

INPUT PAPER

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What drives transformations in meso level disaster risk governance?

Emerging lessons from Zambia, Nepal, Viet Nam and Uganda

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Abstract

The paper compares and contrasts how disaster risk management is being conceptualised in relation to emerging climate change adaptation efforts and how these two agendas are influenced by different governance systems, accountabilities and social contracts in Zambia, Uganda, Viet Nam and Nepal. Particular attention is paid to how this relates to different forms of state legitimacy and the changing role of local government in connection with a range of decentralisation processes, increasing political attention and the lure of new but little understood climate change funding. Findings highlight how concerns about disaster risk are influencing how new and uncertain forms of combined disaster/climate governance are perceived and implemented. Increasing attention from the media is also noted as a key factor determining which aspects of disaster risk management gain prominence, and which are ignored, in public demands and in responses by politicians and local government.

Executive summary

Over the past decade there has been growing attention to the relations between climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR). This has led to efforts to map and clarify where the agendas overlap, where they diverge and where potential synergies lie. Whereas this has been useful for bringing together researchers and policy makers working with these themes, there has been less attention to the implications in relation to decentralised governance, i.e., how both CCA and DRR fit into the broader landscape of local development. This background paper looks at this decentralised arena and draws tentative conclusions regarding the qualities of governance of these somewhat differing agendas, including their convergences and divergences. This means delving into how the climate change agenda has been superimposed on top of existing agendas, mandates, etc., related to environmental change and natural resource management. It also involves looking at conflicts and synergies with other agendas related to economic development, food security targets, urbanisation, commercialisation and private sector development.

The CCA and DRR governance agendas have very different characteristics, dynamics, and implicit accountabilities at national, meso (province, district, municipality) and community/village levels. This is partly due to the different roles of institutions at these levels, their different accountabilities to disaster/climate change affected populations and their different capacities. Furthermore, contested governance is different in the four countries upon which this study is based, Uganda, Nepal, Zambia and Viet Nam. Governance differs where there is faith in a strong state, where there are contestations between state and civil society, and within extremely varied relations between governments and the (largely donor oriented) CCA agenda versus the often more locally owned DRR agenda. Our initial findings suggest that there is a technocratic turn in the CCA/DRR discourse, which has often led to the diverse nature of governance being overlooked in the favour of standard policy recommendations and exhortations to overcome prevailing weak governance capacities through 'political will'.

In international discussions, the involvement of civil society and academic communities in national level CCA and DRR is seen as a way to introduce a more evidence-based governance agenda based on risk scenarios, multi-stakeholder discussions, etc., but the validity of these assumptions can be questioned. In most cases we have found that both CCA and DRR efforts by governments and civil society are managed in parallel, with limited actual cooperation. Engagement with academia is important in this regard, as both government and civil society recognise the need for evidence and understanding. The extent to which the evidence base presented is used for critical reflection can be questioned, as there are some indications that scientific input is desired for justification of existing plans, but may be ignored if it highlights the trends toward increased disaster risk and maladaptation inherent in prevailing development priorities.

At meso level in all four countries accountability for responding to and preparing for disasters is generally stronger than for CCA and more long-term risk reduction. However, as plans and programming take form, learning is taking place about longer-term trends and scenarios, which may possibly contribute to increased accountability for addressing these future risks, even if the primary focus is on current perceived hazards.

Governance at meso level is very strongly related to the ways that politicians hold civil servants to account for the quality of their work, and also the 'qualities' that they demand, as the latter is not always appropriate from a risk reduction perspective. Real governance is related to real money, and an important but surprisingly seldom researched aspect of DRR and CCA governance is in processes of planning new investments. The elaboration and implementation of investment plans are not just technical mechanisms for allocating funds, but actually highly politicised processes through which governance of DRR and CCA is negotiated in real terms (i.e., with real money). They may therefore contribute to overcoming some of the ambiguity that has characterised these governance issues thus far. A challenge can be noted though due to a skewed tendency to see infrastructural investments as the solution for risk reduction, regardless of the problem that generated the risk. This also puts into question assumptions about the extent to which 'community based' modalities and planning processes can overcome these inherent biases towards infrastructural solutions and overall discussions about how to allocate funds.

In all four countries, accountabilities today are such that village level authorities are largely excluded from the discussions of real investments and systems (apart from being told what to do to implement plans). The district and provincial levels, despite being 'one step removed' from local communities, are largely responsible for mediating between national policies and the need to address risks where they exist. There is a spatial challenge in perceiving of a province, with perhaps over a million inhabitants, or a district, with a population of tens of thousands, as being a channel to the 'community' just because they are labelled as 'local government'.

