

# Responsibility in Disaster Resilience

An aidnographic case study of the Perception, Performance and Re-Imagination of Responsibility allocation in Disaster Risk Reduction of INGO employees in Nepal



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8/26/2018

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Title: Responsibility in Disaster Resilience

Subtitle: An aidnographic case study of the Perception, Performance and Re-Imagination of Responsibility allocation in Disaster Risk Reduction of INGO employees in Nepal

Date: August 2018

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Study Program: MSc International Development Studies

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Chair group: Sociology of Development and Change

Code: SDC-80736

Word count: 29.966

Picture on front page (taken by friend of author): Graffiti in Kathmandu city

*The picture shows two elderly people sitting crying on the ground on the left and standing on the right with a shovel and a pickaxe. In between are the words Hijo and Aaja, meaning yesterday and today. I have chosen this picture as to me it represents two ways of reacting to (potential) disasters, in which the second form reflects a more resilient version. For me, the picture on the left in which the elderly people sit alone, crying and passive, together with the word 'yesterday', depicts the situation before the 2015 earthquakes in Nepal in which less attention was paid to Disaster Risk Reduction. The picture on the right, in which the elderly couple stand smiling, holding each other's hands and equipment and the word 'today', shows the cooperation and activeness of the people to deal with the aftermath of the earthquakes and to take action to prevent or mitigate a future disaster.*

*In this thesis, I am considering who these elderly persons, acting upon previous and future disasters, are or should be according to DRR practitioners. Furthermore, I make them look to each other, considering whose hand they are holding and in what manner. In other words, I focus on who is and who should be responsible for DRR in Nepal and if, with whom and how they cooperate to ensure a resilient Nepal. As shown in this thesis, there is a difference between the portrayed responsibility allocation in Disaster Risk Reduction efforts and how this is performed in daily life. This difference led some INGO employees to reimagine the current responsibility allocation. However, it is questionable whether these alternative political imaginaries will be able to find ground in material reality.*

We are made wise not by the recollection of our past, but by the responsibility for our future

George Bernard Shaw

## Abstract

This thesis calls for a critical engagement with the discourses, practices and imagination around responsibility within resilience. Over the last decades, attention and popularity for the resilience concept and practices has increased, leading to a lively discussion on the positive and negative political impacts of responsibility allocation for the communities involved in these kinds of projects. Considering the lasting impact that Disaster Risk Reduction projects have on current and future policy and research, it is relevant to investigate how the responsibilities within these projects are perceived, performed and possibly re-imagined by practitioners. This thesis is based on six-month ethnographic research in Nepal and focuses on how INGO employees perceived and performed responsibility allocation in resilience alongside government and local NGO stakeholders. In line with the neoliberal resilience discourse and the participation discourse, INGOs often understood their responsibility and subjectivity as facilitator and supporter of the government and local NGOs to be materialized in their projects. However, using Butler's performative subjectivity, I show that the everyday politics of aid interfered with the performance of this responsibility; INGOs prioritized their responsibility of achieving a 'successful' project over their subjectivity as facilitator and supporter. Realizing that the current responsibility allocation is sometimes counterproductive, INGO employees re-imagined this allocation and their subjectivity. This resulted in various political imaginaries ranging from a desire to more compliance to the current responsibility allocation, to an emphasis on the responsibility of the state, to shared responsibility for DRR efforts. Although these political imaginaries provided different approaches and solutions on how to reduce disaster risk, I argue that imagination only forms the first step of resistance to a discourse. Operationalization and performances are crucial to overturn neoliberal power dimensions.

*Keywords: Disaster Risk Reduction, Resilience, Responsibility, Ethnography, Performativity, Imagination, INGOs, Nepal*

## List of Abbreviations

BBB	Build Back Better
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
GoN	Government of Nepal
HR	Human Resources
INGO	International Non-Government Organization
MCA	Membership Categorization Analysis
NGO	Non-Government Organization <sup>1</sup>
NRA	National Reconstruction Authority
NPR	Nepalese Rupee
SWC	Social Welfare Council
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

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<sup>1</sup> In this thesis, (local) NGO is often used to designate Nepalese NGOs.

## Acknowledgements

It is impossible to determine the order in which to thank people that contributed to this thesis. Therefore, in random order, I wish to thank the following persons:

My supervisor dr. Robert Coates for his kindness, insightfulness, support and constructive feedback. I enjoyed our hours long theoretical conversations that inspired me and helped me to create this thesis. I was grateful that he put up with my stubbornness, which allowed me to follow my own research path, while simultaneously preventing me from derailing. Together with dr. Gemma van der Haar and Bram Jansen, you enabled me to dot all the I's and cross all the T's. It was a pleasure and a privilege to have you as my supervisor.

My dear friend and colleague, Emilie Arnaud, without whom I would be lost in world of INGOs, local NGOs and government stakeholders. As I was (and maybe still am) a relatively new and naive person in the world of aid, she provided me with insights that I would have never achieved on my own.

My respondents, the most important people who made this research possible. I want to thank all the employees of INGOs, local NGOs and government that gave me insight in their perceptions, experiences and imaginations. I also want to thank INGO A for giving me the opportunity to do aidnographic research.

My friends in Nepal: Namraj Sedhain, Bikash Sherma, Hari Karki, Laure Perrot, Lenka Peskova, Pia Ferner, Daniel Coyle, Leonie Tax, Apsara Timsala, Gyan Maharjan, Nabin Dangol, Mohendra Bista, who showed me the beauty but maybe more importantly the fun side of Nepal.

My loving environment in the Netherlands. Without them, I would never have completed this master. I want to thank Lauren Huisman, Pier Hiemstra, Rutger van Aken, Milou van der Horst, Hanne Wiegel, Leontien Jansen, Djuna Buizer and Ruud van Alfen for listening to me bickering and for keeping me somewhat sane with all their hugs.

Finally, I want to thank my family for their continuous support in my education.

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## 1. Introduction



*Jaba samma yo dharti ma chandra, surya rahanxo taba samma Nepal rahi rakhaxa*

*Until and unless the sun and the moon exist on this earth Nepal will exist*

Sang my close friend and colleague in the backyard of his parents. Before he had told how he experienced the shivering of the earth, the months of aftershocks during which he and his friends spent nights outside in the cold and the slow recovery process of the 2015 earthquake. And now he sang this line. He explained to me that this line refers to the symbolism of the moon and the sun in the Nepali flag, representing the hope that Nepal will last as long as the sun and the moon, a dream of 'national resilience'.

Unfortunately, Nepal is in dire need of this resilience as the country is highly affected by natural hazards. To prevent or mitigate the impacts of these hazards, disaster management practices such as Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and resilience-building projects have become more and more present. Especially after the 2015 earthquakes, the Nepalese government and the international community have increased their focus on DRR practices, through a resilience lens. The popularity of the term resilience is increasing in international disaster management practices, because it is considered to give ownership and empowerment to communities. However, there are also more negative voices in the academic community who are concerned that resilience shifts responsibility for risk reduction to the most vulnerable and removes all forms of culpability from wider structural processes. In these different narratives on DRR and resilience, the focus is mainly on how responsibility allocation affects communities, while less attention is going to the practitioners that design and implement DRR projects.

Considering the large ethical<sup>2</sup> discussion on responsibility allocation in resilience (see also 2.1), and the lack of attention for the perspective of DRR practitioners, I focused on how this allocation is perceived and performed by International NGO (INGO) workers in relation to government and local NGO stakeholders. I found that INGOs claim the subjectivity<sup>3</sup> of

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<sup>2</sup> Ethics is a discipline that deals with what is good and bad and govern a person's behaviour. Perceptions and practices of responsibility are ethical as it focuses on who is accountable for fulfilling certain tasks, in this case, tasks within DRR.

<sup>3</sup> The concept *subject* is ambivalent and ambiguous and is most often used in theories about the self and identity (Bauman 1996, Elliott 2013, Hall and Du Gay 1996, Mansfield 2000, Branaman 2009). It covers questions of who we are and what we can become, how we experience, feel and think and why we act in certain ways (Mansfield 2000). It shows the way our immediate daily life is always already caught up in complex power dimensions.

supporter and facilitator of DRR initiatives to be performed in their projects, implying cooperative behaviour with government and local NGO stakeholders. However, the power dimensions of everyday aid politics interfered with the performance of this responsibility; INGOs sometimes showed uncooperative behaviour as they prioritized their responsibility of achieving a ‘successful’ project over their subjectivity as facilitator and supporter. Realizing that the current responsibility allocation is not always the most effective way to reach a resilient Nepal, I asked INGO employees to re-imagine this allocation and their subjectivity. This resulted in different political imaginaries, which however might be difficult to materialize considering the complex reality. Therefore, I would like to argue that imagination is the first step, but not enough if it is not performed.

### 1.1 Building Resilience in Nepal

Nepal is highly affected by disasters, both because of its high exposure to natural hazards and because it is one of the poorest countries in Asia<sup>4</sup> leading to large vulnerability (Carmichael 2017): it ranks 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> with regard to relative vulnerability to climate change and earthquakes (Dangal 2011, NDRRP 2017). It is also vulnerable to floods, droughts, landslides, avalanches, fire, thunderbolts and Glacial Lake

Disaster type	No. of death	No. of persons missing	No. of persons injured	No. of houses damaged or destroyed	No of affected families	No. of incidents
Epidemic	16,564	-	43,076	-	512,970	3,448
Earthquake	9,771	-	29,142	982,855	890,995	175
Landslide	4,832	165	1,727	32,819	556,774	3,012
Flood	4,344	6	527	215,427	3,702,942	3,720
Fire	1,541	-	1,379	83,527	256,445	7,187
Thunderbolt	1,502	129	2,444	952	6,880	1,505
Cold wave	515	-	83	-	2,393	390
Snow storm	87	7	-	-	-	5
Avalanche	16	3	7	-	-	2
Wind storm	-	-	2	-	-	16
Hailstones	-	-	-	6	2,608	17
Heavy rainfall	-	-	-	4	5	3
Other*	1,092	-	-	15,323	-	2,892
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,264</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>78,387</b>	<b>1,330,913</b>	<b>5,932,012</b>	<b>22,372</b>

*Note: The category 'other' represents unidentified events and was recorded till 2013.*

(Government of Nepal 2016)

Outburst Floods (GLOFs). These natural hazards lead to a massive loss of life and property. For example, the Gorkha earthquakes in April 2015 and May 2015 of respective magnitudes of 7.8 and 7.3, led to over 8,790 deaths and 22,300 injuries (Dangal 2011, National Planning Commission 2015, NDRRP 2017). The recurring floods in the Terai area result almost every year in loss of life, houses and crops.

<sup>4</sup> Nepal ranks 144 out of 188 countries on the Human Development Index (UNDP 2016).

Nepal is a post-conflict country<sup>5</sup> with a weak legislative and institutional setting for DRR (Jones, Owen, and Wisner 2016). The Gorkha earthquakes exposed many gaps in disaster preparedness, even though an earthquake of this magnitude has been anticipated for a long time and there were a number of DRR initiatives, acts and policies<sup>6</sup> (Sharma 2015). For example, Nepal had a 'low level of political will to build earthquake resilience ... and that which does exist seems to be conjured forth by the attraction of donor funding' (Jones, Owen, and Wisner 2016, 40). The government focused more on disaster response than on DRR, and there was a gap in disaster management legislation (Gaire, Delgado, and González 2015). DRR initiatives were thus mainly driven by the international community (Jones et al. 2014). They, however, mainly focussed on DRR as one aspect of broader development planning. As one of my respondents expressed: 'Before this disaster [2015 earthquakes], nobody were that much serious about this DRR' (I19)<sup>7</sup>.

Experiencing the devastating effects of the earthquakes, both the government of Nepal (GoN) and the international community increased its attention towards DRR. Increasing numbers of humanitarian INGOs poured into the country after April 2015 to start relief, recovery and DRR programs (Pokhrel 2015). The post-earthquake disaster management policy goals of the GoN were to "build back better" (BBB) and to develop capacity for resilience and disaster resistant infrastructure (Government of Nepal 2016, Pandey 2017). The National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) was established for 5 years to lead and manage the reconstruction and recovery and 'to promote national Build Back Better interest' (Government of Nepal 2016, 4) and the outdated Natural Calamity Relief Act of 1982 was recently replaced by the new Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act in September 2017 (Unknown 2017). However, as this thesis will show there are many challenges involved in DRR programming.

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<sup>5</sup> Nepal is still dealing with the aftermath of a ten-year civil war between the Maoist Communist Party of Nepal and the Government of Nepal that ended in 2006 (Gellner 2007).

<sup>6</sup> See appendix 1 for disaster management in Nepal.

<sup>7</sup> See appendix 2 for information on Data Collection. / and a number is used to refer to a certain interview, /C refers to informal conversation and PO refers to participant observation. To protect the privacy of my respondent, I anonymized their names and organizations. I decided not to use of different names, because Nepal has a highly political caste system that can be associated with names.



These pictures show some of the devastation still present three years after the 2015 earthquakes (Pictures taken by author).





Besides physical impacts of the 2015 earthquakes, there is also symbolical art that refers to its impact such graffiti. It signals that there is a huge demand for DRR in Nepal; 'the big one' refers to an even bigger earthquake (Pictures taken by author).



## 1.2 Research Problem

Originating from environmental science, resilience is ‘a discourse<sup>8</sup> in international politics’ that has been adopted by disaster management practitioners, academics and others (Alexander 2013, Reid in Haug 2017, 254); it has become ‘an expansive *lingua franca* of preparedness, adaptation and survivability’ (Duffield 2012, 480). There are different ideas on how DRR should be practiced and the notion of resilience has been gaining popularity since the late 1990s. In this thesis, I use the definition of United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR). They define DRR as ‘the concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyse and manage the causal factors of disasters’ (UNISDR 2009). Focusing on natural hazards, the following definition of disaster is used: ‘A natural disaster occurs when a significant number of vulnerable people experience a hazard and suffer from severe damage and/or disruption of their livelihood system’ (Wisner et al. 2003, 50).

Both international development and academic communities consider the positive and negative effects of the responsibility allocation within resilience projects on local populations generating an ethical debate; some see it as empowering and granting ownership, while others argue that it is a neoliberal discourse that shifts the burden of disasters to the most vulnerable (see 2.1). However, in the ethical debate about responsibility allocation in DRR little to no attention has been paid to how implementers of projects – such as INGO employees - understand this responsibility and put it into practice in cooperation with others (Jones et al. 2014). These INGO employees are entangled in a fuzzy and complicated world in which they have to deal with global policy ideas concerning DRR and resilience, the demands and requests from their headquarters abroad, their donors and local and national governments, while simultaneously trying to implement projects in cooperation with local partners that satisfies and fits the local situation on the ground. So instead of looking only at the debate about the ethical side of responsibility allocation, this exploratory ethnographic research also considers how employees of an INGO country office perceive and perform this responsibility allocation

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<sup>8</sup> In this thesis, I view *discourse* from a Foucauldian perspective that highlights that knowledge is historically and politically situated (Foucault 1977, 1990, Foucault and Gordon 1980, Roberts 2005, Rabinow 1984). Discourses ‘are more or less coherent sets of references for understanding and acting upon the world around us’ (Hilhorst 2003, 215); they entail underlying assumptions about the nature of the world and of particular social values and beliefs that informs and justifies certain DRR practices. It is a medium through which power and norms function. I like to see discourse as a frame for conducting certain activities, which leads to the reproduction of discourse as well. Discourse is material in effect, producing practices, which simultaneously reproduce the power dimensions in the discourse.

by engaging with the complex power constellations around the provision of aid. Returning to the ethical debate, I considered how my respondents re-imagine the current allocation of responsibilities.

In this thesis, I concentrate on how INGO employees perceive and practice the responsibility allocation in resilience. Responsibility refers to how one is answerable for one's actions (Craig 2013); 'a person is responsible for an action because he does the action or brings it about either directly or indirectly' (Bunnin and Yu 2008, 606). These actions lead to responses such as blame, praise, punishment or rewards. Responsibility thus refers to who is accountable for disasters and its aftermath. The allocation of responsibility is highly ethical and political as it focuses on who should do what. It relates to social justice, as it reflects on what kind of responsibility allocation would be fair and why. It is a controversial issue, as Craig explains: 'we are responsible for the intended results of our actions', but how far are we responsible for their unforeseen effects, 'or for harms that we do not prevent when we could' (2013, 768). The answer to the question of how far we are responsible depends on what we see as our business, how we see it as our *task* to act upon, entailing certain obligations to do certain actions.

Because responsibility refers to how one is answerable for one's actions, I consider that the allocation of responsibility is based on a perception of *who* someone is associated with *what kind of tasks* they can and should do. I analysed this perception through the use of the concept of 'performative subjectivity' (Butler 1988, 1993). This concept allowed me to consider which subjectivity and associated responsibilities INGO workers claim for themselves and how this subjectivity can never be performed 'perfectly'. It granted me the chance to investigate if and how the performances of employees of an INGO country office are produced and reproducing the resilience discourse and the complex power dynamics involved in everyday aid politics and how these employees simultaneously reinterpret and appropriate these power dynamics in their own ways. It enabled me to see how multiple discourses and dimensions of power produce various and sometimes clashing subjectivities, were internalized, reinterpreted and exercised by INGO employees. INGO workers claimed the subjectivity of facilitator and supporter based on the discourses of resilience and participation. However, engaging in the everyday politics of aid, they prioritized their responsibility their responsibility for a 'successful' completion of their project. I investigated how INGO workers manoeuvre within these complex power constellations by focusing on how they cooperate

with the Government of Nepal (GoN) and local NGOs to set up and implement DRR projects. Working in an INGO in Nepal, I decided to focus on the government and local NGOs as I observed that these are actors with whom INGO employees often had face-to-face contact and who are crucial for the implementation of DRR. This provided insights in the practical side of responsibility allocation in DRR projects, which will firstly provide a context for how my respondents understand and re-imagine this responsibility allocation and secondly, inform the feasibility of materializing these political imaginaries.

The aim of this exploratory research is

*To contribute to the ethical discussion on responsibility allocation in resilience through the provision of transparency in practices involved in DRR projects and by gaining insights in the perspectives, practices and imaginations of INGO workers that implement these projects*

Considering the lasting impact that resilience discourse has on current and future policymaking and research and the large role practitioners have in shaping such projects, it is highly relevant to investigate how responsibility within these notions is seen by INGO employees. Without understanding the realities of INGO employees and the power dimensions in which a certain responsibility allocation emerges, it becomes difficult to make any necessary changes. Asking them if and how they would re-imagine the responsibility allocation allows us to see what they would like to change and how they would like to change it. The insight and transparency of DRR policy implementation and associated cooperation is thus the applied significance of this research. Considering the lively discussion on the ethics of responsibility allocation within resilience, and the lack of attention for the perceptions, experiences and ideas of DRR practitioners, the scientific significance is to provide insight into the experiences, perceptions, dreams and practices of INGO workers. It provides empirical accounts of how responsibilities are allocated, while simultaneously offering insights into the ethical considerations of practitioners in these practices.

