventions took off. As I stated in chapter 1, CBDRR interventions should be viewed "*as a complex set of historically unfolding social encounters and battles over resources and meaning in which spatial and temporal dimensions play a role*" (Long, 2003: 51). Local people have their motives, agendas and understandings about interventions that may differ from the NGO-desired intervention process. In a conflict context this implies that researchers and local NGOs should be aware of sensitivities that CBDRR interventions can cause among different groups, and apply the 'do no harm' approach (Anderson, 1999; Goodhand, 2000).

However, it is not always clear from the start how power operates and how relations are formed within and beyond villages, to know who are the 'dividers' and who are 'connectors' in the villages, and whose power is reinforced through the CBDRR interventions. I observed this in Halmahera where the local partner and I tried to make sense of contradicting stories about land disputes between Birinoa, a Christian village, and Togoliua, an adjacent Muslim community. These villages got involved in the violent conflict in December 1999. Although the violence was organized along religious lines, explanations for violent incidents and current tensions point to land disputes between the two villages which go back to the transmigration of Muslim families to Togoliua in 1973⁶. Local people in Birinoa complained about unclear land borders, and accused people from Togoliua that they intrude their land. The people from Togoliua lost their land certificates during the conflict, and left their land uncultivated when they evacuated to Ternate. Upon return they reconstructed a specific understanding about how *adat*⁷ law should be applied in these specific post-conflict circumstances. The authorities in Birinoa made up *their adat* interpretation, which differed from the one in Togoliua.

Initially, the local NGO focused on the difference in *adat* interpretations with the aim to solve the land disputes through dialogue and mediation between the villages. While the CBDRR-pilot started with collecting more historical, social, institutional and spatial data, involving community people from various positions and backgrounds, it became clear that individuals from Birinoa informally sold land to individual households from Togoliua for personal economic gains without the consent of village authorities. When these everyday practices of these individuals were uncovered, the villagers in Togoliua who bought land in Birinoa no longer attended meetings and kept silent about the land disputes, while the village head and secretary of Birinoa tried to win the NGO support for legitimizing their land

⁶ See chapter 5 for the complete background of the violence.

⁷ *Adat* refers to the set of cultural norms, values, customs and practices found among specific ethnic groups in Indonesia.

claim. People's everyday life consists of multiple realities (Long, 2001: 19) and these are not apparent right at the start, but need to be uncovered through the interaction.

Hale (2001: 15) argues that people involved in an interactive research setting “*tend to provide much more, and much higher quality information when they feel they have an active stake in the research process*.” I agree with Hale that this holds true for the ‘research’ side of interactive research, for instance, unravelling contradictory stories about land disputes aimed to solve them, and which teach us a lot about the very processes that we try to understand (ibid: 15). I like to add, however, that uncovering contradictions should simultaneously consider the consequences for the quality of the *interactive* side of the research. In case contradictions and confrontations lead to polarization of actors, silencing of actors, or when the NGO's interventions are perceived as partial by one group, it is important to maintain relationships with all parties. First of all, because it has to be avoided that some villagers benefit from the research, while others won't. Goodhand (2000) warns for being co-opted, to be sensitive for the needs and fears of people, to have an awareness of implicit messages the NGOs are sending out through the intervention for specific groups, and how it would affect tensions or conflict. As researcher and NGO staff, we were aware of these points in theory, but it remained a challenge to timely recognize and deal with them in practice.

Goodhand (2000: 13) remarks that there is a need to constantly assess whether the results of the research justify the risk involved. “*If social learning is the objective and the research is likely to lead to tangible benefits to those being researched, the level of acceptable risk may be higher than for a more academic research exercise without any planned follow-up*” (ibid). He refers to the acceptable risks for the researcher and aid agencies who work in conflict areas, but acceptable risks are also an issue for the communities involved. They also take risks to interact with NGOs and a foreign researcher if they believe the interactive research will benefit them, especially in the Afghan context. I view the CBDRR pilot in Herat, western Afghanistan, in this light. Goodhand's and Anderson's considerations to do no harm were also valid for this case, where different ethnic groups and villages competed over natural resources and suffered from sandstorms. The NGO recognized and dealt with sensitive issues like competing claims on natural resources and facilitated with several villages and government institutions a reforestation plan. Since 2009 security dynamics worsened in the province with incidental clashes between the Taliban and ISAF troops. The communities became a no-go area for me, and this largely affected both the interaction and the research part of doing interactive research. As a result, the interaction between me and the community took place in the NGO office in the provincial town. Usually the same group of villagers would come – both men and women – to update, to discuss and reflect on the intervention process and their everyday life experiences. They took the risk to meet me and the NGO staff by travelling to provincial capital. The fact that they came to the office every time can be interpreted as that the intervention is relevant for them, although I have to admit that for several months I doubted whether I was engaged in a fake process or not. I missed the ocular visits and other conventional triangulation methods. How could I verify what was really going on?

Such circumstances required a creative use of multiple methods and an acceptance of certain data gaps. “*The use of multiple techniques is not, as in positivist triangulation, to try and validate some philosophical notion of absolute truth, but an acknowledgement of the*

restraints that the circumstances of war put upon the researcher” (Barakat and Ellis, 1996: 153). I used Google earth to get at least an aerial impression of the environment, and found case studies on reducing sandstorms on internet conducted in the same province. I further read research reports from the Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) about conflicts on pasturelands, and landownership and access regulations to natural resources. Together with the information in the NGO’s progress reports I formulated sets of questions and engaged in e-mail and Skype conversations with the NGO field staff to fill data gaps, continue the process of sense-making and ensure internal validity. This remote control kind of interactive research felt weird, but it was valued by the NGO and communities. It was not only me asking questions to them; they also raised questions about the CBDRR process and new developments like what to do to counter a mice infestation which threatened the reforested area. We exchanged technical information about pest control that community people would test and report back.

Selecting translators

The best thing to do when working in conflict areas is to learn the local language. From my experiences in the Philippines and Nepal I know the importance to be able to understand the everyday conversations in the street to pick up signals of threats or fear. This time however, it wasn’t possible to learn and speak two new languages. I am aware this is a weakness of the research. If this interactive research would have been conducted in one country, I would definitely have invested in learning the language. However, considering the short periods of time I spent in each country, and the insecurity of not knowing how often I would visit Afghanistan, relying on reliable translators was a good alternative.

Over the course of my fieldwork I worked with different translators. In Afghanistan I always, except the first time when a male translator was already hired – requested for a female translator to get access to both men and women. It is not easy to find a female translator since not many women are allowed by their families to travel with a foreigner to rural villages. Once we had to accept a *mahram*, a trusted male accompaniment, to allow her to travel with me. She was a medical doctor, born and educated in Pakistan as a refugee, and returned to Kabul in 2003. She has been so much protected by her family from the outside world that she honestly believed that there was no poverty in Afghanistan. I wondered if she would be the appropriate person for being my translator, but she turned out to be a brave and curious woman with many aspirations. Her dream was to study surgery to cure Afghan women from those diseases, like breast cancer, for which they currently cannot find assistance due to the male dominated medical care system. Female surgeons are actually not accepted in Afghanistan. Her medical background turned out to be an asset when we visited villages and met with the women and children. Her diagnoses, practical advice and referral notes were highly welcomed. Witnessing so much ailments and disorders during a short visit made me realize why Afghanistan was ranked as the most dangerous place in the world for women due to violence, dismal healthcare and poverty⁸. I felt grateful that my translator could bring some relief. My other Afghan translators had also studied or lived abroad (US, Germany, and England). They had NGO backgrounds and were familiar with the areas where the CBDRR-pilot took place. Important is that these translators were all outsiders to local conflict dynamics, and did not interfere in discussions.

⁸ According to a survey conducted by TrustLaw, an arm of Thomson Reuters.

In Indonesia translators came from the local NGOs that were involved in the interactive research, but who themselves were not involved in the implementation. They were very conscious in separating the translation of what has been said in the discussion, and providing their own interpretation. They are or have been researchers themselves and know the art of translating, and did not attempt –as far as I could intuitively tell - to conceal or hide any sensitive information.

2.4 Shaping the interactive research – “*designing the plane while flying it*”

Early 2006, I had many discussions with Evert and Sjoerd of I&K on how to shape the CBDRR pilot programme organisationally. Interactive research is often perceived as cooperation between the different parties, involving a subject-subject relationship between the researcher and researched subjects, also referred to as inter-subjectivity. However, it was not very clear at the start what kind of subjects the various actors were supposed to be (Roose and de Bie, 2009). We distinguished four parties: (1) the researcher; (2) the research subjects like programme officers of I&K, and local partner NGOs; (3) those who should benefit from the research – in this case disaster and conflict affected population; and (4) those who stand to benefit from this research, the management and policy makers (ibid: 109).

Evert and Sjoerd insisted from the start that the interactive research should take the perspective of local people, and their participation in aid programming as a starting point. This means that people’s views, ideas and interests should be acknowledged and recognized in the CBDRR pilots. Knowing that the incompatibility between policy and practice is most felt in the interaction between local people and NGO field staff, and between the local NGO and the donor agency (Quarles van Ufford, 1993: 137), Evert, Sjoerd and me took the decision to focus on the local level, and to create subject-subject relationships between the researcher and the local NGO staff. The research objects were the CBDRR pilots as a specific form of aid intervention, and the manifold ways in which various actors interact – both on and off stage – with NGO field staff to shape these CBDRR interventions.

Another subject-subject relationship was formed through the establishment of a Steering Group consisting of the researcher and several staff members from the head-office of I&K in the Netherlands: Evert and Sjoerd, the concerned staff dealing with the Afghanistan and Indonesia programmes, and a part-time coordinator for the CBDRR pilot programme. Later representatives from three thematic programmes⁹ joined the Steering Group. Within the Steering Group we discussed our roles. I was assigned to act as facilitator, advisor, capacity builder, to keep a critical eye on the whole process and ensure quality of information and methodology. The other members of the Steering Group were responsible to communicate with selected local partners about the CBDRR pilots, and to use the findings from the CBDRR pilots for negotiating different aid practice and policies with their managers and policy-makers in the head-office. The organizational change agenda was put in the hands of the Steering Group: they were the *change agents* to lobby and influence policy, procedures and operational systems with the management and policy-makers. My role as researcher in the organizational change process was defined as to explain the methodology applied to establish validity and credibility of findings, and to produce and present the field-based evidence to the organizations’ management. Whereas the Steering group had frequent

⁹ These three themes were ‘Democratization and Peace building’, ‘Access to Basic Services’, and Sustainable and Just Economic Development’

meetings with I&K's managers and policy-makers, my interaction was limited to three times: in 2006 to present the research design; mid-2008 to present the interim-findings of the CBDRR-pilots, and at the end of this research I presented the conclusions, main findings and implications for aid programming.

'Inter-subjectivity' is a notion in interactive research to mark the nature of relationship between the researcher and the actors involved in the research, which is close because the researcher and the researched study a shared reality of aid practice and policy. As a previous CBDRR-practitioner working with local NGOs in Asia, I could appeal to the experiences, dilemmas and frustrations of local NGO staff, and in this sense I could come close to them as researcher. However, I also needed a certain distance when I wrote about their experiences and analysed them using a conceptual framework. I do not solely rely on their information, since I can use other references which help to enlighten the problems to be solved.

Like an intervention, also an interactive research creates power relations from its inception, and also during the process of shaping the research design and its implementation, discussions, debates and conflicts are inevitable. This raises questions concerning positioning and roles of the researcher, the institutional politics related to the selection of local partners, and negotiating research principles and methods.

2.4.1 Multiple roles and positioning of the researcher

I was aware of the fact that my role and position as researcher changed according to circumstances, institutional context and the roles I was asked to play. To start with my positioning in this interactive research, I distinguish three dimensions: (1) the position of the researcher vis-à-vis the power-holders and the change-motives of initiators of research; (2) the researcher's own research agenda and change-motives; (3) the position as independent, distant outsider, and 'knowledge broker'.

(1) Position of researcher vis-à-vis research initiators and power holders

In my case *Insiders invited an outside researcher* to join the research in collaboration with them (Herr and Anderson, 2005). I was part of a Steering Group created within I&K that consisted of like-minded people who aim to understand the discrepancy between grassroots realities and aid programming and intend to change organizational culture and settings. The insiders/outsider team faced a hierarchical power within the organisation. The change-motive was directed to institutional arrangements within the aid chain. It is important to mention that the Steering Group solicited funds for this research from PSO's capacity-building programme, an independent source.

(2) Position of researcher as CBDRR-practitioner and reflective insider

The reason why I agreed to this interactive research was my motivation to reflect on my own work experience in Asia. Several research questions came from there. I worked for almost eight years with a local partner of I&K in the Philippines. Therefore I could position myself partly as insider, particularly at the problem-posing and data-gathering part of the research together with the local partners' field staff in Indonesia and Afghanistan. I brought in contextualized knowledge from the Philippines, which I shared with the NGOs' staff. They related this knowledge to their specific contexts and either adapted or criticized it. Their

knowledge and experience contributed to valuable discussions, reflections and ideas to look at CBDRR interventions differently, while I became aware of my own assumptions.

(3) Position as PhD researcher: independent, distant outsider, and 'knowledge broker'

Although subject-subject relationships were established between the researcher and local field staff, my independent position as researcher and distant outsider, allowed me to collect views, experiences and opinions of local populations on how they dealt with risk, and who were sometimes not (yet) involved in the CBDRR interventions. For instance in Afghanistan, I negotiated with local partner NGOs to meet with Afghan women knowing that the NGO did not involve them. In central Java, I talked to landless settlers affected by floods but who were not yet included in the CBDRR pilot. I could critically reflect on the routines and aid practices of field staff, and 'broker' the opinions and views from local populations to aid practitioners and policy makers.

When writing field visit reports, interim-reviews or chapters for my dissertation, I stepped back further and as an outsider I reflected on all practitioners' actions and reflections taking a bird-eye's view position to interpret the findings, opinions of the different learning cycles, policies and documents and to relate them to theories. Ideally, there is mutual dialogue between practice and theory during the interactive research process. We studied very complex and dynamic problems, which required the mobilization of research expertise from various academic disciplines and locations. What could be mobilized locally, we tapped. What was not available we tried to broker through contacts, MSc research or literature. In this PhD, I focus on theorizing on CBDRR, but making sense of all the interactions and dynamics in the varying CBDRR pilots in Afghanistan and Indonesia and relating it to theories often goes slower than the social dynamics in the field and practitioners' demands for solutions and answers. It is a challenge to synchronize academic theorizing with social engagement.

A second challenge of interactive research is to maintain one's independence as a researcher. In the end it is the researcher who is responsible for the content of the PhD dissertation and written products in between. Sometimes I felt that the actors involved in the research looked over my shoulders to what I wrote about them. I dealt with this by concentrating on *how* I write about them – in a critical but respectful, emphatic manner – and by submitting written pieces about process and reflection outcomes to the Steering Group for joint analysis and validation. In case of disagreement, I explained how I arrived at a certain interpretation. I opened a genuine dialogue with them, and allowed their perspectives to be expressed. My concern was to keep a balance between being critical and maintaining and appreciating relationships. As researcher you can be critical to the researched, if you show empathy to understand why they did something in a certain way, when you offer workable alternatives or solutions, and when you respect practitioners' expertise (Chisholm, 1990).

Shifting roles during research process

During the research process my roles as researcher continuously changed from independent observer, facilitator, trainer, advisor, mediator, communicator, sounding board, knowledge-broker, to researcher. This requires clarity and awareness on when to play which role, and the flexibility to change roles. As much as possible I documented the process, the changing

roles I played and if possible how others perceived me in these roles. The latter turned out to be important to understand their (changed) attitudes towards me or to the CBDRR pilot in general. Often these perceptions come out later during a trusted internal environment for reflection, or as a surprise when new staff, for instance, articulated prejudiced views on the CBDRR pilot.

During the course of the research I attended seminars and workshops about interactive research methodologies with WUR researchers like the Community of Practice on collaborative research from 2007-2008, and through the Action Research Action Learning Interest Group (ARALIG) in 2009 on the politics of interactive research. In this way I sought dialogue with peer-researchers to reflect on research encounters, to monitor the quality of this research, and to get inspired by new insights.

2.4.2 Selection of local partners to be involved in the CBDRR pilots

Early 2006 the Steering Group prepared an initial short-list of potential partner NGOs which could be interested to join the research, and discussed selection criteria for the CBDRR pilot communities. The aim for the first year was to select local partners in Indonesia and Afghanistan and to identify communities where to pilot the CBDRR-approach. Local partners were oriented on the CBDRR pilot through kick-off seminars and actual visits during 2006, and invited to join if they were interested. For this purpose I travelled twice to Afghanistan and once to Indonesia. I started with an open mind exploring local and institutional contexts, assessing past and current aid practice of local partners, their histories with donors, and their interest and willingness to join the CBDRR action-reflection process. I prioritized investing in relationships as participant observer, respecting their practice. I did not want to immediately engage in developing concrete research plans and arrangements. I presented CBDRR as an entry-point to reflect on their practice, on constraints in the aid chain, and to reflect on donor policies. Everyone was motivated to have discussions on content and concepts instead of talking about finance and reporting. I noticed lots of frustrations, particularly among field workers. Table 2.1 lists the local partners involved in the research and research localities.

Table2.1 Partners and villages involved in interactive research

Research partners	Localities	Duration CBDRR pilots
<i>Oxfam-Novib:</i> Afghan Development Association (ADA) Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA)	- 8 adjacent villages in Nahreen, Baghlan, Afghanistan - 3 adjacent villages in Khulm, Balkh, Afghanistan	2007 - 2009 2007 - abandoned
<i>ICCO (first two also Kerkinactie partners):</i> Cooperation Centre for Afghanistan (CCA) Sanayee Development Organization (SDO) SHEEP YLSKAR YAPHI	- 3 remote villages in Bamiyan, Afghanistan - 2 adjacent villages in Ghoryan, Herat, Afghanistan - 11 villages along Juwana river + 4 villages on Muria Mountain, Pati district, Central Java - 4 villages on Muria mountain, Jepara district, Central Java - Legal support function to the other NGOs in Central Java	2009 – on-going 2009 – on-going 2006 - on-going 2009 – on-going 2009 - on-going
<i>Kerkinactie:</i> YPL GMIH-SANRO	- 2 villages on Muria Mountain, Kudus district, Central Java - 4 villages in Weda –Gane, Halmahera, Maluku - 3 villages in Tobelo district, Halmahera, Maluku - 1 village in Buli district, Halmahera, Maluku	2009 – on-going 2006 – never started 2009 – 2010 2009 - 2010
Total number of villages involved in the pilot: 44 villages (see maps 1, 2 and 3 in front of the book). 11 villages were abandoned, not because of security reasons or internal village dynamics, but because of decisions of local partner and aid chain dynamics between donor and local partners. Chapter 6 will deal with these decisions.		

Two other partners of Oxfam-Novib were involved in the CBDRR-pilot: IbnSina and BRAC-Afghanistan. They were part of the whole process but I decided not to include them in this PhD thesis, since I considered BRAC-Afghanistan as a foreign NGO, while IbnSina, a public health organisation, used CBDRR as an approach to be integrated in their health programme, with very promising results though, but beyond the scope of this PhD thesis. Then, local partners had to select communities that fulfilled pre-set criteria and were willing to join. In chapter 6, I will elaborate on the politics of selecting the communities for the CBDRR-pilot which is considered part of NGO aid practices and object of this research.

2.4.3 Negotiating research principles and methods

I&K were very strongly adhering to one particular research principle: “*real-world research requires interventions that do not deviate too much from real world conditions*” – according to Sjoerd. He meant that in order to improve the aid practice of local partners and project staff of both funding agencies, the researcher has to experience the constraints and pressures herself to produce relevant and meaningful solutions. The implication was that I shouldn’t spend more time in the field than programme officers usually do, meaning that I was supposed to visit partners and communities not more than twice a year for a short period of time. This was an issue of serious debate within the Steering Group, since I preferred to stay longer in the field to do more in-depth research as a participant observer. My PhD supervisor also attempted to convince the Steering Group about the importance to have space and time for doing independent in-depth research, but the principle remained unchanged. Whereas a prolonged exposure to local dynamics in villages would have resulted in more detailed information about community organizing processes, or NGO field staff practices of participation, I realized that the many short visits over an extended period of six years still enabled me to investigate the interaction between local level institutions with civil society groups, and government institutions. I was able to observe some tangible, preliminary outcomes of political struggles and negotiations among the various CBDRR actors like in Herat and Central Java. The limitation of short visits forced me to organize my field visits to Indonesia and Afghanistan more effectively, and to adopt a ‘multi-sited fieldwork’ approach (Marcus, 1995) along the aid chain tracking ‘CBDRR’ as a new idea and concept.

Multi-sited field work

In chapter 1, I contextualized CBDRR approaches in evolving development policy and practice from a historical perspective, and remarked that various interpretations of CBDRR exist among actors across nations, embedded in particular state-society configurations. This interactive research explores CBDRR interventions in new contexts involving different actors along the aid chain, and is therefore already in itself ‘multi-sited’. This research particularly aims to understand why different interpretations of CBDRR exist and how these are operationalized in practice. In order to answer this question, I adopted a multi-sited approach for my fieldwork (Marcus, 1995). Multi-sited research is designed around chains, paths, and conjunctions that are connected through the object of study, and where the researcher establishes some form of presence (ibid: 105). In multi-sited field work, the researcher can follow a specific group of people, the production, processing and consumption of things, or the travelling of metaphors, an idea or concept, evolving events like conflicts, or –in this case – the translation of CBDRR policy into practice (ibid).

For this research, I followed actors in the head offices in the Netherlands to understand their construction of concepts like risk, vulnerability and CBDRR, and followed programme officers traveling to Afghanistan and Indonesia who explained and espoused new CBDRR policy to local partners, and local NGO field staff when they interact with local people. Locally, I studied how community people, civil society organizations and government officials constructed their meaning of CBDRR and the various concepts, which are embedded in their cultural, organizational, historical and even so political environment in which they live and operate. *“Multi-sited field work is thus always conducted with a keen awareness of being within the landscape, and as the landscape changes across sites, the identity of the researcher requires renegotiation”* (ibid: 112). Moving between sites as researcher required changing roles or positions, influenced by the researcher’s affinities for, affiliations with, or alienation from those with whom the researcher interacts at different sites. *“In certain sites, one seems to be working with, and in others – like in Maluku - one seems to be working against, changing sets of subjects”* (Marcus, 1995: 113).

An exchange visit to the Philippines – countering prejudices, uncovering hidden assumptions

At the start of shaping this interactive research, I&K proposed to organize an exchange visit to Bangladesh or the Philippines. These two countries experience many large and small impact disasters, and are known for their various CBDRR-approaches to reduce disaster risk (UNISDR, 2004). The Philippines was chosen because I&K wanted to expose its local NGO partners from Afghanistan and Indonesia to a kind of CBDRR practice that recognizes the political nature of disaster risk reduction. The Philippine experience of the Citizens’ Disaster Response Centre (CDRC) served as a source of reference to provide direction for the CBDRR-pilots.

In November 2008, staff from all local partners NGOs involved in the CBDRR pilot in Afghanistan and Indonesia travelled to the Philippines to join a two-week exchange programme. Also staff from three local partners in Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador joined the exchange visit since their experience in CBDRR could also contribute to a valuable exchange of experiences. The exchange visit was organized together with the Centre for Disaster Preparedness (CDP), CDRC, I&K, while several local NGOs and government officials in Central Luzon and Mindanao hosted field visits. Staff of CDP who were temporarily doing advisory work for UNDP in Pakistan, were very instrumental in arranging visa for the Afghan participants at the Philippine Embassy in Islamabad, and to get permission from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to travel with Afghan and Indonesian citizens to war-affected parts of Mindanao.

The purpose of the visit was to reflect on CBDRR concepts and community organizing strategies; to critically reflect on ‘participation’ by actually conducting a participatory risk assessment in an urban flood-prone community in Manila, identifying appropriate risk reduction measures for that community, and then reflecting on the proposed measures with the community. Field visits to both disaster and conflict areas were organized to relate observations and reflections on CBDRR practices in the Philippines to the specific contexts in their home-countries. The Afghan and Indonesian partners were particular interested in understanding people’s risk perceptions and why these can differ among various actors, how to link people’s vulnerabilities at the local to macro level root causes, and how to engage with local government and other relevant actors.

The exchange visit revealed that by *'doing CBDRR'* in new contexts - like doing a risk assessment with urban poor in Manila - one's own perceptions and values become more explicit, and that these often differ from the perceptions and values of community people. Through several real-time exercises, the Afghan and Indonesian NGO staff discovered the value of participation, and that local people are able to provide relevant feedback on the staff's proposed measures. These new practices deviated from their routines at home, and made the Afghan and Indonesian staff's implicit assumptions and tacit knowledge explicit. *"In Afghanistan we work top-down, because we assume that people are not yet ready to participate and take decisions like these urban poor do in Manila"*. They looked at the "Philippine world of CBDRR" through their contextualized lenses, like I did in their countries. *"In Indonesia it is not possible to just enter a village without having spoken or getting permission from the village head"*. By carefully listening to the kind of questions they raised, I could learn about the realities in their home-countries and their hidden assumptions.

The exchange of multiple perspectives on CBDRR increased the reflective ability of the whole group and made our prejudices explicit. Instead of posing the question *"is CBDRR – meaning like in the Philippines- applicable in the Afghan and Indonesian context"* we asked: *"what will CBDRR look like in Afghanistan and in Indonesia?"*. This may seem an innocent twist in a question, but it raised new questions. Questions about how does change happen in each context, what do we want to strengthen and what do we challenge through our interactive research, whose and which norms and values are inserted, and whose expertise counts?

Visiting the Philippines with a group of foreign CBDRR practitioners confronted me with my own conceptualization of CBDRR. I gained a deeper insight in the particularities and context-specificity of the CBDRR approach. By allowing multiple perspectives on CBDRR and related concepts, I was confronted with my own perceptions and prejudices. I increasingly became aware that my so-called expert knowledge on CBDRR was not only contextualized but also idealised. The multiple reflections during the exchange visit made me realize to change my idealized image of CBDRR into a more naturalistic approach, emphasizing the unknown and unpredictability of current and future social dynamics in the selected CBDRR pilot areas. Instead of an 'expert interpretation' of CBDRR, I let its meaning emerge in the Afghan and Indonesian contexts. During the course of this interactive research I changed from a true CBDRR believer to someone questioning my own CBDRR practice in the Philippines.

The exchange visit further produced hope and inspiration for particularly the Afghans who visited conflict-affected and displaced communities in Mindanao, and observed how CBDRR could prepare people to prevent or reduce violence, and to report human rights and ceasefire violations through grassroots networks using text-messaging. The Indonesians returned home with more confidence¹⁰, taking with them many creative ideas for risk mapping, community organizing, and community exchange visits, which they applied in their CBDRR-pilot areas. Later, I noticed that the exchange visit had been instrumental for Afghan and Indonesian partners to open up to me, as researcher, in sharing their dilemmas.

¹⁰ This is what they expressed to me after they returned home.

2.5 Quality criteria for interactive research

Herr and Anderson (2005) searched for a definition of 'validity' that suits the nature of interactive research methodologies, which differs from how 'validity' is defined in positivist or constructivist research traditions, because researchers involved in interactive research are interested in outcomes that go beyond knowledge generation. Herr and Anderson offered a variety of criteria that are frequently cited and summarized in literature on action research and collaborative research methodologies. Using their overview, I distilled the following five quality criteria for this interactive research dealing with (1) the achievement of the CBDRR pilot outcomes, (2) relevance for local settings, (3) the quality of reciprocal relationships, (4) the usefulness of the CBDRR pilots for future aid programming, and (5) whether new knowledge was produced.

These quality criteria supported the researcher in observing the research process, its outcomes and the research quality. Triangulation in interactive research refers to the inclusion of multiple perspectives to guard against viewing events in a simplistic or self-serving way (Herr and Anderson, 2005: 56). Together with the local partners, except SANRO¹¹, I reflected on these criteria and whether they were met or not.

(1) *Objectives of the interactive research are achieved - 'outcome validity'*

According to the local NGOs involved in the CBDRR pilot programme, the objectives were achieved in terms of learning and changing their aid practice from separating emergency relief and development work, towards acknowledging different risk perspectives and the role of institutions in their on-going programmes, except in Halmahera and Khulm. All partners, except in Halmahera, adopted CBDRR into their organizational policies and strategic plans for aid programming. This is an indicator that they appreciated the piloted approach and its relevance for the local contexts. *"Even if CBDRR will not become formal policy of I&K, we will continue with CBDRR in current and new areas of operation"* expressed by the Muria Coalition members.

At the level of the funding agencies, CBDRR has been accepted by Oxfam-Novib as a relevant strategy to improve the humanitarian capacity of its local partners in Afghanistan, and it developed a policy paper on DRR in conflict situations elsewhere. I&K, however, did not yet formulate a DRR policy paper. Despite many attempts of the Steering Group to discuss the CBDRR pilot programme within its organizations, a genuine interest among individual managers and policy-makers exists, but it did not crystalize into new policy. I&K regard themselves as development organizations, and still view CBDRR as being part of the humanitarian programme, despite the intentions of the Steering Group to mainstream CBDRR in development programmes.

More specifically, I&K aimed to improve its downward accountability through CBDRR, using criteria like *'needs-based interventions'*, *'participation'*, *'empowerment'*, and *'resilient communities'*. This research revealed that these criteria confront us with a challenge: the CBDRR-interventions were never completely *'needs-based'*, *'participation'* of the most vulnerable was a challenge because of its boundaries set by social norms and values, *'resilience'* as a concept was not really used, whereas *'empowerment'* did happen

¹¹ SANRO was contacted about the researcher's visit to Indonesia in September 2011 and also I&K staff in Indonesia attempted to arrange a meeting to reflect on the whole research. Unfortunately, SANRO did not reply.

in various degrees. What does this mean? Is downward accountability as an idea problematic, or did we select the wrong criteria? Possibly both. The criteria we proposed rather matched with the idealistic logframe model expressing a desirability and manageability of social change (Quarles van Ufford, 1993). This research focused on the lowest level of the aid chain where local NGOs interacted with various social actors, on and off stage, viewing the interaction as 'a political arena' with unpredictable outcomes. Knowing the incompatibility between the logframe and the political arena model, we should have selected criteria that recognize complexity, connections, and the non-linear nature of interventions. This is an unexpected insight with implications for aid agencies to measure downward accountability differently, and to be clearer about to whom they are accountable.

(2) *Results are relevant for the local settings - 'local validity'.*

The CBDRR-pilots were implemented through action-reflection cycles to make sense of what happened locally and why the CBDRR process evolved as it did. Through the interactions between community organizers and various local actors, risk problems emerged from a particular context, and appropriate solutions were negotiated for. This quality criterion refers not only to the relevance and appropriateness of the research outcomes for local settings, but it also refers to whether all parties who had a stake in the CBDRR-process were involved (Herr and Anderson, 2005). The key actors in this research were the NGO field staff and community organizers, and they expressed that the research findings – both the practical insights from 'doing CBDRR' and the revisited concepts – were relevant for them, and for the local settings. In terms of CBDRR intervention outcomes, which are of a different level, it depends on whom you ask. The board of the local partner NGO in Halmahera did not appreciate the CBDRR-approach for its slow and politically sensitive nature, and as a result the research outcomes were not found relevant. Also the local people from the five downstream villages in Khulm did not appreciate the intervention outcomes, while the NGO field staff learned from their initial short-sightedness, and may improve their future performance.

(3) *Findings are result of reflexive cycles, reciprocal relationships and reciprocal adequacy – 'internal validity'.* This criterion has been complied with as I elaborated in this chapter, although the creation of reciprocal relationships, a precondition for joint reflections and sense-making, took in Indonesia about two to three years to happen, considering that I visited local partners only twice a year. I assumed to regularly reflect on the NGO's practice, using a set of practical cycles that I developed for that purpose to analyse the interactions within villages, between community people and field staff, and between field and management staff. It was only in 2009 when local partners were willing to openly reflect on their performance and practice, after they realized that 'CBDRR' wasn't part of new donor policy pushed on them. They started to share their insights learned which they hadn't shared with me during previous visits. They did use my practical cycles for internal reflections. Since then we exchanged views and experiences *jointly*, on community organizing and strategies for change at the village level, we shared different kinds of knowledge to analyse problems and to find ways to deal with them. They expressed that they appreciated such discussions, because they are about content instead of project management and reports. So, although I did not stay for long periods in the field as researcher, I did develop a prolonged engagement with the local NGOs and the respective

staff in the headquarters through feedback reporting, e-discussions and later on through Skype-meetings that occurred in between the actual visits. In Halmahera the reciprocal relationships established with the field staff came under threat, which resulted in partial reflections which undermined the internal validity of the research findings of this case.

For Oxfam-Novib, I worked with local partners through short-term research contracts which lasted till 2009. Our relationships were good, but I realized afterwards that they were not based on reciprocity. While I met with Oxfam-Novib's partners in Afghanistan during a workshop organized by ICCO's partners in April 2009 and discussed with them CBDRR updates and reflections, the relationship with the head office's staff had ended, both formally and informally. No interest existed anymore in the progress of this research, or what I did with the data and analysis of the CBDRR experiences of its Afghan partners. When reciprocal relationships end or do not exist, the practice of double hermeneutics becomes problematic, and affects the internal validity of interactive research.

In the course of the interactive research I further experienced that my interaction with the various local NGOs differed significantly from intensive interactions about CBDRR-practice and coming up with new meanings of concepts, to a minimal form of interaction to basically understand what was going on locally. Some NGO staff are not well-versed to outsiders, and extra efforts were required to allow them to express their thoughts, and for me to understand them, valuing their contributions equally as the other NGOs with whom it was easier to relate. It is tempting to validate findings with only those who are well-versed, but reliability of data interpretation required the engagement of all, and not necessarily all at the same time. The last round of validation was done by purposely visiting and Skyping the NGOs separately to allow them to speak freely without comments of other NGOs.

(4) *Reorienting, focusing and energizing the actors involved towards knowing reality in order to transform practices - 'Catalytic validity'*. During the CBDRR-pilots and reflection workshops I observed a spiralling change in the field staff's understanding of local realities. They reflected on their practice and started doing things differently, did not only gain a better understanding of how interventions interact with social systems, they also gained *skills* on how to interact differently. Comparing the first introductory workshops on CBDRR with the reflection sessions after two-three years, field staff espoused their CBDRR practice differently in terms of diversity in risk perceptions, of changing the hazard-viewpoint into a more structural, institutional viewpoint. Also my understanding about CBDRR changed, especially due to the reflections on the Afghan pilots. I was amazed how local staff could transform my inputs that were initially based on the Philippine experience, to the Afghan situation. The exchange visit to the Philippines generated inspiration and changed understandings as well. Describing local settings as political arenas, generated the most energy among community organizers as if their efforts and challenges got formally recognized by the NGO management staff. Despite the challenging political CBDRR arenas, the NGOs intend to apply the CBDRR approach in other localities, like in Aceh, because they view it as a viable and relevant approach to find durable solutions. Equipped with new insights and skills, they can apply these in other localities where they will work in the future. This is referred to as *catalytic validity*.

This notion is also discussed under the term ‘trans-contextual credibility’, referring to the actor who seeks to make an application of the newly defined concept elsewhere (Herr and Anderson, 2005).

(5) *New knowledge is generated for both practice and theory – ‘dialogic validity’*

Although this research is basically practice-driven, interim findings and experiences were tested with academic literature, related to on-going theoretical debates, and presented and debated during conferences, while experiences with an interactive research methodology were tested in workshops with WUR researchers involved in interactive research, like the Community of Practice on collaborative research from 2007-2008, and through the Action Research Action Learning Interest Group (ARALIG) in 2009 on the politics of interactive research. In this way I sought dialogue with peer-researchers to monitor the quality of this research. I emphasized to value scientific theory-driven knowledge equally as practitioners knowledge, and at the end of this research I realized that interactive research is not only about *knowledge production* for both theory and practice, but also about *different ways of knowing* that are blended into a new way of perceiving and understanding local contexts and aid practices. The concluding chapter presents how new insights led to revisited CBDRR concepts and specific meanings of CBDRR in different contexts, as well as what this knowledge means for aid practices through formulating several implications for aid practitioners and policy-makers.

Reflecting on the whole research process, I regard the establishment of reciprocal relationships *and maintaining* these, as one of the most crucial criterion for interactive research, because it is a precondition for complying with the other criterion to achieve results that are valid and meaningful. Because of reciprocal relationships, local partners and the Steering Group of I&K challenged my thinking and remained critical to my texts and interpretations, which I defended or adjusted according to their arguments. In this way we dealt with multiple perspectives, partiality and preconceived judgment, and produced findings that were not just ‘right’ but ‘meaningful’.

2.6 Limitations of the research

One limitation has been raised in chapter 1, and refers to the decision to focus on the level of the aid chain where local NGOs interact with disaster and conflict affected populations, government officials and other local actors, since this is the level where the incompatibility between policy and practice is felt most, according to Quarles-van Ufford (1993), and because local people’s perspectives were regarded as leading and important. This choice was a deliberate one. The common approach to study aid practices in disaster and conflict settings is to focus on people’s livelihoods taking the household as unit for analysis, followed by recommendations for humanitarian aid workers. These studies then tend to become thin about the interactions between local people and aid workers, and the social- political relationships that start to emerge when aid interventions are brought in. Particularly in CBDRR literature, handbooks and policy documents this interaction is often romanticized and therefore I focused more on this level than on the interactions and power dynamics within villages. Consequently I focused on how social-political relationships and interventions generate, reduce or reproduce people’s social, political and institutional vulnerability to disasters and conflict, leaving out the economic and material dimensions, which are

interrelated and important as well. Practical limitations were caused by local security situations, particularly in Afghanistan, that prevented me staying long in a village.

If I could do the research again, I would do the research in one country, reduce the number of communities and local NGOs, and extend the aid chain to include the higher levels of the aid chain and to have more time to engage with directors, policy-makers and programme staff. I could have better explained the multiple realities of local NGOs and funding agencies, which contribute to the discrepancy between CBDRR policy and practice, which now remained thin in this research. Because of the short length of the field visits, I could not really engage with local government to better understand their life world. I relied on interviews with them, and on the reflections of the local NGOs involved.

3. Disasters as an opportunity for social change

CBDRR in the Philippines: experiences to organize effective agency for risk reduction

“Within minutes after any major impact, disasters start becoming political”

Olson, 2000: 266

The Indian Ocean tsunami, the earthquake in Kashmir, Hurricane Katrina, cyclone Nargis in Burma and the earthquake in Haiti are recent examples of how major disasters influence national and international politics. These disasters highlight the importance of the political context in which they happen. The occurrence of disasters and the way relief is handled do involve politics, and impact on state-society relations (Watts, 1983; Wijkman & Timberlake, 1984; Pelling & Dill, 2009). The incapacity of the state to respond adequately to major disasters can create opportunities for political action and social change. The question is for whom and in what way?

Disaster events and their management are part of unfolding political histories. Bankoff (1999) argues that the frequency and magnitude of past disasters exacerbated the extreme differences in power and wealth in Philippine society favouring the elite few. Solnit (2009) refers to different cases in Latin and North America where disasters have led to the reordering of political power. She points to elite panic after disasters, who in fear of social unrest – even when people pull together acting in a sphere of post-disaster solidarity – take repressive measures towards disaster victims. Klein (2007) goes a step further by stating that governments and business consciously take advantage of disaster events and manipulate post-disaster recovery processes in favour of the vested interests. The question is if disasters could ever lead to social change that benefits marginalized, poor and vulnerable people.

Pelling and Dill (2009) conclude that disaster shocks do open political space for the contestation or concentration of political power. They argue that the moments that people’s rights are claimed or denied can be seen as potential tipping points for political change. In this light this chapter examines the politics of disaster events and their management in the Philippines through the experienced history of the Citizens’ Disaster Response Centre (CDRC) based in Manila. CDRC developed its Citizenry-Based and Development-Oriented Disaster Response (CBDO-DR) approach amidst oppositional politics since the 1970s, when the people’s social movement contested President Marcos’ dictatorship. The case shows the importance of viewing disaster risk reduction as a *political* process – considering the history of state-society relationships, power dynamics, politics and the broader institutional context - to change patterns of authority and relations with the government in favour of disaster-affected citizens. CDRC and related civil-society groups increasingly were able to use the opening of political spaces to engage with government to influence institutions and policy to positively affect people’s safety and protection, despite the ways the Philippine government and business take advantage of disasters to strengthen their

vested interests. People's successes at the local level, however, remain small and are not necessarily sustainable.

The chapter aims to uncover the political meaning CDRC attaches to its Citizenry-Based Development-Oriented approach to disaster management. I will do this by first reviewing how CDRC shaped its CBDO-DR tradition within the historical context of oppositional state-society relations. Secondly, I will elaborate on how CDRC and its network engage with other actors like the government in the political arena of disaster risk reduction and responding to violent conflict, how they organize effective agency of vulnerable sectors, and whether this is indeed effective or not. It is in this broader institutional context that its Citizenry-Based Development-Oriented approach got its political meaning, and therefore the last section of this chapter will discuss the CBDO-DR concepts defined as embedded in the specific cultural and political historical context of the Philippines.

3.1 Making sense of my CBDO-DR experience in the Philippines

From 1993 till 2001, I worked as a field officer in the Field Operations Department of CDRC. My initial task was to improve CDRC's monitoring and evaluation system with the purpose to make CDRC's aid interventions more effective and appropriate. Over time, my tasks expanded to include project management, capacity building of network-members and I contributed to policy development. I recorded notes from field visits, office meetings and reflections on my work experiences. In March 2007 I returned to the Philippines to review, with selected leading practitioners, the evolution of the CBDO-DR approach of the Citizens' Disaster Response Centre since its inception in the 1970s. This was done through interviews, and several field visits to communities and local member organisations of the network. During this visit I also searched through archives of CDRC and a selected number of Regional Centres, particularly proceedings of network consultations, CBDO-DR assessment reports, and policy documents. Six years after I left CDRC, I was able to return to the places and people who inspired me and shaped my view on pro-active disaster response strategies from the perspective of local communities. I knew that most of them have left CDRC, and took on positions elsewhere: at the Centre for Disaster Preparedness (CDP) in Manila, at International NGOs, at UNDP, at ECHO or within the people's mass movement, while some staff from the regions moved to CDRC. Because staff moved to other positions outside CDRC, they were more open to reflect on the CBDO-DR-approach and practice. I could not only complete the official narrative of the CBDO-DR approach, but was able to make sense of the hidden narratives I heard during the everyday interaction with my office-mates in the Field Operation Department before 2001.

3.2 CBDO-DR in the Philippines: historical roots of citizens' responses to disasters

The Philippines is located at the centre of typhoon, tectonic and volcanic belts, while people's vulnerability is compounded by widespread poverty rooted in the country's socio-economic, political and environmental context (CDRC, 1992). According to Bankoff (1999) disaster occurrence in the Philippines has been one of the ordering elements shaping state-society relations over centuries. He argues that the frequency and magnitude of past disasters in the country exacerbated the extreme

differences in power and wealth in Philippine society. The majority of poor and marginalized people live below subsistence level suffer from recurrent disasters, adopting coping strategies which often undermine the basis of future livelihoods. The elite and powerful few, on the other hand, take advantage of disaster events, diverting relief and reconstruction funds for their own benefit and to consolidate or enhance their financial and political position in society (Bankoff, 1999: 408). The government is further responsible for destructive environmental practices such as deforestation, extracting mineral resources through open-pit-mining and consequent pollution of river basins. These human-induced changes contribute to the increasing number of disasters like landslides and floods, affecting poor and marginalized people. Environmentally irresponsible practices by powerful persons not only contribute to the increasing incidence of floods, landslides and displacement of local communities, but also to maintaining the status quo of huge social inequalities within Philippine society. Delica (1997) suggests that the Philippine government seems to nurture the causes of people's vulnerability instead of reducing disaster vulnerability.

Because of these inequalities, the Philippines have a long history of contested state-society relations, with a 'tradition' of peasant struggle, social protests and oppositional politics. The origin of the Filipino CBDO-DR tradition should be understood within this context of oppositional politics, and can be traced back to the early 1970s when peasant organisations and students took the initiative to render support to peasants affected by floods in Central Luzon. Relief goods were generated among peasants who were not affected by floods and distributed to those who were in need. Students, church-based social action workers and the academic community supported these initiatives which were ad hoc, and channelled through so-called People's Organisations (POs) (Vargas, 1996, Luna, 2001). These are community-based organisations, and in the Philippine context organized along sectoral lines, representing peasants or workers, and later fisher folk, women, indigenous people and urban poor at the grassroots level.

Ad hoc citizens' responses to disaster survivors started at the time when president Marcos declared Martial Law in 1972, and when human rights were increasingly violated, fuelling the contradictions within Philippine society (Lubi, 1992). Ordinary people and disaster survivors complained and criticized how the government handled disasters during the Martial Law years. Government responses were often insufficient, inappropriate, driven by favouritism excluding legitimate victims, and lacked coordination. Disaster management had a low priority in the government's budget as most of the budget went to allocations to the military and servicing of foreign debt. Violation of human rights continued. The assassination of Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino, a leading oppositionist, in August 1983 was a trigger to transform small fragmented movements into a massive unified one, including people from all walks of Filipino life.

This process of a growing people's social movement coincided with a series of severe disasters hitting the country: a severe drought affecting the country's agricultural production in 1982-83, followed by six successive typhoons in 1984, killing about 2,500 people and rendering more than 280,000 families homeless. In September of

the same year Mayon Volcano erupted, affecting more than 35,000 families in Bicol region. The Government's response was negligible, raising the anger of not only the affected population, but also of concerned citizens. The disasters fuelled people's protests to express their growing discontent with the increasingly oppressive Marcos administration (Heijmans & Victoria, 2001).

Affected peasants and urban poor approached so-called cause-oriented groups composed of the churches, people's organisations, student-unions, and concerned progressive individuals for assistance. As a result, a "Support Disaster Victims Campaign" was launched from October 1984 until July 1985. Its aim was to mobilize and unite the greatest number of people, particularly in the urban centres and Metro Manila to generate financial, material, technical and human resources to support the people in disaster affected areas, especially in the rural areas where there was no ready access to basic social services. The positive experience of working together in relief gave rise to the idea of institutionalizing a so-called "citizenry-based and development-oriented" approach to disaster response, in short CBDO-DR. The Citizen's Disaster Response Network started in 1985 with two NGOs: the Citizens' Disaster Response Centre (CDRC)¹ in Manila and *Tarabang Para sa Bicol* (TABI)² in Bicol region. The network expanded to other regions nation-wide and was formally launched as the Citizen's Disaster Response Network in 1989.

3.2.1 Social movements, framing collective action and a neutral image

People's discontent alone will not automatically result in collective action to challenge authorities (Snow, 2004). Snow argues that if a social movement should get off the ground, "*social arrangements that are ordinarily perceived as just and immutable must come to seem unjust and mutable*" (Snow, 2004: 383). CDRC relates to similarly-minded organisations, including grassroots communities through People's Organisations, referred to as the people's mass movement. In this network CDRC provided meaning to disaster events and experiences around them in Philippine society to convince grassroots communities that disasters are not natural, but a matter of vulnerability for which the Philippine government is held responsible. Further, CDRC had to convince them that they have agency and capacities to change their situation, and show how this could be done through collective action. Equally crucial for CDRC was to create a neutral image because president Marcos' dictatorship had not yet ended.

Community-based or citizenry-based?

The CDRC belongs to the so-called progressive NGOs who are affiliated to the broader people's mass movement. Hilhorst (2003) and Lubi (1992) provide a detailed historical analysis of how NGOs and mass organisations developed in the Philippines inspired by the upsurge of liberation movements worldwide as a reaction to failed development strategies. Churches in particular were active in adopting progressive ideas, moving from traditional welfare projects to social action. One of the first NGOs

¹ In 1991, the year that Mt Pinatubo erupted, CDRC changed its name from Citizens' Disaster *Rehabilitation* Center to Citizens Disaster *Response* Center, meaning that its response consists of preparedness, relief, rehabilitation, mitigation and development work.

² In 2009 TABI changed its name from *Tabang para sa mga Biktima sa Bicol* – "Support for the victims in Bicol province" to *Tarabang Para sa Bicol* – deleting the victims from its name.

involved in organizing peasant communities, and which took initiatives to support disaster survivors in the early 1970s, was the Philippine Ecumenical Action for Community Empowerment (PEACE). It used its church-network and the organized peasant sector as a venue to provide relief. During the early years of Martial Law, when Marcos closed all ways for legal protest, forcing all legal mass organisations to go underground, only the historically traditional institutions such as the church and trade-unions were allowed some leeway in legal organizing (Lubi, 1992: 25).

CDRC was formed during Martial Law, and in order to openly support disaster affected communities, it had to adopt a neutral outlook. At that time, civil-society organisations came out with alternative perspectives to achieve the goal to change the political scene (Luna, 2011). Some groups aimed to change the social system, while others targeted to change the political leadership, and also methodologies varied from violent revolution to more reformist strategies of non-violent confrontation (ibid). In this context, the notion 'community-based' had a political connotation meaning 'anti-government'. High government officials labelled, and still label, progressive NGOs like CDRC as sympathizers of those favouring the violent revolution option. These labels provide the military tacit approval to kill the government's political opponents (Amnesty International, 2006). To reduce the risk of government harassment or of being forced to work underground, the people establishing CDRC framed their approach 'citizenry-based' instead of 'community-based'.

'Citizenry-based' is explained as adhering to moral duty and solidarity among citizens to help each other, recognizing that local people have agency and capacities to deal with crisis and to overcome it. 'Citizenry-based' further expresses the partnership between the vulnerable and less vulnerable sectors – called the middle forces in the language of the people's mass movement³. The less vulnerable sectors are able to contribute resources like finances, leadership, technical skills, intellectual thinking and material resources which are much needed to sustain the movement to achieve its vision of a just, democratic and peaceful society. This explanation for the term citizenry-based was acceptable for a wide range of outside actors. Initially, the citizenry-based approach proceeded pragmatically, but gradually gained meaning. 'Citizenry-based' is a distinguishing feature of CDRC's approach compared to other CBDRR-traditions, emphasizing that communities at risk require partnerships among a wide range of actors in society to reduce their vulnerability.

By the end of the 1990s, the concept of Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction had become a generally accepted approach by the international community and the Philippine government. Additionally, CDRN's community organizers increasingly critiqued the notion of 'citizenry'. They argued that the notion of 'citizen' can refer to anybody, masking power differentials. In the field, community organizers had to solve this internal contradiction. They understood the meaning of 'community-based' as putting premium on organizing the marginalized segments in the commu-

³ The people's mass or social movement refers here to the National Democratic Front (NDF), which was formed in 1973 to bring down president's Marcos dictatorship. The NDF is a coalition of left political parties like the Communist Party of the Philippines, churches, agricultural unions, trade unions, and other related groups in the Philippines, including the NPA. In 1993, the NDF split in different factions.

nity, since this refers to their day-to-day work. This interpretation stems from the tradition of the people's mass movement that time to start labelling practices alternative to those of the government as 'community-based', like Community-Based Health Programs, and Community-Based Coastal Resource Management, referring to self-reliance, building local capacities and recognizing local people's perspectives. In 2001, CDRC decided to change the CBDO-DR-label into Community-Based Disaster Management (CBDM).

The difference between 'citizenry' and 'community' can be dismissed as merely wordplay, yet it brought out a fundamental question of how CDRC situates itself vis-a-vis the poor. In CDRC's view 'community-based' refers to the agency and capacities of the neediest, deprived, least served and poorest segments in a village, whose socio-economic conditions make them highly vulnerable to hazards and disasters. 'Community' here does not necessarily refer to the whole village, or a village administration unit. Rather, it refers to a particular group of people facing up to the difficulty of surviving in adversity, and who find themselves committed to contributing time and resources to change societal structures locally and beyond their community. 'Citizenry-based' on the contrary, got a more liberal meaning, since it could refer to any citizen affected by disaster, whether very vulnerable or not vulnerable at all. 'Citizenry-based' neutralized politics and the power differences between citizens.

3.2.2 Framing and re-framing CBDO-DR policy in a dynamic environment

CDRC framed and re-framed its CBDO-DR policy strategically to manage relationships with different actors in a changing political environment. 'Frames' refer to how people use language to give meaning and coherence to events and experiences around them, and how they use language as discursive means to shape people's beliefs, their acceptance of the status quo, and defines what is normal and what isn't (Gaventa, 2006). CDRC frames its CBDO-DR narrative by blending scientific knowledge, political interests and cultural patterns. During the years I worked within the Field Operations Department of CDRC, I noticed that CDRC staff shifts between frames during department meetings and field visits. We talked 'people's mass movement' language when internally discussing the dilemma of prioritizing organizing work for social change vis-à-vis improving people's livelihoods through social and economic projects. When writing proposals, we used language from disaster management literature, foregrounding CDRC's political view on 'disaster' and 'vulnerability', which provides CDRC with a distinctive identity and mandate to the network, and a framework to communicate with donors. Humanitarian language is used tactically vis-à-vis government forces and the military to create access to disaster and conflict affected communities. Multiple frames are used strategically at the same time (Hilhorst, 2003).

It took CDRC several years to frame and re-frame its CBDO-DR policy. In 1993 CDRC produced its first policy document to present its CBDO-DR policy to the wider public (CDRC, 1993). Over time, CDRC adjusted this policy document due to a changing context, or created new frames to enhance the mobilization of resources. Nonetheless, a core set of values can be detected (Heijmans & Victoria, 2001):

- (1) It views disasters primarily as a question of people's vulnerability;
- (2) It recognizes people's existing capacities and aims to strengthen these capacities;
- (3) It seeks to contribute to addressing the roots of people's vulnerability and to transforming or removing the structures generating inequity and underdevelopment;
- (4) It considers people's participation essential to disaster management;
- (5) It puts a premium on the organisational capacity of the vulnerable sectors through the formation of grassroots disaster response organisations;
- (6) It mobilizes the less vulnerable sectors into partnership with the vulnerable sectors in disaster management and development work.

In the next section I discuss how these values are embedded in the dynamic political context of the Philippines with recurring disasters and conflict, and how CDRC blended this experienced reality with scientific knowledge and Philippine culture to cope with adversity.

Feature 1: views disasters as a question of people's vulnerability

When I started working with CDRC in 1993, the coordinator of the Field Operations Department gave me the following publications, and asked me to read them in order to understand CDRC's view on disasters and the purpose of its operations: *"Taking the naturalness out of natural disasters"* (O'Keefe et al., 1976), *"Disasters and Development"* (Cuny, 1983), *"Natural disasters: Acts of God or acts of Man?"* (Wijkman & Timberlake, 1984) and *"Rising from the Ashes"* (Anderson & Woodrow, 1989). These authors were very important in framing CDRC's alternative agenda using disaster studies language to legitimize CDRC's practice and directions to both the people's mass movement and foreign donors.

'Vulnerability' is the key-concept of CDRC, borrowing its definition from Anderson and Woodrow (1989). CDRC interprets vulnerability as conditions and interdependent processes interacting between global and local level, which adversely affects the ability of people to respond, to cope with or to recover from the damaging effects of disaster events. CDRC uses the term 'vulnerability' to help local communities understand the Philippine disaster situation and the reasons why they are vulnerable, using methods of critical consciousness raising. In 1986, CDRC published *'The Philippine Disaster Situation: a Question of Vulnerability'*, which explains why Filipinos are vulnerable to disasters, substantiated by government's statistics and reports. This so-called 'National Situationer' served as a means to raise the awareness of communities at risk to convince them that disasters are not natural, but occur due to injustices in Philippine society, and that they themselves can change this. Raising people's awareness is to convince people that *"...Reducing the vulnerability of the poor is a development question, and such question should be answered politically"* (Cuny, 1983: 7). This differs from the CBDRR traditions which emerged later during the late 1990s among the INGOs and UN-community, which limit awareness-raising to disaster risks and what to do in case of an emergency (Chapter 4).

In the mid-1990s, CDRC included 'development-induced disasters' in its definition of 'disaster' giving it the term 'development aggression' which cause-oriented NGOs already used during Marcos' time (Lubi, 1992). During Fidel Ramos' presidency (1992 - 1998), development projects resulted in increasing numbers of displaced communities, due to mining operations, construction of power plants and hydro-electric dams, plantations, and demolition of urban slum areas to give way to shopping centres and infrastructure. Local people perceive 'development aggression' as worse than typhoons or floods, since they lose not only crops or livestock but also their homes, land, livelihoods, and development aggression further negatively affects their identity and roots (Heijmans, 2004). Through the frame of 'development aggression' CDRC was able to organize and mobilize "*effective agency through the actions of a chain of agents*" (Latour, 1986) ranging from human rights activists to environmentalists, lawyers, economic experts, students, and local people who were directly affected. This broader mass base could also be mobilized in support to communities affected by natural hazards, because the cause of both natural and man-made disasters is believed to be similar, i.e. inadequate and biased disaster management policies and practice of the Philippine government. With more actors involved, CDRC and its members could become more effective in advocacy and lobbying at the national level.

Feature 2: recognizes people's existing capacities and aims to strengthen these capacities

Despite people's vulnerabilities, the history of CDRC proves that people still have capacities and are not helpless in times of disasters. CDRC finds this confirmed by Cuny (1983) and Anderson (1989). CDRC stresses Filipino traditional values like family and community cooperation here, the *damayan* and *bayanihan* spirit. Also being '*madiskarte*' (resourceful) coupled with Filipino wit and humour enables Filipinos to deal with hardship (Heijmans & Victoria, 2001). Bankoff (2004) explains the origins of these Filipino core values as a way to maintain cultural resilience. In a disaster-prone country like the Philippines, the frequent experience of hazards influences the way how cultures develop, not only in terms of adapting livelihoods, or the construction of houses, but also in terms of practices to deal with the emotional and psychological requirements of living with uncertainty. People in the Philippines make sense of what happened, allowing 'nature to speak'. They explain flash floods, typhoons, mudslides as the 'revenge of nature', not to express fatalism, but to indirectly blame those to be held responsible for exploiting natural resources. The Tagalog expression *bahala na* – literally translated "leaving it to fate" – does not simply imply 'indifference', but refers to the lack of people's confidence in the ability of government's agencies to protect their citizens, and therefore to people's shared realization that they need to carry their burdens themselves (Bankoff, 2004).

There are several arguments for CDRC to highlight these cultural values, and social and motivational resources of people. In a context of recurrent and increasingly damaging disasters, physical and material vulnerabilities presently far outweigh capacities, and CDRC believes it is more viable and durable to strengthen people's organisational and motivational resources. Skills, knowledge, positive attitudes and beliefs are assets that stay with people, regardless displacement, can be shared,

transferred, and are believed by CDRC to reduce local people's vulnerabilities in the long run and are instrumental in accumulating material capacities. Interventions to strengthen organisational and motivational capacities are closely linked to features 3 and 5. They deal with leadership development, negotiation skills, speaking in public, awareness raising on human rights and paralegal training, and are part of the organizing work to strengthen the people's mass movement. A second argument is that the appreciation of cultural values and people's social and motivational resources enables CDRC, particularly the community organizers, to mobilize and organize local people with little financial input, and convincing people that they – again - need to carry their burdens themselves, but that when organized, they increase their chances to rework constraining power relations, policies and institutions.

Feature 3: seeks to contribute to addressing the roots of people's vulnerability

The work of Anderson and Woodrow (1989) facilitated CDRC to view disaster response conceptually as a process of community capacity building. CDRC acknowledges that community capacity building cannot be achieved through one or two 'projects', but is a series of interventions which link local actors to macro-level institutions as a precondition to addressing the root causes of vulnerability. This is not a linear process, but one with opportunities and set-backs. CDRC does distinguish short-term interventions to save lives and to relieve immediate suffering, and responses aimed to reduce people's vulnerability in the long run. Relief and disaster preparedness are entry-points for long-term capacity building and not one-time events. CDRC integrates disaster vulnerability reduction into a broader agenda to transform the socio-economic and political roots of people's marginalization on one hand, and of irresponsible depletion of natural resources on the other. The task of preparing people for disaster events implies and includes the effort of shifting the locus of social power into the hands of the majority for their own benefit – in this case the marginalized of Philippine society (CDRC, 1986: 2). By challenging power inequalities and holding the government accountable to implement disaster risk reduction policies, CDRC – jointly with other issue-based organisations and groups - hopes to achieve justice, peace and responsible governance.

Feature 4: considers people's participation essential to disaster management

CDRC argues that disaster management is not the sole domain of experts and scientists, but that local people play a major role too. Particularly in demanding 'safety' and 'protection'. People affected by disasters are not passive victims or recipients of aid, but they can be powerful claimants with rights (Heijmans, 2004). CDRC further recognizes that villages are socially heterogeneous. Therefore a community organizer must spend ample time to integrate into a community, to understand the problems, to get to know who is who, the local elite, the most marginalized, and who has potential to become leaders of a People's Organisation. This process of social analysis is biased towards deprived groups in the community, and the resulting interventions may exclude local elites in terms of benefitting from it. Power plays are acknowledged to be part of reality and discussed, and where possible dealt with properly to reach the most marginalized groups.

CDRC emphasizes that people's participation is not limited to providing information to aid agencies in order to identify appropriate interventions. People's involvement in data gathering, situational analysis, identification of interventions, implementation and assessment are embedded in a long term process of conscientisation and learning, of strengthening organisational and social capacities, of developing leadership competencies, and developing people's knowledge, potential and confidence. Central in this long-term perspective is people's empowerment. In this way vulnerable groups will be able to challenge policies and decisions taken by authorities which negatively impact their lives. Although CDRC means here policies and government's decisions related to disaster response, its interventions implicitly contribute to broadening a mass base that can be mobilized for other purposes as well.

CDRC uses disasters instrumentally to involve, mobilize and organize the disaster-affected population into a critical mass base that can be linked to the broader people's social movement. 'Participation' is not limited to involvement in local CBDO-DR interventions, but means long-term engagement in the people's social movement. These social movements, however, create new forms of power relations, in which local POs have little influence on decisions made at the top. Although this is not part of this research, I would like to note that 'participation' is a relative notion in the Philippines, where political agendas and NGOs' interests set the boundaries for people's influence. The example of the Seed Bank Program in chapter 1 fits in this argument. Particularly CBDO-DR interventions that aimed to strengthen people's livelihoods and social economic projects generated fierce debates among CDRC staff, and within the network. Staff who viewed POs as instrumental in strengthening the people's social movement would argue against livelihoods projects, fearing a decrease in community cohesion⁴. Those who viewed CBDO-DR interventions primarily as strengthening local capacities would argue in favour of livelihoods projects and people's participation. This was a recurrent dilemma.

Feature 5: puts a premium on the organisational capacity of the vulnerable sectors through the formation of grassroots disaster response organisations

This feature distinguishes CDRC from most current CBDRR practices in that it views disasters not only as a matter of vulnerability, but also as an opportunity for political organizing. This means that addressing the immediate suffering of disaster survivors is not an end in itself, but that it regards as the most important task to assist local marginalized Filipino people in identifying and addressing the root causes of their vulnerability. This requires a long-term process which goes beyond the artificial boundaries of isolated short-term CBDRR-projects and beyond a focus on natural hazards. While the work of Anderson and Woodrow (1989) offered a 'disaster science frame' for addressing the root causes of disaster vulnerability (feature 3), CDRC links the grassroots disaster response organisations' frame to the language of the people's mass movement. Grassroots disaster response organisations are functional in disaster preparedness, but additionally in enhancing collective bargaining capability. Community organizing is meant to enhance representation of vulnera-

⁴ Livelihood projects like micro-credit, post-harvest machineries, and community seed bank, led in many instances into competition over resources and tensions within communities. This resulted in a negative image of livelihood projects.

ble groups beyond community level, and forms a mass base for collective action. These grassroots organisations link up with each other enabling communities to raise common issues beyond community-level. CDRC's mitigation measures are mostly non-physical in nature, strengthening the social and organisational capacities of people at risk.

Feature 6: mobilizes the less vulnerable sectors into partnership with the vulnerable sectors in disaster management and development work

While the most vulnerable people are supposed to be the main actors in CBDRR, CDRC considers the support of and partnership with less vulnerable sectors as an essential feature of sustaining and up-scaling CBDRR efforts. These less vulnerable sectors played a key role in mobilizing relief goods during the spontaneous "Support Disaster Victims Campaign" in 1984. With the less-vulnerable sector is meant social workers, health and medical workers, food and drug sector, church-related organisations, teachers and students, scientists, technologists, media, and even managers and entrepreneurs. They extend assistance to disaster survivors, and manage volunteer groups - the 'core' of the less vulnerable sector - performing tasks to sustain and improve voluntary services during and beyond emergency periods (Dulce, 2003: 111). In this way, CDRN can be viewed as a network of networks, which despite the limited number of regular staff, is able to conduct large operations and deliver continuing support to communities and people's organisations. Organized disaster affected communities are not isolated entities, but linked to institutional mechanisms created beyond community level, both horizontally and vertically, which facilitates raising grassroots voices and entering the political arena to demand safety and protection, although with varying success.

In Table 3.1, I provide an overview of how CDRC translates these features into practice. The table should not be regarded as a linear step-by-step model, because depending on the local circumstances, entry-points and sequence of activities vary.

Over more than 25 years, CDRN has kept on analysing and adapting its interpretations and models to a changing social and political environment. Through its regional networks CDRC has the flexibility to analyse people's vulnerability and capacities by linking macro policies and processes to grassroots realities. This results in a diversity of regional 'translations' of CBDO-DR policy framed by CDRC. What works in Mindanao for internal refugees may not be a priority for lahar-affected communities in Central Luzon. CBDO-DR practice is very contextual to become effective, and therefore its outcomes are difficult to replicate in other localities. What they have in common, though, is a shared analysis and vision, and crucially a shared network which can mobilize collective action to 'up-scale' local initiatives.

So far I reviewed how CDRC shaped its CBDO-DR approach within a historical context of oppositional state-society relations, and how it arrived at its six core values. These core values highlight a multi-level approach beyond community level, linking disaster-affected communities through alliances and networks to the macro context, and a long-term political process of community strengthening aimed to address the root causes of people's vulnerability.

Table 3.1: Process from at-risk community towards a grassroots disaster response organisation (Heijmans and Victoria, 2001: 47)

Description of community level process to strengthen social and political resources	Activities of CDRC and network members to support community process
Community at risk: people are exposed to one or more recurrent disasters. They developed coping strategies, but these may fall short.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDRC/CDRN enters community during emergency situation, conducts damage-needs assessments, provides relief • Getting to know situation in the community, key-persons and potential leaders • Trust building with local people and authorities
<p><i>Start conscientization process:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding nature and behaviour of hazards, disaster risks and the causes of vulnerability in their locality • Prioritization of risk to be addressed • Identification of what people can do at local level before, during and after disasters happen 	<p><i>Start of process to strengthen organisational resources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitation of conscientization process on why people are vulnerable to disasters in their locality • Conduct hazard, vulnerability, capacity assessment • Disaster Preparedness Training
<p><i>Formulation of a Counter Disaster Plan (CDP):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify pre-, during and post disaster community needs • Identify available community resources • Identify roles and responsibilities of the Disaster Response Committee (DRC) • Identify the people and committees for DRC • Formulate communication and decision-making system • Set-up warning system and evacuation plan (if needed) • Formally launch DRC in community (can be part of existing PO, or new Grassroots Disaster Response Organisation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up consultations, meeting with PO • Leadership training • Participatory monitoring and facilitate documentation of process, results, lessons • Organisational development support
<p><i>Activities of functioning GDRO</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share Counter Disaster Plan with the whole community • Conduct evacuation drills and draw lessons to improve CDP • Coordination with Barangay and municipality Disaster Coordination Council, churches, NGOs, other POs. • Monitoring threats and hazards in community • Issue warning and manage evacuation • Search and rescue • Report damages and needs to disaster agencies for assistance • Coordinate, plan and conduct relief delivery with aid agencies in community • Identification, selection and implementation of vulnerability reduction measures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate learning through drills • Training on networking, campaigning, negotiation • Training on damage, needs and capacity assessment; emergency response • Training on planning, monitoring and evaluation
<p>From here the PO or GDRO can tackle more demanding activities, link up with other communities and support-groups. They also take on efforts to recover or strengthen livelihoods like seed bank, repair of damaged irrigation canals, village pharmacy, negotiation and networking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue-based training • Various skills training • Facilitates strategizing to address vulnerability beyond community-level

The next sections elaborate on how CDRC and its network engage with other actors like the government in the political arena of disaster risk reduction, and respond to violent conflict. I further review what CDRC, its network and the broader people's social movement found room for manoeuvre and what they achieved within the past 25 years in the terms of reworking the institutional context towards safer communities.

3.3 The institutional context of disaster risk reduction in the Philippines

My experience at CDRC from 1993 till 2001 opened my eyes for the politics-disaster connection. Disaster politics happen from the local to the national level involving affected communities, government officials, military, citizens, and other organisations and actors who respond to disasters. The politics-disaster connection is therefore not limited to formal and official politics, to what government authorities, state-actors, political parties, their supporters and lobbyist do, and how they respond to disasters. Also the responses of affected populations to survive and cope to disas-

ters, and how resources are allocated by (I)NGOS, corporations, religious institutions, media, universities and other institutions are politically significant, since these actions interact with state actors and influence aid outcomes locally.

In Box 3.1 I provide a compact overview of the Philippine institutional context – using Jütting’s categories (2003). It connects the micro everyday disaster politics to the macro political context in which disasters and conflict occur. It is in this broad institutional context that CDRC and its network of networks manoeuvre to particularly strengthen people’s *organisational, motivational* and *political resources* to hold the government accountable to implement or change its policies.

CDRC and its networks exercise all three forms of politics that Kerkvliet (2009) distinguishes: as a member of the Disaster Risk Reduction Network Philippines (DRRNetPhil) – led by the Centre for Disaster Preparedness (CDP) - it engages with ‘official politics’ and lobbies with the Office of Civil Defense, the National Disaster Coordinating Council, legislators, and with members of the House of Representatives for a new Disaster Management Bill. This lobby-work was successful; in 2010 a New Bill was approved in Congress replacing a reactive Bill from President Marcos’ administration. CDRC’s community organizing work and alliance building is meant to engage in ‘advocacy politics’ to hold the government accountable to provide safety and protection to its citizens while the ‘everyday politics’, is mainly practiced by People’s Organisations locally challenging local institutions.

Box 3.1: Interrelated institutions in the Philippines dealing with disaster response (after Jütting, 2003)

Informal institutions, traditions and social norms

Common experience of disasters – a normalization of threat – resulted in informal institutions enabling people to adapt to changing conditions not only physically, but particularly emotionally through *bayanihan, damayan, madiskarte, bahala na*, and other social, religious supportive and reciprocal interactions (Bankoff, 2004: 102). CDRC builds on these existing strengths. They represent people’s view of decent social relations, and the pooling of risks. These also include particular rules of reciprocity with better-off community members like landowners and local elite, who are expected to practice charity to the poor, helping them to manage through periods of difficulty (Scott, 1976). CDRC also recognizes the existence of traditional and indigenous forms of village governance which usually relate to or overlap with the formal government system.