The vertical nature of governance is problematic for the participation of those facing climate related disaster risks. Voice is related to 'whose risks count', including gaps in the risk reduction agenda related to wealthy/poor, crop/livestock/aquaculture producers, etc. Due to the relatively strong social contract to respond to disasters and due to media coverage and awareness of the political benefits and hazards related to being seen to respond to disasters, accountability may be becoming reinforced. However, the centralisation and politicisation of many response functions suggest that the capacity of citizens to use their voice in influencing the nature of response may be limited. There is little indication at this point that citizens are demanding accountability for addressing longer-term risk trends or the factors that generate risk. Economic development trumps risk reduction and rich and poor alike appear to give priority to maintaining growth and accept the associated risks as inevitable.

Governance of CCA and DRR reflects the state of the social contract for addressing human suffering caused by disasters. The range of government agencies that take action (or fail to act), their scope and position in the hierarchy of decision making, and the factors that induce them to act reflect their relationship with and perceived responsibilities to their citizenry. Our research has revealed extensive differences in this regard – some governments are goaded

to respond to extreme events through media, civil society or donor pressure, while others take up disaster response without hesitation. There is a social contract for responding to gradual climate changes resulting in recurrent shocks, but this is weaker than for high profile disasters. This leads to questions about the nature of the social contract and disaster risk reduction. A more comprehensive risk reduction, i.e., risk reduction integrated into all aspects of development and government activity, is far from evident. Instead, stopgap measures and retrofitting of existing structures and systems seem to be the norm. This may be due to the way DRR has been presented and received, the capacity of governments to comprehend the complex implications of risk, and their capacities to allocate human and financial resources to act. Regardless of the causes, it indicates the prevalence of a social contract based on a limited and probably inadequate standard for DRR, which is thus unlikely to compel comprehensive risk reduction.

Frustration with these limits to the social contract has meant that the point of departure for climate advice has too often been directive and normative: Telling people what to do. But we know from other development efforts that telling people what to do (and perhaps then just sending them on a course) is not very effective. This normative approach to development programming comes all too often without an understanding of the existing responsibilities and roles of the institutions and people who are supposed to 'do all this climate change stuff'. We have to recognise that meso level officials already have a 'day job', and we need to understand their capacity and motivations for responding to climate change in relation to what they are already doing.

The findings of this paper show that there are indeed elements of a social contract for DRR and CCA at meso level, but they are variable according to context. The potential to build 'good enough governance' (Grindle, 2007) around this social contract is overlooked due to an over-emphasis on national policies, targets and investment plans, and the hierarchical structures that are required to roll them out. In these planning processes the potential dynamics that might support (or at least not undermine) the social contract of street level bureaucrats (Lipsky, 2007) are overlooked due to ignorance and disinterest in local governance and the range of other responsibilities and accountabilities that enmesh the meso level.

1. Introduction: Is there a new playing field for disaster risk governance due to the climate change adaptation agenda?

a. Overview

Over the past decade there has been growing attention to the relations between climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR). These discussions stemmed from recognition among those involved in CCA that:

- a large proportion of the measures needed to address the effects of extreme climate change events were the same as those which were already being undertaken in relation to DRR
- there was an existing body of practical experience from DRR efforts that could inform CCA thinking
- there was a potential for competition and confusion if both CCA and DRR were not either synchronised or merged

This has led to efforts to map and clarify where the agendas overlap, where they diverge and where potential synergies lie. Whereas this has been useful for bringing together researchers and policy makers working with these themes, there has been less attention to the implications in relation to decentralised governance, i.e., how both CCA and DRR fit into the broader landscape of local development.

Furthermore, as climate change adaptation efforts begin to be rolled out in earnest, there is starting to be a basis for empirical analysis of how these linkages are manifesting themselves in practice within actual governance structures. This background paper looks at this emerging experience and draws tentative conclusions regarding the qualities of governance of these somewhat differing agendas, including their convergences and divergences.

Analyses of both DRR and CCA efforts have been dominated by two frames of reference:

- national perspectives; what policies, plans and directives are needed to address scenarios and meet targets and policy commitments
- “community” perspectives; how are “people” dealing with climate change and how they might do this better

Our perspective is different; we ask “who is going to do all this stuff” given the (over) production of directives and policy recommendations and also “why would they want to bother”, i.e., what are the incentives and disincentives in prevailing governance systems for moving towards the intentions of (especially) Priority area 4 of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) regarding more risk sensitive development.