To gain insight into the perspectives, practices and imaginations of INGO-workers concerning responsibility allocation in DRR projects, I have based the work around the following Research Question:



*How do INGO employees perceive, perform and potentially re-imagine responsibility allocation for disaster resilience alongside government and local NGO stakeholders?*

The following three interrelated sub-questions are derived from this research question:

*1. How do INGO employees understand DRR and their responsibility within DRR?*

This question aims to understand the influence of the neoliberal resilience discourse by investigating how INGO employees see DRR and their responsibility. It provides insight into which subjectivities they claim for themselves based on the prevailing discourses and the tasks associated with these subjectivities. It provides a background for how they legitimize their actions and how they perform their responsibility, discussed in question 2.

*2. How do INGO employees perform these responsibilities alongside government and local NGO stakeholders?*

This question focuses on the actual performance of the claimed responsibilities and the associated subjectivities. It provides insight in how various power dimensions, such as the resilience discourse and everyday politics of aid, have material effects through the practices of employees of INGOs when they work together with government and local NGOs. Simultaneously, it provides insight in how these multiple discourses have a contradictory effect when performed by the subjects and how these subjects internalise, reinterpret and appropriate their subjectivity. It provides an understanding of why the perception of the responsibilities differs from those practiced and the complexity involved with the allocation of responsibilities underpinned by resilience.

*3. How would INGO employees re-imagine responsibility allocation in DRR activities?*

There is an extensive critique on the allocation of responsibility in resilience that argues that resilience is a neoliberal instrument that shifts the responsibility for disasters and disaster management to the most vulnerable (see 2.1). Evans and Reid (2013, 2015, 2012a, b) argue for a new political

imagination that can overturn neoliberal power structures. As INGO employees work in the frontline of DRR projects, it makes sense to see how, if, and in what way INGO employees would re-imagine responsibility allocation and potentially their own subjectivity. Considering the performances of the different stakeholders investigated in question 2, I reflect whether these new political imaginaries presented by my informants will be able to materialize considering the current complex reality and whether political imaginations are a way to resist the neoliberal power dimensions.

I employed an aidnographic study (see 3.2) to investigate how responsibility allocation is perceived, performed and re-imagined. The goal of this exploratory research is not to generate generalizable statements about the involvement and ideas of INGOs on DRR, but rather to provide insight and to grasp the variety among INGOs on these matters. As the performativity of responsibilities can be seen as a continuous process, this thesis can be considered to be a 'snapshot' taken during a 6-month aidnographic fieldwork in Kathmandu, Nepal.

### 1.3 A reader's guide

The thesis is organized as follows: In chapter two, I develop my theoretical framework. I elaborate on the ethical responsibility debate in resilience and how imagination is seen as a way to overthrow neoliberal power structures. I continue with an explanation of the everyday politics of aid and how I used Butler's analytical concept of performative subjectivity to investigate how INGO employees perceive and practice their responsibility. Chapter three places the research in its methodological context. Chapter four focuses on which subjectivities INGOs claim for themselves to understand their perception of their responsibility in DRR. Chapter five shows that these subjectivities is not always performed, by explaining if and how INGOs cooperate with government and local INGO stakeholders. As the current responsibility allocation is not always viewed as most effective to reduce disaster risk, Chapter six considers a re-imagination of responsibility allocation focusing on the subjectivities available for the relevant stakeholders. Chapter seven brings together all the themes developed in this thesis and discusses what meaning they can have for DRR practices and the theories. Chapter eight concludes by summarizing the findings.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

This theoretical framework first elaborates on the ethical debate on responsibility allocation in resilience discourse and how imagination is seen as a way to overthrow current power structures. Secondly, I describe the everyday politics of aid INGO workers are involved in. Finally, I elaborate on the analytical concepts ‘performative subjectivity’ used to analyse the perceptions and practices of responsibility allocation by INGO employees.

### 2.1 The Responsibility Allocation Debate in Resilience

There are different perspectives towards resilience, ranging from praising and cheering stories of the international community to darker stories from the academic side. Both sides focus on the allocation of responsibility in resilience discourse, leading to an ethical debate on what the right distribution of tasks is or would be. Based on the participation discourse, emphasizing local ownership and empowerment, the international community takes a pragmatic perspective on resilience, viewing these kind of projects in a positive light. However, parts of the academic community portrays a darker side of resilience: using a bio-political lens, they consider the power dimensions and social structures surrounding resilience and critique resilience for its neoliberal discursive nature. Imagination is seen as a way to overcome these neoliberal power dimensions.

#### Resilience as empowering and granting local ownership

The international community sees resilience-driven DRR as empowering and granting local ownership (Bohle, Etzold, and Keck 2009, Levine et al. 2012, Norris et al. 2008). Therefore, the international community at large has a very positive view on resilience-driven DRR. One of the main reasons for the current popularity of resilience thinking is the focus on supporting what people can do for themselves and how to strengthen them, which fits into the popular ideas of local ownership and empowerment. DRR practices are considered to empower local populations to address the challenges they face and to take control over their own destiny. Furthermore, it is deemed more effective, because DRR measures will be more appropriate for the context. Moreover, local communities are always the first ones present at the site of disaster and can harness their ‘local’ knowledge for the rescue and recovery of their people and their area. Due to this reason resilience is also considered to be a more sustainable and cost-effective solution to deal with future disasters than humanitarian aid (Levine et al. 2012, Pain and Levine 2012). Instead of placing a bandage in the form of humanitarian aid in the aftermath of a disaster, the international community now helps people before, during and

after a disaster. In other words, the international community is working in a proactive instead of reactive way.

The positive view on resilience driven DRR is partially based on the participation discourse which argues to make “‘people” central to development by encouraging beneficiary involvement in interventions that affect them’ (Cooke and Kothari 2001, 5). Participatory development was supposed to differ from donor-led approaches in two respects; firstly, participatory approaches were said to be bottom-up and implemented by communities rather than being imposed upon them and secondly, they were intended to empower the vulnerable and socially excluded. Although the definition of *empowerment* is often vague, most NGOs use it to designate

a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their lives. It is a process that fosters power in people for use in their own lives, their communities and in their society, by acting on issues they define as important (Page and Czuba 1999, 1)

So where the participation discourse emphasizes the need for domestic actors to participate and control their development pathway, empowerment is a way to ensure that they can take this control. This emphasis that domestic actors should be able to participate and control the design and/or implementation of projects, comes to the front in the concept *local ownership* (Donais 2009, Wong 2013). The ‘rationale of propagating local ownership is to obtain greater efficiency and sustainability’ (Wong 2013, 48). The concept emerged after the Cold War, when the discussion on aid effectiveness arose and it was acknowledged that aid processes were too strongly led by donor priorities and lacked sensitivity to complex local contexts (DAC 1996). Locally owned development initiatives are considered more sustainable in medium to longer term and more appropriate to the local conditions, because the commitment to action is not dependent on the presence and support of external actors. Furthermore, the focus on local ownership has to do with ethics and legitimacy, as development and humanitarian work have often been criticized for its lack of sovereignty. Considering the notion of sovereignty of a nation to determine its own pathway, the idea of *local ownership* is based on the moral notion of respecting self-determination. It aims to respect the choices of countries and promotes a sense of independence (Funk, Stajduhar, and Purkis 2011). The participation

discourse evokes a sense of optimism and ‘a world where everyone gets a chance to take part in making the decisions that affect their lives’ (Cornwall and Brock 2005, 1044).

The emphasis on participation, empowerment and local ownership forms the positive narrative about resilience and is used as legitimization by practitioners for resilience-driven DRR projects. Much emphasis is placed on the agency of communities, granting them ownership over their own survival. Resilience gives them responsibility over their own lives, and therefore positively viewed.

#### *Resilience as a Bio-political instrument, shifting the Burden to the most Vulnerable*

Although this positive perspective aligns with the thinking of some academics, there are also academics who view this as a negative development (Chandler 2012, 2013, Chandler and Reid 2016, Duffield 2012, 2013, Evans and Reid 2013, 2015, Frerks, Warner, and Weijs 2011, Furedi 2008, Grove and Chandler 2017, Reid 2012a, b). Where the ‘positive’ perspective highlights the agency of the target group, some of these academics argue that it fails to acknowledge the power structures in which this agency can take place. Using a bio-political lens, Evans and Reid argue that responsibilities have shifted to those most prone to disasters; vulnerable communities. Bio-politics is a Foucauldian term that focuses on managing populations by exercising power over their lives (Foucault 1978, Rabinow and Rose 2006, Srinivasan 2013). It is about strategies for governing life by controlling the options and choices that people make concerning their life, health and eventually their death. Because disaster management and DRR is entangled with the survival and thus life and death of populations, it can be seen from a bio-political perspective.

Evans and Reid (2013, 2015, 2012a, b) argue that disasters are considered to be a normal part of daily life and that vulnerability is an inevitability. The world has become increasingly interconnected due to globalization. This interconnectivity, together with climate change, has led to the perception of our world as complex, unknown and volatile (Duffield 2012, 2013, Evans and Reid 2013, Frerks, Warner, and Weijs 2011, Furedi 2008). History has shown our world to be a place filled with disasters, which holds the promise for a disastrous future, where threats are looming around every corner. The optimistic view of the 1970s that disasters can be predicted has been abandoned and the future has become uncertain. The only certainty in this world is a ‘continuing uncertainty’ (Duffield 2012, 480), as it is certain that lives are permanently threatened by disasters unpredictable in form and time. In other words, disasters have become an endemic feature of the world, one that is beyond our

control. Vulnerability is accepted as the defining condition of existence and living. As Evans and Reid write: 'To be able to become resilient, one must first accept that one is fundamentally vulnerable' (Evans and Reid 2013, 2).

Based on this ontology of vulnerability, resilience is used as a bio-political neoliberal<sup>9</sup> instrument that disciplines the local poor and marginalized to accept, expose themselves and adapt to their vulnerability. Therefore, Evans and Reid (2013) argue that resilience shifts the burden and responsibility for disasters from the international community or the state to the local community, the most vulnerable. There is no attention given to the role national and international actors or markets can play within the causation, response or solution to disasters or the fact that local communities are not always capable or willing to improve their situation.

The idea that international actors could resolve the problems of developing countries through interventions is abandoned as a disillusion (Chandler 2013). International actors would no longer intervene to secure people, but intervene to assist people to become resilient and help themselves. Rather than maintaining any hope in their governments or the international community to secure their lives, local communities are disciplined into believing in the necessity to secure and improve their well-being themselves (Reid 2012a). By making local populations responsible, resilience urges local populations to participate actively. This call for active participation can be seen, from a cynical perspective, as a policy instrument of the international community to avoid being blamed for not interfering within the affected community. The population concerned is disciplined to see oneself as responsible for the impact of disasters and their response to them. This means that resilience shifts the burden to local communities, as they can be blamed for not being resilient (Chandler 2013).

A paradox emerges; resilience presupposes the disastrousness of this world and the vulnerability of people, while at the same time making local communities responsible for mitigating their vulnerability. This means that resilience blames local residents for an aspect

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<sup>9</sup> Although neoliberalism is often ill-defined and its meanings have changed over time, it is commonly associated with 'a (re)negotiation of the boundaries between the market, the state, and civil society so that more areas of people's lives are governed by an economic logic, as the market is regarded to be the best mechanism for allocating goods and services to meet the diverse needs of actors across the globe' (Jones et al. 2014, 79). It refers to an emphasis on 'market relations, re-tasking the role of the state and individual responsibility' and 'the extension of competitive markets into all areas of life, including the economy, politics and society' (Springer, Birch, and MacLeavy 2016, 2). Reid, Evans and Chandler (2016, 2013, 2015, 2012a, b) take this further and argue that we should look at neoliberalism 'as a theory of subjectivity rather than simply a regime of political economy' (Reid in Haug 2017, 255). They imply that contemporary neoliberal power structures work through transformation of the relationship between humans and the world, leading to an emphasis on individual responsibility and self-care.

of life that it presupposed as something that cannot be altered. Resilience urges local communities to take responsibilities and thereby shifts the blame of failed disaster management to these communities. As the problem is placed with the local community, international actors are less likely to take responsibility for the outcomes of their interventions (Chandler 2013). The problems of the local populations are perceived as inevitable and that is why these actors claim that they cannot have a major impact on these processes. Resilience cannot be 'given' or 'produced' by international actors; they can only facilitate it. This means that external intervention is legitimized, in fact seen as necessary, while the responsibility for the outcomes is placed on the shoulders of the local population itself. Therefore, resilience is criticized, because it rationalizes and legitimizes a broad range of external interventions in disaster-prone areas without taking responsibility for them (Chandler 2013).

Resilience 'preaches the uncontrollable nature of the world, the powerlessness of the human subject' (Reid in Haug 2017, 255). The discourse of resilience degrades the political capacities of the vulnerable communities; they cannot resist their vulnerability, because it is perceived as a condition of living in this world. Resilience 'never starts a process with goals or aims at transformation and instead is reactive and responsive rather than a matter of initiation of beginnings, of creativity' (Grove and Chandler 2017, 85). In other words, the political voice of communities is silenced and disasters are depoliticized; politics is reduced to responding to and managing disasters, instead of tackling its causes. Resilience generates a post-utopian worldview, in which security is only attainable for some, making safety 'a matter of *exclusivity*' (Evans and Reid 2013, 96). These neoliberal discourses generate a politically degraded subject whose resilience and adaptability may be enhanced but whose political agency and autonomy is diminished (Chandler and Reid 2016). Vulnerable subjects are perceived to be the cause of social problems instead of structural relations such as the market and its underlying ontology and epistemology of market primacy; they should become more self-aware and be responsible for their vulnerabilities. Instead of tackling structural injustice, blame is put on the losing subject of inequality that simply has to become more resilient. Evans and Reid (2013, 2015, 2012a, b) argue that the only way to overturn these power structures and to find an alternative to this neoliberal subjectivity is an imagination of another politics in which a different responsibility allocation becomes possible.

### Imagination to overturn neoliberal power structures

Reid and Evans argue that the discourse of resilience prevents any other political imagination than the current neoliberal way of thinking; resilience ‘prevents the possibility of death – not in the biophysical sense of a loss of life, but rather in a philosophical sense of becoming-otherwise’ (Evans and Reid in Grove and Chandler 2017, 85). It shows ‘its deceitful emancipatory claims that force people to embrace their servitude as though it were their liberation, and the lack of imagination the resiliently minded possess in terms of transforming the world for the better’ (Evans and Reid 2015, 154). In the neoliberal discourse of resilience, ‘the forces that bring about change are quite literally out of our hands’ because ‘its political imagination [is] notably absent’ (ibid., 156). They argue that it is ‘politically catastrophic’ (Evans and Reid 2013, 83) and a ‘tragedy’ how the resilience discourse ‘forces us to become active participants in our own de-politicisation’ (Evans and Reid 2015, 156). Resilience goes ‘along with the collapse of the political imaginary that refuses to envisage anything other than the bleak current state of political affairs’ (Evans and Reid 2013, 96).

Nevertheless, ‘power itself is fundamentally dependent on a deployment of imagination’; the neoliberal power constellations have an ‘unprecedented scale of imagination at work in its development’, while simultaneously ‘masking itself’ to hide the underlying power dimensions and potential alternatives (Reid in Haug 2017, 256-257). Because imagination can help to sustain certain power dimensions, it can also be a solution that can help us ‘overturn power relations’ (Reid 2012a, 160). Reid argues that we should regain ‘a political subject which can conceive of changing the world, its structure and conditions of possibilities’ that is able to ‘speak back’ to the neoliberal forms present in the discourse of resilience (ibid., 74). A political subject that will ‘seek out the sources of their suffering, with a view of destroying them’ (Reid 2012b, 159).

For Reid, imaginative action is a very emancipatory subjective faculty that can enable us to overturn the neoliberal power relations:

imaginative action is what enables human beings forsake the current courses of their worlds in constitution of new ones through, not the transformation of themselves, but the exercise of agency on their worlds, through the rendering of the image upon it (in Chandler and Reid 2016, 19).



He aims to revive a subject that is capable of imagining itself otherwise. He argues that there is 'the need to develop alternative imaginaries; the need to imagine the world differently, in order to struggle for such alternatives' (Reid 2012b, 160). He states

Images are ... while untrue and in a certain sense inferior to the real, nevertheless things which human beings need in order to be able to act collectively upon the real, and to change the very nature of their political and social circumstances... [Therefore], we must recover the profoundly human power to subordinate the real to the image, such that it is made to conform to what we imagine (in Haug 2017, 260).

He focuses on reclaiming subjective agency and to have the courage to imagine other forms of life, security and agency.

But what is imagination or what is it to engage in imaginative action? Reid uses Gaston Bachelard to explain imagination as 'a psychological world beyond'; it is 'not only the power within the human psyche for the projection of being beyond, but that element within the human psyche which is always *already* a world beyond' (Reid 2012b, 161). If we follow this line of thinking, imagination is 'not only the promise of a world beyond', 'but the actual existence of the beyond in the psychic life of the subject' (ibid., 161). In other words, 'it is the enactment of the beyond now' (ibid., 161). Without imagination, resistance cannot exist. However, this 'imaginary must find its matter, its reality' enabling it to 'realize itself. A material element must give the imaginary its own substance' (ibid., 161-162). This implies that the struggle against the neoliberal discourse on resilience - which is already difficult to overthrow as it depoliticizes disaster management and generates a politically degraded subject - might become even more difficult without any substance in reality. The question is thus 'how the imaginary finds its material, such that it is able to realize itself' (ibid., 162).

As shown above, there exists both positive and negative narratives on the impact of DRR and resilience projects relating to the allocation of responsibilities. However, in these stories the focus is mainly on those "made resilient". Instead of only "studying downwards", I employed an aidnographic study that aims to "study up" as I wanted to understand how professionals work in this fuzzy world of DRR and resilience. I show whether INGO employees are only bio-political instruments through which the neoliberal discourse of resilience is

enacted or whether they reinterpret the resilience discourse. To do this, I focus on the perception, performances and re-imagination of responsibilities in DRR. But first I elaborate on other power dimensions present in INGO's DRR practices, everyday politics of aid.

## 2.2 Everyday Politics of Aid

Starting with the premises that '[I]NGOs constitute multiple realities', I want to focus on the multiple power dimensions that influence the responsibilities and subjectivities in DRR (Hilhorst 2007, 297-298). Besides the resilience discourse, an understanding of the everyday politics of aid and the power dimensions involved is relevant to grasp the way INGO employees see and perform their responsibilities in DRR. Rather than seeing (I)NGOs as 'the saviours and sources of hope' for development processes, we should gain an 'empirically rooted and theoretically innovative understanding of the everyday politics, actual internal workings, organizational practices and discursive repertoires' of (I)NGOs (Hilhorst 2003). This provides insight in '*how they [aid workers] understand their role in the development process*' and thus how they perceive their responsibilities - in this case for DRR (Stirrat 2008, 408 in Harrison 2013, 265). This thesis unravels how the politics of aid interact with the neoliberal discourse of resilience described by Evans and Reid (see 2.1), to see how responsibility allocation for DRR is perceived, performed and re-imagined.