The overall institutional environment

This refers to formal policy and the judiciary system related to disaster management like the Presidential degree 1566 dated 1978, and to existing laws that supplement PD 1566 like the Building Code, the Fire Code, the 1991 Local Government Code, Republic Act 8185 (Local calamity fund), the Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992, the Clean Air Act, and the Environmental Impact Statement system. In 2003, NGOs like CDP, CDRC, POs and other civil society groups came together to promote CBDRR in the country and to influence government’s policy. This loose network established the Disaster Risk Reduction Network Philippines (DRRNetPhil) in 2008, and continued serious lobby efforts for a new DRR Bill that encourages the government to shift its focus to disaster prevention and risk reduction adhering to the principles and strategies consistent with the Hyogo Framework for Action⁵. In 2010, the Philippine Congress ratified the proposed “Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act”. If enacted into law, the legislative measure would provide a new perspective by adopting a disaster risk reduction framework, viewing disasters as a reflection of people’s vulnerability, replacing government’s reactive disaster preparedness framework with a proactive one that is more responsive to the needs of the people (Luna, 2011). Civil society organisations however, will continue to hold authorities accountable for their decisions. Local people are made aware about the content and procedures of laws relevant for their situation. They act on the conviction that the government has the moral obligation to provide

⁵ The Hyogo Framework for Action is a comprehensive, action-oriented response to the international concern about the increasing impact of disasters on people and national development efforts. The HFA was formulated and adopted by 168 governments at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Kobe in January 2005. Chapter 4 will elaborate on the HFA.

safety and protection to its citizens. When the government cannot fulfil this role or does not show the political will to do so, social protests emerge.

After the end of president Marcos' dictatorship in 1986, the Aquino administration and the succeeding Ramos administration, increasingly institutionalized NGO's and civil-society participation in governance. The enactment of the Local Government Code in 1991 offered opportunities for NGOs and POs to influence local development decisions. In 1998, the Party-List system was first contested during the elections allowing sectoral groups like peasants, labour, women, urban poor, indigenous cultural communities, and youth to be represented in the Parliament with a maximum of 20% of the total seats. This sectoral representation enables the people's mass movement to influence national policies, like the "Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act".

Institutions related to "the play of the game" and the creation of organisations and councils

The Philippine government established a nation-wide network of regional, provincial, municipality and *barangay* level disaster coordination councils that are activated in times of emergency. CDRC participates in the National Disaster Coordination Council (NDCC) which has been renamed in 2010 into National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), but still headed by the Ministry of Defense, while the CDRC members are invited to councils at lower levels. The DRRNetPhil proposed a shift in supremacy of civilian authority over military authority especially in complex emergencies and human-induced disasters, and to expand the NDRRMC to include, among other, the National Anti-Poverty Commission, and the Office of the Presidential advisor on the Peace Process (DRRNetPhil, 2008). This would open space to manoeuvre for CDRC to support Internally Displaced People (IDPs). At the local level, CDRC actively supports the creation of Grassroots Disaster Response Organisations and strengthening of existing People's Organisations and as institutions that are in charge of CBDRR at the local level, and that represent local people to the wider governance context to influence government policies and decisions. Where indigenous or *barangay* councils exist that are willing to take on the CBDRR agenda, CDRC does not create new POs. CDRC strengthens the political resources of local people as the expansion of their social and motivational capacities.

Rules and procedures related to resource allocation for disaster response

This level refers to the political arena of decision-making: whose risk, which risk reduction measure to take where; who is involved in making decisions, and who is excluded; Where to channel resources and how much? At this level CDRC supports local people to enhance their negotiation skills, to speak in public, to know their rights, to facilitate meetings, and where to go to lobby.

This institutional context makes it complicated for CDRC to respond to both disaster *and* conflict affected communities. Actors directly or indirectly engaged in relief and rehabilitation operations, also actively participate in the conflict, in particular the military (Soriano, 2006). The institutional set-up of the government to provide relief and rehabilitation allows the military, being the head of the NDRRMC, to gain control over these humanitarian resources, which they can strategically use against their enemies, i.e. Muslim settlements which are allegedly hiding rebels, whereas evacuation centres are located in Christian settlements in Mindanao (ibid).

In a context of deep mutual mistrust and oppositional politics between the state, military, civil society organisations and rebel groups it is quite difficult for CDRC to manoeuvre confidently in this political arena as it does in case of addressing root causes of disasters. In Chapter 1 I argued that both disasters and conflict can be viewed as political processes and events, in which local people, civil society, government officials, (I)NGOs, military, combatants, *de facto* rulers, among others, actively make choices that correspond with their motives, interests, and the options they have to shape their actions (after Anderson & Woodrow, 1989; Richards, 2005). Also CDRC carefully makes choices regarding where and how it implements CBDRR in disaster and conflict affected areas.

One of the research questions relates to the disaster-conflict nexus and asks if CBDRR would be an appropriate approach in environments where communities are divided, disintegrated or displaced, or in environments not conducive to dialogues between local actors and the state. In the next section I will briefly present why CDRC responds to disasters differently than to conflict affected populations, which are part of the unfolding political history. Whereas CDRC sees disasters and how responses are handled as highly political events, it approaches armed conflicts in the Philippines and the impact on communities, behind a more neutral outlook, constructing less political images of what happens on the ground. It does this for mainly institutional reasons to get access to displaced communities, and for keeping up its credible and reliable image towards government agencies.

CDRC's 'neutral' positioning vis-a-vis armed conflicts in the Philippines, and its construction of 'disasters as political events', contradicts to the dominant view on disaster and conflict as explained in chapter 1, which views disasters as caused by natural phenomena, while conflicts are viewed as rooted in complex social and political interrelationships, requiring fundamentally different responses. The next section will explain why CDRC and its network manoeuvre as humanitarian chameleons in the political arena of responding to both conflict and disasters as a way to deal with their multiple realities.

3.3.1 The political arena of responding to both disasters and conflict

In the Philippines the occurrence of disasters and the armed struggles – between the communist New People's Army (NPA)⁶ and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and between AFP and several Muslim rebel groups in Mindanao - are interrelated since they have common root causes, like poverty, injustice, foreign domination and political marginalization (Casambre, 2004).

After Marcos dictatorship ended in 1986, CDRC started to document incidents of violence and numbers of families displaced by armed conflict. It expanded its operations to support Internally Displaced People (IDPs). Despite the end of Martial Law and a democratically elected new government headed by president Corazon (Cory) Aquino, military operations continued in the country-side to counter Muslim rebels in Mindanao and to a lesser extent NPA rebels nation-wide. The IDP-cases documented by CDRC were families who sought refuge in evacuation centres, while CDRC knew through its regional networks that most displaced households fled into forests out of fear for further harassments by military and para-military groups. These remote hiding places caused difficulties for documentation purposes - also documenters were harassed - as well as for reaching people for relief and medical assistance.

In order to gain access to these remote places to serve IDPs, CDRC initially presented itself to government officials and military as a neutral humanitarian agency, and developed strong coordination mechanisms with well-established institutions like churches, children rights organisations, the health sector, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, and UNICEF. Overtime, CDRC became a reliable source of

⁶ The New People's Army is the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

IDP statistics and documentation for government departments, NGOs and media. As such CDRC gained legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of authorities to serve IDPs in a humanitarian way which was limited to relief. This legitimacy was very much needed to negotiate access to IDPs *and* to communities with established POs living in remote conflict areas.

In 1989 CDRC abandoned the label 'humanitarian' after internal discussions, deciding that it should bear the risks of rendering humanitarian aid in conflict areas as part of its broader political agenda, and be consistent with the way it responds to disasters. This decision implied that CDRC will implement its CBDO-DR approach in conflict affected areas and in areas where 'development aggression' takes place which often overlap with each other. CDRC aims to strengthen local people's effective agency and political resources to resist development aggression or to be in a better position to negotiate with companies and government for compensation.

The Regional Centres that are part of CDRC's network are the ones that directly support IDPs and threatened communities. Conflict in the Philippines can be characterized as a 'no peace no war situation' where periods of violence are alternated by times of relative calmness. The aim of CBDO-DR is to provide immediate relief and livelihood support to IDPs, *and* use this interaction like after disasters happen, as an entry-point for CBDO-DR. CDRC's CBDO-DR interventions focus on strengthening people's social, motivational and political capacities for the reason explained in feature 2. In a context of recurrent violence, this implies that communities systematize their early warning system to forecast violence and to take precautions; they attend paralegal training to enhance their skills and confidence to negotiate with military and rebels; they receive training on human rights and humanitarian law, and how to report human rights violations to outsiders like media, human rights organisations *and* to the warring parties.

Almost all communities I visited in conflict areas nation-wide appreciated such support, but several admitted from own experience that at the same time, being organized and holding community meetings, increases the risk of military harassment. The military associates POs in remote areas with NPA presence. Not all communities can withstand military harassment, particularly not when their leaders are tortured or killed. The kind of pressure CDRC intends to escape at the national level, is played out locally. These are harsh realities, and subject for reflection to adjust strategies.

The positive side of strengthening people's social, motivational and political capacities is felt during forced evacuations to escape violence, and during the process of securing a safe return. Organized communities do this often together: they jointly arrange transportation, they know in advance where to go or where to assemble. In several cases POs do not want to go to government's or NGOs' evacuation centres where it is crowded, services limited, and where aid providers set the rules. Instead, they prefer and succeed in making a deal with landowners in safe places who allow them to live in semi-permanent housing instead of temporary tents, and to cultivate the land. Organized communities further have a plan for how to divide roles and responsibilities in an evacuation centre, and know whom to contact to check security

in their original communities and for support to return to their homes. Strengthening local capacities of grassroots communities is particularly effective in remote insecure areas. Communities initially can rely on their own resources, capacities and contacts since outside agencies face difficulties in getting access to them. Barrs (2009) documented grassroots preparedness and protection strategies in conflict contexts globally that largely resonated with the CBDO-DR experiences in the Philippines.

At the provincial and national levels CDRC and related networks organize campaigns to stop violence and war, and to make funds available to support returning IDPs. The latter – enabling IDPs to return home and to rebuild their livelihoods – require the involvement of local and provincial government, the police, representatives from military and rebel groups, and these processes are usually facilitated by church-related organisations. Before families return to their lands, they try to reach an agreement among all these parties concerning security, food aid, no trespassing of warring parties in the community, lifting of food blockades, respect of human rights, support to livelihood, and a monitoring team to be installed to report violations of the agreement. During these negotiations NGOs like CDRC and its network remain at the background, and critically observe the negotiation and power processes, as I witnessed in Mindanao. They only interfere when they feel a better deal could be reached for the returning refugees. CBDO-DR focuses on preparedness, rehabilitation and recovery measures for both disasters and conflict through strengthening people's organisational, motivational and political capacities to better deal with the various risks

CDRC does *not* engage in peace-building activities, like mediation between warring parties or dealing with divided communities in Mindanao. In a context of deep mutual mistrust and oppositional politics between the state, military, civil society organisations and rebel groups it is quite difficult for CDRC to manoeuvre confidently as it does in case of addressing root causes of disasters. CDRC and its regional members are frequently harassed and accused by the military of being affiliated to the National Democratic Front (NDF) and of being sympathizers with the armed struggles in the country. It is the church-sector in the Philippines which is the most active and experienced, and has the most sustained effort in peace building, including wide-ranging forms of support to government-NDF, and government-MILF peace negotiations (Casambre, 2004).

While CDRC has an outspoken political approach to deal with disasters, it takes a more modest, and backstage position when it supports conflict-affected communities. Providing assistance to conflict-affected communities involves different kinds of politics from the national level to local contexts. CDRC does not want to lose its good reputation and potential donors, so in the regions CDRC relies on local network members to play their role in the humanitarian arena locally which affects aid outcomes for disaster and conflict-affected people. This is not without danger and staff of the local NGOs move in and out of conflict areas as humanitarian chameleons. They have to choose their aid labels carefully depending on local conflict dynamics, and on whom to negotiate access with to communities.

In 2007, CDRC proposed to create a separate NGO that will give full attention to IDPs as a result of man-made disasters like conflict and 'development aggression'. The reasons behind are tactical in nature and related to how government actors perceive CDRC's role in the context of disasters events differently from its role in a conflict context. While CDRC enjoys a good reputation as established disaster response agency in the country, it does not want to spoil this reputation, when opposing and confronting government policies and decisions to start a war or on development aggression which cause massive displacements. In Mindanao and the Cordillera, for instance, there exist a nexus between planned government projects like mining and the occurrence of violent conflict involving various warring parties. In these arenas, the government uses deterrent strategies to harass NGOs. In the next section I will further detail the state-civil society interactions in responding to disaster and conflict.

3.3.2 Mobilizing effective agency to find room for manoeuvre in the Philippine context

The previous section outlined the history of CDRC, its guiding principles, and the institutional context in which CDRC operates and adapts its CBDO-DR approach to a changing environment of disasters, development induced disasters and on-going armed struggles. This section details the political arena of risk reduction and how CDRC strengthens people's effective agency to find room for manoeuvre: institutional and societal change can only happen when risk reduction strategies are formulated to rework institutional relationships at multiple institutional levels. I used Olson's three questions to further discuss the politics of disaster in the Philippines, and how CDRC and the Philippine government exercise different forms of power to respectively change the status quo, or to protect it.

Olson (2000) proposed to ask three fundamental questions after a disaster hits: (1) "What happened?" (2) "Why were the losses high or low?"; and (3) "What will happen now"? Since various social actors interpret their circumstances, events and what is happening around them differently, local people, NGOs and state-actors will reply to Olson's questions in various ways considering their social position, and try to convince the other of *their* explanation of events, their risk definitions, whom to blame and how to allocate resources when they negotiate, confront each other, negotiate about issues, resources, and values. In this political arena, actors use different but interrelated forms of power, referred to as *discursive power* which actors use to give meaning to disaster events and to get support for their risk definition; *institutional power* which constructs power relations between actors through policies, laws, rules, authority and procedures for instance; and *publicly performed power* performed in the political arenas to influence decision-making on resource allocation. The way power is performed, should then be placed within a broader institutional context.

Ad 1. "What happened?" Using discursive power

CDRC constructs a disaster narrative that aims to convince grassroots communities that disasters are not natural, but a matter of vulnerability for which the Philippine government can be held responsible. Academic paradigms find their way in discursive struggles of the meaning of disasters: CDRC's narrative stresses the politi-

cal nature of disasters, which should only be understood vis-à-vis the disaster management politics of the Philippine Government, which are driven by patronage, incompetence and 'organized irresponsibility' (Bankoff, 1999). CDRC is critical, and sometimes antagonistic, towards Philippine government's policies and includes development-induced disasters in its disaster definition. CDRC views disasters as an entry-point for making people more conscious of the injustices prevailing in Philippine society: disasters are viewed as an opportunity for social change. The long-term solution lies in transforming the social and political structures and institutions that breed poverty and injustice. This view on social change guides CDRC's actions and principles. *"Disaster vulnerability can only be reduced if an aware and organized public can pressure the Philippine government in such a way that their interests can no longer be ignored in government's decision-making and planning"* (Heijmans & Victoria: 2001: 16). CDRC subscribed to the liberation of the people from oppression perpetrated by the American hegemony, local elite and corrupt bureaucrats, - an ideology that took shape during Marcos dictatorship (Delica, 1997). This is actually CDRC's theory of change which usually remains implicit in its official CBDO-DR narrative. In the regions, CDRN staff regarded their disaster management practice very much as a class struggle, like suggested by Bankoff (1999: 400). This was particularly reflected in the type of rehabilitation interventions in low-land peasant communities which aimed to break through patron-peasant dependency relations by providing working animals and small farm machineries like water pumps, threshers, blowers, or corn mills. People's needs were analysed using 'SICA' referring to an assessment tool for community organizing: Social Investigation and Class Analysis. In the mid-nineties this tool was integrated in the Capacity and Vulnerability Analysis, to weave disaster jargon into the language of the people's mass movement.

For the Philippine government, disasters are external natural phenomena which disrupt normalcy (Bankoff and Hilhorst, 2009). The government's political aim is to restore damages and return to the status quo prior to the event. Seeing disasters as external events results in approaches that apply geophysical and engineering knowledge (Hewitt, 1983: 5). Government officials particularly prefer engineering and physical projects since these are visible, showing the electorate and potential investors that government is responding to disasters to achieve safety and protection. These physical projects do not threaten the status quo, but neither are they apolitical. Pelling (2003) argues that especially contractors and even political leaders usually benefit economically from such investments, and in this way reinforce existing power disparities in society. There are many examples of huge engineering projects which turned ineffective due to inappropriate design or construction work and which re-allocated risk to already vulnerable social groups. An example is the construction of the "Mega-Dike" in the Philippines which ought to serve as catchment for lahar (volcanic mudflows) coming from Mount Pinatubo after its eruption in 1991, directing the lahar to the sea. The mega-dike collapsed each year, due to faulty design, and ignoring scientists' recommendations to take different measures. As a result the lahar-flow turned uncontrollable and unnecessarily affected many villages and valuable agricultural lands displacing many lowlanders. Meanwhile much profit was made in *"building ineffective dams and dikes, largely ignoring scientific, moral and common sense"* (Rodolfo, 1995: 88; Bankoff, 1999).

Additionally, government uses discursive power to frame disaster events in certain localities as very dangerous, or declares localities 'no-man's land', particularly there, where it has commercial investment plans. For instance, coastal areas are labelled as dangerous places to live due to typhoons and tsunamis - and consequently government authorities prohibit people to return and rebuild their houses there. I personally witnessed brutal displacement of urban poor living on the high-value reclamation area along Manila Bay which was being developed as a commercial area. On November 2, 1995, typhoon 'Rosing' hit Manila. The urban poor families found shelter in the national basketball stadium not far away from their homes, which was arranged with the local government. When they returned the next morning, they not only found their homes damaged due to the strong typhoon, but what was left over was burnt down, and torn apart by military forces while a huge fence was erected to close off the area for the returning families and aid providers. The typhoon had eased the demolition process in favour of the vested interests in business. Pelling and Dill (2009) and Klein (2007) also highlight this aspect of the politics-disaster connection where disasters exacerbate existing inequalities by post-disaster government manipulation. These discursive means – supported by physical force – result in very asymmetrical relationships of power in which these subordinated groups have little room to manoeuvre.

Ad 2. "Why were losses so high and responses inadequate?" Performing institutional power

The Philippines has a legal framework for disaster management since 1978 known as the Presidential Decree (PD) 1566 "Strengthening the Philippine Disaster Control Capability and Establishing the National Program on Community Disaster Preparedness". It refers to the supportive role of the National Government to the local governments in times of emergencies. Although the *Barangay* (village) chairpersons have the responsibility to provide leadership to disaster response operations, the policy lacks provision for community participation and citizen's involvement in disaster management (Delica, 1997). Even if government would invite people to attend consultation meetings, affected people's opinions and views are likely not to be registered since these could undermine the vested interests (White, 1996).

In this context of antagonistic state-society relations, CDRC developed its policy emphasizing the strengthening of community 'institutions' to connect local realities to the wider context. CDRC and its network members aim to increase people's voice in the political arena, enabling them to act collectively to create space for manoeuvre to negotiate, oppose and change societal structures which give rise to their vulnerability. Strengthening local institutions refers, amongst others, to strengthening or reviving traditions, norms and values like *bayanihan*, self-help and mutual assistance which relate to the social structures of society (level 1 institutions in box 3.1). Local institutions further refer to organisations or associations like the formation of Grassroots Disaster Response Organisations (GDRO) with its specific roles and responsibilities. In addition, CDRC raises people's awareness about injustices in society and that these are changeable through collective action beyond the own village. Organized disaster affected communities are not viewed as isolated entities,

but are linked to other organized communities and to the broader people's mass movement with its own governance and obligations depending on the issue at stake.

While the citizenry-initiated relief operations were originally spontaneous actions of sharing resources from the "haves" to the "have-nots", they now have become institutionalized efforts to reduce people's vulnerability from the local to the national policy level. CDRC and CDRN only invest in these efforts in localities that are recurrently affected by disasters, that are usually neglected by the government, or where new risks are expected like development induced disasters. Organizing is a continuous process before, during and after disasters in coordination with other POs, and the less vulnerable sectors as described in feature 6. The aim is to engage with local government to access resources and to hold them accountable for implementing a disaster management approach that provides safety and protection for all people. Over time CDRC has developed good relationships with the Department of Social Welfare and Development, and is part of the National Disaster Coordination Committee (NDCC) which was recently renamed into the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), while it has an antagonistic attitude when issues like mining, military abuses, demolition in urban poor communities and the government's refusal to provide alternative land and livelihood opportunities to displaced communities.

Hilhorst (2003) describes how the distance between grassroots and NGOs increased over the years, and how gradually more different kinds of organisations made up the protest movement: 'People's Organisations' referring to community-based organisations. 'Sectoral Movements' referring to 'grassroots' movements composed of a specific sector like peasants, women, or indigenous people. Through these sectoral organisations local people can be mobilized for political purposes, or the other way around, can serve to voice their disagreement with local policies and decisions, mobilizing people from other places for their cause, or to enhance collective action to seek protection and safety. In addition, thematic social movements were distinguished like the human rights and environmental movements. NGOs are viewed as 'intermediary organisations, which support grassroots organisations through funding, technical advice and advocacy' (Hilhorst, 2003: 14). Although all these organisations may belong to the same people's mass movement and sharing a common vision, in practice however, the relationship within and between the different entities is not always without tensions or conflicts. Differences arise about tactics, strategies, mandates and procedures, which sometimes threaten internal cohesion of the network or between smaller regional networks.

The example of UGNAYAN in Central Luzon in box 3.2 describes how local communities gained a political voice through local institutions linked to the broader political context up to Malacañang, the Office of the President. UGNAYAN's aim was to demand land and livelihood support from the Government after they lost their farms due to lahar flows from Mount Pinatubo. The Philippine Government however, was very reluctant to comply with the demands of Pinatubo survivors, because of lack of resources and due to vested interests of business.

Box 3.2: Alliance building among lahar affected communities in Central Luzon

In 1992, one year after Mt Pinatubo erupted, grassroots communities still experienced on-going lahar flows from the slopes of the volcano triggered by recurrent typhoons. Lahar flows- sometimes covering land and houses up to 5 meters or higher - destroyed properties and took lives. Urban residents, wage labourers, and a large number of displaced peasants, formed UGNAYAN-Pampanga, an alliance of People's Organisations to lobby for resettlement for all lahar-affected families living in evacuation centres without land or any source of livelihood. UGNAYAN later expanded to include POs from other provinces as well creating a region-wide survivors' association whose membership has different political levels. In 1995 UGNAYAN was ready to openly address vulnerability issues as landlessness, poverty, unemployment and the government's Central Luzon Development Plan which aimed for land conversion favouring industries and landlords. UGNAYAN got the support from CDRN, human rights groups, and local media to mobilize more evacuees, to create favourable public opinion and influence policy makers from the local and national government. They were able to cultivate idle land within Clark Airbase, one of the former US military bases until 1999, while negotiating with the Department of Agrarian Reform for land titles. Until 2011, the Philippine Government has not rewarded UGNAYAN's demand. Instead, People's Organisations, alone or in groups, were able to access idle lands of big landowners in their respective municipalities, took the risk to cultivate abandoned lahar-covered land, or tried to adopt alternative livelihood options – practicing a form of everyday politics.

It remains a big challenge for CDRN and related networks to change this unjust system in favour of landless peasants and displaced families.

So institutional arrangements created beyond community level, both horizontally and vertically, facilitate collective action, raising grassroots voices, and serve as entry-points to political arenas for addressing the causes of their vulnerability, although with varying success. In the context of the Philippines with very polarized civil society-state relations, these institutional mechanisms to generate collective action, or active citizenship, function as parallel governance challenging the central government in Manila (Bankoff & Hilhorst, 2009). Individual staff members of CDRN and CDRC express their ambivalent opinion on how to relate with the government. On the one hand they blame the government for the continuing vulnerabilities experienced by the people. They criticize some agencies for graft and corruption like the Mount Pinatubo Commission, and they condemn the military harassments of PO leaders and CDRN members (Delica, 1997). On the other hand, CDRN relates with the government to lobby and gets invited to national, provincial or municipality consultations. Every time it is a dilemma to attend or not such meetings where government plans are discussed, afraid to be co-opted. In many instances, DSWD included CDRC's served communities in its compliance reports claiming these to be served by the government. Although the experience of UGNAYAN shows that influencing government's policy and practice is not an easy task, it also proved that people's everyday politics practice could affect positive change on a limited scale.

The Philippine government attributes high losses and its inadequate response to the lack of financial and human resources, arguing that disasters happen beyond their control. Since the 1970s the loss of human lives due to disasters is decreasing, despite the increasing number of disaster events. However, alarmingly, the economic damage in the country due to disasters has increased 18-fold (UNSIDR, 2010). The Philippine government faces indeed many challenges like tens of millions of people in chronic poverty, extremes of social inequality, a recurring fiscal emergency, eroded long-term economic viability amid a still unfolding global crisis, weak and undemocratic institutions of governance, systemic corruption, and on-going armed conflicts (IBON, 2010). The major criticism of NGOs is the government's

tendency to be more reactive than preventive. This is a result of inadequate institutional capacity due to insufficient funding, inadequate skills and inappropriate processes that would support disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness. While the country has numerous laws which could theoretically contribute to preventing and mitigating disasters, they are inadequately implemented (Velasquez, 2011; Luna, 2001: 224). According to a village leader in a flood-prone area in Metro Manila (see Box 3.3), the government blames them for their own suffering, because they violate environmental laws or ignore land use regulations, since they 'illegally' occupy riverbanks. It is this irresponsible attitude of the Philippine government - of breaking the 'social contract' with a large group of citizens who cannot rely on guarantees from the government for any form of protection, physically, economically nor politically – that inspires CDRC to do its work as it does.

Disaster events in specific locations are used by the government to blame its political opponents instead of nature. From November to December 2004, four typhoons hit Quezon province killing over 1,000 persons through floods and landslides in areas with a long-standing guerrilla conflict between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the New People's Army (NPA). In the media illegal logging was identified as one of the causes of the disaster. The Philippine government promptly associated the illegal logging with the NPA (Kelman & Gaillard, 2007). The opposition blamed the government for not tracking down the loggers and for contributing to environmental degradation. Both sides have media allies, and these typhoons became political constructions around the allegedly responsibility of nature, illegal loggers and the NPA.

The various examples show the inconsistency in how disaster events are explained. There does not seem to be a scientific argument behind these explanations. All actors search for explanations that suit their worldviews and political interests. *"Within minutes after any major impact, disasters start becoming political"* (Olson, 2000:266). Whereas CDRC constructed an image of the Philippine government as corrupt and as an instrument of the elite taking advantage of disaster events, it increasingly started to view the state as a political arena where some of the issues of vulnerable marginalized sectors can be fought and won.

3. "What will happen now?" Publicly performed power

Olson's third question refers to the post-disaster recovery phase pointing to resources, and decisions on how to use and allocate these resources. He regards post-disaster responses from a government's perspective, while I propose to broaden this perspective to include all actors involved in disaster response and disaster risk reduction. Decisions about resource-allocation are inherently linked to issues of power, participation, inclusion and exclusion, and whose agenda or interest dominates the decision-making process. Further the kind of 'default' responses depends on one's interpretation of vulnerability and the way disasters are framed. Since disasters happen locally, it is there where major debates and struggles about resource allocation occur, especially around the question *whose risk will be reduced?*

Over time I have been witnessing the unfair distribution of risk in Metro Manila. The people in Barangay Banaba, for instance, in the municipality of Marakina, Metro

Manila face an on-going struggle to put their risk-problem on the municipality's agenda (Box 3.3).

Box 3.3 *Re-allocation of risk to a poorer, social excluded community*

Barangay Banaba is situated between Marikina and Nangka river in the eastern part of Metro Manila. People in Banaba earn an income as taxi-drivers, wage-labourers in factories or construction-work while they supplement their income by cultivating small plots along the dirty rivers with vegetables, root crops and bananas. They are organized in a PO. The people are aware of the riverbank code which prohibits settlement within 10 meter from the river, but they have no alternative place to go. In 1995 a high wall of almost 500 meters long was built by the city government to protect a middle class subdivision on the other side of the river against floods. While the wall indeed protected the subdivision, the floodwater now runs in other directions, particularly to barangay Banaba – the lowest area- which completely submerges in the water. Children and chickens drown, while people cannot stay in their houses. The people from Banaba initiated protests through direct consulting and lobbying local and municipality government and they filed a case against the construction company. The protest resulted in a restraining order against the company. The wall was not removed, but the company was not allowed to complete the wall. Meanwhile, the people from Banaba continued lobbying at municipality level for protection and re-allocation to a place where they can make a living. However the people lack the money to buy land. Because their houses are constructed within the 10 meters from the river, their village is a blank spot in government's land use plans. Because they are made invisible, they are also excluded from any flood risk reduction decision process. This is the more painful when knowing that the houses of the middle class subdivision are constructed within the 10 meter zone as well, but apparently they are sufficiently able to influence their municipality government to obtain the needed flood protection. Risk reduction resources were channelled to those with more political power. People suffer from the same risk differently.

While barangay Banaba is invisible on the government's land use plans, it managed to create an early warning system in cooperation with the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), the institution responsible for flood control in Metro Manila. The PO leader receives text messages from MMDA on rainfall data and water levels upstream which are interpreted by the PO leader into alert levels for evacuation purposes. This early warning system is an important preparedness measure that prevents casualties.

The experience of the people in Barangay Banaba is not an exception. In many other parts of the country, disaster risks are not reduced, but re-allocated to poorer, marginalized and social excluded segments of society (Lebel et al, 2006). For ordinary citizens it is difficult to tap government resources for disaster risk reduction purposes, except for relief goods in times of large-impact disasters. Most community-based work to address people's vulnerability to disasters is supported by civil society organisations and their foreign funding agencies.

The CBDO-DR approach focus on *recurrent small-scale disasters* which are largely neglected by national and international actors, while the damages – at least in financial terms - caused by all small scale disasters together outrange one large disaster (Wisner, 2008)⁷. Small-scale disasters do not trigger aid flows due to the lack of or flawed emergency procedures of (local) governments, unless affected citizens jointly start demanding proper responses (Voss & Wagner, 2010). Research on scale issues in relation to the responsible political subsystems is still rare. Moving up from recurrent small disasters at the local level to provincial level emergencies and national calamities, the political stakes increase as a direct result of event effects, and therefore of the response requirements and related government's resource allocation.

⁷ More research into the financial impact comparing small and large disasters is needed to support this argument.

This chapter started with the statement that disasters have the potential to spur political events. Pelling & Dill (2009) particularly refer to large, rather than small disasters that could trigger a breaking point in the political status quo. It may be true that only large-scale disasters could reach the political agenda at national and international level, but in the case of the Philippines, the occurrence of multiple disasters in 1984 fuelled social protests which ultimately resulted in a regime change in 1986. However, the change in government did not actually translate into transforming pre-existing inequalities. What did change since 1986 was an increasing opening of political space for civil society groups to engage with government in several arenas, including the House of Representatives since 1998. CDRC and its network use these spaces at each level of the political system with the aim to influence institutions that affect safety and protection – from getting resources from the local government’s calamity fund, towards more fundamental changes in the 1978 DM bill, and addressing root causes of people’s vulnerability.

These multiple strategies have different time horizons for making communities resilient. CDRC consciously accumulates lessons from concrete multiple-scale disaster events to substantiate its viewpoint that disasters are not natural but political. This requires a long breath and cannot be sustained by international donors only, who prefer to support short-term projects at the local level. Key is to make the existing legislation work and generate financial resources from the responsible government institutions locally and nationally. This is another reason why CBDRR interventions in general should look beyond village level and project durations.

3.4 The meaning of CBDO-DR in the Philippines

The particular and unique circumstances in which CDRC conceived and adapted its CBDO-DR approach to a changing institutional environment – from Martial Law to more open political spaces, while being part of a people’s social movement - resulted in an approach with a specific meaning and interpretations of the concepts that make up the CBDO-DR approach.

CBDO-DR means in the first place that disaster and conflict affected populations should be made conscious about *why* they are vulnerable to disasters and conflict. CDRC does this by explaining that disasters are not ‘natural’, but in fact ‘political’ events; those social arrangements causing poverty and marginalization in the country, and perceived as normal, just and immutable by vulnerable communities, are changeable. CDRC further stresses that people have ‘agency’ which can be mobilized and organized into a People’s Organisation that lines up with other POs, experiencing similar issues or conditions. CDRC enables POs to gain access to social and political resources to obtain safety and protection from the local to the national level. CDRC further facilitates alliance building between the vulnerable and less vulnerable sectors which enter the political arena with government officials to negotiate, debate, and challenge power inequalities, holding the government accountable to implement disaster response policies and struggle for justice, peace and responsible governance. CDRC defines specific concepts differently than ADPC or UNISDR referring to the prevailing definitions in Chapter 1.

'Community' and facilitating partnerships between the most and less vulnerable sectors

The meaning CDRC attaches to 'community' differs from ADPC's definition of 'community' in the sense that CDRC prioritizes groups of people facing difficulty in coping with adversity, and not automatically all villagers. It targets the most vulnerable to disasters and conflict – in an analytical sense. However, within communities, CDRC also looks for people who find themselves committed to contributing time and energy to rework societal structures locally and beyond their community. Partnerships between the most vulnerable and less vulnerable sectors are a way to mobilize the agency of grassroots people towards effective agency, with various successes. This conscious division of roles between the most and less vulnerable groups is a useful distinction that is not mentioned in ADPC's definition.

Risk or vulnerability reduction?

CDRC does not use 'risk' language, deliberately. While it views vulnerability as the product of past political, economic and social processes, it sees 'risk' as a concept which links the present with the uncertain future. The notion of 'risk' will then not offer clear and easy explanations to community people of why disasters occur, nor examples to blame or held the government accountable for past losses. CDRC therefore prefers to use the notion of 'vulnerability'.

The way CDRC views 'risk' refers to its most common definition as the 'probability' of a disaster occurring, resulting in a particular level of loss. Risk is here objectively measured using statistical formulas - considering intensity, frequency, related damage, and so on, of a particular hazard - translating 'uncertainties' into 'probabilities' (Althaus, 2005). In this definition, the sources of risk are placed outside society "in the environment" as presumed accidental unscheduled forces that "erupt" within (Hewitt, 1998: 78). This risk definition is deeply rooted in the technocratic and scientific view of disasters, blaming nature and hazards as the cause of people's vulnerability, which fluctuates according to the intensity, magnitude and duration of external events. As a consequence, 'risk reduction' is mainly dealt with in aspects that are susceptible to technical solutions (Cannon, 2000) while the social, economic and political origins of disaster vulnerability are ignored (Blaikie et al, 1994). This is the reason why CDRC does not favour this notion of 'risk' and prefers to focus on vulnerability reduction in its most holistic meaning.

Although this is understandable given the experienced history of CDRC, the notions of 'vulnerability' and 'risk' are not necessarily each other's opposites. Also 'risk' and 'risk reduction' can be connected to disaster politics. Exploring Althaus' (2005) overview of how various disciplines view risk, I found theories from an anthropological, social and philosophical perspective which resonate with my observations in the Philippines. These theories define risk not as an analysis of probabilities, using so-called objective mathematical calculations, but as a political construct about 'welfare dangers' (Cullpit, 1999: 92; Althaus, 2005: 575). Risks are often not reduced, but re-allocated to poorer, marginalized and social excluded segments of society (Lebel et al, 2006) like illustrated by the case of the flood-prone urban poor community in Barangay Banabe (Box 3.3).

From a sociological perspective, risk is defined as that it is people who define it: we must turn to people and the societies they live in to understand risk. In this approach different risk perceptions are recognized, and again politics emerges in analysing *whose* risk perception is considered, and *who* decides on which risk reduction measure where to implement, and what is safe enough? Blending the different views on risk, I define risk as a subjective, multi-dimensional social construct. Whoever controls the definition of risk controls the solution to the problem at hand. “*Defining risk is thus an exercise in power*” as stated by Slovic (1999: 699).

Slovic also refers here to risk debates between ‘experts’ and ‘lay people’ as a result of differing risk perceptions, and of the power differentials between them. The case of drought in Panay –discussed in chapter 1 – illustrates that the farmers’ risk perceptions and responses were subordinated to the problem definitions and solutions of the NGO. Power differentials determine which risk reduction measure will be selected, and who benefits from this. Defining risk, and debates about resource allocation, and whose risk to reduce involves politics, not just between the state and civil society actors, but in all human interactions (Kerkvliet, 2009).

Distinguishing political from social vulnerability

I mentioned that CDRC prefers the notion of ‘vulnerability’ over ‘risk’ to mobilize and organize local people. Feature 5 of the CBDO-DR approach explicitly mentions that CDRC intends to reduce people’s political vulnerability. In most literature however, no clear distinction is made between *social* and *political* vulnerability. The two are closely interrelated; political exclusion is mentioned as a major component of social vulnerability. People are made vulnerable to hazards by their marginalized political and socio-economic positions. People’s vulnerability is due to their limited access to economic, environmental, social, political and personal assets (Blaikie et al, 1994, Pelling, 1998). When these different components are tied together by one label of ‘social vulnerability’, the concept remains “fuzzy” and chances are high that people’s political assets will be overlooked.

I propose to make a conceptual distinction for analytical purposes to better understand the political meaning CDRC attaches to vulnerability. ‘Social vulnerability’ refers to traditional values like *‘bayanihan’*, and other forms of cooperation that may be weakened due to outside pressures and constraints. (Seasonal) migration is such a pressure that may undermine actual, innate connections and networks among people. These include extended family networks, reciprocal links, frequent supportive interactions, community bonds, roots and commitments, collective action, and institutions that provide a basis for coordinating a response (Norris, et al, 2008).

‘Political vulnerability’ refers to a field of *differential* relations between actors. These relations are characterized by struggle and competition over access to resources, positions and power, a so-called force field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). This field of differential relations exists within communities and beyond the local level like class, gender, ethnicity and other forms of differentiation. The existence of multiple

force fields – locally as well as referring to power dynamics between civil society and the state - has consequences for the resulting forms of governance, power relations and room for manoeuvre for social action of the different parties involved (Nuijten, 2005). When this room for manoeuvre is limited, people's political vulnerability is high.

Korf (2004a) also distinguishes social from political assets. He argues that households which face high levels of risk and uncertainty, largely rely on their social assets, but can stabilize and even expand their opportunities to reduce their vulnerability by actively seeking connections with power holders as a way to obtain protection. Identifying sources of power is part of poor and marginalized people's everyday life (Li, 1996).

Hence, I refer to 'political vulnerability' as people's inability to access resources, positions and power to demand safety and protection outside their innate social support networks due to power differentials and political exclusion from decision-making processes from the local to national level. CDRC particularly aims to reduce people's *political vulnerability* meaning that it seeks to enable people to have a political voice, to gain access to political resources, positions and to perform power to achieve safety and security from the local to the national level.

I regard 'vulnerability' not something that really happens to people or communities, but rather a construction of reality to serve a different purpose, value or meaning (Ingram and Endter-Wada, 2009: 2). In the Philippine context, CDRC uses the notion of 'vulnerability' instrumentally, as a tool for analytical and conscientization purposes. In the process of conscientization, 'vulnerability' is used to make people understand their current conditions and the reasons behind. 'Vulnerability' is an analytical tool to unravel institutional arrangements and power relations, rather than a real-time description of local people's situation that will disempower and label people as poor, landless, disabled, widow, or elderly. Once people are aware of why the government can be held accountable for their disaster losses, and that unjust conditions are changeable, CDRC shifts its language to people's capacities, emphasizing their 'agency'. 'Agency' includes people's *organisational* and *motivational* resources - terms used by Anderson and Woodrow (1989) in their Capacity and Vulnerability Assessment framework. Likewise I prefer to use the notion of '*political resources*' which includes abilities to actively look for connections with power holders outside their social networks, to organize and mobilize effective agency through a chain of agents and networks (Latour, 1986), and the various forms of people's everyday politics practice (Kerkvliet, 2009).

3. 4 Concluding remarks

This chapter explored the politics of disaster response in the Philippines. The historical review of how the Philippine CBDO-DR-tradition got shape within a context of oppositional politics illustrates how the elite and powerful few who make up the government either neglect disaster response or take advantage of recurrent disaster events. The majority of poor and marginalized sectors rely particularly on their social, motivational and political resources. Both CDRC and the Philippine govern-

ment attach their specific meaning to disaster and vulnerability and construct their paradigms of reality of whom to blame and about what caused the damages. All actors search for explanations that suit their beliefs and political interests and use discursive means to win others for their cause. As a consequence, responses to disasters vary according to their political visions.

The CBDO-DR-tradition generated several features that enable at-risk communities to mobilize and organize effective agency to rework institutions from the local to national level. The CBDO-DR tradition is a context-specific approach and cannot consequently be replicated to other contexts just like that. This research however, aims to explore the potential of CBDRR by looking into how CBDRR can organize 'effective agency', and some of the CBDO-DR features are significant to examine in different contexts like Afghanistan and Indonesia. The following features will therefore become part of the CBDRR pilots, and their potential reviewed.

Strengthening local people's social and motivational resources to deal with adversity

Especially in an institutional context where government policies, the judiciary system, and governance structures are not functioning properly, people affected by disasters or conflict highly rely on social supportive institutions like safety nets. In contexts of recurrent conflict and increasingly damaging disasters, where outside aid assistance is limited, it is considered more viable and durable to strengthen people's social, organisational and motivational resources. These are resources that stay with people regardless displacement, and can be shared or transferred to others. These resources could be instrumental in obtaining material resources, like access to land for Pinatubo survivors through UGNAYAN either through local arrangements with landlords or through a formal government resettlement programme.

Strengthen people's 'political' resources to stabilize and further expand effective agency

CDRC explicitly intends to strengthen people's political resources, referring to people's ability to access resources, positions and power to demand safety and protection outside their innate social support networks. CDRC develops people's political resources by developing leaderships skills, negotiation skills and speaking in public. Local people attend paralegal training to enhance their skills and confidence to negotiate with military and rebels; they receive training on human rights and humanitarian law, and how to report human rights violations to outsiders. CDRC facilitates the process of linking People's Organisations to other People's Organisations that may evolve into issue-based or sectoral alliances mobilizing so-called 'effective agency' (Latour, 1986).

Consider politics, power and the broader institutional context

The Philippine experience illustrates that CBDRR interventions should not limit their scope to village level analysis and interventions. Communities cannot rely on themselves, and need collaboration with less vulnerable sectors and engagement with government actors beyond village level. CDRC puts emphasis on strengthening social and political institutions to connect grassroots people to the wider context enabling local people to act collectively to create space for manoeuvre, to negotiate, to

oppose and change unequal social relations that give rise to their vulnerability. CDRC views its CBDO-DR approach as a long-term *political* process, and not only as a series of short-term risk reduction interventions. This requires multiple strategies – immediate- and long-term - addressing multi-level institutions, involving a broad collaboration of actors, proper representations, and opening new arenas and strategies for engagement: an engagement with government officials that varies from constructive relationships, to critically monitoring policy formulation and implementation to confrontation and opposition. In the long term, this could change patterns of authority and relations between government and ordinary citizens, transforming and taming antagonistic relationships.

While CDRC has been stressing the political nature of disaster events and responses since the 1980s, more researchers and policy-makers now call for a more political focus on risk and risk reduction (Pelling & Dill, 2009; Christoplos, 2001). This includes the UNISDR acknowledging that risk has moved from a technical to the political sphere (Wahlström, 2010). In the next chapter I will analyse the roots and political perspectives of other CBDRR traditions taking a historical trajectory, and analyse how home-grown CBDRR traditions like the Philippine one, get intertwined with CBDRR initiatives promoted by governments through the Hyogo Framework for Action. CBDRR turns out to be a politically contested approach.

4.

The social life of community-based disaster risk reduction

“Those who put victims in the limelight without considering the political context, could do more harm than good”
Achterhuis, 1999

Towards the end of the 1990s, policy-makers and practitioners rapidly adopted Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR) as an alternative to top-down approaches in disaster management. CBDRR approaches claim to build resilient communities. To achieve this, CBDRR raises people’s awareness of disaster risks, using intimate local knowledge, and recognizes pre-existing local capacities and institutions. Hereby, policy-makers and practitioners assume that CBDRR approaches improve the position of vulnerable, disaster-affected people by addressing the root causes of their vulnerability (UN-ISDR, 2005). This chapter is an account of how CBDRR evolved and how it has been associated with various strands of thinking, and used by particular social groups to strengthen the legitimacy of their agendas.

Behind a shared CBDRR language, I observe differing ways in which organisations attach meaning to CBDRR and ‘do CBDRR’. These variations arise because people have divergent world-views, values, and experienced histories of their environment. People interpret and construct ‘meaning’ of these events and experiences. For some, CBDRR means developing technical solutions to improve early warning systems and cyclone shelters at local level, while for others CBDRR is a governance and human rights issue (Wisner & Walker, 2005b). Some consider CBDRR as an approach to advance local level decision-making and partnering with local government, while others interpret CBDRR as a strategy to transform power relations, and to challenge policies responsible for generating vulnerability locally. I want to find out how these CBDRR variations are rooted in social, cultural and political histories, and how they interact with one another in the arena of explaining and responding to disasters.

In this chapter I review the origins of CBDRR since the 1970s, through the life histories of people who wrote about their experiences to respond to disasters, who wrote about CBDRR in their specific local contexts and about how their view on disasters developed. I further use my own experience with some of these people with whom I worked, and who were part of the history of CBDRR in Asia. Their views on disasters are influenced by their experiences with problems of underdevelopment, processes of marginalization and failing government responses to recurrent disasters. These home-grown CBDRR-traditions have a clear political perspective. Since the end of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), governments have been promoting a CBDRR tradition that engages with multi-stakeholder platforms to enhance public participation and institutional reform in the field of disaster risk reduction. This approach – laid down in the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) - supposes a harmonious interaction between the government at different levels and civil-society actors: the government shapes policies and institutional frameworks, while civil-society actors play a complementary role in sup-

porting vulnerable communities. This approach, however, raises questions about mutual trust, the nature of participation of grassroots people, about representation and power dynamics (Warner, et al, 2002). I focus on the social and political life of CBDRR by showing how the approach as a package of concepts is used and appropriated by various constituencies in the 'political arena' of disaster risk reduction. This chapter stresses that, conceptually, CBDRR is a contested approach, and makes a plea for a more explicit recognition of the contested nature of CBDRR policies and realities.

Methodology: about personal constructs, and the social life of CBDRR

My interest in the question of why there are different interpretations of CBDRR, despite the shared language in agencies' policy documents, began when I started to move between different CBDRR life-worlds. From 1993 until 2001, I worked for the Citizens' Disaster Response Centre (CDRC) and its network, which views disasters as an opportunity for social change. For CDRC its CBDO-DR approach means not only addressing people's immediate survival and recovery needs, but includes long-term strategies to transform social and political structures in society which generate vulnerability (chapter 3). From an insider's position, I was able to gain insight into how CDRC constructed its CBDO-DR narrative, and I was part of its everyday practice at grassroots level.

In 1999 – while still working with CDRC – I gained an outsider-position as CBDRR consultant in other Asian countries. This provided me with the opportunity to take a step back from CDRC, and to critically reflect on its practices, allowing me to better identify the challenges of CBDRR. I got involved in the development and facilitation of CBDRM courses¹ at the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) in Bangkok. Most participants came from international NGOs and Asian national governments, and their worldviews, experiences and background often differed from those of the course fellows². They interpreted CBDRM in various ways. At this point in time I realized for the first time that people use the same CBDRR-language but mean different things. These people analyse causes of disasters in terms of immediate and structural factors, but in their practice they view disasters mainly as external events, while largely ignoring the wider context (Ramalingan, *et al.*, 2008: 13). I wished to understand the assumptions and ideas behind these different interpretations, and why the political perspectives, which I appreciated in the CBDO-DR tradition of CDRC, were absent in the CBDRR traditions promoted by the international community.

To better understand the reasons behind this diversity, I decided to recount the evolution of CBDRR by looking into the origins of the various CBDRR traditions. I did this through a *personal constructs* approach (Robson, 2002: 366; Long, 1989: 252), by focusing on the people who wrote about CBDRR, and whose views and ideas inspired CDRC to construct its own CBDO-DR narrative. I used their life histories and careers to understand how they developed their views

¹ ADPC uses the term Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM)

² The first two CBDRM courses were facilitated by Mihir Bhatt and Andrew Maskrey (1997-1998). The third course in 1999 was facilitated by *Duryog Nivaran* and ADPC, including me. Then *Duryog Nivaran* and CDP reviewed the CBDRM course in 2000 and produced new course materials promoting the home-grown CBDRR tradition. In 2004, ADPC published its formal course CBDRM Field Practitioners Handbook taking out the political perspective on disaster response.

through their experiences. Not only did their ideas inspire CDRC, but their joint efforts also influenced the content of several UN policy documents on disaster risk reduction, including the Hyogo Framework for Action. In addition to life histories, I used *narrative inquiry methods*. I reviewed policy and workshop documents of organisations which actively promote CBDRR in Asia, such as *Duryog Nivaran* in South Asia and CDRC, two networks representing what I call ‘home-grown’ CBDRR traditions. I further analysed texts produced by the UN-ISDR representing the CBDRR tradition promoted by the international community. Narrative inquiry methods aim to de-construct the various CBDRR narratives: how is CBDRR framed and why? What are the primary features? What are the gaps, ambiguities and contradictions within these narratives? How one views CBDRR has consequences for CBDRR practice, the kinds of strategy and interventions one selects, and who benefits from risk reduction at the grassroots level and who does not.

I finally looked into the Global Network of Civil-Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR). The GNDR was established in 2007 with the intention to critically monitor the governments’ progress in disaster risk reduction as laid down in the HFA, and to create one voice to hold governments accountable. Through the HFA, the different strands of thinking about CBDRR came together, when in 2008 the UNISDR invited the GNDR to come up with a ‘Views from the Frontline’ report to monitor the progress of the HFA. The GNDR, through its interaction with the UNISDR, increasingly recognizes the ‘Views from the Frontline’ as a political instrument vital to understand the power dynamics within the UN system (Gibson et al, 2011). I followed the activities and discussion of the GNDR through its e-discussions, I attended the Global Network Workshop in London in January 2010, and had discussions with the chairman and project manager of the GNDR.

Origins of ‘home-grown’ CBDRR traditions

The origins of CBDRR-traditions are, among others, closely related to the different ways of ‘seeing’ disasters (Bankoff & Hilhorst, 2009). For a long time, experts such as meteorologists, seismologists and volcanologists have been ‘seeing’ disasters as sudden external events caused by nature. Loss of life and the extent of damages are regarded as a function of the magnitude, frequency and intensity of the natural hazard. This view still prevails, explicitly or implicitly acknowledging nature or hazardous events as the cause of disaster occurrence, and has been called *the dominant hazard-focused viewpoint* (Hewitt, 1983). Since the 1970s, this view has received critiques challenging the argument that disasters are natural, and has been the subject of heated debate (O’Keefe *et al.*, 1976, Cuny, 1983, Wijkman & Timberlake, 1984: 125, Blaikie *et al.*, 1994, Quarantelli, 1998, Pelling and Dill, 2009).

Phil O’Keefe, Ken Westgate and Ben Wisner, at that time linked as researchers to the Disaster Research Unit of Bradford University, analysed global disaster statistics from diverse international organisations, government departments, academic institutions and insurance companies, and observed several tendencies. In their article “*Taking the naturalness out of natural disasters*” (1976), they first mentioned the trend of the increase in occurrence of disasters over the period 1947-1970, paralleled by an increasing death toll per disaster. Secondly, they observed that the greatest loss of life per disaster was in developing countries. In their article they explained these observations by viewing disasters as the interface between an extreme physical

phenomenon and a vulnerable human population. They attributed the increasing number of disasters to the growing vulnerability of people to extreme physical events, accepting that no major geological and climatological changes took place during that period. To underscore their argument, the authors included a quote from Paul Richards - who was at that time working at the Environmental Unit in the International African Institute – which emphasizes the point that the ultimate causes of people’s vulnerability.... *may well be traceable to the structural imbalances between rich and poor countries, and we would be right to replace the term natural with the more appropriate term social or political disaster*” (Richards, 1975: xi). This view greatly reflects the experiences of disaster survivors like peasants or the urban poor in Third World countries. It also suited the Philippine context, and *“Taking the naturalness out of natural disasters”* was one of the few scientific sources the founders of CDRC used to construct their CBDO-DR narrative and legitimize its practice and direction.

Those who actively consider the social-political environment in their disaster management work are mostly people who work closely with people living in adverse conditions prone to disasters. These real-life experiences make them realize that disasters are much more related to development - which benefits the rich more than the poor - than to natural factors. One of these people was Frederick Cuny who witnessed many relief operations in Biafra in 1969 and in 1971 in Bangladesh. Shocked by the mismanagement and naively conducted food distributions, he was determined to improve the way in which aid is offered to people in crisis (PBS online). Like Phil O’Keefe, Ken Westgate and Ben Wisner, Cuny stressed in his book *“Disasters and Development”* (1983) that disasters should not be treated as separate events, but that they are linked to poverty and vulnerability. He questioned rapid, short-term relief operations, and proposed that emergency response should consider the broader development context by adding disaster prevention strategies. He particularly criticized regimes in Third World countries which perpetuated underdevelopment to maintain the status quo of their privileged class. Dole-out of relief goods after emergencies is a preferred strategy of these governments, which does not really challenge state-society relations, although this is not a guarantee. Disasters and the way relief is handled do impact on state-society relations as noticed by Wijkman and Timberlake in their book *“Natural Disasters: Acts of God or Acts of Man?”* (1984). They noticed *“the creative side of disasters”* (1984; 125) meaning that disasters can trigger societal change – even beneficial change for vulnerable communities.

Stressing that *“...Reducing the vulnerability of the poor is a development question, and [that] such question should be answered politically”* (Cuny, 1983: 7), is a shared perspective of the previously mentioned authors. However, they viewed ‘interventions’ from the perspective of international aid agencies, and national governments which are assumed to coordinate aid with voluntary agencies at grassroots level. Local communities may perceive this very differently. Andrew Maskrey was the first person to highlight grassroots efforts in reducing disaster risk from a local perspective in his publication *“Disaster mitigation: a community based approach ”* (1989). Maskrey – at that time an urban planner – started to rethink his understanding of disaster management in the early 1980s, when the Peruvian government asked him to conduct an earthquake risk analysis for the city of Lima (Carillo et al, 2006). He discovered that the oldest part of the inner city, built between the 17th and 19th centuries, was most prone to earth-

quakes. The houses – originally designed for rich households – had gradually been occupied by 20 to 40 poor families. Lack of maintenance and overuse resulted in unsafe housing for the poor. Maskrey realized that disaster mitigation is not just about physical measures, but includes legal measures, proper urban planning and management, and economic interventions. When the earthquake risk assessment task was completed, “*the work got stuck on the shelf* [of the Peruvian government] *and nothing happened!*”. Together with colleagues he decided to create an NGO to work directly with local communities and local authorities. They believed that “*nothing will happen unless people themselves who are actually affected by disasters and who actually suffer, politically start demanding safety and security*” (Carillo et al, 2006; 45). The principal message of his book is that disaster risk reduction is not strictly the domain of scientific and technical disciplines – the job of seismologists, meteorologists, engineers or architects – but is closely linked to development processes, and that grassroots people and local governments have a voice too in reducing disaster risks. In the following years, Maskrey got in touch with people in other parts of Latin America - from universities, NGOs, local governments and international organisations - sharing the same perspective. The idea of the *Red de Estudios Sociales en Prevención de Desastres en América Latina* (LA RED) was born. LA RED aimed to build evidence from local disaster experiences in order to advocate change in (inter)national policies that dealt with relief, preparedness and scientific research.

In 1994 the Sri Lanka office of the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) - now known as Practical Action – initiated a South Asian network of organisations and individuals, called ‘*Duryog Nivaran*’ meaning disaster mitigation. ITDG was inspired by La Red, particularly through ITDG’s Peru office where Andrew Maskrey was at that time director. ITDG’s Sri Lanka office sought out like-minded organisations in South Asia to start the network. The All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) – one of the very active organisations in the network - was one of those invited to the founding meeting that shaped the network’s agenda. The overall aim of *Duryog Nivaran* is to reduce local communities’ susceptibility to disasters and conflict, by promoting an ‘alternative perspective’ at conceptual, policy and implementation levels of disaster mitigation and development programmes in South Asia (Ariyabandu, 1999).

In the Philippines, *ad hoc* citizens’ support to disaster survivors gave birth to the Citizens’ Disaster Response Network (CDRN) in 1985. Ordinary people and disaster survivors criticized government handling of disasters during President Marcos’ dictatorship. CDRN views disasters as an opportunity for social change, and relief as an entry-point for long-term organizing work. CDRN, La Red and *Duryog Nivaran* share a common perspective that disasters are a matter of vulnerability; that disasters are linked to processes of underdevelopment; they all critique top-down emergency response and the dominant hazard-focused viewpoint which fails to recognize grassroots realities; they stress the importance of recognizing grassroots perceptions and efforts to respond to disasters, and therefore the need for genuine grassroots’ participation.

Representatives from CDRN, *Duryog Nivaran* and La Red influenced policy frameworks proposed by the IDNDR, especially after the mid-term IDNDR conference in Yokohama in 1994. The social life of CBDRR evolved from the home-grown traditions in the specific contexts of Peru, South Asia and the Philippines to the global level where the international community increas-

ingly got concerned about the rise in the number of disasters. The next section will discuss how CBDRR got appropriated in the UN agenda to reduce disaster risks, and how its meaning got re-framed in the process.

Brief history of UN-led disaster risk reduction policy

While Maskrey published his book on CBDM, and while in the Philippines CDRC was institutionalised, the UN General Assembly in 1987 took the initiative for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) from 1989 to 1999. The basic idea behind the IDNDR was the unacceptable rising levels of losses due to disasters on one hand, and the existence of a wealth of scientific and engineering know-how on the other, which could be effectively used to reduce these losses. Initially, governments promoted a strictly technocratic and scientific approach to reduce disaster losses. Since the mid-decade IDNDR conference in 1994 in Yokohama, however, also socio-economic aspects as components of effective disaster prevention were put into perspective (IDNDR, 1999). The participants, mainly from governments and the scientific community, acknowledged that social factors like cultural traditions, religion, economic standing and trust in political accountability are important factors in reducing social vulnerability too. The ability to do this requires knowledge and understanding of local conditions (IDNDR, 1994). Hence the Mid-term Review in Yokohama recommended to UN-member states to develop National Platforms to adjust the general disaster risk reduction objectives to local conditions. Since the end of the 1990s the international community has started to promote community-based approaches as a complementary strategy to national and international efforts to reduce risks. However, the meaning governments attach to community-based approaches rather refers to making disaster response more efficient than to genuinely addressing the underlying causes of people's vulnerabilities.

Representatives from La Red, AIDMI and CDRC attended UN conferences during the IDNDR and joined the group of critical and concerned observers at that time. Initially they felt marginalized, since the 1994 Yokohama conference was not designed to have their inputs. Several representatives of NGOs from different continents met to discuss how their voice could be heard by a wider audience. Their shared aim was to change the dominant top-down, technocratic disaster management framework promoted by the IDNDR (Bhatt, 2007: 5; Davies and Myers, 1994). They launched the Global Forum of NGOs for Disaster Reduction (GFNDR) to share experiences, and promote the agenda of progressive disaster risk reduction through training and advocacy work, choosing Zenaida Delica, director of CDRC, as president (Delica-Willison, 2007). Unfortunately, the Global Forum ceased to exist after having participated in the closing meeting of the IDNDR in 1999. The GFNDR was born out of frustration with the UN-meetings, and the main reason why it ceased to be was that such global initiative requires intensive preparations and thoughts about purpose, strategy, structure, management and finance. The GFNDR felt there was a lack of facilitation from the IDNDR secretariat to support civil society actors to participate in UN-conferences, and therefore questioned IDNDR's commitment to considering local agendas (Delica-Willison, 2007). However, La Red, *Duryog Nivaran* and CDRC continued voicing their alternative disaster management agenda at subsequent disaster risk reduction conferences, as well as through ADPC and various UN institutions where some of their members found positions later on.

After the IDNDR, the UN General Assembly decided to continue its activities in disaster reduction and established the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR). The Secretariat's mandate is to engage with as many different actors as possible, and as such it encourages an open debate, allowing different views on disaster management within the UN-system (Christoplos, *et al.*, 2005). Civil society actors from disaster-affected countries in particular, perceive the secretariat as an ally in advocating CBDRR approaches within the UN system and in reforming traditional disaster management structures. In the process to prepare for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) in Kobe in 2005, the secretariat collected comments from civil society actors on the WCDR draft programme outcomes, of which some are integrated in the official Hyogo Declaration, adopted by 168 governments.

Since the start of the IDNDR in 1990, governments have met every five years to discuss strategies and progress made to respond effectively to disasters. The Hyogo Framework for Action should be interpreted as part of this process, and builds on previous documents like *Strategy for a safer world in the 21st century* (IDNDR, 1999) and *Living with Risk: a global review of disaster reduction initiatives* (UNISDR, 2004). Coming from governments' predominant practice of top-down reactive emergency responses, the focus in the HFA document shifted towards disaster preparedness, which is a positive development in reducing, at least, people's *physical* vulnerability. The HFA reflects a growing coherence in ideas and views - at least at policy level. Civil-society actors like Bhatt (2007) argue, however, that the HFA is still a top-down, UN and donor-driven process, and although many civil-society actors are currently involved and consulted, "*the process is still decided at the top, not according to local agendas*" (Bhatt, 2007: 5). It is important to view the HFA document as the outcome of a political process of making choices, as an interactive process of pulling and pushing between CBDRR advocates and resistant members within the UN-family, who frame, advise, and negotiate changes reflecting their perspectives. CBDRR is not a 'thing' or 'solid object' but rather an idea operated through actors, their relationships and interactions through which CBDRR gets different meanings and intentions, to which I refer to as 'the social life of CBDRR'.

The social life of CBDRR: diversity in meaning and perspectives of actors

The HFA is a compromise on numerous issues. Bisiaux (2005) provides insight into the various debates and views during the WCDR. The cluster panel on reducing underlying risk factors, for instance – in which CBDRR advocates participated – highlighted the challenge of a lack of common terminology and of differing frames, which hampers creating effective partnerships in disaster risk reduction. By looking into the backstage dynamics and negotiations among various actors leading to the HFA, and through narrative inquiry of policy documents, I studied what meaning governments attach to CBDRR and its goals. Here I focus on the various concepts which make up CBDRR according to the UNISDR, like 'disaster', 'community', 'participation' 'vulnerability', 'risk', 'partnerships' and 'resilience'. By establishing what is in the texts and what is not, what is vague and what is clear, I will set out who is in and who is out (Fairclough, 2003, Lakoff, 2000).

Disasters as external extraordinary events

In Resolution 1 of the HFA, the governments state that “*We are convinced that disasters seriously undermine the results of development investments in a very short time, and therefore, remain a major impediment to sustainable development and poverty eradication*” (UNISDR, 2005: p. 3). Governments view disasters as an interruption of development and normalcy. In this view disasters are external, extraordinary, uncertain events with unanticipated damages (Hewitt, 1983; Gaillard, 2010). During the WCDR, participants debated about the ‘naturalness’ of disasters and whether the framework should include natural hazards only, or those induced by human processes as well, like industrial and nuclear power plant accidents. Despite resistance from Iranian representatives, the final document definitions and scope include now both types of hazards (Bisiaux, 2005: 5), although they are not analysed as political events. Compared to the IDNDR, disasters are not necessarily ‘natural’ anymore, but still regarded as sudden, unexpected and external events.

The HFA frames the problem of disasters in terms of losses due to a lack of disaster risk awareness, and more implicitly the lack of legislation and poor coordination between different actors. The HFA proposes five priority areas to substantially reduce disaster losses (UNISDR, 2005, p. 11-18):

- (1) Ensure that DRR is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation;
- (2) Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning;
- (3) Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels;
- (4) Reduce the underlying risk factors;
- (5) Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.

These five areas for action are based on an image that fits well with the institutional needs of the UN. The HFA constructs an image of governments being inefficient to adequately respond to disasters at the local level. Poor coordination between the various actors and the lack of legislation are not perceived as political problems, but as a lack of knowledge and information, scarcity of financial resources and unclear authority at the local government level (UNISDR, 2005). Structural change to build a culture of safety and resilience is therefore a matter of informing and educating people at all levels, adopting early warning using appropriate technologies, and devolving roles and responsibilities for DRR to the local levels. The final document is silent on the role of the UN and World Bank in promoting investments that fail to consider disaster risks and generate disaster vulnerability, although this topic was debated in the main committee (Bisiaux, 2005: 7). During the closing session of the WCDR, the Civil Society Address to the WCDR, delivered by Zenaida Delica³, pointed out that the sharp debates and insights exchanged during the thematic discussions did not reach the final document, and stated that governments were avoiding to take responsibility instead of making the strongest commitment to DRR (ibid: 18). The HFA escapes political debates on DRR by casting problems and solutions

³ Former Executive Director of CDRC and at the time of the WCDR working at ADPC in Bangkok as Director of Education and Training.

in technical terms, and legitimizing governments' role in times of emergencies as central commands, who timely warn and efficiently coordinate disaster responses (ibid: 20). Root causes of people's vulnerability to hazards and 'the political' continue to be ignored in UN policies and actions (Wisner and Walker, 2005a: 90). The following section aims to uncover the meaning the UN attach to concepts that make up CBDRR, and when and how they leave 'the political' out of their policies.

Grassroots people as 'proper beneficiaries'

How governments view grassroots people, their communities, and what is expected from them is not univocally formulated in sequential policy documents. 'Community' is defined as "A social group which has a number of things in common such as shared experience, locality, culture, heritage and social interests (UNISDR, 2004: 177). "Politics and financial disparities exist in most villages and neighbourhoods so, it becomes important to identify shared values and concerns" (UNISDR, 2004: 186). These quotes imply that governments focus their attention on 'the common good'. Emphasizing shared values, community cohesion and common interests is functional for mobilizing purposes, and leads to an a-political formulation of community problems (Pelling, 2007: 378). By focusing on the common good, people are detached from their social, economic and political context, and the unequal power relationships between local actors are neutralized. But who then are mobilized? Not all community members have equal access to community institutions and resources. Particular subgroups like landless workers, migrants, women, or minority ethnic groups have distinct priorities or interests, which tend to be subsumed by decision-making processes that are 'consensus-based' and framed as serving 'the common good'. The ones mobilized for decision-making are therefore usually prominent community people like local leaders, local elites and their kinship networks.

The *Living with Risk* publication further mentions that "Communities cannot implement community-based disaster mitigation plans on their own" (UNISDR, 2004: 177-178). This quote could mean, like CDRC explains, that addressing root causes of people's vulnerability requires the involvement of multiple actors beyond community level to challenge multi-level institutions. Since the UNISDR does not intend to do this, it is more likely that UNISDR either views grassroots people as incapable, unable to protect themselves and dependent on government response; or that governments do not *allow* local people to take initiative. The UNISDR explains that the initiative for CBDRR is located at the local government level which will decide how to involve citizens and which citizens. Here, 'community' has an administrative meaning and a formal leadership structure with an elected village head and appointed councillors (Allen, 2006: 84). The *Living with Risk* text further implies that local government officials control the participatory process to assess risks rather than sharing power to debate and define risk together with grassroots people while recognizing their – often differing - risk perceptions. The HFA constructs an image of the regions and people affected by disasters as under-developed, ignorant, un-informed, un-prepared, and un-planned (see Hewitt, 1983 for a critique; Gaillard, 2010), and need therefore to be informed, motivated and educated about risk and what to do in times of emergency. It detaches people's vulnerability from the institutional context while depoliticizing disaster events.

Participation as a policy tool

The HFA considers scientific and technical knowledge essential to reduce risk, but mentions that this information does not reach local populations automatically (UNISDR, 2004: 180). Therefore public awareness is one of the priority actions where experts provide information to local people in a culturally appropriate manner. On the other hand, “*over-reliance on technical experts and one-way communication is ineffective*”, and “*special effort is required to recall locally-valued traditional coping mechanisms*” (UNISDR, 2004: 180). Community participation here is regarded as instrumental, as a necessity for effective communication and appropriate management giving grassroots people ‘*the chance to influence decisions and manage resources to reduce their vulnerability*’ (UNISDR, 2004: 180). Participation is supposed to increase the success of policy and management (Warner et al, 2002: 14). Implicitly, participation means consultation, listening and understanding risks to which they are exposed, and what to do when hazards occur. Participation is not meant here to question or confront power inequalities that generate disaster vulnerability, because as said earlier, governments depoliticize disaster events, and detach disaster affected people from their social and institutional context. In practice however, ‘participation’ is not something people will ‘do’ when asked, since people always participate in on-going events, and practice their everyday politics to influence and respond to these events even if they are *not* asked to participate (Long, 1992; Kerkvliet, 2009). Ineffective communication and disaster response are likely to be caused by power differentials rather than by a lack of knowledge and preparedness measures.

Participation is further seen as a way of tapping people’s local knowledge. The UNISDR refers to local knowledge as *practices developed by a group of people from an advanced understanding of the local environment, which has been formed over numerous generations of habitation* (UNISDR, 2008: vii). The UNISDR distinguishes local knowledge from other types of knowledge in that it originates from the community, that it is disseminated through informal means, it is collectively owned, subject to adaptation, and embedded in a community’s way of life as a means of survival. Most common examples of the use of local knowledge are indigenous warning signals for impending danger, building-techniques to withstand typhoons, floods and earthquakes, and mutual help systems like *bayanihan* in the Philippines. These localized technical solutions to respond to disasters form just bits and pieces of what constitutes local knowledge; local risk perspectives and differing risk interests are not analysed.

Increasingly, international NGOs look beyond a hazard event, and consider people’s perspectives by taking into account how hazards interact with their experiences of vulnerability and their livelihoods. In discussions with government however, the scope of risk assessments remains an on-going debate. During the third session of the Global Platform for DRR in Geneva from 8-13 May 2011, a few civil society organisations pointed to the narrowly defined hazard-focused viewpoint on DRR, and referred to, for instance, the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico affecting the livelihoods of fishermen, and the population of Pakistan whose exposure to terrorism causes more fear and danger than the country’s experienced floods and earthquake (online debate moderated by GNDR, 2011). “*Let us focus on natural disasters only, otherwise our work becomes too complex!*” was a serious remark however, of one of the organisers of a workshop on good practices in CBDRR and strategies to partner with local governments. The

HFA prefers to focus on natural hazards only instead of people's broader risk landscape. A narrow definition of disaster risk means a simplification of reality, conceals the everyday life-worlds and interests of local poor people, while escaping politics (after Li: 2002).