This means delving into how the climate change agenda has been superimposed on top of existing agendas, mandates, etc., related to environmental change and natural resource management. It also involves looking at conflicts and synergies with other agendas related to economic development, food security targets, urbanisation, commercialisation and private sector development, etc. Our research has found that issues surrounding disaster preparedness and response have in many respects taken precedence over efforts to address

growing disaster risk and climate change (mal)adaptation, and this leads to questions about how prevailing governance structures have led to this meso level reinterpretation of policy goals. In looking at the “why would they want to bother” question, we are trying to understand the nature of governance that creates path dependencies in relation to prevailing development priorities and modalities for dealing with disasters and extreme climate events. In this way we are also coming to understand more about the ways that climate and DRR policies are merged with other more dominant policy frameworks in a form of bricolage at provincial, district and municipal levels.

This involves looking at who has the mandate and responsibilities to undertake different tasks due to decentralisation; prevailing division of roles between environmental, agriculture and disaster management agencies; and last but not least, public perceptions of the role of the State and the social contract for dealing with extreme events.

This also involves trying to understand how the rumours (and they are basically still rumours) about future flows of climate resources are interpreted at district, province and municipal levels. This involves analysing the conflicts that are triggered and the manoeuvring undertaken between different actors in the hope of accessing these new, little understood resources. We are finding that these processes are particularly enlightening in the interfaces between a vague and little understood climate change agenda and a politically “loaded” agenda related to disaster response and (sometimes) risk reduction.

b. Different dimensions at national, meso and community levels

Our research has found that the CCA and DRR governance agendas have very different characteristics, dynamics, accountabilities, etc. at national, meso (province, district, municipality) and community/village levels. These forms of governance also impact strongly on the relations between institutions that have different characteristics at these different levels. This is partly due to the different roles of institutions at these levels, their different accountabilities to disaster/climate change affected populations and their different capacities. Our findings show that “governance” can be a misleading concept if it is not anchored in an empirically based analysis of the different forms of governance that exist in these different levels. At worst, a failure to recognise these dimensions can lead to unrealistic and even undemocratic assumptions that governance is about getting national CCA and DRR policies “right” and expecting that they will simply be “rolled out” if there is “political will”.

c. Differences between developmental states, fragile states, etc.

Contested governance means different things where there is faith in a strong state, where there are contestations between state and civil society, and within extremely varied relations between governments and the (largely donor oriented) CCA agenda versus the often more locally owned DRR agenda. Our initial findings suggest that there is a technocratic turn in the CCA/DRR discourse, which has often led to the diverse nature of governance being overlooked in the favour of standard policy recommendations and exhortations to overcome prevailing weak governance capacities through “political will”. This can be most clearly seen in disaster risk reduction and disaster response. Some form of disaster risk management is a core responsibility of any state, but the commitments and capacities to shoulder this responsibility are related to the historical experience and existing socio-cultural norms. In our sample of countries, Viet Nam stands out as a clear developmental state wherein an

understanding of disaster risk management governance relates to how the state has developed and maintained its legitimacy for centuries. In the other three countries, governance is far more contested due to the weaker historic role of the state in dealing with disasters and also the greater dependence on the international community.

The latter factor may be becoming even more central as DRR is increasingly seen as something to be funded from climate change resources, which are in turn seen to be largely a responsibility of the international community. The effects of this are not just to weaken commitments to anchor efforts in strengthened local governance, but even more to distort and confuse accountabilities and social contracts

Nepal can best be described as a fragile state. It has recently emerged from ten years of an armed conflict (1996-2006) between the government and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) which seriously challenged the state and caused significant death, destruction and displacement. Since 2006, when the comprehensive peace agreement (CPA) was signed there has been a long drawn out process of developing a new constitution. In May 2012 the Constituent assembly charged with developing the new constitution reached a fourth extended deadline without resolution; this finally led to a national election in November 2013, in which the Maoist party suffered serious losses. The consequences of this are unclear but it is far from clear that a post conflict environment has been reached. Local government has also been running without elections for more than ten years now. Nepal is still facing difficult processes of transition from war to peace, from a monarchy to a republican state and in social and economic relations. Underlying these difficulties – and central to a view of Nepal as a state with limited capabilities – is the ongoing challenge to its legitimacy and the failure of the state to perform in terms of delivery of basic public goods and reducing poverty, all underpinned by the persistence of an old political elite based on old social hierarchies and practices leading to enduring patterns of social exclusion. The narrative of crisis, risk and disaster is thus common to the domains of security, politics and as well as climate. It is likely that in Nepal's highly unpredictable policy environment, security, growth and poverty reduction are likely to be the major dominant public policy concerns. Climate change policy will have to compete for policy attention both at a national level and at a district level. Donor funded programmes are likely to have a major influence on the way in which the climate change agenda in general and disaster risk management in particular is taken on board.