*Everyday politics* refers to 'the control, allocation, production and use of resources and the values and ideas underlying those activities' (Hilhorst 2013, Kerkvliet 2009). It concerns decision-making and who is and should be responsible. The politics of aid provides understanding of how aid 'is based on a range of driving forces besides the humanitarian desire to reduce disaster risk and to alleviate its life-threatening consequences (Hilhorst and Jansen 2010). The focus on the politics of aid is essential as it allows us to see which other power dimensions are present in the everyday lives of INGO employees besides the resilience and participation discourse. I will focus on organizational and legitimization politics.

*Organizational Politics*, referring to 'the desire to continue operations and retain staff' (Hilhorst and Jansen 2010, 1122), for example, turns out to be highly relevant to analyse INGOs' perceptions of their responsibility. To continue their existence and their operations, INGOs require the financial resources of donors, the approval and possibly support of government in Nepal and the support of local NGOs. Therefore, they involve in the *legitimization politics* entailing that they 'have to convince others of their appropriateness and trustworthiness as organizations doing good for the development of other people' (Hilhorst

2007, 298). The INGOs make the moral claim of 'doing good' which is often their founding rationale and enables them to access funding and public representation and which often is their founding rationale. Therefore, you need to convince others that firstly there is a situation or community that needs help; secondly, that 'the intervention of the [I]NGO is indispensable and appropriate, and that it has no self-interest in the envisaged programme'; and thirdly, that the [I]NGO is able and reliable, in other words trustworthy, and capable of carrying out the intervention' (Hilhorst 2007, 311). Seeking legitimation is a major driving force for INGOs, as their reputation is crucial for their organizational politics.

To consider what these organizational and legitimization politics for INGOs imply for responsibility, I consider the literature on accountability.

#### [The Paradox of Aid Accountability and the Pressure of Reporting](#)

In the literature, the terms responsibility and accountability are often used interchangeable (Lindkvist and Llewellyn 2003). For example, Fox and Brown define accountability as 'the process of holding actors responsible for actions' (1998, 12 in Ebrahim 2003, 814). Therefore, literature on accountability in everyday politics of aid is equally relevant. Much of the literature of the literature points out that accountability is a problematic issue and that there is 'paradox of aid accountability', related to upward and downward accountability and secondly to functional and strategic accountability (Ebrahim 2003, 2005, 2007, Hilhorst 2003, Naudet 2000).

The paradox is related to the asymmetrical relationships INGOs have with their various stakeholders; communities, local NGOs, government, donors and headquarters. Because INGOs often hope and claim to help communities, local NGOs and sometimes government stakeholders, it seems logical that they also hold some accountability towards them. This refers to *downward accountability* and focuses on 'the relationships INGOs have with "groups to whom [I]NGOs provide services"' (Ebrahim 2003, 814-815). However, INGOs find themselves in unequal relationships with donors and headquarters (Ebrahim 2003, 2005, 2007, Hilhorst 2003, 2007, Naudet 2000). This large dependency leads INGOS to focus more on *upward accountability*, which 'usually refers to relationships with donors, foundations, and governments and is often focused on "spending of designated moneys for designated purposes"' (Ebrahim 2003, 814).

Ebrahim argues 'that accountability in practice has emphasized "upward" ... accountability to donors while "downward" ... mechanisms remain comparatively

underdeveloped' (ibid., 813). This is related to the organizational politics focusing on the continuation of the existence of the INGO for which they depend on donors for their resources to maintain and implement their projects. However, similarly donors are also dependent on INGOs for their reputation and status (Ebrahim 2003, 2005, 2007)<sup>10</sup>. Therefore, donors have various 'demands for specific outputs and the establishment of information systems' (Ebrahim 2005, 77). INGOs and donors are involved in a 'resource exchange – the exchange of information for funds' (ibid., 101). Ebrahim continues: 'it is this structure in which money is exchanged for information that becomes central to NGO-funder interactions, despite their common goals and visions' (ibid., 102).

The information that is exchanged for financial resources 'is generally quantitative and easily measurable in nature ... and is designed to demonstrate that the supported projects have been "successful"' (ibid., 101). Ebrahim writes:

Funders attempt to structure the flow of information from [I]NGOs by providing special formats for physical and financial reports ...These efforts by funders impact [I]NGOs not only by placing demands on their attention and by affecting valuation of success and failure, but also by framing interventions in simplistic, quantitative, and depoliticized terms (ibid., 102)

In other words, donors pressure INGOs to provide simple, depoliticized quantitative reports which form the basis for donors to judge a project as 'successful'. They attempt to secure and acquire information suitable to measure results and demonstrate success over short budget cycles. These demands also contribute how INGOs perceive their own work and how they view success. As donors persistently place pressure on meeting targets, INGOs are implicitly disciplined to equate success with target achievement.

This focus on quantitative and quick results refers to another distinction in accountability; the difference between *functional accountability* – 'accounts for resource use and short-term results' – and *strategic accountability* – 'accounts for long-term and structural impacts' (Ebrahim 2003, 825-826). Ebrahim observed that 'NGOs and funders have focused primarily on short-term "functional" accountability responses at the expense of longer-term

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<sup>10</sup> This provides INGOs with certain strategizing agency, as there is thus a certain interdependency between donors and INGOs. Nevertheless, the relationship is often described in the literature as rather unequal.

“strategic” processes necessary for lasting social and political change’ (ibid., 813). This matches Naudet observations, who states that ‘aid appears to be very little guided by principles of effectiveness or goal-achievement’ (2000, 29). The accountability mechanisms used by INGOs ‘might be sufficient for funding and regulatory purposes, [but] they undervalue long-term and qualitative assessments that are essential for understanding the real impacts of development activity’ (Ebrahim 2003, 826). He continues: ‘the present emphasis on functional forms of accountability tends to reward [I]NGOs for short-term responses with quick and tangible impacts, while neglecting longer-term strategic response that address more complex issues of social and political change’ (ibid., 826). This is lack of attention for strategic accountability is related to the lack of consensus and complexity involved in how one can measure long-term changes; if one does not know how to measure in what way their interventions contribute to the improving the situation, it is easier to focus on the quick and quantitative results. Furthermore, it is associated with the pressure of donors to show results in a short timeframe.

This emphasis on upwards and functional accountability provides an insight why projects seldom realize the objectives set beforehand. Plans and policies may turn out different in practice as both Mosse (2011, 2013) and Ferguson (2002) argued. As Ferguson showed, development projects operate through a complex of social and cultural structures that the outcome of the project ‘may be only a baroque and unrecognizable transformation of the original intention’ (2002, 399). There are often if not always ‘pervasive ‘gaps’ between policy and practice, ideal and actual, and representation and reality’ (Mosse 2011, 13). This makes sense, because ‘global’ policy ideas, models and/or frameworks about resilience travel and effect economic, social and political processes across the globe, while being embedded in local social contexts;

‘they begin in social relations in institutions and expert communities, travel with undisclosed baggage and get unravelled as they are translated into the different interests of social/institutional worlds and local politics in ways that generate complex and unintended effects’ (ibid., 3).

Seeing projects as arenas for negotiation or struggle requires ‘a better insight into the behaviour of the actors involved’ (Dusseldorp 1990, 339). I aim to provide this by looking at

their claimed and performed subjectivity, giving an insight in how INGOs experience their responsibility.

### 2.3 The Performative Subjectivity

If we consider a person responsible for an action, because he does or brings about this action, we could consider how we see this person, his identity and subjectivity. Therefore, I chose to reflect on how my respondents see the subjectivity of INGOs and the tasks and practices associated with this subjectivity. Focusing on responsibility - on the actions INGOs should or should not do – I chose a Butlerian understanding of their performative subjectivity to analyse the practice of responsibility allocation. It allowed me to show how multiple power dimensions generate various subjectivities with different understandings of responsibilities.

Butler builds on Foucault's notion of discourse, arguing that in the process of performative acts the subject comes into being (Butler 1988, 1993, Hall and Du Gay 1996, Mansfield 2000, McNay 1999, Nightingale 2011). A performative understanding of the subject means 'that it is real only to the extent that it is performed' (Butler 1988, 527) and that it 'is produced in the course of its materialization' (Hall and Du Gay 1996, 14). It shows how subjectivity 'is understood as emergent and produced out of everyday practices' (Nightingale 2011, 155). Performativity defines Butler 'as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names' (Butler 1993, 2).

There is an undeterminedness in Butler's understanding of the subject allowing for the possibility of disruption and rearticulation that comes to the front in the definition of performativity in the use of the words *iterability* and *citatoriality*. Butler defines a process of iterability as 'a regularized and constrained repetition of norms' (ibid., 95). This use of Derrida's concept of reiteration allows Butler to see the performative construction the subject as productive, enabling and persisting, while at the same time destabilizing and resisting. Citatoriality indicates that the forming of the subject is not possible without conforming to a script, while simultaneously it is never possible to exactly conform to the script. Norms 'hold to the extent that it is "cited" as such a norm, but it also derives its power through the citations that it compels' (ibid., 13). The repetition of the acts according to the norms is what enables the subject, constituting the temporal condition for the subject. However, it also shows that 'identifications are never fully and finally made; they are incessantly reconstituted' (ibid., 105). It indicates that the process of constituting the subject is never fully complete, that it never fully complies with the norms by which their subjectivation is impelled. Although reiteration

has 'sedimented' effects, 'it is also by virtue of this reiteration that gaps and fissures are opened up as the constitutive instabilities in such constructions, as that which cannot be wholly defined or fixed by the repetitive labor of that norm' (ibid., 10). The construction of the subject is thus both persistent and unstable, being 'both produced and destabilized in the course of this reiteration' (ibid., 10). The construction of the subject is an ongoing process and not a single performative utterance; the repeated and repeatable acts make this performative utterance possible.

The acts, constituting the subject, are not only one's act alone. Butler explains: 'Surely, there are nuanced and individual ways of *doing* one's gender, but *that* one does it, and that one does it *in accord with* certain sanctions and proscriptions, is clearly not a fully individual matter' (Butler 1988, 525). Thus, acts are a shared experience. Moreover, '[t]he act that one performs, is, in a sense, an act that has been going on before one arrived on the scene' (ibid., 526). The acts are rehearsed and can be seen 'as a script [that] survives the particular actors who make use of it, but which requires individual actors in order to be actualized and reproduced as reality once again' (ibid., 526).

Here, Butler generates the notion of a decentred notion of the subject in which any interiority or essence prior to the acts is rejected. Through their performative acts subjects reproduces discourses and their power dimensions. Subjectivity is 'a contradictory achievement with subjects exercising and internalising multiple dimensions of power within the same acts' (Nightingale 2011, 155). It means that different power dimensions and different discourses are enacted through the performances of the subject, having 'lateral and unexpected consequences for ... subjectivities' (ibid., 155). In other words, different discourses lead to multiple subjectivities that could clash within a subject's performance, leading to surprising and unintended results.

In this thesis, I use this performative understanding of the subject to show how the multiple power dimensions lead INGO employees to claim the subjectivities of firstly, facilitator and supporter and secondly, being successful project designer and manager. Although these subjectivities do not seem to contradict each other, in their actual performances they collide. This conflict is related to the notion that INGO employees do not perform their subjectivities in isolation, but perform in a social environment in which they need to cooperate.

### Performances of Cooperation

‘Successful’ DRR projects require the cooperation of INGO workers with other relevant stakeholders. In this thesis, I analysed if, why and how INGO employees cooperate with the Nepalese government and local NGO stakeholders. The word ‘cooperation’ is derived from the Latin words ‘*co*’ meaning ‘*together*’ and ‘*operari*’ meaning ‘*to work*’. It emerges when there is interdependency, a (somewhat) similar goal and trust (Lundin 2007, Sennet 2012, Green 1964, Kramer et al. 2001). Interdependency is important as you will only cooperate if you cannot do something yourself; it is thus a *necessity* that derives from some form of *interdependency*. However, both parties need to benefit and therefore you work ‘together to the same end’ (Oxford 2018). Trust is considered to be crucial in the emergence of cooperation which ‘exists when a party believes, or when there is credibility, in the integrity and reliability of their partner’ (Martins et al. 2017, 49). In other words, trust is based on the belief or expectancy that the other party will do the same and cooperate; It is based on previous experiences of reciprocity and on identification processes (Kramer et al. 2001) and concerns the uncertainty involved with cooperation.

In this thesis, I aim to see how different power dimensions – such as the neoliberal resilience discourse and the everyday politics of aid – generate multiple and sometimes contradicting responsibilities and subjectivities materialized through the performances of INGO employees. These subjectivities are performed in a social environment in which INGOs need to cooperate. Before I go into how this works in Nepal, I elaborate the methodology used for this thesis.

## 3. Methodology

In this chapter, I describe how my interest and knowledge on the theory was turned into an ethnographic research project, how I gained access to my respondents and how I collected and analysed my data. Finally, I explain my positionality and the general complexities involved in this research.

### 3.1 From interest to research

This thesis springs from an interest in DRR and resilience that emerged during my internships at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cordaid, in which I learnt how these matters were seen from a Dutch perspective. I became curious to see how these matters were brought into practice and I got the opportunity to experience this in Nepal through an internship in INGO A



focused on improving School Based DRR trainings. Gaining insight into the ethical debate concerning the responsibility allocation in DRR and resilience (see 2.1), I became interested to see how this allocation was perceived and practiced by INGO employees in Nepal. Working within an INGO, I realized that the everyday politics of aid, I realized that this was a key power dimensions besides the resilience discourse. As different responsibilities and subjectivities emerged from these power dimensions, I considered that Butler's performativity approach would be helpful to understand how power dimensions shape perceptions and how in everyday life these are performed in a different way; it bridged various (macro) power dimensions and everyday performances.

Having found no research on INGO perceptions and practices of responsibility allocation in DRR and resilience programs, I consider this research to be rather explorative<sup>11</sup>. This meant that I needed to find my own research approach based on aidnographic methods.

### 3.2 An Aidnographic Methodological Approach

To understand the responsibilities and subjectivities of INGO employees, I decided to embark on a six months 'ethnographic study of aid' (Gould 2014, 2); an aidnography. An aidnography 'utilises an ethnographic approach to understanding how aid workers and policymakers, through their everyday practices, make sense of their role within complicated 'intervention arenas'' (Hilhorst, Weijs, and Van Der Haar 2017, 120). Instead of only focusing on the successfulness of programs, emphasis in aidnography is placed on the narratives and social complexities that development aid brings to the lives of those involved (Gould 2014). It can contribute to 'the need to make people who work in the aid industry, and the work that they do, more visible' (Lewis 2017, 30).

It shows how working in the aid industry 'can appear to be sealed and separate – a 'bubble', with its own rituals, symbolism and language' (Harrison 2013, 264). This is something I experienced myself as well; for example, it took me at least two weeks to grasp some of the terminology used in the office. Furthermore, walking home with my colleague and discussing the day at the office, she often gave me insight in the workings and rituals of 'Aidland' (Apthorpe 2011). For example, one time I was enthusiastic about how our (interim) country director argued that we should be proud of the work done. My colleague looked at me and

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<sup>11</sup> Adler and Clark define exploratory research as focusing 'on a relatively unstudied topic in a new area, to become familiar with this area, to develop some general ideas about it, and perhaps even to generate some theoretical perspectives on it' (2014, 13).

smiled. She shared her perspective that our director did this because an employee talked too much about the internal problems of the INGOs and tried to discipline this employee to 'keep his mouth shut'. Furthermore, the unequal relations between various stakeholders, the pressure to document in the 'right' way the project results and how to work with the government were often topic of discussion. It showed how this 'Aidland' had its own metal topographies, languages of discourse, lore and custom' (Apthorpe 2011, 199). This bubble did not pertain to the office, but also extended to evening times; during nights out people continued to talk about work, network with other INGO employees, or tried to cosy up with donors or headquarter people. Local NGO employees in their way tried to connect with INGO employees to gain a better-paid job in the INGO.

An aidnographic approach was suitable, as it allowed me to see how my respondents build up their own reality as I came close to the lived experiences and perceptions of my respondents. It was an iterative process, as I continued to reflect on the assumptions I made before, during and after the research. Furthermore, this ethnographic approach was useful to gain understanding of INGO employees' performed subjectivity as it allowed me to investigate their practices while paying attention to their social, political and economic surroundings (Eriksen 2004). It allowed me 'to situate aid practices in a sort of *sociologie totale*' (Apthorpe 2011, 200) and show how aid performances are not only driven by a humanistic altruism but also organizational and legitimization politics. This enabled me to show the complex reality of DRR on the ground, which complicates the abstract ethical debate on responsibility allocation.

In order to gain insight into how INGO workers perceive, perform and reimagine their subjectivity and responsibility, I needed to understand how they made sense of their environment and their possible options for action. The ethnographic approach allowed me to grasp this in two manners: firstly by considering their narratives, gained through semi-structured interviews and various informal conversations; and secondly, via my own experiences of participant observation working in an INGO on DRR recorded in field notes. The data gathered were triangulated amongst each other, and also with documents collected during research and the relevant literature sourced prior to the research, to establish trustworthiness. But before I turn to how the conduction of these methods advanced in my research, I describe my data collection and how I gained access to my respondents.

### 3.3 Access and Data Collection

October 2017, I started as an intern with an INGO (INGO A) in Kathmandu, which granted me access to several respondents and other data. Making the final adjustments to my proposal when in Nepal, I decided to first observe, learn how things work and gain contacts. In the first weeks of my internship, I dedicated myself to collect and review the available documents related to DRR projects that my INGO had conducted in the past. As the research proceeded and my network grew, I obtained more documents that were included in my final analysis. Based on these documents, my experiences in the INGO, and the literature review<sup>12</sup>, I constructed an interview guide for my second data collection method, semi-structured interviews.

Using this interview guide – a list of open-ended questions and/or topics (Heldens and Reysoo 2005) – I interviewed 25 persons during 22 interviews (see appendix 2). More than one third of my interviews originated from the relations I build working in INGO A. Most of the interviews took place in Kathmandu or surroundings; a few took place outside of Kathmandu and were related to the work I needed to do for INGO A. Using snowball sampling, I found new suitable respondents through the network of previous respondents. It allowed for a flexibility suitable for explorative research; I could go after the leads presented to me while benefitting from the newly acquired information. The interviews were only loosely based on the interview guide, as I tried to conduct my interviews in a ‘conversational’ style; aiming to make my respondents as comfortable as possible and let him/her direct the conversation. The conversations were free flowing and gave me a better understanding of aspects that they considered to be important which I had not yet considered. As my research progressed, my interview guides developed significantly; previous interviews and observations informed upcoming interviews and the topics were adjusted to the respondent to ensure relevance.