'Risk' or 'vulnerability' language?

In contrast to home-grown CBDRR traditions, the HFA uses 'risk' language more frequently than the term 'vulnerability'. 'Risk' is defined as "*the probability of harmful consequences, or expected losses (deaths, injuries, property, livelihoods, economic activities disrupted or environment damaged) resulting from interactions between natural or human-induced hazards and vulnerable conditions* (UNISDR, 2004: 6). This risk definition largely matches the technocratic and scientific view of disasters, which I discussed in chapter 3. The *Living with Risk* document spends a whole chapter on understanding the nature of risk (ibid: 35-77) and that risk is rooted in physical, social, economic and environmental vulnerability. Physical vulnerability refers here to e.g. exposure, density of populations and design of infrastructure. Social vulnerability includes aspects of illiteracy, access to human rights, health, social cohesion, gender roles, traditional knowledge and power relations. These factors are presenting a list of aspects that people lack or have problems with, without an explanation or reference to the underlying societal causes. Likewise, economic vulnerability refers to the economic status of people, like a lack of income and access to loans and credit, without explaining the interrelationships and economic dynamics between the poor and wealthier segments in society. Environmental vulnerability includes natural resource depletion and the state of resource degradation. In the end these vulnerability factors are presented as facts and conditions which increase people's susceptibility to hazards. The chapter continues to discuss the frequency and intensity of the various hazards with the related damages of each particular hazard, and looks to trends in people's vulnerability - translating 'uncertainties' into 'probabilities' (Althaus, 2005). By focusing on risk in terms of probabilities, and vulnerability factors in terms of susceptibility, the HFA ignores the social, economic and political origins of disaster vulnerability (Wisner and Walker, 2005a). As a consequence, 'risk reduction' is mainly dealt with in terms of technical and physical solutions (Cannon, 2000).

Reducing the underlying risk factors is one of the priority actions in the HFA. It promotes strategies which deal with institutional reform, like improving communication channels, land-use planning, access to safety-nets, or are physical in nature. They leave existing power relations unchallenged. Local government officials particularly prefer engineering and physical projects since these are visible showing the electorate and potential investors that government is responding to risk (Pelling, 2003: 49). These physical projects do not threaten the status quo, but neither are they a-political. Pelling (2003) argues that contractors and even political leaders benefit economically from such investments and in this way reinforce existing power disparities in society.

The UNISDR definition of risk does mention people's vulnerable conditions, but 'the why' remains unmentioned. The *Living with Risk* document explains that the reason why especially poor people are worst affected by disasters, "*is because the poor outnumber the rich and live in greater density in more poorly built housing on land most at risk*" (UNISDR, 2004, p. xi). This im-

plies that HFA views vulnerability in terms of *numbers, poverty, and physical exposure* to hazard events, not in terms of marginalized or excluded segments of society like Maskrey did when he made the same observation in Lima, Peru. The HFA does not question why so many poor people live in unsafe housing on land most at risk. To illustrate, the UN attribute the high number of casualties in the Haitian earthquake to poverty and lack of preparedness measures (Maigna, 2010), not to the neo-liberal policies of the US and the World Bank in the past, instructing the Haitian government to abandon its agricultural past and develop a robust, export-oriented manufacturing sector in its capital city (Lindskoog, 2010). Many Haitians migrated to the city forced into low-paying jobs sewing baseballs and assembling other products, while living in increasingly crowded slums (ibid). “Vulnerability’ is narrowly defined as physical exposure omitting the larger political historical context.

Platforms and partnerships

Forming National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction, networking, building links, cross sector coordination and partnerships are key-words used to express intentions for more inclusive and effective collaboration. *The spectrum for collaboration varies from sharing information to undertaking joint strategic planning and programming* (UNISDR, 2004; 223). According to Warner (2007) the international community perceives platforms and networks for cooperation as problem-solving institutional innovations: involving multiple voices is a new way forward to address complexity and diversity, and is believed to be broadly accepted. This fits within the liberal thought, which recognizes multiple perspectives and values, but when put together, they constitute a harmonious and non-conflictual ensemble, negating ‘the political’ in society (Mouffe, 2005: 10).

This approach, however, raises questions about mutual trust, the nature of participation of grassroots people, about representation and power dynamics (Warner et al., 2002). Therefore, we shouldn’t simply see these platforms and partnerships as the ultimate goal to ensure that all stakeholders are involved. Grassroots representatives could only benefit from such platforms if they have the capacity, confidence and opportunity to negotiate with local government officials and local elite to have their voices reflected in the decisions taken to obtain protection, and when they are recognized as legitimate opponents (Mouffe, 2005: 20-21). This does not happen overnight given power inequalities, limitations to genuine participation and differing mind-sets.

The notion of ‘empowerment’ is absent in the HFA document. Its belief in harmonious partnerships and platforms does not require a concept like ‘empowerment’, because the existence of power differentials in society is denied. In the liberal view on DRR, the notion of ‘empowerment’ has been replaced by ‘partnerships and platforms’.

One area where partnerships have proven their value is early warning. Therefore the HFA stresses the importance of *“institutional capacities to ensure that early warning systems are well integrated into government policy and decision-making processes”* at different levels (UNISDR, 2005: 13). The death toll of cyclones in Bangladesh significantly went down thanks to early warning mechanisms and involvement of community people. But whereas the number of disaster deaths has gone down by 30% over the last two decades, the number of people

affected by disasters has gone up by 59%, despite technical fixes like warning systems, better communication and cyclone shelters (Wisner and Walker, 2005b). This increase can be attributed to people's increasing vulnerability to disasters due to unfavourable economic policies related to processes of liberalization, privatization and globalization, to environmental degradation, to increasing occurrence of violence, and to erratic weather conditions due to climate change (Wisner *et al.*, 2004).

Resilient communities

The HFA document defines 'resilience' as described in the working definitions in chapter 1:

"The capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to adapt, by resisting or changing in order to reach or maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure. This is determined by the degree to which the social system is capable of organizing itself to increase its capacity for learning from past disasters for better future protection and to improve risk reduction measures" (UNISDR, 2004: 6 volume II).

This definition frames resilience no longer within the "back to normalcy and recovery" strand of thinking, but as the ability to learn to live with change and the capacity to deal with it. However it still has a hazard-focused viewpoint, and the explanatory text in *Living with Risk* on resilient communities (UNISDR, 2004: 139-141) focuses on tools and strategies for hazard reduction and risk management like urban designs, regulations and resources to protect assets. The text mentions support to institutions that are responsible for crisis management, response and recovery. Institutions refer specifically to local government authorities. The hazard is the central event in building resilient communities, not the processes, policies and institutions in society that generated the vulnerable conditions in the first place. The HFA document expresses '*Disasters can be substantially reduced if people are well informed and motivated towards a culture of disaster prevention and resilience*' (UNISDR, 2005: 14). Resilience is a matter of sufficient know-how and collection, compilation and dissemination of knowledge to local levels to enable communities to withstand and recover from hazards and changed circumstances. This notion of 'resilience' expects people to adapt endlessly to their circumstances, not the circumstances to people's risky lives.

In summary, the CBDRR-tradition developed by the international community is an approach initiated and led by the local government, where grassroots people are educated on what to do in case of a disaster or how to best prepare for it. CBDRR activities that will reduce disaster risk consist of influencing people's awareness and behaviour in times of disasters, and technical measures. Volunteers groups and committees to take on specific disaster preparedness measures are formed – following more or less a standard format. When these actions are taken, the government intends to restore 'normalcy'. In essence, this CBDRR-tradition still resonates with the dominant, top-down, hazard-focused approach to disaster response. Figure 4.1 shows the implicit interpretations and worldviews behind the HFA-promoted CBDRR-tradition and the home-grown CBDRR tradition. In reality, CBDRR-practice switches between the two CBDRR extremes as visualized through their features on the continua presented in Figure 4.1. Seeing the continua as a volume-bar of a radio, one can hear some voices louder than

others, when moving the volume-bar between the features of the home-grown and HFA CBDRR-traditions, or when regarding the figure as a DJ’s mixing panel, some features will resonate stronger with one CBDRR-tradition than the other.

Figure 4.1: Nature of CBDRR traditions expressed through their primary features on the continua

Origin	Internationally negotiated	↔	Home-grown, locally negotiated
View on disasters	External event	↔	Matter of vulnerability – Opportunity for social change
Purpose	Reduces people’s physical exposure to hazards	↔	Social transformation
Focus	Natural hazards restoring normalcy	↔	Integrates everyday livelihoods, security concerns with preparing for disruption/disaster/conflict
Priority in intervention	Physical measures, early warning, awareness raising life-saving actions	↔	Strengthening community institutions, mobilizing collective action
Participation	Consultation, project-focus	↔	Empowering, process-focus
Levels involved	Multi-level partnerships, harmonious cooperation	↔	Multi-level, multi actor collaboration in power force field
Community	Administrative unit of local government, “common good” approach	↔	Most vulnerable groups, recognizing local elite
Resources	External funds	↔	Locally generated resources, voluntarism, political commitment, external funds
Longevity	On-off through platforms	↔	Dynamic and adaptive to changing institutional context

CBDRR is a contested approach: different interpretations and divergent practices

The origins of CBDRR lay in the critique of the top-down, single-event relief operations of governments. Although the UN has recognized the importance of involving local communities in disaster risk reduction, its CBDRR-tradition still resonates a lot with top-down, short-term and isolated responses. In particular, the political connotation that was essential to the original conception of CBDRR has become marginal to mainstream CBDRR. Behind a shared CBDRR language, home-grown and mainstream CBDRR-traditions represent different origins that attach radically different meanings to CBDRR and the related concepts. The home-grown CBDRR views disasters as the outcome of bad governance, while the mainstream CBDRR views disasters as external events disrupting and undermining development investments (Bankoff & Hilhorst, 2009). Both CBDRR-traditions support people to build their resilience to disasters. The mainstream CBDRR does so through risk awareness raising, disaster preparedness, physical measures, safety-net mechanisms and institutional reforms, among others, while the home-grown CBDRR regards disasters as an opportunity for social change, therefore viewing CBDRR as

a long-term community capacity building process to enable vulnerable groups to demand safety and protection. CBDRR is a contested approach, not simply because people cannot agree on a common definition, but because they have different worldviews and intentions in mind that determine their actions. This causes misunderstanding and confusion but also irritation and agony. These emotional experiences refer to the existence of 'politics', to a political arena where different views on what CBDRR is, interact (Mouffe, 2005).

During the course of this research however, I noticed that since the Hyogo Declaration in 2005, national governments increasingly recognize civil society organisations as important actors in disaster risk reduction despite their differing views and intentions. Both in the Philippines and Indonesia new legislation on disaster risk reduction was formulated and enacted with the active involvement of civil society organisations. There is still a long way to go, though. Many governments do not prioritize, lack the resources, or are reluctant to implement policies or legislation at the local levels which favour vulnerable communities. In general, their aim is to return to 'normalcy' after a disaster hit, as espoused in the definitions and views in the HFA signed by 168 governments, which usually does not change the status quo. Equally, involving disaster-affected communities in local decision-making will also not automatically lead to reducing their vulnerability, if we do not ask *whose* risks are being prioritized and *who* decides *which* risk reduction measures will be implemented. Christoplos *et al.* (2001) mention the need for a shift from a focus on *which* technical solution works, towards a concentration on the *political process* of how these choices are made and their impact.

While I conclude that CBDRR is a contested approach, I think it is important to view the establishment of platforms and partnerships, as proposed in the HFA, as a means to encourage agonistic relationships between governments and civil society organisations (Mouffe, 2005). This may bring the various actors closer to finding a match between technical solutions and institutional reforms to create safer communities on the one hand, while on the other hand grass-roots' collective action beyond community level will still be needed to change the political climate in favour of the most vulnerable on the long run. The next section discusses how the home-grown CBDRR traditions got intertwined with the UNISDR and governments' promoted CBDRR strand of thinking through their monitoring activities to assess the progress of the HFA after Kobe. The match has not yet been found, nor did values change. What did change is that the initiatives of several passionate civil society actors who were critical at the WCDR in Kobe expanded to a global movement of civil society organisations which has become a legitimate player in the international arena on DRR.

Beyond Kobe – CBDRR as a political construct in the UN – civil society arena on DRR

During the Kobe conference in January 2005, a coherence in messages could be heard from donors, governments and civil society organisations to build common views and consensus on DRR. Particularly the civil society organisations had a strong rationale for forming or reviving a civil society network to collect good local DRR practices, case studies and to have one voice in monitoring the governments' progress as laid down in the HFA. In this context, the Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR) was formally established in 2007, but like the GFNDR in the 1990s, it lacked funding and consisted only of a group of in-

dividuals, wondering how it could mobilize civil society in disaster-prone countries to join the network, and about what should be the added value of joining the network. Within a year they were invited by the UNISDR, by Andrew Maskrey, to get involved in monitoring the progress of the HFA made until 2009.

Andrew Maskrey joined the UN in 1999, and in 2008 he was responsible for the coordination of the UN Global Assessment Review (GAR), which is a self-assessment done by government officials at the national levels of their progress concerning the five action points in the HFA. The GAR is done in all 168 countries which signed the HFA in 2005. Andrew Maskrey was concerned that this would be a meaningless exercise if the local level wouldn't be involved. Therefore he proposed that the GNDR could do a local level assessment with local level government officials, *"to demonstrate the divide between policies established at national level, and implementation at the local level"* (Gibson and Namisi, 2011).

The GNDR however insisted on conducting an independent assessment to be able to be more critical to governments than the UN is able to do. Besides, the GNDR insisted on also consulting local populations affected by disasters – to collect 'views from the frontline' - as they are ultimately intended to benefit from the HFA (ibid: 4). The 'Views from the Frontline' project was the activity that brought the Global Network together involving 48 countries in Africa, Asia and the Americas, and mobilised over 400 civil society organisations which collected responses from about 7000 people⁴ (GNDR, 2009). The overarching goal was to present robust data reflecting the perceptions of local actors on their respective government's DRR performance.

The Views from the Frontline report "Clouds but little rain..." revealed a contrast between the national self-assessments reported in the UNISDR's GAR, and the local level perceptions based on the VFL survey. The data reinforced the message that policy at the international level is not leading to effective implementation at the frontline. *"At national level there has been investment in institutional frameworks, science and technology, and new policies and legislation for disaster risk reduction. However, for people at the frontline trying to handle the practical consequences of vulnerability to disaster, national policy has not yet yielded the fruits of these investments on the ground"* (GNDR, 2009: 11).

When taking a closer look at the country scores, the Philippines scored best of all participating countries in terms of DRR performance described as 'some progress but with significant scope for improvement'. The VFL report indicates that in the Philippines, government culture is supportive and open to the formation of local partnerships between government, civil society and communities. The report attributes the high score to the frequent occurrence of disasters in the Philippines requiring a proactive approach in DRR. Chapter 3 revealed that the supportive and open attitude of the Philippine government is limited to specific government departments. It is likely that the active lobby work of DRRnetPhil contributed to this score, since they are part of the GNDR and participated in the VFL. Afghanistan scored very low, since local people responded that progress was made to a very limited extent. Indonesia ranks in the better part of

⁴ Compared to less than a hundred respondents in the UNISDR assessment

the average scores. Remarkably, both the 'Views from the Frontline' and the Global Assessment Review found *"that countries that have made the greatest progress are the ones that adopted local community-based approaches"* (GNDR, 2009: 13). Especially when these are supported by decentralisation processes and government-civil society partnerships.

The GNDR secured space in the main plenary session of the Global Platform on DRR in 2009 to present the report, and it featured in many discussions. The immediate achievement of the 'Views from the Frontline' effort in the conference was the chair's closing statement that highlighted the need for increased recognition of grassroots processes. The global network members felt proud, but basically, this statement was already made 15 years ago during the mid-decade IDNDR conference in 1994 in Yokohama. The difference is that now civil-society representatives got access to the discussions and participated in the conference, while before they had the status of observers.

Civil society's policy influence or co-optation?

Six months after the global platform conference, GNDR organised its first Global Network Workshop in London from 25-27th January, 2010. The aim was to reflect on the VFL, on the added value of the GNDR and on its future. In the meantime Andrew Maskrey requested the GNDR to produce another VFL report in 2011. However the opinions and views of the GNDR members present at the workshop varied and many questions were raised. The main discussion circled around the kind of relationship the GNDR wished to have with the UN. The UN was represented in this Global Network Workshop by Margareta Wahlström, the head of the UNISDR, and Andrew Maskrey. Both stressed the important role the GNDR can play in supporting and advising the UN. Margareta Wahlström articulated the need for a more political focus on risk and risk reduction as one of the major challenges ahead. She particularly referred to moving the DRR agenda to action point number 4 – addressing the underlying risk factors – and preferably to do this together with the GNDR. She views the GNDR as a strong partner of the UNISDR. *"During the 2007 Platform meeting, civil society showed its traditional behaviour, critical, negative and feeling marginalized, while in the 2009 Platform meeting you were more constructive, showed self-confidence which is important to build trust between you and us"* – Margareta Wahlström. Andrew Maskrey also expressed his wish for a close cooperation with the GNDR particularly now *"risk discussions are moving from technical to the political sphere"*. He referred to conducting the GAR together with the GNDR to improve progress indicators, to integrate GAR and VFL dialogues, to deconstruct 'risk' to provide more concrete recommendations to governments, and to uncover cost-benefits analysis which are often hidden in reports. They both have an interest in reforming the UNISDR agenda, and invite the GNDR to support them.

In small working groups, GNDR representatives discussed future aims and role of the GNDR. They questioned whether the HFA is the right framework to measure DRR progress, proposing to enrich the HFA with more comprehensive progress markers, particularly in the area of action point number 4, i.e. addressing the underlying risk factors. Others remarked that the 'Views from the frontline' is not just about measuring progress but also a tool to influence governments' actions. A concrete example was proposed to lobby for more DRR resources at the local

level. “90% of DRR resources go to the national level, so the GNDR should lobby for more resources for the local level”. According to GNDR’s chairperson “governments allocate resources through channels where they can maintain the status quo, and this is not in the interest of the vulnerable sectors”.

Several GNDR members from Europe stressed the need to keep its distant position to criticize the particular UN policies and decisions. For instance, “Civil society can engage with the UNISDR to push the UN to address the underlying risk factors, but this is a challenge for the UN since many UN economic policies are contradictory to DRR actions. So civil society needs space to be critical to the UN as well”. GNDR members from the disaster affected regions, felt that the VFL activity was more than collecting data and views from the frontline. The process of data collection created opportunities for partnerships at the local and national levels through meeting actors they previously had no access to. It also created advocacy conditions at national levels and it contributed to multi-stakeholder efforts (Gibson et al, 2011). GNDR members concluded that the VFL had not only mobilized civil society worldwide but also claimed and created political spaces within their home-countries. GNDR uses Gaventa’s framework (2006: 26) defining ‘spaces’ as “opportunities, moments, and channels where citizens can act to potentially affect policies, discourses, decisions and relationships that affect their lives and interests”. These spaces however are not neutral but shaped by power relations which set the boundaries for who can participate and who cannot, and in which role or identity (Gaventa, 2006).

John Gaventa, who was one of the invited speakers at the Global Network Workshop, argued that the VFL participatory monitoring of the HFA’s progress will be unsustainable and frustrating, when the GNDR cannot be involved in the UNISDR policy formulation. The UN as an institution does not create space to officially respond to the VFL findings. Therefore, Gaventa recommended to the GNDR to work on both sides: to strengthen local voices *and* to find the champions within the government and UN who hold the doors open for civil society to reform UN policies⁵. The GNDR then proposed to examine how the various spaces it entered were created, in whose interest and what the terms of engagement were. Because of the momentum and unexpected positive impact of VFL 2009, the GNDR decided to conduct VFL 2011 and to reflect in depth on the future afterwards. The design of the VFL 2011 put greater emphasis on presenting material from the local and national level surveying local risk governance, and to expand the number of respondents through texting-surveys.

The second VFL report (2011) “*If we do not join hands...*” was based on 20,000 people in 69 countries who responded to the 2011 survey, and on 36,000 people who replied through text-messaging. The focus of this VFL report was on local risk governance. Key findings showed that government functions of coordination, planning and partnerships are not being matched with by sufficient expertise and financial resources for effective implementation at the local level (ibid: 15). 57% of people felt disasters losses have *increased* over the last five years compared with only 21% who felt disaster losses have decreased.

⁵ See <http://www.globalnetwork-dr.org/home.html> and go to Global Network YouTube Channel.

The GAR reported the HFA progress differently: *“The Mid-Term Review states that significant progress is being made in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and that its principles have been firmly established and endorsed. The discussions at the Third Session demonstrated that we now possess the knowledge, the means and the commitment to make disaster risk reduction a national, local and international priority. There is a sense of urgency and clear political and economic imperatives to invest in disaster risk reduction”* – point 4 of the Chair’s Summary.

The GNDR felt highly disappointed and frustrated after two iterations, in 2009 and 2011, of conducting the “Views from the Frontline” (VFL). Where the GNDR delegates got official seats in 2009 – in the back row – in 2011 they were relegated to observer status in the balcony. They were particularly frustrated that two surveys – GAR and VFL - based on well documented facts, led to a significantly different interpretation of the progress and constraints in reducing disaster risk. *“We are simply being drawn into the system to support the status quo rather than influence and change policy”* – GNDR-member (Gibson et al, 2011: 15). The GNDR felt that the Chair’s Summary only paid lip service to the goal of the conference. No concrete, measurable goals were formulated for the next two years. The GNDR decided, in response, to draft a ‘shadow statement’ with measurable outcomes at 2013 (GNDR, 2011).

“We, as representatives of civil-society organisations working alongside vulnerable people primarily in low and low-middle income countries, believe the official UN statement provides an incomplete and overly optimistic assessment of progress towards the HFA expected outcome. The official summary omits to report on the continued upwards trend in disaster losses, particularly the realities of implementation of the HFA at the local level, despite this being the required goal of the HFA. In so doing it does not take into account some of the key findings of national, regional and international studies and reports (including GAR 2009 & 2011; HFA Mid-Term Review; Views from the Frontline 2009 & 2011) which provide strong evidence of a persisting and growing gap between policy and practice” (GNDR, 2011: 1).

The GNDR inserted the image of “running up the down escalator” to express its struggle against the current trend of substantial increase in disaster losses by 2015. The number of disasters, including the unrecorded small and frequently occurring disasters, is expected to increase due to climate change and a rising exposure and people’s vulnerability (UN and World Bank, 2010). And very few governments and inter-governmental organisations are able to address the underlying risk factors that are configuring the rapid growth of risk. Despite the expansion of the network members, the GNDR felt frustrated. The 2009 and 2011 VFL demonstrated that the HFA was not achieving its goals, and that there appeared to be no concrete progress in shifting paradigms or towards measurable locally oriented action.

Discussion and conclusion

Following the interactions between civil society and the UN in the area of (CB)DRR, specifically during the last three years between the GNDR and the UNISDR, revealed some insights about why the political perspective and concrete changes towards local level actions are being subordinated, resulting in the maintenance of the status quo. The first refers to the dynamics be-

tween the UN as an institution, and its state-level actors and the UNISDR. The UNISDR seems to be limited in its ability to be critical of member states, and their interactions should be viewed as 'saying the right things without provoking its members' (Gibson et al, 2011). In this light it needs civil-society groups to speak up for them, which explains Wahlström's and Maskrey's various attempts to invite GNDR to work with them, stressing their inter-dependence. UN agencies are not hegemonic structures, but they are influential and not isolated from changes in society (Ilcan and Philips, 2006). Wahlström and Maskrey are very aware of all the current trends and threats, using NGO language in their discussions, and try to enrol civil society in their agendas. A second reason is that the UN still regards the knowledge and opinions of experts, scientists and authorities more accurate, relevant and privileged over local and indigenous knowledge, thereby ignoring or absorbing – read neutralizing – the 'Views from the Frontline' (Gibson et al, 2011: 20). The third insight is related to resource allocation, and how governments allocate about 90% of DRR resources to the national level without transfers to local levels, according to GNDR members. The HFA through the UNISDR portrays a harmonious interaction with and complementary role of civil society at different levels, while in reality interactions cause irritation and frustration of the GNDR. The GNDR has to reflect and re-examine how it wishes to engage with the UN-system at the various institutional levels.

The GNDR currently consist of over 500 civil-society organisations operating worldwide, and the majority are practicing CBDRR in forms that are closer to the home-grown CBDRR traditions than to the UN promoted CBDRR tradition or somewhere in the middle. Through their involvement in the VFL they became more aware of the contested nature of CBDRR and the intentions behind. Although GNDR's efforts to influence or change the UN's values and views on DRR still have minimal impact, the 'Views from the Frontline' resulted in increasingly concerted efforts of civil-society organisations worldwide. For the rapid mobilization of a vast network and its success to coordinate local organisations to report on local conditions, the GNDR received a letter of Commendation from the UN Sasakawa Award Jury⁶. The UN Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction is awarded to individuals or institutions that have taken active efforts in reducing disaster risk in their communities and advocates for disaster risk reduction.

The GNDR members' everyday political arenas are however local, where local people interact with civil-society organisations and their governments to negotiate about the meaning of CBDRR and to lobby for DRR in localities far away from Geneva, New York or Japan where the UN hold their meetings. The three kinds of power dynamics – negating politics in language and texts, subordinating local perspectives to expert knowledge and authorities, and channelling resources there where governments can maintain the status quo - play out in the local DRR arenas as well. This is the subject of the following chapters.

⁶ The jury decided that the Network is too young to be recognized with an official award like the monetary award or the Certificates of Merit/ Distinction, but wanted to give this Letter as an encouragement for its continued efforts for reducing risks at local level.

5. The risk of using local knowledge in CBDRR

*“Danger is real, but risk is socially constructed”
Slovic, 2003:7*

The appreciation of local knowledge in CBDRR stems from the realization in the mid-1990s that technocratic and scientific approaches alone cannot reduce losses (see Chapter 4). There was a call in the mid-decade IDNDR conference in Yokohama in 1994 to better understand local conditions, cultural traditions and religion. CBDRR-handbooks assume that the use of local knowledge will improve disaster risk reduction policies and project implementation. Research and evaluation reports of humanitarian aid assistance regularly conclude however, that aid practice is often based on simplified realities and little on situational analysis and recognizing local risk perspectives (Buchanan-Smith and Fabbri, 2005; Bhatia, 2003; Pain, 2002). This refers to a discrepancy between policy and practice regarding the usage of local knowledge, or that it may be difficult to grasp people’s local knowledge and risk perspectives.

This chapter aims to explore local people’s perspectives on risk stemming from disasters and conflict, and how people deal with uncertainty and overcome crisis. This exploration was one of the first activities of the CBDRR-pilots. Recognition of local risk perceptions and local knowledge is one of the spearheads of CBDRR policy. But what *is* local knowledge actually? And *whose* risk perceptions at the local level should be recognized? This chapter will answer these questions, and provide insight in what way local people’s risk experiences differ from how aid agencies assess and label local disaster and conflict situations. The chapter concludes that local knowledge and practice to overcome crisis is not just ‘out there’ or collectively owned. It cannot uncritically be utilized or empowered, since local knowledge has its limitations, is differentiated, conflicting and partial. Using local risk perspectives in CBDRR approaches should therefore not be romanticized.

This chapter is divided into three parts. In the first part (section 5.1), I discuss how I view local people, what I mean with local knowledge and local risk perceptions, and how these can best be analysed through listening to people’s stories. The second part (section 5.2) contains local narratives on risk and risk reduction from Afghanistan and Indonesia, accompanied by a process of sense-making and analysis to understand why and how people construct risk in a particular way. The stories from Maluku are ordered according to the chronology of violent events to understand people’s motivation to join or to flee the violence. The stories from other parts of Indonesia and Afghanistan do not follow a particular order, but demonstrate variations in prevailing gender norms, age groups, social cohesion and other local institutional arrangements which result in differing risk perceptions and vulnerability outcomes. The last part (section 5.3) brings together the insights of the various cases. I will also highlight the dilemmas when one considers appreciating local knowledge

and local risk perceptions in a CBDRR approach with the aim to empower people, and some of the felt gaps between local people's perspectives and aid programming.

5.1 Concepts and methodology

5.1.1 Affected people as 'social actors'

Every culture and religion has produced arrangements to protect the most vulnerable inside their community, to cope with disasters, to regulate violence and to contain war (Meriboute, 2004; Anderson and Woodrow, 1989). This chapter starts from the premise that people have 'agency'. This means that people have the *capacity to process social experience and devise ways of coping with life, even under the most extreme forms of coercion* (Long, 1992: 22). The term 'human agency' refers to the blend of goals, aspirations, power, and organizing capacities which people combine in their problem-solving, survival and development strategies (ibid). Although people have alternative ways to shape their coping strategies and to formulate their objectives, it is important to point out that people's strategies are culturally embedded which influences their interactions with others. People are '*social actors*', meaning that they draw their strategies from their individual rationality, but equally from their structural location in society. People's agency and consequently their chosen coping strategies are related to their social position in society and prevailing cultural norms. Local people's perspectives on risk therefore vary greatly across countries, within villages, and between men and women.

5.1.2 Local risk perceptions, local knowledge and local practice

CBDRR-literature emphasizes the importance of people's existing capacities including local knowledge - also referred to as indigenous knowledge. It is assumed that the use of local knowledge will improve disaster risk reduction policies and project implementation (UNISDR, 2008). The UNISDR refers to local knowledge as *practices developed by a group of people from an advanced understanding of the local environment, which has been formed over numerous generations of habitation* (2008: vii). The UNISDR distinguishes local knowledge from other types of knowledge in that it originates from the community, that it is disseminated through informal means, it is collectively owned, subject to adaptation, and embedded in a community's way of life as a means of survival. Most common examples of the use of local knowledge are indigenous warning signals for impending danger, and building techniques to withstand typhoons, floods and earthquakes. Local knowledge and practice further refer to mutual help systems like *bayanihan* in the Philippines, *gotong royong* in Indonesia and *ashar* in Afghanistan to mobilize community labour, to specific values and rituals to create harmony or to justify defence in conflict situations, to routines to dismantle and hide assets, or to farm in groups as a form of protection against violence.

As the local narratives in this chapter show, however, local or indigenous knowledge shouldn't be romanticized; it has its limitations and can even be dangerous. Further, local knowledge is not simply a reflection of people's environment, but rather constructed in social processes (Jansen, 1998; Hilhorst, 2004). Jansen (1998) distinguishes three views on local knowledge which Hilhorst modified to the field of disas-

ter management (Hilhorst, 2004). These three ways of looking at local knowledge are relevant for analysing people's local risk perceptions:

1. The first one is the instrumental view that sees '*local knowledge as a barrel of knowledge*' that can be tapped for reducing risks. This instrumental view resonates with the definition of UNISDR.
2. The second view positions '*local knowledge in contrast to modernization*', assuming that local knowledge blends nature with culture and that it can inspire resistance to western, colonial or outsiders' ideas. The revival of '*adat*' (custom, tradition) in post-Suharto Indonesia fits in this view. *Adat* is associated with history, land and law, with order and consensus. Here, revival of *adat* has, among others, the strategic purpose to oppose land appropriation by the state for mining, timber, plantations, and transmigration (Henley and Davidson, 2008).
3. The third view closely relates to the second view: *local knowledge as a source of political-economic empowerment* of local people, instrumental to mobilize people. It stresses participatory societal change aimed to address the root causes of people's vulnerability.

Hilhorst points out that these three views share the assumption that local knowledge is homogeneous, shared by the community and can be separated from outside knowledge, and that this assumption is problematic (2004: 62). She refers to the fact that not everybody in the village possesses the same knowledge, or shares the same ideas about nature, disasters or risks. Sticking to the *adat* example, different interpretations of *adat* exist locally between and within villages causing tensions rather than consensus as will come out of the local narratives from Maluku. Also the local narratives from Afghanistan show diversity in risk views and ideas about the same risk events. So, people's local knowledge inherently is diverse and conflictive, which they express through their varying risk perceptions and which result in different risk practice and responses.

Further, local knowledge is never purely local. People construct their knowledge through interaction with their neighbours, through social networks, from what they hear on the radio or in the market, or through seasonal migration. In this way local knowledge is not an accumulation of facts, but "*the result of a great number of decisions and selective incorporations of previous and new ideas, beliefs and images*", and at the same time deleting other possible frames of understanding (Arce and Long, 1992: 211). In the same way people construct their risk perceptions. They do not only take into account the possible exposure to danger and future damages, but they also consider their resources, knowledge, skills, past experiences, opportunities and alternatives, as well as weighing the different probabilities of things happening and the consequences of their risk-decisions. As local knowledge and risk perceptions get constructed in social processes, power relations play a role as well. Some people are much better positioned to obtain knowledge than others, and can make their interpretations of events and processes authoritative in the community (Hilhorst, 2004). Similarly some are in a better position to articulate and define their risk perception than others, and - as explained in chapter 4 - whoever controls the definition of risk, controls the solution to the problem at hand (Slovic, 2003). Local knowledge is therefore also partial.

5.1.3 How to analyse different local people's perceptions and their agency?

In Afghanistan and Indonesia, most people affected by disasters and conflict do not write their stories down, and are seldom heard because they have little voice in the events that determine their lives. Aid practitioners do talk to affected people, but basically with the aim to collect facts and figures about immediate disaster impact and short-term needs, not necessarily to understand how people make sense of these recurrent events, or how they use their various resources to mitigate or overcome crisis (IFRC, 2004). To understand how people ascribe meaning to events like disasters and conflict, to interpret silence and distortions in their stories, I used 'oral histories' and 'story-telling' as a method for data collection (Leydesdorff et al, 1999). Personal stories of survival are an important addition to the official narratives about, for instance, the conflict in Afghanistan or the recurrent floods and landslides in Indonesia. Life stories are a source of knowledge about how people perceive their circumstances, how they portray themselves, how they put their lives in a historical perspective beyond the current situation, how they manage to build a new life and what meaning they attach to outside aid. People, however, may change their story, or omit specific traumatic events or feelings of guilt and shame, as I experienced in Maluku. Sometimes the researcher poses new questions to people who experienced the event and a new process of sense-making may start. Talking to people through informal conversations or interviews can be used, on one hand, 'to collect information' but also 'to study story-telling, and to listen for meaning' (Leydesdorff, 2007; Nuijten, 2003). 'Listening for meaning' can be done through listening to the narrator's moral language. Sometimes feelings or practice uncovered exceed the boundaries of acceptable or expected behaviour according to the prevailing norms (Anderson and Jack, 1991: 24). The researcher should further be attentive to meta-statements, referring to moments in the interview when people stop talking, look back and comment on what they just said or thought, and to the logic of the narrative (ibid). This refers to contradictions, or silences, to events crucial to understand the person's story and current feelings, but which are consciously omitted from the story. Since local knowledge is partial, the researcher needs to listen to stories from different social actors, and analyse why their risk perspectives about the same event differ, which is part of the sense-making process.

In addition to oral histories and story-telling, I talked with people about their livelihoods and coping strategies, as a way to understand how they make a living and survive in adverse conditions. This is referred to as 'the coping strategy approach' (Boås et al, 2006), which also recognizes people's agency and that people do not passively accept their fate.

It is important to stress that the significance of people's narratives can only be determined in relation to the rest of the research material. Aside from the personal stories or small group discussions, especially with women, I engaged with the villagers through the CBDRR-pilots over the course of a few years. I met with them in different settings, in formal community meetings discussing risk, land and water conflicts, and prioritizing interventions, or during informal settings afterwards. I listened to how they talked and how they framed issues. Towards the end of my fieldwork I confronted people with what I saw as contradictions in their earlier statements and cur-

rent actions. Their explanations added to the meaning of the various life histories that were documented separately and vice-versa. In this way, as researcher, I interpreted and re-interpreted life histories to discover patterns in people's narratives, on how they construct local history, give meaning to disasters and conflict, how they manage uncertainty and survival, and how they perceive risk. All in relation to their position in the community and in society.

I made use of MSc research done in Halmahera and Central Java in the CBDRR pilot areas conducted by students of Disaster Studies¹. They stayed in the villages much longer and were able to unravel local perspectives on disasters and conflict. From their studies and my own fieldwork I distilled patterns of how people deal with risk and uncertainty and relate these to academic literature concerned with local level survival and coping. This is mainly literature focusing on livelihoods, coping and protection strategies, often written from the perspective of aid agencies.

The local narratives in this chapter do not yet reveal everything about people and their immediate environment: people's opinions, views and practices are incomplete, and specific practices are not yet mentioned because these were disclosed in reaction to the evolving CBDRR-intervention and not yet at the initial phase of the CBDRR pilots. Through the action-reflection cycles various layers of complexity got unravelled, which will be discussed in the proper context and the scope of each following chapter.

5.2 Local narratives on dealing with risks, disaster and conflict

In this section I share stories of people who deal with violence, who got displaced, who regularly face floods, landslides, avalanches and droughts, and who refer to a broader risk landscape beyond conflict and disasters. Most of the stories were collected during the initial stage of my fieldwork, when we were still in the process of selecting areas to pilot CBDRR or in areas that were just selected. The stories start in Afghanistan, where risks stemming from disasters and conflict are strongly interrelated, and where people's perceptions depend on how local institutions mediate protection and safety measures. In addition, I highlight gender differences in local narratives on risk and risk reduction, because in Afghanistan, men and women tell very different stories about the same events. When selecting people for the oral histories I further considered age groups, locality in the area, and authority and position in the village ranging from village heads, religious leaders to marginalized groups like the landless. In Halmahera, Northern Maluku, people shared experiences before, during and after the communal violence in 1999-2000. In people's stories, dignity and a lack of recognition for their acute concerns and capacities by government and NGOs are recurrent issues. They do not feel taken seriously, as if they do not matter as people. In Central Java people shared how they experience and explain new risks, like (flash) floods, mining and storage of nuclear waste. They use their religious and cultural beliefs in explaining events and in mobilizing people to protect their environment.

¹ Charlotte van der Tak in Halmahera, and Marian Meulenkamp in Central Java

All these stories are diverse and cannot be compared. They are collected with the intention to analyse how local knowledge is used in people's risk experiences considering that local knowledge is not commonly owned, but heterogeneous and socially constructed within the prevailing power relations, and considering the three views on local knowledge as (1) instrumental, (2) local knowledge as a blend of nature and culture as opposed to modernization, and (3) local knowledge as a source of political-economic empowerment of local people (Jansen, 1998).

5.2.1 Gender-segregated local narratives from Afghanistan

The image of Afghanistan abroad is usually one of a country where conflict has led to state collapse, the breakdown of social institutions, destruction of infrastructure, of a country where all Afghan men wear a Kalashnikov², where women are consigned to the margins of social life, and where aid has been central to people's survival (Bhatia et al, 2003). Many of these, usually constructed images, turn out to be wrong. Despite decades of conflict people have devised ways to continue everyday life as normal as possible and developed livelihood pathways to deal with extreme events. Some even prosper under conditions of insecurity and high risk (Rubin, 2008).



Map 5.1: Province map of Afghanistan

I visited Afghanistan for the first time in January-February 2006. It was winter but despite the snow, the cold and badly accessible roads, I visited Parwan and Kapisa province together with Oxfam-Novib partners (see Map 5.1). It was the month when the Dutch Parliament voted positively about sending Dutch troops to Uruzgan. People I met in 2006 - both in the NGOs and in communities – were positive about the arrival of ISAF troops and they had high expectations that they could establish peace and order. However, these hopes shattered over time due to non-compliance

² This is an image I often heard among NGO staff in the Philippines and Indonesia.

of ISAF promises, disappointing results of the international aid and the Karzai government, and a continuing war in most parts of the country.

When I asked the people again in May 2009 - in villages, at district and provincial government offices, and NGO staff - they expressed their frustration that they see foreign aid being channelled to insecure areas instead of to stable areas where investment in development would make more sense. The vice-governor of Bamyan Province told me that people feel like being punished for their peacefulness. I did my fieldwork in the northern and central part of the country from Herat in the West to the provinces of Balkh, Baghlan, Kunduz, in the north, Bamyan in the central highlands, and in several localities near Kabul. These areas are relatively secure although insecurity increased over time, particularly in Kunduz, Herat and along the roads from Kabul to Parwan and Kapisa.

The stories from Afghanistan were collected during single-sex meetings, and each story represents the collective views of men separated from those of women. Only in Kunduz I talked to men and women in a mixed-sex setting, where the women did speak out. In Afghanistan, women and men talk very differently while being in a group. The men narrate about their experiences and views in a quite formal way. In the meetings I attended, only one person talked extensively, usually the *shura* head, while others patiently waited for their turn to speak. Women on the other hand, overlapped one another's talk, not interrupting each other, but two or more women continued talking at the same time on the same topic. According to Wareing (2003) this is an expression of that women value cooperation and solidarity very highly in their conversations. Women could not talk one by one despite several requests from our side, which caused difficulties for translation and recording. Additionally, women who shared their experience, moved closer to the interviewer, and in some cases they hold my knees to stress the seriousness of what they had to say. These gatherings were chaotic but lively, full of self-reflection, sometimes breaking-through prevailing gender norms, and the women were very explicit in what they wanted and what they did not. I listened to multiple voices that wanted to be heard. I noticed that women regularly stressed that their experiences and views on surviving and coping with disaster and conflict, are opposed to what men would have told me. For instance:

"Our husbands do not allow us to earn money. They say that we are not able to work, but of course we are! Men say that we cannot work because we do not know how to read and write and due to our rural background. But we could learn that! [...]" *"We want to work to earn additional income to buy food. Due to inheritance the amount of land has become less and men look for work abroad. The remittance from our husbands in Pakistan is too little. That is why we want to work"*.

[...] *"If the men would have known that you would come, they would have instructed us about what to tell you and what not"* – a woman in Ghulistan, Bamyan province

After I met these women, I returned to the house where the male *shura* members were having lunch. The head of the *shura* asked me immediately if the women had told me that they are being beaten by their husbands?.....I honestly and politely replied, that they did not. The man was clearly worried, and possibly felt threatened by my presence and interest in talking to the women. Being attentive to gender differentials and the powers involved, involves ethics about whose voices are heard and whose knowledge counts. My discussion with the women may have reverberated for some time afterwards since the village head was suspicious about what the women had told me. At the same time, if data collection is combined with social learning aimed to lead to tangible benefits to those being researched, it may reduce the risk for women to talk to me next time (Goodhand, 2000).

The 'red thread' in the stories from Afghanistan, despite the variety in places and environments, is the seasonality of local conflicts related to the occurrence of disasters like floods, drought, and avalanches, and the moment in the agriculture cycle. Most conflicts are about land and water, and the extent to which conflicts are settled depends on local institutional arrangements like water allocation and distribution practices, functioning of *shuras*, influence of commanders who operate parallel to *shuras*, the social fabric in villages, and on the relations between villages which rely on the same resources. The stories from members of local peace *shuras* demonstrate that beliefs and practices to settle disputes are changeable, albeit slowly, and that the majority of Afghans find informal peace *shuras* more credible and efficient than the official judicial system. "*Water conflicts cannot wait to be solved after 12 years, but require immediate attention*"- according to a male Peace *shura* member in Kunduz.

Place and environment do matter for local gender dynamics. At the grassroots, stories of men and women reveal that they experience disasters, conflict and war differently. This does not mean though that one can simply conclude that women are disadvantaged due to Afghan traditional culture and Islam, or because of the war. Attention is needed to recognize the effects of disasters, conflict and displacement on gender relations and norms, both negatively and positively. Women from Nahreen and Khulm shared the dual effects of living in harsh circumstances and how these force them to do things beyond prevailing gender norms, like going out in public to earn an income, or which are supposed to be non-existent like prostitution. Young women who attended school during the years of displacement in Iran or Pakistan, have different motives to break through gender norms. It depends on how strongly households and communities adhere to certain gender stigmas whether women get space for manoeuvre and to positively influence gender outcomes. And this varies from place to place. In general, the stories reveal that local traditions, local knowledge and gender stereotypes in Afghanistan are dynamic, changeable and not so local, due to experiences of people as IDPs which influenced their beliefs and social norms. However, these processes go slow, very slow and in the meantime women continue to suffer from a lack of attention to their health needs and maternal care, which is a poignant example of women's distress in Afghanistan.

Stories from Nahreen, Baghlan province: interplay between disasters and conflict

I visited Nahreen in April 2008 when the early signals of drought were already noticeable due to little snowfall, and no or very little rain during spring. Nahreen *bazaar*, the town centre, is located at a 1 ½ hour drive on a rough road eastwards from Baghlan city. In 2002 it was heavily affected by an earthquake measuring more than 7 on the Richter scale, with approximately 2,000 lives lost. It is situated in a mountainous semi-arid terrain, a harsh environment for agriculture since Nahreen district, together with Burka district, are the only districts in Baghlan Province without perennial irrigation facilities. People fully depend on rain and melting snow for farming. When it rains, the water runs down quickly, due to lack of vegetation to retain the water. Decades of war and severe drought have led to the disappearance of trees and shrubs which increases the risk for floods and drought. Around 50% of the households in the whole province report having problems satisfying their food needs at least 3 – 6 times a year lasting several weeks (MRRD, 2007), meaning that the area is highly food insecure. The stories confirm these figures and reveal people's motives to join criminal and violent activities as an alternative source of livelihood.

When I went to Nahreen with ADA staff, we expected to first meet with a group of about 10 to 20 *shura* leaders from eight villages. However, when we entered the compound noticing the huge amount of shoes at the gate, we were surprised that about 120 men were waiting for us. They formally welcomed us, and we exchanged some polite words. One man holding a paper started to talk and I sensed that all the *shura* representatives had sat down earlier to prepare this meeting. Johnson and Leslie (2004) point out that villagers quickly work out what is going on when interacting with NGOs or government officials, either foreign or Afghan. They sit all together at night, working out what outsiders want, and then they tell you what they want you to hear. This is not typical Afghan behaviour, but quite universal for villagers trying to manage the world around them (Hilhorst, 2003). It is a way to control information and to keep authority where local people want it. In insecure environments, like Nahreen, it is also a way to protect information. The man with the white beard started to read from the paper on which their suggestions are written to improve their situation:

"We need solutions to our problems that are practical". Then he continued with listing the following suggestions. "Our women want to improve their skills on income-generating activities; we like alternative livelihoods like carpentry; our drinking water facility needs improvement, as well as veterinary support for our cattle, which suffers from diseases".

Although the items sound like a shopping list to be given to the NGO, they correspond with the expected problems related to the nearing drought. The men shared about the erratic rainfall and limited snow this spring, commenting that these were the signals of a nearing drought. Men had stopped ploughing. Nobody was working anymore in their fields. We saw fields partly planted with winter-wheat, partly ploughed and more than half still fallow. This is an indicator that people feel insecure to invest in agriculture. Many adult men had left the villages to find a job in provincial towns or even as far as Iran. Another man mentioned that during drought

periods the risk of different diseases and pests among livestock increases. They rely on livestock during difficult times like a drought period, since livestock is an asset, a kind of saving, which you can sell when you need cash to buy food. But when these animals are sick, the price is low, or you cannot sell it at all.

Fig. 5.1: Nahreen, Baghlan province



Partly ploughed field



Flood wall along dry riverbed



Shura meeting in the open air with representatives from eight sub-villages



I asked about their experiences in other years, for instance last year, and the discussion turned a bit less formal and more men joined the conversation. They started sharing about the annual floods. *“When clouds get darker, the wind starts blowing and a thunderstorm is approaching, we know that it usually takes three hours before the floods reach the village”*. In this short period, a few shura members start warning the men whose households are most exposed to floods through mobile phone. It takes again three hours for the water to recede. Protection from floods, and measures to maximize available water for their livelihoods, seem to be a concern of particular the men. They stressed the duality of floods: *“they [floods] kill cattle and people, damage our fields and houses, but we also depend on floods for our livelihoods to grow crops [people grow wheat, onions, and a few grow poppy], for our cattle, and for drinking water.”* How to protect the villages from floods and at the same time maximizing the available water for their livelihoods is their major concern. In some parts they apply ‘spate irrigation’, a unique form of water harvesting and managing unpredictable and sometimes destructive floods for crop and livestock production. Farmers divert floodwater that runs off the mountains, from the river bed and spread it over larger areas. The uncertainty comes both from the unpredictable nature of floods, and the frequent changes to the riverbeds from which the water is taken. It is often the poorest segments for rural populations whose livelihood and food security depends on spate flows (www.spate-irrigation.org). In the absence of reliable irrigation facilities, men stress the need for alternative livelihoods for themselves, like carpentry, and for women skill development for income-generating activities.

On my way to the meeting place I noticed a long flood protection wall along the dry riverbed. The wall is currently being constructed with support from the district government, but – despite people’s involvement in the design and construction of the wall -they are not satisfied with the outcome: the wall is protecting only part of the village; there are still holes in the wall where the road crosses the dry river, and the level of the riverbed is higher than the level of the villages due to sedimentation. As a result the wall will not function as it is supposed to do, and could even divert water to directions which were safe before. We further observed that the protection wall is not strong enough to withstand the force of water, and may collapse easily. Due to time-constraints I could not discuss and analyse the ‘social construction’ of the flood protection wall: whose idea it was, why this design, why this location, who decided, and so on. In the middle of this discussion ADA staff whispered in my ear, that the women were waiting a few houses away to meet me, and that I should leave the compound. On my way out the men continued their discussion with the ADA staff, while my female translator and I left through the gate – where we saw that somebody had turned around all the 120 pairs of shoes to ease departure – and with some ‘community bodyguards’ we walked to a small house where about the same number of women were waiting for us³.

About 100 women had gathered in two small rooms, and asked what we have been discussing with the men. They immediately stressed that it are not floods – like prioritized by the men and the NGO staff - which are the main problem, but their insecure livelihoods: *“While floods affect only part of the communities, drought and food shortage affects us all, especially the poor who have no access to land”*. In Nahreen, only few households own land, while the majority of the families till the land of others. Tenants are responsible for the cultivation of the land and have to buy seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides. In case the harvest fails due to flash floods or drought, the burden is on the shoulders of the tenants, since investments will not be compensated by the landowners. In the room are many widows who lost their husbands during the war, and female heads of households, whose husband is working abroad. Consequently they do not have anybody left to till the land, since this is considered a male task. Particularly these women face hardship in accessing food through agricultural activities.

“We women are more affected by food shortage than men who often get meals while they find jobs elsewhere. But we stay behind with our children, and we just eat less to save food for them, but they still go to school with an empty stomach”.

Widows - about 45% of the women in Nahreen is widow - and female-heads of households told us they earn an income by making scarves and blouses (embroidery and tailoring) which are sold in Iran. They receive materials from a trader who lives in Nahreen bazaar, has shops in Iran, and who collects the handicrafts weekly. The

³ Women cannot go out alone in public to for instance, attend a meeting, they need a male *mahram*, like their husband, brother or another male relative. The meeting of the men and women are scheduled simultaneously to enable them to go home together.

women are aware of the fact that they receive very little money for their products: 300 Afghani's (6 US\$) per blouse, while the trader sells it for 20 US\$ in the market. "We do not mind if the price is low or if there is no market, we need money and are prepared to work day and night". The way they talked to us, was a mixture of despair and perseverance, of never giving up. That their livelihoods are very insecure and unstable illustrates the following remark of a woman, who told us that several male youth had recently joined the Afghan military and local armed groups. These are rewarding options for earning a livelihood, at least better than subsistence farming or migration to reduce the family's food shortage. The woman warned us to not come back tomorrow, because 'they' now know that we are here.....

Since my translator introduced herself as a doctor, the women used this opportunity to get advice or treatment for their ailments and health problems. I saw neglected skin problems, a woman with a neglected wound on her foot, and another woman with an egg-shaped tumour in her belly. In principle their ailments could easily be treated, according to my translator. But since these women either lack male accompaniment to see a doctor, or the respective body part is culturally labelled as 'indecent', or they lack the resources to see a doctor, women's health is hardly attended to. In Afghanistan, women's grievances are generally addressed through male representation, and the loss of male protectors and mediators (fathers, husbands or brothers) may leave them without recourse (Kandiyoti, 2007: 188). However, as I will discuss in the next chapter, several educated women in Nahreen are allowed by the male *shura* to attend training on early warning, on search and rescue and to be involved in settling disputes and mediating domestic violence. The women said to be afraid to walk in public spaces, but to remedy their fear, they walk with other women and use the *burka* as protection "to look like ordinary women". The men in Nahreen appeared to be relatively less conservative than in for instance Ghulistan, Bamyan province, where women complain about their husbands' conservative gender norms preventing them to earn an income. In Nahreen, on the contrary, men allow educated women to participate in the CBDRR-pilot. 'Educated' means in this context, that the women attended elementary school and some a few classes high school, or that they received vocational training while being a refugee abroad.

In general, households in Nahreen derive about 54% of their total income from agriculture, while the remaining 46% is derived from livestock, and non-farm labour. The level of economic hardship in Baghlan province is reasonably high: 83% of rural households in the province experienced natural disasters in 2005, out of which 77% reported that they had not recovered at all from external shocks experienced over the past 12 months, while 21% said they recovered only partly (MRRD, 2007).

After meeting the women, we went with several male *shura* members to a meeting with the district authority. The district governor was previously the head of the *shura* of Nahreen bazaar. About 25 years ago, he told us, Nahreen district was food secure. Many factors contributed to the depletion of resources and livelihood insecurity. Decades of war and extensive drought periods, resulted, among others, in a high percentage of widows in Nahreen, which together with out-migration of male family

members, led to a lack of labour in agriculture. In addition other factors contributed to increasing food insecurity: the cutting of trees and bushes - for heating to survive cold winters and for cooking, building and fodder for cattle during drought periods -, the lack of irrigation facilities, absence of extension services, and the wrong use of fertilizer resulted in infertile lands and environmental degradation. The district authorities are aware of the concerns of the people in Nahreen, but lack the resources to support these villages. ADA remarks informally that the district government lack the political will to genuinely initiate and follow-up resource generation. The idea to construct a dam with irrigation canals or water-harvesting measures has been communicated to the provincial level authorities, because resources (budget, design, and technical support) has to be mobilized at the provincial Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) line department. But at the provincial level they were still waiting to get funds from Kabul for conducting a feasibility survey. Support for irrigation facilities and water harvesting had priority, but what the district governor offered was an ill-designed flood protection wall that did not really protect the villages. The men complained about the neglect by their government, and the limited NGO support. In a report compiled by MRRD, containing a provincial profile of Baghlan, it is evident that Nahreen district indeed did not get much attention from its government, neither from international and national NGOs. Most of the donor aid went to the provincial towns of Pul-i-khumri and Baghlan (MRRD, 2007). And when aid was given it was relief and food aid through the World Food Program. This is usually done through "food for work" schemes, and since the nature of the work is always 'male' work, widows and female-headed households do not benefit from this kind of assistance, while they need it the most.

We lacked the time and focus to deepen the discussion and analysis on how people's situation is affected by the war, natural hazards, and the performance of the overall political economy (like the price-hike of wheat, donor aid distribution), and on people's entitlements to goods, services and resources. While I listened to the district governor's stories I did not notice the dark clouds outside, but I heard thunder and felt the sand blowing through the windows. Around me people started to become stressful and waving at me that I should stop the interview. They even prevented me to politely say goodbye and to thank for the discussion. The stress was caused by the bad weather approaching, while we had to cross two rivers on our way back, and needed to be back before dark. The risk that we could be stranded in our cars in between the rivers was high, and this would increase the risk of kidnapping. They pushed us in the car and we left the village in a hurry. This incident illustrates well 'local knowledge in action' with the purpose to protect us.

Stories from Khulm district, Balkh province

"Better to be a servant in the upstream area than a king downstream" – is an Afghan proverb on water access in irrigation canal systems which can be related to people's stories in Khulm. They narrated about the dynamics in local water governance, how seasonal floods and drought periods increase tensions among upstream and tail-end villages which all depend on the same irrigation facilities. Despite the tensions households are on the average better-off and less vulnerable to disasters than in Nahreen, thanks to the availability of irrigation water. However, stigmas on gender

are more conservative in Khulm, constraining women's options of going out in public, to attend meetings and even to rescue neighbours during floods. However, widows and female heads of the households shared stories about how adverse realities force them to do things that are publicly denied that they happen, but necessary to survive, like prostitution.

Khulm district is located a 40 minute drive along the highway eastwards of Mazaar-i-sharif. Driving from the direction of Mazaar one first crosses a flat and dry area, and when approaching Khulm, the landscape turns greener (in April) with mountains at the background. The villages selected for the CBDRR pilot, are located along the Samangan River and several irrigation canals, which take water from this river. As the name suggests, the river originates in Samangan Province, and Khulm district used to be within the provincial administrative boundaries of Samangan. After the Taliban was defeated in 2001, the boundaries of Khulm district changed and it became part of Balkh Province, creating opportunities for new government positions at district level. These were seized by local elites who changed the rules for water distribution. During the Taliban water was distributed according to land size, an approach which helped to keep tensions over water in check. After 2001 new water distribution rules favour upstream villagers with whom the commander is closely affiliated. This results, especially during drought periods, in increasing tensions about water division between upstream and tail-end villages. The villages are situated close to the main highway connecting Kabul and Mazaar-i-sharif. We visited three places in the area: (1) the villages upstream near the bazaar of Khulm, (2) Molakoli village at the tail-end of the canal, and (3) Mullah Sultana, a village near the spectacular gorge where the Samangan River leaves Samangan province and enters Khulm district in Balkh province.

We started our field visit with observing the newly rehabilitated irrigation intake which diverts half of the water into a canal providing water to eight villages, while half of the water flows through the river to other villages. The riverbed is higher than the surrounding villages and one can easily imagine what would happen in case of a flash flood. When entering the villages one could still observe the remaining ruins of damaged houses due to the flash-flood of two years ago (2006). Also the irrigation canals are higher than the surrounding fields, sometimes more than one meter. From the intake the main canal splits after a hundred meter into three secondary canals and particularly the houses and fields along the middle canal are the ones most vulnerable to floods; when it floods, these people are surrounded by water and have no escape route to higher dry areas. One woman told us: *"I do not know whom to rescue first, myself or my children. There is water everywhere!* We discussed risk perceptions and practices to reduce risk with men and women separately, but in the text they are interwoven to stress the gender differences and women's dilemmas.

Preparing for floods

Warning is a male activity in Khulm. Men observe the weather, they observe rain clouds near the mountains, and when the rain is intense, they know the flood will be muddy and destroying crops. In addition they check or receive warnings from people

in Samangan province by mobile phone⁴, they monitor the water levels and colour in the river and canals to assess alert levels, and convey warnings through the mosque's loudspeaker and by knocking on doors. Based on past experience, the warning is given two hours before the water reaches the villages, which is very short. When it happens during the day, women receive the warning through loudspeakers, and this is important because men are often away. Some women said they do not always receive the warning in time, since they do not hear the loudspeakers. In the past when floods happened during the night, there was no warning at all, and people were just surprised to see water inside the house.

When I talked to the women, they expressed their wish to have their own women volunteer groups, while simultaneously they feel the limitation of not being allowed to go next-door to render assistance during emergencies, or to perform 'public' activities. *"We can rescue our own family members, but not our neighbours"*! With this statement they expressed their wish to challenge existing gender roles. On the other hand, women cannot be rescued by men unless they are family-relatives. Life-threatening situations may be exceptions, but *"when the water comes, we rely on our own capacities"*. When asking further it appears that women are involved in taking precautions for floods, which they frame as *"supporting their husbands like filling sandbags with mud which our husbands put around the orchards and at both sides along the irrigation canals, collecting grasses which is put in between the sandbags, and we help with weaving twigs to reinforce the canals"*.

The need to evacuate people and cattle depends on the intensity of the flood - if it is likely to damage houses - and on the level of the water. Some women are afraid to leave their house when it is flooded, while some other women told that they move to a friend's house with their children, but they do not stay long. Once the water starts receding they return to their homes to start cleaning and repair. It is not clear if the women are afraid of the water or of their husbands since they are not supposed to leave home alone. When households need a place for about one week, they can use the school and the hospital for evacuation purposes as decided by the male *shuras*. In 2006 when the flood damaged many houses, the affected families received tents from the government and used them for about six months till they had rebuilt their houses. The water intake was rebuilt in 2007.

Differing risk perceptions embedded in social and spatial positions

Floods usually occur from the months April till June, but it can happen that the canals are still frozen when the water comes. Men then try hard to remove the ice from the canals to keep the water within the canals. However they lack the appropriate tools to do this quickly, and do not get support from the government. Three upstream communities went to visit the district authorities many times, also to voice their interest in flood protection, but in vain. They claimed that certain government officials have land downstream, and that downstream villages actually depend on the floods to get irrigation water for their crops. Hence, their non-cooperation. During floods, all people are stand-by, and try to protect their fields and houses through

⁴ Before they received warning from truck drivers along the highway coming from Samangan, but now the head of the DMC receives phone calls from relatives in Samangan, which makes forewarning longer.

sandbags and try to divert the water with spades. The men showed us a video filmed during a flood to give us an impression of the impact. We observed houses threatened by the water because they are made of mud and the water weakens the foundations.

When talking to the villagers living in Molakoli village situated at the tail-end of the canal, the floods turned out to be a relative problem. For them floods are a blessing. They stressed that this year (2008) drought was more likely to happen than flood. They depend on floods for land preparation and irrigation in spring, but experience drought instead, if it does not rain, due to their inability to negotiate for access to water with upstream villages. From the end of February until the end of September the upstream villages keep their gates closed to ensure sufficient water for their crops like wheat, figs, almond, pomegranate, mustard seeds and vegetables. The downstream villages grow the same crops but wheat can only yield when it rains or when they get water due to floods. In September the upstream villages open the gates, and only then the tail-end communities receive irrigation water. They prepare their lands – ploughing and sowing – and wait till spring in the next year for the seeds to sprout (seeds will not rot or freeze during winter). According to the villagers in Molakoli, the people in the three upstream villages are more powerful and allocate the water to serve their needs first.

Especially from June onwards there is no drinking water in this area. Children fetch water upstream using donkeys. Only during extreme drought periods, the gates are opened for ten to twenty days (24 hours) to allow tail-end villages to store water in brooks (5 meter deep) for drinking purpose. This is an old practice based on mercifulness. Similarly tail-end villagers came to help upstream people when they experienced the severe flood in 2006. Digging wells for drinking water is not a solution, because the water will be salty.

In Khulm district there are about 20 more villages like Molakoli who have no access to irrigation water when they need it most. They have tried again and again to start discussions and negotiations with upstream villages about the water allocation, but they do not know anymore how to proceed. They attribute the problem to the change in provincial boundaries in 2001 when Khulm became a district of Balkh province, and suddenly the water division “rules” changed. This resulted in less secure livelihoods and people told us they had to diversify their livelihood sources. They now collect firewood (or shrubs from the dessert) to earn an income, or they do construction work and migrate. The tensions among the villages around competing claims were identified during the vulnerability assessment, but to assess who is most vulnerable in the whole area, the local NGO together with the local people needed to continue the analysis and to include all villages in the CBDRR pilot when it aims to find durable solutions. The next chapter elaborates how the NGO community facilitators made courtesy calls to several influential people to get permission to enter the community, and how they failed to properly engage with the Community Development Councils (CDCs) and the ruling groups in order to identify risk reduction measures that would benefit the most vulnerable people in a lasting way.

Besides the differing risk perceptions between the upstream and tail-end villagers, I observed differing risk perceptions between men and women. Like in Nahreen, particularly widows and female-heads of households articulate their main problem as food shortage. Some widows told they have a small vegetable garden within the compound, and allow daughters to work as domestic helper for rich people in Khulm bazaar. A widow sitting next to me whispered that this refers to prostitution. Earning little income through transactional sexual relations occurs frequently. Women stressed they do anything to earn an income to buy food for their children, because “*If your stomach is empty, you do not like to listen to music*”- according to an Afghan proverb. Mothers choose to make the sacrifice and, going against prevailing gender norms, undertake income generation that enables their children to avoid work and attend school (Hunte, 2009). Another women shared that allowing daughters to marry at an early age, e.g. an age of seven, also happens as a way to get cash or assets to secure food. In addition, particularly widows depend on friends who share food with them. A widow said she receives some food from neighbours every three days. Another widow with three daughters and four sons shared that one son gives her money, while she moves from one child to another to be taken care of. She has no land.

The men in Khulm, compared to those in Nahreen, are more reluctant to allow their wives and daughters to go out. Widows and women whose husband is away suffer a lot from disasters, but on the other hand, they - particularly elderly widows – are able to enter the public space in order to survive. These women can be crucial for enabling other women to attend meetings, to assist in selling products in the bazaar, or they could get specific roles like becoming head of women *shura* (we met such widow living close to Khulm bazaar) because she has no husband who could prevent her leaving her house, to take on economic activities, or to go out in the public.

Men view floods as most destructive to their livelihoods since they damage canals, crops and sometimes houses. It is their responsibility to repair irrigation canals, rebuild protection walls, which is costly and labour intensive. Since men are able to define their problem to the NGO staff, their problem gets attention, while the women, despite the involvement of outside female community organisers hired by the NGO, are not able to get their problems on the agenda of the NGO nor discussed in the male *shuras*.

Generalisations about gender dynamics in Afghanistan are impossible to make, since they depend on locality. Women’s involvement in public spaces or agricultural work partly depends on whether the household can afford to hire in labour, how strongly social stigmas around women and men’s involvement in certain activities are, as well as how strongly individuals of households adhere to them (Grace, 2004, 6). The stories illustrate the minor differences in public space used by women in Nahreen and Khulm. In general, the vast majority of women in Afghanistan have hardly contact with the state, markets, and civil society organisations. Women’s options are conditioned by *the fortunes of the communities and households in which their livelihoods and everyday lives are embedded* (Kandiyoti, 2007: 176). Ironically, women *shuras* never existed in Afghanistan. They were introduced in 2002-2003 by the interna-

tional donor community as part of the National Solidarity Program (NSP). They were created – mostly as parallel (powerless and without authority) structures to male CDCs – to accommodate donor requirements rather than to create inclusive, participatory, democratic and representative committees at village level. This explains their disconnectedness to village level decision-making. But given the fact they now exist, and the opportunity they provide for women to come together, to exchange views and to learn, and for female outsiders like me to talk to them, I view women *shuras* as an entry point to reach women. Realizing that gender relations are not static but changeable like practiced by the women I met, women *shuras* mark the beginning of a public space for Afghan women.

Stories from Ghulistan, Bamyan province

People in Ghulistan village belong to one ethnic group and because social cohesion is strong here, they feel confident to deal with any adversity. Sar-e-Qul on the contrary, a village facing similar environmental conditions as Ghulistan, has difficulties to deal with the impact of disasters which people attribute to social divisions, a result of past wars. People's narratives support the argument that local institutional arrangements largely determine vulnerability outcomes locally. These include gender norms.

Ghulistan is a mountain village of about 240 households. It takes a 1.5 hour drive from Bamyan town along a rough road going to the north-west part of Bamyan district to reach the village. The houses are built close to one another on a slope near the snow line. Around us are the peaks of the Hindu Kush Mountains covered with snow. The landscape is spectacular, and one would easily forget the cruelties that took place here since the 1980s, particularly during the last few years of the Taliban regime. In August 1997, the Taliban had installed a food blockade on Bamyan by closing all the roads from the south, west and east to force the *Hazaras* to surrender, which happened in 1998 when the Taliban took control over Bamyan province. This area used to be the stronghold of the opposition to the Taliban, but when the Taliban entered, the population could not withstand the brutal killings, massacres, torture, and rape while they tried to escape through the mountains (Rashid, 2000). To humiliate the local population, the Taliban dynamited the Buddha statues, starting in 1998 with the head of a small Buddha, and in spring 2001 they fired rockets to the two big Buddha's, destroying Afghanistan's greatest archaeological heritage. The official story is that the Taliban government declared that the Buddhas were "idols", which were forbidden under *Sharia* law. Local people told me that Taliban fighters were getting frustrated, that the Taliban started to fall apart, and that they got tired of the refusal of the international community to send humanitarian aid to Afghanistan as long as the Taliban harbour terrorists like Osama Bin Laden. Afghanistan was increasingly isolated.

We arrived in Ghulistan in the morning where we were welcomed by the men. They guided us to the house where the *shura* usually meets and they prepared tea for us. For security reasons, our visit was not announced, although Bamyan province was at the moment the most peaceful province in the country. According to the head of *shura*, Ghulistan is a multi-hazard village:

“During the occupation of the Taliban, they tortured us, - we have some martyrs - , they took our livestock, burned our houses and they destroyed our trees. There was a lot of suffering, but we escaped into the mountains. We ate grass and tried to bake bread using the available stones in the landscape as make-shift ovens. We used to have hundreds of sheep, but now we have five to ten animals or no animals at all. [...] We never suffered from an internal conflict, only externally we did, during the Taliban regime. As a community we are very cooperative. If there are problems we rely on ourselves; the government does not render support”.

The man stressed ‘community cohesion’ as their strength in dealing with adversity. They use the traditional system of *ashar* to mobilize community labour, for instance, to mitigate floods by redirecting the water with shovels, to restore irrigation canals or other community activities. Women and children move to higher grounds when floods happen.

“Every year at the end of the winter we experience avalanches, then rocks start falling down, and floods occur when snow melts too fast. The impact varies, but floods have the potential to damage farm land, kill livestock, and destroy feeding stockpiles and houses. Recently, the bridge has been destroyed too, which connects two parts of the village. About 10 years ago two children died and we could rescue one. But there are also problems we cannot solve on our own. Like those big rocks above us [see figure 5.2]. They can fall down any moment and destroy our houses. We monitor the movement of the rocks and told people not to sleep anymore in the houses that are being threatened. We urgently need equipment from outside to remove the rocks and to minimize damage”.



Figure 5.2: Ghulistan, threatened by big rocks, avalanches and floods

The head of the *shura* continued explaining about the roles and responsibilities of the *shura* in dealing with disasters. The *shura* is tasked to timely warn the villagers. Loudspeakers are used to warn people for floods. Then the *shura* mobilizes the men to divert water through the practice of *ashar*, i.e. voluntary community labour. The *shura* further has the responsibility to link up with external actors to address problems that are beyond their control. He told that the rocks were a real threat, but the *shura* had other concerns as well like the annual flooding, getting electricity in the village, and the difficult access to the health clinic during winter which is 10 km away. Other problems on their list are unemployment and illiteracy of both men and women.

The discussion then shifted to how the *shura* functions, how decisions are taken and how women's concerns are addressed. The man who has been talking all the time continued:

“The shura represents the people. ‘Shura’ means council, the village parliament. So we consult people through meetings. Through discussing the issues we arrive at decisions. [...] We meet only with the men. Men and women talk within the household. Men and women cooperate through the household, within the family. We do not discriminate against women; everything is equally distributed among men and women”.