Uganda has seen a shift from a reform darling to neo-patrimonial rule, political dynamics which have strongly affected CCA and DRR governance. The Ugandan state supported a series of economic and governance reforms during the 1990s in close collaboration with international aid agencies. A high level of commitment by the president and the wider Ugandan political establishment, combined with donor support, resulted in reforms which at the turn of the century were viewed as some of the most successful in Africa. However, this did not extend to DRR and response, which was strongly influenced by recent history of armed rebellion and armed cattle rustling in certain areas; up to the mid-2000's disaster response focused on human induced disasters rather than natural disasters, and the emergency policy centralized disaster management within the OPM's office, which is headed by its own Minister. Over the past decade, the initial success in decentralizing and reforming the public sector has been gradually undermined, leading to a reversal of development and reform outcomes. The performance of the disaster management sector in Uganda over the past decade has

subsequently been constrained by inadequate policy and legal framework for disaster preparedness and management. The government has taken a more passive, coordinating role, while most emergency assistance has come from international agencies. The result is a weak institutional capacity for DRR at district and community level. The trend of recentralization of power to central government has also impacted on CCA, particularly the formulation and implementation of the climate change National Adaptation Plan for Action (NAPA). The National Climate Change Program (NCCP), however, embraces the local government system, revealing the continuing tensions between forces for decentralisation and centralized power.

Viet Nam has often been characterised as a 'developmental state' due to its role in promoting a given development path and guiding markets (Gainsborough, 2010). The historical relationship between the state and the citizenry, where trust underpins the developmental process, was forged most strongly during the wars against the French colonial forces, after that the United States and most recently with China in 1979. The state is widely perceived to be accountable for providing basic security for its citizens – not just political security but also food security and protection from natural hazards and other threats. In reflection of the prevailing social contract, disaster preparedness is clearly perceived by the public and the government as a public good and therefore a responsibility of the state at both national and sub-national levels. Even though financing for some public goods has declined in recent decades, the government still allocates significant public financial resources to address disaster risks. Scott's analysis of the "moral economy" of Viet Nam's peasantry relates various examples of how the justness of the state is perceived as being related to the extent to which the state responds (or fails to respond) to floods and other natural hazards (Scott, 1976). In relation to natural disasters, there is a particularly strong social contract between the state and citizens in Central and North-Central Viet Nam. A correlation can be noted between the large number of leaders of the revolutionary struggle and the high degree of vulnerability of these areas to storms and floods

In Zambia, two factors in particular have influenced the DRR agenda. The first is the nature of politics where a hybrid situation exists in which a legal rational system and relatively free elections co-exist with patrimonial features. Moreover, today's Zambian state is not controlled by a single party with wide rural reach. Instead, a range of different political forces compete for influence within and around the state. At the same time, the recently booming economy has raised expectations among voters. The combination of these factors means that there is a growing need for the national political elite to be seen to be "doing something" about disasters caused by extreme floods and droughts, in order to ensure continued support from followers and voters. The second major influence on the national DRR agenda is the substantial role of development aid in the country's economy. Although currently on the decline, aid has historically played a central role in shaping the national institutional landscape of DRR. Indeed, every major new policy, plan and organisational development related to DRR and climate change adaptation in Zambia has been heavily influenced by aid and associated technical assistance (Funder et.al, 2013). In this process, most of the focus has been on designing national DRR frameworks or providing fragmented support to individual communities through pilot-projects. The meso-level (e.g., district line agencies and local government) have only recently been incorporated into these frameworks,

which remain centrally driven. Structural Adjustment Programmes in the 1990s furthermore led to severe cutbacks in government agencies at subnational levels, leaving an underfunded and understaffed local civil service with little capacity to plan for and respond to disasters. The result of these developments is an institutional framework for DRR that is on the one hand relatively efficient in responding to immediate disasters, but on the other hand very centralised and weak on prevention and longer-term planning.

d. Scope of this report: preliminary indications of different trends, while recognition that rapid changes are underway

It must be emphasised that we have found a high degree of confusion and flux in relation to the dynamic climate change agenda and how it could or should merge with DRR and related efforts. Therefore, the findings presented here constitute snapshots in an ongoing process. This particularly relates to uncertainties regarding CCA plans, resource flows and policies and the extent to which these new factors will impact on existing trajectories towards stronger DRR governance. At the meso level in all four countries, there is a general awareness that climate change (and climate change resources) will affect the roles of public, private and civil society actors. But the nature of these changes is still a matter of speculation. Indeed, this is one reason for the tendency to give greater emphasis to the relatively clear-cut disaster preparedness and response agenda and less to confronting maladaptation and the ways that risk is being reproduced in societal trajectories.