In order to build rapport, I usually informed my respondents about my interest in how they perceived DRR projects and how responsibility allocation was perceived and practiced in the resilience discourse. Afterwards, I told them often how the ethical debate on the allocation of responsibility in DRR and resilience inspired my research. Considering that this

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<sup>12</sup> A review is seen as a form of research that brings together what is known in literature about a certain topic (Gough, Thomas, and Oliver 2012). In this thesis, I have used a *configurative review*, trying to interpret and understand the world arranging and configuring information provided by the authors.

debate would influence their answers, I chose to provide this information at the closing of the interview; it often generated a lot of new and relevant information leading to more depth, nuance and additional stories.

Before interviews started, I asked for permission to record, except for my first two interviews as they emerged spontaneously and were not recorded. My research was quite politically sensitive, as some of the stakeholders I interviewed had problems with other stakeholders that I interviewed. Some expressed great interest in my research, as they might be able to use it for their own benefit. Due to this political sensitivity and to protect their privacy, I ensured the anonymity of my respondents and the organization they worked for. Nevertheless, two times I was asked to turn off my recording device as the respondents wanted to share sensitive data. This inspired my decision to turn off my recording device at the end of an interview and ask the respondents how they felt about the interview and if they wanted to share more details, which sometimes generated more useful data. I combined this information with my impressions of the interview, ideas to improve my data collection and methodological, theoretical or analytical ideas in my field notes.

Considering the political nature of my research, my third method - informal conversations - proved to be a good data gathering method. Social situations such as having a beer in a bar, going to a networking event, or having lunch at the office, sparked conversations that were crucial for my research. I discovered more sensitive stories while having informal conversations: for example, a bus-drive of five hours with a respondent gave me much more information than when I interviewed him. Combined with participant observation<sup>13</sup> in the INGO where I worked, these informal conversations form the main frame of my field notes.

Being my own main research instrument during this aidnographic research, and considering the highly interactive process involved with ethnographic research, a reflection on my positionality and ontological and epistemological standpoint is important.

### 3.4 Positionality, ontology and epistemology

During my aidnographic research, I involved myself in the experiences of people that I sought to understand and participated in their working lives and activities. Therefore, my own subjective experiences, positionality, and socio-cultural background certainly influenced the

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<sup>13</sup> Participant Observation is a data collection method in which the researcher takes part in everyday activities to observe events in their natural contexts (McKechnie 2008).

fieldwork and the way I constructed knowledge, which I discuss first. Secondly, I discuss my ontological and epistemological standpoint<sup>14</sup>.

### Positionality

My positionality informs the way I acted towards my respondents and which questions I asked and influencing how they acted towards me. Reflecting on Butler and Nightengale, I consider that I performed various subjectivities that are situated and potentially contradicting at times. It is impossible to reflect on all the subjectivities and aspects present in my positionality and I accept that I also might be unaware of some of them. Therefore, I will discuss four aspects that I consider to have had a large influence on my research.

Firstly, my background of being a Dutch, white, middle class, university-educated woman influenced how I perceive social reality and how others perceived me as an 'obvious outsider'. For example, considering my Dutch nationality and my initial unfamiliarity with the Nepalese context, people had much patience explaining how the cooperation between INGOs, government and local NGOs worked. Furthermore, several respondents remarked 'this is how it works in Nepal', while people from the West noted the differences between Nepal and a Western context.

Secondly, my position of working for an INGO influenced my research greatly' and gave me sometimes the subjectivity of an 'insider'. Working for an INGO, gave me access to several of my respondents, however, it did not mean that I had easy access to their stories and perceptions on this highly political and sensitive matter of responsibility allocation. Because I worked for the donor of some local organizations, some felt restricted to speak their mind, while others tried to involve me in their political relation with this INGO. Attention to meta-data – 'informants' spoken and unspoken thought and feelings which they do not always articulate in their stories or interview responses' (Fujii 2010, 231) – proved to be highly important but also difficult.

My relationship with respondents - ranging from friendship, being a colleague, to being someone they just met - also influenced my research. A higher level of acquaintance made sensitive or political topics more easily approachable, generating a certain level of depth. Furthermore, knowing a person for a longer time allowed me to place his/her statements in a broader context and understand some of the contradictions in his/her statements made over

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<sup>14</sup> Ontology refers to the question '*what is reality*' and epistemology to '*how this is to be known*' (Porter 1996, 113 in Maggs-Rapport 2001, 375).

time. The relationship also influenced the location of the interview, from informal settings such as in a bar or house to more formal locations such as an office.

The fourth aspect concerns my own ideas about responsibility allocation within DRR and resilience inspired by the dialogue between the international community and scholars of bio-politics. Although this theoretical framework inevitably formed the focus of my research – responsibility allocation in DRR and resilience – I have tried to decrease the inclination to see my data only through already ‘fixed’ theoretical lens. For example, the focus on cooperation between INGOs, government and local NGOs specifically developed during my research.

#### Ontological and Epistemological Standpoint

In this thesis, I employ a critical realist approach, acknowledging an external ontological world which can only be known through discourse dependent epistemologies (Sayer 2000). I reject the discovery of truth in some absolute or ultimate sense, as either meaningless or unattainable. I do not assume that knowledge mirrors the world as naïve realists do, but I rather interpret ‘it in such a way that the expectations and practices it informs are intelligible and reliable’ (ibid., 42). Knowledge claims are socially and situationally constructed. They refer to and involve practical commitments applicable in the context presented to me as researcher. If some statements are considered to be true, this does not mean that they are beyond improvement. Therefore, my knowledge is fallible and there is more than one epistemological approach that can represent the world in a proper manner. Sayer argues that truth might be better understood as ‘*practical adequacy*’, ‘that is in terms of the extent to which it generates expectations about the world and about results of our actions which are realized’ (ibid., 43). How practically adequate my knowledge is varies according to the context in which it is applied.

In this thesis, I have used various ethnographic methods and triangulation to generate a truth that is most practical adequate for this case-study. Doing social science is a matter of ‘double hermeneutics’, indicating that I need to make sense of the sense-making of others and myself. I acknowledge that this thesis presents one side of the story, but relevant considering the lack of aidnographic insights in the ethical debate.

#### 3.5 Data analysis

To analyse my data, I coded it using ATLAS.ti and I conducted a content and membership categorization analysis. Content analysis is defined as a set of social science research

techniques whereby documents are systematically coded to allow for the development of trustworthy inferences' (Wesley 2009, 11). It is a 'powerful data reduction technique' used to gain an overview of the collected data (Stemler 2001).

Thereafter, I conducted a Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA) which is used to analyse conversations to describe how speakers attach a person doing certain activities (e.g. facilitating, being transparent) to a specific category (e.g. INGO) (Housley and Fitzgerald 2002, Baker 2004). I used it to gain understanding of why and how my respondents describe and interpret the subjectivities, actions and responsibilities of INGO workers.

Based on these analyses I was able to consider which subjectivities and responsibilities INGOs claimed for themselves (chapter four), their performance of these subjectivities and responsibilities in association with government and local NGOs (chapter five) and finally, how they reimagined these responsibilities (chapter six). But before I turn to these, I would like to elaborate on specific complexities and limitations of my thesis.

### 3.6 General Complexities and Limitations

One difficulty in my research were the changes within the INGO I worked: after initially asking permission from the country director of my INGO to undertake my research, he unexpectedly needed to leave his position. In the following four months, five persons took up this position: I decided to inform those who stayed longer than two weeks about my research. It provided much chaos and stress in my office, but also granted me insight in different ways of working.

Another difficulty of this research was the general knowledge my respondents had of the English language and the proficiency with which they could express themselves. Although employees of INGOs and most local NGOs were used to writing reports in English, it was not their native language. However, I preferred to work without an interpreter as that would mean 'being completely cut off from the benefits of participation in small talk exchanges, apart from being entirely dependent on the willingness and ability of a mediator to translate statements in as precise and detailed a fashion as possible' (Driessen and Jansen 2013, 252). Furthermore, the use of an interpreter prohibit a respondent to speak his/her mind, due to the complexities of caste and the political nature of the conversation.

Its exploratory character is a limitation of this research, as it showed only a fraction of the many ways in which INGOs see their subjectivities and responsibilities. This was also due to the time-span, as over the period of six months I was only able to witness parts of the ongoing performances. Together with the snowball sampling method used in this research, it

generates a bias that is inevitable in qualitative research and which makes it difficult to make any generalizing statements. However, this research can be seen as a basis for deepening aidnographic research in DRR and resilience projects.

#### 4. Understanding and Claiming Responsibilities in Disaster Risk Reduction

Being interested in INGO perceptions on responsibility allocation within DRR and resilience initiatives, I first focus on how they understood DRR and resilience and how this influenced their perception of their subjectivities and responsibilities. Then I concentrate on the everyday politics and how this influenced which subjectivities and responsibilities INGO employees claim for themselves. It can be seen as the most important action as it allowed them to legitimize their subsequent actions and shape the dialogue on responsibility allocation in DRR projects.

The subjectivities INGOs claimed for themselves has undergone great change as the nature and discourses of humanitarian and development aid have shifted dramatically since aid programming started in Nepal in the 1950s (Coyle 2018). This has led to different claims of responsibilities and subjectivities. For example, the resilience and participation discourse have greatly changed the subjectivity of INGOs; instead of implementing DRR projects themselves, INGOs now claim to be a facilitator and supporter of DRR initiatives, as described in 4.1 and 4.2. The everyday politics of aid in which donors want quantifiable and visible results, influenced INGOs to claim the subjectivity of being a successful project manager, as described in 4.3 and 4.4.

##### 4.1 The Understanding of Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience

UNISDR's understanding of DRR as 'the concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyse and manage the causal factors of disasters' (UNISDR 2009) is a rather broad conceptualization, open to many interpretations. A broad definition does not need to be a problem as it can lead to a debate about the proper application of the concept (Furedi 2008). Looking at the DRR projects in which my respondents were involved, we can see the broadness of this concept back. For example, when I asked one respondent how she saw DRR, she started to laugh and said 'Many, many different definitions' (I4). She elaborated how different organizations used it in different fashions. Another respondents elaborated that DRR can be 'something very specific', while at the same time it can be integrated in every



project, referring to the ‘mainstreaming’ of DRR (I3, I11) and the notion that DRR is a ‘cross-cutting issue’ (I6, I22). Projects ranged from Building Back Better (BBB)<sup>15</sup> of houses, schools and WASH<sup>16</sup> facilities and the provision of disaster resilient seeds, to the development of DRR plans, facilitation of DRR committees and awareness raising events of insurance schemes. Considering the large diversity of these projects, it is worth to investigate how INGO employees understand DRR.

One respondent stated that DRR focuses on understanding the risk for certain hazards, such as floods, earthquakes and landslides, to be followed by planning to respond to that risk, accordingly (I22). Another argued: ‘disaster risk reduction means to me reducing the risk or the impact of future disasters on the population’ (I11). It focuses on preparedness, mitigation and prevention. DRR was considered to be important, as DRR ‘needs to build resilient people and to build strong people’ (I3). Resilience was seen as ‘the capacity of people to respond to, or to bounce back ... [or] to recover from a disaster’ (I11). This capacity is required, as ‘this is a country prone to disasters’ (I11).

Many respondents reflect on Nepal’s large exposure to hazards and the upcoming effects of climate change. Hazards are seen as inevitable; for example, one respondent stated ‘you will never stop the hazard to happen’ (I11). Respondents make statements such as ‘we need to be able to deal with the recurrent disasters’ (I3) and ‘we [the Nepalese people] are all facing the problem of climate change... So disaster, you know is ongoing phenomenon for us’ (I6). Another respondent argued ‘disaster is that event which we cannot predict. When it happens, how it happens, we cannot predict’ (I10). Here, we see that hazards, and nature in general, are seen as incontrollable and disasters are seen as an endemic feature of Nepal. Although many are aware of the conceptual difference between hazards and disasters, in my interviews the concepts are often used interchangeable and no one mentions how (structural) inequality leads to more vulnerability for some people. As Nepal experiences a high exposure to hazards, my respondents normalized disasters and vulnerability. As one respondent concluded: ‘disaster is inevitable, it happens’ (I16).

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<sup>15</sup> BBB refers to ‘the use of the recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction phases after a disaster to increase the resilience of nations and communities through integrating disaster risk reduction measures into the restoration of physical infrastructure and societal systems, and into the revitalization of livelihoods, economies and the environment’ (UNISDR 2017, 6).

<sup>16</sup> WASH stands for water, sanitation and hygiene.

Therefore, DRR focuses according to one of my respondents on ‘how we can live with the disaster’ (I6). Disaster risk is accepted, and the Nepalese population need to be thought how ‘to deal with the disaster risk’ (I6). The only thing that the Nepalese people can do is adapt and prepare: ‘So every person should prepare for disaster, any time it can happen’ (I10). Due to the unpredictability and the remoteness of some parts of Nepal, the respondent continued to explain that people need to prepare for themselves, because they ‘cannot be reached at time, when [a] disaster happens’ (I10). In first respect, they should do it themselves and help each other in preparing. Many of respondents focus on the capacity *to cope* with disasters (I6, I11, I16, I20) and on independency (I10, I11), ‘not needing any external support’ (I11). Communities should be able to survive a disaster, without relying on anyone’s help. An INGO worker concluded: ‘the main major role comes under the responsibility of the community themselves’ (I14).

When engaged with DRR, the aim of INGOs ‘is to reduce the impact of hazards on people, and their assets, livestock and livelihoods’ (I11). Next, I describe how INGOs aim to do this and reflect on what subjectivity they claim for themselves.

#### 4.2 INGOs as Facilitator and Supporter

*Our role is always of facilitation, we always want to support (I3).*

Asking about who is responsibility for DRR in Nepal, there was not really a consensus amongst my respondents; government stakeholders, local communities and NGOs were named. However, my respondent did agree that the responsibility of INGOs is mainly to facilitate and support these stakeholders. Although a respondent stated that ‘without question people are responsible for their own insecurities’, he continued to add that ‘they need guidance’ (I5). This would be partially the task of INGOs, as many of my respondents argued.

In line with the concept of local ownership considering Nepal’s sovereignty and responsibility to control its own development, many INGOs in Nepal saw their subjectivity not as *provider* of certain services, but as *facilitator*<sup>17</sup> and *supporter* of DRR and resilience initiatives. Identifying his INGO ‘only [as] facilitator’, a country director argued that his INGO put Nepalese ‘NGOs, Networks and government in the driver’s seat’ (PO 6-10-2017). Aiming to improve Nepalese resilience, INGOs want to avoid duplication and be ‘complementary and supplementary to the government system’ (I16). INGOs ‘are here just because the state is

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<sup>17</sup> INGO -employees used facilitation to refer to ‘the act of helping other people to deal with a process or reach an agreement or solution without getting directly involved in the process’ (Cambridge Dictionary 2018)

failing to respond to disaster, so we [INGOs] are here until they are able to do that themselves' (I11). Other INGO employees argued that because the government is failing, they should support local NGOs to build up the resilience of the Nepalese population. They cannot support the Nepalese communities directly, as the Nepalese government does not allow for self-implementation by INGOs.

They claimed to provide support through different activities. Firstly, they aim to raise the awareness of communities about disaster risk. Although Nepal experienced many disasters, my respondents explained that communities do not always possess the knowledge of what is going on or tend to prioritize other activities over DRR activities. A respondent stated: 'people are sometimes inactive', therefore, INGOs have 'to sensitize them, to train them, to empower them to make them realize their responsibility' (I14).

Thus, next to raising awareness for DRR, INGOs are involved in capacity building and empowerment;

So our [INGO's] focus is mainly to how we can make them capable to cope with the disaster. How we can build up their resilience capacities, you know, against disasters and climate change (I6).

This task, capacity building and empowerment, is based on the idea that the government and local NGOs 'are possibly lacking political, economic and social capacity in terms of human, institutional, material and financial resources to perform essential roles' necessary for local ownership (Wong 2013, 51). The following expression was taken to heart: *'Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day, teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime'*. Several INGO workers considered that capacity building leads to sustainable outcomes as the government and/or local NGOs learn skills that can help Nepal become resilient. As my respondents argued, INGOs 'give their expertise from the world context' (I20) and 'transfer knowledge' (I14) through capacity building trainings. The aim is to support the capacities of local stakeholders to 'determine their own values and priorities, to organize themselves to act upon and sustain these for the common good' (Eade 2007, 632). It is hoped that this process that will continue long after a project has finished. INGOs claimed to move from 'a *doing* to an *influencing* role' (Clark in Pearce 1993, 222); they argued that they do not directly implement projects but use local NGOs for this goal. Here, the influence of the Nepalese context can be

observed, because INGOs are not allowed to implement their projects themselves, as explained earlier.

#### 4.3 Everyday Politics of Aid

To be able to do these DRR awareness raising and capacity building activities, INGOs need to be able to establish and continue their operations and retain their staff. Therefore, they need to engage in organizational and legitimization politics. My respondents expressed that they relied heavily on donors and headquarters to provide them with the required funding. As a respondent stated: 'because INGOs have to survive, they have to get good money' (I3). After the 2015 earthquakes, loads of funding and other resources poured into the country. However, at the time of my research, there was a 'donor crisis' (I2); there was a decline in international attention for Nepal as two years passed since the 2015 earthquakes. Another respondent stated: 'the pot of money ... really shrunken' and that 'INGOs and NGOs are fighting for the same money' (I4). This dependence on donors is real, as I heard several stories of INGOs that had to stop their projects because the donor changed its policies and/or focus area (I4, I6, I19).

The reputation of INGOs was crucial, because donors selected only 'the best, best partners' (I1). This generated much pressure for INGOs who need to prove that they are worth the money that donors are willing to put in. My respondents talked about the different demands and requests donors had. For example in a BBB project, an INGO worker expressed that he needed to report weekly on the construction of 300 schools on 28 steps to the donor (I1). Working for different donors, it was difficult for INGOs to adhere to all the different requests and demands. These desires can change quite frequently, making it difficult of INGOs to have lasting impact (I2, I16). Additional pressure was the different timeframes donors have; my respondents had projects ranging from 3 months up to 3 years. Talking about these timeframes, a respondent stated: 'you need to spend the money within this timeframe and if you did not then they will pull it out of the basket' (I2), implying that the donors will take the money back if they did not finish the money in time. I experienced this pressure first hand, as I was present at INGO meetings discussing how to ensure the budget was fully used. However, problem could also be that the budget was not enough and then creative ways were sought to ensure that all the activities would be executed. To adhere to the desires of donors was especially difficult with donors who were abroad and did not understand the situation and needs on the ground; they demanded activities that did not always fit the local context.

However, as a respondent expressed: 'INGOs don't want donor to go back [without giving the funds], because of [the] donor crisis' (I2).

Being dependent on donors, INGOs had to adapt to the wishes and desires of donors; 'it is about survival of existence' (I2). This organizational politics required that INGOs engaged in legitimization politics, in which they legitimized and promoted their operations by firstly claiming to work support DRR (see 4.2) and secondly claim the subjectivity of successful project managers.