I knew I had a chance to meet with the women to validate the man's remark. So instead of going into the gender dimension of decision-making, I was curious to know about *who* can become a member of the *shura*, *how* do you become a member, and are they appointed or do they use voting like introduced by the National Solidarity Program (NSP). But then a younger man entered the room, requesting me and the translator to move to the mosque, where the women are waiting. It somehow felt annoying to cut off an interesting discussion, but overtime I have learned to accept this fact as the cost I need to pay to meet with the women. This time my translator was a student from Bamyan who spent several years in Germany. As an internal refugee, she was seriously ill and needed treatment that was not available in Afghanistan that time. A German NGO facilitated her treatment in Germany where she stayed several years to recover while attending school. She speaks German fluently.

Women's stories from Ghulistan – feeling the power, but scared to use it

The mosque where the women were waiting was spacious but quite dark. Flimsy light entered through two small windows high up in the wall. About 15 women and a few children gathered. They all wore bright red scarves and colourful hair-pins in the fringe, very different from the women I met in other places. Apparently the self-made red scarves provide sufficient cover to walk in public, because I did not notice a pile of *burkas* lying in a corner. We introduced ourselves and after a brief report about our discussion with the men, an older woman fiercely started her story:

“Yeah, we know about the problems with the rocks, the snow and floods. We carry our children into the mountains during crisis. But a more serious problem we face is that we do not have work like weaving carpets, so we could earn money. We want to work to earn additional income to buy food. Due to inheritance, the amount of land has become less and men look for work abroad. The remittance from our husbands in Pakistan is too little. That is why we want to work”. [...] Our husbands do not allow us to earn money. They say that we are not able to work, but of course we are! Men say that we cannot work because we do not know how to read and write, and because of our rural background. But we could learn that! How to convince our men? We do not like that men take all the decisions for us”.

The earlier remark of the men that they consult women through the household is denied by the women. It is in this context that a woman stated that *"If the men would have known that you would come, they would have instructed us about what to tell you and what not"*. The women did not feel taken seriously by their husbands. The women really do not understand why the men do not see the urgency of additional income, given the poverty in the village. The women themselves do feel the urgent need, and they are convinced about their ability. However, they feel restricted by the prevailing gender norms in their remote community that women are not supposed to participate in work beyond their home and farm. They are scared though to break through these gender norms. It is plausible to assume that the women may face violence by their husbands when they start carpet weaving for instance, referring to the question of the *shura* head asking me whether the women have told me that they are beaten by their husbands. The women continue their story about another constraint regarding NGOs that come to Ghulistan:

"As women we are not supposed to talk with the male NGO workers. [For NGOs, it is very difficult to hire female staff]. One NGO came with food aid. And once a lady trader promised us to help us with carpet weaving, but she never came back. We do not feel represented by the male shura. There is a female shura but not active at the moment. We want the male shura to talk with us, to listen to us. But this does not happen. We are eager to accept work from the male shura, whatever sort of work. We have very little to do now. During the winter we have lots of time. Carpet weaving we can do inside the house. Even widows with children are not allowed to work, which is a huge problem. In winter, widows are being helped by other families.

While the men stressed 'community cohesion' as their strength to face crisis, their implicit and hidden gender norms on the other hand, greatly limit the room for manoeuvre for women, particularly for widows. Women have a positive sense of self, but still feel constrained to challenge the accepted gender norms. They wish the support of a female NGO facilitator to take away this hindrance. The women *shura*, created by NSP is a farce, since women's views and ideas do not reach community decision-making, and they are not taken seriously by the men.

The position of the women in Ghulistan differs a lot from those in Nahreen. Although the level of poverty in both localities may not vary a lot, the opportunities for women to earn an income differ substantially due to differing cultural and gender norms. The extent to which men and women are exposed to the outside world may also be a factor. While Nahreen has a bazaar which functions as a cross-road, connecting remote villages in the district to, for example Iran, the village of Ghulistan is situated high in the mountains. People's livelihoods opportunities are generated by various factors like local security regimes, ethnicity, gender, wealth, and even by proximity to borders, access to roads, markets and water. *"In Afghanistan 'place' matters"* (Bhatia, et al, 2003: 9).

What the women in Ghulistan and Nahreen seem to have in common is their struggle to get access to health services. In Ghulistan it is quite common that women and

babies die during the delivery. There is a traditional midwife who helps women during their labour, but in case of complications she lacks the tools, and uses her hands and feet instead. Although a health clinic is built 10 km away through the NSP, it is inaccessible during winter, and more importantly, it lacks doctors and nurses.

Stories from Chapdara sub-village, Sar-e-Qul village, Bamyan Province

The 500 families of Sar-e-Qul live in several sub-villages, and Chapdara sub-village is located nearest to the snow-line where currently about 45 households live after 35 households left after a destructive avalanche in 2008. Local narratives – from both ordinary villagers and local NGO staff – demonstrate the difficulties of sub-national state building, and how commanders operating parallel to the *shura*, or Community Development Council, ignore the concerns of disaster affected households. The community is divided and the *shura* is not able to settle land disputes caused by the annual avalanches.

Like Ghulistan, Sar-e-Qul is located high in the mountains, about an hour drive southwest from Bamyan town. Winters can be harsh here; it sometimes starts snowing while the wheat is still on the fields. Snow usually starts falling in October and only in March-April the village becomes accessible again. Occasionally the snow can be as high as fifteen meters. Before the winter people stockpile food and firewood to survive.

When we visited the village in the month of May, the snow-line was still nearby. Here, farming is only possible during four to five months. People in Chapdara are represented in the local *shura* through two persons, a man and a woman, who were not present at the time of our first visit. Therefore, we met with ‘ordinary’ men and women together in the local mosque, although the women kept silent during the meeting. I therefore requested if I could talk to them in a separate occasion, which was possible.

This sub-village experiences avalanches, and the worst happened in March 2008. A woman who still remembers the horrific event starts telling:

“It was in the middle of the night, around 3:00 am when I suddenly heard lots of noise. Suddenly our house was hit, it was dark, I screamed but the noise of the snow was loud. I was lying in the rumble of my damaged house, waiting to be rescued. The noise of the snow continued. Around 5:00 am people, using pick and shovels took me out of my damaged house. I wasn’t injured.....” [She does not complete her story. Instead, a woman sitting next to her completes the story] *“She lost her brother and four children. She had no husband anymore, so she could not farm herself. The family has a piece of land, which is now being cultivated by a sharecropper. That is how she can survive.”*

When the snow disappeared, nobody from outside rendered assistance to those households who lost their house. 35 families got displaced and moved to houses of relatives further away who had vacant rooms due to migrating household members. They still live there, while 45 households remain to live in their original houses. Ava-

lanches happen yearly but the impact differs. In March 2009, an avalanche damaged three houses, killing 9 people. Houses, trees, livestock and also farms and irrigation canals are damaged. The surrounding slopes are very steep causing the snow to run off very fast taking with it rocks and stones. The only remedy people see is to rebuild their house with borrowed money or they migrate to towns and cities to do construction work, leaving their destroyed houses behind. If they cannot borrow money, they rent out their small piece of land, or leave it idle since they lack the money to buy seeds, or because their farm animals were killed by the avalanche. They say they lack the proper equipment to repair the damaged fields and canals. They perceive the avalanches as something inevitable that Allah decides on. This attitude differs a lot from how people in Ghulistan face the similar kind of problems. What about 'community cohesion' in Sar-e-Qul?

There are several traces in people's stories that refer to little or no cooperation among households. Instead of repairing the damaged houses, fields and canals together through *ashar*, like in Ghulistan, a woman complained that nobody helped her to rebuild her house. And the men complain that the avalanches trigger local conflict every spring. They demarcate their fields with rows of piled stones, and avalanches not only destroy these demarcations, they also change the environment – course of water flows, position of rocks and stones. It then becomes unclear which land belongs to whom, and it affects the flow of irrigation water. The local *shura* does not deal with these land disputes according to the men. *"Our two representatives from this sub-village are powerless; they have no influence in shura decisions. Our voice is not heard"*. Another man has the opinion that the local *shura* only has the authority to deal with social conflict, probably not with problems related to land rights. He refers to the government as the proper institution to address land issues: *"In 1972 land ownership was arranged but not officially registered; we never received documents to prove ownership."* The way the men talk reveals passivity. In their view, it is the task of the *shura* - the elders - to solve disputes, to solve problems, and to plan and initiate action. However, they say that *"we have no idea about what happens in the shura"*. They keep silent about why the *shura* does not function.

It could be too risky for them to disclose sensitive information. Also the women strongly expressed their frustration with the *shura*, and with the men:

"We have no influence". "They [the men in the shura] do not ask us anything, so why should we ask them something?"

"We cannot imagine that anybody would listen to us except the female half of this village". "We cannot do anything about our problems, as long as men do not recognise these". "Please do not tell the shura that we said the shura is not functioning".

After we left Chapdara, CCA staff told me in the car that hostility and latent conflict exist among the various sub-villages related to politics. The sub-villages are supported by several commanders belonging to different factions which go back to the struggle against the Taliban. These commanders use the village *shura* to legitimate their activities, to access NGO resources, not to genuinely discuss concerns or solve problems and disputes. Several NGOs have given up working in this village. Also the

National Solidarity Program – which is in fact a government programme, but implemented by NGOs - did not reduce tensions. On the contrary, a few powerful commanders used the NSP to further strengthen their position by allowing the NGOs to implement their western ideas about democratization. The two representatives from Chapdara belong to the *mazdoor* - landless wage labourers, who do the heaviest work for the landowning class⁵. It is quite unusual in Afghan tradition that these groups are member of the *shura*⁶. Like the women *shura*, making *mazdoor* member of the *shura* is an attempt of the NSP to make village governance more inclusive. In reality, the representatives from Chapdara remain powerless, since commanders and local elite ignore their concerns. The case of Sar-e-Qul demonstrates the problematic of sub-national state-building in Afghanistan and the donors' naive expectation to change Afghanistan into a democratic country over a couple of years, using western standards. The government in Bamyan hardly plays a role at the village and district level. It is not an exception though. I observed many different outcomes of NSP in the villages I visited. NSP did not yet result in a coherent governance structure connecting the local to the higher levels of government (Nixon, 2008). Changing social structures and norms requires a long time horizon, like I explained in chapter 1 referring to Jütting's institutional framework (2003).

5.2.2 Intermezzo: Making sense of local narratives in Afghanistan

The cases from Afghanistan demonstrate how local conflicts and tensions are closely related to the seasonality of disasters and their immediate impact on people's livelihoods. 50% of local conflicts in Afghanistan are primarily about livelihoods associated with access to land and water (Dennys and Zaman, 2009). Whether communities can deal with the tensions and negative disaster impact or not, seem to be linked to local formal and informal institutions and to people's position in society. Women, landless families, widows and female-headed households have the least possibilities to influence village decision-making. The extent to which their concerns are considered depends on how the *shura* adheres to social stigmas around gender or traditional protection principles regarding low income groups. In Nahreen and in Sar-e-Qul there are signals that local conflicts are linked to broader divides or that the broader conflict context offers livelihood opportunities for unemployed youth. In many areas local government – from village to provincial level – does not function, nor does the formal judiciary system, which local people regard as slow, expensive and often corrupt. As conflict is a daily reality that Afghans must address, there is a dire need to address these local conflicts to avoid escalation and that they feed into the multi-layered conflict system in the country (Dennys and Zaman, 2009). When visiting CBDRR-areas, I came across a few peace *shura* initiatives which attempted to change the traditional practice, norms and values of settling disputes, like avoiding killing as revenge, and which seem to act as an appreciated institution that is able to solve a large number of disputes⁷. In many places in Afghanistan, people are tired of

⁵ *Mazdoor* is the lowest income group involved in cutting grass for livestock, fetching water, cleaning the stables and collecting firewood. *Dehqan* are also landless but do work with a little higher status like cultivating the land. *Dehqan* are a kind of sharecroppers receiving 1/5 of the produce.

⁶ Notions of village 'representation', 'participation' and community decision-making are subject of Chapter 6.

⁷ Particularly civil cases, while criminal cases are more difficult to tackle.

conflicts and making war, and do not want to passively wait for the government to achieve peace and order.

The organisations in Afghanistan that collect data about conflict and insecurity focus mainly on issues that affect the operations of the humanitarian and development community⁸. The information, however, does not tell much about the everyday experience of conflict for Afghans at the local level. Therefore, I added stories of peace *shuras* which demonstrate trends to understand the Afghan reality of conflict, particularly at the local level, and how these are linked to the broader context. More importantly, the peace *shura* stories reveal people's motivations for using violence, and their motivation for mediating and breaking through the negative spiral of conflict and revenge. Part of this research also aims to study how local institutions, like traditional and peace *shuras*, produce, reproduce or reduce people's vulnerability to disaster and conflict. Peace *shuras* are newly established institutions after 2001 that operate parallel to the traditional *shuras*, although people can be member of both like religious leaders.

5.2.3 Stories from peace *shuras* in Kunduz, Herat and Kabul provinces

In May 2007 I travelled by car from Kabul to Kunduz to meet with a local peace *shura*. A small group of elders, religious leaders and government officials approached CPAU⁹ in 2005 to help them to settle local disputes and to reduce tensions in Kunduz district. They heard about CPAU from their relatives in Badakshan who were involved in a serious conflict. CPAU played a positive role there so the elders wanted CPAU to help them as well. A local leader starts telling:

“25 years of war has divided people in different political camps. Fighters took land, women and other assets from ordinary people. During the Russian time, the communist fought against the mujahedeen. When somebody was killed, the perception is that the person is killed by an opposing ‘family member’. During the civil war, different factions of the mujahedeen fought against each other, and then the Taliban came. Violence is being personalized at the local level targeting people from different ethnicity or clan” [...] Many people in Kunduz lost ownership of their land to commanders, and this worsened the relationships with neighbours and between families. Regardless the layer of conflict, revenge is always projected at the village level”.

“People do not go to court, because court takes too long and it is corrupt; getting money is more important for the court than applying the law. Water conflicts cannot wait to be solved after 12 years, but require immediate attention”.

“Traditional shuras do not always want to interfere in local conflicts, or they come up with old, awful solutions that are not beneficial to particularly women, or not durable because solutions did not take away tensions, were not always

⁸ These are, among others, the Afghan NGO Security Office (ANSO), The Afghan Conflict Monitor, and the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC).

⁹ CPAU (Cooperation for Peace and Unity) is a local Afghan NGO founded in 1996. CPAU encourages people to actively participate in peace building through advancing knowledge and skills to mediate conflicts.

perceived as just by both parties. That is why we have changed our perspective on conflict resolution. For instance, we want to get rid of the practice of settling disputes through compensation that involves women. We further promote 'forgiveness' instead of revenge. We use customary law, sharia law and mediation depending on the case, while abolishing rude practices" [...] Although we may not always be respected by some powerful parties, our motivation and numbers keep us going. Sometimes we ask advice from lawyers."

Because the justice system in Kunduz is barely functioning, the local population prefers to approach the informal peace *shura*. In Kunduz about 50% of the conflicts are related to land and water, caused by illegal occupation and selling of land by commanders, and increasingly by inheritance related problems. The latter results in an increase in inter-family conflicts.

The peace *shura* in Kunduz has a women committee which meets with the men to consult and coordinate tasks regarding specific cases. The women particularly deal with divorce, domestic violence and inheritance matters.

"We are happy to go out of our homes. We are fed up with violence and war. We are educated women [several teachers and a doctor] if we do not do it, who will do it? We want to know more about women's rights and how to deal with domestic violence. We want to serve others, to get the women out of their houses. We see an increase in domestic violence in Kunduz after the Taliban left, because women had hoped to go out again".

In Herat I met with five women who are active in peace *shuras* in Ghoryan district which borders Iran. They also are educated women - high-school teachers - and committed to support women who are in trouble¹⁰. The eldest woman is active in the district peace *shura*, and in a saffron processing cooperative as an entry-point to reach women. Their motivation to mediate in local conflicts stems from their belief that Afghanistan needs their support. They do not have the capacity to address conflicts nation-wide, but they believe they can contribute to reduce local conflict. As women they are particularly motivated to mediate conflicts related to domestic violence and drug addiction, which in their view has the highest priority in their area.

"Drug addiction is highest in districts that border Iran. Ghoryan has about 5000 drug addicts – 300 women and 4700 men. Three years ago the total number of addicted people was only 800. Husbands increasingly force their wives to use opium so they wouldn't complain about their husbands' addiction and misbehaviour. Last month 8 women were killed after quarrels with their husbands over selling assets like jewellery in order to buy drugs. When the women resisted they were killed. [...] Many conflicts start within the family, between husband and wives, between mother and daughters-in-law, and among co-wives."

¹⁰ Three women are in their early twenties, and got their education while seeking refuge in Iran. Girls educated in Iran are exposed to different gender norms and ideas which they bring back into Afghan villages.

“Geographically, Ghoryan district is along a smuggling route between Iran and Afghanistan. Afghanistan produces poppy which is smuggled to Iran, where poppy is processed into crystals. Addiction is not a new phenomenon but a practice Afghan people from Herat adopted while they were refugees in Iran. When they returned home many of them became smugglers, particularly ‘Kuchis’, for whom it had become almost impossible to return to their nomadic way of existence. [...] There are now also crystal factories in Faryab (a province north of Herat). Crystals are very small and smugglers offer US\$20 to ordinary people to tempt them to taste the crystals to, so-called, test the quality. This is the way how people get addicted. It is perceived as a painkiller and to heal cancer. It is also given to small children. We are very concerned with these trends because it will be a big problem for the next generation. The government ignores the problem. In fact the government benefits from the smugglers and drug lords, like the brother of Karzai. The provincial health department does not take the increasing addiction seriously referring to the insecurity along the border. The government uses ‘insecurity’ as an excuse, because it is safe”.

Women and men set different priorities to which conflict should be settled first. Women perceive drug addiction as a high risk in Ghoryan district, which the women living in Dehran and Roshan villages¹¹ confirmed. Drug addiction is closely linked to criminal activities and prostitution. The women I met are frustrated that there is not even a rehabilitation centre or a safe house for female drug addicts. The head of the district’s Education Department told the women that *“nobody can stop drug addiction, even the US government cannot* while a former women’s affairs minister in Kabul even denied that prostitution happened in the country. To render support *“Sometimes old women in the village offer their house as a safe place”*, according to the women. Men in Ghoryan, on the other hand, put conflicts related to land and water as the highest priority, which are related to rules for grazing areas for cattle, protection areas to reduce the impact of sandstorms, and to irrigation water.

Men and women experience conflict and war differently, and have different stakes in peace-building and stability. Kandiyoti (2007) rightly points out that instead of viewing gender in Afghanistan only through the lens of indigenous culture and Islam, attention is needed to recognize the effects of conflict and displacement on gender relations and norms, *because it is against this background of new challenges, that the politics of gender is being played out*” (Kandiyoti, 2007: 176). It is common practice, for instance, to use women as compensation payment to settle disputes¹², or as a disposable asset to settle debts.

The various stories from the peace *shuras* demonstrate that people go to informal institutions to settle disputes. However peace *shuras* like the ones I talked to are still rare in Afghanistan. The majority of conflicts may be settled temporarily, but are likely to revive and escalate again later on. In light of the lack of a formal judicial system, of impunity and corrupt courts, local informal institutions to settle disputes must be recognized. In Kabul, several unresolved cases were referred by the formal

¹¹ These two villages in Ghoryan district are the CBDRR-pilot areas of SDO, partner of ICCO.

¹² Through sex or marriage.

court to the informal peace *shura*. A peace *shura* is a local institution which has the potential to reduce people's vulnerability to disasters and conflict.

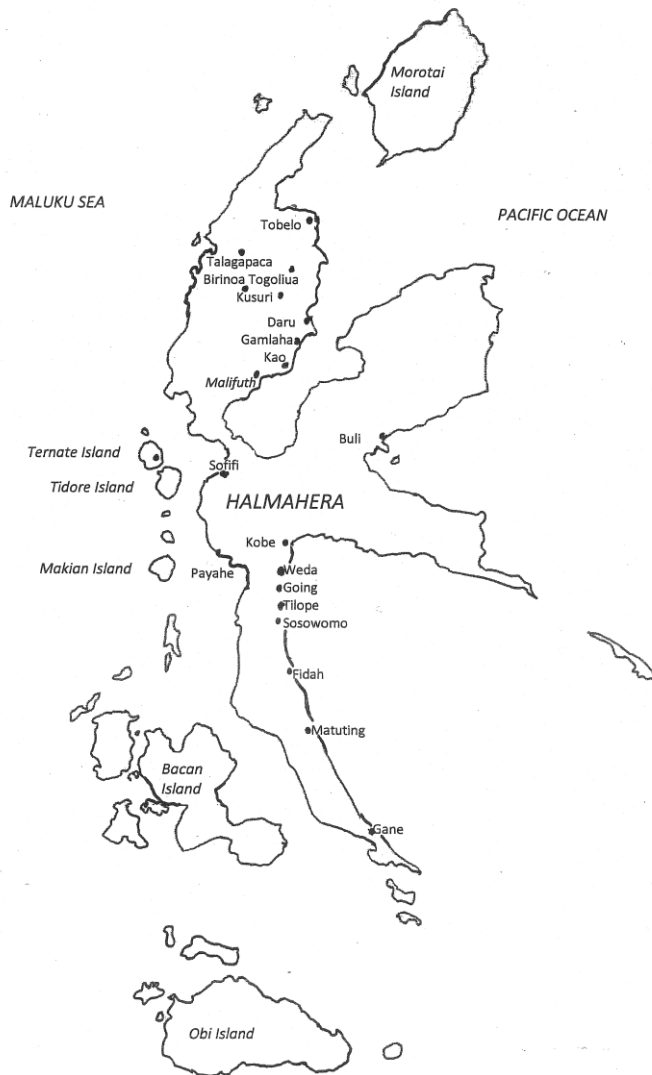
The stories from Afghanistan show the differentiated nature of local knowledge through the diversity in risk views and ideas within villages about the same risk events. The diverse risk views are embedded in specific social, cultural and institutional settings. People's livelihood options and decisions are further determined by geographical and environmental factors, and by the effects of conflict and displacement. The knowledge people apply is neither local, commonly owned nor solely religious or cultural in nature. The peace *shuras* are a good example of how different bodies of knowledge – sharia, customary law, western reconciliation ideas - are blended, and how norms about justice and gender are changing. The cases from Sar-e-Qul and Nahreen illustrate that local knowledge can also have its limitations, resulting in out-migration in search of new opportunities.

5.2.4 Halmahera, Indonesia: How people talk about the communal violence and its consequences

There are numerous accounts of the violence in Maluku, especially about the events in Ambon (Klinken, 2007; Azca, 2006; Panggabean, 2004; Lingsma, 2008), whereas the conflict in Halmahera, North Maluku, received far less attention (Duncan, 2005a; Adeny-Risakotta, 2005). Violence in Halmahera happened from August 1999 through June 2000, resulting in 220,000 people displaced and almost 2,800 dead (Klinken, 2007b). I found competing versions, explanations and numerous causes for the violence among local people's accounts. There is no doubt about the subjective nature of all the stories documented, but it are these subjectivities that provide insight into the causes, local people's motives to use violence (or not), the consequences of the conflict, and people's current attitudes (Duncan, 2005a). As explained in chapter 1, I view conflict as a process of how warring parties mobilize and organise their supporters, looking into the agency of violence (Kalyvas, 2003; Richards, 2005; Duncan, 2007). At the local level this allows to ask why certain people are affected by violence in the way they are, and how they make sense of the events. How do local people understand and experience the violence on the ground? In what way did local knowledge play a role in preventing or making violence? The stories were collected in different parts of Halmahera between 2006 and 2010: in the north around Tobelo and Kao (Birinoa, Togoliua, Daru, Gamlaha), in central Halmahera near Sofifi, in the south near Weda (Going, Sosowomo, Tilope) and in the east, near Buli (Geltoni). These are mostly villages selected for the CBDRR-pilot program (see map 5.2).

All people I interviewed had returned to their old village, while a few moved to places allocated to them by the government. No one was staying anymore in a refugee camp or in a temporary shelter. I arranged the stories according to their chronology, to better understand the link between events, people's motives to use violence or not, and the consequences.

Map 5.2 Halmahera and surrounding islands



Story from Malifut-Kao district – fall 1999

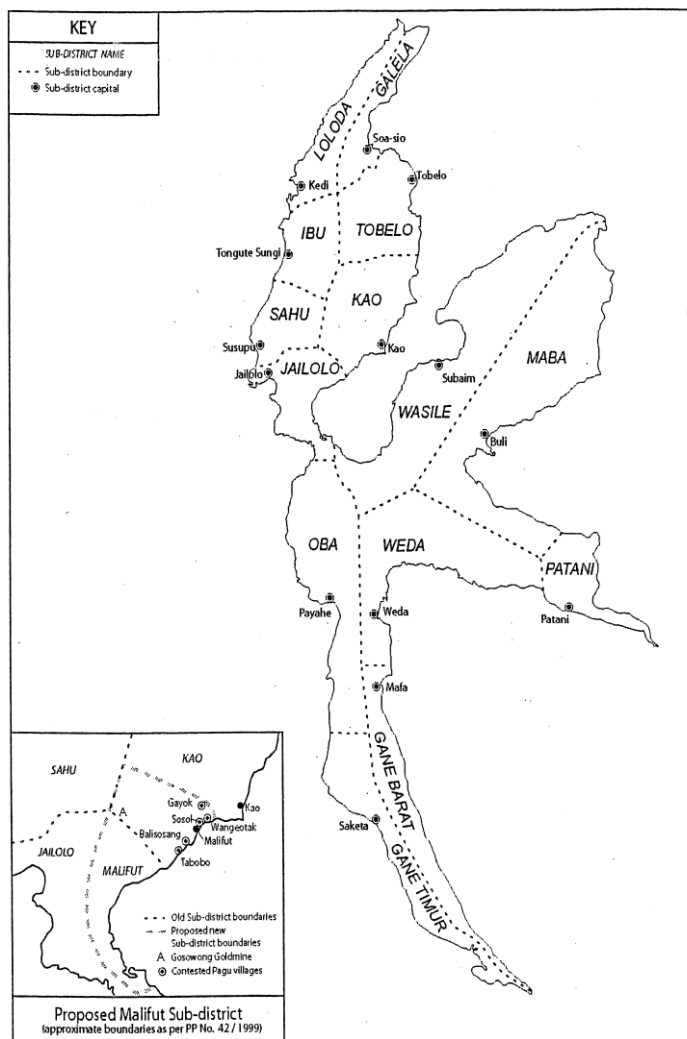
The first person who told his story was a 63-yearsold reverend from Gamlaha, a village close to Kao in Kao district, Northern Halmahera. He belongs to the Tobelo Boeng tribe. He starts his story with a brief history of the village and how protestant missionaries encouraged people in 1897 to build their houses closer to each other and to convert to Christianity. As a reverend of a local protestant church he explains why he mobilized the men in the village to take up arms and to join the conflict.

“The protestant missionaries were made to believe that we are cannibals. To attract local people’s attention, they used a tambour, which is in our culture a way to announce wedding-parties. People would gather and listen to the missionaries. They told us that if we would convert to Christianity we would meet again with our ancestors, parents and friends in heaven. We used to believe that death means a definitive farewell. So we appreciated this new idea, and were eager to be baptized and become Christian. The missionaries brought schools and healthcare, but we still use traditional medicines as well. In our culture and

traditions there are practices and values we still adhere to and that were not part of evangelization. Like Jesus Christ in Christianity, our tradition has O Gihiri Moi as the creator. Whereas Christianity focuses on gratitude to God, our traditions focus on sincerity and honesty. Before we do something, we need to look introspectively if we do it with good or bad intentions. We only should do things with a pure heart. For instance, if we want to cut trees, we need to ask permission to O Gihiri Moi, the creator. It makes people conscious about what they do. It is not allowed to cut trees for self-enrichment. [.....] Although we are Christians, most of us are emotionally still guided by ancestral spirits like "O Roha Mapareta", a spirit offering protection, and by "O Dilikine", a spirit offering strength during fights and who accompanies us. During the conflict, we called on these spirits. In our tradition we do not have enemies. We did not want the conflict. "Do not start the problem" is a local saying. But if we are being threatened or attacked, we shouldn't walk away, or give up. On the 24th of October 1999, a Sunday, I was leading a service in our local church when we heard that Kao has been attacked [by the Makians from Malifuth]. I instructed the men to collect their weapons and to come back in the church. I know this is wrong from the perspective of Christianity, but from the perspective of our tradition it is right. So we all went to Kao to help our brothers to defend themselves". As a spiritual leader I had to join...."

A report of the International Crisis Group (2000) confirms that on Sunday October 24, 1999 violence broke out again between Makian and Kao tribes and they fought for two days. Every Makian house was burned to the ground. As a result, about 17,000 Makian fled to the islands of Ternate and Tidore with a dominant Muslim population. I asked the reverend how he can justify the use of violence with his belief to only do things with a pure heart. He answered that local beliefs have no bad intentions while referring to 'O Dilikine'. Although he admits he had an aversion to join, he is very open in how he mobilized and armed the male villagers which felt as the right thing to do. After six years he still showed no regret. As belonging to the indigenous people of Kao he feels a strong sense of unity based on the *adat* belief that their ancestral lands cannot be divided. He referred to a new law of the Habibie government that was passed in August 1999 (Government Regulation No 42/1999), and that created a new Malifut sub-district for the Makian in the southern part of the Kao-sub-district (see Map 5.3). There are many accounts written about the rivalry and increasing tensions between the two ethnic groups, and how a local ethnic conflict over land and boundaries, combined with longstanding dormant grievances, had been transformed into a province-wide religious one (Klinken, 2007a; Klinken, 2007b; Azca, 2006; Duncan, 2005a; Panggabean, 2004; Adeny-Risakotta, 2005).

Functioning as a reverend in a local protestant church, he had authority in the village, and as such he could use the Sunday church service to mobilize his supporters. While the reverend referred to local beliefs to justify his use of violence, his actions could be – and were later – interpreted by opponents as religious violence. The reverend's partisan role in the conflict and the remarks of my translator made me alert to be critical about the role of the Evangelical Messiah Church of Halmahera (Gereja Masehi Injil Halmahera, GMIH) in the CBDRR pilot. The GMIH is the immediate



Map 5.3 1999 Sub-district boundaries on the island of Halmahera (approximately)

successor of the Dutch protestant mission church *and* the local partner of Kerkinactie and ICCO in Halmahera for channelling emergency relief and development aid. Its allegedly partial role in the communal violence caused a problematic relationship between the Dutch Protestant aid agencies and the GMIH when Kerkinactie wanted to support displaced families in 2000. The GMIH is the dominant Christian church in northern Maluku around Tobelo, which became the next arena of conflict after Kao-Malifut.

Stories from Tobelo – Rumours about “Bloody Christmas” and “Bloody Ramadan”

In the whole of Halmahera, 85% of the population is Muslim and 15% is Christian. This Christian minority lives particularly in Tobelo sub-district, where they are the majority. They live throughout the sub-district while Muslim communities were more concentrated like in Tobelo town, and in the village of Togoliua. Many Christian IDPs from other parts of Halmahera sought refuge in Tobelo, and they brought with them stories of Muslim atrocities - real or imagined - which had a significant impact on the conflict (Duncan, 2005a). The stories or rumours were believed by their hosts, and are still believed, and often cited to justify the violence around Tobelo. Most stories were about the brutal killing of children in Payahe by Muslims (Duncan, 2007). There

were further rumours about a “Bloody Christmas” and a “Bloody Ramadan”, “*If we do not kill them, they will kill us*” and both sides were preparing for the violence. The GMIH was accused by the Muslims to gather Christians IDPs in Tobelo to strengthen their forces for a planned attack. The Christian community spread slogans like “*Muslims are our brothers, but all ethnic Makian, Tidore and Kayao should leave Tobelo*” until the government has restored peace and order. The fighting started in the night of December 26, 1999. Christians claim that the Muslims started throwing stones to their homes in Gosomo, a neighbourhood in Tobelo town, while the Muslims claim the opposite. The situation quickly spiralled out of control since both sides interpreted the stoning as a start of the attack. Both sides mobilized their forces from within and beyond Tobelo. On December 28 the Christians controlled Tobelo while the Muslims fled to their mosques, where they were rescued by the army who moved them to a military camp for protection. Then violence broke out between Muslims and Christians in villages north and south of Tobelo.

The stories I include here are from two neighbouring villages: Togoliua and Birinoa. The GMIH selected these villages for the CBDRR pilot with the intention to reduce the tensions. It has a long-standing relationship with the people in Birinoa which is dominantly Christian, and because Birinoa still experiences tensions with the people from Togoliua who are all Muslim¹³. The GMIH and SANRO used the CBDRR-pilot as an opportunity to play a mediating role between the two villages to reduce tensions. The stories showed how the communal violence got its religious outlook as projected in the media and that was later picked-up by aid agencies abroad, whereas the way local people talk about and justify the use of violence refers rather to land disputes using the notion of ‘*adat*’. The practice, values and politics around *adat* and land rights are the recurrent themes in the stories from the north to the south of Halmahera which were largely ignored by the aid agencies that entered Halmahera after the violence. Therefore, local people do not feel taken seriously by outsiders.

Stories from Togoliua

Togoliua is a Muslim village. It is located less than one hour drive along the road between Tobelo and Kusuri, a town northwest of Kao. The attack on Togoliua is one of the most violent ones in Halmahera (Klinken, 2007). Duncan (2007) recorded a story from a woman from Togoliua when she stayed in a refugee camp in Ternate:

“When they [the Christians] invaded there were too many people so we fled to the mosque. When we got to the mosque they started knocking in the mosque windows and they were able to get into the mosque and started hacking at people. I was cut but did not see it because I was under people. Those who were still alive were hacked at again.....Many women were killed in the mosque.....from bombs, from being chopped up.”

Even nine years after the violence, the village head felt the need to reconstruct the village’s history and the violent events in December 1999 without me directly asking

¹³ Both villages are covered by the fieldwork of Charlotte van der Tak (2008).

him to do so. Tensions with the neighbouring villages, dominantly Christian, still existed. From time to time there were violent incidents deep in the forest, or women and children sought refuge as a result of rumours they picked up along the highway. The village head related these incidents to the past violence and to how Togoliua started as a settlement. Through telling his version of the history of Togoliua he seemed to legitimize his right to live here. The village head started his story in 1973 and it circled around land issues:

“83 families received land from the government as part of a transmigration program. We originally come from Tolonulo [a small island northeast from Tobelo]. The settlement of these 83 families is documented by the land registration office in Ternate and we received an official land certificate which was kept in the village archive. The total land is about 4000 ha. Unfortunately, the certificate got lost during the violence when my house burned down. [.....]All families in Togoliua fled, leaving their land behind, uncultivated. We have this unwritten rule: when you have to abandon your land in such situation, others are not allowed to occupy it or to cut large trees. [.....] In 1973, there were very few houses in this area [Birinoa and Tagalapaca]. These were not yet villages. We divided the land among us: each family got about 25 hectares. Over time newcomers received lesser land as a result of influx of families: 15, 7, 5, 5 and now 2,5 ha. So now in the village, there are people owning 25 ha, but also those that only possess 2,5 ha. The land size is a decision made by the village council according to adat law, not by the government. Adat law tells that once you cultivate a piece of land, it is yours! We know the borders of our land very well. Intruders are told to leave, but they come back and back. They do not respect our boundaries. We [village officials] have been visiting adjacent villages to discuss our problem we have now for the past two years, but without a durable solution. [Why not? I asked] The sub district government silently allows and supports the ‘illegal’ land occupation here in Togoliua by the village head and council members from Paca who cultivate a 2 km long strip of land. I see the following solution: Paca could get a 1 km strip of land instead of 2 km, and then the problem is solved. But if nothing happens, we all fear renewed violence.

Without going into detail about what happened in Togoliua during the conflict he focused his story on land disputes. These land disputes are related to their transmigration, the loss of land certificates and to their temporary absence from their village after the conflict. The village head, and the other village officials have a specific understanding about how *adat* should be applied in their circumstances which seems to differ from how others [the native population] view *adat*. Later in this chapter I elaborate on this when I will make sense of the conflicting stories. An interesting fact in the village head’s story is that Paca does not immediately border Togoliua, and this land issue is not related to the changes in administrative borders. It is further remarkable that he is silent about the tense relations with the people from Birinoa which directly borders Togoliua. From the oral histories of various people in Birinoa I learned that village officials from Togoliua have ‘granted’ a piece of 100 ha of forest land, within the Birinoa territory, to the military in return for protection the Togoliuans received to escape the violence. Especially the native Birinoans

are furious about this, since from time to time they are chased away by military men from the ancestral land they used to live in. Native people in Birinoa accuse people from Togoliua of intruding their land. Disputes about land and varying interpretations of *adat* seem to be a plausible explanation for why several violent incidents still happen exactly deep in the forests between Togoliua and Birinoa.

The current village head and some other officials in Togoliua portray themselves as victims, both during and after the conflict. *“People from outside came to Togoliua and provoked us”* while several others share they have no hard feelings: *“what happened, has happened, and we should leave it behind”*. The latter either have Christian relatives in nearby villages, who came to Togoliua to rescue them, *and* to fight the others¹⁴, i.e. Muslim non-relatives. Or they depend on Christians to earn a livelihood (Tak, 2008). Christians from adjacent villages claim, however, that the Muslims in Togoliua had blocked the road with felled coconut palms and had sent taunts to neighbouring Christian villages to provoke violence, stories I heard in Birinoa and read in literature (Duncan, 2005a). A 65-year old *kepala adat* in Kusuri shared:

“People from Kusuri went to Togoliua to fight. I also went, but only because my children went and I wanted to protect, to stop them. It was very difficult what one should do, a dilemma, because you did not know whom to trust, and in some cases [Kusuri people] killed relatives. People from Kusuri did not want to fight, but people from Kao went to Togoliua, and we had to help them.”

It is clear that competing versions still exist and that the oral histories are biased. In order to understand the violence and the complexity of the land issue, it is necessary to hear the stories from other actors involved in the violence and subsequent land disputes like the stories from Birinoa.

Stories from Birinoa

Till the 1990s the area of Birinoa, belonging to the village of Kusuri¹⁵, was mainly forest inhabited by shifting native tribes who depended on these forests for their survival. During the 1980s the native inhabitants allowed newcomers from other places in Halmahera to use 2 ha of forest garden per family. In 1988 a protestant missionary and staff of World Vision encouraged the native population to settle down in a village, to adopt western style of clothing, and new techniques to grow crops as part of its Area Development Programme. Then the native population converted to Christianity. Currently 35 native households settled in Birinoa living together with about 17 families coming from other places in Halmahera. Persuading forest people to live in villages was part of government’s policy that officially aims to raise the level of ‘civilization’ and social welfare of these groups who are ‘socio-culturally isolated’ and ‘backward’, while it serves the strategic purpose to open the forests for logging, mining and plantations (Duncan, 2002). Before the conflict Birinoa used to be a mixed village of forest people, Christians and Muslims, all belonging to the indigenous tribes of Halmahera.

¹⁴ Based on interview with village policeman in Kusuri, an adjacent village with dominantly Christians (Tak, 2008).

¹⁵ In 1993 Birinoa became part of the village of Tobe till it got the status of village itself in 2006.

People in Birinoa followed the news about the violence through the radio, neighbours and relatives. People in Birinoa got scared, and both Christians and Muslims decided to leave the village to seek protection elsewhere, using their social networks. While the village was abandoned, both Christian and Muslims mobs came to Birinoa to look for and attack the other religion, and burned all houses down. The Christians, while in Kusuri, met with refugees from north of Tobelo, who wanted to return to their homes, but were blocked by the people from Togoliua. These were holding machetes, and threatening to attack them if they would pass. To support the refugees to return home to Tobelo, Christians from neighbouring villages, including Birinoans, assembled and decided to attack Togoliua with the argument to re-open the road as they felt as if their religion was attacked¹⁶.

“The Togoliuans started the conflict, so they may start it again”, has become a dominant narrative in Birinoa to cover up their fear for revenge. It is also a way to portray themselves as ‘vulnerable’ towards outsiders in the hope to be eligible for external (international) support, especially to solve the land disputes. The Birinoans are frustrated that Togolians encroach their forest gardens belonging to Birinoa, and that the Togolians ‘granted’ a piece of 100 ha of forest land to the military. Underneath the dominant *us-them* narrative, I found a variety of local narratives about everyday Muslim-Christian interactions, narratives that are positive and optimistic about *the other*, aside from a few narratives that show a kind of indifference.

All Christians returned to Birinoa in 2001. A while later, the Muslim families returned. The Christians claimed that the Muslim brought relatives and friends with them, and the Christians did not want these ‘strange’ Muslims in their village, leaving them with no choice than to leave. Some Muslims converted to Christianity to be able to stay in Birinoa, while the majority went to Ternate, Tidore and Makian. The village leaders in Birinoa made a pact to not allow new families to settle in Birinoa for the next five years, neither Christians nor Muslims. However, from various respondents I learned that since then new families did settle, but Christians only. The village officials, dominated by the village secretary, maintain an *us-them* divide in public.

When at the start of the CBDRR-pilot a risk assessment was conducted, the land disputes turned out to be more complex: officially, *adat* land cannot be sold, but individual people in Birinoa did sell land to Togoliuan families for personal gains. The local *adat* narrative in Birinoa is not consistent with its practice. This caused a lot of tensions, not just between the two villages but also within Birinoa. The stories reveal that people, in the absence of clear government laws or institutional arrangements regarding land, define their own rules to perform power over the other to access land.

5.2.3 Making sense of competing local narratives in northern Halmahera

The more stories I heard I realized that it is quite impossible to make a distinction between victims and perpetrators. The dominant narrative I heard is that *“Christians and Muslims can live together”*, *“We do not know who organised, mobilized the vio-*

¹⁶ One of those leading the attack was the village secretary of Birinoa at the time of this research.

lence, how it started”, “What has happened, happened. We must leave it behind”. The conflict in Northern Maluku was fought at different levels by various groups by a complex mix of motives (Klinken, 2007a). Most of the motives remained invisible to local people, and many told that they shouldn’t be involved, that they did not want to be involved. Publicly talking about the violence and what really happened has become a taboo in Northern Maluku (Klinken, 2007a: 122). This dominant local narrative, however, contradicts to story-traces of on-going tensions, fear, trauma, silences due to unsolved land disputes. The most heard complaint is that “Government is not taking us seriously”. Government in Halmahera promoted reconciliation through *adat* ceremonies, and focused on achieving security targets, while promoting a ‘culture of forgetting’. This attitude reinforces local people’s feeling that they do not matter as people. They want to be treated with more respect and dignity.

The conflict happened in a time with great uncertainty about rules and laws, when the government of Indonesia was weak, which created opportunities for conflict entrepreneurs (Klinken, 2007). Although *adat* law was officially replaced by a nationwide bureaucratic regional and village administration in the mid-1970s, it was still practiced in remote areas inhabited by indigenous groups. Particularly these areas were prime targets for state transmigration programs which were essentially a continuation of the colonial ‘civilizing mission’ (Henley and Davidson, 2008). The beneficiaries of the transmigration program in Togoliua are Muslims from Northern Maluku, not from Java or Sulawesi, and the rivalry therefore seems to be about who is most indigenous, or who seems most eligible to get government’s support for their claims. In 1999, the Habibie government passed laws that led to a revival of local *adat* in village governance. The Birinoans now use *adat* to oppose the claims of the Togoliuans that go – in their perception - beyond the original transmigration agreements, and they use *adat* as an instrument to redress past injustices. The Togoliuans on their turn, argue that the Birinoans apply *adat* too strictly and they feel neglected by local government to provide clarity.

People in the villages look first of all to the sub-district, district and provincial government to solve land disputes, but till now without satisfactory outcomes. Villagers expect that borders will be clarified and officially registered at the Land Registration Department. They hope to get documents. The priority of the local government, however, is to provide security by establishing military security posts near violence-prone villages, and to mitigate the tensions through organizing dialogues and reconciliation. It uses traditional values from *adat*, like *Balai Besar*, literally meaning ‘Big House’ referring to a shared history and ancestors, with accompanied traditions to reach consensus and to lower tensions. These values are exclusive rather than harmonizing traditions, since newcomers and immigrants are not fully recognized in the referred shared history. With these measures, the government does not tackle land disputes. Why not?

Creating a culture of peace and harmony is safer than touching on political matters like land governance and competing claims. The process of decentralization and re-defining administrative boundaries of sub-districts and villages is still on-going. Decentralization means an increasing control of local governments over revenues

from natural resource extraction. The transfer of authority and control over revenues increased the prestige and profitability of local politics (Duncan, 2005a: 59). Local politicians are competing over these positions and may use local disputes to mobilize supporters in their campaigns during elections. They enter villages to provoke and to convince people of their utter reliance on them. Local politicians expect to win votes, while reinforcing existing divisions among people (Tak, 2008). Appreciating *adat* as local knowledge for a political struggle requires critical reflection about who uses it for what purpose, and who will be excluded. The purpose could be to simply document and record land rights to do justice to local indigenous people's rights, but *adat* could also be used to promote ethnic conflict like the stories from Halmahera have shown.

It should be noted here that *adat* and *Balai Besar* are notions promoted by Christian institutions in Maluku as well, including the GMIH, and supported by Kerkinactie. The question is how aid workers in Halmahera, supported by the GMIH and Kerkinactie take a position in such a conflictive context, given the partial past of these church institutions. In the next chapter the positioning of aid workers in communities will be a central theme.

5.2.5 Stories Central Java – making sense of ‘new risks’

The village of Tempur is situated inside the caldera of Muria Mountain, in the northern part of Central Java in Jepara district¹⁷. In 1990 Tempur became accessible by road for motorbikes, and since 1995 for cars. Lowland communities constructed the narrative that the severe floods in 2005 and 2006 in the lowlands surrounding Muria Mountain started in Tempur and its surroundings, after several hours of heavy rain. Tempur itself, consisting of six sub-villages on the slopes of the caldera, was hit by a flash flood for the first time in history. Due to damages to the road and several bridges, the village was isolated from the outside world for about 10 days. The water level in the river rose seven meters, damaging houses and more than 100 ha of rice fields either completely destroyed or being filled with big stones and rocks. A total of 750 households in Tempur were affected by the flash flood.



Figure 5.3: Tempur, located in the caldera of Muria Mountain, hit by a flash flood in 2006

The oral history of Tempur goes back to 1900 when people lived in the forests through hunting and gathering, and considered the forest and particularly the top of Muria Mountain as a holy place. From the 1930s people started to construct more permanent housing using bamboo and leaves plastered with manure. They stole

¹⁷ Based on MSC thesis of Marian Meulenkamp and own field work

coffee plants from *Tolont*, a Dutch coffee plantation nearby, and currently coffee is their main source of livelihood which grows in their forest gardens. People developed their own traditional tenurial system to use and maintain the forest according to their socio-cultural lives. During the Dutch colonial time these traditional tenurial systems were overridden by new rules. The Dutch declared all forest to be owned by the state, which could be made suitable for commercial interest and establishing plantations (McCarthy, 2000). Although the Dutch never entered Tempur, and people considered their forests as inherited from their ancestors, their forests were officially put under state control. Later, Suharto's administration created the Basic Forestry Provisions (No. 5/1967) to divide several forest areas into specific land use categories, like timber production, conservation area, and community forests (ibid: 94). This categorization was done on paper, marking out the acceptable boundaries for different forest land uses without taking into account local communities, or notions of local territoriality (ibid). In Tempur, the boundaries between community forest and state forests are not very clear, but local people say they recognize the boundaries from the different tree species. The most degraded areas are in the state forests – categorized as conservation area - due to logging activities which became rampant since the Asian financial crisis in 1997 and Suharto's fall in 1998. Whether these logging activities are legal or illegal remains ambiguous depending on whom you ask. In Tempur, stories link environmental degradation to a system where elite networks captured 'formal' logging permission over state forests, even in conservation areas, which is possible in the absence of state authorities that control resource use. This sudden increase in logging activities and environmental degradation, in combination with extreme rainfall, is believed to be the cause of the first flash flood in Tempur in 2006.

The occurrence of the flash flood caused people to make sense of the event, why did it happen, and how to deal with this new risk. In Tempur, people's risk perceptions are closely related to cultural and religious interpretations of risk and insecurities. The majority of the people in Tempur are Muslim while a few households are Christian, although many elements from Animism, Buddhism and Hinduism can still be found in their religious practices (Meulenkamp, 2009). People's risk perceptions are shaped through a mix of religious and traditional beliefs. The villagers attribute 'accidents' like the flash floods to their Karma, "*you will get what you deserve*", "*It is an action of God*", although they know that the flood of 2006 was a man-made disaster, and that they can influence its impact. This is not necessarily a contradiction, because people believe they can positively influence their Karma. In order to reduce risk people believe they should live a good life, taking care of others and of their environment. 'Accidents' refer to harvest failure, forest fire or landslides which do not harm the whole community. People view an 'accident' as a warning signal for a larger impact disaster, a test from god.

Reflecting on the village's recent 'accidents', people interpret the fire in the state forest in 2003 as such an 'accident'. This fire was a warning for the flash flood in 2006. However, people ignored this warning "*do not steal from the forest*", and therefore the flash flood was a punishment from God, because people failed to manage the forest properly and to use the forest resources in a sustainable way.

Whereas many people in Tempur think that actual and potential loss associated with disasters is in the hands of divine forces, their religious and cultural beliefs are instrumental in enabling them to mobilize and organise villagers to better protect their environment and to restore the degraded portions in the forest.

This does not mean that they completely blame themselves for the degradation of the environment; they know very well that the main actors in the illegal logging on the steep slopes in the conservation area are outsiders, backed by powerful elite. In 2007, one year after the flash flood, the village authorities decided to better manage the forests in cooperation with the villagers. Particularly *Karang Taruna*, the youth group, is an active actor in monitoring illegal logging practices and in getting the loggers prosecuted. Initially there was however difference in views between the *Karang Taruna* and the older people in the community on how to protect the environment. The older people were concerned with their short-term seasonal economic needs, while the youngsters were concerned with restoring the forest without considerations for seasonal economic needs. The differing views relate to their different experiences and bodies of knowledge: the youngsters are mostly involved in trading and livelihoods outside the village, while older people have been working in the forest gardens since their youth, and know how to combine the maintenance of the forest with seasonal cropping like coffee, vanilla, spices and vegetables. Through the CBDRR pilot, the NGO field staff acted as a facilitator to bring both views together and to maximize the knowledge of both age-groups for formulating an environment protection and land use plan.

In 2007, the villagers in Tempur received the news about the government's plan to build a nuclear plant in Jepara district, and that the national government intends to store nuclear waste in the caldera of the Muria Mountain. The district government of Jepara and the local governments are against this nuclear plant, but the national government insists that it needs this form of energy. Until now rumours are still rumours, but the villagers of Tempur believe that God will punish the government in case they are forced to leave Tempur. Tempur is their cultural heritage, a holy place which they will never leave out of free will. In case the nuclear plant becomes reality, they will resist the plans and organise demonstrations. Their cultural and religious beliefs are a source of mobilizing effective agency to oppose outside interventions that threaten Tempur's environment.

5.3 Overall insights and conclusions about what is local knowledge

The stories demonstrate that people affected by disasters and conflict survive because they do not operate as individuals, but actively use their social networks, past experiences and local knowledge. The stories also show how people expand their social networks towards areas of displacement, adapt or change traditions by integrating new values and beliefs like peace *shuras* do in Afghanistan, or why Muslims in Maluku convert to Christianity in the hope to stay alive, and why women in Afghanistan break through the prevailing gender taboos to earn some money. They survive not because of professional aid or risk reduction programs (Christoplos, 2004). I argued that local knowledge shouldn't be romanticized. It has its limitations,

it can be dangerous, and is partial as the conflicting stories about *adat* in Halmahera show. Uncritically recognizing and using local knowledge in CBDRR approaches is therefore problematic and tends to obscure the wider institutional setting and gender norms in which local knowledge is produced and where CBDRR interventions are put in practice. Table 5.1 provides an overview of the main analytical points and insights on local knowledge from the various stories and localities.

Table 5.1: insights on local knowledge

Afghanistan	Analytical points	Insights on local knowledge
Nahreen, Baghlan province	Dual risk perception of men towards floods: destructive but crucial for livelihoods. Women stretch gender norms to reduce risk of food shortage.	Local knowledge has its limitations. Local knowledge is not so local. People are able to acquire, incorporate new knowledge relevant to survive.
Khulm, Balkh province	People's risk constructs go beyond the village level. Differing gender perspectives on risk. Breaking through gender taboos despite conservative gender norms	Local risk perspectives differ and are embedded in social positions. Local knowledge has institutional dimensions which are changeable.
Ghulistan, Bamyan province	People rely on innate social networks and resources to cope with adversities, like <i>ashar</i> , and social protection.	Local knowledge is embedded in institutional context and power relations, determining vulnerability outcomes for households. Vulnerability has institutional dimension as well.
Sar-e-Qul, Bamyan province	Seasonal disasters result in local conflict, unattended by divided <i>shura</i> , causing out-migration of poorest population.	
Kunduz and Herat peace <i>shuras</i>	Peace <i>shuras</i> blend local knowledge, customary law with <i>sharia</i> law and mediation based on imported western values, to solve urgent disputes, and are a credible alternative to formal judiciary system.	Local institutions produce new knowledge-systems to respond to people's urgent needs in a context of recurrent disasters and conflict.

Indonesia	Analytical points	Insights on local knowledge
Gamlaha, Kao sub-district, Halmahera	Local beliefs in ancestral spirits are used to justify violence	Local knowledge can be dangerous and partial.
Togoliua, Tobelo sub-district, Halmahera	<i>Adat</i> serves to justify violence, to defend people's land rights, to oppose trans-migration policy, or for reconciliation purposes and promoting harmony.	Local knowledge to oppose national policies Local knowledge is conflictive Local knowledge to escape 'politics'.
Birinoa, Tobelo sub-district, Halmahera		
Tempur, Jepara district, Central Java	Local religious and cultural beliefs used to explain new risk and to mobilize villagers to protect environment and oppose outside threatening interventions	Local knowledge as a source for political economic empowerment; instrumental to mobilize effective agency

What is local knowledge in the context of CBDRR policy and practice?

This chapter revealed that local knowledge is not just 'out there' or collectively owned, but differentiated and partial. And this raises the question about CBDRR processes of 'participation', *which* actors to involve, and consequently what does 'community-based' mean? As a concept in itself, local knowledge does not reveal this differential character, nor the varying ways people understand *adat*, the history of land distribution in their village, or the consequences of floods. Knowledge is constructed and embedded in a social, cultural and institutional context. Knowledge consists of ways in which people categorize, code, process and impute meaning to their experiences (Arce and Long, 1992), and since knowledge is fragmentary and partial, I conclude that local knowledge as a barrel of community information which can be tapped, does not exist. Instead different bodies of knowledge exist, and these "do not only have social meaning, but they also have a practical and instrumental

content” (Jansen, 1998; 193). The various cases show that local knowledge, and its related social meaning and instrumental content, are applied in both positive and negative manners, supporting people’s urgent felt needs, or excluding specific actors.

The different bodies of local knowledge are not so local, but often a blend of different sources of knowledge and experiences that people gain both locally and outside their village. People’s beliefs, new ideas and results of their sense-making processes are incorporated as well. This makes local knowledge dynamic, and enables people to adapt to an ever changing environment and to deal with uncertainty and crisis. It can motivate people to influence and change prevailing social norms or gender stereotypes like young Afghan women who returned from Iran or Pakistan.

The differentiated nature of local knowledge becomes clear in people’s narratives from Afghanistan and Indonesia showing the diversity in risk views and ideas about the same risk events, which people express through their varying risk perceptions, and which result in different risk practice and responses. In Khulm “*floods are destructive*” for upstream villagers who invest efforts in flood protection, sandbagging, enforcement of irrigation canals, and in lobbying for flood protection measures at the side of the canal intake. Whereas “*floods are a blessing*” for downstream farmers to access irrigation water during spring. It is in their interest to maintain good relations with the upstream villagers since they depend on them for drinking and irrigation water. This case shows best how risk perceptions are embedded in people’s social positions, and how people’s options are related to local institutional settings. Local knowledge has institutional dimensions which are changeable.

The cases from Halmahera reveal the conflictive nature of local knowledge. Different actors have their own specific interpretation of *adat*, which they use to legitimize their actions like for using violence (the reverend in Gamlaha), or for reconciliation purposes (provincial government and the GMIH), to defend their ancestral lands against transmigration (Birinoa) or to defend land rights (Togoliua). Local knowledge has institutional dimensions which are embedded in power relations that produce, reproduce or reduce people’s vulnerability to conflict or disasters. While the Birinoans use *adat* for political reasons to defend their land, the government uses *adat* to escape politics. Since the government is in a better position to articulate its meaning of *adat*, land disputes will not be solved easily, reproducing people’s vulnerability to conflict after the violence in 1999-2000. Because local knowledge is differentiated, conflictive and partial, it cannot be uncritically utilized in CBDRR practice.

People’s stories from Ghulistan and Sar-e-Qul reveal the institutional dimensionality of local knowledge. The difference in ability to deal with adversity in both villages, despite the similarity in environmental conditions, can be attributed to varying local institutional arrangements. I refer here to the functioning of *shuras*, ability to settle disputes, access to resources, *ashar*, and social protection. These local institutional settings largely determine how vulnerability to disasters and conflict plays out locally. ‘Vulnerability’ as a concept or analytical tool, has an institutional dimension as well. In both villages people use their innate social networks to deal with adversity, they

establish links to be represented in *shuras* to influence decision-making on community affairs, but their safety and protection are regulated through institutions, the 'rules of the game'. In Sar-e-Qul, avalanches and floods manifest particularly people's institutional vulnerability due to dysfunction and divided village authorities.

In Tempur, as in many other villages on Muria Mountain, people's religious and cultural beliefs are not necessarily naive, conservative or passive, but function as a source of political-economic empowerment of local people to protect their 'holy' environment against threats from outside.

The question posed at the beginning of this chapter about *whose* perceptions should be recognized, is a complex one, and I conclude that as much as possible all perceptions and views should be recognized. The issue here is whether and how the various actors can articulate their view to those with more power or authority, and if their views are acknowledged or not. Outsiders like researchers and aid practitioners, should be conscious about whose voices are heard, whose knowledge counts, and whose ideas are suppressed. When outsiders, like CBDRR practitioners, say they aim to recognize local knowledge in their interventions locally, they should be aware and acknowledge the differentiated nature of local knowledge, the diversity in risk constructs and the local institutional arrangements that influence them. How this raises problems and dilemmas in practice is subject of next chapter.

The stories of local people further reveal that their views on risk go beyond the emergency paradigm of disasters and conflict like applied by aid agencies. Both in Afghanistan and Indonesia conflict and disasters are part of daily realities that people must address. Conflict is not just external, but closely related to people's access to land and water to sustain their livelihoods threatened by seasonal disasters. Disasters like floods, avalanches, and sandstorms, can trigger conflict and violence when institutions to handle disputes – formal and informal, local and national - are absent or not functioning well. Local people then actively make choices that correspond with their motives, interests and the options they have to shape their livelihoods, and so occasionally violence erupts. Whereas governments and aid agencies label Afghanistan and Maluku as post-conflict contexts, local people define their post-conflict and displacement reality as more risky, or as the 'normality of crisis'. As a consequence, the responses of aid agencies may not match people's real concerns that deal with land rights for instance in Halmahera.

In the context of recurrent disasters and conflict, local risk narratives are primarily about 'dignity', 'respecting people's rights, recognition of people's capacities', 'survival', 'breaking through accepted norms', searching for justice. Not about their vulnerability, or that people rely on outside aid. Even if the formal institutional context is unclear or weak, people create new rules, re-order power relations and try to change the local institutional arrangements so that these benefit them while excluding others. People are not passive, nor powerless.

CBDRR's current definitions re-examined

The empirical data gathered and analysed in this chapter, provide insights to re-examine the current definitions of 'local knowledge' and 'vulnerability':

Local knowledge: Ideas, beliefs, and practices of 'social actors' that are embedded in their social, political and institutional position in society, and therefore local knowledge is differentiated, partial and at times conflictive. Social actors use local knowledge to legitimate their actions, and to oppose or change institutions to reduce risk for disasters and conflict.

Vulnerability: the concept of vulnerability is problematic when viewing disaster and conflict realities from the perspective of local people. However, as I argued in Chapter 3, the notion of 'vulnerability' remains an important analytical tool to understand local processes of how people deal with disaster and conflict events, and how they explain and make sense of these events. Aside of a social and political dimension, 'vulnerability' has an *institutional* dimension. In CBDRR literature and policy documents, aid agencies seek to support the most vulnerable groups in a community, and focus on household level rather than on local institutions and their dynamics. Households or individual people are often categorized as farmers, women, landless, elderly, disabled and so on, without much analysis about institutional relations between the various groups – both vulnerable and non-vulnerable groups.

The next chapter zooms into the CBDRR practice of several local aid agencies in Afghanistan and Indonesia, how they select, enter and search for the most vulnerable households. It deals with the difficulties and dilemmas community organisers and field staff face, and what it means to recognize power dynamics and diverse risk perceptions.

6. The politics of selecting, entering and organising the community

“Relationship building is a way of looking at the world—not just a strategy”
Putnam, 2003: 18

INGOs like CARE, IFRC, Tearfund and Cordaid developed their own organisation’s CBDRR-handbooks to explain the CBDRR process by means of a step-by-step model indicating where to start and where to go following a particular trajectory. Central in these steps are the notions of ‘participation’ and ‘strengthening people’s existing capacities’, which are promoted as the key elements of CBDRR-approaches to achieve resilient communities. Appropriately involving community people, capitalizing on local knowledge and existing structures, is believed to contribute to effective and sustainable risk reduction measures and to processes of empowerment. In this light, NGOs develop community organising and mobilization models to apply these principles in practice and to guide their CBDRR interventions. Funding agencies and (I)NGOs choose words like ‘participation’, ‘local ownership’ and ‘empowerment’ to express the transformative aspect of CBDRR in policy documents and proposals. Given the large amount of published success stories and ‘best practices’ by aid agencies, it is not yet fully acknowledged that CBDRR interventions face many operational challenges. Most of these ‘best practices’ are superficial descriptions of short-term projects or public relations exercises, focusing on the strengths of the CBDRR approach and little on its limitations (Twigg, 2005).

In an actor-oriented approach, interventions are viewed as ‘on-going, socially constructed and negotiated processes that take place in arenas of struggle where actors from different life-worlds with different worldviews meet (Long and van der Ploeg, 1989). Therefore I want to open the ‘black box’ of how NGOs make their CBDRR policy operational, and to go beyond simply measuring CBDRR performance against some set of formulated objectives. I focus on the everyday practices of how NGOs select communities, how NGO field staff enter villages, with whom they engage, how they mobilize and organise local people for CBDRR efforts and for what purpose. Local NGO field staff play – in my view - a prominent role in CBDRR interventions: they are the front-line workers tasked to translate policy into practice through their interaction with villagers, and who deal with local power dynamics and politics - issues that are neglected in ‘best practices’ cases as these are often divisive and obstructive.

Not only NGOs, also villagers have their motives, projects and understandings that may interfere with the NGO-desired organising process (Hilhorst, 2003: 103). My experience in the Philippines taught me that ‘local knowledge’, and ‘strengthening people’s existing capacities’ are subject to various interpretations, values and agendas. Therefore, CBDRR-interventions cannot be isolated from *the on-going relations that evolve between the various social actors including [...] the manifold ways in*

which local actors (both on- and off stage) interact with the implementing officials and organisations” (Long, 2003: 50). Planned CBDRR-interventions should therefore be viewed *as a complex set of historically unfolding social encounters and battles over resources and meaning in which spatial and temporal dimensions play a role”* (ibid: 51). Findings show how space- and time-bound interventions clash with local realities, causing debate and tensions among the different actors who are – directly and indirectly – involved in the intervention. Therefore, this chapter further revisits the notions of ‘community’, ‘community-based’, ‘participation’ and ‘empowerment’, terms commonly used in CBDRR interventions.

The previous chapter analysed the non-project nature of people’s lives, how people deal with disaster risks and conflict, how they are engaged in various social interactions, and how they solve and cope with their problems, irrespective of outside aid interventions. This chapter aims to explore and understand the dynamics and interactions between the local populations and NGO field staff. It looks behind the ideal-typical, time- and space-bound, step-by-step models that guide CBDRR processes in the field. I am interested to know what happens in practice when NGO field staff acknowledges that local knowledge and subsequent risk perspectives are differentiated, partial, not community-owned but embedded in social and political power relations (previous chapter). Together with NGO field staff and local people I made sense of their practical knowledge and organising capacities that emerged and developed among them and of their implicit assumptions, dilemmas, and pressures impinging on them while *doing* CBDRR. The chapter reveals the paradoxical nature of CDRRR approaches promoting ‘participation’ and ‘empowerment’ which in practice opens up space for negotiation and initiative for some groups while closing options, ambitions and political agency of others (Long, 2003; Cleaver, 1999). Despite the conscious efforts of the CBDRR pilot projects to reach the most vulnerable groups in a village through creative, flexible and context-specific approaches, the benefits still seem to drift towards elites. This means that the elite forces are strong, and that withstanding these pressures is difficult for Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) and NGOs. Why this happens, is seldom subject of the documentation of CBDRR ‘best practices’ or lessons learned literature. Hence, this chapter.

6.1. Structure of the chapter

The chapter starts with an actor-oriented perspective on the CBDRR step-by-step model to explain how I analysed the nature of relationships and interactions during the stages of community selection, entering a community and community organising (section 6.2). I argue that community selection, organising and strengthening is essentially political: community organising and empowerment are in fact local *contested arenas in which actors’ understandings, interests and values are pitched against each other* (Long, 2003, 47) and where social relations are reworked. The first section ends with the methodology I applied to analyse the *process* of how NGOs put the community organising models in practice, and their interaction with villagers. Through action-reflection cycles (Chapter 2) NGO field staff and villagers, together with the researcher, made sense of their interaction, gained new insights which they then integrated in the on-going practice. The second part of the chapter (section 6.3) narrates about the events, stories, dilemmas and feedback of field staff

and villagers on concrete processes of CBDRR community organising in their respective villages in Afghanistan and Indonesia. These stories were collected during sequential field visits. Each field visit ended with sessions of reflection and sense-making of past actions followed by the identification of future CBDRR action. Although the NGOs in different countries used quite similar step-by-step community organising models, the process followed varied substantially due to varying local contexts in terms of entry-points used, prevailing ideas around participation, gender, authority in the village, and how NGO field staff translated the NGOs' policy and principles regarding 'participation', 'community', and 'vulnerable groups' in practice. These varying practices and conditions impact on the *outcomes* of CBDRR organising processes in terms of whose risk reduction measures are implemented, who resists, and who benefits. The last section brings together the insights of community organising experiences in different contexts and draws conclusions regarding the meaning of 'community', 'community-based', 'participation', and 'empowerment'.

6.2 Concepts and methodology

6.2.1 The CBDRR step-by step model

The INGOs CBDRR-handbooks are basically inspired or partly copied from the CBDRR field practitioners' handbook developed by the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) (2004). As written in Chapter 4, many of the ideas and tools documented in ADPC's handbook originate from the Philippines, including CDRC's experience, since quite some former CDRC staff got positions in the Training and Education Unit of ADPC or were hired as consultants - including myself – and tasked to develop a CBDRR curriculum and course materials. Local NGOs in Indonesia and Afghanistan sent staff to attend ADPC's CBDRR courses, received the handbook via their donors or through this CBDRR pilot. Recognizing ADPC as a prominent training centre on CBDRR throughout Asia, I used its Handbook for Field Practitioners as a reference point for the CBDRR step-by-step model presented in Box 6.1 below.

Box 6.1 Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction Process (Abarquez and Murshed, 2004)

"The CBDRR process has seven sequential steps which can be executed before the occurrence of a disaster or after one has happened to reduce future risks. Each stage grows out of the preceding stage and leads to further action. Together, the sequence can build up a planning and implementation system, which can become a powerful disaster risk management tool" (ibid: 15).

(1) Selecting the community

This is the process of choosing the most vulnerable communities for possible assistance on risk reduction using a set of criteria like the organisation's mandate, cost-benefit-analysis, profiling and the need to be seen, personal interests, ideology (ibid: 16, 22-25)

(2) Rapport building and understanding the community,

"After selection of the community the next step is to build rapport and trust. A relationship of trust, friendship and rapport is key to facilitation of appropriate participation. If community members have trust in the outsiders who are working with them, then open sharing about issues, problems, concerns and solutions can take place. In addition to gaining the trust of local people, rapport building will also lead to a greater understanding of the local culture, another essential component of the CBDRR process" (ibid: 26).

(3) Participatory Disaster Risk Assessment (PDRA)

"This is a diagnostic process to identify the risks that the community faces and how people overcome those risks. The process involves hazard assessment, vulnerability assessment and capacity assessment. In doing the assessments, people's perception of risk is considered" (ibid: 16).

(4) Participatory Disaster Risk Management Planning

“This follows after the analysis of the results of participatory risk assessment. People themselves identify risk reduction measures that will reduce vulnerabilities and enhance capacities” (ibid: 16).

(5) Building and Training a Community Disaster Risk Management Organisation (CBDRRO)

“Disaster risks are better managed by a community organisation that will ensure that risks are reduced through the implementation of the plan. Therefore it is imperative to build a community organisation, if there is none yet or strengthen the current one, if there is any. Training the leaders and members of the organisation to build their capacity is important” (ibid: 16).

(6) Community-Managed Implementation

“The CBDRRO should lead to the implementation of the community plan and motivate the other members of the community to support the activities in the plan” (ibid: 16).

(7) Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

“This is a communication system in which information flows among all the people involved in the project: the community, the implementing staff and the support agency, concerned government agencies and donors” (ibid: 17).

This step-by-step model projects a kind of road map indicating where to start and where to go following a particular trajectory. Although it was based on the Philippine experience, the model got de-contextualized, and divested of its political meaning and practices. CDRN does not implement isolated CBDRR *projects*, but views projects instrumental to contribute to a long term organising process of the most vulnerable sectors into People’s Organisations and alliances, to build a broader mass base (see Table 3.1 in Chapter 3). Hilhorst (2003: 104), who analysed a community organising model in the Philippines, argues that such models may be more important for processes of sense-making within NGOs and for managing relationships, than for steering the community organising process through sequential steps. Her observation is valid for the NGOs in this pilot as well. Only one Afghan NGO showed me at the start of the pilot a reworked step-by-step CBDRR model, completed with indicators to measure progress. After a while, the project manager concluded that the step-by-step model did not match local realities since the steps do not follow a linear process. He and his field staff had to find their own way in dealing with local power dynamics between influential leaders, government officials and villagers. The model was kept in the office as a tool for reflection and sense-making. As researcher, I used the model as a kind of checklist of issues to observe, discuss, and reflect on during the CBDRR process with villagers and NGO field staff. Since the seven steps are assumed to lay the foundation for a resilient community, I refer to these steps as the process of ‘community organising’. This chapter zooms into the first five steps of the model: (1) Selecting the community; (2) Rapport building and understanding the community; (3) Participatory Disaster Risk Assessment (PDRA); (4) Participatory Disaster Risk Management Planning; and (5) Building and Training a Community Disaster Risk Management Organisation¹. I pay explicit attention to ‘entering the community’, an activity that happens before step 2 and highly determines the process of rapport building, but which is omitted in ADPC’s Handbook. Step 6 till 7 of the step-by-step model are dealt with in Chapter 7, although it is impossible – as this chapter will demonstrate – to distinguish the separate steps in a linear sequence.