e. Description of CCRI and methods

This background paper draws on the initial findings of "Climate Change and Rural Institutions" (CCRI)¹ a four-year collaborative research programme which explores the role of district level institutions in relation to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. The programme is coordinated by the Danish Institute for International Studies in collaboration with partners in Nepal, Uganda, Viet Nam and Zambia. The programme is funded by Danish Research Council for Development Research, with additional support from the Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security Programme under the CGIAR Partnership.

CCRI has been designed to address knowledge gaps in relation to understanding of the performance and potential of meso level institutions to support adaptation and risk reduction processes. Meso level institutions which are active in rural areas – such as local governments, agricultural advisory services, agencies involved in natural resource management and farmers' organisations – are located at the interface between national development and climate/DRR policies on the one hand and practices at the community and household levels on the other. It is at this institutional level where the different messages and instructions from ministries and the international community have to be reconciled – and where there is an immediate need to respond to local demand and realities. Consequently, these meso level institutions should be of key importance when it comes to enabling local adaptation and risk reduction, but very little is known about how they actually fulfil this role.

¹ www.diis.dk/ccri (December 18, 2013)

As the research has gotten underway, it has quickly become apparent that at these meso levels, national CCA policies and plans are largely transformed in a process of renegotiating disaster risk management governance. Other aspects of CCA are mostly perceived as abstract, with unclear accountabilities and implications for who should do what and why. By contrast, disasters have emerged as an area where the CCA agenda can provide a fresh injection of ideas, money and political commitments to what has in some cases been an ongoing process (Viet Nam) and in others a grey area (Uganda), a struggle between state and civil society (Nepal) or a neo-patrimonial struggle for prestige and power (Zambia).

2. Who is accountable to whom in DRR and CCA governance?

a. At national level

i. Between ministries of agriculture, environment, special offices of the PM, etc.

Accountability in CCA and DRR is in particular flux. This relates to somewhat more rigid (but politically influenced) accountabilities related to disaster preparedness and response, versus ambiguity in relation to CCA and many more fundamental aspects of risk reduction as well.

Climate change plans have often been seen as the responsibilities of ministries of environment, and this is frequently where the formal mandates and contact points for climate change adaptation are found. However, in countries where aid plays a significant role in climate change efforts, it is not unusual to see additional/alternative organisational arrangements promoted by donors. This includes special units to overcome bottlenecks of capacity and political strength and/or efforts to move the locus of national decision-making on climate change more towards ministries of finance and planning in the interest of greater political clout and cross-sectoral mainstreaming. As ministries of environment are often also particularly weak on the ground, their formal mandates in climate change adaptation tend to be somewhat watered down in practice. National authorities are more in tune than local authorities to macro trends and potential financial flows, so there is a greater interest in CCA and addressing policy commitments (e.g., HFA).

By contrast, disaster risk is frequently the responsibility of offices of the prime minister/vice president, special autonomous technical units or sometimes (e.g., Viet Nam) agricultural ministries due to their perceived greater capacities at field level. The logic behind this is usually that disasters require a mandate for national disaster risk management agencies to act swiftly, mobilise field operations and convene other departments – and therefore need a strong powerbase closely connected to the political leadership and/or with staff at field level who can act expeditiously.

National authorities typically recognise the potential contribution to legitimacy and political capital from rapid response to major or high profile disasters. This has led to tendencies to centralise response to major disasters and even to ignore formal institutional structures for response if they stand in the way of maximising political gain.

In Zambia the perceived political capital emanating from disaster response has become more evident in the last ten years with the recurrence of major floods at the heart of the nation's capital. Floods have become an annual problem in Lusaka, which has raised the attention of

the media even more and turned flooding into an issue in elections. Responding to disasters is therefore a matter of some priority for the political leadership in order to ensure continued support from followers and voters. There is a tendency to give priority to disaster-related operations in national policy and institutional development. Such actions also provide an opportunity for demonstrating statesmanship: Visits by ministers to disaster-affected areas are thus a predictable part of the post-disaster process in Zambia. In contrast, the political attention given to addressing more long-term climatic change (such as changes in rainfall and rising temperatures) is much weaker.