#### 4.4 INGOs as Successful Project Manager

Finding themselves in asymmetrical relationships with donors, INGOs presented themselves as successful project managers. There were three steps in this process; firstly, they claimed to fulfil the needs of the population (I19, I20). An INGO employee explained how INGOs often 'raise the issue of communities' when obtaining the funds from the donors; they claimed that their project will help make communities more resilient and improve their DRR measures (I20). INGOs involved themselves in needs assessments to design and legitimize their projects. Thus, they claimed to have downward accountability to legitimize themselves towards donors.

Secondly, INGOs wrote project proposals in which they argue the need of the communities and how they are the perfect candidate to fulfil these needs. They referred to the international reputation that the INGO has in the field of DRR and how they used this expertise in previous projects. Sometimes they had conversations before with the donors, trying to figure out what kind of projects they would like. This process can take quite some time; a respondent told me that for one large project a proposal went back and forth between the donor and the INGO as the donor required adjustments in the contract, narrative and the budget (I20).

INGOs showed their suitability by taking donors on field trips and providing them with extensive documentation, such as lessons learnt documents, annual and project reports. In their proposals, INGOs stated the output of their projects and in their reports they write if and how they would meet this proposed targets. These outputs are often quantifiable, because donors would like to see 'direct and quantifiable results', as one respondent put it (I16). My colleagues felt this pressure to fulfil targets as well; during lunch two colleagues discussed how they could justify to the donor that they failed to meet the number of people present during DRR trainings and the number of earthquake-proof constructed buildings promised in the proposal (PO 23-10). I realized that the pressure on the 'right' documentation was as

important as the actual work itself. INGOs involved in monitoring and evaluation to provide the expected documentation to the donors to show the requested results. My respondents reflected that this documentation was so important, because it allowed donors to ‘ensure the quality of the implementation of their projects’ (I6) and check whether ‘things are done properly’ (I4). In other words, the logic seemed to be that the documentation would reflect the reality on the ground. However, its one way to present reality, which INGOs should do in the ‘right’ way to please the donor by following certain formats. In other words, INGOs are required to show upward accountability, as described in 2.3.

#### 4.5 Conclusion

In short, parts of the neoliberal resilience discourse are internalized in my respondents’ perception of Nepal as a hazardous country in which disasters are a normal event of everyday life. None of my respondents reflected upon how structural inequality led some people to be more vulnerable than others. There was not much attention placed on the the broader social, economic and political realities, which forced them into a vulnerable existence. Instead, my respondents focused on their survival strategies. Disaster risk was seen as something people have to cope with and adapt to. Some of my respondents placed much emphasis on the responsibilities of communities; disasters would be unpredictable and could hit people that are difficult to reach with external aid. However, as will be expressed in chapter seven, there is not much consensus how responsibilities in DRR should be allocated.

Nevertheless, there is a consensus over INGOs’ responsibility within DRR, as they claim the subjectivity of facilitator and supporter. Analysing this from a neoliberal discourse, I argue that by claiming this subjectivity some INGO employees acknowledge that they cannot solve the problems of developing countries and therefore only intervene people to become resilient; one respondent argued that people should be responsible for their own DRR and recovery and INGOs can only help them (I11). In this way, they also adhere to the participation discourse that emphasizes the need for domestic actors to control and take responsibility over their own development pathway. But in a more negative light, I would like to argue that by claiming this subjectivity INGOs legitimize their interventions without taking responsibility for its outcomes (see also 2.1). However, first I need to consider INGOs’ performance of this responsibility.

INGOs claimed that through their DRR projects, they facilitate and support the Nepalese government and local NGOs in building up resilience. Here, we see the second

subjectivity emerging, influenced by the power dimensions of the everyday politics of aid; the subjectivity of successful project manager. INGOs found themselves in an asymmetrical relationship with donors; they would get the resources to support Nepal in their DRR efforts if they proved that they were a suitable candidate based on their project management skills. First, they legitimized their operation by showing the need of the target group, to be followed by their international and local expertise on DRR. They engaged in monitoring and evaluation visits to provide extensive documentation with direct and quantifiable results requested by donors. In other words, they placed great emphasis on upwards accountability, while they legitimized themselves by claiming to be accountable to the needs for the community, referring to downward accountability. Through their reporting, INGOs showed that they have functional accountability as these documentations show the use of resources and show short-term results. This functional accountability is assumed to automatically lead to strategical accountability as successful DRR projects are seen as the means to achieve long-lasting resilience of the population of Nepal.

In other words, INGO workers claimed to combine the two subjectivities of, firstly, facilitator and supporter of DRR initiatives and, secondly, successful project manager. They claimed that through their DRR projects they facilitate and support the Nepalese government and local NGOs in DRR initiatives to increase the resilience of the Nepalese people. DRR projects are seen as the means to the end goal, the development of DRR in Nepal. Through this claim, INGOs exercised and internalized multiple dimensions of power, as described by Butler and Nightingale; they enacted the power dimensions of resilience, participation and politics of aid by claiming these two subjectivities and responsibilities.

Although my respondents presented to the outside world that these subjectivities go hand in hand, in the next chapter I show that these subjectivities sometimes collided in their performances. It will be shown that a successful project is sometimes prioritized over INGO's responsibility of facilitation and supporter.

## 5. Performing Responsibilities in Disaster Risk Reduction

In the previous chapter, I established how INGO employees perceived their responsibility and subjectivity as supporter and facilitator of Nepali driven DRR initiatives through the provision of 'successful' DRR projects. There is a certain vagueness surrounding *whom* INGOs claim to support. Because the Nepalese government does not allow for self-implementation, INGOs

are not able to support local communities directly and left with two options: the government or local NGOs. Some INGO workers, argue that INGOs ‘always want to support government’ (I3) as this is perceived as the way to a resilient Nepal, while others consider that the best way to reach this is to capacitate and empower local NGOs. Because INGOs claim to facilitate and support government and/or local NGOs, I assume that they would perform cooperative behaviour towards these stakeholders.

In this chapter, I describe how they perceived these stakeholders and how this influenced their performances in supporting and facilitating. I considered this by looking if and how they cooperated with, firstly, national government stakeholders and, secondly, local NGOs.

### 5.1 INGOs’ perceptions of the National Government

Many INGO employees argued that ‘working with the government is very very difficult’ (I3), as there is often a lack of alignment in thinking, perception, understanding and motives. However, as one respondent argued, the government is ‘the main thing; we need to be kind to them, they determine everything’ (I1). As INGOs often are often not directly involved with local or district level government stakeholders, I decided to focus on central government stakeholders, especially the Social Welfare Council (SWC) and the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA). Every INGO that wants to work in Nepal needs to register itself with the SWC and seek its permission to start working. The SWC is ‘responsible for the promotion, facilitation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the activities’ of local and international NGOs in Nepal (SWC unknown). It claims to act as a link between INGOs and other government stakeholders, providing them with ‘needful guidance, administrative supports and facility arrangements’ to ensure the ‘effective use of the available resources to the targeted groups’ (ibid.). INGOs only needed to deal with the NRA if they have DRR projects related to *Building Back Better* (BBB), see 1.1 and 4.1. INGOs involved with BBB also had to ask permission from the NRA, the government agency that coordinates and leads reconstruction work after the earthquake (NRA 2018).

Many of my respondents expressed difficulties cooperating with these authorities, because they are perceived to delay projects or to be engaged in patronage activities. According to my respondents, the government delayed projects because they lack internal coordination, are bureaucratic and under-capacitated. They make the ‘life of NGOs and INGOs extremely difficult’ (I11). The SWC is often considered to be ‘hindering’ and ‘blocking’ INGOs



(I11, 14), while the NRA is more cooperative but lacks capacity. Seeing the inflow of billions of rupees, the central government, in the form of the SWC, had increasingly tried to control this money, introducing tighter regulations and control mechanisms (Coyle 2018, Jones et al. 2014). Even though INGOs could praise these governmental efforts to gain control over DRR initiatives and development practices in general from a local ownership perspective, they often saw it more negatively. Talking about the monitoring visits and evaluation meetings with the SWC, an INGO worker said:

‘they [the SWC] are also supposed to give us advice... There was not one good suggestion that we can improve our quality or improve our program activities. So ... organizations spend a lot of time, energy and money for that [these monitoring and evaluation meetings and visits] and the outcome is nothing for us’ (I14)

In other words, INGO workers considered these activities as ‘zero useful’ and ‘a waste of money and time’ (I11, 14). The INGO employee expressed that these are ‘valueless activities’: ‘it has no value for anybody, neither for us, neither for themselves’ (I14). And his colleague concluded that dealing with the SWC is ‘just a bureaucratic step that you cannot avoid’ (I11).

The perceived engagement of the government in patronage networks<sup>18</sup> comes to the front as the colleague stated ‘they [SWC] are sucking more money out’ (I11). Seeing Nepal as a state based on patronage networks, Coyle (2018) argued that it tries ‘to harness and capitalize upon aid as a source of patronage’ (Coyle 2018, 1). The INGO workers explained that the involved officials often do not see any wrong;

‘[they] realize they are not misutilising their government budget. The budget comes from anywhere outside, so if they get that money, that is not a corruption, [is] their perception, the government staff’s perception (I19).

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<sup>18</sup> I did not go into the definition of patronage with my respondents, but listening of their stories I assume that they agree that patronage refers to support, encouragement, privilege or financial aid given by an organization or individual (Collins 2018, Merriam Webster 2018). My respondents often implied that it was an abuse of entrusted power for private gains.

Another INGO worker expressed that the officials do not care where the money is coming from and ‘who is in the end paying for that ... they just see the money coming’ (I14).

Listening to these stories, I sensed that the government and especially the SWC is not fond of INGOs. According to INGO workers, the government can be ‘resistant’ because they have a ‘negative impression’ of them and think that INGOs take over their tasks. One INGO transformed into a Nepalese NGO. About being an INGO, their director, stated: ‘I always felt I never wanted to go to this government offices because they looked upon us as an alien, a different species’ (I12). She continued to state that the government was ‘not very welcoming’ and treating the INGO as ‘an outsider’. However, when the INGO became a local NGO, they were treated like ‘friends’ and the government gave them ‘tips and tricks to make things work better, faster, easier’. Furthermore, ‘when we were an INGO to get one project approved would even take a year; now it doesn’t even take two weeks’, implying that the government delays INGOs much more than local NGOs.

## 5.2 Supporting the Government?

*Everybody thinks that coordination is really important but nobody wants to be coordinated (I5).*

As explained in chapter four, INGOs claimed to support the government and/or local NGOs. Therefore, I assumed that INGOs worked together with central government stakeholders to be able to execute their projects. However, as shown above they have a negative perception of these stakeholders; they often viewed that the SWC hinders and blocks INGOs, while the NRA is more cooperative but lacks capacity. Therefore, I wondered whether they would actually perform their subjectivity and responsibility of supporting and facilitating the government in its DRR activities. I considered three ways in which they deal with these government stakeholders: following the rules and building good rapport, being non-transparent and bribing.

### Following the rules and building good rapport

Several respondents expressed that working alongside and coordinating with the government is important to establish a resilient Nepal. However, often more practical considerations concerned INGOs, when they tried to build a good rapport with government officials and follow the rules; a successful operation of their projects on which they were judged by their donors, as described in chapter four. An INGO employee expressed:

we are arranging budget for that useless activities, just to have good relations with them [government], good rapport with them, just to get permission to work in the country. I mean that is the only reason why [I]NGOs have to follow the rules (I14).

To avoid the government generating problems for the project, 'you need to make them happy, only for that you are spending so much money...It is government rule and then we have to do that, no choice for us' (I14). Although this is a very negative formulation of why INGOs follow the rules, many of my respondents agreed that INGOs followed the rules to prevent any problems.

They considered that building of a good relationship with government is highly important for gaining permission for projects. Towards this aim, some INGOs employed former government officials as a strategy; these former officials would understand the government bodies, their ideas, and the way in which they would perceive INGOs' proposals. More importantly, they would have a large network that could contribute to gain permission easily and run projects smoothly.

#### Lack of Transparency

Although most INGO workers claimed that they cooperated with government stakeholders to ensure permission for their projects, they often shared stories of other INGOs that were less cooperative. Fortunately, I found some that also talked from their own experiences. A country director, for example, expressed that he was often 'amazed' that other organizations approached the SWC 'with the understanding of SWC as a legitimate authority' (I21). He explained that 'they [government] have no opinion on my projects other than how much money they can get out of it'. Perceiving government authorities in a very negative light, he stated that his job was to *protect* the space in which his project managers operate (PO 18-10). Therefore, some INGOs employed the strategy of providing less and/or untrue information on their practices. The country director elaborated: 'why am I trying to be transparent towards an agency that uses transparency as a weapon against me to take more bribes and to take more money and fuck with my program'.

Different strategies were used. For example, I heard different forms of 'smoke-screening' in which INGOs made up their numbers and fabricated their books to prevent the extent of patronage activities of the government. Another form of non-transparency is

employed about the ways INGOs executed their projects. For example, the NRA came with the rule that INGOs should follow their modality of *only* providing cash grants of 200,000 NPR per household. However, INGO Y already started their BBB reconstruction project using a different modality. They did not want to change their approach because they viewed it to be more beneficial for their project participants. Therefore, they continued with their approach, only telling the NRA at the end.

Another way that many INGOs played with the truth is in the registration of projects. Some INGOs registered less to no projects with the SWC, as they saw it as a hassle or they lacked trust in the SWC. An employee told that they only signed one project with the SWC to be legal in the country, while in reality they had four other projects. Furthermore, she told me that because ‘the process at SWC is so slow ... all INGOs start implementing before’ (I11). This statement implies that some INGOs pretended to follow the rules, but bent them by starting without approval.

In BBB projects this became easier, as the SWC and the NRA were in a power struggle; both had authority to approve INGOs’ reconstruction project proposals. The SWC claimed that the NRA breached its jurisdiction by approving INGO projects (Dhungana 2016). This power struggle has led to a lack of coordination between both authorities, forcing INGOs to go through two different lengthy bureaucratic processes which are ‘time consuming and full of hassles’ (AIN official in Dhungana 2016). However, it also generated space for INGOs to manoeuvre, because the NRA is often quicker and (claims to) have the jurisdiction to approve reconstruction projects. INGOs claimed that they ‘did everything as per the book’ and were ‘legally ... in our right to start implementing’ (I11) when they received permission from the NRA while still waiting for SWC approval. In this way, as the INGO director framed it, INGOs have ‘been playing SWC and NRA off each other’ (PO 2—12).

### Bribing

Bribing was the last tactic that INGOs used when working together with the government. Perceiving the patronage nature of the government, some INGOs used this to speed things up or to avoid problems if they did not follow the rules. Although none of my respondents admitted that they were involved in certain practices, they had plenty of stories of other INGOs that bribed the government with financial or in-kind favours. Talking about INGOs, a local NGO-worker, expressed that, ‘to avoid all the hassle, you [the INGO] want to grab

someone, this person will do everything [if you pay]', and 'you are forced to bribe because if you don't pay thousands of money, you're losing millions of money to the project' (I7).

### 5.3 INGOs' perception of local NGOs

*It is easy to find [a] partner in Nepal, it is difficult to find [a] good partner* (PO 27-11).

As the above statement shows, it could be difficult to find a local NGO that meets the requirements to execute the project. Telling stories how it was to cooperate with the local NGOs, an INGO employee stated: 'Well it really depends. It really depends' (I11), referring to the large diversity of local NGOs.

The number of local NGOs in Nepal has grown significantly (Karkee and Comfort 2016): from 1977 to 2017 46.235 NGOs affiliated<sup>19</sup> themselves with the SWC (SWC 2017). This large number generates a large diversity in NGOs ranging in capacity levels, thematic expertise, coverage, number of employees. Therefore, it was difficult for many of my respondents to make general statements about the cooperation between INGOs and local NGOs and they expressed their own experiences of working together with local NGOs. They expressed different benefits to having local NGO involvement. For example, they stated that it allowed INGOs to 'tap into services of existing organizations' (I4), as some local NGOs have expertise. Furthermore, it was beneficial to work with local NGOs because they have cultural and contextual knowledge of the project area which can contribute to more effective projects; they speak the language of the area they are working in and more importantly, they can connect with the communities they aim build their DRR measures. A respondent said; 'the local NGO is key actor, they can understand the exact situation of their place' (I19).

Another respondent said 'it has much more added value to work through local NGOs and try to build their capacities and train them and do monitoring... let them do the work themselves, because ... people should be responsible for their own recovery' (I11). This is in line with the participation and local ownership discourse, which emphasizes that local stakeholders should have control over their development and not international actors.

However, other local NGOs were perceived to lack capacity. This lack of capacity could entail many things ranging from a lack of knowledge to a lack of management and planning skills. For example, in my INGO I came across a BBB project aimed at contributing 'to the

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<sup>19</sup> The difference in treatment of the SWC of local NGOs and INGOs, as described in 5.1, is also shown in the terminology used by the SWC; INGOs need to *register* with the SWC, while local NGOs have to *affiliate* themselves with the SWC.

recovery and resilience of earthquake affected communities in Nepal' (INGO A 2016). This project was supposed to run 10 months, but it was extended three times. When I left, this project was still not officially closed, 11 months after its deadline. Both INGO and local NGO workers expressed that this project was a 'bitter experience' for them and the result of a lack of 'operational or



One of the more than 300 bags of cement that were wasted  
(Picture taken by author)

management capacities', 'communication and reporting capacities' of the local NGO (I19, I20, I22). The result was the delay, the wastage of more than 300 bags of cement and the collapse of one construction because it was built on unsuitable land.

Other problems were the 'slow ... morality of work' (I14) and problems with Human Resources (HR); often local NGOs did 'not [have] enough staff to actually manage the program and ... [to be] able to deliver in time' (I4). These NGOs had a 'lack of manpower' (I14). A respondent stated: 'I have the feeling that all the partners completely underestimated their HR ... That is also why sometimes [the] quality was little on the edge, because ... they cannot simply be there' (I11). Considering the difficulty in reaching remote places in Nepal, local NGOs required much workforce to cover all the project sites.

#### 5.4 Supporting Local NGOs?

Because the Nepalese government does not allow for self-implementation, INGOs have to cooperate with local NGOs. My respondents explained that the general working morality of working with a local NGO was 'to transport funds to the implementing partners and they [will] do the work' (I1). A director of a local NGO further elaborated: 'what happens normally [is that the] INGO delegates power and authority to local NGO to be responsible to implement a kind of District level activities' (I6). The local NGO will 'lead and implement' (I4) and the INGO will monitor their progress. It implied that INGOs gave much of their control to the local partners, making themselves dependent on these partners for the successful implementation of their project.

In this section, I reflect whether INGOs who claimed to support local NGOs through capacity building actually performed this subjectivity by considering if and how they

cooperated with local NGOs. I consider four ways in which INGOs dealt with the local NGOs: capacity building and consultation, pushing and threats, take over, and generating one's own local NGO.