¹ For a complete description of the model, ADPC’s Field Practitioners’ Handbook provides detailed *resourcepacks* for each step explaining how to do things and how to behave as a fieldworker.

6.2.2 Concepts to analyse the nature of relationships and interactions

CBDRR concepts like ‘community’, ‘participation’, ‘empowerment’, ‘strengthening people’s existing capacities’, and ‘local ownership’ are notions that implicitly refer to *relationships* between actors, for instance between NGO field staff and local people, between insiders and outsiders, or among villagers. The ADPC handbook divides CBDRR actors into ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’: it refers to ‘insiders’ as those individuals, organisations and stakeholders who are located within the community like a Community-Based Organisation (CBO), whereas ‘outsiders’ are those sectors and agencies located outside the community and who want to reduce community vulnerability and enhance its capacities for disaster risk management (Abarquez and Murshed, 2004: 18). Such division reflects a simplified view on reality where actors are categorized according to a geographical location, demarcated by project-boundaries that ignore the broader context. Similar to my conclusion that ‘local knowledge’ is not so local in a globalised world (previous chapter), also the term ‘insiders’ or ‘local people’ can no longer refer to some geographical area. The way people organise their lives and with whom they identify may not correspond with village or community settlements, and also out-migration stretches community boundaries creating part-time insiders (Guijt and Shah, 1998). Afghan refugees who received education in Iran or Pakistan and returned with new ideas (previous chapter) may feel themselves both insider and outsider. According to Anderson and Olson (2003), insider-outsider refers to proximity and directness of impact. Here ‘insiders’ are those people vulnerable to conflict and disasters because they are from the area and live there, *and* they personally experience and have to deal with the consequences of conflict and disasters. ‘Outsiders’ are those who choose to become involved in contexts of conflict and disasters and who have personally little to lose (ibid: 36). Reich (2006) specifies that some people within the conflict or disaster affected areas could also be considered ‘outsiders’, if they cannot be counted as affected by conflict or disaster either as a result of the geographical distance – for instance through the rural-urban divide - or because of their social and political position in society (ibid: 21).

In my view, dynamic community boundaries and compositions highlight the limited value of the insider/outsider divide and of the notion of ‘community’. ‘Insiders’ are not a homogeneous group of individuals, and also the category of ‘outsiders’ consists of a wide range of actors, with different intentions and interests. Therefore, what matters is that assumptions about homogeneity and harmony need to be replaced by recognizing conflicting interests within communities and imbalanced power relations between NGO staff and villagers, despite the rhetoric of ‘participation’ and creating ‘local ownership’ (Guijt and Shah, 1998; Reich, 2006; previous chapter). The step-by-step model in Box 6.1 shows this basic intrinsic contradiction: on one hand it uses the rhetoric of ‘bottom-up’ planning and the involvement of the community in every step, while on the other hand, the concrete activities per step reflect the externally driven nature of the CBDRR approach, particularly step 1 to decide on community selection where the organisation’s motivations and interests play a dominant role. In the Philippines we called this *facipulation*, a contraction of facilitation and manipulation, recognizing the paradoxical nature of how outsiders relate to local people (Constantino-David, 1982).

The model is framed in terms of a project, an external intervention, where the steps reflect the stages of a project-cycle: situational analysis, risk assessment, identification of specific activities, making a plan, a budget, identify people who do things according to the plan assuming that everybody agrees on the plan, and develop a monitoring and evaluation system. This implies a time, and possibly, a space-bound intervention following a linear logic between activities and outcomes as in the idealistic logframe model. In everyday practice, such logic has little relation with the on-going processes in which the intervention is brought in, and with processes of negotiation and struggle as a result of differing opinions, norms, values, motives and goals of the actors involved (Long and van der Ploeg, 1989; Quarles van Ufford, 1993; Leeuwis, 1995). Therefore I use the 'political arena model' (Long, 2001) to analyse this step-by-step organising model, an approach that focuses on the nature of relationships and interactions between the local NGOs, villagers and other actors that play a direct or indirect role. It views the CBDRR intervention as an arena in which actors socially negotiate the policy and practice of CBDRR. The realities and outcomes of CBDRR depend on how actors at points during the process interpret the context, their needs, their own roles and each other, and how they use their different forms of power (after Hilhorst and Serrano, 2010). This includes the actors' interpretation of 'community', 'participation', and 'empowerment'.

6.2.3 The politics of selecting, entering and organising communities

Viewing CBDRR interventions as an arena in which actors socially negotiate CBDRR policy and practice, means that actors also negotiate 'community-organising models' since they are part of the NGOs' policy. CBDRR policy on community organising explains and legitimizes what NGO staff is doing and how they shape their actions. This implies that I study and analyse community organising as a process, not only as an outcome. The concept of 'policy' further implies that there are alternatives (Colebatch, 1998: 12). The 'politics of selecting, entering and organising' - as I used in the title - refers to 'policy as a process', to a continuing struggle between the various actors involved over alternative models, ideas and differing ways of doing things. NGO field staff put policy into practice, they engage with (certain) community people, and enter an unpredictable process of discussing intentions, negotiating values and norms, debating programs and solutions (Leeuwis, 1995). In this process community people get an opportunity to get (limited) access to resources to shape interventions according to their interests which do not necessarily coincide with the preconceived ideas and assumptions of the NGO.

This chapter analyses the interactions between local actors and local field staff of NGOs with a particular focus on what meaning is given to community, participation, and empowerment. Together with NGO field staff I aimed to better understand the dynamics of how interventions get shaped. With whom does the NGO field staff engage and why? How does NGO field staff legitimize its presence? How do they deal with the complex political life in the selected localities? What is it that they want to strengthen? Do they reach the most vulnerable groups in a community, and what makes that so difficult? Which other actors interfere in the community organising process? These are among the questions that guided the initial phase of the CBDRR

pilots and the evolving process. The discussions around these questions were compared with my observations during field visits. Reflections and sense-making continued in case of deviating opinions, complex issues or when dilemmas remained unresolved. All discussions were documented in field reports which were fed back to both local NGOs and the headquarters in the Netherlands. My intention is not to criticize the efforts of the field staff, but to stress some of the significant insights that we gained, and which we then adapted in consequent practice.

As I will demonstrate in this chapter, NGOs attach different meaning and objectives to CBDRR and community organising, as did the Dutch funding agencies. In the Philippines, CDRC aims to strengthen the social and political resources of People's Organisations and views CBDRR as a long term political process to change patterns of authority and relations with the Philippine government in favour of disaster and conflict affected populations (Chapter 3). It has a clear political agenda. NGOs in Central Java, Indonesia, interpret 'community organising' differently. They see themselves as bridge-builders between villagers and local government officials. They explore ways to both strengthen community-based organisations and institutions in flood-prone villages, *and* simultaneously support village and district government officials to do what they promise to do in DRR policies. In Afghanistan, 'community organising' is in itself not new, but in the context of CBDRR it is. Afghan NGOs see CBDRR as an approach to break through aid dependency and to rework aid relationships between communities and NGOs to enable communities to become self-reliant. I&K regard CBDRR as an approach to rework aid relations with their church partners in Maluku, whereas in Afghanistan, I&K use CBDRR as an instrument to legitimize their new country programme.

The NGOs participating in this pilot programme do not have a particular step-by-step model at hand, but allow their strategies for community organising to emerge from the realities locally. For any outside agency it is a challenge to find actors locally with whom to engage considering competing political, tribal or ethnic affiliations. In both countries the NGOs recognize that the context in which they bring in a CBDRR intervention are in fact political arenas, and are very consciousness about with whom to engage, how to deal with authorities and how to best manoeuvre in and between villages. In 6.3.1 I briefly describe the countries' history and institutional context in which the process of community organising got its shape.

6.2.4 The NGO field staff or community organisers: who are they?

I followed and worked with NGO field staff in Indonesia and Afghanistan. But who are they and what are their motivations?

"We dreamt about being Che Guevara like in the movie Motorbike Diaries. We also drove our motorbikes [they just graduated from college, AH] exploring rivers and villages around Muria Mountain in search of people to help. We got fascinated by the river system and decided to map it. It was 2006 when we suddenly noticed an older man along the road, covered with mud and dirt crying at the foot of the mountain. He was from Tempur and narrated about the flash flood, the noise, the damage. We went together with the man back to his village,

by foot because most bridges collapsed and roads had become inaccessible for motorbikes or cars. When we reached Tempur after two days – located within the caldera of the Muria volcano - we witnessed the destruction by the flash floods. We decided to help and organised a spontaneous relief operation with friends. We stayed in touch with the people in Tempur, encouraging them to make temporary bridges and to save and collect materials that could be re-used during reconstruction.” - Makhali and Masyuri, community organisers in Jebara district, Central Java.



Figure 6.1 Damages after the flash flood in Tempur in 2006 and the construction of a temporary bridge (Makhali)

Field staff of the Indonesian NGOs is idealistic, highly motivated to serve marginalized people, and to stay and live in the villages for a long time. They all have their roots in the area, speak the local dialects and the national language, but no or little English. In Central Java they are all young people, former student activists like Makhali and Masyuri, some just graduated from college or university, while a few are farmers who got interested in NGO work, particularly as community organiser. In Halmahera the field staff is older, in their thirties and forties, and most are trained as agriculture extension workers. They have many years of experience in organising farmer associations which together form the farmers' network in Halmahera, and in educating farmers in sustainable agriculture. In Halmahera they are all male Christians, while in Central Java, field staff is a mixed group of Christians and Muslims, mostly male. Only SHEEP has a few female community organisers. It is remarkable that during the six years of the CBDRR pilot, the group of field staff hardly changed, which facilitated a close cooperation among them through exchange monitoring and reflection workshops.

In Afghanistan, field staff involved in the CBDRR pilot are predominantly educated men who received their education in Iran or Pakistan after they fled Afghanistan as teenagers during the war against the Russians. Some of them still have their families living abroad. One field staff told me how he spent fourteen years in a refugee camp in Peshawar, how he attended a school run by NGOs, how he learned about human rights, first aid, health issues and journalism. He never received formal education, and when he returned to Afghanistan in 2002 he knew a little of many things and

decided to look for work with an NGO active in Bamyan province since he has his roots there, and because the NGO staff belong to the same ethnic group². Most field staff joins a NGO to earn a living for their family; serving people in need has a second priority. NGOs find it hard to hire female community organisers. Women are not supposed to travel and move alone in public spaces without a *mahram*, a male relative. In one instance, a father and his daughter were hired as community organisers for the same villages to overcome this problem. In other instances, the few female staff is allowed by her family to travel together with male colleagues – who often are her trusted relatives. But then these women are burdened with tasks in several projects simultaneously which they cannot attend all. As a result organising women in Afghan villages remains a challenge. Only one Afghan NGO chooses to work with community organisers who are selected from among the villagers, both men and women. This is a strategy to develop leadership within the villages to sustain CBDRR efforts in times of worsening security when the NGO shifts to ‘distant assistance’ through mobile phone. To avoid favouritism, the NGO considers ethnic and kinship diversity among the selected community organisers.

The majority of Afghan field staff live in their local offices and travel up and down to the villages. They hold the lowest rank in the NGO hierarchy, and have to implement what the management decides. A NGO management staff at Kabul-headquarters, frequently visiting field offices, expressed:

“Staff at the headquarters in Kabul is quite busy, and has limited time to train field staff and community organisers to develop their competencies to enhance participation of community people. It is simply not a priority. The culture is to tell ‘lower’ people what to do, which is in fact ethically incorrect. We should change our organisational culture and practice since I now realize that this hierarchical attitude has its repercussions on how field staff interacts with community people ” (CBDRR workshop Kabul, April 2007).

This remark set the trend to critically reflect on the work of community organisers in the selected Afghan villages and to become more conscious about their crucial role in community development. The remark shows how NGO directors and managers as off-stage actors, influence the interactions at village level. Not just in Afghanistan. Field workers everywhere are in a specific location or interface within the aid chain, and their work creates varying levels of demands, for instance, achieving CBDRR outcomes within a particular project time frame, NGO procedures, they have to comply with the NGO’s monitoring and evaluation needs, which causes stress among the field workers.

² Many Afghan NGOs have an ethnic face; they are run by family-members, friends or fellow students because they do not easily trust people they do not know. The director of ACBAR once mentioned that running a NGO in Afghanistan is merely a coping strategy for the own staff than an idealistic choice to serve Afghan people and to build a strong civil society in the country.

6.3 Selecting, entering and organising communities: experiences from the field

This section focuses on the everyday practices of selecting and entering communities, building rapport, risk assessment and community organising. The context in which CBDRR interventions are brought in and the reasons behind vary substantially. Chapter 3 concluded to give importance to the broader political and institutional context in which disasters and conflict happen, and in which CBDRR actors interact with one another. Therefore I start to briefly describe the particularities of each country context that influence the CBDRR process and outcomes.

6.3.1 The broader political and institutional context of Afghanistan

After the Taliban were defeated in 2001, the international community emphasized – in successive strategic frameworks for reconstruction and development in Afghanistan, the need to improve governance across the country and at all levels of the state. However, the externally driven state-building project largely failed (Donini, 2009). The Afghan political context is characterized by a formal central government in Kabul which interacts with formal institutions at provincial and district level, *and* with the actual power-holders at these levels. There is a divergence between a *de jure* and *de facto* state (Nixon, 2008; Rasuli, 2007)³. The formal sub-national government structures lack the capacity and resources to perform well, resulting in an eroding legitimacy. The vacuum is then filled by local commanders and powerful elite who undermine local governance, service delivery, security and human rights.

Formally, Afghanistan has 34 provinces which are divided into 398 rural districts, which are currently the lowest level of formally recognized administration in the country headed by a district governor or *woleswal*. If you visit a District Governor's office, you will usually meet residents waiting to see the governor. The District Governor's office is the first point of contact for ordinary people who have requests or petitions for formal government support, especially after disaster or crisis events. The *woleswal* is the interlocutor between the state and society. In practice, the *woleswal* can extend the "government of relationships" to the local levels – he can call for a *shura* to gather advise - , or he himself can access resources and influence through corruption, illegal detention or narcotics business (Nixon, 2008: 25). Community or village governance remains largely informal and varies widely across the country. In villages I visited in Afghanistan I met with *shuras* that presented themselves as collective decision-making bodies or councils consisting of male elders who gather when there are important issues to be solved like damages as a result of floods. In some places local governance is in the hands of one or more powerful commanders who extended their influence beyond their own group to build a wider base (Johnson and Leslie, 2004). Variations are inherited from the past where different actors were seeking a kind of engagement with local actors. For instance during the 1980s and 1990s, NGOs operating from Pakistan established local *shuras* within Afghanistan aimed to manage rehabilitation projects, while simultaneously, the Peshawar-based mujahidin parties also introduced varying changes to local governance institutions, either along the lines of *shuras*, or through more hierarchal

³ Interview with Mohammed Arif Rasuli, a Social Specialist of the World Bank in Kabul, tasked to review the National Solidarity Program, April 2007.

party or commander-based structures (DACAAR, 2005; Nixon, 2008). NGOs operating in Afghanistan before the Taliban came into power in 1995 experienced that *shuras* are very fragile forms of organisations not equipped with skills to manage project activities. Too often, NGO assistance became a source of tension among rival groups which resulted in the exclusion of one group or another from the *shura*. Traditionally, *shuras* were never meant to run or manage projects; Afghans approach *shuras* when they need arbitration on issues that cannot be handled by individuals. (I)NGOs and the international community as a whole tend to view *shuras* as a local government structure responsible, among others, to provide services and strive for “equal representation” in village councils, whereas Afghans view *shuras* as “an assembly” where selected bodies of local decision-makers gather when need arises (Larson, 2009; Johnson & Leslie, 2004).

Various interpretations of *shura* continue to exist even after the implementation of the National Solidarity Program (NSP), a nation-wide program aimed to create functional, legitimate and sustainable governance institutions at the local level, initiated by the central state in 2002 with support of the World Bank. Implementing agencies – a mix of (I)NGOs and one UN agency - transformed traditional *shuras* into Community Development Councils (CDCs) or created ‘*new shuras*’ according to procedures laid down in the NSP Operations Manual (MRRD, 2004; Boesen, 2004). The NSP provided local communities with block grants of up to US\$20,000 for development projects chosen and implemented by the CDCs, bypassing a dysfunctional administrative structure. The programme was appreciated by local villages because of the delivery of much needed projects at the local level, but it has not led to any major institutional change (Rubin, 2009).

I found it quite ambiguous that the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development contracted (I)NGOs to implement a subnational state-building programme. It raised the question about the role of (I)NGOs in Afghanistan and their positioning towards the Afghan state. When I started my fieldwork in Afghanistan in January 2006, I noticed confusion among Afghan NGOs about their future role to play in society: being contracted by the central government to provide basic services to rural communities, or being a critical monitor of the unfolding Afghan history. During the civil war and Taliban regime, NGOs functioned rather as parallel government institutions offering emergency relief, rehabilitation and basic services, and in fact they still do. However, the way NGOs are perceived by Afghans has changed considerably over the past few years from appreciated basic service providers to being part of the political and military agendas of the international community. The reasons are that Afghans see most aid channelled to Kabul and urban centres, and not to rural areas where more than 75% of the population lives. On top of this, most of the aid went to the most insecure and war-affected provinces in the south instead of to secure areas for reconstruction purposes (ACBAR, 2008). Additionally, many (I)NGOs were pressured by donors to work with Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) causing Afghans – and the Taliban – to view humanitarian aid as linked to political and military agendas. Afghan people increasingly feel wronged. And this narrows the humanitarian space since “*the social contract of acceptability between humanitarian agencies, affected communities, and belligerents is rapidly breaking*

down” (Donini, 2009: 8). Still, NGOs working in remote rural, less insecure areas are appreciated by the local population, since they fill the gap of basic service delivery.

In 2003, the Department of Disaster Preparedness (DDP)⁴, which is part of the MRRD, produced a National Disaster Management Plan in cooperation with UNAMA and SEEDS-India. The plan is quite comprehensive on paper, but unfortunately in practice, the DPP faces many limitations like lack of human capacity, financial resources, equipment for early warning, search and rescue equipment, relief stockpiles and absence of good coordination⁵. At the provincial level, government officials complained about the absence of resources for relief, preparedness or recovery. They depend on (I)NGOs’ resources to respond to emergencies. The National Disaster Management Plan espouses to initiate a programme for community based programming for disasters, using the CDCs as the appropriate channel for participatory preparation of village disaster management plans. In the villages selected for the CBDRR pilots, this did not happen. What MRRD/DDP did do is producing provincial Vulnerability and Risk Assessments which contain valuable data for aid programming.

6.3.2 The broader political and institutional context of Indonesia

After the Asian financial crisis in 1997 and the fall of President Suharto in 1998, Indonesia started political reforms creating new opportunities for a revised relationship between the state and community. The New Order’s centralistic and uniform framework was replaced by a new legal framework for the democratisation of local-level politics and village institutions (Antlöv, 2003). During the New Order, Suharto’s central government was in full control in supervising village governance, where the village head was in fact an instrument to the central government. Village heads were directly accountable to the sub-district head, not to the villagers. Village administrations – usually consisting of religious teachers, and local elite like landlords - enforced policies and decrees formulated in Jakarta. Since they had to be loyal to the state party, Golkar, they were forced to maintain good relations with higher authorities, at the expense of relations with the local populations who were their neighbours (Antlöv, 2010: 196).

According to the new Law 22/1999, the village is no longer under the authority of the sub-district, but became an autonomous level of government. This means that a village can formulate and pass its own village regulations and budgets without the approval from higher authorities. The village administration now consists of a village head, his staff and the *Badan Perwakilan Desa* (BPD), the village parliament, which is elected from and by the villagers. The village head is no longer oriented to the upward government structures, but is accountable to the villagers and to the BPD. The law provides the framework for what is legally possible, but we have to look at how the law gets implemented to know whether the possibilities are realised. Many village governments are not yet aware about the space for own initiatives while in other villages, the local elite is not yet willing to fundamentally change existing power relations as the cases in this chapter will show.

⁴ The DPP was established in 1971.

⁵ Based on interviews with MRRD and DDP representatives Mr. Ghulam Haider and Mr. Ajmai Karimi, May 2006.

Aside from democratization, the central government produced a new framework for decentralisation, devolving responsibilities and power to the district levels of government, with widely varying effects in different regions. In Maluku, for instance, decentralisation resulted in communal violence (Chapter 5) due to renegotiating administrative boundaries and to who gets the authority over environmental resources. In Central Java, decentralisation of powers to the district level made it more difficult for flood affected communities to address environmental issues taking a watershed perspective, which covers three districts. The new governance system does not function uncontested, since lack of knowledge and understanding of the new responsibilities lead to gaps in planning and implementation among government levels and departments (de Hauwere and van der Zouwen, 2010).

In 2007, in light of the Hyogo Declaration, the Indonesian House of People's Representatives approved a new Disaster Management Law, stating that the State of the Republic of Indonesia has the responsibility to protect all people of Indonesia and their entire native land against disasters, both life and livelihoods. This implies a shift from emergency relief to a pro-active approach to reducing disaster risks. However, most government officials at the various levels do not know what this entails. The national disaster management framework still contains crucial ambiguities in terms of concepts (exact meaning of disaster management), organisational structure (National and Regional Disaster Management Body), process and procedures (Muria Coalition, 2008). These ambiguities affect regional government's adoption of the framework and its translation into regional policies and instruments. A critical issue in the targeted districts for the CBDRR pilots is the apparent reluctance of district governments to enact District Regulation on Disaster Management, to establish District Disaster Management Body, and formulate a 5-year Disaster Management Plan using these legal ambiguities as primary justification (ibid). Local communities and local NGOs in Central Java make use of this ambiguity which provides room for negotiating how government from the village to district level could translate disaster risk reduction policy into practice.

6.3.3 The politics of selecting communities

Selecting communities for aid programmes is always a crucial exercise for NGOs since it involves multiple considerations and pressures to do something in a certain locality and not in another. NGOs need to maintain multiple relationships with various actors which put pressure on the selection process. NGOs need to show positive *results* to donors to stay eligible for funding, *and* they need to prove that their efforts are legitimate by serving those most in need. These two obligations are not always compatible, and in case the resources are scarce, the selection tends to accommodate donor conditions. The need to profile the organisation, the NGOs' broader agenda and values, personal interests of staff, accessibility and security issues are other factors that at times get priority over criteria like severity of community's exposure to risk and its vulnerable conditions.

In this section I reconstruct the process of community selection in Afghanistan and Indonesia by focusing on who was involved and whose interests, values and motives played a role in the final decision. Some researchers argued that NGOs implement

their programmes in so-called ‘safe areas of intervention’ with more chances for success, instead of areas where their support is most needed (Derksen and Verhallen, 2008; Koch et al, 2009). They attribute such choices to distorting funding policies of the donors’ back-donors who insist on ‘results’ and whose preferences influence the geographical choices of NGOs. In this pilot we tried to eliminate such pressures by allowing flexible time-frames, allowing failures to happen to learn from, and to value processes equally to outcomes.

The divide into ‘needs-based’ and ‘result-oriented’ criteria also slipped into the criteria that the Steering Group formulated as guidelines for the local partners to determine the locations for their CBDRR pilots. These criteria, presented in Box 6.2, are a result of a negotiating process among the members of the Steering Group of which I was part. The criteria are based on assumptions and prepositions, and reflect an ideal image of the communities we wanted to engage with during the CBDRR pilot. These criteria – the first three - stem from a sub-research question “what are local people’s perspectives on risk stemming from disasters and conflict, and how do they respond?”, assuming that communities are not homogenous entities, and that gender, ethnicity, religious belief, political affiliation, or other discriminatory characteristics play a role in risk perceptions and responses. However, pressured by the limited timeframe of this PhD research project, result-oriented criteria were added as ‘preferable’, based on the preposition that if local NGOs have a long-standing relationship with the community, if community-based organisations exist, and if communities are secure enough, the conditions for doing the CBDRR pilot would be favourable. These preferred criteria made sense for Afghanistan but were not so relevant for Indonesia since most selected villages there did not qualify these result-oriented criteria.

Box 6.2: Criteria for selecting communities to take part in the CBDRR pilot in Indonesia and Afghanistan (formulated early 2006 by Steering Group)

Needs-based criteria:

- High-risk areas: communities that are regularly hit by small-scale disasters
- Communities are affected by situation of chronic conflict (vulnerable groups like Internally Displaced People, returning refugees, female-/disabled headed household, ex-combatants)
- Communities or segments of community belong to certain groups which are marginalised or excluded due to their gender, ethnicity, religious belief, political affiliation, or other discriminatory characteristic

Result-oriented criteria:

- Preferably, the existence of community-based organisations or local governance structure
- Preferably, partner organisations have long-term relationship with these communities and intend to continue working there, including religious community based organisations
- Practically, communities should be secure enough despite the conflict situation

The Steering Group assumed that local partners in Afghanistan and Indonesia would select the communities before the end of 2006. However, ‘community selection’ turned out to be a recurrent topic for discussion, even during 2010 towards the end of the CBDRR pilot, particularly in Halmahera, and to a lesser extent in Afghanistan.

6.3.3.1 Selecting communities for piloting CBDRR: experiences from the field

Community selection in Afghanistan

I&K categorized Afghanistan as part of its 'Democratization and Peace building' (D&P) programme, which still needed to be formulated at the start of 2007. Sjoerd, who became programme coordinator of the D&P program in Asia, promoted CBDRR as a methodology. He espoused CBDRR as a participatory, programmatic, bottom-up approach aimed to formulate a new Afghanistan program, which recognizes local people's perspectives on any aspect of life in general, and on peace building and reducing risk in particular. During informal talks in Kabul, CBDRR was further framed as a "cure" for top-down oriented management styles of many Afghan NGOs. During a workshop in Kabul in May 2007, attended by about ten local NGOs, two regions were selected for the country programme where both conflicts and disasters occur and where partners operate – *Hazarajat* region and Herat province. Although the CBDRR pilots were supposed to be implemented under the umbrella of I&K's Conflict Transformation programme, in practice, the CBDRR pilot developed independently from I&K's country programme.

The Afghan NGOs participating in the CBDRR pilot had no prior experience with CBDRR and developed their own selection criteria for communities using the ones in box 6.2 as a guideline. Asking about the process of selecting communities, all NGOs, except one, mentioned their prior relationship with the selected communities as key criterion. One NGO selected villages abandoned by other NGOs or which hardly received assistance from government or NGOs. They all selected communities where they, and in few instances other NGOs, had previously implemented the NSP or related programmes like education, peace building, relief and rehabilitation. Knowing the leaders, the functioning of a *shura*, the level of integrity of the leadership, the acceptance of NGOs in their locality, were the most important elements for consideration. NGOs applied an additional criterion, namely that communities should not request the NGO to pay for their participation in this intervention. The NGOs viewed CBDRR as an instrument to reduce aid dependency, and expected that in these localities, local institutions would be more democratic, transparent and accepting participatory processes in the hope that CBDRR would be a legitimate intervention. These motivations support the argument of Derksen and Verhallen (2008) and Koch et al (2009), that NGOs tend to select 'safe areas for intervention' with more chance of positive results.

However, several NGOs explained their choices in a slightly different way, arguing that they apply the 'do no harm' approach⁶, meaning that they select those areas where the chance that their intervention would support warring parties is minimal. This is how some Afghan NGOs developed ways to deal with uncertainty and insecurity. A local partner of Oxfam-Novib selected communities in Tarinkwot district, Uruzgan, where villages were affected by both natural disasters and violent conflict involving ISAF troops and Taliban. The NGO has been implementing development programs in Uruzgan since 1993, is accepted by local communities, has implemented

⁶ This refers to Anderson, M.B. 1999, *Do no harm, how aid can support peace or war*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder

the NSP there, and the villages are situated close to each other. It viewed the CBDRR pilot as an opportunity to improve its aid practice in highly insecure areas. Although the selection met most criteria mentioned in Box 6.2, the donor's field staff in Kabul raised some concerns and dilemmas regarding implementing a CBDRR pilot in Uruzgan, particularly the impossibility for the Dutch donor staff and the researcher to visit the villages. It then decided to move the CBDRR pilot to Baghlan province, and selected communities where it recently implemented an education programme, and which belong to the most vulnerable and most neglected villages in terms of government and NGO support, according to MRRD data (MRRD, 2007).

Indonesia – Central Java

I&K does not regard Central Java as an area where the most vulnerable, marginalized or poor people live compared to other regions in Indonesia, and therefore several staff within I&K were not in favour to start the pilot here. In-depth research in one of the CBDRR pilot villages by de Hauwere and van der Zouwen (2010: 88) confirmed that people's vulnerability decreased over the past fifty years despite the more frequent floods in the area. However, allowing SHEEP to implement its CBDRR pilot in Central Java is based on the assumption that this is a locality where the pilot could generate a lot of lessons and insights that are useful for I&K's other partners in Indonesia. I reluctantly agreed to include Central Java as a pilot area, although I recognized that SHEEP could be a role-model. Selecting Aceh as the pilot area was preferred and considered, but most of the local I&K partners were then still involved in the tsunami response and the Steering Group found it inappropriate to burden those partners with a pilot project⁷. The decision to include SHEEP in the pilot programme was a pragmatic one.

SHEEP selected Pati district for its CBDRR pilot programme, because many of SHEEP's staff are from this area, they grew up there and feel strongly connected to people's lives, their livelihoods and to the environment. Secondly, the area along the 60 km Juwana river experiences floods every 8 to 10 years, but since 2005 floods occurred more frequently. SHEEP viewed these floods as a disaster, and submitted several times emergency appeals to I&K to support flood-affected households. I&K wanted SHEEP - through the CBDRR pilot - to change this reactive response into a proactive structural approach to reduce flood risks. SHEEP was open for the pilot, and initially selected four villages in Sukolilo sub-district that were recommended by *Serikat Petani Pati* (SPP), the Pati Farmers Union. SHEEP and SPP worked together in providing relief to flood affected people, either generated locally or through international donors. At a first glance, selecting villages in an area where NGO staff has its roots and relationships with villages through SPP supports the argument that NGOs tend to select 'easy areas' for their programmes. SHEEP however rejected this argument by stressing that its mandate is transformative in nature, aimed to hold the Indonesian government responsible to implement its policies to reduce disaster risk. SHEEP considered this as a challenging task which goes beyond its project work. SHEEP expanded the CBDRR pilot in 2008 by selecting eight new villages along Juwana river, after it realized that not only farmers, but also landless and fisher folk, living closer to the river mouth, were negatively affected by the floods. The selection

⁷ After the CBDRR-pilot SHEEP plans to start CBDRR-interventions in Aceh.

of these villages was not only based on people's needs to mitigate floods, but also for strategic reasons to mobilize villagers from along the 60 km Juwana river to build an alliance of CBOs to lobby the district government to mitigate floods. SPP nor I&K played a role in selecting these eight communities.

In 2007, I&K started to encourage local partners to transform their projects work into a programmatic way of working focusing on one issue with other NGOs. The CBDRR pilot in Central Java was regarded by I&K as an opportunity to put their new policy into practice. ICCO learned from SHEEP that the floods in Pati are partly related to inappropriate land use on Muria Mountain, where logging, mining and corn production on steep deforested slopes takes place causing massive flash-floods and landslides since 2006. To mitigate floods, I&K envisioned that their local partners in Muria region – covering the three districts of Pati, Kudus and Jepara – could be eligible for new funding if they would cooperate as a coalition in a CBDRR pilot. Although CBDRR was a new field for these local partners, except for SHEEP, and although operating as a coalition was perceived with some reservation, the Muria Coalition was formed in 2008 consisting of four local Indonesian NGOs – SHEEP, YLSKAR, YPL and YAPHI.

The Muria Coalition decided to strategically select both upstream and downstream villages situated along the main rivers running from Muria Mountain to the sea and which were badly affected by flash floods, landslides or flooding in 2006. The selection of communities was done as part of the community organising strategy taking a 'watershed approach': i.e. selecting villages situated upstream and downstream of main rivers that run down Muria Mountain. The Muria Coalition aims to strengthen the bargaining capacity of communities at risk in Muria Region to influence government policies to create a safer environment. A total of nine villages were selected. Three of them belonged to communities where the NGOs had contacts or rendered relief in the past, like Tempur. All the other villages were new, and the community organisers faced many challenges and even resistance from local actors.

Indonesia - Halmahera

When the pilot programme started in 2006, the local partners of I&K in Halmahera were still implementing their Rehabilitation Programme for Returning Refugees in Weda and Gane, located in the south of Halmahera. The programme would officially end in March 2007, and everybody involved in exploring the options for a CBDRR pilot in Halmahera agreed to continue in Weda and Gane. The villages met all the criteria and there was a lot to learn. Suddenly in 2007, the on-going discussions on how to proceed with the CBDRR pilot got distorted due to unsettled problems from the past, related to problematic aid relations between the protestant churches in the Netherlands and Indonesia (Chapter 2, Box 2.1), aggravated by reorganisations and staff changes. After a period of silence, I&K carefully resumed communication, and discussed with its partners where to pilot CBDRR. The staff of I&K proposed to select villages not too far from Tobelo in northern Halmahera to "*save on project budget considering the limited capacity of the NGO and the remoteness of Weda and Gane*".

Budgets, or more precisely *whose* budget within I&K, to minimize financial risks, became a decisive factor in community selection rather than people's vulnerability or needs. The donor pushed for a geographical area nearby the local partners' offices where indeed three villages were selected, although the GMIH included one village in Buli, located in the eastern part of Halmahera, a six hours drive from Tobelo. Buli was suggested to the GMIH through its church structure and local reverends. They reported about plans of a mining company to start its exploration activities in Buli to search for gold and nickel. Reverends are part of the village authorities and proposed to utilize the CBDRR pilot to increase people's awareness about mining, and about how people could accept and spend the compensations offered by the mining company wisely to reduce poverty. From a former local partner staff, I heard that some GMIH board members have relatives in Buli with economic interests in the intervention. Although I&K staff and I were puzzled about the intentions of the local partners in Buli, ICCO agreed to include Buli in the pilot.

The four selected communities did not meet all criteria, while the door to Weda and Gane was not completely closed either. I&K remained open to expand the CBDRR-pilots to Weda and Gana at a later stage, particularly because SANRO field staff could not let go of the villages where they have been working for several years. I strongly supported their case both as former NGO worker, being critical about the ease with which NGOs abandon and replace communities, and as a researcher concerned with selecting proper places to have optimal learning. On the other hand, as a researcher I stepped back by accepting that such decisions are taken, and considered it my task to document and analyse the evolving process of the consequence of this decision.

Reviewing the choices and arguments of NGOs in selecting communities, I conclude that these differ a lot. The argument that NGOs tend to select 'safe areas for their interventions' using mostly result-oriented criteria, is not as univocal as suggested (Derksen and Verhallen, 2008; Koch et al, 2009). It is true that donors push and pull aid relations with local partners to influence the geographical choice of NGOs and the selection of particular villages while excluding others, and that local NGOs have their affinities with specific communities and localities. The case of Halmahera illustrates this best.

In Central Java, the donor influenced – and from the perspective of local partners – pushed the NGOs to form the Muria Coalition to comply with its new funding policies to apply a programmatic approach. This was in the interest of the donor, whereas this did not obstruct the Muria Coalition to formulate their own selection criteria using geographical, needs-based and strategic criteria. The Muria Coalition selected communities by thinking ahead of how their community organising strategies could build people's alliances across three districts to be able to influence government policies. This was a strategy the Coalition borrowed from SHEEP's experience along Juwana River in Pati district.

In Afghanistan, the NGOs selected those villages where they expected the least trouble with warlords, commanders or corrupt village leaders. This is not because Afghan NGOs want to avoid working in insecure areas, but because they intend to

adhere to the 'do no harm' principle. Indirectly this is a way to reduce the chances to be co-opted and to have more chance of success. People's vulnerability, risk and poverty are criteria they used as well to select communities. As this chapter will demonstrate, the arguments and criteria for community selection did not automatically guarantee success. Community organisers who entered villages, whether they were familiar with the people or not, faced many dilemmas and challenges to deal with resistance and local power dynamics within the village and beyond.

6.3.3.2 Entering the village

Whereas selecting communities is mainly an office-based exercise involving different NGO staff, entering a village is often assigned to community organisers or field staff. The Field Practitioners' Handbook of ADPC describes this step as building trust and understanding the community. It prescribes how a field officer should behave to become accepted by the community using Chambers' guidelines (1997). The Handbook does not elaborate on how local people may view or react to NGO visitors. Even when previous relationships existed between the NGO and community, new staff and new reasons for entering the village may not be automatically accepted.

Stories from field staff about entering villages reveal that they have to deal with lots of questions, prejudices and resistance from community people. *"Are you here to convert us to Christianity?"* was a recurrent question to Christian field staff in Indonesia. Instead of focusing on CBDRR, field staff then decided to spend ample time with religious groups and with village officials to build trust. A female community organiser in Indonesia shared how she spent every Saturday teaching at the elementary Islamic school, and organised contests on reading from the Koran, singing the best praying call, or a quiz about religious issues. Often villagers took a reserved attitude and had many questions: *What do you really want? Or what do you give to us?* especially when people are used to receive aid after disasters.

"Sometimes the perception of the villagers is that we [NGO field staff] look for issues to be solved so we get projects", according to one community organiser, *"and that most of the money goes to the NGO, not to the community"*. Village officials can be suspicious towards NGO staff, viewing them as trouble makers, as being critical to government officials. In Central Java, a village head ordered the military to intimidate a community organiser, pushing him to get official permission from sub-district government to enter his village, while officially there is no need to have official permission and documents before entering a village. Even after the community organiser got official permission, the military kept on attending community meetings to monitor the activities of NGO staff. *"If you often meet with the same persons, people start gossiping. Be conscious where you stay and meet a diversity of people",* is an often used strategy of community organisers to avoid that they are perceived as being affiliated with specific actors in the village and labelled as trouble-makers.

Entering villages usually happens through contact persons who have relatives in the village or live there themselves. A few stories of field staff illustrate how they entered the village, how they explored who is who, and the dilemmas they encountered.

Box 6.3: Entering Sambiroto village, Pati district, Central Java

Sambiroto – located down-stream along Tahu river which runs from Muria Mountain to the sea - was selected because it experienced a severe and destructive flood in 2006. Floods happen regularly.

Agung, the field staff, knew a person in Sambiroto who works in the fish market. Through him Agung got in touch with Elistiono, the head of the fishermen's group in the village. This fishermen's group is member of the sub-district's fishermen's group headed by Seroto. To explore the situation in Sambiroto and to introduce the NGO, Agung also contacted the village officials and the village midwife Annie. He further met with vendors in the market, religious groups, the youth and with Mohammed Matun, who is a legislative member of the district government and advisor of the fishermen's group. 75% of the total 3900 households in Sambiroto are traditional fishermen, 20% are involved in aquaculture and 5% are farmers.

Through discussions with these various actors, Agung learned that the floods in Sambiroto affects aqua-culturists and rice-farmers. A few times the dike collapsed causing damage to rice-fields, houses and fish floated away. Aqua-culturists and farmers attribute the floods to deforestation upstream, while the fishermen frame their problem as 'sedimentation' which causes the river to overflow the embankments, but more importantly, sedimentation hinders their access to the sea during low tide to go fishing. Due to sedimentation they have to push their boats through the sand to the sea. This is heavy work, requiring many people and it take hours before the boats are brought from the small 'harbour' in the river to the sea. Their fishing equipment does not allow them to fish during night or to wait for high tide to leave the harbour. They usually fish from 4:00 am to 4:00 pm. They catch shrimps and crabs, not big fish. In 2004, the government once took out the sand from the river, and the fishermen want that the government does this yearly. In 2005, the fishermen themselves dug with the help of a contractor who had the right equipment. However this was expensive and the fishermen cannot afford to do this yearly.

Based on an initial assessment, Agung - supported by the NGO field office -concluded that the fishermen form the most vulnerable group in the community. The basis for his conclusion is that sedimentation leads to less income for a large marginalized group, and they are the ones in the village most neglected by government officials considering other urgent issues, like lack of enforcement of fishing zones causing intrusion of commercial fishing boats into the waters of traditional fishermen.

The fishermen attributed sedimentation to deforestation 20 km upstream, which triggers a huge impact in a short time. They have been trying to put their problem on the government's agenda, assuming that river management is the responsibility of the infrastructure department but that was not correct. They know that flooding and sedimentation is also a concern of the farmers and aqua-culturists, but these groups regard the fishermen as trouble-makers, and are unwilling to cooperate. While farmers received government's support after flooding, the fishermen did not receive anything. The relationship between the fishermen and the other sectors in the village is not so smooth.

The story of Agung shows how the steps of the CBDRR-model happen simultaneously: Agung built a relationship with different actors, got an understanding of who is who in the community, particularly how the various groups frame their problem and how they position themselves vis-à-vis each other. At the same time he assessed who is most at risk – in his view the traditional fishermen who make up the majority of the villagers - and how they try to strengthen their social and political resources. He identified the following key-actors: an active fishermen group, a village government which ignores fishermen's issues, rice farmers and aqua-culturists with different risk perspectives, and linkages between the local fishermen's group with both the sub-district fishermen group and the district government through Mohammed Matun.

These actors and their positioning formed the starting points for his community organising strategies. As a community organiser, Agung had to manoeuvre between the different parties to get them understand each other's perspectives. It is the NGO's principle to not take sides, but to be a bridge-builder between different parties to establish and maintain his legitimacy in the village. Later in this chapter I will elaborate how he succeeded in this.

Whereas in Central Java, field staff enters villages through informal contacts, entering villages in Afghanistan requires formal courtesy calls. The NGO field staff in Khulm, Balkh province, first had to visit the district governor, the *woleswal*, to get official permission to work in the selected villages along a 10 km long irrigation canal. The *woleswal* recommended three villages which, in his view, were the most affected by floods. The NGO was aware though that it also needed permission from more powerful, influential actors than the *woleswal*, namely a former mujahidin commander and several religious leaders. The male NGO field staff told me that "*once they agreed, no one else would oppose*" meaning that his presence and the NGO intervention were legitimized through the approval of influential people. The field staff focused its organising work entirely on the three upstream villages as recommended by the district governor with the aim to reduce the risk for floods. Two years after the destructive flash flood, the physical impact in these villages was still visible. However, the NGO's dominant focus on the exposure to flood risks in three villages turned itself blind to the fact that these people were not necessarily the ones most vulnerable in terms of their social, economic and political affiliations. The NGO had not questioned the recommendation of the district governor or commander by looking beyond the three villages.

Only later, the NGO found out that the irrigation canal is shared by a total of eight villages, and that the rules for water distribution changed in 2001 to the disadvantage of the five downstream villages. The field staff had affiliated itself with the most powerful actors in the area, the commander and his affiliates in the three upstream villages who control the water allocation. The NSP and the creation of CDCs in the villages have not resulted in democratic and transparent institutions as assumed by the NGO. When the NGO learned about this disparity and the negative consequences for the downstream villages, it was quite late to change its role into one of a mediator between both parties encouraging the powerful men to assume responsibility for the more vulnerable groups in their communities. The relationship between up- and downstream villagers got tense during a prolonged drought period in 2008, but the NGO lacked the capacity – number of staff and mediation skills – to take up such role. Such experiences feed Afghan people's belief that aid is distributed unfairly based on personal relationship and reinforcing existing power relations. When the NGO staff reflected on the first year of its CBDRR pilot, it realized the importance to take a broader risk perspective and wider view on social relationships to include all villages dependent on the water resources, to understand the history of water distribution among the villages, and of people's livelihood strategies as a way to understand people's vulnerability. 'Community-based' in this context means following the relationships between social actors and local institutions that matter, i.e. a 'community' of eight villages that rely on the same irrigation

canal and water resources for their livelihoods considering power differentials. This was an important learning during the pilot, but unfortunately too late for the villagers in Khulm. The NGO decided to withdraw from the area.

There are various creative ways to deal or to bypass influential actors in a village with varying results. I describe two experiences from Indonesia. The first case is from an uphill community on Muria Mountain experiencing landslides and flash floods caused by illegal mining that involve the village officials with the protection of the district government (Box 6.4). The entry-point into the village circumvents sensitive issues by talking and mobilizing various actors around issues that do not immediately challenge power differentials.

Box 6.4: Entering Bungu village, Jepara district

Bungu is situated on the slopes of Muria Mountain, where, like in surrounding villages, the practice of illegally mining stones for road construction takes place since 2002. One staff member of the NGO is from Bungu. His father was once village head in Bungu, and many of his relatives are involved in illegal mining till today but he himself opposes this practice. For security reasons he is not involved in the CBDRR pilot. Most villagers are afraid to openly oppose or even talk about illegal mining despite the negative consequences of their immediate environment and livelihoods. They are intimidated by the miners who threatened them, beat them and even destroyed paddy fields. In Bungu, two farmers' groups exist which are not very active, because village officials control and suppress farmers to not oppose illegal mining. The two groups do not cooperate causing fragmentation among villagers. The social relations are not harmonious. Village authorities deny that disasters occur in their area or downstream. The village head, a woman, however, is willing to openly discuss the mining threats with the NGO field staff since she herself is marginalized by the male village officials and not taken seriously. She expects that the NGO will support her, and the villagers, in opposing the illegal miners.

The NGO field staff insisted on getting permission to work in the village from the village officials to not raise suspicion, and he explained to them that the NGO promotes sustainable agriculture. The permission was given. The government has agriculture programs but these are not implemented in Bungu because the district officials do not reach Bungu. Farmers do not get access to seeds and inputs and information because the village government sets other priorities. The community organiser fills this gap, and used agriculture as a mobilizing topic to enhance interaction between village officials, district government officials and farmers' groups. He lives and moves from one sub-village to another (Bungu consists of 12 sub-villages) to avoid that he will be associated with one faction of the village officials. Instead of talking about illegal mining, he focused the discussion on water issues, farming practices, and food security issues, topics which were non-threatening and had the potential to re-activate the two farmers groups and encourage interaction with village officials. In these discussions the NGO field staff did not totally avoid DRR issues when he asked about immediate daily problems like water. He asked, for instance, what was the situation in Bungu before, and how is the situation now? And then people discussed the reasons for changes. The NGO assumed that the issue of illegal mining will be raised once confidence and trust have been built among the farmers groups. Secondly, this approach aimed to increase the commitment of government to support people's livelihoods in Bungu.

His strategy worked. He established good relationships with the village head, the village administrator, the village water manager, and with the leader from one farmers' group. Together they produced a risk map with about 20 illegal mining points within the village borders. In July 2010, they discussed this map with all members of the farmers group while using 'food security' as main theme. The community organiser assumed they could make a plan on how to discuss the risk map with village authorities supportive to illegal mining. However, he noticed that landslides and mining are still not regarded as threats, and that people keep silent about mining. In September 2010 he

organised a community exchange visit to Tempur, an upland community badly affected by flash floods in February 2006, where villagers, particularly the youth group, initiated community forest management practices to reduce landslides. There, the Bungu representatives dared to speak about illegal mining in their village. *“Mining brings benefits for the miners, but has negative effects on our irrigation system - eroding canals and drying up of water sources - and big trucks damage the asphalt road”* according to the village water manager. In October 2010, this small group of village officials organised a village dialogue, and invited six miners and the farmers group from Bungu as well as the sub-district governor. During the dialogue, the sub-district governor declared the closure of all mining sites in Bungu. The media reported about the mining closure, while farmers constructed a steel road blockade to prevent trucks to enter Bungu. The illegal miners, backed by powerful authorities in the district and province, did not give up, but through the process illegal mining is now *openly* questioned by the majority of the villagers. This is a major outcome in terms of reworked relationships.

The community organiser consciously built relationships with all crucial actors in a non-threatening way by focusing on food security and people’s livelihoods. It took him nine months before the farmers and village head dared to speak out about illegal mining practices and to publicly confront the miners during a dialogue and through the media. The community organiser manoeuvred between the various social groups to maintain his legitimacy.

The second example (Box 6.5) is from Halmahera where villagers attacked each other during the communal violence in 1999-2000, resulting in the temporal evacuation of the whole Muslim community of Togoliua. The NGO took the role of mediator between Christian and Muslim villagers when it entered the communities with the aim to solve land disputes. Field staff also moved among the various actors and villages, but with less success promising results compared to Bungu.

Box 6.5: Entering and mediating between a Christian and Muslim village in Halmahera

In Chapter 5, I narrated about the events in northern Halmahera in 1999 leading to the violence in Togoliua and Birinoa. The main issue deals with land disputes, not religion. Even today, violent incidents happen in the forests between the two villages.

The NGO, linked to the Protestant Church in Tobelo – perceived as playing a partial role during the violence against Muslims, consciously tried to take an impartial stance by playing the role of mediator and facilitator. The NGO field staff moved between the two adjacent villages to encourage village leaders to retrieve the official transmigration documents of the establishment of Togoliua in 1973 which were burnt in 1999 during the violence, and to search for the living witnesses who know about the *adat* arrangements regarding the ancestral lands of Birinoa and the surrounding villages. A durable solution could only be reached when all five villages surrounding Togoliua would be involved in clarifying the land boundaries. All these villages were visited separately by the NGO field staff to get a village-specific perspective and positioning on the land issue. This approach - to involve all actors who have a stake in the issue - was based on the lessons learned in Khulm, in Afghanistan, to construct a representation of the NGO as being an impartial legitimate actor in the area.

When gathering historical, social, institutional and spatial data, involving community people varying from village authorities to farmers, youth and voluntary *Gotong Royong* groups, they found that people’s stories remain inconsistent. Most people repeated the official stories about traditional *adat* regulations and the current government law. Early 2010, a few individuals in Birinoa however, dared to speak about some people’s practice to sell land to newcomers for personal gains. *“The first group of newcomers has left Birinoa, but they probably sold their land to other newcomers, and here the problem started”*. The government determined that it is no longer allowed to sell land which - according to *adat* – is regarded as communal land. According to the village secretary in Birinoa “A

newcomer gets 1 ha of hutan (forest garden) for free; when the person leaves the village, the land is supposed to be returned to the community". The government argues that all land is state-owned, and cannot be sold to third parties. It seems though that some people got land in use when they arrived in Birinoa, but that they unofficially bought the land from the previous 'dusun head'⁸, who may have pressured these people in need for money. The whole village of Birinoa is actually misled by the previous *dusun* head. In the same way, land has been unofficially sold to people from Togoliua, to about 20 to 30 households. When they leave, they will sell the land. Officially, the current village leaders of Birinoa are against such practices, however the *tokoh adat* has no authority anymore to end this practice due to new government's law. The village leaders in Togoliua saw no reason to join the NGO meetings, since they actually benefit from unclear regulations despite their narratives of being victims (see chapter 5). The CBDRR intervention outcome may reverse their 'land rights'.

The issue here is that three different types of local institutions are entangled: government laws regarding land ownership (state-owned), *adat* rules (land belongs to the community), and backdoor practices for personal benefits. Since *adat* rules have no longer authority, and the sub-district government does not want to interfere (only when conflict turns violent), the illegal selling of land will continue. Some people complaining about the intrusion of Togoliua people in Birinoa territory are themselves involved in illegally selling of land. I suspect that these people use the presence of the NGO to get their practice legalized. The village secretary of Birinoa uses the presence of the NGO and the involvement of a master's student of Disaster Studies to reinforce his claim against the military, who got 100 ha from Togoliua in return for protection during the communal violence, which is the same 100 ha in which 20 to 30 households from Togoliua bought land. Politics influences how the local institutions function and the way how they are viewed by local people and by the NGO, and these institutions cannot be isolated from the wider processes of decentralization and the political history in Halmahera that have led to the violence.

The village authorities in Togoliua were not pleased with the discovery of illegal land deals, and suddenly avoided any contact with the NGO staff. They passively opposed the NGO's efforts to engage them in a dialogue through the tactic of withdrawal, thereby delegitimizing and undermining the NGO's plans. Also the sub-district government did not want to get involved in settling disputes, because it wanted to escape politics. As concluded in the previous chapter, local actors who compete over resources, construct *their* history, *their* interpretation of local realities, which do not necessarily match with the historical facts once unravelled. They use their discursive and institutional powers in the interaction with NGOs, and construct images of local realities with omissions and hidden intentions resulting in differentiated or competing views.

The NGO put itself in a difficult position, not precisely sure how to proceed with the pilot project. It questioned whether the land disputes were a concern between villages or between individuals from different villages. After further investigation the NGO concluded that the disputes were between specific groups from the villages which had the potential to turn violent. The NGO decided to no longer focus on groups that were willing to participate, but on who *should* participate to reduce the risk for violence and to renegotiate village boundaries and policies regarding land ownership. This meant a shift in the CBDRR-process from exploring actors and their interrelationships that matter towards looking for those who have authority and should take responsibility. The latter consisted of the village heads, *tokoh masyarakat*, *tokoh adat* and several members of the village parliament, from the

⁸ *Dusun* is a sub-village

various villages and at a later stage the government department for land registration. By the end of 2010 negotiations were still on-going. The CBDRR-process did not evolve as expected, and the NGO found itself increasingly caught into the web of local politics.

Although the NGO field staff was still motivated to continue its work in these villages after one year, especially in Togoliua, an influential board member found these kinds of community processes too slow, too time-consuming with little output, and strongly argued that the NGO should change its focus towards Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes of mining and palm oil companies⁹. He believed that CSR could be more relevant for people in Halmahera to support people's economic needs, and, more importantly, to make the NGO a more visible actor. I&K staff reacted concerned, arguing that it is the NGO's responsibility to monitor environmental impacts and legality of the companies' operations. This view was dismissed with the argument that the NGO should not go into lobby activities against corporate business.

The various experiences from Central Java, Khulm, and Halmahera generate two important insights. The first deals with the legitimacy and representations of NGO field staff when entering the village. In all the villages, field staff encountered frictions and tensions among social actors. Whether NGO field staff could deal with competing views and risk perceptions, seems to be related to their ability to act in an impartial manner without losing sight of those groups in the village that are marginalized. In Sambiroto and Bungu, field staff were perceived as credible and reliable actors after their efforts to meet with the various groups and understanding local dynamics. In Khulm however, NGO staff affiliated itself too much with the powerful elite and thereby losing its credibility and legitimacy in the downstream villages. The NGO field staff in Halmahera did recognize all perspectives and views of the varying actors, and engaged with them to uncover hidden practices. It consciously intended to perform an impartial role being aware of the different interests of the various actors. And yet the field staff was not able to become a legitimate mediator who could position itself above the parties. Initially, I attributed the NGO's difficulties to its Christian background, and its perceived partial role during the conflict. Later I realized that the *direct* interactions between local authorities, individual households, and sub-district-government were very minimal and that it seemed that nobody could or wanted to find room for manoeuvre in the *visible* CBDRR process to settle land disputes. Despite people's complaints about tensions and violent incidents, they, including individual village officials, were involved in more *invisible* interactions of illegal land deals. Disengagement from the CBDRR process provided some village authorities from Togoliua room for manoeuvre in the more hidden interactions with military, with some villagers from Birinoa and with officials from the sub-district government. The NGO did not know how to deal with the multiple realities of village authorities, or to effect power relations to bring the multiple realities together.

The second insight relates to NGOs' assumptions that communities and local institutions have clear and definable spatial boundaries. This assumption turned out to be incorrect. The examples from Khulm and Halmahera reveal that local institu-

⁹ This occurred in March 2010 during a reflection meeting with local NGO staff and two board members.

tions are not necessarily organised according to spatial boundaries but rather according to social units which change over time. It is the political history of land boundaries, water uses and access to natural resources that represents the key factor in problematizing a bounded view of community. Community as a defined space is contested here. In this phase of the CBDRR process, 'community' referred more to the social interactions within and beyond village boundaries, in the past and possible future. The fishermen in Sambiroto, for instance, feel more connected to its sub-district's fishermen network, with which they share the same concerns, than to the other villagers who viewed them as trouble-makers. They are aware, though, that they should engage with these villagers, the village authorities and upstream villages if they want to address their flooding and sedimentation problems.

6.3.3.3 Searching for the most vulnerable and participation in framing risk problems

"Reaching the most vulnerable groups in the community" is the most rhetoric sentence in CBDRR policy documents and proposals, because this is what the NGO will need to accomplish to claim its success to donors. It took some effort to deconstruct staff's success stories about their interventions, taking away their fear to discuss dilemmas and failures, and to encourage them to reflect on local realities. They admitted that this is the hardest part of the CBDRR-process because as community organiser they need to manoeuvre between the various actors with different, in some cases opposing, interests and agendas, while maintaining their legitimacy.

Initially, NGOs and donors viewed social differentiation mainly through the categorization of general social or occupational roles like 'women', 'farmers', 'fishermen', 'youth', 'leaders' and the 'poor' (Cleaver, 1999). In Afghanistan 'widows' and 'disabled' are added to the list. Labelling people as such hides their relationships with their institutional context, ignores power differentials, differing risk perceptions and how conflict impacts on them. The need to negotiate and accommodate these differences is therefore not always explicitly recognized by the NGO management, while it is the daily concern of the field staff. A community organiser in Afghanistan felt uncomfortable with openly categorizing people because he felt that these labels disrespect people, ignore their dignity and agency. However, in practice these categories do steer the process of community organising, in particularly Indonesia, and to a lesser extent in Afghanistan.

In Central Java, community organisers work with the traditional Community Based Organisations (CBOs) like farmers' groups (*kelompok tani*), fishermen's groups (*kelompok nelayan*), women's groups (*Pembinatin Kesejahteraan Keluarga - PKK*) and youth groups (*Karang Taruna - KT*). These CBOs are old institutions, established during Suharto's administration, used to channel top-down government programmes under strict military supervision. These CBOs were the major instrument to conform these groups to the central government (Antlöv, 2003). Often the leaders of these CBOs are relatives of the village head or other village elite. The NGOs in Central Java engage with these CBOs because people are familiar with these institutions - although most of them are inactive -, because CBO leaders are crucial contacts between NGOs and villagers, like *Erning*, and because of the opportunities

the new decentralisation policies offer to rework the relationship between CBOs and the Indonesian government. Instead of viewing CBOs as an instrument to conform to government policies, the NGOs in Central Java view CBOs in the new context as an instrument to challenge policies and to hold government accountable.

This particular institutional history of CBOs, however, still influences the attitude, routines and practices of CBOs, village authorities *and* of the NGOs, at times contradicting the NGOs' espoused values and intentions. It influences how the community organiser engages with village government officials and village elite – whether (s)he cooperates with the village authorities or not – and who participates in framing risk and who does not. It is regarded as relatively easier to engage with CBOs than with village authorities. *“Village authorities are often corrupt, intimidating, have traditional norms and values, and refuse to talk about disasters, or do not want to frame these events as disasters”* – according to NGO field staff during a reflection workshop. Working with both village authorities and CBOs costs a lot of energy, and therefore field staff tends to focus on engaging CBOs in risk assessments *and* district government officials who are more open and interested in disaster risk reduction.

Box 6.6 Process of exclusion and inclusion of vulnerable subgroups in framing risk problems

Central Java, Indonesia: The NGOs – stressing that they do not want to support only the most vulnerable and to be labelled as anti-government – see their role in bringing together local government officials and CBOs. After successive visits, I noticed that one NGO engages particularly with local peasant organisations representing small and middle-class farmers in the district and with village leaders to formulate local level disaster management legislation. Landless labourers' views were not represented despite their vulnerable position. This subgroup could not get access to village institutions and resources. The NGO's multi-stakeholder approach involves stakeholders who either are responsible for relief and risk reduction efforts like local government, or those who visibly suffer from the floods like peasants. Groups like landless labourers and migrants were ignored. The NGO staff affiliated themselves with the peasants who frame their risk as 'crop failure due to floods caused by sedimentation of the river'. Landless labourers and migrants framed their risk problem as 'loss of livelihood'.

Later, the NGO realized that also fishermen, living closer to the sea, experience negative effects from flooding, who frame their risk problem differently: it is not sedimentation that they view as main problem, but the big waves from the sea and the chaotic parking of boats in the harbour near the river mouth that obstruct water to flow to the sea. The NGO facilitated the interaction between the fishermen and the peasants. The latter had frequent inter-village peasant group meetings where the idea was born to form a broad network of people concerned about the flooding in Pati district aimed to be more influential during negotiations with the district government. To mobilize the fishermen groups and other concerned citizens into the broader network, the risk problem should be framed in such a way to mobilize a larger constituency. After lengthy discussions peasants and fishermen agreed to frame the problem as 'Juwana river is in a bad condition' referring to the problems of sedimentation and boat parking. On May 20, 2009, they officially established their network *Jampi Sawan - Jaringan Masyarakat Peduli Sungai Juwana*, meaning People's Network that cares for the Juwana River. In addition *Jampi Sawan* refers to an herbal medicine to cure diseases; it also symbolizes 'solution'. All villagers living along Juwana river or who are affected by floods indirectly – like labourers – can become a member of *Jampi Sawan*.

This example from Pati district shows how the NGO started its community organising through traditional CBOs, ignoring those subgroups that did not qualify for CBO membership, while later on, *Jampi Sawan* opens up to include any concerned citizen for mobilizing purposes, to create leverage and legitimacy as it aims to negotiate and lobby with district government. It does not address the specific interests of subgroups which are subsumed to a “common good” agenda. *Jampi Sawan* does exclude civil servants and village government officials to become board member because of the experience that they tend to control information and play a dominant role. The

process of organising and mobilizing people for flood risk reduction goes beyond community level, building alliances among villages along Juwana river between the most vulnerable and less vulnerable groups aimed to influence and change policy and power relations with Indonesian government departments at district level and higher.

Again the meaning of 'community' in CBDRR brings up the dilemma of 'community' as territory, and of defining project boundaries, which rather flow from a social process of mobilizing peasants, fishermen and citizens along Juwana river which evolved over three to four years starting in a few villages in one sub-district towards including all sub-districts bordering the river. In its interaction with responsible government departments, it by-passes village authorities and engages directly with district government, because this is found easier than mobilizing village authorities *and* because the district is the appropriate authority to negotiate flood mitigation measures.

Whereas this shared agenda of flood mitigation addresses the structural causes of flood, it hides the diversity of short term needs of each specific group. The NGO did pay attention to these needs in varying ways. It supported farmers, women, landless, fishermen with several health and livelihood related activities, and in one instance with the construction of an evacuation centre¹⁰ requested by landless settlers. These activities served as entry-points for community organising and were followed up by linking a particular CBO to its (sub)-district occupational network of farmers or fishermen. Combining issue-based networking through Jampi Sawan, with sectoral networking is a way to address both people's practical immediate needs with long term strategic interests.

Only in a few villages in Pati district, community organisers were able to act as bridge-builders between CBOs, non-CBO members and village authorities. In these villages, the authorities were open to perform their new role in disaster risk reduction and included safety and protection arrangements in its village regulations, like a definition of disaster, a joined disaster management taskforce to coordinate relief distribution, emergency health, access to preparedness equipment like boats, coordination of farming experiments in relation to climate change, and mobilization of people for rehabilitation efforts. In these village regulations the views and interests of the most vulnerable groups were included. A community organiser reflected on this particular CBDRR outcome, as a step towards community resilience, particularly in combination with Jampi Sawan's lobby efforts for flood mitigation. He referred to the importance of village institutions and how they function as element of resilience.

In the majority of the other villages the attitude of village authorities remained problematic. These villages have a long history of oppositional local politics related to village head elections. For instance, a village head belongs to a big influential family, and the cleavage in the village is between this family and the rest of the community, and distrust is high. He bribes people to become re-elected and threatens to use violence. Many people are still ignorant towards village politics and

¹⁰ See Chapter 7 for the whole story

are easily manipulated, according to SHEEP field staff. In one village the cleavage has an economic dimension as well: whereas the CBO consists of traditional fishermen, the village head is involved in commercial fishing and these two compete over fishing zones. In some other villages, the level of interaction and trust between CBOs and village authorities is low. This occurs in villages where people are relatively poor and come from different places due to past transmigration, and where as a result many people migrate. Community organisers find it difficult to get people's commitment for CBO work or to attend meetings.

The NGO viewed CBO leaders, next to village authorities, as its principal contact, and who function as a bridge between the NGO and the so-called 'vulnerable' groups in the village. Being a CBO leader is a demanding task: (s)he is supposed to understand and articulate the NGO's values, concepts, strategy, and vision; needs to be willing and able to translate this to CBO members and to involve ordinary villagers; understands the conditions of villagers within and outside the CBO, and provide feedback to the NGO. Very few CBO leaders can fulfil these tasks or sustain them for a longer time. And this makes reaching the most vulnerable groups in communities quite a challenge.

In Afghanistan, community organisers mainly engage with the CDCs and religious leaders to identify who should be involved in the risk assessment and how, therefore setting the boundaries for who is included and who is not.

Box 6.7 Inclusion and exclusion of most vulnerable subgroups in Khulm, Northern Afghanistan

Women, particularly widows and female-headed households, prioritized an early warning system for food shortages resulting from drought, floods, price hikes and conflict dynamics. Their priority differed from the men who prioritized repair of irrigation canals and flood protection. I met these women through so-called 'women *shuras*', a village institution introduced by the international community in 2003 aimed to enhance women's participation in community decision-making. These women *shuras* never existed before, and were created as parallel structures to the male *shura*, but without authority. No mechanism exists to allow both men and women to validate each other's risk assessment results, and to frame risk priorities together. The female and male community organisers exchanged among themselves the assessment results of both the women and men, and concluded that these are similar. Male NGO staff ensured me that women's interests are looked after through the responses identified by the men "since these serve the common good".

While acknowledging heterogeneity in communities and gender differences, the community organisers focused in the end on shared values, common interests and avoiding open conflict. As rightly mentioned by Allen (2006), particular subgroups in the community, like landless workers, migrants, women, or minority ethnic groups have distinct priorities or competing interests, which tend to be subsumed by decision-making processes that are 'consensus-based' and framed as serving 'the common good'. In this way the CBDRR-interventions got de-politicized in favour of those involved in decision-making. In Afghanistan, the ones mobilized for decision-making are prominent community people like local leaders, local elites and their kinship networks, not the most vulnerable segments.

'Participation' is practiced here in an instrumental way based on procedures and techniques: people are approached in groups to hear about CBDRR, and asked to provide information about their locality through exercises from toolboxes –

information they already know. Particularly women were quite critical about the manner the participatory risk assessment was conducted. “We provided information to the community organiser and she gave advice, but most of it we already knew and do! There were some new tips, like sandbagging in the doors of our houses, and to be alert during the night”. Only the men, and particularly CDC members and religious leaders participated in setting the agenda of what they expect from the NGO, namely providing financial resources and a technical design for a protection structure against floods. Men tolerated, with some reluctance, that their women attended NGO meetings, because men considered this as a NGO condition for getting resources, but it is culturally not acceptable to involve women in community decision-making and to take their views seriously. ‘Women’s participation’ is subject to discussion and debate between male community leaders, community organisers, NGO staff and donors, where in this case, the community leaders set the boundaries for when women can participate and when not. Additionally, the male community leaders framed ‘flood protection’ as the solution, and thereby they created another boundary of action by excluding five downstream villages to participate in the risk assessment, who would have opposed this solution. In this way, the CBDRR intervention maintained the status quo of the upstream, male and powerful actors.

Figure 6.2: Khulm, Balkh province



Risk maps made by women



Female community organisers



Male *shura* meeting



The intake fails to protect villages against floods

Two Afghan NGOs approached the process of community mobilization and risk assessment differently, recognizing social and power differentials within and among communities. Based on previous experiences with community development in southern provinces of Afghanistan, and being familiar with the “do no harm” approach, field staff first looked through a conflict lens, exploring interactions and relationships among ethnic groups in the area from a historical perspective. In Ghoryan, Herat province, the NGO field staff spent energy in understanding the history and nature of the disputes in the area, and discussed with the *shura* how it could settle disputes with adjacent villages differently, f.i. through mediation or renegotiating institutional arrangements of natural resources, replacing the

traditional and at times violent ways of settling disputes. The NGOs invested in creating peace *shura* to enhance mediation skills before the CBDRR intervention started, and they were aware of how the CBDRR intervention could be a way to lower tensions between social groups. This approach had surprisingly positive and promising results, which I discuss in the next chapter. The CBDRR pilot in Ghoryan differs from the other pilots in Afghanistan, because the NGO and local leadership recognized the broader institutional context of norms, judicial system, governance structure and institutions related to allocation of resources. It approached CBDRR beyond the village level and was concerned with embedding the risk reduction measures in the institutional setting of a weak functioning government.

The NGO operating in Nahreen consciously selected field staff for the CBDRR pilot from the communities and not from the NGO. It believed that in this way the skills, new insights and experiences remain in the communities after the NGO leaves for whatever reason¹¹. The CBDRR pilot-supervisor lives in Nahreen and is a much respected person. Several men in the communities allow him to talk and meet with their women. The boundaries for women's participation in community issues are a little bit more flexible. Widows and educated women go out in public, but always in groups. *"We always hide ourselves carefully in burqas to not be recognized easily. We are still afraid. Not all men allow their women to go out in public or to attend meetings"*. The project supervisor, together with the CDC, selected the community organisers from the eight sub-villages, representing the three ethnic groups to avoid favouritism and internal conflicts. They selected eight men and eight women who have a certain degree of education and who are respected by the villagers. They received training in CBDRR particularly on disaster preparedness, facilitation and mediation skills. These community organisers were supposed to assist the *shura* in disaster risk reduction issues and settling disputes, and additionally to fulfil the role of informal leaders to support their fellow community people when needed. The community organisers were further tasked to make ordinary men and women in their sub-village aware of what to do to reduce disaster risks. When I asked if they consciously searched for the most vulnerable households, some women community organisers replied that they usually only approach those households in the village through the line of kinship and friends, and not necessarily the most vulnerable, while a few others told me that they knock on doors of the most vulnerable people based on the hazard maps. The initial risk assessment was limited to identifying households exposed to flood risk, while an assessment of the broader risk landscape needed follow up.

In 2009, Nahreen experienced severe floods after a long period of drought, and the community people anticipated the floods by sandbagging and storing valuables, while the community organisers applied their early warning and evacuation procedures. When this resulted in no casualties, the people were surprised and realized how a systematic 'software' approach¹² by creating task forces and proper coordina-

¹¹ For instance when the security situation worsens like in Uruzgan causing NGO staff to travel undercover, or to switch to the 'distant assistance' mode.