Institutionally, there is overlap and competition between the involved ministries, sometimes influenced by donor agendas. Responsibility for DRR lies with the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU) under the Office of the President, while the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources (MTENR) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) are formally responsible for CCA. However, in practice the DMMU plays a significant role in the national and especially local climate change arena. The DMMU also has formal powers to convene other ministries and agencies, unlike the MTENR, which makes it attractive for demonstrating cross-sectoral mainstreaming. Its adaptation role is partially promoted by donors, as evident in DMMU's current donor-funded efforts to establish a climate risk information system.

The Ministry of Finance and National Planning (MoFNP) has also become engaged as the World Bank has recently sought to shift more emphasis towards it. This is based on the logic that the MoFNP is where the power to plan and allocate budgets – and mainstream across sectors – is located. The recently more explicit role of the MoFNP in climate change responses has recently shifted some of the climate change focus (and resources) away from the MTENR, which has contributed to infighting and delays in approving national climate change policies and coordination frameworks.

The Ugandan emergency policy distinguishes between 'natural' and 'human induced' causes of disaster. In the 1990s the focus of disaster risk management was closely related to effects of the prolonged low-intensity rebel activity in Northern Uganda. Because of the highly politically sensitive nature of support for internally displaced persons who were forcibly resettled in camps, the responsibility for coordination of emergency assistance was centralized in the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), represented by a junior minister. However, the emphasis of emergency response has shifted since the turn of the century to addressing the effects of extreme climate change events. While OPM has remained in charge of disaster response, government attention has diminished, and government funding for disaster risk reduction has been inadequate.

The formulation of National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA) in 2006 was an externally driven policy process carried out by a committee of representatives from relevant central ministries with the task of making Uganda eligible to receive funding from the Least Developed Country Fund (LDCF). The NAPA is anchored in Ministry of Water and Environment. According to United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) guidelines, NAPAs should describe a country's perception of its most "urgent and

immediate needs to adapt to climate change".² While the Uganda NAPA was formally subject to a process of participatory consultation, in reality the identification and prioritisation process was done among technical representatives from central ministries. Decentralisation, which in Uganda has a broad development mandate to provide development services and well-established institutional structures that are governed by elected district councils, was by-passed by NAPA as a vehicle for implementing CCA.

The process of formulating a new national Climate Change Policy has been driven by a newly established Climate Change Unit (CCU) in the Department of Meteorology in the Ministry of Water and Environment (MoWE) that functions as the National Focal Point for climate change under the UNFCCC. A draft Climate Change Policy was formulated during 2012 and will take effect subject to approval by Government Cabinet. NCCP proposes to strengthen the current Climate Change Unit (CCU) and promote it to the level of a sectoral Climate Change Department (CCD) under the Ministry of Water and Environment. NCCP emphasises the multi sectoral nature of climate change and seeks to mainstream climate change as cross cutting across other development policies. However, in practice there seems to be little collaboration or coordination between the OPM responsible for DRR and the MWE responsible for CCA.

In Viet Nam institutional roles in responding to climate hazards and risk can be roughly categorised as being related to two inter-related streams with very different institutional relationships. The first relates to responding to existing hazards and risks, and the second involves responding to climate change more generally and in relation to future scenarios. Flood and storm control related efforts focusing on existing hazards and risks currently dominate. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) leads on most of these activities. The Minister of MARD is a chair of the National Flood and Storm Control Committee (NFSCC) - Ban Chỉ đạo Phòng Chống Lụt Bão Quốc Gia. Institutional structures related to immediate disaster response are well established at all levels, from central government to commune, and have a clear base in legislation, regulation and procedural guidelines. These structures are largely similar throughout the country, with some differences according to the types of hazards affecting each province.

The second institutional stream relates specifically to climate change adaptation in relation to both current risks and future scenarios. Policies and national action plans exist, but interviews at provincial and district levels show that the local implications of these plans are still perceived as uncertain. In overall long-term climate response, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) is designated by the government as the lead agency. The Department of Hydro-Meteorological and Climate Change is the management agency for climate change issues, and the National Hydro-Meteorology Agency is a technical agency in charge of weather forecasting and for sea level rise and hydrological information. MONRE has developed the National Target Program to Respond to Climate Change (NTPRCC), to be implemented within the Government's Resolution No. 60/2007/NQ-CP in 2008, and also developed the Scenarios for Climate Change and Sea Level Rise in Viet Nam in 2009 and 2011. In 2011, the Prime Minister approved the National Strategy on Climate Change (NSCC) based on Decision No. 2139/QDD-TTg. Institutional structures related to the NTPRCC are in

² http://unfccc.int/national_reports/napa/items/2719.php (December 20, 2013)

the process of being established between national and provincial levels. They are not clearly regulated and in the short-term will effectively rely on pre-existing flood and storm control structures for implementation at sub-provincial levels (i.e., the line agencies under MARD), to the extent that they link with those levels at all.