#### Capacity Building and Consultation

Because not all local NGOs had knowledge on DRR, many INGOs built this capacity through the provision of trainings. They aimed to 'transfer the skills and knowledge to the [local] partners' (I14). These trainings explained the basic concepts, helped them design DRR projects and draft organization strategies that included DRR. They flew in experts from their headquarters or put money aside to send NGO staff to certain trainings. INGOs provided trainings to local NGO staff to improve 'their capacity to work, to perform the way we [the INGO] want' (I14). In a way, these capacity building trainings aimed to shape and form the way these local NGOs operate. Its objective was to discipline them in a certain way to have better control over their operations.



Observation of DRR trainings to generate new DRR training methods for local NGOs to use (Picture taken by author)

Another way in which they did this is through working together on the development of DRR tools, training methods and manuals. They provided orientation to the local NGOs on how to use existing and new tools. Furthermore, they aimed to fill the gaps they found with local NGOs during their monitoring and made themselves available for consultation for decisions that would have a large impact on the implementation of projects.

Besides shaping the DRR activities of local NGOs, capacity building activities were also aimed at influencing the way local NGOs communicated their results. For example, INGO employees expressed that some local NGOs were 'not good enough to response of donor queries' or 'not good enough in reporting' (I19). Beforehand, these documentation requirements were recorded in contract, obliging local NGOs to communicate in the way INGOs desired. However, as some local NGOs lacked this capacity, INGO employees engaged



themselves in the provision of orientation and/or workshops in these matters. For example, I was sent by my INGO to a local NGO to work on their proposal, budget, work plan and reporting skills. It signals the emphasis on the 'right' documentation as discussed in chapter 4.

#### Pushing and Threats

To ensure the implementation, different tactics and strategies were used ranging from flexible to more strict. Some local NGOs described that the INGO they worked with was very 'easy' and 'flexible' (I15, I22). This INGO was 'easy to talk [to]' (I15), willing to change the planning and/or budget and to improvise if there were valid reasons. They were willing to follow the local NGO's way of reporting and show up when the local NGO asked them to monitor. This strategy showed that either the INGO trusted the local NGO in their capacity to implement the project in the 'right' way or they did not have the capacity itself to be stricter.

Other INGOs took different strategies and 'were always pushing' and 'always on their [local NGOs'] back', even though they considered that it 'was probably annoying' for the local NGOs (I11). The INGO employee explained: 'We want to know everything what's happening and we are pressuring them to meet deadlines and questioning everything' (I11). Some local NGOs experienced this INGO as 'a burden' and a 'pain in the ass' (I11). The INGO worker expressed that she realized that, 'but they [a local NGO] are also in our opinion... underperforming, so if we were not pushing I don't know what would have happened' (I11). She expressed that the local NGO was missing deadlines and did not make much progress in the project. She admitted that it might be 'very heavy', frustrating and stressful for the local NGOs, but without strict monitoring and checking some activities would not be done properly or be forgotten. It showed that the INGO did not trust the local NGO to perform in a proper or timely manner without their interference. Therefore, they tried to push the local NGO to improve their performance.

Next to constantly checking and pushing the partner to implement their activities in a better or quicker way, INGOs made threats towards local NGOs. In many cases, an INGO pays their local counterpart in different instalments. This provided the INGO with a financial leverage over the local NGO, which forces local NGOs to finish the work left for them if they do not want to lose out financially. Here, the pressure of reporting and documentation also became visible. Next to monitoring visits, INGOs pushed local NGOs to write extensive reports on their progress. Until these reports were delivered, INGOs refused to pay. For example, my INGO refused to pay the local NGO for the work they completed, because the local NGO 'failed'



to provide the expected reporting. As my INGO also felt the pressure from donors to close this project, my colleague stated that he started to prepare the report himself. In other words, my colleague within the INGO took over some of the responsibilities originally assigned to the local partner. This activity is discussed next.

#### Take Over

Due to the 'underperformance' of some local NGOs, some INGO workers felt that 'if we had implemented by ourselves instead of having partners, maybe that would be quicker and more effective' (I14). Therefore, some INGOs took over some of the tasks normally delegated to local NGOs, involving themselves in the implementation project. Observing this trend, an INGO employee raised the valid question: 'Where do you [INGO] draw the line? Until where should you involve? And what is your responsibility?' (I11).

Some INGOs intentionally take over the responsibilities of local NGOs. I came across such a project and my respondent told me: 'They [INGO A] go for self-implementation' and use the local NGO 'only for showing to the government [that they follow government rules]' (I20). '[A]round 90% responsibility was taken by [INGO A]' (I19). The reason why the INGO did this was not fully clear: explanations ranged from INGO A 'want[ing] not to be fully dependent on them [the local NGO]', to suspicions that it was 'some trick, to have some money' (I19) and 'some sort of corrupt practices within the organization [INGO A]' (I6). The local NGO itself stated 'it was kind of total unfair and kind of cheating', reflecting their disappointment for not getting more responsibility (I6).

An employee of INGO D expressed that they did not want to take over, but that they had to because the local NGO was 'underperforming'. She described that 'clearly the management of the project team in the field was not doing his job and that is why it [the project] was also delayed' (I11). They suggested to the local NGO to fire the manager, but the NGO did not as they felt it was not the INGO's business. The employee elaborated that after pushing the local NGO without any result, INGO D decided to send one of their staff to work with the local partner at least once a week. However, she expressed that it made her uncomfortable; 'this is not what we are supposed to do' (I11). Another respondent also called this way of working, 'capacity substitution instead of capacity building' (I5). He elaborated that although placing a person in an organization fills a gap, it does not generate ownership and sustainability if the necessary skills are not transferred.

#### Generate own local NGO

Although none of my respondents had first-hand experience, they did share the reality that some INGOs generated their own local NGO. This allowed INGOs to have much more control while still officially following the government rules that prohibit self-implementation. I assume that these INGOs do not trust the local NGOs present in the country to perform their project in the way they want to and therefore they form their own NGO. A director of a local NGO called this an 'alarming trend'; by generating their own local organization, INGOs 'could fund only this organization, [while] they don't fund other local organizations' (I7). In this way, INGOs avoid any cooperation with local NGOs and avoid claimed subjectivity of supporter of local NGOs that so many INGOs do.

#### 5.5 Conclusion

Chapter four concluded that based on the resilience and participation discourse, INGO employees claimed the subjectivity of facilitator and supporter of resilience, while based on the everyday politics of aid they claimed the subjectivity of successful project manager. On first hand, these subjectivities and power dimensions seemed to go perfectly hand in hand: projects were the means to achieve the goal of supporting and facilitating Nepalese resilience. Their responsibility over their project would thus help them fulfil their responsibility for supporting DRR in Nepal.

This chapter focused on the performance of these subjectivities. Based on these responsibilities of support and facilitation, it is logical to assume that INGOs would cooperate with both government and local NGO stakeholders. However, this chapter showed that this cooperation did not always take place. The main reason for this is that INGOs felt the pressure of donors to make their projects a success. During my observations and interviews, I gathered the notion that INGO employees felt that their project has become a success, once all the promised activities were executed and documented in the 'right' way. The right way was based on that donors wanted 'quick results' (I16) documented in quantitative reports. They felt ownership over their projects and they wanted to do anything to ensure that a project would become 'successful' and that it reached the results promised in the proposals to their donors. Talking about the notion that the local NGO led to delays of the projects, an INGO employee expressed: 'it is our project as well ... if the project fails, we fail as well' (I11). This ownership also implied that INGOs would like be in control in their project. Giving the importance of the success of projects for its survival and continuation, it is not surprising that

INGOs try to maintain some form of control over their projects and try to decrease the uncertainties associated with the projects.

These issues of control sometimes collided with their supporting and facilitating responsibility. Because INGOs often perceived the central government as having a negative impact on their projects, they used different tactics and strategies to reduce their interference ranging from following the rules, to a lack of transparency and bribing<sup>20</sup>. If INGO employees sensed that their projects would be compromised, hindered or blocked, they showed uncooperative behaviour. The director of an EU-funded project to support the NRA stated: 'Everybody thinks that coordination is really important but nobody wants to be coordinated' (I5). Applying this to INGOs, I consider that they would not like to be coordinated by, or cooperate with, the government if they feared it would have a negative impact on their projects.

Considering the three requirements required for cooperation (see 2.3) – interdependence, goal congruence and trust – I would like to argue that a certain lack of interdependence and goal congruence leads to a lack of trust that is crucial for the (un)cooperative behaviour of INGOs. Although the goals of SWC officially seemed to align with those of INGOs, they often had alternative motives and different timeframes than INGOs. Next to the seeming lack of goal congruence, it is mainly INGOs that depended on the SWC because they could ban an INGO from the country. This led to a power imbalance impacting the interdependence. INGOs expressed that cooperation with the NRA was easier as their goals overlap more and the NRA is partially dependent on the INGOs to achieve their goal; to lead and manage the reconstruction and recovery and 'to promote national Build Back Better interest' (Government of Nepal 2016, 4). Nevertheless, the NRA was considered to under-capacitated and bureaucratic, which makes it difficult whether the NRA would provide the permission on time.

The lack goal alignment and interdependency combined with previous experiences with the government as slow and bureaucratic, led INGOs not to trust the government to act fast enough or in an advantageous way towards them. This was the main reason why INGOs would not work together. INGOs only wanted to coordinate and cooperate with the

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<sup>20</sup> Bribery can be seen also as some form of cooperation with government stakeholders, but many informants considered that it harms the resilience of Nepal.

government if they trusted them and believed it was beneficial for their projects. An INGO employee explained:

it is always the question of if you do coordinate with them and they're going to hamper and slow down your project; do you want to do that or not? If you want to deliver, you better don't. But if you want to see the bigger picture, you should (I11)

She expressed how the primary focus of INGOs is the successful implementation of their projects, in which it is sometimes better to be less cooperative. This chapter showed how INGOs sometimes showed uncooperative behaviour through the lack of transparency or bribing. This uncooperative behaviour, however, may be harmful when seen from a local ownership and sustainability perspective, because the government is not or less involved in the DRR initiatives in their country. Furthermore, it shows that INGOs sometimes do not perform their own proclaimed subjectivity and responsibility of being a supporter and facilitator.

A similar situation is going on with local NGOs. Although INGOs seemed to have a rather mixed perspective towards local NGOs, officially they are obliged to give away much control to local NGOs and to cooperate with them. So next to claiming a supporting and facilitating responsibility, they are also not allowed to take up any other tasks. At first sight, this did not seem to be a problem. INGOs and NGOs shared a similar goal, as they both aimed to reduce disaster risk in Nepal and improve its resilience. Furthermore, INGOs gave local NGOs financial means to implement a project and to pay salary to its staff, making the NGO dependent on INGO. Simultaneously, an INGO is (or supposed to be) dependent on local NGOs to execute and implement the project, as self-implementation is prohibited by the government. This goal congruence and interdependency provided good ground for a fertile cooperation.

However, similar to the cooperation with government, the trust in the local NGO to execute the project was sometimes lacking. INGOs were sometimes not convinced that local NGOs had the capacity to implement the project in the way they would like to see it. Aiming to steer local NGOs, they tried to discipline them through capacity building, close monitoring, pushing and making threats. In this way, they tried to regain control over the projects, as they felt it is their failure as well. If this did not work, they reclaimed this control; they stepped in

and took over. They did not trust the local NGO to fulfil the required activities in a timely and/or proper manner and started doing activities they are actually not supposed to do, also according to themselves. Some INGOs tried to circumvent the system, by not giving up control and forming their own local NGO. It allowed them to keep control, while still 'officially' following government rules. Similar to the government situation, in this way INGOs did not perform the subjectivity and responsibility they themselves claim; being a facilitator and supporter of DRR initiatives.

Therefore, I conclude that the claimed responsibility allocation and subjectivity of supporter and facilitator of DRR initiatives on the one hand and subjectivity of successful project manager collide. The uncooperative behaviour showed that INGOs prioritized their responsibility as project manager over their responsibility to provide support and facilitation. As an INGO employee argued: 'they [INGOs] have to meet the target to complete their project and that is the main issues for [I]NGOs' (I14). In other words, they prioritize functional over strategic accountability, as they take full responsibility over their projects, while not taking any responsibility over the impact of disasters on the Nepalese population. Similarly, focusing on the desires and demands of the donors, INGOs train local NGOs to report in the desired way of donors. Although they do try to assist local NGOs sometimes through capacity building, they also show sometimes that they want to take back the control to fulfil the desires of donors. It shows that INGOs focus more on the upward accountability than on downward accountability. Focusing more on the desires of donors, indicates that INGOs prioritize organizational politics over the goal of resilience they aim to fulfil in Nepal.

As they do not perform their proclaimed subjectivity of facilitator and supporter, it seems on first sight that the power dimensions of the neoliberal resilience discourse are not so strong; it seems not to be internalized by INGO employees who fail to perform this subjectivity. It confirms Butler's notion that subjectivity can never be performed perfectly and Nightingale's insight that the multiple dimensions of power lead to various subjectivities that sometimes collide with each other. It illustrates the difficulty to perform a DRR in a proper and sustainable way and how development practices differ from original ideas and intentions, also stated by Ferguson (2002) and Mosse (2011, 2013). It leaves questions on the strength of the neoliberal discourse of DRR. However, in chapter seven I argue that the power dimensions of the resilience discourse are reiterated in a different form. But first, I consider if and how my respondents would re-imagine the current responsibility allocation in resilience.

## 6. Re-imagining Responsibility in Resilience

Reflecting on their real-life experiences with the responsibility allocation in DRR practices, my respondents sometimes showed a dissatisfaction with this current allocation. With Evans and Reid's argument for a new political imaginary in the back of my head, I asked if and how they would re-imagine this responsibility allocation. I was amazed by the creativity, inventiveness and imagination of my respondents and it provided me various insights. First, this provided insight in how strongly they were influenced by the neoliberal discourse of resilience. Secondly, this provided input for a new political imaginary that Reid and Evans strive for. As they probably agree, you cannot bring about change without considering the understanding of those who should enact this alternative imaginary. Thirdly, it allowed me to reflect how well imagination can actually 'overturn power relations', as Reid (2012a, 160) argued, by considering the practical implications of these alternative imaginaries.

In this chapter, I discuss three ways in which my respondents would like to change the performance of responsibilities in DRR. First, the desire for more compliance to the current responsibility allocation is discussed, which did not present a new political imaginary but rather showed the strength of the neoliberal resilience discourse. Then I discuss two new political imaginaries; a stronger responsibility for the government and a shared responsibility for societal change.

### 6.1 Desire for More Compliance to the Current Responsibility Allocation

Some of my respondents did not feel a need to change much in the current responsibility allocation, but hoped that it should be executed in a better manner. They argued that the demarcation between the responsibilities of INGOs and local NGOs should be clearer and be adhered to: INGOs' tasks include funding, capacity building and monitoring and evaluation, while local NGOs should lead the implementation of the project. Duplication and confusion should be avoided to ensure cost-effectiveness. The Nepalese government should cooperate more with the INGOs to ensure effective DRR measures, which will generate trust, enabling INGOs to cooperate more with the government. A local NGO employee stated 'government should collaborate with some specialized agencies..., some INGOs and NGOs who have kind of thematic priority on DRR' (I6).

They did not see a future in which the government is more willing or capable to reduce disaster risk; A respondent stated 'the government is not doing its job, well it's not trying' (I11). Therefore, they espoused statements that align with the neoliberal resilience discourse

that emphasizes the individual responsibility to take care of yourself and shifts the responsibility for disaster management to the local population. For example, one INGO employee stated: 'the main role [for DRR] comes under the responsibility of community themselves...they do the main work that is how it is done' (I14). Another argued: 'in the end the government will not provide the [required] services..., so if people don't take care of their own ... nobody will do it here' (I11). The task of the INGOs and local NGOs is thus 'to raise their [communities'] awareness and to make them understand that this [the DRR project] is for them' (I11). If people become 'inactive', INGOs and local NGOs have 'to sensitize them, to train them, to empower them to make them realize their responsibility' (I14). INGO and local NGO responsibility is 'to energize, recharge them', 'to continuously make them aware about their roles and responsibilities [in DRR] to continuously follow up that issues' (I14). Here, we see a return of the emphasis that INGOs should support and facilitate others to take their responsibility for disasters, while not taking this responsibility themselves.

A director of an INGO argued for 'community based disaster management work'. He stated:

For me, looking at the flood of 2008, flood of 2012 and the 2012 diarrhoea in the mid-Western Region of Nepal, and the 2015 earthquake and 2017 flood in the Southern Nepal, Terai, what I felt is who is the first aid worker, who is the first rescuer and search, who is the first relief worker, ...[it] is the local people... Until and unless we do not prepare local volunteers, until and unless we do not make the local Disaster Management plan, the external help may not come on time (I16).

This signified that some of my respondents embraced vulnerability as a condition for living in this world in which disasters are inevitable. In line with resilience discourse, he argued that 'local people [should be] ... empowered, strengthened and equipped to mitigate the upcoming disaster' (I16). Questions about why these local people are living in a vulnerable environment are not raised and there is no mention that INGOs should or could build up the political voice of these people to resist their vulnerability. In other words, the current perception of the responsibility allocation in DRR as presented by the neoliberal discourse is not problematized by some of my respondents.



Nevertheless, continuing to talk about how we could re-imagine responsibility allocation in DRR, some of my respondents came up with ‘alternative political imaginaries’ of the sort that Evans and Reid might argue for.

## 6.2 A Stronger Responsibility for Government and Less to No Responsibility for INGOs

One of these alternative political imaginaries is a returned focus on the state, allowing people to look their government to secure their wellbeing and safety. Most of my respondents considered that DRR is the main responsibility of the Nepalese government. Referring to the social contract between the government and its citizens, an INGO employee argued that the responsibility for DRR ‘first of all should be on the government; they are here to provide ... basic services at least to their population’ (I11). It ‘is the duty of the government’, the government should take [the] lead [in DRR] (I6). Considering that Nepalese citizens pay taxes for government services, including disaster management, it seems logical to hold the state accountable to some degree for the safety of its citizens.

Another respondent stated

‘We, NGOs and INGOs, should not replace the government. We need to make the government more responsible and accountable and they have to be the first natural provider to local people; they have to be the first providing the service to the people’ (I16).

However, as most of my respondents recognized: ‘Nepal is a special case, because they’re failing’ (I11). Only because they are failing, INGOs and NGOs step in. Another respondent explained

‘there are so many areas where we do not need NGOs, INGOs, and we [INGOs and NGOs] are there because the government is not functioning, they’re not doing their job...So I ... definitely want to see efficient and effective government’ (I7).

She thought the problem is ‘their [government’s] willingness, ... their capacity, ... [or] lack of funding’ (I7). Yet my respondents remained determined: ‘In the end of the day, the government is responsible, because NGOs and INGOs just fill the gap and Nepal is not a

country without resources, we [Nepal] have money' (I13). A government official agreed and explained that INGOs and possibly local NGOs are and should not be considered a 'regular supporter', therefore 'we don't need to dependent on the [I]NGOs, we should be independent, ... we should manage the situation' (I10). INGOs are not and should not stay in the country, but leave the management in Nepalese hands. A respondent argued that within the government 'disaster risk reduction should be part of each development interventions' and 'clear policy' is required (I16). He continued 'only the government can develop policy guidelines ... [which] is mandatory for all agencies', implying that only the government can enforce DRR policies to be followed by everyone.