¹² In Afghanistan local people and NGOs distinguish 'hardware' and 'software' interventions, referring to respectively physical structures and training or organising people.

tion could make such a difference. Consequently, these community organisers were asked to train *shuras* in adjacent villages.

Women's views in Nahreen are taken to the decision-table through the female community organisers to the project supervisor and their husbands. During one big *shura* meeting I attended, the views and ideas of the women were indeed articulated by the men, and put on the agenda for action. Ordinary men and women however, subordinated to *shura* members, participated as receivers of information – a warning, and what they can do to anticipate floods or earthquakes, but not as active participants from the start. The nature of participation is shaped by the prevailing norms and structures in the locality and differs throughout Afghanistan.

I often asked myself how problematic this is. First of all, it is simply impossible that everybody always participates in all activities. Secondly, people may find it unnecessary to participate in meetings or groups, when they have other ways to get benefits from an intervention. Hussein, field staff in Pati, Central Java, helped me to further this topic. After being involved in the CBDRR pilot for five years, he concluded that "*community-based does not mean that all people in the village need to be involved in all the decision-making or attend all meetings. What matters is that the views of the different social groups in a village are represented in the village institutions and regulations, and beyond*". The women in Nahreen do not visibly participate in the male *shura* meetings but channel their views and ideas through male relatives and trusted persons who acknowledge women perspectives. This reminded me of the research I did in Nepal (Bruins and Heijmans, 1993), where female household heads could not become a member of the water users association, which was based on the assumption that women in Nepal do not irrigate. However, they arranged their access to irrigation water informally through their sons or directly through the water distributor when they met him in their fields. They even found this more convenient than wasting their scarce time in meetings.

This implies that the assumption that participation depends on a mobilization process, and on a high level involvement of people for their own benefit, does not necessarily hold true. What matters more is to recognize that 'participation' is shaped by the prevailing social norms and values through particular power relations which find their expression in village institutions. Village institutions refer to structures, rules, norms that include/protect/secure the interests of marginalized people or not. However, 'participation' should always be an issue for discussion, debate, and negotiation between *shura* members, village authorities, marginalized groups and NGO field staff to possibly stretch the boundaries for participation and to rework social relationships. Especially for widows in Afghanistan without male relatives who lack the mechanisms to communicate their interests to decision-makers, and to those groups in Indonesia that are excluded from the traditional CBOs like landless labourers.

Conducting participatory risk assessments

Whereas ADPC's Handbook identifies *Participatory Disaster Risk Assessment* as a distinct step of the CBDRR process, evidence from the field reveals that it is not.

Assessing risk became part of the community organiser's rapport building efforts and evolving interactions with different groups in the village. The community organisers accumulated risk views and knowledge from different social actors. At a certain moment they facilitated an initial risk mapping exercise with one specific CBO to allow them to map *their* risk perspective, without being constrained by other social actors. Only in Khulm, risk mapping was done as an explicit step in the CBDRR process with as much people as possible, men separately from the women.

Whereas the women in Khulm commented that a risk map was a visualisation of what they already knew, in many other localities risk maps were used for very different purposes and were instrumental in community dialogues and mobilizing: (1) to present and exchange risk perspectives between different social actors within the village to bridge differences and overcome stereotyping like in Sambiroto, (2) to enable CBOs to express *their* risk conditions to authorities, (3) a tool or entry-point to engage with local government authorities, (4) to make other communities aware (upstream-downstream, adjacent communities) about their specific disaster risk conditions; and (4) for planning purposes.

Risk maps – mostly produced by one group - were instrumental in creating understanding for differing risk positions, to raise awareness about interconnectedness of risk problems in various villages, in the creation of CBO alliances, and to enter dialogues and negotiations like in Halmahera. However, the outcomes of dialogues and negotiations varied.

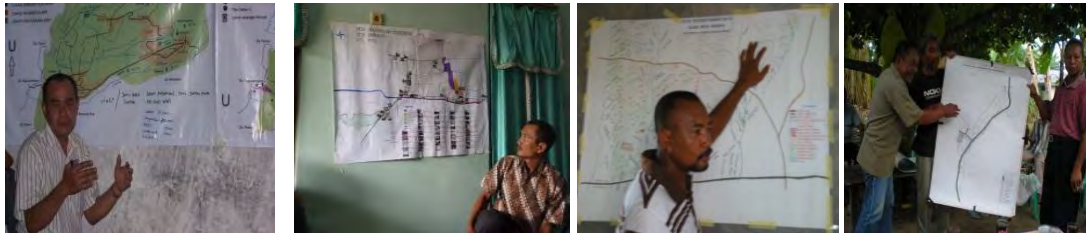


Figure 6.3 Risk maps made and explained by villagers in various CBDRR-pilot areas

Reviewing the various approaches to participation and involving community people in discussions about risk, defining risk and deciding on what to do, it becomes clear that in most cases, the most vulnerable groups are not immediately targeted or involved, or when they are, like women in Afghanistan, they are not necessarily involved in the final risk decision-making. Institutional settings like histories of CBO-structures, functioning of village organisations and prevailing norms about participation set the boundaries for who is included and who are excluded in risk assessments, risk prioritization and decision-making. Field staff work through these traditional structures and institutions for reasons of convenience, routine, or with the intention to change institutions and rework power relations in favour of vulnerable, marginalized groups.

6.3.3 Community organising and empowerment: with what perspective?

The fundamental idea behind community organising is to cultivate a sense of potency and effectiveness in people and in whole villages. Local people are made to believe that they must actively define their own destiny, and develop their capacity to

assert their rights. NGOs frame the purpose of community organising in the field of CBDRR differently (Table 6.1), and as a consequence also their organising strategies differ. “*What do we want to strengthen through the CBDRR approach?*” was a recurrent question I posed to allow field workers and project staff to reflect on their organising process. And “*What do we mean by empowerment?*”.

Table 6.1 Purpose of CBDRR community organising and empowerment

Afghanistan	Enhance people’s capacity to reduce risks, to make people believe in their own resources to become self-reliant, and to overcome aid dependency.
Central Java, Indonesia	Enhance people’s capacity to reduce immediate risks, to make people conscious about <i>why</i> they are at risk and enhance their skills to enter political spaces to negotiate, influence or oppose government policies, <i>and</i> to rework government institutions from village to national level to make them responsible actors so they seriously implement DRR policies
Halmahera, Indonesia	Enhance people’s capacity to reduce immediate risks and tensions, and to improve people’s livelihoods and economic resources.
CDRC, Philippines	Enhance people’s capacity to reduce immediate risks, to make people conscious about <i>why</i> they are at risk, and enable people to gain access to social and political resources to obtain safety and protection from the local to the national level. NGO organises people’s organisations and facilitates alliance building between vulnerable and less vulnerable sectors

‘Empowerment’ hides many different meanings and worldviews. ‘Adding power’ and ‘gaining the ability to undertake activities, to mobilize resources, set one’s agenda, and change events’ are among the most common definitions, and are based on the traditional interpretation of ‘power’ as an asset (Guijt and Shah, 1998). This way of articulating ‘empowerment’ prevailed among most of the NGOs involved in the pilot, while in practice they consciously or unconsciously tried to rework institutions and facilitate political and social linkages from the grassroots to the national level. Only in Afghanistan, CBDRR efforts did not go beyond the district or provincial level.

NGO field staff in Afghanistan organised communities assuming that after the NSP, there were no serious attempts anymore to develop the country. They observe a declining aid influx, and also the World Bank indicated to no longer invest in the NSP. After decades of emergency and charity aid, and currently facing a corrupt, incapable government, lack of justice, and a decrease in international aid in secure areas, Afghan NGOs view CBDRR as a promising strategy to counteract the ‘aid dependency mentality’ through promoting self-reliance.

The NGOs’ narrative on people’s ‘aid dependency mentality’ is very dominant among Afghan NGOs referring to the undesirable social behaviour of local people in response to aid (Harrell-Bond, 1986). Although individual field staff acknowledged that local people have agency, and actively find ways to cope and survive, they start talking about their aid dependency mentality, as soon as the NGO starts discussing the nature of interventions. NGOs then portray local people as being passive, non-cooperative and lacking the initiative to solve community problems voluntarily without outside support, and therefore local people expect NGOs to provide everything they need. The existence of people’s aid dependency mentality has been proven to be a myth based on various research and publications (Harvey and Lind, 2005; van Dijkhorst, 2011). Referring to the trend of decreasing foreign aid, criticizing ‘aid dependency’ has become a justification for NGOs to shift from ‘cash for work’ to reviving *ashar* and to view *shuras* as project managers.

The CBDRR agenda aims to revive, rework or systematize traditional local institutions like those for dispute settlement, early warning, evacuation, reviving *ashar*, restoring and protecting natural resources, and the functioning of *shuras*. In a sense, NGOs are actually reworking their aid relations with communities, since these NGOs will no longer hand-out aid without any contribution from the community in return. *Ashar* should replace 'cash for work' or 'food for work' for instance, which saves on donor funds, but may not always be a realistic option from the community's perspective. This has been a hot issue during reflection sessions, and touched on the dilemma of balancing short-term needs versus long-term development strategies. One villager in Ghoryan, Herat province, mentioned that he is willing to spend one day of community voluntary work, *ashar*, to support the reforestation effort against sand storms, if he can also work one or two days for the World Food Programme which pays for his labour in road construction.

Whereas the Afghan NGOs promoted the idea of self-reliance to the selected villages, local leaders often resisted this idea. Their interest was getting cash or food for work as a short-term gain, even if interventions were not their priority. NGOs tried to convince *shuras* to invest their labour and resources in activities that are their priority and that will last. One field staff in Herat summarized: paying cash for work solves the hunger for one day; while using and investing resources in a more structural manner will result in durable solutions. These were negotiations that sometimes took six to twelve months before CBDRR was accepted by *shuras* as a legitimate intervention. Often *shuras* agreed with the field staff to revive *ashar* to invest in structural protection measures, but it were the villagers who resisted. *Shura* members were sometimes accused of being corrupt, because villagers argued that all NGOs pay, so why not this time?

In Indonesia, community organisers from particularly the NGOs in Central Java, proceed from the perspective that the Indonesian government should take its responsibility to implement its DRR policy because it signed the Hyogo Framework for Action in 2005. Community organising strategies take therefore multiple strategies to rework relations and interactions between different actors for various goals.

The experience from Sambiroto for instance, reveals how community organising strategies rework relationships between (1) the fishermen's group and other villagers to improve its image and to enrol more villagers in its efforts to address floods, sedimentation and other village problems; (2) between the fishermen group and the government at village and district level to address problems of enforcement of zoning laws for fishing, sedimentation, and retribution; (3) and most remarkably, between Sambiroto as a downstream village and Jrahi, an upland village, blamed by Sambiroto for causing flooding and sedimentation.

Box 6.8 Community organising process in Sambiroto to rework relationships with various actors to reduce risk

Inspired by the participatory village mapping practices in barangay Banabe in the Philippines (Box 3.3) – a village visited during the CBDRR exchange visit in November 2008 by field staff of NGOs involved in the CBDRR pilot - SHEEP's community organiser Agung facilitated a process of participatory risk mapping in Sambiroto. He encouraged fishermen and their wives to look critically at their environment. Priority issues were identified like

sedimentation, coastal erosion, enforcement of zoning laws for fishing, garbage disposal, flooding and retribution. Then they discussed which issues they can address themselves, and which require government's response at and beyond the village level. They further distinguished between specific fishermen's problems (enforcement of zoning laws for fishing, sedimentation, retribution), and community problems (garbage disposal, flooding, coastal erosion).

Reworking relationships at village level

The fishermen planned a workshop with the village government to present the risk map and to discuss their problems, but this workshop never took place because the village authorities were not responsive. Instead the fishermen presented their map at different moments to different groups in the village and as a result information was added and the analysis improved. The aqua-culturists for instance, experience negative impact from river flooding from January till March, *and* from seawater intrusion due to high waves in May. Additionally, villagers adjusted their opinion about the fishermen's group, since its efforts no longer focused on only 'fish' but on community concerns as well. Fishermen told me that they are less regarded as 'trouble makers'. Majority of people agreed that flooding and garbage disposal, particularly lots of plastic and glass, are major problems that require action. The village leaders remained irresponsive however, despite media coverage about the garbage problem.

Reworking relationships with district and provincial government

Meanwhile, the fishermen's group tried to get the attention of district and provincial government to get protection against intruders – large commercial fishing boats - in their fishing zone, to address coastal erosion and the issue of retribution. In the past they tried to link up with government departments through the liaison of Mohammed Matun or Seroto, but SHEEP encouraged the fishermen to become less dependent on local brokers and to link up with other organised fishermen groups in adjacent coastal villages. They joined a fishermen network "*Janusapati*" with fishermen groups from coastal villages facing similar problems. Through this fishermen network they assumed to increase their bargaining capacity to deal with the government. Regarding the retribution issues, the network was successful. Since 2010 the government resumed to pay social funds to fishermen in Sambiroto in emergency cases like illness, funeral or accidents. Government's support to control coastal erosion is still very minimal; it provided limited funds to restore mangroves while the fishermen protect and monitor the replanted area. The law enforcement regarding fishing zones is still very weak.

Reworking relationships between Sambiroto, a downstream village, and Jrahi, an upstream village

In 2006 there was a big flash flood along the Tayu river, causing severe damage and some deaths downstream in Sambiroto. The villagers from Jrahi went down to offer their help in clearing debris and cleaning roads, but what they got were negative comments. They were blamed for irresponsibly cutting trees and mining stones from the riverbanks causing landslides, flash floods and sedimentation downstream. Although both communities have a history of disliking each other, the people from Jrahi were dazed by these negative reactions and accusations.

Like in Sambiroto, SHEEP has a community organiser working with the peasant group in Jrahi. Initially people found it either funny to talk about 'disasters' because "*there are no disasters occurring in Jrahi*" or did not want to talk about disasters, despite the occurrence of landslides. 'Disaster language' was new and the community organiser together with some peasant group leaders had to collect comprehensive historical and current data on changes in land use, water management and environmental conditions to convince community people and authorities about potential disaster risks and the need to address environmental degradation. The risk assessment and maps were presented, discussed, corrected, and through discussions and debates, people's awareness about the occurrence, recognition and causes of landslides and floods increased over time.

SHEEP organised a forum inviting both upland and downstream villages including Jrahi and Sambiroto. While CBO leaders from Jrahi presented their risk map and explained the condition of the forest, likewise people from Sambiroto presented the conditions of the Tayu river downstream and the impact on their livelihoods. Through recurrent meetings and discussing causes of vulnerable conditions along the Tayu river from its source to the river mouth, the 'blaming' attitude of the fishermen in Sambiroto shifted towards an attitude of understanding and respecting the arguments of Jrahi people. Deforestation and mining could not be solely attributed to the Jrahi villagers. When people from Jrahi cleared and sold land to farmers from Tayu, near Sambiroto, for casava production, also people from other places came to the uplands to illegally cut trees during the financial crisis at the end of the 1990s. Risk maps were instrumental in awareness raising, improving and reworking relationships among upland and downstream villages, and in creating effective agency for lobby purposes to enhance law enforcement against deforestation and c-type mining¹³.

An early warning system has been set-up. When it rains more than two hours in Jrahi, the CBO sends text-

¹³ C-type mining refers to the size of stones that are being mined for construction purposes, i.e. gravel.

messages to the CBO in Sambiroto that flood could be expected within three hours. The warning is sent to all villagers. Fishermen, when not at sea, evacuate their boats from the parking lot and go to the sea where their boats cannot be damaged by the flash floods, while women go with children and belongings to higher places, away from the river. Formation of a network of upland and downstream villages along the major rivers running from Muria Mountain aims to have a community-based network which can negotiate and lobby government to enforce proper land use planning and environmental protection. Particularly the youth is motivated and active.

The Muria Coalition aims to strengthen the bargaining capacity of communities at risk in Mount Muria Region. It takes a multi-track approach as practiced in Sambiroto. Given the history of CBOs, they cannot be expected to easily perform countervailing power within the village and beyond. Yet, 'strengthening' here means that community organisers use the changing political environment in Indonesia to transform the CBOs' role and to allow them to critically assess their reality that they have taken for granted or adjusted to, and act upon their grievances. The community organiser evokes from the people their frustrations, their dreams, their needs and limitations. It is a way to determine levels of consciousness, to spot potential leaders, to identify issues, social relationships and power differences within the village. Then the community organisers provoke people into thinking and acting upon their reality in directions they had not previously thought of, they did not feel confident to do this, like in Bungu, or they did not know to whom to channel their grievances, like in Sambiroto.

Additionally, NGOs in Central Java have staff that analyse government's policies and regulations affecting DRR including spatial planning, and identify which government departments are responsible for the implementation of the respective policies at the various institutional levels. This knowledge is used to set out community organising strategies – lobby and advocacy - within and beyond village level. In this context, the community organiser balances evocative and provocative organising, what I earlier called '*facipulation*' which is *manipulation only in the sense that the community organiser consciously directs the efforts of the community towards an objectively desirable goal that is beneficial to the people* (Constatino-David, 1982: 194). Community organisers also engage with village government officials and raise their awareness on DRR policy and what they should do. In the regular process of government's policy formulation, ordinary people are never involved. The NGOs explore the spaces and boundaries of the new political and institutional environment in the country supporting CBOs, their alliances and local village government in entering new arenas for disaster risk reduction at district, provincial and national level, mobilizing people's effective agency¹⁴.

An important precondition for reworking institutions and challenging power relations within the village seems to be the ability of field staff to deal with competing risk perceptions, with the silencing of disasters and with opposing village authorities. The experiences in Central Java show how relationships between various social actors within the village changed from opponents, enemies towards engagement, agony, and even cooperation. These power dynamics illustrated that power is actually 'relational' and the result of the working of multiple, intertwined institutions (Nuijten, 2005). Power has to be constantly performed rather than being possessed

¹⁴ Chapter 7 will elaborate on how CBOs, their alliances and local village government in entering new arenas for disaster risk reduction at district, provincial and national level.

(Foucault, 1980). Consequently 'empowerment' could be articulated as 'a reworking of social relationships and institutions in a way that favours the vulnerable segments of society'. Reworking social relations occurs among various actors at different levels: between men and women, among ethnic groups, between village elite and marginalized sectors, or between villagers and aid providers. Based on evidence from the field, the assumption that 'strengthening people's existing capacities' contributes to sustainable risk reduction and to processes of empowerment – as stated at the beginning of this chapter – is questionable. Social relations and institutions continuously change, people migrate, CBO and village leaders come and go, and the interactions between them remain a constant power-play. Therefore I would replace '*strengthening people's existing capacities*' with '*reworking people's existing social relationships and institutions*'.

For this purpose, community organisers need to deal with both vulnerable groups *and* village elite and authorities. It is impossible to take a 'neutral' stance - like NGO managers often espouse vis-a-vis donors, to construct the image of not being part of local politics. Evidence from the field shows that it is crucial for field staff to take an 'impartial' position. *Impartiality* means, that field staff recognizes and acknowledges the different and competing risk perceptions in the community taking a historical, social and institutional perspective, and that (s)he *facipulates* the CBDRR process towards a desirable goal that is beneficial to at least the most vulnerable social actors.

6.4 Conclusions

The distinct steps of the CBDRR step by step model seldom happen in a sequential order, but run simultaneously, back-and-forth, or they never reach a next step. *Doing* CBDRR and its consequent process is rather unpredictable and can be viewed as an arena in which actors socially negotiate over access to resources, positions and power. Local people resist, hesitate, ignore or take advantage of the presence of an outsider in a way that was not intended. It happened that selected communities were abandoned and replaced by others in case conflict occurred, the CBDRR process did not proceed as expected, or when available financial resources were reduced. The step-by-step model rather reminds practitioners to be conscious about the nature of relationships and interactions among the various actors involved in CBDRR than that it steers the process of community organising to reach the intended CBDRR objectives.

All field staff agrees that local realities require a creative and flexible approach to community organising, but certain elements or patterns do keep coming back in how NGOs select, enter and organise communities: "*organising is about routinization – developing known and predictable ways of dealing with events*" (Colebatch, 1998: 46). The Afghan NGOs developed their own CBDRR step-by-step model to be more conscious about the nature of relationships and interactions among actors (Box 6.9). Since CBDRR-practice is new for these NGOs I view the eagerness to develop their context specific CBDRR-models as part of their sense-making process of new experiences, and to be able to share these experiences with others. The CBDRR step-by-step model in Box 6.9 is the result of a reflection workshop with the local partners

of Oxfam-Novib¹⁵, and which largely resonates with the approach followed by the ICCO-partner in Herat province¹⁶.

Box 6.9: CBDRR step by step model developed by NGOs in Afghanistan

- (1) Review provincial data on frequency of hazards, localities of high vulnerabilities, and least aid provisions.
- (2) Apply the Do no Harm approach during the process of selecting communities before strategizing interventions. It is crucial to know who and what the connectors or dividers are, with the aim to estimate the risk for being co-opted by dividers.
- (3) Use appropriate channels to enter the community. Usually the CDC or *shura*. Courtesy calls to powerful persons in the area are crucial, but getting their permission alone will not be sufficient to rule out power dynamics. Hence, next point.
- (4) Since local contexts are complex and interests among groups differ, it is important to first understand these contexts in terms of history, power dynamics, past and current conflicts. Initial mediation among diversity of groups and transferring these skills to local authorities is important before talking about disaster risks. This will minimize obstruction and accusations of providing aid in a biased way.
- (5) Depending on issue and whether disaster cause tensions/conflict, relationships that matter are identified and institutions renegotiated through special created groups/councils or committees that are related to male *shura*, or cluster-CDCs (depending on the level of where authority is required).
- (6) Start confidence building process through risk assessment process and with identifying possible solutions which benefit the majority of people (balance short-term benefits with long-term structural development efforts). There are a variety of ways to involve people in this process.
- (7) Use Koran texts and mullahs to enhance cooperation among diverse social groups, and to influence/challenge prevailing gender norms.
- (8) Gather or approach ordinary people individually, to raise and increase their awareness on the issues at stake and that are of common interest.

In Central Java, similar attempts happened to articulate its context-specific multi-track approach to community organising: (1) selecting high risk upstream and downstream villages taking a watershed approach; (2) exploring social relationships and interactions within the villages and beyond (3) strengthening the CBO and facilitate interaction among opposing groups using risk maps as an instrument for dialogues, (4) facilitation of sectoral CBO networking, (5) issue-based networking among CBOs facing same or related risks (6) enabling village, district, provincial government to draw regulations that represent the interests of the CBO/vulnerable groups.

The process of selecting, entering and organising communities is by its very nature an externally driven process. The community organiser has own ambitions, motivations, preferences and affiliations with certain groups in the community *and* with the larger NGO agenda. The organised part of the community – CBO or *shura* - can play an instrumental role in this agenda. It depends on the actors entering the arena - joining, opposing, co-opting or changing the NGOs' agenda - how the CBDRR-intervention gets shape and whose agenda will be met. Some cases showed how CBDRR-interventions – promoting 'participation' and 'empowerment' - opened space for influential actors to get their plans realised while it closed down options, ambitions and political agency of others (Long, 2003; Cleaver, 1999).

Conclusions on selecting communities

The experiences in community selection show that looking for the most vulnerable, marginalized, and at risk communities is not the only concern of NGOs and donors.

¹⁵ Reflection and sense-making occurred from 16 April – 2 May, 2008

¹⁶ An exchange between local partners of ICCO and Oxfam-Novib occurred in May 2009.

Strategic arguments – geographically, accessibility, feasibility – both financially and in terms of political gains - play a big role in the selection. Even in Afghanistan, the NGOs select those villages where they expect the least trouble with warlords, commanders or corrupt village leaders. This is not because Afghan NGOs want to avoid working in insecure areas, but because they intend to adhere to the ‘do no harm’ principle. That is why they choose so-called ‘safe areas of intervention’ with fewer chances to be co-opted and more chance of success. CBDRR practice shows however, that this mode of selection does not guarantee this success. Once field staff enter the villages, many of the assumptions turn out to be wrong.

In terms of *who* decides which community to select for the CBDRR pilots, I conclude that this varied. Local partners selected the majority of the communities, while in Halmahera the arguments of I&K were decisive. I&K further played a prominent role in determining the provinces or regions in Afghanistan where local partners could select communities. The selection criteria were set by the Steering Group, and it checked whether the selected villages complied with the criteria. In this sense, I&K’s role was influential.

Conclusion on entering the community

Entering villages either happens through informal contacts that have relatives in a village or through formal courtesy visits to authorities. How a community organiser enters the village and with whom (s)he engages is steered by the NGO’s agenda and assumptions about how change happens. When community organisers are aware of local power dynamics like in Bungu, creative ways to engage and mobilize people become a strategy to address power differentials. However, when this awareness is low, community organisers may become an instrument of local elite to fulfil their agenda, like in Khulm and Birinoa. In these instances, the CBDRR process did not evolve as expected, and the NGO found itself increasingly caught in the web of local politics. NGOs and community organisers tend to assume that a ‘community’ has a defined space with clear boundaries, that it is heterogeneous but undivided. The cases suggest that we should approach ‘community-based’ as looking for social interactions first, followed later by drawing territorial boundaries and reworking local institutional arrangements for dispute settlement, protection and risk reduction within and beyond village level. This is only possible when the community organiser took an impartial position to maintain credibility and legitimacy.

Conclusion on community organising and conducting risk assessments

Awareness raising of disaster risks and identification of disaster preparedness measures is often a first step before community organisers go into deeper risk analysis and more structural long-term strategizing. Reasons are manifold. Focusing on disaster risk is concrete, most people can relate to the topic, have negative experiences with disasters, and therefore disaster preparedness often makes a big impact without lots of financial investments. For NGO field staff that are not familiar with CBDRR, a focus on disaster preparedness seems the first step to grasp the approach and to have a legitimate presence in the village.

Later on, through progressive on-going risk analysis and reflections, NGO staff, community organisers and CBO leaders realized, that to address issues concerned with watershed management, flood mitigation, land rights, water rights or spatial planning, village institutions do not operate at the appropriate scale. They recognized the importance of consciously entering the 'political arena' to negotiate and struggle for their risk solutions with the government who is expected to create enabling political and legislative environments. However, only in Central Java and in Herat the local NGOs acted accordingly, while local partners elsewhere did not.

Entering the political arena requires the mobilization of CBOs of other villages facing similar challenges, and the support of other civil society organisations like NGOs, lawyers, human rights groups, or environmentalist. Jampi Sawan is such an alliance in Central Java - like UGNAYAN is in Central Luzon, Philippines (Chapter 3). Such alliances aim to benefit local communities, but they also serve NGO agendas to strengthen and expand a political support base to influence and challenge government policies and practices. In Herat, Afghanistan, such alliances did not emerge. Ordinary people and *shura* leaders instead focused on the reworking and revival of social and institutional arrangements to encourage forms of cooperation, to manage common resources and solving disputes aimed to strengthen livelihoods and their ability to respond promptly and flexibly to local-specific circumstances and stresses. The cases of Central Java and Herat are discussed in more detail in Chapter 7, which focuses on the everyday politics of CBDRR practice.

Most NGOs assumed that the process of entering and organising the community would take six months to one year, followed by implementation of risk reduction measures. However, this assumption turned out to be wrong. Community organising turned out to be a continuing effort. Most community organisers needed to find a balance between enabling local vulnerable people to affect change towards reducing risk and creating safer communities, while simultaneously trying to avoid open conflict, and resisting the reproduction of structures and practices that serve to oppress subgroups in the community (Allen, 2006). The community organisers found themselves in a continuous struggle between the various actors involved in CBDRR over alternative ideas, solutions, ways of doing things, and values, to which I refer as the everyday politics. The community organising process is unpredictable, time-consuming, often beyond the project time-boundaries, and highly political. Despite the conscious efforts of this CBDRR pilot to reach the most vulnerable groups in a village through creative, flexible and context-specific approaches, the benefits still seem to drift towards elites. This means that the elite forces are strong, and that it is difficult for CBOs and NGOs to withstand these pressures, unless NGOs and CBOs decide to expand their view of the political arena beyond village level.

6.5 What do these experiences and practices mean for CBDRR concepts?

In this section I will revisit some of the definitions and meanings of concepts that make up CBDRR like community, community-based, participation and empowerment. I set out the meaning of these concepts as they emerged from the experiences in the field and from the sense-making process afterwards.

A social, territorial and institutional conceptualization of community

Community is a term that has many meanings ranging from a specific geographic area or administrative unit to a collective with common socio-cultural or even economic bonds and relations (Marsh and Buckle, 2001). 'Community' as the prefix in the CBDRR approach promoted by the UNISDR refers the lowest administrative unit of the government¹⁷ (UNISDR, 2004), whereas 'community' used by CDRN in the Philippines refers to a social entity: the most vulnerable groups within a village (Chapter 3). However, communities are not necessarily clearly bounded social or geographic units, nor do they solely refer to homogeneous groups with shared interests. There is no universally shared concept of 'community', only particular specifications that overlap, complement or contradict (Young, 1990). What the definitions have in common is that all use some combinations of space, people and social interactions (Kumar, 2005). When NGOs in Afghanistan and Indonesia selected communities, they assumed that they function politically, are socially heterogeneous but undivided, and have clear geographic boundaries. These assumptions turned out being problematic. A key problem was identifying the boundaries of the community: where do they begin and end, what form do boundaries take – spatial, social, ethnic, authority? Who is inside and who is outside 'community' boundaries? (Guijt and Shah, 1998: 8; Kumar, 2005: 282). "*The term 'community' hides a great deal of complexity*" (Coombes, 2007: 62).

Evidence from the field shows the overlapping, shifting and subjective nature of 'communities' and the permeability of boundaries. Local people view 'community' first of all as social entities, political and religious affiliations, or descendants of particular ancestors which put social boundaries. Secondly, people refer to 'community' as the specific community structures and regulations like *shura*, *ashar*, *gotong royong*, *adat*, or *BPD* which have to do with managing and regulating how different social entities relate to one another, what their community responsibilities are and the management of resources like land, forests and water setting geographically and territorial boundaries. These two views together link people and their interactions with space.

Experiences from the CBDRR pilot areas reveal the need to take a multi-dimensional approach to the notion of 'community'. When entering the community, the NGOs discovered the importance to first look into the relationships and interactions between social actors that matter, taking a systemic approach within *and* beyond village level. These interactions, relationships and power differentials are shaped by the prevailing local institutions and their histories, like gender norms, regulations for water distribution, access to land and forest resources, how space can be used and by whom, the handling of disputes, or efforts for social protection against disaster risks. These institutions are not static but can change as a result of conflict or disasters outcomes, and how people respond to these changes. In sum, *community* is a social construction that links social actors to local institutions and their histories, with authority and space.

¹⁷ See Chapter 4.

'Community-based'

In line with the revisited definition of 'community', the notion of *'Community-based'* refers to the efforts of field staff to acknowledge the risk perspectives and interests of different social groups and their power-plays in a community, and to get these represented or included in village institutions and regulations within the village and beyond - through negotiation, debate and struggle - taking a multi-dimensional approach to 'community'. Local institutions cannot be isolated from the broader institutional context. 'Community' in community-based is complex because social systems are multi-scale, and therefore CBDRR interventions should not be limited to the pragmatic territorial boundaries of singular villages as often practiced by NGOs but be expanded to the multiple institutional levels in society. 'Community-based' refers to a multi-scale, social and institutional system beyond the village level to negotiate and demand risk solutions steered by disaster and conflict affected people.

'Participation' as a negotiated value

Community-based approaches are often labelled as being participatory without a clear description of what 'participatory' means. It is often used in a normative way, meaning that participation is assumed to be 'good' and 'empowering'. However, 'participation' means various things for various actors and conceals divergent views on its aim and practice (Guijt and Shah, 1998). Pretty's typology of participation identifies different types of participation in terms of varying degrees of people's role or ability to influence decision-making over an intervention and resources offered by 'initiators' like project staff, planners or researchers (Pretty et al, 1995). Discussions on the participation typology with field staff concluded that most of their practices of participation tend to be instrumental – they interpret participation in terms of providing data, consultation, providing labour as mechanisms for reducing financial costs or prolonging sustainability to generate local ownership. Alternative practices of participation aimed to develop people's self-confidence and ability to mobilize others to challenge prevailing power differentials were practiced at a later stage particularly in Central Java.

Discussions on the participation typology with field staff in Afghanistan revealed that the local political context and the prevailing norms around 'participation' influence what form and intensity of participation is feasible or acceptable, and who is allowed to participate and who isn't. Participation is ultimately about power and control (Cornwall, 2008). Pretty's typology is a useful tool to uncover conflicting ideas among actors about why 'participation' is used and who should be involved. In Afghanistan, the notion of 'participation', involving 'common village people' in discussing community matters, or listening to what women have to say, is in many places considered irrelevant, not accepted, since community decisions are usually taken by the elders, those with some education, religious leaders, or the elite, but all male. I realised that 'participation' therefore is a negotiated value, subject for discussion and debate among actors involved in CBDRR. This is not restricted to the Afghan context, but actually applicable in any context. 'Participation' constitutes a terrain of contestation, *"in which relations of power between different actors, each with their own 'projects', shape and reshape boundaries of action"* (Cornwall, 2008: 276).

‘Empowerment’- the transformative aspect of CBDRR

Disasters, conflicts, their impact and responses create opportunities for social change. For whom and in what way depend on many factors. In Chapter 1, I presented a prevailing definition of ‘empowerment’ as ‘changing power relations in favour of marginalized excluded groups in society’. This is a very general definition. The empirical findings showed that the extent to which risk reduction measures benefitted the marginalized, vulnerable groups related to the ability of field staff to remain a legitimate and credible actor in the eyes of different social actors, and to look beyond the existing institutions around which people organise themselves, like *shura* and CBOs. These field staff interacted with a diversity of actors involving relationships varying from harmonious, cooperative to antagonistic and intimidation. Through tactical and strategic approaches to community organising, oppositional or antagonistic relationships among villagers, between authorities and villagers, between civil-society groups and government, and between men and women, changed and in several instances improved. Instead of targeting, searching and working with the most vulnerable groups – as often espoused in CBDRR literature - field staff engaged with the vulnerable groups, *and* with village elite, *and* with village authorities. I have been referring to this as ‘impartiality’.

‘Impartiality’ has various meanings. In the field of humanitarian aid ‘impartiality’ means that response should be guided by human *needs* alone, rather than political or any other criteria (Leader, 2000). This implies that aid providers do not interfere in a conflict but provide assistance to those people most in need. In the field of peace building ‘impartiality’ refers to the performance of a mediator or peace builder in order to build trust. It is found crucial that all parties feel fully respected as equal human beings, and that one group does not receive more attention than another (Patfoort, 2001: 462). In the context of the CBDRR pilots, the interventions aimed to respond to people’s needs before, during and after disasters, to reduce risks *and* tensions. In this context I prefer a politically sensitive meaning of ‘impartiality’: the ability of field staff to bring opposing actors together without having personal prejudices or preconceptions of the actors, in order to reach a comprehensive understanding of the actors’ needs (Vaux, 2001: 5). This means understanding the actors’ needs within their full social and political context, and seeing the connections and power relationships between them. *“Impartiality means distinguishing one person from the next, and being aware that many people have an interest in the vulnerability of others”* (Vaux, 2001: 20). The community organisers in Sambiroto and Bungu, for instance, focused on connections and interests of the various actors, and carefully managed to bring opposing groups on speaking terms, without explicitly taking a preconceived position.

Acknowledging competing risk perspectives, seeing connections and understanding power relations between actors, between villages, CBOs and with the government, matters to rework social relations aimed to reduce risk and people’s vulnerability. I therefore define ‘empowerment’ here as ‘challenging and reworking of social relationships among differing social actors and institutions in a way that risk solutions favour the marginalized vulnerable segments of society’.

7. The everyday politics of CBDRR practice

“The simplistic assumption that better access to local perspectives will ensure that program decisions are more participatory is only too obviously blind to the institutional realities”
Mosse, 2005: 99

Many aid organizations operate with limited interpretations of CBDRR. They focus on addressing problems at ‘the local level’, and address ‘risk reduction’ in aspects that are susceptible to technical solutions (Cannon, 2000). The social, economic and political origins of disaster vulnerability and the political nature of disaster risk reduction are often ignored (Bender, 1999; Blaikie et al, 1994). CBDRR aims to build resilient communities and to improve the position of vulnerable, marginalized people. The preceding chapter concluded that despite the conscious efforts of the CBDRR pilot to reach the most vulnerable groups in a village through creative, flexible and context-specific approaches, the benefits still seem to drift towards village elites. This means that elite forces are strong, and that withstanding these pressures is difficult for CBOs and vulnerable groups, and for the NGOs which claim to support the latter. I further concluded that for addressing people’s vulnerabilities, - particularly people’s social and political vulnerability - village institutions do not operate at the appropriate scale to address issues concerned with flood mitigation, watershed management to reduce flash flood and drought, land and water rights, or spatial planning. Therefore, local people and NGOs realize that they need to engage – in one way or another - with the broader institutional context of norms, traditions, the judiciary system and policies, the governance structure and institutions related to the allocation of resources, and understand how these play out locally through village institutions (Jütting, 2003). Local people and NGOs need to consciously enter the ‘political arena’ to negotiate and struggle for their risk solutions. How to do this is not part of ADPC’s CBDRR step-by-step model, which views CBDRR as a project isolated from its broader institutional context.

This chapter examines how local people and NGOs implement their CBDRR plans – step 6 and 7 of the CBDRR step-by-step model - by entering ‘the political arena’ to realize their risk solutions in conflict settings. The political arena of disaster risk reduction considers the many conceptualizations of politics, ranging from state politics to the everyday politics of all human interaction (Kerkvliet, 1991). Evidence from Afghanistan and Indonesia shows that risk reduction measures locally are not just shaped and decided upon by local actors. Rules, decisions and policies are made at every level in society and in all organizations, and therefore politics is not limited to those officially elected in governments and parliaments (Kerkvliet, 1991). Olson (2000) refers to politics as how actors frame and explain disaster events, questioning who can be held responsible, and how resources are allocated to whom, where and for what after disasters hit. Many disaster risk reduction measures - like for instance construction of evacuation centres and dikes, river normalization and reforestation – generate resource contests and land claims, and require spatial re-ordering. This makes disaster risk reduction political.

A CBDRR intervention is not just a negotiated outcome of social practices and political struggles about critical resources. People’s motives, interests, norms and views on how

change happens are also contested and debated, which influences how risk reduction measures are put into practice, and determines who benefits and who does not (after Long and van der Ploeg, 1989). Research findings show how local villagers struggle to put their risk-problem on the government's agenda, and how government officials try to get support for *their* definition of reality. The broader institutional context in which district governors, line departments, civil society organisations, and (I)NGOs push their agendas as well, play their role in determining which risk reduction measures are implemented where and how, and whose risks are not. Risk is often not reduced but redistributed to poorer, marginalized and socially excluded segments of society (Lebel et al, 2006). By looking for politics in the everyday life of disaster and conflict affected people, I aim to uncover some of the complexities and the political nature of disaster risk reduction practice. The implication for aid agencies is that they should invest considerable time and effort to find out who cooperates and who opposes particular risk reduction measures and why, and to deal with these power plays in such a way that marginal groups could succeed in their demands for protection and safety.

Interventions as distinct entities do not exist, since they are always part of a chain of events in the broader institutional environment, which influences current intervention dynamics (Long, 2001: 32). I discuss several cases of intervention processes in Central Java beyond the time-bound CBDRR projects through analysing the everyday politics of DRR from the perspective of villagers, civil society organisations, village authorities and district government. They all struggle to get support for *their* definition of reality. I visited the area once or twice a year during a time-span of five years from 2006 until 2011 and followed the different actors to discover certain patterns, interactions and contradictions between them. Two MSc students spent four months in the area during 2010 to conduct in-depth research into negotiation processes of two DRR interventions. Reflecting on CBDRR-interventions as a political arena, released a lot of energy and recognition among NGO staff, and reduced the temptation to construct success stories to me. Additionally, I briefly discuss intervention processes in Herat province, Western Afghanistan, where local people successfully got cooperation and legitimacy from district and provincial authorities for their efforts to reduce the negative impact of sandstorms, while the risk priorities set by their women – drug addiction and health problems - faced a lot of obstacles locally and were even denied by government authorities. Due to increased security problems, I could not visit these villages myself and relied on discussions with villagers whom I met in Herat city, on critical reflection sessions with representatives of the CBDRR committees from the villages and the NGO project team, and on research papers of others to validate my interpretations and to fill the gaps¹. The reason to include this case, is to make sense of the meaning of CBDRR approaches in conflict settings and in contexts where government is weak, contested or absent, but where despite these constraints, local people succeeded in creating new governance arrangements to get (limited) access to social and political resources. It is the aim of this CBDRR-pilot to enhance the aid responsiveness to communities, and this includes communities that have become inaccessible for foreigners due to ISAF-Taliban encounters, but that are still, although with security risk, accessible for Afghan aid workers.

¹ Doing research in a 'remote sense' mode faces lots of weaknesses like limited triangulation, the danger of promoting the stories of the *shura* while suppressing others, no access to observe local dynamics and interactions, and high reliance on second hand data. Yet, this is also the reality of aid practice of Afghan NGOs and their donors.

7.1. Prioritizing risk: whose risk?

Previous chapters concluded that a diversity of risk perceptions exists about the same risk event. Field cases revealed that specific actors are in a better position to articulate their risk constructs and mobilize people and organizations than others, which closely relates to local institutional settings. These local institutional settings largely determine how social and political vulnerability to disasters and conflict plays out locally: two communities in Bamyan with apparently similar environmental conditions and exposure to floods and avalanches, experience the impact of these disasters very differently which can be largely attributed to a variation in the functioning of *shuras*, rivalry between commanders, practice of *ashar*, rules and practice of water and land allocation, and social protection. The previous chapter revealed that even when NGO field staff explores the divergent risk perceptions of different social groups in a village, that this is not a guarantee that these perceptions are brought to the decision-table where people will decide about *which* and *whose* risk to prioritize. Risk perceptions of women, landless people, and migrants tend to evaporate in the risk assessment process as community organizers, sometimes pushed by village authorities, frame risk problems in terms of 'serving the common good' focussing on shared values and common interests to avoid conflict.

There are exceptions, though, where CSOs try to influence processes of 'risk' negotiation between social actors to get a risk-problem of marginalized groups recognized or to resist elite capture. This happened in Kasiyan, Central Java, where particularly landless settlers experience negative impact of floods. They wanted a proper evacuation site within the village, instead of traveling and staying far away with their relatives. Their risk problem was initially ignored by the NGO, because landless settlers and migrant workers are not organized in the traditional CBOs, and therefore remained invisible for the NGO. It was the *Serikat Petani Pati* (SPP), the Pati Farmers Union, which brought this forgotten group's risk problem to the attention of the NGO, and simultaneously integrated this group in its own political agenda to negotiate with the government flood mitigation measures and to resist the land claim of a cement factory in the area for limestone mining. While the case of the evacuation centre in Kasiyan is central to the analysis, it should be seen in a broader framework of former and existing chains of events and negotiation processes between villagers, CBOs, CSO alliances and government officials.

The case from Herat province focuses on how district and provincial government recognize and support the male-defined risk problem of sandstorms, while it completely denied the women's interrelated risk problems of opium addiction, health and domestic violence. The women wanted a safe house, a place to find social protection. Although women in Afghanistan have limited access to the state, markets and civil society organizations, their exposure to education, health and other social welfare services while staying in refugee camps abroad, made some of them decide to take on civil society work and to support disadvantaged women in their villages of origin. This background, in combination with the presence of an active female NGO field staff, improved their bargaining position towards men. Initially, they got the support from the male *shuras* until a piece of land had to be allocated for the 'women's resource centre' as they framed it to get it accepted. The start of the construction work occurred at a time of increasing Taliban influence in the province, and that NGO staff received death threats probably related to the NGO's promotion of saffron production to replace poppy. A women's resource centre could become a target as well.

Despite all these constraints, two women resource centres were constructed and inaugurated in November 2011.

7.1.1 The construction of a permanent evacuation centre in Kasiyan, Sukolilo subdistrict

In February 2006 Juwana River overflowed and inundated 36 villages in 7 sub-districts in Pati district including 5,657 hectares of ready-to-harvest paddy fields. The harvest failed since the rice was submerged for several months. The Pati Farmers Union (SPP) submitted an emergency appeal through SHEEP to Kerkinactie, despite local risk narratives that people are used to live with the floods which occur frequently. *“Floods are part of our normal life”* as one SPP leader told me when I met him for the first time in September 2006. People in the area have developed coping strategies to deal with floods combining farming with fishing. In the lower parts of the area, where houses get flooded, people lift their belongings, make a floating kitchen of banana stems or move to the first floor if possible. When water levels rise further, they practice family-wise evacuation strategies using boats, and stay with relatives on higher grounds. Since 2003 people who can afford it, started to elevate their houses, and also mosques or community halls are assigned as evacuation centre when needs arise. People help each other to evacuate livestock. So, when floods are part of people’s normal life, why then did SPP-SHEEP submit an emergency and recovery appeal to a Dutch donor?

SPP-SHEEP uses emergency relief as an entry-point for community organizing. SPP views disasters as a political opportunity to rework CBOs’ orientation to become critical monitors of government’s performance and policies. SPP is a farmers’ organization consisting of small and middle farmers who own their land (88% has less than 1 ha)². SPP is a so-called new farmers’ movement where farmers as producers are trapped in global markets which are beyond their control in contrast to traditional peasant movements which are based on a struggle for land rights and land reforms (Chasan³, 2005). SPP initially challenged the national government’s policies like the rice market liberalization – pushed by the IMF and the World Bank - that lowered rice prices, raising problems for the farmers in Pati. But increasingly, they face failed harvests due to floods which they attribute to sedimentation of Juwana River, and therefore SPP included flood mitigation in its lobby and advocacy agenda. SPP focuses on policy advocacy activities through demonstrations, alliance building, opinion building and negotiation. It aims to build a broad support base to have a better bargaining position vis-à-vis the government regarding farmer’s concerns like the demand for flood mitigation through river normalization.

SPP selected six villages, among others, Kasiyan for emergency assistance because it was worst affected by floods due to its low location causing floodwater to stay for four months. SPP has only five members here out of 98 households which is very few. 70% of the inhabitants are not even farmers but settlers from various districts, who came to Kasiyan in 1985 through a government resettlement programme. They mainly work as day-labourers on farms of others, like for SPP members. During floods, they lose these livelihood options and particularly the youth leave the village in search for work, while others rely on humanitarian aid or they borrow money to buy food. Women told me they feel ashamed to rely on humanitarian aid and to evacuate to stay with relatives. The local mosque serves as evacua-

² Source is Agriculture Census BPS Pati 2003 presented in Chasan’s report (2005: 21)

³ Chasan is a former staff of SHEEP who completed his masters on SPP at the ISS in The Hague in 2005.

tion centre as well, but it is small, crowded and people find the combination of evacuation with praying not very appropriate. However, when floods suddenly occur during the night, the mosque is the first place to go for safety. This group of landless day-labourers and their families do not view SPP as an immediately relevant organization for them, but appreciate the food support. SHEEP did not identify these landless migrants as target for relief or the CDBRR-pilot, since they are not the usual members of SSP or of the traditional CBOs who are predominantly farmers, and as a result remained invisible.

A motive for SPP to render support to Kasiyan beyond this emergency period is related to a decision of the government to allow a cement factory in Sukolilo to convert 1400 ha of paddy fields and villages into a mining area (limestone and clay) without the consultation and consent of 8500 households in affected villages, including part of Kasiyan. The most active supporters and members of SPP are from Sukolilo, and they regard this threat of displacement as an attack on their roots and identity. Nobody has an official land certificate to prove landownership, but they share the understanding that land cannot be sold to outsiders. Many SPP members from Sukolilo belong to the Samin community⁴, who share a strong collective identity of farm workers, rice producers and have a sense of “we-ness” because of a feeling of being excluded by the political system (Chasan, 2005 and own interviews). *“The “we-ness” feeling”, according to one SPP leader, “can be traced back to colonial times, when our ancestors resisted paying tax to the Dutch colonizers”. “Sukolilo people are known as tough people”, “village heads label us as rebels” – according to some female SPP members. These women became active since 2008 during the protests against the limestone mining and arrival of a cement factory, to provide SPP with a friendlier image to government officials, particularly to ease negotiations with the district governor who is a woman*⁵. It is possible that this shared identity is rather a construction of an ‘imagined community’ of people being excluded, than that it is based on actual historical facts. Also the settlers felt deceived and excluded when the government did not provide them farm land in 1985 but just a housing lot in Kasiyan. SPP, in its organizing work, effectively constructed a collective identity and collective enemy to mobilize and organize social action and resistance to government’s decisions and policies that are framed as unjust. Most probably, SPP supported Kasiyan with the construction of the evacuation centre since it hoped to gain political support in negotiation processes to oppose the cement factory and limestone mining. Agus, a landless settler from Demak and youth leader, became SPP member during the construction of the evacuation centre because he regarded SPP as *“people who think with you how to best solve your problems”*. SPP emphasizes and convinces people that despite their marginalization they have agency, a role to play in their own ‘inclusion’, referring to social solidarity, cohesion or moral bonds of rights and obligations that knit them together (Daly and Silver, 2008).

Early 2006, SPP leaders observed the poor quality of the evacuation site at the mosque, and thought that this could be improved. SPP approached SHEEP to meet with those people in Kasiyan who need to evacuate during flood seasons, and to discuss their priorities. People prioritized a proper spacious evacuation site and clean drinking water on short term, while

⁴ Samin community is an indigenous community living in some places in East and Central Java. They practice their own belief inherited from their leader Samin Surosentiko.

⁵ Interview with women in secret location in Pati district in March 2009 when protests against the cement factory turned violent.

mentioning ‘river normalization’ as the structural solution to flooding. The latter is however a slow and long-term effort, while floods occur again early next year. An evacuation shelter has immediate benefits and could be used for multiple purposes. No clear plan existed and hardly resources – it wasn’t included in the emergency and recovery appeal nor in the first CBDRR intervention -, but given the urgency, it was decided to start with the construction of an elevated floor of 2 meters and a surface of 10 x 20 m². People offered labour through *gotong royong*, voluntary community labour, food for the workers, sand and stones, while SHEEP provided cement.

Construction was not yet completed when floods occurred again early 2007. 74 people fled to the unfinished construction site using plastic sheets to protect them from wind and rain. By the end of 2007 the evacuation centre got a roof of iron sheets provided by the district vice-governor who visited Kasiyan on the invitation of SHEEP, and after seeing the floor she decided to donate 20 million Rupiah⁶. That time sanitation facilities were still lacking. During the floods of early 2009, the evacuation centre was full again with families, but to stay there was still not comfortable. People approached SHEEP to correct the construction to make the roof safer, to build walls to replace the plastic sheets and to finish the latrines. This time SHEEP included the materials and a few skilled labour into the CBDRR pilot budget, enabling the completion of the evacuation centre, which is currently called *Balai Rakyat* or Community Hall because the place is also used for health services, education and for meeting purposes.

Figure 7.1: Construction of evacuation centre in Kasiyan, Pati district, Indonesia



The evacuation centre in Kasiyan is not the outcome of a well-planned CBDRR intervention that supports and consciously targets the most vulnerable group in a village. On the contrary, it is the result of the everyday practice of local people, SPP and SHEEP who interacted in a spontaneous, complex and unpredictable process that took place in the margins of a planned CBDRR intervention in Kasiyan, that focused on the farmers’ CBO instead, who benefitted from water pumps and a livestock programme. It further happened in a context of historical and contemporary dynamics beyond the occurrence of annual flooding in which SPP needed to position itself by broadening its support-base, negotiation with government on flood mitigation and rice prices, and resisting new risks caused by the cement factory’s claim. While the evacuation centre was relevant for Kasiyan, for SPP and SHEEP it was a by-product of their long-term organizing work. In 2009 Pati’s district governor suddenly called the evacuation centre in Kasiyan a model for flood preparedness, and promised to allocate funds to build similar structures in five other flood-affected villages along Juwana River. The plans were approved in 2009, including technical specifications for each village, however without clear implementation deadlines (BAPPEDA, 2009). The governor, knowing the complaints and the discontent of flood-affected villagers, hoped to take political advantage during the coming elections. She promoted the implementation of evacuation centres,

⁶ 20 million Indonesian Rupiah amounts about € 2000,-

thereby ignoring the demand of flood-affected villagers for river normalization as I will explain in the following section.

7.1.2 Engaging in the political arena of DRR beyond Kasiyan

In Chapter 1 I explained how I will analyse disaster politics and how responses are handled by combining the official and the everyday politics perspective, asking Olson's three questions to all actors involved in DRR. These three questions refer to processes of how disasters are framed and explained by various actors differently – why they happen, and who can be held responsible - about what should be done and how to allocate resources (Olson, 2000; Kerkvliet, 1991). All actors in Pati agree that DRR is important to address floods, but behind this apparent consensus, a decisive power play takes place about *who* has the discursive power to frame the flood-risk problem and the related solution, and *who* decides *whose* risk reduction measures are taken seriously and *whose* ideas and proposals are left out. The case of flood and water management in Pati deserves special attention as it illustrates, amongst others, that a government and the private sector are not always a winning team.

Whereas local risk narratives stress that floods are part of people's normal lives, and people take their precautions to prepare for and mitigate floods, more structural solutions to deal with flooding cannot be developed independently from the political arena of DRR actors in Pati and beyond. Local villagers know that their own measures fall short, as they lack the means to tackle the underlying reasons of flooding: sedimentation of the Juwana River, deforestation of surrounding mountains and lack of coordination between government officials and the upstream dam authorities about the release of excess water into Juwana River. The watershed lines of Juwana River do not correspond with political and administrative boundaries, and neither does the web of power relations that influence DRR decisions and resource allocation. The new governance system in Indonesia, introduced after the fall of Suharto, is ambiguous in terms of where authority is situated, and the lack of knowledge and understanding of the new responsibilities lead to gaps in planning and implementation among government levels and departments (de Hauwere and van der Zouwen, 2010).

In 2007, in light of the Hyogo Declaration, the Indonesian House of People's Representatives approved a new Disaster Management Law, stating that the State of the Republic of Indonesia has the responsibility to protect all people of Indonesia and their entire native land against disasters, both life and livelihoods. This implies a shift from emergency relief to a pro-active approach to reducing disaster risks. However, most government officials at the various levels have little idea what this entails (SHEEP, 2010). Local communities and local NGOs in Central Java make use of this ambiguity which provides room for negotiating how government from the village to district level could translate disaster risk reduction policy into practice. From the villagers living along Juwana River to the governmental officials at the district level, they all monitor the world around them and strategize accordingly. To make this political arena explicit, I will analyse the negotiation processes around two concrete DRR measures –the normalization of Juwana River and the construction of five evacuation centres. I will discuss how the various actors use their discursive power, their institutional power and how in the end resources for DRR are allocated linked to Olson's questions for analysing the politics of disaster response (2000) and to the institutional context as proposed in Table 1.2 (Chapter 1). Aside from my own fieldwork, details are taken from the in-depth research of de Hauwere and van der Zouwen (2010), two MSc students I supervised

and who received assistance from SHEEP, and on studies of two SHEEP research staff into the institutional context in which disaster risk reduction gets shaped.

7.1.3 Negotiating DRR interventions: the case of normalization of Juwana River

The first demands for normalization originate from the 1990s. Year after year, villagers living alongside the river, supported by SPP, SHEEP and later Jampi Sawan, lobbied with government officials to make the river deeper and wider as they considered the sedimentation of the river as one of the main causes of flooding in their villages. Nevertheless, after a decade of dialogue and pressure, river normalization became a recurrent element in political campaigns. This implies that the CBDRR-pilot did not start on a 'blank page' but became part of a chain of events in the broader institutional context where villagers, civil society organisations, village authorities and district government interacted and shaped the CBDRR process and outcomes. This section describes how local people together with civil society organizations interacted with government departments to demand river normalization in a time of decentralization. One of the outcomes of these interactions was that five bulldozers started to lift sedimentation from Juwana River near Karangrowo village in September 2010. Contractors told me that they received budget from the district government that was just enough to dig and widen 10 km of the river, instead of the needed 60 km. The widening and deepening of this 10 km would take until September 2011.

Using discursive power to frame flooding: Why does the government resist normalization?

Asking government officials why floods happen in Muria region, including Pati district, the majority responds that “*disaster is an act of God*” or due to climate extremes (SHEEP, 2010). Only a few attribute the flooding to sedimentation of Juwana River. The government tends to view disasters as external events for which they cannot be held responsible. Asked about DRR, they start talking about relief operations. Contrary to the Philippine experience, where the government favours engineering and physical projects to mitigate flooding⁷, government officials in Pati try to elude discussions about river normalization, which is a big engineering project, by constructing narratives that flooding is not an urgent issue and the situation is not getting worse (de Hauwere en van der Zouwen, 2010). River normalization involves more than just technically increasing the capacity of the river by making it deeper, wider and straight; it also has a social dimension. River widening has a consequence for people whose land and houses are situated within 20 meters from the river, which will be excavated, and for this loss of land they are entitled to receive compensation.

Over the years however, politicians discovered the political perspective that disasters offer, especially during election time. The promise to build five evacuation centres should be seen in this light. An evacuation centre is easy to implement, it is a small project, very visible in the village, and showing its benefits before the next elections. This is not the case with river normalization, which is costly and involves a complex long-term process involving many other government institutions before the benefits will become clear. Through Jampi Sawan's lobby and critical media coverage, which target the district governor to be responsible for implementing flood mitigation, election candidates promise to support river normalization, but they do not deliver after elections. There is hardly an incentive for them to approve such an expensive and complex project. Instead, quick-win projects like relief and the planned

⁷ See Chapter 3

evacuation centres were believed to sufficiently keep critical voices silent (de Hauwere and van der Zouwen, 2010).

To legitimize government's resistance to normalization, district officials further argue that they do not always implement what citizens demand, because they have incorrect ideas and views. A district government official explained this: *"For instance on the radio, when the topic is about normalization, there are many phone calls from people who urge that normalization should start immediately. However, normalization requires calculations, how deep it should be, as the depth can differ for different areas. If they dig too deep, it will result in intrusion of salty water, the water would not be able to flow back to the sea and the people cannot irrigate their fields. So people's needs can differ from wants. If people's needs are not fulfilled, it will trouble them. But if they want something, it does not mean that the government has to fulfil it"* (Hauwere and van der Zouwen, 2010: 149). It is true that citizens are not always aware of the technical implications of interventions, and that government cannot fulfil all suggestions of its citizens. Nevertheless, deviating opinions are always subject to competing discourses, and what counts as 'correct' or 'incorrect' depends on the actor's interests. While the flooding in Pati is real, there is room for the DRR actors to socially construct its urgency and the extent to which the flooding is worth an intervention (Slovic, 2003). Further, framing the villagers' demands either as 'needs' or 'wants', the risk involved in flooding is subsequently prioritized or minimized.

For a long time local people did not view flooding as a disaster, as these were considered part of normal life or to be in the hands of God. People continuously adapted their livelihood strategies to the changing environment combining farming with fishing. Over the last few years, however, this narrative altered. People expressed that they increasingly face difficulties to adhere to their seasonal cropping calendar because floods occur earlier – during harvest time - and stay longer hampering planting a second crop. The reasons to alter local narratives could be attributed to the factual increase in flood events, but also to SHEEP's engagement with these villagers, because SHEEP regard the *"floods are part of normal life"* narrative as problematic. SHEEP and the other NGOs in Central Java construct a disaster narrative that aims to convince both grassroots people and government authorities that disasters are not natural, but a matter of vulnerability for which the Indonesian government can be held responsible. Although the government is held most responsible, the NGOs advocate a multi-actor approach to DRR involving communities, media, CSOs, business and government institutions. SHEEP uses the Hyogo Framework for Action to mobilize all actors including government with the difference that the NGOs regard the DRR multi-stakeholder approach not as harmonious, but as a political arena. Like CDRC, also the NGO-CSO networks in Pati district, and in Muria region, use disasters as an entry point for making people more conscious about injustices in society. However, while CDRC aims to transform social and political structures and institutions that generate poverty and injustice, the NGO-CSO network in Muria region project their strategies in a framework of environmental protection or restoring the environment by promoting appropriate land use planning.

Institutional power plays: villagers and NGOs in search of support and justice

To understand why floods happen in Pati and in Muria region in general, one needs not only to know the geography of rivers and dams in the area, but also the national institutional history in which DRR policy is currently evolving. In the preceding chapter I explained that

the New Order's centralistic framework has been replaced by a new legal framework for the democratisation of local-level politics and village institutions. According to the new Law, 1999, the village is no longer under the authority of the sub-district, but became an autonomous level of government. This means that a village can formulate and pass its own village regulations and budgets without the approval from higher authorities. This includes DRR regulations. Most village authorities know the new DM law 24, 2007, but are not yet aware of the opportunity to make regulations and policies independent from higher administrative levels. This is a policy gap which NGOs aim to address through their CBO organizing work to hold village authorities accountable for DRR.

In January 2005 the Government of Indonesia signed the Hyogo Declaration shortly after the December 2004 tsunami. The Hyogo Framework for Action provided a push for reform, which coincided with lobby efforts of UNDP and the Indonesian Society for Disaster Management, known as MPBI (Lassa, 2011). MPBI is an association and comprises UN staff, government officials, NGO activists and academics. It successfully advocated and lobbied for a more proactive DM law to reduce the immense losses like experienced during recent major disasters in the country stressing to look into causes of disasters and not only into impact. This new DM law 24, enacted in July 2007, is integrated in the decentralization policies, meaning that power to formulate DRR policies for its respective territory is delegated to the district and village government levels – dismantling the provincial level in terms of decision-making authority (Schulte-Nordholt, 2003). The law prescribes that DRR policies should be in line with development policies, and include disaster management cooperation policies with other districts, provinces or cities. In practice this does not happen because the authority of government institutions that should play a crucial role in disaster risk reduction, operate at different administrative levels: provinces still have autonomy in spatial planning, public works, environmental issues, mid-term development planning, while the district level has autonomy on DRR, and the national level keeps the responsibility for natural resources, fiscal and monetary matters, and justice, among others. There are many contradictions within the government system between elected bodies that take decisions, and administrative functions.

Land-use planning and watershed management are issues being decided at higher levels, and therefore it is difficult for flood affected communities to address environmental issues through a watershed perspective, which involves three districts. Whereas Pati district has a DRR plan and policy since July 2010, the adjacent districts of Kudus and Jepara lack any DRR policy or structure. Aside of the lack of knowledge and understanding of the new responsibilities among government levels and departments, the decentralization did not result in the decentralization of revenues. This implies that provinces can set their priorities but are not sure whether they will have the funding for implementation. This is another constraint for the district government to not invest in big projects like normalization. In the end, it remains unclear what exactly has been decentralised (Schulte-Nordholt, 2003). This institutional context of unclear responsibilities between administrative levels and departments, together with a democratization process, offers opportunities for civil society groups to find space to manoeuvre aimed to make their lobby for structural DRR measures successful.

Whereas during Suharto's time, civil-society organizations had to operate under heavy regulations and repression, preventing labourers and farmers to organize themselves to

oppose government policies (Antlöv, 2003), they now are less afraid to speak out their concerns or dissatisfaction. Flood affected communities increasingly complain to village authorities that relief should not be the only answer, but that government should keep its promises like implementing normalization. Initially SPP and SHEEP were instrumental in the conscientization of farmers and fishermen by challenging their conventional thinking on hierarchy in Indonesian society. The official statements on decentralization and bottom-up approaches will not happen automatically, unless concerned citizens enter and use the opening of political spaces to engage with government to influence institutions to further their interests. However from 2008 onwards, SPP increasingly focused its energy and campaign on resisting the arrival of the cement factory and to reverse the decision to allow limestone mining, which required multiple strategies and tactics like getting media attention, open demonstrations, negotiations and many court cases up to the Supreme Court in Jakarta. As a result SPP lacked the capacity to also advocate for river normalization to address floods. Besides, the lobby for river normalization also involves fishermen and concerned citizens, while SPP is a farmers organization. In consultation with SHEEP, SPP made a strategic choice to focus on farmers' interest, and that it would be more effective to mobilize farmers, fishermen and other citizens into an issue-based alliance.

Since then SHEEP facilitated the formation of an alliance among farmers and fishermen living along Juwana River but who were organized in separate CBOs. The purpose of the alliance was to lobby and pressure the district government to implement river normalization. After lengthy discussions fishermen and farmers – with each different risk problems and diverting priorities - decided to combine forces by establishing the CSO 'Jampi Sawan' (see box 6.6 chapter 6). Considering the relatively little means SHEEP and Jampi Sawan have to foster government's accountability, they brought in multiple, creative strategies to engage both with government and concerned citizens. They engaged with village authorities, the districts governor and line departments, politicians and with provincial level authorities to better grasp policies, responsibilities and where to find potential support for normalization. To bring the political debate into the village, members of Jampi Sawan for instance took their camera and boat to map all kind of issues and problems encountered along Juwana River, and discussed their observations with villagers living there. They intended to particularly mobilize the village heads to raise their voices, since this group still tends to await instructions from district level, not yet used to the possibility to deviate from the district's plans, or they simply refuse to cooperate. Through media like local newspapers and radio, SHEEP and Jampi Sawan raised the issue of normalization as frequent as possible bringing the political debate both into the village and the district government. *"When we publish an article today, tomorrow there will be a reply from the government using their media – an indicator that government take us seriously"* – according to SHEEP field staff. Getting stories published is not always self-evident, as the media has an interest in highlighting the issues of the day, and not necessarily in background articles on why floods happen or about unfulfilled promises of politicians. But since the media in Indonesia are sensitive to the occurrence of disasters, SHEEP and Jampi Sawan constantly strategize how they can best use these opportunities to bring out the structural shortcomings in governmental policy and to pressure government to take its responsibilities. At the same time, politicians use their media to create an image of goodwill and responsibility.

In addition to media, SHEEP and CSOs in the other districts organized meetings to bring together district government, village officials, and CBOs to discuss DRR. During these meetings all actors manoeuvre to frame their concerns in culturally accepted ways and avoid direct political confrontations. Village officials attend these meetings in their professional capacity, and since respect for people higher in the hierarchy is still considered important, directly blaming government officials for their failures will jeopardize their participation in such meetings on the long run. Besides, for the NGOs, to be able to influence the government, it is important to have some government officials on board. In the end, these meetings rather serve to stay on speaking terms and maintain relationships, than to actually negotiate policies and plans. SHEEP, Jampi Sawan and village officials need to know what happens behind this façade, to make their lobby for normalization and pressure on the district governor effective. So, social investigation and research into the institutional relationships is an important activity of their DRR-work.

The political arena behind the façade

So far, the district government showed little interest in the normalization project. The Indonesian government, however, is not a monolithic organization and through the engagement of SHEEP and Jampi Sawan with government officials and departments at different levels, internal contradictions and hidden agendas behind resisting the normalization project became clearer. Before going further into the everyday politics of river normalization, one needs to understand the technical and social side of this intervention. As said earlier, normalization refers to the process of increasing the capacity of a river by making it deeper and wider. It is part of a broader package of planned river management, such as diversion channels, flood-ways and dam reparations. River widening has the consequence that people whose land situated within 20 meters from the river will have to move, and are entitled to receive a compensation. The government department responsible for the technical part of normalization is *Balai Besar Wilayah Sungai Pemali Juana*, the head office in charge of the management of Juwana River, authorized by the Ministry of Public Works at national level, and which will tender several contractors to take care of the implementation. *Balai Besar* reserved a budget of 7.2 billion Indonesian Rupiah (IDR)⁸, good for normalizing 10 km of the river according to a local contractor we met in one of the villages. This amount includes 900 million IDR for the district government which is responsible for informing the people who are entitled to receive a compensation for the land that they will lose when the normalization is implemented, and to actually pay the compensations⁹. *Balai Besar* is not entitled to buy land. *Balai Besar* informed SHEEP and Jampi Sawan that the funds were available but that the district government was not willing to invest. Why not, and who was blocking the intervention?

A regulation exists to prevent people to own land or to build houses within a range of 20 meters from the river, but this regulation has never been enforced. Jampi Sawan mapped the land ownership along the river to make people aware that they are entitled to receive compensation and started to link the opposition of the district governor to the buildings and

⁸ 7.2 billion IDR = €622.395, -- (1 EUR = 11,568.22 IDR). Exchange rate retrieved August 18, 2010, from <http://www.exchange-rates.org/converter/EUR/IDR/1/Y>

⁹ The district government – department of public works – got a budget of 900 million IDR (€77.799,--): 150 million IDR to inform the people, and 750 million IDR for compensation

factories along the river and the financial interests behind them. The governor seemed to protect Chinese factory owners to the disadvantage of the farmers and fishermen who struggle to secure their livelihoods in a flood prone area. In one village along the river, where several parliament members live, a wealthy family built a dike to protect the village against floods directing the water to flood the opposite riverbanks. In case the normalization would push through, it means that this whole village would need to be re-allocated. Aside from the technical and social dimension of the intervention, a political debate exists about who should be protected by whom at whose sacrifice (Warner, 2008).

Once it became common knowledge that the governor was blocking the project, and that the district government turned out to be the major obstacle to implement normalization, tensions between the departments escalated into a conflict. In a meeting of the district parliament in the first week of March 2010, SHEEP and Jampi Sawan took another chance to advocate for normalization by emphasizing that budget is already made available and that *Balai Besar* is looking for ways to start normalization. According to the village head of Karangrowo, the district governor still tried to block the project, and to save his face by offering an alternative location to park big ships that now prevent excess water to flow into the sea, but there was no way out anymore for him. In preparation for this meeting, Jampi Sawan and SHEEP had gone to *Balai Besar* to inquire about the proper procedures to realize normalization and requested to see the correspondence between the two departments. *Balai Besar* provided all the letters. These letters were presented during the district parliament meeting. The district governor was shocked and surprised by the fact that ordinary citizens could possess this information. The village head of Karangrowo formulated the position of the governor as follows: *“He felt reluctant, but his position was in gamble. It made him angry. SHEEP and Jampi Sawan kept on asking questions about the normalization”*. By uncovering the internal conflicts within the governmental opposition in a public meeting, and the interests of the different actors, the CSOs and village officials leveraged their position as negotiators. From all the actors present in the meeting at the district parliament, no one wanted to be blamed for not taking action. *Balai Besar*, by linking up with CSOs and village officials, could position itself as the hero within the government. SHEEP and Jampi Sawan could be portrayed as civil-society heroes, especially the latter which could establish itself as a legitimate party. *“The official correspondence between Jampi Sawan and the district parliament on, amongst others, the funding of the project illustrate this”* (Hauwere and van der Zouwen, 2010: 144). In sum, the way to influence DRR policy and interventions is not only about how to frame floods to one’s advantage, but additionally in finding allies within government and beyond who share an interest in the same outcomes, independent of their individual motivations. The successful cooperation between *Balai Besar* and CSOs was temporal, aimed to leverage their own bargaining position. Alliances are dynamic and develop over time according to the specific purposes they serve (Long, 2001). Alliance formation, enrolment, persuasion, manipulation, compromise and exclusion are tactics used by all actors to improve their negotiation position to achieve their objectives (Few, 2002: 33).