In Nepal a National Disaster Relief Act was passed in 1982 providing for a Central Natural Disaster Relief Committee (CNDRC), Regional Natural Disaster Relief Committees (RNDRC), District Natural Disaster Relief Committees (DNDRC) and Local Natural Disaster Relief Committees (LNDRC). The Nepal Red Cross (NRCS) has long been an important actor in disaster response and is one of two NGOs that sit on the Central Disaster Relief Committee. It has been mandated by Nepal's Ministry of Home Affairs to formulate and implement disaster management policies, plans and programmes (NRCS, 2010). It is also a member of core disaster management committees at national, regional and district levels. More recent support to disaster risk planning has been provided by UNDP. Recently, the Home Minister pledged to earmark two percent of the national budget for DRR³ indicating that the concern for disasters has grown significantly within the government.

There are two major national institutional structures operating at the government level for coordination and policy-making in climate change in Nepal: the Climate Change Council (CCC) and Multi-stakeholder Climate Change Initiatives Coordination Committee (MCCICC). The CCC is a higher-level body and is chaired by the Prime Minister with membership from various ministries and 'experts' from academia, the private sector and NGOs. It aims to provide the long-term policy and strategic guidelines for CC activities in the country. The MCCICC was formed under the Ministry of Environment during the NAPA process in July 2010 with an aim to contribute to programming. It includes representatives from line ministries, local government, donors and civil society. The GoN established the Climate Change Management Division in the Ministry of Environment (MoE) in the early 2010 (GoN, 2011). Beneath them there are a range of government ministries, key departments and agencies, local bodies and other organisations that to varying degrees have an interest in or dedicated sections to climate change issues (GoN, 2011). The Ministry of the Environment has been given the mandate to coordinate the Climate Change agenda and is also the National Focal Point for the UNFCCC. However, in May 2012 the MoE was merged into the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology (MoEST).

MoE has been seen to be a weak ministry with no district presence. It has had to rely on structures under Ministry of Local Development for climate change related project implementation at the local level. The NAPA⁴ document has involved six line ministries (Ministry of Agricultural Development, Ministry of Home Affairs, Department of Urban Development and Building Construction, Ministry of Health and Population, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, or MoFSC, and the Ministry of Energy). The MoFSC (which is considered as a strong ministry) has its own separate Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) and climate change division leading on

³ <http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2012/10/27/top-story/back-from-jakarta-gachhadar-focuses-on-mitigating-risks/241102.html> (December 18, 2013)

⁴ <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/napa/npl01.pdf> (December 20, 2013)

REDD process in Nepal. This will also challenge the ability of MoE to coordinate the climate change agenda across ministries.

ii. Between states, civil society, academic community

In international discussions, the involvement of civil society and academic communities in national level CCA and DRR is seen as a way to introduce a more evidence-based governance agenda based on risk scenarios, multi stakeholder discussions, etc., but the validity of these assumptions can be questioned. In most cases we have found that both CCA and DRR efforts by governments and civil society are managed in parallel, with limited actual cooperation. The extent to which civil society actors have been consulted/involved in national CCA planning differs according to the respective histories and maturity of civil societies. In some countries (e.g., [Zambia](#)) civil society involvement in national planning processes are also dependent on the extent to which donors pressure for their involvement.

In [Viet Nam](#), national government has made a commitment to national implementation of a Community Based Disaster Risk Management system (Decision 1002), presumably due to calls from the UN and NGOs, but it has not allocated significant resources to rolling this out, leaving the agenda effectively in the hands of NGOs managing small and scattered pilot projects.

[Nepal](#) has seen a remarkable rise in civil society activism since the political change of 1990, and this was instrumental in forcing the king to relinquish power in April 2006. There has also been a growth of the media – national broadsheets, local newspapers, television stations and a huge number of FM radio stations throughout Nepal. A particular aspect of Nepalese civil society development over the past decade has been the growth of socially differentiated civil society organizations – alliances or federation of NGOs or other organisations based on a specific identity-based constituency. Thus, while Nepal has a national federation of NGOs, there are also associations of Madhesi (People of the tarai) NGOs or Dalit (Untouchable caste) NGOs. Similarly, the national federation of indigenous nationalities (NEFIN) has been advocating the rights of indigenous/ethnic groups over the past two decades.