Many of my respondents see a large responsibility for the government. And although there is some space for local NGOs, one respondent stated 'I see from now to [the] next 15 years or so, there might not be INGOs required for Nepal. So I see this role of INGOs declining' (I16). Imagining a utopia, another respondents stated: 'well in the ideal world, in an ideal Nepal, there would be no [I]NGO' (I11). Referring to the 2015 earthquakes, she argued that it would be ideal 'to see Nepal being able to cope with such large scale disasters in the future' without any interference or assistance of INGOs.

Similar to the previous vision, this imaginary also did not foresee a larger responsibility for INGOs, in fact, some even claimed that there should be no responsibility for INGOs. Different is the emphasis placed here on the responsibility of the government, instead of the local communities. It showed a return to a social contract model, underscoring government's responsibility to take care of its population. However, my respondents argued that this political imaginary might be difficult to materialize, if we consider the current failing performances of the government.

### 6.3 Shared Responsibility and Societal Change

Another imaginary speaks of 'the words and gestures of human solidarity on which resistance ... depends' (Reid 2012a, 78). Reid argued that this human solidarity is threatened with extinction. Nevertheless, they come to the front in an alternative political imaginary espoused by a few of my respondents. They argued that everybody is responsible for DRR in Nepal. Viewing that the responsibility for DRR should be shared and carried by everyone, my respondents argued for better cooperation between government, local and international NGOs and the Nepalese population. They stated that the government and INGOs should change their attitudes towards each other and that INGOs and local NGOs should transform

their relation 'from giver and receiver to ... a real partnership' (I16). They should not throw away individual responsibility, but should consider how together they can share the responsibility for disasters.

Several of my respondents, mainly local NGO employees, expressed that INGOs focussed mainly on completing their projects 'successfully'. However, 'successfully' often means the deliverance of the output, instead of looking at whether their project actually improved Nepal's DRR. It points to the clash between the subjectivities of facilitator and supporter on the one hand and project designer and management on the other, as described in chapter five. It also refers to a prioritization of functional accountability over strategic accountability. A director of an INGO elaborated:

In Nepal, both NGOs and INGOs are projectized. We are project driven, we are not driven by the issues and causes. If we are really driven by the cause, driven by the issues, then we will work for 10 to 20 years in a place, so that you can bring changes (I16)

In other words, he referred to the focus on functional accountability instead of strategic accountability. He argued for 'societal change' explaining that disaster risk reduction involves changing of 'the human mind'. INGOs and local NGOs need 'to make a bridge between people and authorities'. It signals a focus on DRR as 'long-term community capacity building process to enable vulnerable groups to demand safety and protection' (Heijmans 2009, 28) in which disaster management is re-politized again and a critical consciousness is raised.

The imaginary speaks of some form of relational responsibility allocation in which INGO's neoliberal evasion of responsibility is denounced. A solidarity vision develops, providing a different understanding of the problem of disaster risk and its solutions. As different responsibilities are proposed, a different political vision is imagined that goes beyond neoliberalism. It shows that the neoliberal resilience discourse is not so strong that it prevents any other political imagination. Reid argued that a different future seems to be in reach, as the human psyche is already in this world beyond (2012b, 161). However, Reid acknowledged that this 'imaginary must find its matter, its reality' enabling it to 'realize itself' (ibid., 161-162).

Considering the current responsibility allocation, it is questionable how this 'imaginary finds its material, such that it is able to realize itself' (ibid., 162). Firstly, this relational responsibility allocation, in which all share responsibility for disasters, requires more operationalisation; who should do what and when? It requires different perceptions of the stakeholders involved to generate trust that will blossom cooperation and real partnerships. Although both INGOs and local NGOs acknowledged that a 'donor-grantee' (I7), 'giver-recipient' (I16) and 'donor-beggar' (I22) is not desirable, the reality is that there is an unequal relationship between local NGOs and INGOs. A local NGO employee stated that they had to 'obey' the INGOs (I22). Therefore, a director of a local NGO expressed: 'There has to be some kind of partnership relation where the funding organization would also respect [local] organization and [local] organization would definitely respect whoever is funding' (I7). According to some respondents, INGOs need to bring about this change: 'It is not local NGOs, it is INGOs who really need to focus that local NGOs are the real partner to work on DRR' (I16).

Furthermore, there should be a more positive relationship between INGOs and government. INGOs should trust the government, but also have positive experiences that enable them to trust the government. My respondents argued that only if there would be a (more) equal relationship between INGOs, government and local NGOs, it would be possible to get to a shared and relational responsibility allocation. Only in this way, it is possible to actually reach an improved DRR in Nepal, and thus would there be focus on strategic accountability, next to functional accountability. However, considering the current relationships between INGOs, government and local NGOs, it seems unlikely that this change would happen.

This also requires a change in the donor community, which is the second point. An INGO director stated 'the donors ... are really making the decisions' and they 'want to see immediate results only, rather than long term long-lasting changes' (I16). He continued that there is 'no continuity' in the focus of the donor community, which further complicates getting funding for long-term projects. Seeing that donors currently do not take any responsibility, a respondent stated: 'Donors should also be accountable toward the target groups that they work [with]' (I6). Therefore, the INGO director stated 'we need to educate the donors for long-term investments' (I16). In other words, donors should also take some responsibility for DRR and commit to long-term investments; donors should show downwards and strategic accountability. Although the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action (OECD 2005, 2008)

emphasized shared accountability, this case study showed that there is more upwards than downwards accountability. Thus, much work remains to be done.

The priority for downward accountability should also be present in INGOs. My colleague explained that INGOs ‘need to be more down to the marginalized peoples’ and realize that ‘actually the money comes for them, actually we [INGO employees] are getting salary from their money’ (I20). He argued for a different understanding of the subjectivity of INGOs; instead of that they are saviours that serve local communities, INGOs should realize that these communities help them maintain their existence and generate a living for their staff. In other words, INGOs should actually see how their source of legitimization – the needs of the local community – is the basis for their survival and therefore should be the start of their organizational politics. Thus, if INGOs realize that only thanks to their target group that they can exist, they need to focus more attention towards downward accountability. However, this might become difficult as the pressure of donors remains, requiring upwards accountability.

In my perspective, all these aspirations hold together and feed into each other. This interconnectivity is what makes it so difficult for this imaginary to find its matter its reality.

#### 6.4 Conclusion

This chapter reflected on how my respondents re-imagined the responsibility allocation in DRR, because Evans and Reid (2013, 2015, 2012a, b) argued that the neoliberal resilience discourse did not allow for any other political imaginations and that alternative political imaginaries would be key to overturn the neoliberal power structures. It was shown that the neoliberal resilience discourse is strong, as some of my respondents argued in the first re-imagination that the main responsibility for DRR lies with the communities. INGOs should only play a supporting and facilitating role and are not requested to take on more responsibilities for disasters. In other words, they show strategic accountability through taking on this supporting and facilitating subjectivity. However, as chapter five has shown INGOs sometimes diverge from this subjectivity, harming the strategic accountability. My respondents argued it would have been better for the population’s resilience if all stakeholders involved cooperated to ensure the enactment and compliance to the proclaimed supporting subjectivity. Therefore, some of my respondents argued for a return to this subjectivity, in line with the neoliberal discourse. The only change these respondents would like to see is more compliance to the current responsibility allocation and a more clear demarcation of responsibilities that

would actually be performed; INGOs should show cooperative and transparent behavior with government and local NGOs and support them wherever needed.

Although this first re-imagination showed the strength of the neoliberal resilience discourse, it was not as strong as Reid and Evans claim; other respondents showed that it is still possible to imagine 'of transforming the world for the better' (2015, 154). For example, my respondents envisioned a different responsibility allocation in DRR and emphasized a stronger responsibility for the government. It signals a return to a social contract model in which the state takes on the responsibility to take care of its population in exchange for its taxes and compliance. INGOs have to take on less to no responsibility, which resembles the avoidance of blame in the neoliberal discourse. They do not have to take on any accountability – strategic, functional, upwards or downwards – as the government is requested to take all responsibility for DRR. However, looking at the current performance of the state – which many of my respondents signal as 'failing' or 'not enough' in the field of DRR – it seems unlikely that this imagination can materialize and become reality.

The third and most drastic re-imagination my respondents came up with was shared responsibility over disasters, showing the solidarity Reid was talking about. Where the previous re-envisions of responsibilities allowed INGOs to evade their responsibility for DRR, this re-imagination argued for a different and potentially broader responsibility of INGOs. It is a political imagination that goes beyond neoliberal thoughts and focuses also on strategic and downward accountability. Nevertheless, it remains questionable where it can be realized. Firstly, it should be operationalized, potentially leading to different conceptualizations of the subjectivity of INGOs. Secondly, the building of trust is required to build meaningful and (more) equal partnerships of all stakeholders, including donors. All these stakeholders should be aware of their responsibility and keep their eyes on the goal of a resilient Nepal, their strategic accountability. As visions might differ on how to reach this goal, open dialogue with equal voice for all stakeholders is crucial. The different responsibilities will lead to different conceptualizations of the subjectivities of all the stakeholders. The relational and shared nature of responsibilities proposed, might be difficult to realize due to the interconnectedness of all these steps. Cooperation is needed from everyone, which requires a level of trust, associated with a sense of solidarity.

## 7. Discussion

In the conclusions of chapters four to six, I have examined the relevant themes that emerged out of these chapters in relation to the theoretical framework. This chapter will bring all these threads together and discuss overall theoretical considerations regarding the responsibility allocation in resilience based DRR projects on the case of the perceptions, performances and re-imaginings of responsibility by INGO employees in Nepal.

Inspired by the ethical debate on responsibility allocation in resilience, I wanted to investigate how DRR practitioners like INGO employees perceived, performed and potentially reimagined responsibility for DRR. Without grasping how these practitioners understand responsibility allocation and how they perceive reality, it will be difficult to make any changes. Their understandings provided an insight into how strong the neoliberal discourse is and potentially how to overthrow it. Besides providing transparency in DRR projects and associated cooperation, this thesis filled a gap in the literature by offering a window into the ethical considerations of practitioners and by shining light on their empirical accounts in order to contribute to the ethical debate.

In this chapter, I first discuss the strength of the neoliberal resilience discourse, as argued by Reid and Evans (2013, 2015, 2012a, b). Then I continue with the presence of everyday politics of aid, reflecting on organizational and legitimization politics and the different forms of accountability. Thirdly, I focus on how these power structures led to different understandings of the responsibilities of INGOs leading to a clash in subjectivities and what this means for the neoliberal resilience discourse. Finally, I reflect on if and how alternative political imaginaries can overturn neoliberal power dimensions as Reid and Evans claim.

### 7.1 The Strength of the Neoliberal Resilience Discourse

In 2.1, resilience is explained as a neoliberal discourse, using Reid and Evans (2013, 2015, 2012a, b) perspectives; it was explained how vulnerability was seen as an inevitability and a condition of life. Disasters were perceived as endemic and beyond our control, therefore, populations had to accept and adapt to their vulnerability. In 4.1, it was shown that many of my respondents shared this ontology of vulnerability, considering the large vulnerability of Nepal towards hazards. Learning how to live with and adapt to disasters was the way forward. None of my respondents problematized the vulnerability of communities, instead they argued that they needed assistance in how to adapt to these disasters.



Reid and Evans further argue that the resilience discourse disciplines the local poor and marginalized to accept and adapt to their vulnerability, allowing the international community, such as INGOs, to shift the burden and responsibility for disasters to the most vulnerable. In 4.2, we see that based on the participation and resilience discourse INGOs claim to take on the responsibility of supporting and facilitating. Reid and Evans would argue that this legitimizes their interventions as the resilience of communities cannot be 'given' or 'produced' but only 'facilitated' or 'supported'. So reading INGO perceptions on their subjectivity from Reid and Evans' perspective, one could argue that the resilience discourse allows INGOs to legitimize their interventions, while not taking responsibility for the outcomes of the DRR efforts. Considering that INGOs perceive their subjectivity as supporter and facilitator of DRR efforts, it would be fair to say that the neoliberal discourse of resilience is fairly strong. However, as shown in chapter five and discussed in 7.3, this subjectivity is not always performed leading to questions about the strength of the resilience discourse.

Another element that leads to questions on the strength of the neoliberal resilience discourse is the notion that there are alternative political imaginaries. Reid and Evans argued that the resilience discourse prevents any other political imagination than the current neoliberal way of thinking. However, as chapter six showed, political imagination is not absent as there are imaginations on how to transform the world for the betterment of DRR in Nepal. In other words, the neoliberal resilience discourse is strong, but not as strong as Reid and Evans portray it to be. This would also be strange as they suggest imagination as the way to overturn the neoliberal power dimensions they describe. Something that problematizes the neoliberal discourse of resilience is the everyday politics of aid.

## 7.2 The Occurrence of Everyday Politics of Aid

In 2.2, I discussed the everyday politics of aid (Hilhorst 2013, Hilhorst and Jansen 2010, Kerkvliet 2009) that are relevant to understand the current responsibility allocation in DRR in Nepal. These everyday politics of aid indicated how INGOs were not only driven by a humanitarian desire to reduce disaster risk in Nepal to save people's lives, but also by organizational and legitimization politics. In 4.3 and 4.4, I showed how INGOs are mainly driven by the desire to please their donors in order to survive as an INGO. They aim to legitimize themselves through pointing to the needs of communities for DRR, arguing that they have downward accountability. However, because of the current donor crisis, INGOs are focused on their organizational politics which requires upwards accountability; they are highly

concerned with being a 'successful project manager' fulfilling the needs of donors through writing proposals, reports and lessons learnt. It seems that they are disciplined in how they perceive success; although there is attention for qualitative and long-term results, these reports are mainly dominated by quantitative, physical and quick results. This shows that they are focused on upwards accountability and functional accountability, as Ebrahim (2003, 2005, 2007) argued. How this impacts downward and strategic accountability is to be considered in their performances as discussed next.

### 7.3 Clashing or Coinciding Subjectivities

The multiple power dimensions of the resilience and participation discourses and the everyday politics of aid found ground in the subjectivities of INGO employees. From the resilience and participation discourse the subjectivity of 'supporter and facilitator of DRR efforts' emerged and based on the everyday politics of aid INGOs claimed the subjectivity of 'successful project manager'. It seemed that these subjectivities could coincide or even merge perfectly, as explained in chapter four: successful projects were the means for INGOs to support and facilitate Nepalese DRR efforts.

Arguing that responsibility is about who we are and what we do, I chose Butler's performative understanding of subjectivity to consider how INGOs practice their responsibilities (Butler 1988, 1993, Hall and Du Gay 1996, Mansfield 2000, McNay 1999, Nightingale 2011). The notion that two different subjectivities arose from the power dimensions, aligned with Butler's decentred notion of subjectivity which provide space for the existence of various subjectivities. Although the presentation of the INGO employees implied that these subjectivities would match perfectly in chapter four, using Butler's performative lens, allowed me to show that INGO employees sometimes prioritized their responsibility to complete a 'successful' project over their responsibility to support and facilitate Nepalese stakeholders in their DRR initiatives. They sometimes showed uncooperative behaviour as they did not trust the counterpart to fulfil their responsibilities due to lack of willingness of capacity. Supporting and facilitating DRR initiatives might not entail much responsibility, but also means that INGOs needed to give away control, including control over their projects. However, as INGOs also felt ownership over their projects and were judged for their successful completion by donors, some of the strategies and tactics used to regain or keep control do make sense. They equated the success of their project with their target achievement and lost track of their long-term goal of resilience. It shows the difficulties involved in the empirical

reality of INGO employees that further complicates the ethical debate on responsibility allocation in resilience.

Claiming to support government and local NGOs, while not cooperating with these stakeholders, leads me to conclude that they did not perform the supporting and facilitating subjectivity the way they claimed to do in chapter four. It matches with Butler's statement that subjectivities are never performed perfectly. Because projects provided INGOs the means of existence – as donors pay them for their projects, a 'successful' completion of a project becomes their end goal and main responsibility. As chapter five showed, this sometimes means sacrificing support for and facilitation of government and/or local NGO efforts to build the resilience of Nepal. In other words, by focusing on their projects only, they lose sight of the minimum responsibility they had of supporting and facilitating others to reduce disaster risk. Upward and functional accountability are thus prioritized at the expense of downwards and strategic accountability, as Ebrahim (2003, 2005, 2007) argued. In other words, the survival of the INGO, enacted in the organizational politics, were emphasized, while the *raison d'être* of the INGO – supporting DRR in Nepal – was abandoned.

On first sight, the notion that these two subjectivities clash and the subjectivity of successful project manager is prioritized, could imply that the neoliberal resilience discourse was not so strong or that the everyday politics of aid were stronger; INGO employees did not internalize the resilience discourse so strongly as they failed to perform a supporting and facilitating subjectivity. It illustrates the difficulty to perform a DRR project in a 'proper' and 'sustainable' way and how development practices differ from original ideas and intentions, also stated by Ferguson (2002) and Mosse (2011, 2013). It confirmed Nightingale's (2011) insight that multiple dimensions of power lead to various subjectivities that sometimes collide with each other. Furthermore, one could argue that the government of Nepal in their prohibition of self-implementation did not allow for any other presentation of INGO subjectivity than supporter and facilitator. Therefore, questions could be raised whether there is such a neoliberal discourse.

However, using Butler's (1988, 1993) performativity lens, I would like to argue that the neoliberal discourse on resilience is useful to explain this case. In my perspective, the neoliberal discourse interacted with multiple other power dimensions, such as the everyday politics of aid. Discourses - such as the neoliberal discourse on resilience - are powerful,

because they always materializes in different forms based on context and other present power dimensions.

Looking at my case, I agree with Butler that the performance of a discourse, such as that of resilience, can never be enacted in a perfect sense, as in its performance a discourse is reiterated and cited. I see the reiteration of the neoliberal resilience discourse in the performances of INGO employees; they did not perform the subjectivity of supporter and facilitator, but still also did not take any responsibility over the DRR outcomes of their projects. They did take functional accountability by focusing on their projects as their organizational politics urges them to, but no strategic accountability over the fatal consequences of hazards in Nepal. The neoliberal focus on self-responsibility thus emerged in the performances of INGO employees, who focused on their responsibility for their projects while not taking more responsibility for disasters in Nepal. No attention was paid to wider structural causes which makes the population of Nepal vulnerable or how to raise the political voice of vulnerable subjects. Thus, neoliberalism was materialized in a different form in the performances of INGO employees than expected in 4.2, as the everyday politics of aid intermingled with the resilience discourse. Nevertheless, it seemed to be present. In a way, the resilience discourse was reinterpreted and rearticulated in the performances of INGO employees who simultaneously had to deal with the everyday politics of aid.