Publicly performed power: negotiations continue on resource allocation and new land claims
The third form of how power operates among DRR actors refers to resources and decisions on how to use and allocate these resources. While the district government finally gave in to the demand of the CSOs and village authorities, the negotiation processes did not stop. It is

expected that the 'first phase' of normalizing 10 km will last till September 2011. Jampi Sawan is aware that the available budget is insufficient to normalize the whole river, and is afraid that the project will not result in flood mitigation. On the other hand, if Jampi Sawan would refuse to further cooperate with the government, it fears that the government will never look for additional funding. And this is not the only dilemma. The district government requested Jampi Sawan to take on the 'socialization' process, probably to legitimize the whole activity and because it has little capacity itself, while on the other hand, it rejects all kind of ideas and inputs from Jampi Sawan. For instance, Jampi Sawan uses art, theatre, and religion to inform people about what is going to happen with the river and the consequences. Government does not like this and is not willing to provide financial resources to Jampi Sawan although there is 150 million IDR available for socialization purposes. But when there are problems with land issues, the government immediately asks the help of Jampi Sawan to mediate. People who have to move their house or had to sell their land, claim land elsewhere, and this causes frictions between villagers and the government. De Hauwere and van der Zouwen (2010) found that in the negotiations concerning the compensations, for instance, villagers influence each other not to settle for the proposed price offered by the government. Although it may not be possible to refuse to sell the land, people try to find out how far they can go. Another problem is that many people have land but not an official land certificate. No certificate means no compensation. Jampi Sawan anticipates problems and advised each village to form a lobby committee to support such cases.

It is expected that the case of river normalization in Pati district will still face many dilemmas, opposing interests and agendas. Besides difficulties to get the necessary funding, internal government politics are likely to cause further delays or to prove an obstacle to complete the normalization for the whole river. The actors involved all use their agency to perform their powers to create room to manoeuvre and to change structural elements to their own advantage.

7.1.4 Negotiating DRR interventions: the case of the five evacuation centres

While negotiations, debates and conflicts concerning the proposed normalization were played out, the district government proposed five evacuation centres like in Kasiyan. Those villagers who were aware of the plan for the evacuation centres expressed their disapproval. A farmer from Karangrowo put it as follows: *"Even though there is flood, the people do not need to evacuate to an evacuation centre. They do not need an evacuation centre but normalization. But maybe from the perspective of the government, maybe making an evacuation centre is essential because they basically do not know how the people in the village live"*. Villagers expressed that they feel as if the district government is forcing this plan upon them. They explain the eagerness of the district government to build five evacuation centres as quick win interventions: in a relatively short time, it is possible to construct technically simple and with little financial resources from the district's budget a visible measure. This is more rewarding for politicians than getting involved in a complex intervention like river normalization. An evacuation centre like in Kasiyan is a perceived need by the government, but not recognized by local people in other villages. The social context in Kasiyan differs from elsewhere, where people can evacuate to relatives close by, whereas Kasiyan is populated by settlers whose relatives live in another district. Neither SHEEP nor Jampi Sawan were involved in the idea of the five evacuation centres, since they prioritized lobby and advocacy for normalization.

De Hauwere and van der Zouwen (2010) – while living in one of the villages where an evacuation centre would be built – discovered that people’s perception regarding the planned evacuation centre changed. Whereas people initially narrated that they would stay at home or move by boat or *ranggon* – bamboo raft - to higher grounds to stay with relatives, they started to become more positive about the new building. One village official even expressed that the evacuation centre has priority at this point over the process of normalization. Why? The villagers started to realize that it would be impossible to convince government officials to spend budget on more urgent matters in the village, and started to brainstorm how they could use the building for other purposes, and how to influence its design. The village head had this idea: *“We will use the evacuation centre to dry rice, for meetings of the farmer groups, or for the parents to take a rest while the children go to school as the evacuation centre will be in front of the school. There are 313 families in the village, if they get relief however, it is usually too little, like for 200 families, so we need to stock goods till there is enough before we distribute it. We now use the village office for this purpose but the evacuation centre would be better”*. When they found an alternative purpose to use the building, they stopped protests against the plan, and decided to just allow it to happen. Once construction materials will arrive, they believed, the new purpose of the intervention could still be negotiated locally, although they could not predict how the initiative will be shaped in the actual implementation since the technical specifications are fixed. It is further not sure how government officials will react to the reinterpretation of the project, and whether the alternative usage will still provide them with political benefits.

In sum, by focusing on two concrete DRR interventions, the interactions between the different actors revealed that differences in actors’ views and priorities in DRR, for instance between villagers and the government, are related to more hidden interests and agendas. Government constructs an ‘urgent need’ or ‘perceived risk’ to legitimize its plan for five evacuation centres, while resisting normalization which is felt by a large population as the real need. Often-heard statements like ‘governments lack political will’ or ‘lack of trust between government and citizens’ get a more concrete interpretation through these case studies. What the villagers together with the CSO did, is *tracing ways in which power creates webs of relations between actors, institutions and discourses across time and space* (Nuijten, 2004). As the cases show, the government is not a monolithic organization, and organized citizens search with whom in the government they can collaborate and who are their opponents and why. Collaboration with a wide range of actors at multiple levels was necessary to make normalization possible, since village authorities cannot mitigate flood in their respective village alone. It is however, not self-evident that CBOs and CSOs can endlessly carry on with their struggle, negotiations, searching for new opportunities, and stay alert for new challenges, as everyone is busy with their own daily activities. Lot of pressure is put on particularly CBO leaders, and NGOs invest in them without having the guarantee that leaders will stay for ever. SPP came up as a strong social movement in the beginning of the 2000s, but decided to stay focused on farmers’ issues, instead of taking on the broader lobby work for normalization. Then Jampi Sawan emerged to take the lead in the lobby for normalization since 2008, and increasingly gained support and legitimacy. However, it is constantly in need of new local leaders at sub-district level. Expecting CBDRR leadership and their committees to be sustainable is an illusion.

Following the processes of disaster risk reduction – and CBDRR in particular - in Central Java for almost six years, I observed that the NGOs emphasized lobby and advocacy. Risk reduction measures are usually material or technical in nature, like seed dispersal, livestock dispersal, or installing water pumps to enhance irrigation to strengthen people’s livelihoods and coping strategies. In the CBDRR-pilot areas in Central Java relatively little effort went into such activities. Support to strengthening livelihoods were mostly meant as entry-point activities to start community organizing and raising awareness about DRR and environmental concerns. Also the typical disaster preparedness activities were missing. Instead, SPP focused on lobbying for better rice price policies and a secure selling market; on getting justice by resisting the arrival of the cement factory and limestone mining affecting their core-membership. Jampi Sawan spends its energy on negotiating river normalization which is believed to solve a big portion of people’s livelihoods problems, and more effective than small livelihood projects for individual households. Particularly when taking people’s remittances into account, which are an important resource for the majority of the flood affected people to cope with crop failure, illness and other emergencies. Discussions with community people in diverse villages in Muria Region revealed that remittances involve larger financial flows than the earnings through small livelihoods projects¹⁰. This was one of the insights the NGOs discovered during the CBDRR-pilot and their motivation to address local problems through CBDRR beyond the village level.

7.2 Reducing sandstorms and opium addiction in Ghoryan district, Herat province, Afghanistan

Ghoryan district is a flat arid area in western Afghanistan which borders Iran. Years of conflict, social disruption and drought have resulted in the almost disappearance of vegetation due to uncontrolled grazing and pressures for firewood (Virgo, Aslami & Ahmed, 2006). The Afghan NGO SDO selected Ghoryan district for its CBDRR pilot because of the high frequency and severity of sandstorms occurring annually from June till October, and its proneness to drought, flooding and an increasing opium addiction, among particularly women. Ghoryan is located along a drug trafficking route from Afghanistan to Iran. Progressively, men force their wives to use opium to silence their protests, according to the women. SDO has a running peace building program in the district which created 10 informal village level peace *shuras* – six male peace *shuras*, and four women peace *shuras* - and one at district level. Their aim is to settle urgent conflicts related to natural resources, tribal issues and domestic violence related to drugs trade and opium addiction.

SDO promoted saffron production and marketing in the district to replace poppy cultivation. The CBDRR intervention is not an isolated intervention but linked to SDO’s other on-going programmes in the area. Because of limited staff capacity of SDO for the CBDRR initiative, SDO highly relies on the female organizer involved in SDO’s peace building programme, who attempts to involve the women in the CBDRR initiative, while an engineer managing the saffron enterprise programme, lends his skills and knowledge particularly on measures to reduce the negative impact of sandstorms. Dehran and Roshnan villages were selected for the CBDRR pilot from all SDO supported villages in the province, because they experience the most frequent and severe sandstorms, which villagers label as problematic. They have been exploring the option to leave the area again, and to rebuild or create their livelihoods

¹⁰ Exact financial figures to make a comparison were not collected, but this statement is based on qualitative research on coping strategies by the local NGOs.

elsewhere. A study by Formoli (1995) suggests that the destruction of trees (forest, planted and fruit) was probably the largest environmental disaster that occurred during the war years, followed by a long drought period of 2000-2004. It is however not easy to find agricultural lands elsewhere, and the people decided to find a solution to reduce the impact of sandstorms.

During the civil war, many villagers fled to Iran leaving their land unattended and unprotected. Bushes disappeared due to firewood and fodder needs of outsiders. When people returned from Iran, they expanded the area for rain-fed agriculture, particularly for cumin cultivation which they brought from Iran. This is one of the reasons why the *Kuchi* pastoralists who also fled to Iran, could not reassert their traditional access to pastureland when they returned due to changed political-ethnic powers (Alden Wily, 2004). They now work as agricultural labourers or in the drugs trade. The selected villages Dehran and Roshnan along the Hari Rud River faced competing claims over these deteriorating grazing areas with villagers at the other side of the river who regularly enter the area to cut and even uproot the scarce bushes for fodder and firewood. Sandstorms do occur because of degradation of large pastures surrounding the villages. Northern villages do not experience the negative impact of sandstorms, and do not share the interest to protect pastures. The northern wind blows most sand from the dry riverbed – and dried clay that covers land after floods - in the direction of the villages south of the river. Sand and dust enter the residential area and inside houses, fills irrigation canals, and covers agricultural fields with sand dunes resulting in crop failure and economic losses.

Using discursive power to frame risk problems

When SDO was exploring people's interest to get involved in the CBDRR pilot, it initially faced resistance. SDO explained CBDRR as an approach to reduce existing or potential risks by mobilizing community's available resources. The *shuras*, led by a former commander, were highly motivated to talk about the various disasters they face and identified sand storms as the most disturbing one, but rejected the idea to shoulder all expenses since they expected the NGO to provide projects and the necessary resources. I&K staff repeatedly stressed that Afghan NGOs shouldn't expect funding for their CBDRR activities, but should search for resources locally instead¹¹. SDO wasn't pleased with the restraining attitude of I&K because this hampered the community organizing process. The community leaders were highly motivated to join efforts to reduce the impact of sandstorms by reforesting 50 ha of land along the river, but not alone. In 2006, they already had initiated planting trees near the Hari Rud River to reduce the impact, but these plants were destroyed by recurrent flooding during spring. SDO turned to the provincial and district government with whom they have a routine "*and somehow obligatory coordination practice*" (SDO, 2009: 2) when planning new activities in their areas of responsibility. However the department responsible for disaster risk reduction was not proactive and lacked the resources for reducing sand-storm's impact. SDO found out that when framing 'reducing sandstorms by reforestation' as an 'environmental protection' effort, that the provincial line departments of agriculture and environmental protection were interested in SDO's plan. Although the provincial government lacked the financial resources, they were willing to provide technical and institutional

¹¹ This approach differs from how Indonesian partners implemented CBDRR-pilots: they received programme funding from I&K and Kerkinactie. This contrasts to the restraint of I&K staff regarding Afghan partners: they encouraged creativity in local resource generation while fearing corruption of donor funds. This fear is based on past experiences.

support for SDO's CBDRR initiative in Ghoryan. I assumed that kinship relations and favouritism played a role here, since requests for government support in Afghanistan for community concerns usually falls on deaf ears or require endless negotiations. Later I learned that the provincial governor has an NGO background¹². I observed that in more instances during the pilot programme, former NGO staff took on government positions, including an engineer from the CBDRR team in Ghoryan who became district governor of another district in Herat province in 2010. Previous NGO staff on crucial government positions opens space for communities to get access to government support, in this case particularly institutional support and political resources to turn their reforestation initiative into a legitimate one. This is important in a context of competing claims, especially when the distinction between land *accessed* and land *owned* seems to be unclear for the pastures targeted for reforestation. The reforestation initiative in Ghoryan was identified as a structural solution to reduce sandstorms on the long term, but in order to succeed, the local *shuras* needed an arrangement with the neighbouring villages that their reforested area would be protected, preferably with support from authorities, in the short term to avoid that planted trees would be cut.

Institutional power plays: what is the status of the land? How to protect the reforested area? Like the normalization effort in Central Java, also the reforestation in Ghoryan is an initiative which village authorities alone cannot solve. In April 2009 when I met with several *shura* members from Dehran and Roshnan in Herat town, they told me that ideally an area of 200 ha should be protected, but that they intend to start with 50 ha on land close to the residential area and most degraded. *"We could regard this area as communal land, there is a shrine in this area; the person who takes care of the shrine could probably look after the forest as well; all farmers could pay the guard for looking after the trees"*. They further thought of establishing a village nursery that can produce seedlings for future expansion of the 'forest' area. Currently there are no trees left, just low bushes and sand, and therefore talking about 're-vegetation' instead of 'reforestation' would be more appropriate, I thought. However, SDO considered the lessons learned from a community-based watershed management program east of Herat city¹³, namely that villagers should be encouraged to plant trees for firewood or fruits to give the additional motivation for protection (Virgo, Aslami and Ahmed, 2006).

From the moment the technical staff of the provincial agricultural department and directorate of environmental protection visited Dehran and Roshnan to conduct an environmental assessment, discussions about the status of the land emerged. Was it indeed communal land, as the villagers thought, or was it public land? The government classified 75% of the land as public land, and therefore government-owned land, and 25 % as communal land. The *shuras* did not object to this classification since their most important motive was to get the area reforested. Also the boundaries between agricultural and pastureland – targeted for reforestation – had to be clarified. In the past, disputes over accessing pastureland between villages at both sides of the river regularly happened in which a common trigger was violating seasonal agreements for cutting bushes. Simmering tensions still exist among the surrounding villages. To settle these tensions for the future, and to protect the newly planted trees, the question how to protect the reforested area

¹² Joseph Nurestani

¹³ Implemented by DACAAR, an Afghan NGO

against intruders, became a crucial question. The CBDRR groups from Dehran and Roshnan wanted to secure their investments in the reforestation effort.

In Afghanistan, land law and policies on pastures are ambivalent. I refer to Alden Wily's extensive study (2004) on land relations and pastures in Afghanistan to understand the status of pastures from an historical perspective. According to the 1965 registration law, pasture land was considered 'common land', "*open to the public*" for use, but controlled by the government. Pasture was then excluded from the description of 'government land' (ibid: 45). Alden Wily analysed how the distinction between public and government property increasingly got blurred (2004: 46). While in 1978 public land was defined as land *owned* by the people, but *administered* by the state on their behalf, in 1987 pasture and forest simply became state property. The Karzai decree in 2003 made these state properties available for lease, and "*those who have established occupancy in pastures during the last 37 years [since 1965, AH] will be the rightful leaseholder – if they can pay*" (ibid: 47). This applies to Dehran and Roshnan.

After the conduct of the feasibility study and technical plan, funds for purchasing seedlings had to be found. As I will elaborate later, the district and provincial government lacked the financial resources to support the communities, and no other (I)NGOs in Afghanistan were able or willing to support. Therefore SDO turned to I&K again and started a long negotiation process, supported by community representatives who met with I&K staff twice, until I&K was willing to fund the trees in fall 2009. Then a contract was signed by SDO, the village *shuras* and the District Governor, witnessed by the Herat provincial agricultural department. The contract stipulates the roles and responsibilities of each party: village committees are responsible for forestry management and 'social fencing', the district government enforces protection violations when outsiders enter the protected area, whereas the NGO would provide further technical advice and training. 'Social fencing' as opposite to a real fence made of wood, bushes or barbed wire, refers to a fundamental prerequisite to protect the area, as there is a clear demarcation of community user rights and the formal recognition of these rights by government and other land users, while community people assign guards who monitor and report protection violations. SDO views the contract signing as an added value to its program since it believes that it will end contestation about landownership and access. This will allow the newly planted trees to grow, and on the long run the impact of sand storms will be mitigated. The *shuras* developed a 'protection and environmental conservation statement' which the district governor signed and was distributed to 40 surrounding villages. The statement explains the importance of protecting the environment and resource management, encourages other villages to do the same, and explains punishments enforced by the government in case people cause damage to the environment. Community people contribute resources to two guards who monitor the replanted area. Several signboards to keep people with their cattle out of the reforested area were placed around the 50 ha: 18 ha newly reforested and 32 ha protected.

Who is actually gaining from this process? Although the contract should actually be a lease contract according to the new law, the government does not insist to receive an income, since it regards this as a public benefit project. The communities, economically motivated to protect their area against sand storms, obtained a more legitimate access to their pastures through their role as environmental protectors. Both the sandstorms and scarce resources

Figure 7.2: Reforestation efforts in Ghoryan district, Herat, Afghanistan



Through *ashar* community people prepare the land for planting the trees



The trees after six months

Sign boards around protected area (pictures by SDO)

like energy and fodder are problems that affect both the village head, and the poorest households, although in different ways. When sand stops entering agricultural fields and crop failures are reduced, it is most likely that landowners with irrigated fields will benefit most, because they expect an increase in production due to a higher return from irrigation facilities. But also sharecroppers benefit from the reforestation since sharecropping arrangements put the burden of failed harvests on their shoulders. This may explain the high motivation of a large number of people – about 2000 people - who voluntarily contributed to land preparation and reforesting deteriorated pastures during a period of 25 days. On the other hand, firewood and fodder collection are usually managed by children and landless men, who now have to go further away beyond their villages to collect these resources, at least during the duration of the first contract. Fortunately, in early 2011 electricity arrived in Ghoryan from Iran. People use electricity for cooking and rely less on firewood. Because electricity is cheap, even the poorer households consider to use electricity, and instead of collecting firewood, spend their time as wage labourer. This new development helps in protecting the reforested area.

It is still too early to assess the outcomes of this effort, but the study done about the reforestation initiative east of Herat reveals that the impact for local communities is good; *“after four years the sand intrusion problem has ceased”* (Virgo, Aslami and Ahmed, 2006: 74). However, pressures on pastures elsewhere may increase until the protected area would be sufficiently recovered and can be re-opened for controlled access. Disputes about natural resources are therefore transferred to other areas.

Publicly performed power: what will happen?

During 2009, SDO and the community people from Dehran and Roshnan villages had lengthy negotiation talks about mobilizing community resources, labour and material resources, for making the reforestation to happen. SDO viewed CBDRR as an approach to revive ‘*ashar*’ – a traditional form of voluntary community labour -, while it assumed that seedlings could be produced locally or donated by the agricultural department in Herat. After negotiations with the CBDRR committees – these were formed in the meantime - the people expressed that

they are able to shoulder 60% of the expenses, but that they needed 40% outside support for particularly material support – like seedlings, rental of tractors for land preparation and fuel. When SDO learned that the provincial agricultural department only had resources to conduct the environmental assessment and to provide technical input on local tree species, distance of planting the seedlings, irrigation practices, but not for the seedlings, it approached I&K again. It still took months before I&K agreed to financially support the reforestation proposal of SDO. I&K's programme officer raised many questions and concerns about land ownership, appropriateness of proposed tree species, feasibility and maintenance and protection policies, and SDO field staff responded to all. I&K also asked for my opinion on what it should do. I agreed with I&K that there were several dilemmas in this case compared to the other CBDRR pilot areas. Dehran and Roshnan are the only villages in the CBDRR pilot where the NGO advised us not to go because of security reasons. Therefore, we never visited the villages, but met with people in safe places, and consequently we did not fully understand the local social dynamics, the social differentiation among people and we were not able to appraise the proposed intervention well.

On the other hand, the CBDRR pilot is meant to take on challenges: foreign aid agencies increasingly espouse their principle to continue to support local communities when it has become too insecure to go there themselves, and to channel assistance through local partners. It is a matter of commitment and trust as well. This is difficult, particularly when previous I&K staff were hesitant to provide financial support and who warned us for corruption. Aware of all these emotions, I advised I&K to fund the reforestation effort despite the fact it could become difficult to visit the area ourselves to monitor progress. I&K did provide funds to make the reforestation possible; it particularly provided funds to buy seedlings. In October 2010, a month before I&K staff – one foreign and one Afghan staff - would visit Ghoryan, there were violent incidents between ISAF and Taliban groups, who are slowly expanding their area of control in the province. Also DACAAR, another I&K partner operating in Herat, observed a worsening security situation in areas previously considered more peaceful. Instead of visiting the communities, SDO proposed that *shura* members came to SDO's office in Herat to meet with I&K staff, which indeed happened. I increasingly started to link SDO's cautious security policy for foreigners and Afghan I&K staff to its active promotion of saffron production in the province to replace poppy. A signal that alerted me for this was the sabbatical leave of SDO's director, who – I later found out – received death threats for promoting saffron as an alternative to poppy production.

Concerning the reforestation, as soon as the funds were released, the CBDRR committees mobilized a total of 2000 people to join in '*ashar*' to prepare the land, making rows, and to plant and irrigate 18 ha of trees. The '*ashar*' took almost a month during the winter of 2009-2010. This is an appropriate time to plant trees, and the '*ashar*' did not compete with other farming activities. It did compete, however with the World Food Program, which pays people from the same area for their labour to clean irrigation canals, which are also used to irrigate the reforestation areas. One farmer reasoned that he works one day to plant trees, and the next day for the WFP. This is understandable from the perspective of the farmer, and a challenge for the NGO. Even the CBDRR committees risk every day to be accused of corruption: "*everyone else pays villagers through food or cash for work schemes, so why not in the case of reforestation?*" - as villagers reacted.

The case shows that ‘reforestation’ is more than a technical measure to reduce the risk of sandstorms; it has the potential to settle disputes over natural resources when access and control to land and firewood gets legitimized and accepted by various parties. The ‘reforestation’ is embedded in a history of competing claims of natural resources between rival tribes, between pastoralists (*Kuchis*) and agriculturists, in a history of war and displacement, and recently of returning refugees in search of new livelihood opportunities. Village institutions like the (peace) *shura, ashar*, a forest management plan, and ‘social fencing’ are supported by formal institutions beyond the village level: a signed contract to legitimize landownership and usage of the natural resources endorsed by the district governor, who has the authority to punish those who violate the protection regulations. In this context, 40 neighbouring villages were made aware of these regulations and are expected to adhere to them. Measures are taken to both reduce sandstorms, *and* provisions are installed to avoid or discourage conflicts among the adjacent 40 villages. The strength of such a contract is that roles and responsibilities of each party are stipulated and that actors can be held accountable. The contract has an initial duration of four years. Then the actors have to re-negotiate their rights and mutual obligations. In the context of a weak Afghan state, such an arrangement among communities, the NGO and district governor is in fact a simple accountability mechanism which may increase the political resources of ordinary citizens. It has a potential to improve the credibility of NGOs and the government. Still, it is quite unique.

The CBDRR pilot for the women in Roshnan and Dehran went quite differently. The women’s CBDRR plans which were initially welcomed and supported by the male *shuras*, and financially by I&K, did take off very slowly for several reasons. Some reasons I base on the discussions with the women and the women organizer of SDO, while some other reasons I deduct by linking different events and ‘reading’ the context. I expand on this process in the next section.

7.2.1 The politics of gender in constructing risk narratives and social protection

The politics of gender refers to a process in which men and women use their discursive power to frame and contest socially sanctioned gender relations and women’s rights (Kandioyoti, 2007) within evolving institutional contexts and links between the local and the global. I first delve into how the women used their discursive power to frame their risk problem in such a way that is was initially acceptable for the men.

Using discursive power to convince the men to support a women resource centre

While the men were negotiating for the reforestation intervention, the female field staff of SDO together with several women leaders active in the peace *shuras*¹⁴ started to mobilize the women in both villages with the intention to get their risk perspectives. A total of 50 women were mobilized in the two villages and they appointed eight women in each village to compose a women’s CBDRR-group. The women were positive about the reforestation and hoped that sandstorms would indeed be mitigated, resulting in decreasing incidents of irritated eyes, respiratory diseases and contaminated grain stocks. But their priorities were actually elsewhere. Their first priority was literacy, and secondly addressing the problem of opium addiction. In chapter 5, I elaborated on the background of these risk priorities. Young women, while in refugee in Iran, received education and after returning to Afghanistan they

¹⁴ Their stories can be read in Chapter 5

carefully tried to create opportunities to allow girls and women to attend literacy class at village level. They volunteer as teachers. In Roshnan only two girls graduated from high school, while most of the girls leave school at an early age. The women leaders viewed literacy classes instrumental in raising women's awareness about health and opium addiction which are related issues, since opium is often used as a painkiller, also for children.

As these women leaders are also active in the peace *shuras*, they know many cases of domestic violence. Their role is to settle disputes within the family and to support the women. Many cases of domestic violence are related to the husband's involvement in drugs trade or his opium addiction, which costs money. The problem of opium addiction is closely linked to criminal activities and prostitution through which women become a commodity to settle debts. The women were particularly frustrated that there is not a safe house or even a rehabilitation centre where female drug addicts could go. Their dream was a place, a women's resource centre, in the village where women can gather to discuss their problems, to seek social protection, to attend literacy class and to get health services.

One active woman leader, Khomari, is a professional health worker, and volunteered in the CBDRR-women's group. As a respected woman she is invited to attend the male *shura*, bringing in the women's views, opinions and ideas into the male *shura*. She presented the proposal for a women's resource centre to the male *shura* framing it as "a place for literacy class, health and for taking Quran lessons". Although it is here culturally accepted that women can meet in a separate place from men, other than in one's home, as practiced in other parts of Afghanistan, the male *shura* was initially not very supportive. The men claimed that NGOs cannot provide good health services nor a community health worker: "for health problems you go to the government's hospital". The men are partly right. The women leaders told in November 2010 that indeed the maternity health services have improved in the province, and the number of mothers who die during child-birth has drastically decreased. However, women's health comprises of more than maternal care, and for even very common health complaints it is still difficult to find a female doctor or nurse nearby.

Khormari was able to convince the men about the advantages of having a volunteer community health worker in the village. Convincing the predominantly Pashun men about the need for women literacy was more challenging. The argument that teaching from the Quran will be part of literacy classes, helped in convincing the men to allow their women to go to the women resource centre. Additionally it helped that female teachers – young women who got an education in Iran while staying in refugee camps – came from within the village and were not outsiders. The men gave their approval in fall 2010. While the resource centre was tactically framed as "a place for health and literacy class" towards the men, among women themselves, the resource centre meant primarily "a place to provide social protection for women in the village", to discuss and stop domestic violence, while literacy and learning to read the Quran are rather a means to strengthen women's self-confidence. The re-framing of their risk definition in order to increase the chance of male acceptance can be regarded as a form of women's everyday politics practice, given their limited space to advance their interests in the public domains outside their households and village.

Institutional power plays

The majority of women in Afghanistan hardly have contact with the state, markets or civil society organizations, and their options largely rely on local gender norms. In Dehran and Roshnan, the women, unlike the men, did not get support from governmental departments at the district nor from the provincial levels. The head of the district's Education Department told the women that "*nobody can stop drug addiction, even the US government cannot*", and is in fact denying the problem. Also the fact that prostitution would exist in the country is denied by the government in Kabul¹⁵. However, since the people returned from Iran, gender relations should no longer be viewed in a static cultural traditional or Islamic way. Exposure to education, health services and other social welfare services in refugee camps in Iran, made relatively young women decide to become civil society actors in their places of origin, like the women leaders in Dehran and Roshnan. The establishment of women peace *shuras* focusing on domestic violence and their role in the CBDRR groups illustrate this. And SDO is an important supporter through its female field staff.

Given the indifferent institutional environment, SDO turned to I&K for financial support to construct the women's resource centre in Fall 2009. I&K approved the proposal one year later. This lengthy appraisal could be attributed to the transfer of responsibilities from the head office in the Netherlands to the regional office in New Delhi as part of decentralizing aid programming to the regions. The Afghanistan portfolios were not immediately prioritized, and new staff had to be familiarized with the CBDRR-pilot programme before the women's resource centre proposal was approved.

Publicly performed power

When visiting Herat in November 2010, we learned that disagreement arose about the *location* of the women's resource centre in Dehran, and about who should provide the land. Somebody offered land in the outskirts of the village, which was neither regarded as 'safe' by the women nor as 'appropriate' by the men. Suddenly there was resistance again from within the village to accept the resource centre. Early 2011, the local peace *shuras* engaged in the process with the intent to reach consent and to search for a solution. In the end, the local commander donated part of his land within the village, and the construction started. The women resource centres were inaugurated in November 2011.

So while the male CBDRR groups and *shuras* in Dehran, and Roshnan could settle land issues, seasonal access to pasture resources, and legitimize 50 ha of reforested land, involving 40 villages, it took a much longer time to settle debates involving a few square meters for a women resource centre. It is hard for Afghan women to access male dominated institutions at the local level and beyond. I presume that women who currently are opium addicted and seek protection belong to the poorest part of the villages. "*In Afghanistan, men are not considered vulnerable, even poor men not*" – according to the female field staff of SDO. "*Afghan women and children are*". They highly rely on their everyday politics practice, breaking through taboos. Older women and widows in Dehran and Roshnan, for instance provide shelter and safety in their own house to women who are victims of domestic violence. In the future, the women's resource centres will provide space and opportunities for women to practice their everyday politics in a more institutionalized and visible manner,

¹⁵ According to a female staff of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, attending I&K's workshop in May 2007.

and may slowly modify gender and social norms, stretching the boundaries for community participation.

Kandiyoti (2007) points out that instead of viewing gender in Afghanistan only through the lens of an indigenous culture and Islam, attention is needed to recognize the effects of conflict, poverty and displacement on gender relations and norms, *because it is against this background of new challenges, that the politics of gender is being played out*" (Kandiyoti, 2007: 176). It is a challenge for SDO and I&K to solve the dilemma of colluding with the men and consolidating existing gender relations, or continue the support the brave women leaders who try to challenge the existing norms, eliciting resistance from within the village. The availability of a female NGO field staff and active respected women leaders is an advantage, and they need above all time and perseverance. A plausible cause of men's hesitance to allow the women resource centre to be built, could come from outside the villages, and be linked to the worsening security situation, fears for Taliban and criminal activities targeting their villages. This angle requires, however, further exploration and validation.

7.3 Discussion and conclusions

The various cases show that CBDRR-interventions are not isolated, distinct entities, but very much intertwined with the broader institutional environment. Few international organizations start to realize that interpreting CBDRR as a village level intervention has its limitations, and that looking beyond the community is a must¹⁶. Flood mitigation, watershed management, reforestation, regulating access to pasture lands and firewood involves decisions about people, space and their interactions. This makes risk reduction highly political. Local people, NGOs and CSO groups turn to governments who are expected to create enabling political and legislative environments. But as the cases show, many governments do not prioritize, or are reluctant to change policies or legislation which favour vulnerable communities.

Therefore, local people and NGOs realize that they need to engage – in one way or another - with the broader institutional context of norms, traditions, the judiciary system and policies, the governance structure and institutions related to allocation of resources, and understand how these play out locally through village institutions. Local people and NGOs need to enter the 'political arena' to negotiate and struggle for their risk solutions. While in Central Java, the mobilization of effective agency was required and 'strategic games' of NGOs and CSO groups, in Herat the interaction between the *shuras*, NGO and district governor was smoother, at least for the men. This kind of interaction and government support is rare in the country, where in most instances people rely on their own kinship networks or on more exclusive forms of 'warlordism' to deal with adversary, like in Khulm. While the terms 'commander' and 'warlord' have a negative connotation, they should be judged by how they use their power and the benefits they might bring for their constituents (Johnson and Leslie, 2004), which also applies for district governors. The two cases further reveal how 'official politics' is very much intertwined with and influenced by the 'everyday politics' and 'advocacy politics' of citizens and civil society groups who oppose or modify government policies and practice.

¹⁶ Christian Aid, for instance, developed a toolkit for communities to monitor government policies (Moss, 2007).

One limitation of this research, however, is that the impact of the two structural risk reduction measures highlighted in this chapter – reforestation in Herat, and river normalization in Pati – could not fully be assessed. The trees need at least four years to grow before some change can be noticed in the quantity of sand coming into the villages and covering agricultural land (Virgo et al, 2006). The normalization of the 60 km long Juwana river started in September 2010 and was still going on at the time of this writing. There are however some tangible outcomes: through local level lobby and advocacy, civil-society organizations could access national level financial resources for disaster risk reduction. Considering that 90% of the financial resources for DRR are being kept by the government at the national level (chapter 4), it is quite an achievement that civil-society organisations at district level could access these resources for a structural risk reduction measure. A second important outcome is the change in civil society-government relationship from antagonistic towards agonic, in the sense that the district government views Jampi Sawan as a legitimate actor in the political arena. They do not share the same views on disaster risk reduction, but they realize they need to engage with one another to address floods.

It is crucial to recognize that multi-actor, multi-level interactions in the field of DRR are a political arena in which each actor tries to challenge or defend institutional arrangements. For aid agencies seeking to support local communities, it is crucial to understand the governance context, in the different ways in which power and authority relations are structured in a specific context of state –civil-society relationships (Nuijten, 2004:109). I took an actor-oriented approach as an analytical framework to study the policy-implementation-outcome problematic concerning CBDRR. I attached importance to take the perspectives of local people and NGO field staff without ignoring the broader social, institutional context and its history. The strength of the actor-orientation is its focus on ‘room for manoeuvre’, and viewing interventions as a ‘political arena’ where the various actors negotiate, debate and try to advance their risk agendas which is demonstrated in the cases from Herat and Central Java. However, by focusing on ‘room for manoeuvre’, the outcomes and findings attached to these two cases may get more significance than when I had focused on the constraining structures. I raised the limitation of the time-frame to assess the impact of the reforestation in Herat, but what will happen if the district governor of Ghoryan will not be re-elected. Also in Central Java, government’s resources were released after tactical negotiations of Jampi Sawan, but only good for 10 km river normalization, not yet for the complete 60 km long river system. An analysis of the constraining structures would have put the research findings in a more realistic perspective.

Aside from the two cases highlighted in this chapter, also the CBDRR-pilots in the other localities revealed that the kind of risk reduction measures identified and implemented, dealt mostly with engaging authorities beyond village level, for either tapping resources (Bamyan and Nahreen), or reworking relationships and institutions that would benefit people’s livelihoods and safety. Table 7.1 provides an overview of the risk reduction measures that were implemented based on risk mapping: tapping government resources, influencing and revising policies and regulations, and getting the legal support from government authorities to sustain risk reduction measures like reforestation, address the dynamic pressures and root causes of people’s vulnerability to disasters and conflict (Blaikie et al, 1994). These strategies aim to push and change institutional arrangements to become

‘enabling’. The strategies illustrate how one can arrive at an enabling environment as listed by Twigg (2007).

Table 7.1: Risk reduction measures implemented in the CBDRR pilots

Locality	Risk prioritization	Risk reduction measures implemented
Ghoryan, Herat, Afghanistan	Sandstorms, domestic violence, drug addiction, disputes with adjacent villages	Reforestation of 20 hectares pastureland and legitimizing ‘social fencing’ of 50 hectares with district government authority; Construction of two women resource centres. Literacy class started before centres were finished.
Bamyan, Afghanistan	Rocks, avalanches, floods	Removal of rocks. Tree planting on high risk slopes. Reconstruction of damaged bridge. Vaccination of livestock that serves as safety-net.
Nahreen, Baghlan, Afghanistan	Floods, drought, food shortage	Early warning system and evacuation, making and installing gabion constructions to protect crops, livestock and houses; expanding early warning system to whole district; Lobby provincial government to demand national level resources for DRR and climate change adaptation
Pati, Central Java, Indonesia	Floods - sedimentation	Evacuation centre in one village; goat dispersal; training of community health workers; establishing fish ponds; sectoral CBO networking and issue-based alliance building (Jampi Sawan); lobby government institutions for river normalization; revised village regulations to include DRR measures
Muria region, Central java, Indonesia	Landslides, flash floods, floods – sedimentation, garbage blocking drainage	Tapping government resources for reforestation activities; facilitating dialogues between villagers and village authorities; facilitating networking among sectoral CBOs across villages; facilitating dialogue between upstream and downstream villages; Revised village regulations to include DRR measures to manage natural resources in two villages
Halmahera, Northern Maluku, Indonesia	Land disputes, coastal erosion, floods, pollution	Facilitating dialogues between adjacent villages; lobby with relevant government departments to provide clarity about land issues

The Afghanistan cases – both the reforestation and the women’s safe house - show that a prerequisite for success is that one should deal with the past and current conflict contexts in which the CBDRR intervention operates. Competing claims on natural resources, a change in ethnic-political power relations after refugees returned from Iran, and changes in government’s land policies are crucial to be considered before entering negotiation processes among the various stakeholders. The reforestation intervention is not simply planting wind-breaks to mitigate or prevent sandstorms, but a complex negotiation process involving 40 villages and government officials to achieve ‘social fencing’ and legitimate access to land and resources for a specific timeframe, after which the terms for lease will need to be re-negotiated. The contract and ‘social fencing’ are further meant to reduce tensions and conflict among the villages and ethnic groups. These arrangements may work on the short term and for the villages under lease contract. But closure of pastures in Dehran and Roshnan may cause negative impacts elsewhere.

The women from Ghoryan faced more obstacles to get their risk problem recognized and implemented. Drug addiction and prostitution are realities that the Afghan government prefers to be non-existent. Goodhand (2008) suggests that provincial formal politics are deeply integrated with informal structures and networks engaged in the drugs economy. Their *power is closely linked to the capacity to generate money and patronage through the drugs economy* (ibid: 411). How these linkages work out in the case of Ghoryan wasn’t part of my research, but it is likely that the lack of institutional support for the women’s risk

priorities are related to the government's 'remote control' engagement with the drugs economy.

Politics is omnipresent in the everyday-CBDRR practices. Policy-makers, donors and practitioners should start to accept that CBDRR is not a series of short-term local interventions, but a long term political process. This means that we make the social, institutional and political context visible in the risk analysis. Each actor produces a 'risk construct' according to their interests, interpretations, and values, that may be hidden for others involved in the process. Although these underlying values and views are in itself political in nature, it will be a challenge to bring them to the open from the start. If not, they will probably become evident during the process of shaping, implementing and evaluating risk reduction measures together, like the Central Java case of normalization shows, and the case of the women's safe house in Ghoryan. Evidence-based research into CBDRR interventions, where power dynamics, different values, worldviews, trust, negotiation outcomes, skills and knowledge play a role, could hopefully contribute to the shift mentioned by Christoplos (2001) – a shift from a focus on which technical solution works, towards a concentration on the political process of how these choices are made and their impact.

Conclusions, conceptual reflections and implications for aid programming

The previous chapters reflect my efforts to meaningfully rethink Community-Based approaches to Disaster Risk Reduction by opening the ‘black box’ of CBDRR policy and practice. I wished to critically reflect on the workings of the aid chain to identify constraints that cause a mismatch between humanitarian aid programming and local realities of disaster and conflict-affected people. ICCO and Kerkinactie (I&K), the two aid agencies involved, assumed that Community-Based approaches to Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR) could link relief to development, generate structural risk solutions, and therefore better attune to local needs. Together with them, I explored the ‘political arena’ of disaster risk reduction in different local settings to understand the political and institutional perspectives on CBDRR. Like Oxfam-Novib I was further interested in exploring whether CBDRR approaches have the potential to implement disaster risk reduction measures in a way that they also address divisions and grievances leading to violent conflict. This research project can be characterized as a critical transformative engagement with CBDRR thinking and practice. CBDRR approaches should not be romanticized and neither are top-down approaches to disaster management irrelevant.

The research focused on local level responses to recurrent small-scale disasters and conflict in Afghanistan and Indonesia. A total of four Afghan NGOs and five Indonesian NGOs joined the interactive research through so-called CBDRR-pilots in a total of 44 villages. These pilots consisted of testing a new approach to respond to recurrent disasters in conflict settings beyond emergency relief, by actually ‘doing CBDRR’, and to reflect on the intervention processes and outcomes. In addition, I reflected on my own CBDRR experience in the Philippines from 1993 till 2001. The research had a particular interest in the social, political and institutional relations between the social actors involved when responding to recurrent disasters and conflict, and how CBDRR interventions took shape in a certain institutional context taking a historical perspective. This interest found its way into the following research question: *“What are the reasons for the differing outcomes of CBDRR interventions in disaster and conflict affected contexts in Afghanistan, Indonesia and the Philippines?”*. Outcomes refer to whose risk and vulnerability is reduced with special attention for the most vulnerable and marginalised groups in the village.

I view disasters and conflict both as political events and as opportunities for social change as opposite to viewing these phenomena as external events. Disaster politics and the interplay between disasters and conflict are areas long neglected by many researchers and practitioners (Olson, 2000; Christoplos et al, 2001; Pelling and Dill, 2009). Disasters and conflict are both understood as the product of a cumulative set of changing institutional arrangements and policy decisions over a long period of time (Comfort et al, 1999). Vice versa, disasters and conflict affect institutional arrangements and re-order power relations. Recovery efforts and addressing the underlying risk factors involve debates, negotiations,

and struggles over prevailing risk narratives, over maintaining, adapting or creating institutions, and how to use and allocate resources. I use Olson's three questions to investigate the politics of disaster risk reduction in conflict settings: (1) *What happened?* (2) *Why were the losses so high/low?* and (3) *What will happen now?* An institutional and political analysis is often the missing link in most risk and vulnerability assessments to explain people's vulnerability, and for strategizing actions to create resilient communities (Twigg, 2009; 2007). This approach challenges the simplistic dichotomies between governments' top-down disaster management approaches and bottom-up CBDRR approaches, since – as this research has shown – CBDRR interventions are not isolated distinct entities, but very much intertwined with the broader institutional environment of risk reduction.

This concluding chapter starts with drawing together the conceptual insights based on the findings of this research. In section 8.1 I will set out what CBDRR is and means in disaster and conflict-affected contexts with their particular institutional and political settings. Section 8.2 concludes on the potential and nature of CBDRR in conflict settings. The various concepts that make up CBDRR will be revisited in section 8.3. In section 8.4 I will answer the research question explaining the reasons for differing outcomes of CBDRR-interventions, followed by the implications for aid programming in section 8.5.

8.1 What is CBDRR really? – an approach of which meanings and intentions are contested

Numerous abbreviations exist to express the nature of interventions that intend to support disaster and conflict affected people. Andrew Maskrey (1989) started to use Community-Based Disaster Mitigation, whereas CDRC chose to use Citizenry-Based and Development-Oriented Disaster Response, purposely avoiding the term 'community-based' as this had a political connotation of 'anti-government' during the time of Martial Law installed by President Marcos (Chapter 3). Towards the end of the 1990s, policy-makers and the international NGOs rapidly adopted and promoted CBDRR as an alternative to top-down approaches in disaster management which often failed to recognize local needs and realities. Since then, CBDRR became a fashionable notion among policy-makers, donors, governments and (I)NGOs. However, behind their shared CBDRR language, I found divergent interpretations and practices. Although the UN recognized the importance to involve local communities in disaster risk reduction in its Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), its CBDRR tradition, laid down in the HFA, still resonates with top-down, short-term and isolated responses, portraying local people as ignorant, un-informed, and un-prepared (Chapter 4). The interactions between the Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR) - which critically monitors the governments' progress in disaster risk reduction - and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) since 2007, revealed how the UN negate politics in policy language and texts, subordinate local perspectives to expert knowledge and authorities, and channel DRR resources to mainly national governments. These resources are primarily utilized for scientific forecasting, platform meetings, infrastructure, and public awareness – seldom for local level structural risk solutions. On the other hand, civil-society organizations tend to romanticize CBDRR approaches, assuming that CBDRR is inherently 'good' because of its 'participatory' and 'empowering' features. Problematizing and recognizing the political nature of CBDRR policy and practice is still new, and how to engage with government without being co-opted remains a challenge. Civil-society groups implementing CBDRR like in Central Java, Indonesia, and Herat, Afghanistan, played a significant role in challenging the various

political sub-systems to improve the government's performance in disaster risk reduction. These experiences in very different state-society configurations could be inspiring for the GNDR members to move the 'Views from the Frontline' initiative towards national action-agendas.

Empirical evidence from the CBDRR pilots revealed that local people, local NGOs, funding agencies and government officials, attached different meanings and objectives to CBDRR. These variations arise because actors have divergent interpretations of their experienced history of disaster events, about people's needs, of their own role and each other, and the institutional environment in which CBDRR interventions were made. At the start, the CBDRR pilots took a hazard-focused viewpoint dealing with systematizing early-warning systems, evacuation shelter, search and rescue, and enabling access to safe drinking water. Strengthening livelihoods was part of the NGO's entry-points strategy. However, as it turned out, these concerns were already largely dealt with through people's kinship relations and social networks within and beyond the community (Chapter 5). As a consequence local people, through risk assessments with village authorities and CBOs, requested little support for life-saving disaster preparedness measures, except the landless labourers in Kasiyan, Indonesia, and the *shuras* (customary village councils) in Nahreen, Afghanistan. This is in itself an important research finding, since a lot of humanitarian assistance is still based on the assumption that life-saving measures should be the priority in CBDRR policy and practice.

In many localities, people give priority to addressing the underlying risk factors to find structural solutions to achieve safety and to secure their livelihoods. They refer to cases where achieving safety and security requires the involvement of multi-level institutions and authority like the reforestation initiative in Herat and the flood mitigation lobby in Central Java, or to cases where they face antagonistic social relations around access to resources like in Khulm, Afghanistan, and Halmahera, Indonesia. "*Better to have secure access to land, than a newly built house*" – according to a village head in Halmahera whose house burnt down during the violence. These kinds of safety and security are related to people's rights to be respected, but which in practice are often denied or ignored by humanitarian aid agencies (Berry and Reddy, 2010). Reasons for this ignorance relate to organizational structures of aid agencies which separate humanitarian emergency aid from development programmes. CBDRR projects are often implemented by humanitarian units. Secondly, hazard-focused, short term interventions easily overlook underlying risk factors. ADPC's CBDRR field practitioner's handbook, for instance, remains silent about lobbying and advocacy processes to find durable risk solutions.

Interventions like CBDRR are embedded in a broader institutional context of state-civil society relationships, which constrain or enable local actors to advance their risk-solutions, are linked to previous interventions and experiences, and have consequences for future ones. This explains why NGOs in Afghanistan attach a very different meaning to CBDRR than in Indonesia, or in the Philippines. Table 8.1 shows the meaning local NGOs attach to CBDRR in different contexts, and these differ from the meaning which their funding agencies attach to CBDRR. These meanings are based on discussions, reflection and sense-making sessions with NGO staff of the respective agencies, during the implementation of the CBDRR-pilot and towards the end of the research. These different meanings imply that there is no such thing as *the* CBDRR approach.

Table 8.1: Meanings attached to CBDRR in different institutional settings by local NGOs and funding agencies

Afghan NGOs	Enhance people’s capacity to reduce risks, to make people believe in their own resources to become self-reliant, and to overcome aid dependency. CBDRR is viewed as an approach to re-order aid relations between NGOs and aid recipients. CBDRR considers past and current conflicts over resources, and seeks for the appropriate authority and institutional arrangements to legitimize interventions and outcomes.
Indonesian NGOs in Central Java	Enhance people’s capacity to reduce immediate risks, to make people conscious about <i>why</i> they are at risk and enhance their skills to enter political spaces to negotiate, influence or oppose government policies, <i>and</i> to re-order government institutions from village to national level to make them responsible actors so they seriously implement DRR policies. In Central Java, CBDRR takes a watershed approach connecting upstream with downstream villages through CBO alliances.
Indonesian NGO in Halmahera	Enhance people’s motivational and attitudinal capacities to reduce immediate risks and tensions, and to improve people’s livelihoods and economic resources
CDRC in the Philippines	Enhance people’s capacity to reduce immediate vulnerable conditions, to make people conscious about <i>why</i> they are vulnerable, and enable people to gain access to social and political resources to obtain safety and protection from the local to the national level. CDRC organizes people’s organizations and facilitates alliance building between vulnerable and less vulnerable sectors. They enter the political arena through various democratic institutions to negotiate, debate, and challenge power inequalities, holding the government accountable to address the root causes of people’s vulnerability and struggle for justice, peace and responsible governance.
ICCO & Kerkinactie	CBDRR as a methodology; a participatory, bottom-up approach aimed to formulate humanitarian and development aid programmes that recognize local people’s risk perspectives. CBDRR aims to rework hierarchical, top-down oriented management styles of local partners to enhance downward accountability ¹ .
Oxfam-Novib	CBDRR as part of the road map to contribute to the improvement of local humanitarian capacities in times of major disasters through community contingency planning. In 2009, it viewed CBDRR as an approach to promote resilience of communities and strengthen their capacities for self-reliance.

In Chapter 4, I presented two CBDRR traditions: (1) the CBDRR tradition promoted by the international community, and (2) the home-grown CBDRR traditions, both visualised again in Figure 8.1. This Figure regards the two CBDRR-traditions as extremes on both sides of various continua, whereas empirical findings reveal that both CBDRR traditions actually interact and are intertwined in practice through their particular adherents. The significance of this research is that it shows the need to look beyond the binaries of top-down and bottom-up approaches to reduce risks, and to understand how in the political arena of disaster risk reduction, adherents of the different CBDRR traditions negotiate the principles and features of their CBDRR-tradition, resulting in varying CBDRR-practices, outcomes and meanings.

Figure 8.1: Nature of CBDRR traditions expressed through their primary features on the continua

Origin	Donor-driven, Internationally negotiated	←→	Home-grown, locally negotiated
View on disasters	External event	←→	Matter of vulnerability - Opportunity for social change
Purpose	Reduces people’s physical exposure to hazards	←→	Social transformation
Focus	Natural hazards restoring normalcy	←→	Integrates everyday livelihoods, security concerns with preparing for disruption/disaster/conflict

¹ This was a dominant meaning from 2006 till 2009 in the Steering Group of I&K. After internal debates, this meaning was replaced with the meaning that best resonates with the one in Central Java.

Priority in intervention	Physical measures, early warning, awareness raising life-saving actions	←→	Strengthening community institutions, mobilizing collective action
Participation	Consultation, project-focus	←→	Empowering, process-focus
Levels involved	Multi-level partnerships, harmonious cooperation	←→	Multi-level, multi actor collaboration in power force field
Community	Administrative unit of local government, "common good" approach	←→	Most vulnerable groups, recognizing local elite
Resources	External funds	←→	Locally generated resources, voluntarism, political commitment, external funds
Longevity	On-off through platforms	←→	Dynamic and adaptive to changing institutional context

Politicization and de-politicization of CBDRR interventions

Flood mitigation, watershed management, reforestation, regulating access to natural resources, settling disputes, and construction of evacuation and women resource centres, involve decisions about people, spaces and their interactions. This makes risk reduction highly political. Local people, NGOs and civil society organizations turn to governments who are expected to create enabling political and legislative environments. But as the cases show, many governments do not prioritize, or are reluctant to change policies or legislation which favours vulnerable communities. The various actors deal with 'the political' ranging from confronting it, denying it, or escaping it.

The local NGOs in this research attach a particular meaning to CBDRR which points to the (ideological) background of each NGO, how they interpret local circumstances, and which largely determine the nature of the organization's responses. Whereas the Steering Group from I&K explicitly take a political perspective on CBDRR, Oxfam-Novib views CBDRR as a non-political intervention. Oxfam-Novib and its Afghan partners aim to improve local communities' contingency planning like early warning, evacuation and other disaster preparedness measures. Although these measures look a-political in nature, they can lead to social divisions and unstable livelihoods like in Khulm, when NGOs focus on the *techniques* of CBDRR-practice rather than on its *politics*. In Nahreen, the local NGO is aware of the differences among local people and applies the 'do no harm' approach as part of risk assessments, thereby applying the techniques in a political and conflict sensitive manner.

The local partners of I&K mostly attach a political meaning to CBDRR with the exception of the local partners in Halmahera. Because of the long history of these partners that stem from the colonial past, they prefer non-political interventions and are reluctant to engage in activities that are labelled as political, like lobby and advocacy against the mining company in Buli. The field staff further experiences constraints and reluctance from the local partner's board to support them in solving the land disputes affecting the selected villages. The board prefers economic activities to improve people's livelihoods with quick and tangible results, since this is a way to show the organization's effectiveness. In contrast to most local NGOs, international aid agencies tend to portray their interventions as a-political and neutral, to avoid suspicion of back-donors and the broader public of choosing sides in a conflict or

supporting local party politics. Also governments escape politics in DRR by casting problems and solutions in technical terms.

Hence, there are different processes through which organizations – local NGOs, civil society organizations, funding agencies, government – arrive at a specific framing of local realities and their responses in the context they live and work. These are related to their histories, current state - civil society relationships, and their mandate on how they legitimize their interventions. So, NGOs either underscore the politics of their interventions or rather de-politicize them. From the experiences of this research it is plausible to conclude that when one ignores to view CBDRR interventions in a political and institutional manner, the outcomes of the interventions are likely to reproduce the status quo. This is one of the main explanations for the varying outcomes of the CBDRR-pilots.

8.2 Potential of CBDRR approaches in conflict settings

This PhD thesis aims to contribute to the debate on the interplay between disasters and conflict, and how to support communities that are affected by both disasters and conflict. Disasters increasingly happen in contexts of conflict and political instability (Buchanan-Smith and Christoplos, 2004; Spiegel et al, 2007; Nel and Righarts, 2008). A focus either on disaster risk reduction or conflict prevention simplifies local realities, making aid programming less effective. Aid programming is currently still organized according to a division in emergency relief, development work and conflict prevention or peace building. Research and bodies of literature on disasters and disaster risk reduction developed rather separate from those on war and peace. This research explores both local perspectives on disaster and conflict through collecting local people's risk narratives (Chapter 5) and searches for conceptual commonalities to analyse what people do in times of crisis, what choices they make and why, and how aid programming could best support them.

This research and other studies carried out in Afghanistan and Indonesia, show that people dealing with disasters and conflict survive mainly due to their social networks, informal institutions, and political connections to more influential people, and not because of outside aid (Bhatia, et al, 2003; Christoplos, 2004; Kantor and Pain, 2011). This raises questions like whether external aid should be simply stopped, since it has little impact. Or, should aid programming shift from an emphasis on basic service delivery, with a focus on individual households, towards more attention to reworking local institutional arrangements to address the underlying risk factors? I argue for the latter based on the experiences in particularly Herat, Baghlan and Central Java.

Through reflection and sense-making efforts with NGO field staff, it became clear that the link between disasters and conflict is situated in institutional arrangements: mitigating the impact of sandstorms, will at the same time reduce tensions between adjacent villages, when community leaders, the NGO and the district governor all adhere to the 'contract' they signed. This 'contract' sets out the newly created institutional arrangements: roles and responsibilities of all parties, authority, imposing fines when violating rules concerning the 'social fencing', among others. Such a contract re-orders 'the rules of the game', the kind of 'players of the game', and re-orders power relations. Efforts to reduce disaster risk and stop violence locally draw on social, organizational and political resources of villagers and their leaders, and their ability to engage with a wide range of actors. These include actors who

initiate risk reduction or peace efforts, those committing or potentially commit violence, and those whose responsibility it is to maintain law and order, and provide safety and protection (Heijmans et al, 2009). Local leaders and local NGOs played a facilitative role.

When viewing CBDRR as a political and institutional approach to reduce risk, it has commonalities with the Do no Harm approach (Anderson, 1999) and conflict sensitive programming². These approaches explore who is who in the community, who are connectors and who are the dividers, what are their risk perspectives, how do institutions function, what are institutional histories, past and current conflicts and the forms of power performed. The approaches further stress to understand the interaction between the intervention and the context, and to act upon this understanding, in order to avoid negative impacts. Chapter 5 concluded that local institutional arrangements largely determine how people's social and political vulnerability to disasters and conflict work out locally. Empirical findings show that local institutions limit or support people's options and survival strategies, since local institutions encompass both the 'rules of the game' and the 'players of the game' involving power dynamics. The 'players' can decide to reduce risk or to resist such efforts, like in Khulm, Afghanistan; they can decide to stop violence or to ignore attempts to make peace, like in Halmahera, Indonesia. The notion of 'institutions' can therefore be used analytically to blur the demarcation between disaster and conflict theories and practice, since institutions regulate access to resources, the handling of disputes, the maintenance of social order, social protection, and livelihood security at the local level. In Chapter 1 I argued to view both conflict and disasters as processes and political events, and based on this research, I add that the creation of new multi-level institutional arrangements can regulate both disaster risk reduction and solving conflicts resulting in new kinds of power relations.

From an NGO perspective, a focus on local institutional arrangements alone may create blind spots. The 'everyday politics' practice of some groups may be overlooked, like for instance, Afghan women, landless migrants in Kasiyan, or ethnic groups in Halmahera who are socially excluded, and don't engage with nor benefit from local institutions. Their invisibility for NGOs does not necessarily mean that these groups do not influence local institutions. Being aware of an 'everyday politics' perspective, makes their behaviour visible allowing it to matter, and give their practice political significance.

Participation in times of violent conflict

Aid agencies often argue that in times of war and disasters, 'participation' is not possible, because of people's pressing needs that require immediate action. My experience in Afghanistan, Indonesia and the Philippines in conflict-affected areas taught me that CBDRR interventions and preparedness support for better self-protection is possible through people's participation, even while conflict is going on. Policy makers, donors and aid agencies tend to regard conflicts as something abnormal, as 'human disasters' or 'complex political emergencies', and therefore they respond in an emergency mode (Korf, 2004b, 2005). Conflict contexts like Afghanistan, Indonesia and the Philippines can be characterized by "no peace no war" situations, where periods of relative calmness are interrupted by occasional eruptions of violence, followed by another period of relative stability. I explained in Chapter 6 that CBDRR interventions should not be isolated from the broader context, and this broader context covers a "no peace no war" situation as well (Richards, 2005), where

² <http://www.conflictsensitivity.org>

one cannot separate disaster risk reduction from security. It is important to stress that a political and institutional approach to CBDRR implies that CBDRR practice is not a one-time, short-term intervention to reduce people's risks. I view CBDRR as an approach to encourage local initiatives and to support groups of people before, during and after disasters and conflict occur, to establish alliances, networks, or governance arrangements that function whether local people stay in their villages, get displaced or become inaccessible for aid workers. What matters is that the relationship between NGOs and villagers continues, and takes on flexible forms. NGOs and villagers enter network-support relations beyond the traditional project and funding relationships.

Barrs (2009) documented manifold ways how local communities protect themselves and survive amid conflict and how NGOs could further strengthen these self-protection tactics. Afghan NGOs continue support to conflict and disaster affected communities in Uruzgan, Baghlan and Herat, through 'distant assistance', thanks to its long-standing relationship with these communities. This approach raises questions of accountability, and how warring parties influence the process and outcomes of interventions. However, if the relationship between local NGOs and local people is long-standing and a trusted one, 'distant assistance' is an appropriate mode of supporting local people in need, particularly when institutional arrangements are known by the NGO. These distant forms of CBDRR practice have potential as a strategy to follow up on the frequently heard recommendations in evaluation reports after major emergencies, namely "to strengthen local capacities" for humanitarian assistance. *Shuras*, CBOs, village authorities, and POs can conduct damage needs assessments in their locality or in adjacent villages to reduce favouritism – as applied in Uruzgan - and relay the results to the local NGO or the government department which can check the plausibility of the data submitted. Participation in areas of no war and no peace may be ambivalent, but not a priori impossible (Korf, 2005). The steps that local Afghan NGOs developed to put CBDRR into practice (Box 6.9) are supposed to reduce the risk of being co-opted.

8.3 Re-examining the prevailing definitions of CBDRR concepts

One of the aims of this interactive research is to generate new knowledge and to theorize on what CBDRR is, - specifically on the concepts that make up CBDRR like 'community', 'community-based', 'local knowledge', 'risk', 'vulnerability', 'participation', 'empowerment' and 'resilience'. In the following section I review the current definitions of the various CBDRR-concepts which I define in Chapter 1 using prominent reference sources like ADPC's Field Practitioners' Handbook on Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (Abarquez and Murshed, 2004), UNISDR publications 'Living with Risk' (2004) and 'Indigenous Knowledge for Disaster Risk Reduction' (2008). Many concepts hide different meanings and dimensions, and below I will elicit these meanings as they appear in a specific cultural and political historic context. Table 8.2 provides an overview of the prevailing and re-examined definitions of CBDRR-concepts.

Disaster: from an external to a political event

'The serious disruption of the functioning of society causing widespread human, material or environmental losses, which exceed the ability of the affected communities to cope with using their own resources. Disasters occur when the negative effects of the hazards are not well managed' (Abarquez and Murshed, 2004: 6).

Olson's first question *'What happened?'* generates many different answers and interpretations of the same event. Floods in Khulm, for instance, are regarded a 'disaster' by the upstream villagers, but are a 'blessing' for the downstream villagers. A 'disaster' is a political event, and its explanations and outcomes are embedded in a societal history which produced patterns of vulnerability, and to which political systems must respond. Disasters are an opportunity for social change.

Community: from a social and territorial towards an institutional conceptualization

'People living in one geographical area, who are exposed to common hazards due to their location. They may have common experience in responding to hazards and disasters. However, they may have different perceptions and exposure of risk. Groups within the locality will have a stake in risk reduction measures – either in favour or against' (ibid: 8).

The NGOs selected disaster-affected villages, but soon they could not clearly identify the boundaries of the community: "where do they begin and end, what form do boundaries take – spatial, social, ethnic, authority?". Evidence from the field shows the overlapping, shifting and subjective nature of 'communities' and the permeability of boundaries. ADPC's definition acknowledges people's different perceptions and exposure of risk, but the research findings reveal that people do not have a common experience in responding to disasters. Their ways of dealing with adversity differ, and these are embedded in social positions and the historical, institutional context. Consequently the notion of 'community' is socially constructed, and is instrumental in mobilizing one's social, political or religious affiliations to achieve certain goals such as defending access to resources like the stories from Halmahera, Khulm and Tempur reveal.

In a second instance, people's view on 'community' referred to specific community structures and regulations, like *shura*, *ashar*, *gotong royong* and *adat*, which have to do with managing and regulating how different social entities relate to one another, what their community responsibilities are and the management of resources like land, forests and water. These two views together link people and their interactions with spaces and resources, and bring a political dimension into the conceptualization of 'community'. Consequently, I arrive at a multi-dimensional approach to the notion of 'community': 'community' is socially constructed, and links social actors to local institutions and their histories. 'Community' is not restricted to the village administrative boundaries³.

Community-based as a multi-scale, social and institutional system

'At risk communities are actively engaged in the identification, analysis, treatment, monitoring and evaluation of disaster risks. People are at the heart of decision-making and implementation of disaster risk reduction activities. The involvement of the most vulnerable is paramount and the support of the less vulnerable is necessary. In CBDRR, local and national governments are involved and supportive' (ibid: 9).

³ In this research project, 'community boundaries' seldom corresponded with the administrative boundaries of the villages initially targeted for the CBDRR pilots.

ADPC's definition of 'community-based' is project management-oriented, and views government as a supportive actor. Field findings reveal that the CBDRR-process of organizing the community, conduct of risk assessments, prioritizing risk, identification of risk reduction measures, and resource allocation involves power plays, negotiation, debate and lobby among actors with different, and at times competing risk perspectives and interests. Getting risk solutions implemented, and addressing underlying risk factors require the engagement with and support from institutions and authorities higher in the hierarchy. 'Community-based' refers to a multi-scale, social and institutional system beyond the village level to negotiate and demand risk solutions steered by disaster and conflict-affected people.

The CBDRR pilots demonstrate that disaster risks can be reduced by by-passing village authorities and influencing institutional arrangements beyond the local level. 'Community-based' means in Khulm the involvement of eight villages depending on the same water source, in Herat 40 villages using fodder and firewood in pasturelands and the authority of the district governor, while in Central Java, community-based is being stretched to the meaning of flood-affected villages along the 60-kilometer long Juwana River organized through Jampi Sawan, and involving government authorities like *Balai Besar* at the national level.

Local knowledge is not collectively owned but differentiated and partial

'Practices developed by a group of people from an advanced understanding of the local environment, which has been formed over numerous generations of habitation' (UNISDR, 2008: vii).

The UNISDR distinguishes local knowledge from other types of knowledge in that it originates from the community, that it is disseminated through informal means, it is collectively owned, subject to adaptation, and embedded in a community's way of life as a means of survival'. The UNISDR assumes that the use of local knowledge improves disaster risk reduction practice.

The multiple and contesting risk narratives studied during this interactive research uncover that local knowledge is not just 'out there' or collectively owned by a community, but differentiated, conflictive and partial. Instead of one container of local knowledge, different bodies of knowledge exist embedded in a social, cultural and institutional context. These different bodies of knowledge are socially constructed and embedded in power relations: whose risk, whose knowledge counts, and whose ideas are suppressed, depends on who is in the best social position to use his/her discursive power to gain support for his/her risk construct. Risk constructs and people's options to articulate these, get listened to, and mobilize support, are further closely related to local institutional settings. For instance, people's views in Muria region that landslides and flash floods occur due to mining, logging or intensive corn production on steep slopes, are suppressed by village authorities, who effectively silenced 'disaster talk'.

I redefine 'local knowledge' as consisting of different bodies of knowledge which are socially constructed and embedded in a social, cultural and institutional context. Local knowledge is differentiated, partial or conflictive and reflects local power relations.

Risk as a social construct

'The probability that negative consequences may arise when hazards interact with vulnerable areas, people, property and environment' (Abarquez and Murshed, 2004: 6).

Research findings reveal that multiple and contesting risk narratives exist concerning the same disaster or conflict event. Because different risk perspectives exist, politics emerges in analysing who is in the best social position to get support for his risk construct, and whose risk perspectives get suppressed. NGO staff needs to be conscious about *whose* risk perspective is considered, and *who* decides on *which* risk reduction measure *where* to implement. Power differentials determine which risk reduction measure will be selected, and who benefits from this. Therefore, defining risk is not just an analysis of probabilities, using so-called objective mathematical calculations. Risk is socially constructed and involves politics: whoever controls the definition of risk controls the solution at hand (Slovic, 1999: 699).

Vulnerability in contrast to people's everyday politics practice

'A concept which describes factors or constraints of an economic, social, physical or geographic nature, which reduce the ability of a community to prepare for and cope with risks' (Abarquez and Murshed, 2004: 6).

In the context of recurrent disasters and conflict, local risk narratives are primarily about social networks, searching for justice, survival, breaking through the prevailing gender norms, and getting people's rights respected by authorities. People do not talk about their vulnerability or that they rely on outside aid. Even if the formal institutional context is unclear or weak, people create new rules, adjust traditions, re-order power relations and try to change the local institutional arrangements so that these benefit them, while sometimes excluding others. Although people do not use the notion of 'vulnerability' to describe their worsening situation, they feel the stress, face difficulties, talk about 'risks' and make risk-taking or risk-avoiding decisions. Although these decisions may be individually taken, the options people have to deal with risks are embedded in local institutional settings (Chapter 5). People comply with these institutional settings, adjust them, contest norms and rules, or evade them by doing this in quiet and subtle ways, to which Kerkvliet (2009) refers as 'everyday politics' practice. People are neither passive nor powerless.

The concept of vulnerability is problematic when viewing disaster and conflict realities from the perspectives of local people and their everyday politics practice. 'Vulnerability' is not a real-time condition in which people live, but rather a social construct of aid providers to legitimate their actions. Consequently I regard the notion of 'vulnerability' as an analytical tool and an instrument for conscientization purposes to unravel institutional arrangements and power relations taking a historical perspective, shifting away from routinely categorizing women, children, refugees, elderly, widows, indigenous peoples and others as 'most vulnerable'.

Participation - constrained by local norms or stretched by 'everyday politics' practices

'The community takes responsibility for all stages of the program – from risk assessments, analysis, action-planning and decision-making' (Abarquez and Murshed, 2004: 12-13).

Appropriately involving community and capitalizing on existing structures is believed to contribute to effective and sustainable risk reduction measures. Evidence from the field shows that ‘participation’ is related to local norms about decision-making and representation. The local political context and the prevailing norms around ‘participation’ influence who participates, and what form and intensity of participation is feasible or acceptable. On the other hand, the everyday politics practice of actors stretches the boundaries for participation like, for instance, Afghan women entering public spaces, farmers in Bungu constructing a steel road blockade to stop mining, and *Jampi Sawan*, which gets access to the official politics of government’s decision-making. ‘Participation’ constitutes a terrain of contestation, “*in which relations of power between different actors, each with their own ‘projects’, shape and reshape boundaries of action*” (Cornwall, 2008: 276). Participation is a negotiated value, subject for debate among actors involved in CBDRR. This is an important reason that explains the policy-practice discrepancy in CBDRR.

Empowerment – the transformative aspect of CBDRR

‘Empowerment’ refers to changing power relations in favour of marginalized, excluded groups in society’ (ICCO Alliantie, 2006: 16).

Although ‘empowerment’ is no longer part of ADPC’s Handbook, and absent in UNISDR publications, implicitly it is assumed that ‘strengthening people’s existing capacities’ and ‘involving the most vulnerable groups’ contribute to processes of empowerment. Power is perceived here as a property, which can be enlarged like suggested by the notion of ‘empowerment’. I conceive ‘power’ as relational, which needs to be performed rather than achieved. Power relationships vary from being harmonious, cooperative to antagonistic and intimidating. Research findings demonstrate that antagonistic and intimidating relationships can change when institutions are adapted or new ones created through which local people expand their relationships outside their innate social networks. These include changing prevailing norms, values but also ‘frames of realities’ that legitimated previous relationships and arrangements. Local people use their social, organizational, motivational and political resources for this purpose, which turns out to be applicable in different contexts. What differs in the various contexts, are the strategies and options available to local actors which depend on the broader institutional context and state-civil society relationships. People’s options vary from ‘everyday politics’ to access resources, mobilizing effective agency for ‘advocacy politics’, or entering the political arena with authorities and government and become a legitimate actor in ‘official politics’ to obtain safety and protection. Community organizers play a crucial role in facilitating this process, particularly their ability to bring opposing actors together while understanding the actors’ needs within their full social and political context. I define ‘empowerment’ as strategies and options, that arise from the local institutional context, to expand relationships outside people’s innate social networks, building on people’s social, organizational, motivational and political resources to create effective agency and to change antagonistic relationships’.