#### 7.4 Are Alternative Political Imaginaries Enough?

Arguing above that the neoliberal discourse materialized in INGO performances, yet in a different form than expected, implies that the neoliberal resilience discourse is quite strong. I agree with Reid and Evans that resistance should be there and therefore, I investigated their solution of alternative political imaginaries. Because DRR practitioners such as INGO employees are key in shaping these projects, I considered that the ethical debate on responsibility allocation in DRR should involve the ideas of DRR practitioners; you cannot bring change without understanding how those who should implement an alternative political imaginary. The first imaginary was not really and alternative as it represented a neoliberal focus on local communities as responsible. The second, based on a social contract model, emphasized the government's responsibility. Both ideas let INGOs keep their current responsibility or even reduce it further. The ideas of shared and relational responsibility allowed for a different conceptualization of the problem of and solutions for disaster risk. It emphasized the need for a different subjectivity of INGOs, local NGOs, government

stakeholders, donors and local populations. The relational nature of responsibilities requires every actor to change its responsibility and asks for an improved cooperation between these actors based on trust.

Considering the complex reality - in which trust is often absent and the government fails to provide proper DRR measures - the materialization of the new political imaginaries seems to be further complicated. I do agree with Evans and Reid (2013, 2015, 2012a, b) that because imagination can help sustain power relations, it can also help to overturn them. Therefore, the development of alternative political imaginaries is crucial. However, I wonder if it is enough, if we look at the complex circumstances in which these imaginaries need to materialize. Reid argued that 'we must recover the profoundly human power to subordinate the real to the image, such that it is made to conform to what we imagine' (in Haug 2017, 260). However, seeing the interconnectedness of reality and the large range of involved stakeholders, I would like to argue that this might be more difficult than portrayed by Reid. Although one person could make a change, this only happens if there is a willingness and acceptance by others. Therefore, I argue alongside Chandler (in Chandler and Reid 2016) that there should also be a focus on the external world to bring change.

The question is 'how the imaginary finds its material, such that it is able to realize itself' (Reid 2012b, 162). However, Reid and Evans do not provide any tools on how to realize or operationalize these political alternatives. This might be logical, as it depends on the alternative how it can be realized and operationalized. Furthermore, different stakeholders may have different imaginaries. Therefore, open and equalized dialogue is necessary on what imaginary is most desirable *and* reachable.

I find Reid and Evans' deconstructing efforts of the neoliberal resilience discourse useful, as it shows the power dimensions behind current DRR practices, including my case. Furthermore, I consider that the political imaginations are a first and crucial step to resist this discourse; without imagination, resistance and change is not possible. However, observing how many different political imaginations become enacted in reality – for example, the failed performance of the proclaimed supporting and facilitating subjectivity – I consider the second step of how to operationalize and materialize an alternative political imaginary to be decisive and essential. I would thus like to contribute to the ethical debate by stating that the *operationalization* of the political imaginary is as important as the political imaginary itself for the resistance to neoliberal discourse. Paraphrasing Butler, I would like to argue that this

resistance 'is real only to the extent that it is performed' (1988, 527). Political imagination is important but not enough without actual performances.

## 8. Conclusion

This thesis was inspired by the ethical debate about responsibility allocation in resilience-based DRR. This debate emerged as proponents of resilience (Bohle, Etzold, and Keck 2009, Norris et al. 2008) see it as empowering and granting ownership, while opponents (Evans and Reid 2013, 2015, Reid 2012a, b) argue that it is a neoliberal discourse that shifts the burden of disasters to the most vulnerable. I observed that in this debate the focus was mainly on how this responsibility allocation affects communities and not on the practitioners who implement DRR projects. Therefore, I decided to focus my research on DRR practitioners in the form of INGO employees. First, this allowed me to contribute to the ethical debate by providing real-life experiences of INGO employees, showing the complexity of responsibility allocation on the ground. These employees find themselves in a complex world in which they have to deal with global policy ideas such as DRR and resilience, the demands of headquarters, donors and government stakeholders, while simultaneously ensure the implementation of projects through cooperation with local NGOs. Secondly, by looking at how INGO employees re-imagined responsibility allocation, I presented their concerns and their visions that could inform potential changes. Furthermore, it showed the feasibility of any potential changes.

To provide this contribution to the ethical debate, I answered the research question:

*How do INGO employees perceive, perform and potentially re-imagine responsibility allocation for disaster resilience alongside government and local NGO stakeholders?*

An aidnographic approach proved to be most useful as it allowed me to enter 'Aidland' and focus on 'the true rationale for aid' (Apthorpe 2011, 202). By immersing in the working and sometimes personal lives of my respondents, I was able grasp an understanding of the power dimensions present and how my participants dealt with these in their performances.

In chapter four, I explained how INGO employees perceived and understood DRR and resilience and showed that the neoliberal resilience discourse – as described by Evans and Reid (2013, 2015, 2012a, b) - was fairly strong; INGO employees were convinced of that

vulnerability was inevitable and that communities could only adapt towards disasters. No mention was made of strengthening their political voice. The complexity of the reality on the ground was shown by focusing on the everyday politics of aid, as described by Hilhorst (2003, 2007), Hilhorst and Jansen (2010) and Kerkvliet (2009, Hilhorst 2003, 2007). It was shown that INGOs were concerned with organizational politics focusing on their survival and maintenance of their operations. This required the attraction donors, leading to their involvement in legitimization politics in which they claimed to work to reduce the disaster risk of local communities by making them resilient. In the words of Ebrahim (2003), they claimed to be downwardly and strategically accountable. Concerned with their organizational politics, they also focused on upward and functional accountability, as they claimed to organize 'successful' DRR projects which results would be captured in quantifiable documentation. Based on these different power dimensions, the INGOs claimed that their responsibility was captured in two subjectivities: firstly, based on the resilience and participation discourse they claimed the subjectivity of 'supporter and facilitator of Nepalese DRR initiatives', secondly based on the everyday politics of aid, they claimed the subjectivity of 'successful project manager'. These subjectivities and responsibilities seemed to match perfectly; successful projects would contribute to a reduced disaster risk and the building of a resilient Nepal.

In chapter five, I focused on the performance of these perceived and claimed subjectivities and responsibilities. I showed how these subjectivities collided, using Butler's (1988, 1993) performativity lens. Looking at Lundin's preconditions of cooperation, I elaborated that often INGOs did not trust the government and local NGOs to fulfil their responsibilities. Therefore, focusing on their organizational politics, they often chose not to cooperate with them. This meant that they failed to perform the proclaimed supporting and facilitating subjectivity. Focusing on bringing their projects to a 'successful' completion, they prioritized their subjectivity and responsibility as 'successful project manager' over that of 'supporter and facilitator of DRR initiatives'. In this way, the means in form of the project became more important than the goal of DRR in Nepal. In other words, upward and functional accountability were emphasized at the expense of downward and strategic accountability, similar to Ebrahim's (2003) observations. Organizational politics was chosen over the *raison d'être* of the INGO. It means that the rationale of DRR projects is primarily focused on the survival and benefits for INGOs in Aidland, while the disaster management in Nepal and its outcomes are side issues.



This prioritization of the responsibility for projects over the responsibility of supporting and facilitating Nepalese DRR, confirmed Butler's (1988, 1993) notion that not all subjectivities were performed perfectly and Nightingale's (2011) insight that multiple dimensions of power can lead to colliding subjectivities. As discussed in the chapter seven, one could argue that this prioritization of the responsibility for projects over the responsibility of supporting and facilitating Nepalese DRR showed that the neoliberal discourse of resilience was not that strong as proclaimed by Reid and Evans. However, this prioritization allowed INGOs to still avoid any real responsibility for the impacts of their projects and disasters in general. In other words, they still show a lack of strategic and downward accountability. Therefore, using Butler's performative lens, I claim that the neoliberal power dimensions were reiterated in a different form, in the presence of everyday politics of aid.

Talking with my respondents on the current responsibility allocation in DRR, I reflected upon its desirability and how they would re-imagine this allocation in chapter six. Three imaginations emerged; firstly, an adherence to neoliberal resilience discourse and a focus on the supporting and facilitating responsibility and a better performance of the current responsibility allocation; secondly, an emphasis for a stronger responsibility for the government while less to no responsibility for INGOs; and thirdly, a focus on shared responsibilities requiring different subjectivities, more trust and cooperation. Considering the complex reality discussed in chapter five, it seems rather difficult to realize these alternative political imaginaries. Therefore, in chapter seven, I argue for a stronger focus on how to realize political imaginaries. Reid and Evans do not provide any tools on how to realize or operationalize these political alternatives. Using Butler's performative lens, I realized in chapter five that political imaginaries are not always performed in reality. Therefore, I agree with Evans and Reid that imagination is important for a resistance to the neoliberal discourse, however, I urge for a stronger focus on how to realize this. The reason for this is that resistance, similar to the power dimensions it aims to fight, only become real in its performances, as Butler (1988) also noted. Therefore, political imagination is important but nothing without actual performances.

### Recommendations

There are various limitations that lead to different recommendations. Firstly, this thesis is based on an explorative research, implying that it showed only a fraction of the ways INGOs cooperate with their stakeholders. Therefore, no conclusive statements can be made based

on this research. This thesis can be considered as the basis for deepening the ethical debate on responsibility allocation in DRR by providing insight in the perception, performances and re-imaginings of INGO employees.

#### More Aidnographic Research

This research would benefit from more aidnographic insights on the real-life cooperation of INGO-workers with donors, headquarters and INGO's target groups to get a holistic picture. Although I heard various stories about how it was to work with donors and headquarters in my interviews, as shown in chapter four, I was never present at donor or headquarter meetings. Being an intern, it was considered that it would be better if I would focus on proposal writing, while more experienced staff would communicate with the donor or attend donor meetings, if they took place in Nepal. I was also not involved with headquarter communication. Therefore, more aidnographic research is needed to gain a deeper insight in the pressures of donors and headquarter.

More aidnographic research is also required on how INGO workers performed their subjectivity of project designer and manager; I focused explicitly on the relations among those involved in aid provision and not on the relation between the providing and receiving end of aid. I did not focus my attention to how DRR projects were executed in the field and how the target group saw the responsibility allocation, because the ethical debate already focused mainly on their side.

However, as this ethical debate is mainly philosophically based, empirical aidnographic material on relations with donors, headquarters and target group could shine a different light. It could either support, undermine or further complicate Evans and Reid's (2013, 2015, 2012a, b) claim that resilience is a neoliberal discourse that shifts the burden of disaster to the most vulnerable. This additional data would provide insights in factors that could complicate the materialization of political imaginaries, as discussed in chapter six. Furthermore, it would potentially provide different understandings of DRR and other political imaginaries requiring different operationalisations. This additional aidnographic research would provide further insights in the rationale of DRR and who benefits from the current responsibility allocation.

Finally, Nepal was in a transition process from a unitary system of governance to a federal system when I was present. As this process had just started, some of the practices of the described government stakeholders – SWC and NRA – might have changed while others

have taken on new significance. Therefore, additional research on the government stakeholders with whom INGOs cooperate is required.

#### Theoretical Viewpoints

In this thesis, I dove mainly into Evans and Reid's (2013, 2015, 2012a, b) conceptualization of resilience as a neoliberal discourse, leading to the ethical debate on responsibility (see 2.1). Others, such as Chandler (2012, 2013), also discussed the neoliberal discourse, but offer different solutions. Where Evans and Reid argue that alternative political imaginaries are the way to resist this neoliberal discourse, Chandler argues that the change must not begin in our heads but in the world. He searches for 'ways in which we can begin to reinstate the human subject through bringing back the external world as an object of engagement and transformation' (in Chandler and Reid 2016, 142). Additional research could be done in the potential benefits of different proposed forms of resistance to the neoliberal discourse, such as Chandlers.

Furthermore, other theoretical approaches could also contribute to the understanding of the ethical debate. For example, a political ecology approach, focusing on 'societies' relationships with the nonhuman environment' (Perreault, Bridge, and McCarthy 2015, 3) can provide beneficial insights. Seeing 'nature and society as dialectically constituted' (Watts 2015, 32) and sharing the 'common premise, that environmental change and ecological conditions are the product of political process' (Robbins 2011, 19-20) can provide more in-depth perspectives on how nonhuman elements interact with disaster risk. This could provide further insights to the social justice question of what would be a fair responsibility allocation.

#### Reflection on my learning journey

In this final section, I would like to reflect on the impact this research had on me. The process of setting up this research project has been very fascinating and challenging. First of all, working fulltime as an intern, finishing up my research proposal, gaining access to the respondents and organizing interviews, while simultaneously also having a social life proved to be challenging. When the internal workings of my INGO were also shaken up - as four out of a team of thirteen people unexpectedly needed to leave – this became extra challenging. Various interim employees arrived and left again, which made it chaotic time for the INGO, and made the ethical question of permission a difficult one as discussed in 3.6.

Having to do deal with various responsibilities and subjectivities also proved to be challenging. For example, the notion that I was both an intern and a researcher sometimes led

to complicating situations. As my research focused on the interactions between INGOs, local NGOs and government stakeholders, people were very curious to hear what other people had said and/or in what ways other respondents would hear about what they said. Furthermore, I was sometimes asked about sensitive information on my INGO or in what way I could intervene in the relation between the INGO and local NGO. I was engaged in political interactions in which I needed to be cautious of not to be used as a pion in this political game that I was yet to understand. Whenever it was a pressing issue, I tried to bring it up within the INGO, while simultaneously trying to respect the anonymity of my respondents.

My colleague's warning that everything is political in Nepalese 'Aidland' proved to be very true and I am thankful for her many insights and suggestions, that prevented me from making some mistakes and helped me to gain an understanding which I would have never reached without her. The notion that INGOs tend to prioritize their projects over DRR in Nepal, led me to question the work that I was doing myself during my internship and the use of international development work in general. So although it made me in one way much harder on international development than I already was, it also made me in one way much more compassionate with INGO employees. Considering how INGO employees find themselves in an entangled web filled with discourses and power dimensions, I understood why they made certain choices. Furthermore, having various discussions with my respondents, also brought to the front how some of them tried to change certain aspects.

The task to bring all the complex and detailed stories together in one line of argument in the thesis proved to be difficult, as I needed to kill some of my 'darling' side-stories for the sake of the argument and could not always tell the whole story due to confidentiality issues. Furthermore, I reflected much on which theoretical approach would shine a light that would be most beneficial for my story; for example, I only added the idea of everyday politics in the last 1.5 month as I realized this would bring better understanding of my research data.

Therefore, I consider this research as one large learning experience for me; not only did it teach me how to develop and conduct my own research project, it also provided me with new knowledge on how DRR was perceived and practiced in the setting of a developing country. I am very grateful for the insightful time I had in INGO A and the many inspiring conversations I had with my informants. By gaining insight on how reality is on the ground, it has ultimately contributed to giving me a better understanding why a certain responsibility

allocation for DRR arose, potential re-imaginings and what is required to realize alternative responsibility allocations.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1 Existing disaster management in Nepal

Gaire, Delgado and González (2015) made this table. I have updated this table using Pandey (2017) and my own data collection.

**Table 4** Milestones in disaster risk management in Nepal<sup>2,4</sup>

Year	Initiatives/activities
1982	NCRA promulgated the first legal initiative, the Natural Calamity (Relief) Act
1984	UNDP study about the threats of disaster and the need for foreign assistance conducted
1987	Disaster unit under the MoHA established
1989	NCRA 1982 amended (first amendment)
1990	Strategy for training on disaster management prepared

1990	National committee to celebrate the decade of the 1990s as the decade of international disaster reduction
1991	Comprehensive disaster management plan prepared
1992	Second amendment of NCRA 1982 ratified
1993	Training of government officials in collaboration with UNDP organized
1993/1994	Training on disaster management conducted by USAID and ADPC, Bangkok, organized as per request of MoHA
1994	Action plan prepared with the help of UNDP
1996	UNDP's disaster management capacity-building program begun
1999	Local Self Governance Act
2001	Department of Narcotics Control and Disaster Management under MoHA established
2002	National Development Plan (2002–2007), emphasizing irrigation and water-induced disaster preparedness and natural disaster management
2003	Disaster impact assessments of development projects made mandatory in the Tenth National Plan
2005	National Water Plan development, and Nepal participated in the Hyogo Conference
2006	Approval of water-induced disaster management policy
2007	Drafts on acts, policies, and strategies on disaster management in Nepal prepared
2008	National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management (NSDRM) prepared
2009	NSDRM approved by Government of Nepal
2011	Five-year Disaster Risk Reduction strategic framework developed by USAID and Nepal Disaster Risk Reduction Office, Disaster Preparedness and Response Guideline
2012	National Disaster Response Framework, Local Disaster Risk Management Guideline
2014	Disaster Risk Management Policy developed, National Strategic Action Plan on Search and Rescue
2017	Disaster Risk and Management Act (replaces Natural Calamity Relief Act of 1982)

**Notes:** The table shows the milestones in disaster risk management in Nepal from the first disaster act to a recent policy framework that has been taken into consideration.

## Appendix 2 Data collection

### Interviews

Below you find a) an overview of the 25 persons I have interviewed and b) a network overview to show the connections between the various INGOs, local NGOs and Government Stakeholders.

Nr.	Date	Type of organization	Position	Gender
1	17-10-2017	INGO A	Project Manager	Male
2	08-11-2017	INGO B	Project Manager	Male
3	09-11-2017	INGO C	Project Manager	Male
4	03-12-2017	Several INGOs/ local NGO 1	Project Manager for several years Executive Board Member of local NGO 1	Female
5	05-12-2017	EU – (Reconstruction) Supporting with NRA	Project Director	Male
6	05-12-2017	Local NGO 1	a. Director b. DRR expert	Two males
7	06-12-2017	Local NGO 2	Director	Female
8	10-12-2017	Local NGO 3	Director	Male
9	10-12-2017	Local NGO 3	M&E	Female
10	14-12-2017	Government	DRR education expert	Male
11	22-12-2017	INGO D	Project Manager/ (Interim) Country Director	Female
12	24-12-2017	Local NGO 4	Director	Female
13	25-12-2017	Local NGO 5	Project Manager	Male
14	03-01-2018	INGO D	Project Manager	Male
15	05-01-2018	Local NGO 6	Project Manager	Male
16	06-01-2018	INGO E INGO F	Country Director Project Manager	Two Males
17	07-01-2018	Local NGO 7	Project Manager	Male
18	16-01-2018	Local NGO 8	Project Manager	Male
19	28-01-2018	INGO A	Project Manager	Male
20	30-01-2018	INGO A	Logistics Manager	Male
21	31-01-2018	INGO G	Country Director	Male
22	04-02-2018	Local NGO 9	Director Project Manager	Two Males

### Network of INGOs and local NGOs

Below you see a network explaining the connections between the INGOs and local NGOs that my respondents worked for;

- *I* and a number are used to refer to a certain interview
- *INGO* and a letter are used to refer to a certain international NGO
- *Local NGO* and a number are used to refer to a certain Local NGO

I5 and I10 are left out, because they are related to the government and whom I met during two different networking events. Potentially, there were more connections of which I was unaware.