Resilience - ability to rework institutions through effective agency

‘The capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to adapt, by resisting or changing in order to reach or maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure. This is determined by the degree to which the social

system is capable of organizing itself to increase its capacity for learning from past disasters for better future protection and to improve risk reduction measures'
(UNISDR, 2004: 6 volume II).

Whereas 'resilience' is a concept that appears in policy documents of funding agencies like Oxfam-Novib, national governments (UNISDR, 2004) and discussed in the Steering Group of I&K, it is hardly referred to by local people, local NGO staff or government officials. Towards the end of this research project, when discussing the notion of 'resilience' with the NGOs, they raised questions about the proper scale to look at resilience, - a community, a watershed, nation-wide or globally-, and in whose interest has the concept been introduced in the field of CBDRR. 'Resilience' as a term represents good intentions and has a more positive image than 'vulnerability', but it hides the various ideologies and views of different actors on how to achieve resilience, and consequently it does not offer one set of concrete handles to operationalize it in practice. Not every adaptation is beneficial to all social groups and ecosystems, and some responses may increase the vulnerabilities of others.

The NGOs equate 'resilience' with coping capacity and becoming self-reliant. Instead of using the notion of 'resilience', they focus on components of resilience as listed in Twigg's *Characteristics of a disaster-resilient community* (2009), and adapt and prioritize these to their local contexts. These components set out steps to achieve safer conditions locally and to rework institutions beyond the village level, which is referred to as 'the enabling environment' in Twigg's document (2009):

- (1) Considering institutional arrangements for safety and protection at multiple levels taking a historical perspective;
- (2) Risk assessments as a multi-purpose tool, particularly for facilitating negotiations to bridge differing risk perspectives;
- (3) Combining a focus on people's immediate safe conditions, with their practical livelihood needs, and long-term strategic needs;
- (4) Engaging with relevant government departments;
- (5) Mobilizing effective agency, either through alliance building, or *ashar* for community work.

In the course of this research project, the notion of 'resilience' increasingly gained policy recognition among aid agencies dealing with disaster risk reduction, climate change or environmental protection. Although local NGOs and local authorities do not use the concept – which is a finding in itself – I wish to redefine the notion of 'resilience' in line with a political and institutional approach to CBDRR and recognizing the five components of resilience mentioned above. I redefine 'resilience' as: 'People's ability to use their social and political resources to engage in the political arena of DRR to uncover, debate and negotiate the different views and agendas of recovery and adaptation, and to strategize through effective agency how to re-order institutional arrangements that generate risk solutions in favour of vulnerable segments of society, their livelihoods and the environment'.

Table 8.2 Overview of the prevailing and re-examined definitions of CBDRR-concepts

Concept	Prevailing definition	Definition re-examined
Disaster	'The serious disruption of the functioning of society causing widespread human, material or environmental losses, which exceed the ability of the affected communities to cope with using their own resources' (Abarquez and Murshed, 2004: 6)	'A disaster is a political event and its explanations and outcomes are embedded in a societal history which produced patterns of vulnerability, and to which political systems must respond. Disasters are an opportunity for social change'.
Community	'People living in one geographical area, who have common experience in responding to hazards, who have support networks, but who may have different risk perceptions and stakes in risk reduction' (ibid: 8).	'Community' is socially constructed, and links social actors to local institutions and their histories. Community is not restricted to the village administrative boundaries.
Community-based	'At risk communities are actively engaged in the identification, analysis, treatment, monitoring and evaluation of disaster risks. People are at the heart of decision-making and implementation of disaster risk reduction activities. The involvement of the most vulnerable is paramount and the support of the less vulnerable is necessary. In CBDRR, local and national governments are involved and supportive (ibid: 9).	'Community-based' refers to a multi-scale, social and institutional system beyond the village level to negotiate and demand risk solutions steered by disaster and conflict-affected people.
Local knowledge	'Practices developed by a group of people from an advanced understanding of the local environment, which has been formed over numerous generations of habitation' (UNISDR, 2008: vii).	Local knowledge consists of different bodies of knowledge which are socially constructed and embedded in a social, cultural and institutional context. Local knowledge is differentiated, partial or conflictive and reflects local power relations.
Risk	'The probability that negative consequences may arise when hazards interact with vulnerable areas, people, property and environment' resources' (Abarquez and Murshed, 2004: 6)	Risk is socially constructed and involves politics: "Whoever controls the definition of risk, controls the solution to the problem" (Slovic, 1999: 699).
Vulnerability	'A concept which describes factors or constraints of an economic, social, physical or geographic nature, which reduce the ability of a community to prepare for and cope with risks' (ibid: 6)	'An analytical tool to unravel institutional arrangements and power relations taking a historical perspective, and for conscientization purposes, shifting away from routinely categorizing women, children, elderly, refugees, widows , migrants, etc.'.
Participation	'The community takes responsibility for all stages of the program – from risk assessments, analysis, action-planning and decision-making' (ibid: 12-13).	'Participation constitutes a terrain of contestation. Participation is set by local norms and values, but its boundaries can be stretched by people's everyday politics practices'.
Empowerment	'Changing power relations in favour of marginalized, excluded groups in society' (ICCO Alliantie, 2006: 16).	'Strategies and options that arise from the local institutional context, to expand relationships outside people's innate social networks, building on people's social, organizational, motivational and political resources to create effective agency and change antagonistic relationships'.
Resilience	'The capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to adapt, by resisting or changing in order to reach or maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure. This is determined by the degree to which the social system is capable of organizing itself to increase its capacity for learning from past disasters for better future protection and to improve risk reduction measures' (UNISDR, 2004: 6, Volume II).	'People's ability to use their social and political resources to engage in the political arena of DRR to uncover, debate and negotiate the different views and agendas of recovery and adaptation, and to strategize through effective agency how to re-order institutional arrangements that generate risk solutions in favour of vulnerable segments of society, their livelihoods and the environment'.

8.4 Answering the research questions

In the preceding chapters I have outlined how local NGOs in the three countries and their funding agencies arrive at a specific framing of local realities and their responses, and consequently attached a particular meaning to CBDRR. Based on the findings I re-examined the

prevailing definitions of CBDRR related concepts in policy documents. I arrived at the particular meaning and revisited definitions of CBDRR concepts, by studying the processes and outcomes of the CBDRR pilots in different contexts, searching for the answers on the research questions. The main research question was:

“What are the reasons for the differing outcomes of CBDRR interventions in disaster and conflict affected contexts in Afghanistan, Indonesia and the Philippines?”.

More specifically the research set out to answer the following three questions:

1. *How is CBDRR defined by different actors, and operationalized in practice?*
2. *How do the various actors perform their different forms of power to shape CBDRR interventions?*
3. *How does CBDRR enable disaster and conflict affected people to influence and change institutions that constrained them in reducing their vulnerability?*

Table 8.3 provides an overview of the outcomes of the CBDRR pilots in the different localities. CBDRR approaches aim to reduce people’s immediate and long-term vulnerability to disasters, at often stated in policy documents. I assessed the outcomes in terms of *whose* risk and vulnerability is reduced with special attention for marginalized and vulnerable groups: were they able to rework institutional arrangements and power relations to demand safety and protection?

Table8.3: CBDRR pilot outcomes

Locality	Risk prioritization	Whose risk and vulnerability is being reduced?
Ghoryan, Herat, Afghanistan	Sandstorms, domestic violence, drug addiction, disputes with adjacent villages	A ‘social contract’ and ‘social fencing’ are new institutional arrangements to mitigate sandstorms and disputes, which benefit the various groups in Ghoryan. However long-term outcomes cannot yet be assessed. Women resource centres offer space to seek protection, health care and to possibly transform women’s everyday politics practice into more institutionalised efforts to further their protection agenda. The women resource centres are accepted by the male <i>shuras</i> at community level.
Bamyan, Afghanistan	Rocks, avalanches, floods	In Ghulistan, people’s immediate exposure to falling rocks, avalanches and floods was reduced benefitting the whole community. In two other villages no major changes occurred because the functioning of <i>shuras</i> was not questioned or challenged.
Nahreen, Baghlan, Afghanistan	Floods, drought, food shortage	People’s safety concerning floods improved. Flood risk is predominantly a male concern. The NGO did not consider people’s risk problem of drought and food shortage as prioritized by women/widows. Underlying risk factors were not addressed leaving people’s vulnerable conditions unchanged.
Pati, Central Java, Indonesia	Floods - sedimentation	Through Jampi Sawan, progress was made to mitigate flood risks along Juwana River benefitting farmers, fishermen, and landless households. The relationship between civil society groups and government authorities improved. However, negotiations to complete river normalization have to continue.
Muria region, Central java, Indonesia	Landslides, flash floods, floods – sedimentation, garbage blocking drainage	In Muria Region, risks are not yet reduced, but antagonistic relationships and intimidation are slowly being transformed into more agonistic relationships and cooperation between upstream and downstream villages, between village authorities and CBOs, and between CBOs and district government.
Halmahera, Northern Maluku, Indonesia	Land disputes, coastal erosion, floods, pollution	Land disputes remained unresolved; coastal erosion and floods were not reduced, while the NGO withdrew from Buli leaving the pollution caused by mining problem unresolved. Status quo was maintained

After the discussion of findings throughout this thesis the following points represent briefly the answers to the research questions posed above:

- **Actors involved in CBDRR have different interpretations of disaster and conflict events**
Local people, village authorities, NGOs, government officials, and funding agencies view and explain disaster and conflict events differently. Their views are based on past experiences, values, ideologies, interests, their position in society, affiliations, and all perform their various forms of power to get support for their risk explanations. CBDRR interventions and their outcomes are shaped by those who can best mobilize support for their risk problem and solution.
- **Mixture of a-political and political meanings attached to CBDRR interventions**
Some local NGOs conceived CBDRR as an a-political intervention aimed at improving disaster preparedness or individual households' livelihoods, whereas other NGOs attach a political meaning to CBDRR from its inception. The NGOs use their discursive power to articulate their values and ideas about how change happens, which change should happen, and for whom. This influences the nature and purpose of community organizing strategies, the type of interventions, which institutions to involve, and hence the CBDRR outcomes.
- **Translating CBDRR policy into practice doesn't follow a linear step-by-step model**
CBDRR interventions are continuously re-defined and re-shaped, and seldom comply with pre-set time-frames and localities. The discrepancy between CBDRR policy and practice is the result of how meaning and implementation are negotiated and transformed in the political arena that consist of the multi-level institutional context including the relationships between funding agencies and local partners. Actors involved in CBDRR locally resist, pursue, negotiate and struggle for their interests and agendas beyond the moment of decision-making on resource allocation. These political arenas cannot have similar outcomes. CBDRR is not a prescribed recipe nor does it follow a linear step-by-step model.
- **Selecting 'safe areas for intervention' are not a guarantee for meeting the intended results**
Funding agencies push and pull aid relations to influence the geographical choice of local NGOs that match best with their programme objectives. Local aid agencies, on their turn, need to maintain multiple relationships with various actors which put pressure on the community selection process. They need to show positive *results* to (back-)donors to stay eligible for funding, *and* they need to prove that their efforts are legitimate by serving those *most in need*. The majority of local NGOs had prior relationships with the selected communities and assumed a smooth implementation process. Despite efforts to run less risk during implementation, CBDRR outcomes varied due to local power dynamics that were not foreseen, but had to be dealt with.
- **Differing values and norms about people's participation in CBDRR**
The local political and institutional context, its histories and the prevailing norms and values about 'participation' influence what form and intensity of participation is

acceptable, and who is allowed to participate and who is not. 'Participation' has to be negotiated and debated to stretch the boundaries set for participation to include views from those, who can't be reached through the existing institutional structures. This requires extra efforts and time.

- **Varying engagement of NGOs with vulnerable groups, and village authorities, and village elite**

Community organizers interacted with a diversity of actors involving power relations that could be labelled as harmonious, cooperative, to antagonistic and intimidation. Those NGO staff who recognized the differentiated nature of local knowledge, the histories of institutions and the power dynamics involved, and acted in an impartial manner without losing sight of the needs of the most vulnerable groups, did perform better in the political arena to achieve and support marginalized people's agendas, backed up by a new DRR laws or supportive government officials.

- **Mobilization of effective agency can be linked positively to reducing risks**

Village institutions do not operate at the appropriate scale to address underlying risk factors. Therefore local people need to engage with the broader institutional context. Horizontal linkages among CBOs are instrumental for early warning, sharing the lobbying workload, portraying shared concerns and greater legitimacy as local representatives, and it supports in settling disputes and reducing tensions between villages. Vertical connections with authorities and power-holders make it possible for local voices to be heard at district, provincial and national level, and to access national level financial resources for disaster risk reduction. In Herat and Central Java, local people did not wait for the government to create an enabling environment or to change its social contract.

- **Negative outcomes relate to inexperience or ignoring the institutional and political context**

Low level of community organization, opposing views and interests, lack of formal interactions between key-actors, escaping sensitive political issues at stake by authorities did not lead to a change in the status quo, because the local NGOs involved were either not aware of local power dynamics, or were not able to transform antagonistic relationships into agonistic ones, meaning they could not bring opponents on speaking terms. Instead, opposing actors disengaged from the CBDRR process, and found room for manoeuvre in more hidden realities like in Halmahera.

- **Linking CBDRR to 'Do no Harm' practice has potential to respond to both disasters and conflict**

When viewing CBDRR as political and institutional approach to reduce risk, it has commonalities with the Do no Harm approach. Both approaches explore who is who in the community, their risk perceptions, power dynamics, the histories of institutions, and past and current conflicts. Both approaches apply community organizing strategies to bring the differing actors together to negotiate, debate, contest and mediate their risk constructs. The combination of the two approaches has potential for both reducing disaster risks and settling (violent) disputes.

- **Local people’s social, organizational, motivational and political resources are essential to change prevailing norms, values and ‘frames of realities’ to advance risk solutions**
CBDRR practices can transform institutions and constraints into new institutional arrangements which mitigate risks, disputes and violence, when people’s social, organisational, motivational and political resources are used, recognized and eventually mobilized into effective agency. This is a feature of CBDRR practice I observed in the Philippines, but which turns out to be applicable in other contexts. What differs in the various contexts, are the strategies and options available to local actors which depend on the broader institutional context and state-civil society relations.
- **Organizational structures of aid agencies and mandates influence the nature of CBDRR practices**
CBDRR was steered through humanitarian units of funding agencies separated from development desks and peace building units. Consequently, some local NGOs took a hazard-focused viewpoint to disasters resulting in disaster preparedness measures, while other NGOs, with a development mandate, took on addressing underlying risk factors.

In sum, the outcomes of the various CBDRR interventions in Afghanistan, Indonesia and the Philippines differ because of differing institutional arrangements locally in which the CBDRR interventions were introduced. Institutional arrangements refer, a.o. to differing values and norms about people’s participation, to the history of village institutions like POs, CBOs, *shuras* and *adat*, to village regulations concerning early warning, access to and control of natural resources, dispute resolution, and the way village authorities support CBOs’ demands for safety and protection or resist change. Additionally, the aid agencies attach different meaning to CBDRR which influences the objectives and type of CBDRR interventions. Some NGOs focus on village level interventions to reduce people’s immediate exposure to risk – like the removal of rocks in Ghulistan – while others engage with the broader institutional context to re-order power relations and create new institutional arrangements, like the social fencing and contract in Herat, and the flood mitigation lobby and collaboration between Jampi Sawan and the district government in Pati, Central Java. Through CBDRR interventions, actors defend and mobilize around CBDRR practices that are meaningful to them, or resist institutions and practices that carry meanings they find disagreeable. This results in the manifold manifestations of CBDRR practices and outcomes.

8.5 Implications of findings for CBDRR practitioners and policy-makers

Aid agencies increasingly want to understand what kind of assistance is relevant and appropriate to reduce the negative impact of disasters and conflict. They are interested in the potential of CBDRR approaches in conflict settings. This research reveals that CBDRR has very different meanings, and therefore practitioners and policy-makers have to be aware of how CBDRR interventions are based on various assumptions, perceptions, ideologies, simplifications and experiences, when they engage with other actors in the political arena of risk reduction. This research focuses on the level in the aid chain where local NGOs interact with local communities and government officials. Therefore my findings generate implications for particularly the CBDRR-practitioners of local NGOs and for the funding agency’s policy makers and programme staff, who support the local partners.

Differing values and norms about people's participation, histories of traditional local institutions, differentiated local knowledge and varying risk constructs all contribute to the discrepancy between the idealized policy models of funding agencies and the political arena-model of CBDRR-practice. The policy-practice gap will always be there, and the following implications for aid programming aim to support CBDRR practitioners and policy-makers with how to move and to operate in the force fields of policy and politics.

- *Become aware of one's assumptions, perceptions, ideologies and simplifications of local realities*

Be conscious about the organization's values and principles, what is written in policy documents and proposals, and regularly reflect with field and management staff on why (CB)DRR policy and principles do not always tally with its practice. This implies looking beyond the logframe model's and result-oriented management systems, and requires questioning why there exists a gap between policy and practice. This refers particularly to questioning the organization's assumptions about local realities and how social change happens. Questions to field staff, like 'What went different than expected, and why?', 'Which achievement you feel most proud of?', 'What strategy works for whom in what way?', 'What surprised you (positively and negatively)?' may bring out assumptions and presuppositions and their (in)validity.

- *Be aware of the different conceptualizations of 'community' and 'community-based'*
Instead of viewing a community according to its village administrative boundaries, the term 'community' hides different meanings and these become visible when taking a multi-dimensional approach to 'community'. This means that field staff studies the social inter-relationships among people within and beyond village level around *a risk concern*, and how local institutions govern people's relations, behaviour and their views on this risk concern, with the aim to better understand whose vulnerability to disasters and conflict increases, reduces or does not change.

- *Be aware of the use of local knowledge and differing risk perceptions*
Since local knowledge is not just available in the community in the form of facts, techniques and tips, but is differentiated, contested and partial, it is crucial for field staff to understand and acknowledge the different risk perspectives of specific groups by taking into account the notion of 'impartiality'. The examination of risk perspectives allows one to analyse how different actors frame their risk problems (discursive means), to understand the history of institutions and possible shifts in risk perspectives. Consequently, field staff defines which particular institutions matter, who is excluded from these institutions, and which actors are crucial to engage with in terms of authority and territory. Meanwhile it is a challenge to acknowledge the everyday politics practices of those actors who are not represented in the traditional community organizations or institutions. Determining whose knowledge and whose risk constructs count, is an important step or moment for the field staff to decide its positioning and organizing strategies to enter the political arena to rework antagonistic relationships.

- *Reconsider 'vulnerability' as an analytical tool to unravel institutional arrangements*
Local people do not regard themselves as vulnerable, except when it is strategic to do so, and labelling them as 'vulnerable' has a disempowering impact. 'Vulnerability' is not a

real-time condition in which people live, but rather a description of aid practitioners to legitimate their interventions. I argue that instead of focusing on individual households and their vulnerability categories (farmers, urban poor, fishermen, landless, women, elderly, among others), consider how institutional arrangements and their histories reduce, produce, or reproduce people's vulnerability to understand power relations and how households interrelate. 'Vulnerability' with a focus on institutions and power relations can be used as an analytical tool to unravel people's interactions in disaster and conflict settings. In the PAR-model of Blaikie et al (1994), 'institutions' seem to be the missing link to explain how 'root causes' can generate 'unsafe conditions' locally through 'dynamic pressures'. When analysing people's vulnerabilities, I suggest to particularly study people's 'political vulnerability' to which I refer as people's inability to access resources, positions and power to demand safety and protection outside their innate social support networks due to power differentials and political exclusion from decision-making processes from the local to national level.

- *Explore the institutional context beyond village level*
 The CBDRR-pilots reveal the importance for NGO field staff together with local actors, to explore the institutional context: what are relevant (new) laws, which agency or department is responsible, what are trends in spatial planning processes within government to anticipate new risks; explore the institutional bureaucracies to discover who in the bureaucracy is supporting the people's agenda, and who is opposing. Likewise NGOs and community people make themselves understand the positions of actors in a conflict context: who are the connectors and who are dividers? When they decide to enter the political arena, NGOs may help in how to best use discursive power and how to (re-)frame risk problems to convince other parties. When community organizers and local people are aware of the institutional context, they are more conscious of how these actors perform their powers in the arena where social actors negotiate, debate and struggle for safety, protection and secure livelihoods. Because of an increased awareness, the NGO will run less risk of getting entangled in local power-plays.
- *View 'participation' as a negotiated value*
 To improve CBDRR practice, an understanding is needed of local norms of decision-making and representation and institutional histories. How do these change, and are different values concerning participation negotiated between aid agencies and community institutions? How do people indirectly affect intervention outcomes without direct participation referring to their everyday politics practice? This view on participation differs from how 'participation' is defined in ADPC's field practitioners handbook which promotes an instrumental view on participation where people are involved in all steps of the CBDRR-process without problematizing the prevailing norms on who participates and who does not.
- *Empowerment through establishing horizontal and vertical connections*
 CBDRR-practices in the Philippines, Indonesia and Afghanistan actively seek horizontal support and engagement with other citizens and communities, and vertical engagement – lobby, cooperation, confrontation, and resistance - with the broader but country-specific institutional context beyond the village level. They aim to tackle the underlying causes of disaster risks, to reduce tensions, to address environmental issues, and to

generate financial resources from the responsible government institutions locally and nationally. Alliances offer opportunities to share lobby workloads, portray shared concerns and therefore a greater legitimacy as community representatives (Few, 2002: 37).

- *View CBDRR as a long-term political process with district, provincial and national level results*

When taking the potential transformative nature of CBDRR seriously, it means that CBDRR practitioners will engage in re-ordering social relationships and institutions within and beyond village level. Addressing root causes of people's vulnerabilities means that one has to deal with creating, adapting, or opposing policies, laws, norms, values, structures and decisions about resource allocation – that not only deal with reducing disaster risk or violence, but rather entails institutions dealing with spatial planning, natural resources management, and often the judicial system. These processes of social change usually require more time than the usual project duration of two to four years. In the case of Central Java, the support from I&K consisted of three subsequent CBDRR projects of two years each, which built on each other. Within the total of six years the efforts resulted in the initial release of financial resources from the Indonesian government's national budget – although still insufficient - and a change in the attitude of government officials towards civil-society organizations. Reflecting on this experience, the CBDRR efforts should explicitly envision changes in institutions at multiple levels with the ultimate aim to reduce people's vulnerability locally. Therefore CBDRR interventions have to think ahead of objectives to be achieved at institutional levels beyond the village. Rather than simply aiming for isolated village-level project objectives, results have to be achieved at provincial and even national level. For example, formulating CBDRR objectives in terms of national DRR budgets spent locally could become an appropriate strategy for 'up-scaling CBDRR', a term repeatedly mentioned by INGOs and governments (Moss, 2007).

- *CBDRR has potential for remote humanitarian action*

In local realities where the security situation constraints the interaction between NGO field staff and local people to render humanitarian assistance, the village authorities and community based organizations who have been engaged in CBDRR for a while, have most likely the appropriate institutional arrangements in place to organize and mobilize resources for relief and recovery as demonstrated in Nahreen and Ghoryan districts, Afghanistan. NGOs can provide 'distant assistance' provided it is based on longstanding relationships with the community, and intimate knowledge of local settings.

- *Reconsider the emergency relief – development dichotomy*

The current organizational set-up of the funding agencies that participated in this research portrays a reality where basically only *major* disasters occur which disrupt development, and which require outside emergency aid. And they implement development programmes without considering local people's increasing vulnerability to small disasters or conflict. Recognizing the occurrence of recurrent small scale disasters and conflict in development programmes is still a policy gap. Recurrent small disasters and conflict are seasonal and for many people these have become 'normal'. CBDRR as an approach has the potential to reduce risks in a structural manner, and the kind of CBDRR activities better match with the funding agencies' other programmes dealing with food

security, democratization, human rights, and environmental protection, than its humanitarian aid procedures. It is easier to insert a CBDRR-lens into development programmes implemented by local partners, than in humanitarian aid policies steered from the headquarters in the Netherlands.

- *Invest in improving skills and knowledge of NGO field staff to make context analysis*
The local NGOs recommend investing more in improving skills and knowledge of their staff to conduct a context analysis, to view interventions as a political arena model, to explore the institutional context, and understand the different forms of power that actors perform. It are usually the management and programme staff who are involved in conceptual discussions, if they happen at all, not the field staff whereas they are the front-workers, the ones interacting with local people who needs these skills and knowledge most.

Table 8.4 provides an overview of the key-concepts used in this research: social actors, institutions, questions to analyse the political arena, and forms of power that actors perform in relationships. Olson’s questions can be asked to any actor to uncover their views, assumptions and positioning in the political arena. The table should be read according to columns; there are no direct horizontal linkages.

Table 8.4 Overview concepts: social actors, institutions, political arena, and forms of power

Social relationships/ Social actors	Institutions (Jütting, 2003)	Olson’s questions to analyse political arena of responding to disasters and conflict	Forms of power performed by actors in the political arena
Citizens (differ due to gender, wealth, ethnicity, religion, etc) CBOs NGOs Funding agency Church, mosque Media Civil-society organizations Government officials / departments Politicians Warlord Military Other actors	Ideology, social norms, values, traditions, gender norms (level 1)	1. <i>What happened?</i> How do actors define and explain the disaster event, the violence, conflicts, or crisis? Social construction of meaning, which has implications for goals of responses	<i>Discursive power, domination, structural power relations</i> Construction of meaning, framing, and about what is acceptable. Shapes people’s beliefs, sense of self, and acceptance of status quo.
	Institutions related to access to resources, property rights and judiciary system (level2).	2. <i>Why were losses so high and responses so (in)adequate?</i> What are existing policies, laws and regulations to reduce risks? Who can be held accountable for the losses? These questions refer to why people are affected and vulnerable.	<i>Institutional power</i> Construction of power relations takes place through institutions like policies, laws, regulations which regulate people’s behaviour. Refers to administrative practices, authority, procedures, and discursive rituals.
	Institutions defining governance arrangements, authority, contractual relationships (level 3)		
	Institutions related to allocation mechanisms (level 4)	3. <i>What happens now?</i> Recovery efforts involves resources and decisions on how to use and where to allocate these resources	<i>Publicly performed power, strategic games</i> Refers to the arena of negotiations, debates, struggles to influence decision-making and resource allocation.

- *Listening to people in times of emergencies and insecurity*
This research happens at a time when more researchers, aid practitioners and their agencies acknowledged the need to review the international aid practice with the aim to improve aid effectiveness in future emergencies. Oxfam-International conducted its “Listening to disaster-affected communities” research program after the Asian Tsunami (2008), whereas CDA Collaborative Learning Projects implemented its ‘Listening Project’ (2008), asking people in the recipient societies how they understand the successes and failures of these international assistance efforts. One of Oxfam International conclusions is that people’s local knowledge, capacity and priorities are often overlooked and that aid agencies should train themselves to listen. This is a remarkable conclusion. ‘Listening to

people' - what does it mean? One of the respondents summarized his critique as: "*Instead of understanding contexts and identities, INGO staff only cares for numbers and statistics in their needs assessments*" (CDA, 2008: 2). Local people don't feel heard. Aside of collecting numbers and statistics for needs assessments, it is fruitful allowing people to tell their life stories, to listen to their concerns, to understand the difficulties and complexities, in order to ensure more relevant assistance. 'Listening to people' means moreover to *act upon* an understanding of people's priorities in finding structural solutions, as opposed to asking questions that match preconceived plans.

Final remarks

This research involved crossing boundaries between academic and policy-oriented research through an interactive research methodology. This interaction produced revisited CBDRR concepts and theories, and insights for aid programming that are found 'relevant' and 'meaningful' by aid agencies⁴. Secondly, this research involved crossing boundaries between the fields of 'disaster studies' and 'conflict studies'. I increasingly felt that an interactive research methodology supported me to deal with both the practical constraints and security risks involved in this research, *and* with the ethical issues of doing field work in disaster and conflict settings. Through the interaction with local NGOs, I not only got access to disaster and conflict settings and affected populations, I also felt that being part of the joint sense-making and solving humanitarian aid puzzles, addresses the concerns about ethics and accountability through contributing to 'relevant interventions for local settings'. This is another important research product, aside of 'new knowledge' and 'insights for aid programming'. Of course, there are many challenges and dangers inherent in doing interactive research in complex settings, but when researchers wait till 'normalcy' has returned, action has got ahead of understanding.

⁴ See Chapter 2 for a complete reflection on the interactive research methodology.

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Over the last few decades, the frequency and intensity of disaster events has increased alarmingly, which particularly affected the livelihoods of poor people. Towards the end of the 1990s, policy-makers and practitioners in response rapidly adopted Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR) as an alternative to top-down approaches in disaster management. CBDRR refers to a variety of interventions aimed at reducing people's immediate and long-term vulnerability to disasters by strengthening their capacities to better deal with the negative impact of disasters. Emphasis is placed on people's participation and on the recognition of people's own capacities and knowledge. Though CBDRR is on the rise in international policy circles, there are a number of important conceptual and practical questions that have not yet been adequately addressed. Serious and critical analysis of how agencies put CBDRR into practice is still lacking. Does CBDRR indeed result in safer communities? Why does it fail to benefit the most vulnerable people? This thesis focuses on local level responses to recurrent small scale disasters and conflict in Afghanistan, Indonesia and the Philippines, where the impact of disasters and conflict does not trigger (inter)national media attention nor financial resources. Affected people then largely rely on their own resources to cope with adversity.

The research was conceived together with staff from three Dutch aid agencies: Oxfam-Novib, ICCO and Kerkinactie. They formulated multiple questions, triggered by experiences and dilemmas they felt they could not address themselves. The first set of questions relate to the observed problematic relationship between aid policy and prescriptions at donor level, and the practices they are supposed to generate at grassroots level: aid programmes often fail to match people's needs in crisis situations. The second set of questions deals with how aid agencies depict local populations and portray local realities, when and why aid agencies tend to leave 'the political' out of their aid interventions, ignore 'politics', or when do they selectively put it in. The third set of questions stem from the trend that disasters increasingly happen in situations of conflict or chronic instability. Dynamics of conflict, the interplay with disasters and their specific impact on people's livelihoods are poorly understood by aid practitioners and their donors. Most aid agencies treat disasters and conflict as distinct fields of operation thus simplifying reality.

The three aid agencies viewed CBDRR to be a promising approach to better match aid with the needs of disaster and conflict-affected populations, and wished to explore the potential of CBDRR approaches in implementing disaster risk reduction measures that at the same could address divisions and grievances leading to violent conflict. Whereas Afghanistan and Indonesia were selected beforehand, the selection of local partners and CBDRR pilot areas became part of the discussions and negotiations of this interactive research. In Indonesia five local partner NGOs joined, and in Afghanistan four local NGOs. The CBDRR pilots consisted of 'doing CBDRR' in a total of 44 villages, meaning testing a new approach to

respond to recurrent small scale disasters in conflict settings beyond relief, to reflect on the intervention processes, and to understanding the reasons for the varying outcomes.

I used an actor-orientation since it offers an analytical framework for clarifying how policies and interventions are shaped by the various actors involved in the CBDRR pilots. It further offers a framework to study both the specificities of particular local settings, and the broader forces and processes of institutional and societal change. The actor-oriented approach starts from the premise that each actor has 'agency', meaning that people use their knowledge, skills, influence, aspirations, and organizing capacities in their problem-solving, survival and development strategies. Although people have alternative options to shape their coping strategies, these strategies have their limitations because of people's structural position in society. I'm particularly interested in how people can mobilize and organize 'effective agency' to find room for manoeuvre, and to affect change towards safer communities. I equally want to understand the constraints put upon 'effective agency' that may emerge, and to understand the larger structures in society, which is needed to put the CBDRR-outcomes in the proper perspective. I therefore use the notions of 'institutions', 'power', and 'political arena'. Different actors pursue, negotiate and struggle for their interests and agendas to deal with multiple realities. I critically reflect on CBDRR approaches to understand the gap between CBDRR policy and actual outcomes, considering the multi-level institutions through which meaning and implementation of CBDRR policy are negotiated and transformed, from the conceptual policy design stage until the arena where decisions on risk solutions and resource allocation are made.

Chapter 2 critically reflects on the interactive research methodology. It deals with processes of knowledge construction and how I dealt with partiality and multiple perspectives in disaster and conflict settings. Some research encounters led to tensions and conflict among the actors involved which needed to be constantly managed to maintain reciprocal relationships with the research subjects. These tensions however, led to deeper analysis of the workings of the aid chain, and the nature of relationships among actors. I further reflect on the relevance, appropriateness and ethics of doing interactive research in real-time disaster and conflict settings, and how to secure valid data. The general academic argument is that insecurity makes it impossible to secure validity of findings, and that serious research has to wait till the fighting stops. I argue that research in disaster and conflict settings is possible through the right contacts, access through local NGOs and flexibility and creativity in research methods. I reflect on the 'interactive' part of interactive research explaining how the interactive research got shaped through the involvement of very different stakeholders, considering issues like inter-subjectivity, evolving reciprocal relationships, and positioning and roles of the researcher. I regard this research as a continuous negotiation process, and its findings as negotiated outcomes.

Chapter 3 explores the politics of disaster response in the Philippines. It reviews the history of a Philippine NGO which strategically framed and re-framed its CBDRR policy in the socio-political context of the Philippines since Martial Law in 1972. It illustrates how the elite and powerful few who make up the government either neglect disaster response or take advantage of recurrent disaster events. The majority of poor and marginalized sectors rely particularly on their social, motivational and political resources. Both the NGOs and the Philippine government attach their specific meaning to disaster and vulnerability and

construct their paradigms of reality of whom to blame and about what causes the damages. All actors search for explanations that suit their beliefs and political interests and use discursive means to win others for their cause. As a consequence, responses to disasters vary according to their political visions. This chapter further makes sense of what constitutes 'political vulnerability', and how this contradicts to people's agency and the notion of 'everyday politics'. I conclude that 'vulnerability' is rather an analytical tool to uncover institutional arrangements and power relations, not a real-time condition in which people live. 'Vulnerability' is a social construct of aid providers to legitimize their actions. The chapter concludes that disasters can be viewed as an opportunity for social change, but for whom and in what way is contextual, time-bound and contested in local and national arenas.

Chapter 4 is a historical account of various other 'home-grown' CBDRR approaches like promoted by *La Red* in Latin America, and *Duryog Nivaran* in South Asia. These home-grown CBDRR approaches already existed before the UN declared the International Decade of Natural Disaster Reduction from 1989 to 1999. By the end of the 1990s, the international community started to promote community-based approaches as a complementary strategy to national and international efforts to reduce risk. However, the meaning governments attach to CBDRR rather refers to efficiency, than to genuinely addressing social injustices underlying people's vulnerability. The chapter reveals how the various strands of thinking about CBDRR got increasingly intertwined since the Hyogo Declaration in 2005. The interactions between civil society organizations and the UN in the area of (CB)DRR reveal some insights about why the political perspective and concrete changes towards local level actions to reduce disaster impact are being subordinated, resulting in the maintenance of the status quo. The first insight refers to the dynamics between the UN as an institution, and its state-level actors and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR). The UNISDR seems to be limited in its ability to be critical of member states, and their interactions should be viewed as 'saying the right things without provoking its members'. A second reason is that the UN still regard the knowledge and opinions of experts, scientists and authorities more accurate, relevant and privileged over local opinions and knowledge, thereby ignoring – read neutralizing – the views of civil society actors. The third insight is related to resource allocation, and how governments allocate about 90% of DRR resources to the national level without transfers to local levels. (CB)DRR appears to be a contested approach: beyond its relevance to reduce risks of affected populations, CBDRR is also a political and ideological construct, with its discursive interpretations and justifications.

Chapter 5 explores local people's perspectives on risks stemming from disasters and conflict, the notion of 'local knowledge', and how people deal with uncertainty and crisis in Afghanistan and Indonesia. CBDRR-literature assumes that the use of local knowledge will improve disaster risk reduction policies and project implementation. However, the many stories from men and women in Afghanistan and Indonesia reveal that local knowledge is differentiated, partial, contested and sometimes dangerous like in Maluku, where local beliefs justify the use of violence. When outsiders, like CBDRR-practitioners, say they aim to recognize local knowledge in their interventions locally, they should be aware and acknowledge the differentiated nature of local knowledge, the diversity in risk constructs and the local institutional arrangements that influence them. How this raises problems and dilemmas in practice is subject of the next two chapters.

Chapters 6 and 7 elaborate on how CBDRR approaches get shape and meaning in new contexts like Afghanistan and Indonesia. Through sequential case analysis and regular action-reflection cycles, I encouraged local NGO staff to reflect on their routines that have been taken for granted, and to uncover assumptions, norms, values, skills and systems. Chapter 6 particularly focuses on the NGOs' assumptions and values applied when selecting, entering and organizing communities and the reasons behind. Despite conscious efforts to reach the most vulnerable groups in a village through creative, flexible and context-specific approaches, the benefits still seem to drift towards village elites, unless community organizers are able to understand the various actors' needs within their full social and political context, and see the connections and power relations between them. I refer to this ability as 'impartiality'. In this way community organizers can bring opposing groups on speaking terms in order to negotiate risk problems and solutions, and reduce tensions. Elite forces are still strong however, and withstanding these pressures is difficult for CBOs, vulnerable groups, and for the NGOs that claim to support the latter. The chapters reveal the mechanisms in the CBDRR process that reduce, produce, or reproduce people's vulnerability.

Chapter 7 deals with two cases, flood mitigation in Central Java, Indonesia, and reducing conflict and the impact of sandstorms in Herat province, western Afghanistan. In these two cases, local people and NGOs mobilized and organized 'effective agency' and entered the 'political arena' to negotiate and struggle successfully for their risk solutions beyond community level. The cases show that CBDRR-interventions are not isolated, distinct entities, but very much intertwined with the broader institutional environment. Flood mitigation, watershed management, reforestation, regulating access to pasture lands involve decisions about people, space and their interactions. This makes risk reduction highly political. Local people, NGOs and CSO groups turn to governments who are expected to create enabling political and legislative environments. But as the cases show, many governments do not prioritize, or are reluctant to change policies or legislation which favour vulnerable communities. The Afghanistan case shows that a prerequisite for success is that one should deal with the past and current conflict contexts in which the CBDRR intervention operates. Competing claims on natural resources, a change in ethnic-political power relations after refugees returned from Iran, and changes in government's land policies are crucial to be considered before entering negotiation processes among the various stakeholders. The reforestation intervention is not simply planting windbreaks to mitigate or prevent sandstorms, but a complex negotiation process involving 40 villages and government officials to achieve 'social fencing' and legitimate access to land and resources for a specific timeframe, laid down in a contract between village representatives, the NGO and district governor. The contract and 'social fencing' are meant to reduce both tensions and conflict among the villages and ethnic groups *and* the negative effects of sandstorms.

The final chapter brings together the conceptual insights and conclusions. It discusses what CBDRR actually is and means in the various disaster and conflict contexts, and re-examines the definitions of the key CBDRR concepts. Empirical findings show that there are different processes through which organizations – CBOs, local NGOs, funding agencies, government in Afghanistan, Indonesia and the Philippines – arrive at a specific framing of local realities and their responses in the context they live and work. These are related to their histories, current state-society relations, and how they legitimize their interventions. Actors either underscore the politics of their interventions or rather de-politicize them. From the

experiences of this research it is plausible to conclude that when one ignores to view CBDRR interventions in a political and institutional manner, the outcomes of the interventions are likely to reproduce the status quo. This is one of the main explanations for the varying outcomes of the CBDRR pilots.

This chapter further reflects on the potential of CBDRR in conflict settings. The case from Herat offers valuable prospects for how to support disaster and conflict affected communities in a context where government is weak or contested. I argue to regard both disasters and conflict as processes and political events, and based on this research, I add that the notion of 'institutions' can be used analytically to blur the demarcation between disaster and conflict theories and practice, since institutions regulate safety, protection, access to resources, and gain authority to settle disputes.

By looking for the political in responding to disaster and conflict, I uncover some of the complexities and the political nature of disaster risk reduction practices. The implication for aid agencies is that they should invest considerable time and effort to find out who cooperates and who opposes particular risk reduction measures and why, and to deal with these power plays in such a way that marginal groups can succeed in their demands for protection and safety. This practice substantially deviates from most current CBDRR practices. The significance of this research is that it shows the need to look beyond the binaries of top-down and bottom-up approaches to reduce risks, and to understand how in the political arena of disaster risk reduction, adherents of the different CBDRR traditions negotiate the principles and features of their CBDRR-tradition, resulting in varying CBDRR-practices, meanings and outcomes. There is no such thing as *the* CBDRR-approach.

Het aantal natuurrampen is de afgelopen decennia schrikbarend toegenomen, wat de bestaanszekerheid van vooral arme mensen in toenemende mate ondermijnt. In de jaren negentig vond er een kentering plaats van centraal gestuurde noodhulp, naar lokaal gestuurde benaderingen voor rampenbestrijding (Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR)). CBDRR staat voor de verschillende soorten interventies die tot doel hebben de kwetsbaarheid van door rampen getroffen bevolkingsgroepen te verminderen en hun weerbaarheid te vergroten, zodat ze de negatieve gevolgen van rampen beter kunnen doorstaan. De nadruk ligt binnen deze benaderingen op participatie en erkenning van bestaande lokale kennis, vaardigheden en overlevingsstrategieën die als uitgangspunt dienen voor rampenbestrijding. Ondanks de stijgende populariteit van CBDRR bij maatschappelijke organisaties en ook overheden, kan men toch een aantal kanttekeningen plaatsen bij de uitvoering ervan. Leidt CBDRR inderdaad tot veiligere lokale samenlevingen? Hoe komt het dat deze benadering vaak faalt in het bereiken van de meest kwetsbare doelgroepen? Dit onderzoek heeft lokale interventies onder de loep genomen in gebieden in Afghanistan, Indonesië en de Filipijnen die herhaaldelijk door kleinschalige natuurrampen en conflicten worden getroffen. Kleinschalige rampen en conflicten halen vaak niet de (inter)nationale media waardoor fondsenwerving uitblijft. De getroffen bevolking is dan vooral op zichzelf aangewezen.

Dit onderzoek is tot stand gekomen in samenwerking met drie Nederlandse hulporganisaties: Oxfam-Novib, ICCO en Kerkinactie. Op grond van ervaringen, observaties en dilemma's uit hun praktijk, formuleerden ze een aantal onderzoeksvragen. Een eerste set vragen had betrekking op de problematische relatie tussen het beleid en financieel-administratieve voorschriften van hulporganisaties aan de ene kant, en de resultaten die men in de praktijk beoogt te halen. Hulpprogramma's sluiten vaak niet aan bij de behoeften van mensen in crisis situaties. De tweede set vragen richtte zich op hoe hulporganisaties een beeld schetsen van lokale crisis situaties en van wat lokale mensen nodig hebben. Waarom laten hulporganisaties vaak het 'politieke' weg uit hun hulpinterventies, negeren het zelfs, of waarom maken ze er selectief wel melding van? De laatste vraag volgt op een trend dat steeds meer natuurrampen in conflict gebieden plaats vinden. In hoeverre verergeren rampen lokale conflicten, of bieden ze juist nieuwe kansen om conflicten te beslechten? Hulporganisaties en financieringsorganisaties missen de parate kennis over hoe het samenspel van rampen en conflict uitpakt voor de bestaanszekerheid van getroffen mensen. De meeste hulporganisaties zien rampen en conflicten als verschillende en daardoor gescheiden disciplines, en als gevolg daarvan wordt ook de hulp operationeel gescheiden. De werkelijkheid wordt hierdoor sterk versimpeld.

De drie hulporganisaties zagen in CBDRR een veelbelovende benadering om hulp beter te laten aansluiten bij de behoeften van door rampen en conflict getroffen bevolkingsgroepen. Ze wilden deze benadering graag uittesten in de praktijk en kijken in hoeverre CBDRR interventies resulteren in een vergrootte weerbaarheid van lokale mensen tegen rampen, en te-

vens in het wegnemen van spanningen en het reduceren van conflicten. Het uittesten van CBDRR vond plaats in Afghanistan en Indonesië, twee landen die de drie hulporganisaties al hadden geselecteerd voordat het onderzoek begon. De selectie van lokale partner organisaties gebeurde in overleg met de partners zelf en de drie Nederlandse hulporganisaties. In totaal deden vijf lokale partners in Indonesië mee en vier in Afghanistan. De CBDRR benadering werd uitgetest in 44 dorpen die herhaaldelijk getroffen worden door rampen en conflicten. Het doel van het uittesten van de CBDRR-benadering was om lokale bevolking te ondersteunen op een manier die verder reikt dan noodhulp, te reflecteren op CBDRR interventies, en te begrijpen waarom er verschillen zijn in CBDRR processen en resultaten. Ik heb gebruik gemaakt van de 'actor-benadering', die handvaten biedt om de totstandkoming van beleid en interventies te analyseren vanuit het perspectief van de verschillende betrokken actoren. Het biedt verder mogelijkheden om lokale situaties – waarin interventies worden gepleegd – te bestuderen en ook hoe actoren hun macht gebruiken in institutionele en maatschappelijke processen. De actor-benadering gaat ervan uit dat elk persoon *agency* heeft, het vermogen om kennis, vaardigheden, invloed, en aspiraties in te zetten om problemen op te lossen en te kunnen overleven – alleen of samen met anderen. Ofschoon mensen verschillende opties hebben om nieuwe overlevingsstrategieën te ontwikkelen, kennen die strategieën ook hun beperkingen vanwege de sociale positie waarin mensen zich bevinden. Ik ben in het bijzonder geïnteresseerd in hoe mensen '*effective agency*' mobiliseren en organiseren om hun speelruimte te vergroten om hun bestaansbronnen en leefomgeving veilig te stellen tegen rampen en conflict. Tegelijkertijd wil ik begrijpen welke beperkingen en tegenwerking mensen ervaren, die voortkomen uit bepaalde maatschappelijke structuren. Dit om de CBDRR test-uitkomsten in een realistisch perspectief te kunnen plaatsen. Ik gebruik hiervoor concepten als 'instituten', 'macht' en 'politieke arena'. De verschillende actoren onderhandelen en staan voor hun belangen om te kunnen voldoen aan de eisen die de omgeving aan hen stelt: bijvoorbeeld, lokale mensen willen overleven en veiligheid, NGO staf wil goede resultaten kunnen tonen aan financiers, terwijl lokale overheden vooral hun positie willen veilig stellen. Ik neem de CBDRR-benadering kritisch onder de loep om beter het verschil tussen CBDRR-beleid en CBDRR-praktijk te begrijpen. Ik kijk naar hoe actoren betekenis geven aan CBDRR tijdens de onderhandelingen en uitvoering van CBDRR waarbij verschillende niveaus en soorten instituten worden betrokken – vanaf de conceptualisering van de CBDRR interventie tot in de politieke arena waarin die actoren besluiten nemen over welke risico-verminderende maatregelen getroffen worden en hoe financiële en materiele middelen worden toegekend aan wie, en aan wie niet.

Hoofdstuk 2 reflecteert op de interactieve onderzoeksmethodologie. Het gaat in op hoe nieuwe kennis wordt gecreëerd en hoe ik om ben gegaan met partijdigheid en verschillende interpretaties over rampen en conflicten in specifieke lokale contexten. Sommige ontmoetingen tussen actoren in het onderzoek leidden tot spanningen en conflict, en deze relaties moesten aldoor worden beheerst om *reciprocal relationships* tussen de onderzoeksactoren te waarborgen. Deze spanningen, echter, resulteerden in een verdergaande analyse van hoe de hulpketen functioneert en in de aard van de relaties tussen donor en lokale partners. Verder reflecteert het hoofdstuk op de relevantie, geschiktheid en de ethiek van interactief onderzoek doen in ramp- en conflict gebieden, en hoe je steekhoudende gegevens verzamelt. Het algemene wetenschappelijk argument is dat het onmogelijk is om in onveilige gebieden relevante en betrouwbare gegevens te verzamelen, en dat serieus onderzoek moet wachten totdat conflicten voorbij zijn. Ik pleit ervoor dat onderzoek in ramp- en conflictge-

bieden mogelijk is mits de onderzoeker over betrouwbare contacten beschikt, toegang krijgt via lokale organisaties, en flexibele en creatieve onderzoeksmethoden hanteert. Het hoofdstuk reflecteert ook op het 'interactieve' deel van interactief onderzoek en legt uit hoe het onderzoek zijn vorm krijgt door de invloed van de verschillende deelnemers aan de hand van de begrippen '*inter-subjectivity*', '*reciprocal relationships*' en de positionering en verschillende rollen van de onderzoeker. Ik beschouw dit onderzoek als een voortdurend onderhandelingsproces en de bevindingen als onderhandelde resultaten.

Hoofdstuk 3 gaat in op het politieke karakter van rampenbestrijding in de Filippijnen. Het kijkt terug op de geschiedenis van een Filipijnse NGO dat haar CBDRR-beleid strategisch aanpaste aan de veranderende sociaal-politieke context in het land sinds 1972 toen president Marcos de staat van beleg afkondigde. Het illustreert hoe de elite, die de overheid vormde, rampenbestrijding verwaarloosde of juist zijn voordeel deed uit de herhaalde rampen. De meerderheid van de bevolking is arm en is afhankelijk van vooral sociale en politieke vangnetten, en van mentale kracht. Zowel de Ngo's als de Filipijnse overheid geven een specifieke betekenis aan rampen en kwetsbaarheid, en construeren hun paradigma's over de werkelijkheid van wie is verantwoordelijk voor het leed en over wat de schade veroorzaakt heeft. Iedereen zoekt een verklaring die het best past bij de eigen opvattingen en politieke belangen, en probeert met argumenten en redeneringen de ander van hun gelijk te overtuigen. Vanwege verschil in politieke visie verschillen de wijzen waarop actoren op rampen reageren. Het hoofdstuk geeft verder betekenis aan 'politieke kwetsbaarheid' (*political vulnerability*) van mensen en hoe dit begrip contrasteert met de 'alledaagse politieke' praktijk (*everyday politics*). Ik concludeer dat 'kwetsbaarheid' eigenlijk meer een analytisch concept en instrument is om institutionele regelingen en machtsrelaties te ontrafelen, en niet de reële werkelijkheid waarin mensen leven. 'Kwetsbaarheid' is een constructie, een label die hulpverleners gebruiken om hun interventies te legitimeren. Het hoofdstuk concludeert dat rampen kunnen worden beschouwd als een kans voor sociale verandering, maar voor wie en hoe is contextueel en tijdsgebonden en wordt uitgevochten in lokale en nationale arena's.

Hoofdstuk 4 geeft een historisch overzicht van het ontstaan van andere CBDRR tradities die onder bepaalde omstandigheden lokaal zijn ontstaan en gepromoot zoals door *La Red* in Latijns America en *Duryog Nivaran* in Zuid Azië. Deze lokaal gevormde CBDRR tradities bestonden al voordat de Verenigde Naties (VN) het 'Internationale Decennium voor de Bestrijding van Natuurrampen' uitriepen van 1989 tot 1999. Tegen het eind van de negentiger jaren begon ook de internationale gemeenschap de CBDRR benadering als zinvol te beschouwen en zag het als complementair aan de nationale en internationale inspanningen om risico's op rampen te verminderen. Echter, overheden geven CBDRR een betekenis die zich meer richt op efficiëntie, dan op het aanpakken van de onderliggende structurele oorzaken van rampen. Het hoofdstuk laat zien hoe de verschillende CBDRR-tradities in toenemende mate met elkaar verstrengeld zijn geraakt sinds de Hyogo Verklaring in 2005. De interacties tussen maatschappelijke organisaties en de VN op het gebied van rampenbestrijding geven inzicht in waarom het politieke karakter van rampen en concrete veranderingen ter bevordering van lokale rampenbestrijding ondergeschikt blijven waardoor er niets verandert en schade niet vermindert. Het eerste inzicht heeft te maken met hoe de VN als instituut functioneren, en de dynamieken tussen de afzonderlijke lidstaten en de VN Internationale Strategie voor Rampenbestrijding (UNISDR). De UNISDR lijkt beperkt in haar mogelijkheden om

zich kritisch uit te laten naar lidstaten, en hun interacties worden gekenmerkt door ‘de juiste dingen zeggen zonder lidstaten te provoceren’. Een tweede inzicht is dat de VN kennis en wetenschappers en autoriteiten hoger in het vaandel hebben dan kennis en meningen van lokale maatschappelijke organisaties over rampenbestrijding. Rapporten van deze laatste groep worden daarom keer op keer genegeerd. Een derde inzicht heeft te maken met het toekennen van financiële middelen aan rampenbestrijding, waarbij overheden ongeveer 90% van die middelen toekennen aan nationale inspanningen en nauwelijks aan lokale rampenbestrijding. CBDRR lijkt een betwiste benadering: behalve haar relevantie om risico’s te verminderen voor kwetsbare gemeenschappen, is het bovenal een benadering die door verschillende actoren politiek en ideologisch wordt ingezet in debatten om hun maatregelen te legitimeren.

Hoofdstuk 5 analyseert de perspectieven van lokale mensen die risico’s ervaren als gevolg van rampen en conflict, en hoe ze met onzekerheid omgaan in Afghanistan en Indonesië. Het verdiept zich in de vraag “wat is lokale kennis eigenlijk” die mensen gebruiken om te overleven. CBDRR literatuur gaat ervan uit dat het gebruik van lokale kennis de effectiviteit van rampenbestrijding vergroot. De vele verhalen van mannen en vrouwen in Afghanistan en Indonesië in dit hoofdstuk, tonen aan dat lokale kennis gedifferentieerd, partijdig en betwist is en zelfs gevaarlijk kan zijn, zoals in de Molukken waar lokale kennis en geloof mensen juist aanspoorden tot geweld. Wanneer buitenstaanders, zoals CBDRR beoefenaars, zeggen dat ze lokale kennis erkennen in hun interventies, dan zullen ze zich bewust moeten zijn dat er niet zoiets bestaat als een container met lokale feiten en kennis die je kunt gebruiken, maar dat lokale kennis en risico percepties gedifferentieerd zijn als gevolg van lokale institutionele regels en spelers. Hoe dit problemen en dilemma’s oproept voor CBDRR beoefenaars, is onderwerp van het volgende hoofdstuk.

Hoofdstukken 6 en 7 gaan uitvoerig in op hoe CBDRR een specifieke betekenis krijgt en wordt toegepast in nieuwe situaties in Afghanistan en Indonesië. Door middel van herhaalde bezoeken aan de CBDRR test-locaties en regelmatige actie-reflectie cyclussen, werden lokale NGO stafleden aangemoedigd te reflecteren op hun routines, onderliggende aannames, waarden en normen, vaardigheden en management systemen. Hoofdstuk 6 verdiept zich in de aannames die Ngo’s hanteren bij het selecteren van gemeenschappen, bij het vertrouwen winnen van de lokale bevolking en het organiseren van lokale gemeenschappen, en de achterliggende redenen. Ondanks bewuste strategieën om de meest kwetsbare groepen te bereiken door middel van flexibele, context-specifieke en creatieve benaderingen, lijken de niet-kwetsbaren het meeste voordeel te halen uit CBDRR interventies. Dit gebeurt niet wanneer veldstaf de behoeften van mensen vaststelt in de context van hun sociale en politieke positie, en zich bewust is van lokale machtsrelaties. Ik refereer naar deze vaardigheid als ‘onpartijdigheid’ (*impartiality*). Op deze manier is veldstaf in staat om tegenover elkaar staande partijen ‘*on speaking terms*’ te brengen, en om ze te laten onderhandelen over oplossingen om veiligheidsrisico’s en spanningen te reduceren. De invloed van lokale elite is groot en moeilijk te weerstaan door lokale organisaties en kwetsbare groepen. Het hoofdstuk laat de mechanismes zien hoe gedurende het CBDRR interventie-proces kwetsbaarheid van mensen kan worden vergroot, verkleind of hetzelfde blijft.

Hoofdstuk 7 gaat in op twee specifieke CBDRR ervaringen: het bestrijden van overstromingen in Centraal Java, Indonesië, en het verminderen van de effecten van zandstormen en

tevens reduceren van spanningen betreffende het gebruik van graasgebieden in Herat, west Afghanistan. Beide ervaringen laten het belang zien van *'effective agency'*, het mobiliseren en organiseren van lokale mensen in groepen, netwerken of allianties om zo hun kansen in de politieke arena op district en provinciaal niveau te vergroten om hun risico-oplossingen met succes te realiseren. De twee ervaringen laten zien dat CBDRR interventies geen geïsoleerde projecten zijn, gescheiden van de lokale context, maar verweven zijn met de bredere maatschappelijke context en geschiedenis. Het bestrijden van overstromingen, het managen van natuurlijke hulpbronnen, herbebossing, en beheer van weidegrond vergen maatregelen omtrent mensen, ruimte en de interactie tussen beiden. Dit maakt rampenbestrijding uitermate politiek. Lokale gemeenschappen, Ngo's en andere maatschappelijke organisaties richten zich tot overheden van wie men verwacht dat ze de politieke en wetgevende voorwaarden scheppen voor veiligheid. Echter, beide ervaringen tonen dat de overheid geen prioriteit stelt aan rampenbestrijding, of dat ze onwillig is om beleid uit te voeren in het voordeel van kwetsbare groepen. De ervaring uit west Afghanistan leert dat men het verleden en het huidige conflict ook moet oplossen wil de CBDRR interventie om de zandstormen tegen te gaan kans van slagen te geven op de lange termijn. Concurrerende claims op natuurlijke hulpbronnen, verandering in etnische-politieke verhoudingen nadat vluchtelingen terugkeerden uit Iran, en veranderingen in overheidsbeleid na 2001 aangaande landeigendom, moesten in acht worden genomen voordat onderhandelingen konden starten over herbebossing. Herbebossing is niet simpel bomen planten om te voorkomen dat zand landbouwvelden bedekt en huizen inwaait, maar het vergt onderhandelingen met 40 andere gemeenschappen en overheidsinstanties om afspraken te maken over legitiem toegang en beheer van de graasgronden en het herbebossingsgebied. Afspraken werden vastgelegd in een 'sociaal contract' getekend door de lokale volksvertegenwoordigers, de overheid en de NGO waarin ieders taak en verantwoordelijkheden zijn vastgesteld. Dit contract is ook bedoeld om spanningen en conflicten over het landgebruik te verminderen.

Het laatste hoofdstuk brengt de conceptuele inzichten en conclusies van de verschillende hoofdstukken bijeen. Het bespreekt op de eerste plaats wat CBDRR nu eigenlijk is en betekent in verschillende ramp- en conflictgebieden, en herziet de definities van gangbare CBDRR concepten zoals onder andere gemeenschap, participatie, lokale kennis, kwetsbaarheid en weerbaarheid. Empirische bevindingen laten zien hoe Ngo's, lokale gemeenschappen en overheden in Afghanistan, Indonesië en de Filippijnen op een heel verschillende manier lokale realiteiten interpreteren en betekenis geven aan rampenbestrijding in de specifieke context waarin ze werken en leven. Die interpretaties worden beïnvloed door hun ervaringen in het verleden, door huidige verhoudingen tussen overheid en maatschappelijke organisaties, en hoe actoren hun interventies legitimeren. Of actoren benadrukken dat hun interventies politiek zijn, of ze depolitiseren hun werk. Op basis van dit onderzoek is het plausibel te concluderen dat wanneer men CBDRR niet beschouwd op een politieke en institutionele manier, de resultaten van de CBDRR interventie niet ten goede komen aan de meest kwetsbare groepen. Dit is één van de redenen waarom de 44 CBDRR test-locaties gevarieerde resultaten toonden.

Het laatste hoofdstuk reflecteert ook op de potentie van de CBDRR benadering in conflictgebieden. De ervaring uit Herat biedt een waardevol perspectief op hoe je gemeenschappen die door zowel rampen als conflict getroffen worden kunt ondersteunen in een context waarin de overheid zwak, afwezig of betwist wordt. Ik pleit ervoor om zowel rampen als

conflict, te beschouwen als politieke gebeurtenissen. Op basis van dit onderzoek voeg ik het begrip 'institutes' toe dat analytisch gezien de scheiding tussen rampen en conflict theorieën kan opheffen, omdat 'institutes' veiligheid en bescherming kunnen reguleren alsook toegang tot hulpbronnen, besluitvorming en conflicthantering.

Door het politieke karakter van CBDRR beleid en praktijk in verschillende gebieden te bestuderen, is het mogelijk om de complexiteit en het politieke karakter van rampenbestrijding en conflicthantering te ontrafelen. De implicaties voor hulporganisaties is dat ze actief moeten uitvinden wie bepaalde risico-beperkende maatregelen ondersteunt of tegenwerkt en waarom, en manieren moeten vinden om kwetsbare groepen met succes te kunnen laten onderhandelen voor meer veiligheid in hun gemeenschap en in die van anderen. Deze manier van CBDRR toepassen verschilt substantieel van hoe CBDRR vaak wordt toegepast. Het belang van dit onderzoek is dat men verder moet kijken dan de tegenstelling tussen top-down en bottom-up benaderingen van risicovermindering, omdat in de politieke arena van rampenbestrijding beide partijen elkaar tegen komen en onderhandelen over de principes en kenmerken van CBDRR tradities, wat resulteert in zeer gevarieerde CBDRR-praktijken, betekenissen en resultaten. Dé CBDRR-benadering bestaat niet.

List of abbreviations

ACT ALLIANCE	'Action-of-Churches Together' Alliance
ADA	Afghan Development Association
ADPC	Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre
AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
AIDMI	All India Disaster Mitigation Institute
AREU	Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit
BPD	<i>Badan Perwakilan Desa / Village parliament</i>
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CBDRM	Community-based Disaster Risk Management
CBDRR	Community-based Disaster Risk Reduction
CBO	Community-based Organization
CBDO-DR	Citizenry-based Development-oriented Disaster Response
CCA	Cooperation Centre for Afghanistan
CDA	Collaborative for Development Action
CDC	Community Development Council
CDP	Centre for Disaster Preparedness
CDRC	Citizens Disaster Response Centre
CDRN	Citizens Disaster Response Network
CHA	Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
CSBP	Community Seed Bank Programme
CSO	Civil-Society Organizations
DDP	Department of Disaster Preparedness
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DRRNetPhil	Disaster Risk Reduction Network Philippines
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
GAR	Global Assessment Review
GMIH	<i>Gereja Masehi Injil Halmahera/Protestant Church of Halmahera</i>
GNDR	Global Network of Civil-Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction
GNFDR	Global Forum of NGOs for Disaster Reduction
GRDO	Grassroots Disaster Response Organization
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
ICCO	Inter-church Organisation for Development Cooperation
IDNDR	International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

IDP	Internally Displaced People
IDR	Indonesian Rupiah
I&K	ICCO and Kerkinactie
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ITDG	Intermediate Technology Development Group
MMDA	Metro Manila Development Authority
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
NDCC	National Disaster Coordination Committee
NDRRMC	National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPA	New People's Army
NSP	National Solidarity Programme
PGI	<i>Persekutuan Gereja-Gereja di Indonesia</i> / Council of Churches in Indonesia
PKN	Protestant Churches in the Netherlands
PO	People's Organization
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
SANRO	<i>Saro Nifero</i> , Tobelo dialect meaning 'Let us develop!'
SDO	Sanayee Development Organization
SHEEP	Society for Health, Education, Environment and Peace
SPP	<i>Serikat Petani Pati</i> / Pati Farmers Union
UGNAYAN	Alliance of People's Organizations affected by the eruption of Mount Pinatubo
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
VFL	Views from the Frontline
WCDR	World Conference on Disaster reduction
YAPHI	<i>Yayasan Pengabdian Hukum Indonesia</i> /Legal Services Foundation of Indonesia
YLSKAR	<i>Yayasan Lingkar Studi Kesetaraan Aksi dan Refleksi</i> /Social Foundation for Equality, Action and Reflection Studies
YTBI	<i>Yayasan Tanggul Bencana Indonesia</i> /Foundation for Disaster Management-Indonesia
YPL	<i>Yayasan Pamaerdi Luhur</i> /Christian Welfare of <i>Pamaerdi Luhur</i> Foundation

<i>adat</i>	Set of cultural norms, values, customs, traditional laws and practices.
<i>ashar</i>	Community cooperation (Afghanistan)
<i>bahala na</i>	Literally 'leaving it to fate'.
<i>balai besar</i>	Literally 'big house' referring to the shared history and ancestors among the different ethnic and religious groups in Halmahera.
<i>Balai Besar</i>	Complete name is <i>Balai Besar Wilayah Sungai Pemali Juana</i> , the head office in charge of the Juwana River management.
<i>balai rakyat</i>	Community hall.
<i>barangay</i>	Village as administrative unit in the Philippines.
<i>bayanihan</i>	Community cooperation.
conflict	A relationship between two or more parties who have, or think they have, incompatible goals that clash. This research refers to conflicts that intensify and escalate in tension and violence.
<i>damayan</i>	Mutual support (Philippines).
<i>dehqan</i>	Sharecropper.
<i>dusun</i>	Sub-village, hamlet.
<i>gotong royong</i>	Mutual support, community cooperation (Indonesia).
<i>Hazara</i>	Ethnic group which lives in predominantly in the central highlands of Afghanistan including Bamiyan, Day Kundi and parts of Ghazni and Wardak.
<i>hutan</i>	Forest garden.
<i>Jampi Sawan</i>	People's Network that cares for Juwana River.
<i>kahon</i>	Literally 'box', but refers here to rain-fed rice terrace.
<i>karang taruna</i>	Youth group.
<i>kelompok nelayan</i>	Fishermen group.
<i>kelompok tani</i>	Farmers group.
<i>kepala desa</i>	Village head.
<i>khan</i>	Large landowner.
<i>kuchi</i>	Afghan Psthun nomads.
<i>madiskarte</i>	Resourceful.
<i>mahram</i>	Male accompaniment for women to enter public spaces.
<i>malik</i>	Village leader; representative between community and government; can resolve disputes.
<i>mazdoor</i>	Landless wage labourers.
<i>mirab</i>	Customary water rights controller.
<i>sharia</i>	Islamic law.
<i>shura</i>	Customary council / committee
<i>tokoh adat</i>	Leader/authority responsible for customary law
<i>tokoh masyarakat</i>	Community leader
<i>woleswal</i>	District governor

Author biography

Annelies Heijmans (1963) was born in Roosendaal, the Netherlands. She obtained her MSc degree in Landscape Architecture at Wageningen University in 1989. She focused on rural land use planning, both in the Netherlands and in developing countries. She wrote three MSc theses. The first entailed an interactive research with female farmers and the governmental authority on spatial planning (*Landinrichtingsdienst*) on gender issues in the land reform program in the '*Lage Maaskant*', *Noord Brabant*, the Netherlands – with supervision from the Chair Group of Landscape Architecture. The second thesis was an historical research on changing perceptions on planning our environment in the Netherlands, done with the chair group of Philosophy of Science. The last thesis, supervised by the Chair Group of Forestry Management, consisted of field research on the consequences of Nicaragua's land reform program on the socio-economic position of male and female farmers and on their environment, Matagalpa, Nicaragua.

After completing her studies in Wageningen, she spent twelve years in Asia through SNV-Netherlands in Nepal and the Philippines, and later as independent consultant for the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre in Bangkok, CARE-India, CARE-Bangladesh and for the Vietnamese National Red Cross. She assisted local NGOs, working in disaster and conflict affected areas, with practicing and further developing their CBDRR strategies. From 2002 till 2006 she worked at the European Centre for Conflict Prevention, the Netherlands, as Program Coordinator for the Asia-Pacific program and later as Head of Programmes. These positions advanced her experience and understanding of the role of civil society organizations in the prevention of armed conflict, and the importance of multi-track approaches in transforming conflicts.

In 2005, Disaster Studies approached her to take on an interactive research with three Dutch aid agencies which resulted in this PhD thesis. In 2008 she received an honourable distinction from the Storm-van der Chijs Fund jury for showing personal initiative in research design and implementation, establishing and using international contacts, interdisciplinary approach in research design and methodology, and for the ability to relate obtained insights to the broader social and scientific context. Currently she works as an independent consultant and researcher.

She published on the following issues:

- Vulnerability and risk perceptions
- The role of civil society in the prevention of armed conflict
- The interplay between disasters and conflict
- University's research role in reducing disaster risk
- The everyday politics of disaster risk reduction

Annex to statement
Name: Annelies Heijmans
PhD candidate, Wageningen School of Social Sciences
(WASS)
Completed Training and Supervision Plan



Wageningen School
of Social Sciences

Name of the activity	Department/Institute	Year	ECTS*
A) Project related competences			
Collaborative research	CoP/WUR	2007-2008	1
Politics of interactive research	ARALIG	2009	2
Oral histories and life stories	UvA	2007	1
Narrative Inquiry	Mansholt/CERES	2008	1,4
Complexity and Innovation	CDI/Disasters Studies	2009	0,6
Facilitated and attended workshops at Novib, ICCO, Kerkinactie, Cordaid, CARE and NRC	Different aid agencies	2006-2011	4
B) General research related competences			
Introduction course	CERES	2006	5
Presentation tutorials	CERES	2006	1,4
Summer School	CERES	2006	1
Summer School	CERES	2007	1
Information literacy course	CERES	2006	0,6
Guest lectures on CBDRR ('Natural Hazards' course)	Disaster Studies	2006-2011	2
Guest lecture 'Aid and security in Afghanistan' ('Humanitarian Aid' course)	Disaster Studies	2007	0,5
Guest lecture 'Interactive research in conflict settings'(Research methodology course)	Disaster Studies	2010	0,5
Presentation of paper: 'Making conflicts and disasters less dangerous'	1 st World Conference of Humanitarian Studies, Groningen	2009	1
Presentation of paper: 'The social life of CBDRR'	1 st World Conference of Humanitarian Studies, Groningen	2009	1
Presentation of paper: 'Making sense of political vulnerability'	2 nd World Conference of Humanitarian Studies, Boston	2011	2
Presentation Afghanistan case on the interplay of disasters and conflict	Humanity House, Cordaid and Disaster studies	2011	2
C) Career related competences/personal development			
Art of Writing course	Language centre CENTA - WUR	2007	1,8
Basic Safety & Security Course	Centre for Safety and Development	2007	0,9
Teaching and supervision thesis students	WUR	2008	0,6

Science, the press and the general public	CERES	2008	1
Scientific Publishing	WUR	2009	0,3
Total (minimum 30 ECTS)			32,6

*One ECTS on average is equivalent to 28 hours of course work

Front cover: John Holbo, 2008, *Plato's Cave Theatre*

Printing: Grafisch Service Centrum Van Gils B.V., Wageningen

This research project was financially supported by ICCO, Kerkinactie, PSO, Oxfam-Novib, and the Chair Group of Disaster Studies, Wageningen University.