Three federations – FECOFUN (Federation of Community Forest Users Nepal), NEFIN, and HIMAWANTI (Himalayan Grassroots Women Natural Resources Management Association) – have been closely associated with the climate change agenda for several years. FECOFUN, NEFIN and ForestAction have been part of the REDD policy processes. FECOFUN is involved in implementing a number of REDD+ projects; for example, it is engaged with a REDD pilot project under the leadership of ICIMOD and in collaboration with another NGO, Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bioresources (ANSAB). This is addressing the design and setting up of a governance and payment system for Nepal's Community Forestry.

Engagement with academia is important, as both government and civil society recognise the need for evidence and understanding. The extent to which the evidence base presented is used for critical reflection can be questioned, as there are some indications that scientific input is desired for justification of existing plans, but may be ignored if it highlights the trends toward increased disaster risk and maladaptation inherent in prevailing development

priorities. In contrast, and as discussed further below, at meso level some institutions such as agricultural extension are looking for practical ways of dealing with risks, and therefore we have found evidence of application of research and even collaboration among researchers, farmers and extension staff.

iii. Between states and donors

A cross-cutting finding is that disaster risk management in general is much more driven by states and their accountability to citizens, whereas CCA is more donor driven; but is there a trend towards convergence?

The historical influence of Western donors on Zambian policy agendas is highly evident in the disaster management and climate change arena. Western donors have been crucial actors in the development of the entire institutional framework for addressing both climate change and disaster management, as mentioned in the role of the ministries presented above. For Western donors, the climate change agenda provides an obvious foothold in a context where their long-standing influence is declining as a result of the currently strong Zambian economy and the entry of China and other new actors. For the government, the agenda provides a means of addressing certain national economic concerns that are threatened by climate change; a means of filling budgetary gaps (e.g., fuelling the motorbikes of extension workers); and a means of displaying action on disasters, smallholder food security and rural development. Donors' climate change agendas thus provide a means by which the government can fulfil many responsibilities, not only those of CCA and DRR.

In Nepal, donor funding contributes about 80 percent to capital expenditure and 28 percent to the overall budget (World Bank, 2010) indicating the major influence that donors play within the country. Funding of climate change expenditure has a larger proportion of donor funding (55%) than the donor element of overall government expenditure which comprises about 25% (National Planning Commission, 2011). Donor funding for climate change is increasing, and there are considerable sums spent on technical assistance which are not channelled through the government. Around 60-70% of climate change expenditure is made directly by central government and the remainder is spent through local agencies of the Ministries. This is mainly allocated through Unconditional Capital Grants and programmes in the Ministry of Local Development. There appears to have been consensus amongst the donors around the idea that the local governments would lead activities on disasters and on climate change adaptation. There is, however, an issue of the capacity of local governments to take up their extensive mandate since it largely remains an unfunded mandate with limited human resources.

In Uganda the role of the OPM in DRR is today one of formally coordinating disaster risk management activities of international agencies. The diminished role and interest of government in disaster risk management is closely linked to the shift in focus from assistance to victims of civil strife to victims of extreme climate events. The OPM is challenged by national NGOs for taking a reactive rather than proactive approach to addressing natural hazards and for being slow and hesitant in recognising the existence of natural disasters.

In the absence of a comprehensive climate change policy framework and dissatisfaction with the quality and relevance of the NAPA priorities, the international donor community has funded and implemented conventional development projects with more or less explicit focus on CCA. An inventory carried out in 2009 found that the donor funded climate change portfolio amounted to USD 750 million. Implementation is conducted without explicit policy guidance, and most of the inventory comprises general development projects with an added CCA component.

The 2012 Climate Change policy formulation process was financially supported by international development agencies, including EU, DFID, DANIDA, World Bank and World Food Program (WFP). The strong donor support for the formulation of NCCP is reflected in its implementation framework, which fully embraces the decentralised governance structures, including establishment of local fora for dialogue and co-production of ideas needed to address rural people's challenges to adapt to climate change.

Viet Nam is going through a transition in its relation with donors. Given its rapid economic growth, developmental perspectives and obvious ethic of self-reliance many donors are phasing out their development assistance. At the same time, Viet Nam's status as one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change has meant that climate change funding continues to rise. Some observers suspect that some development efforts (by both government and international NGOs) are being repackaged so as to attract climate change funding. In such a context, a certain degree of merging of DRR and CCA objectives could be presumed to be driven by pragmatic concerns about maintaining resource flows.

b. At meso level

i. Between departments responsible for disaster response and longer term CCA and DRR

At meso level in all four countries accountability for responding to and preparing for disasters is generally stronger than for CCA and more long-term risk reduction. However, as plans and programming take form, our research has found that learning is taking place about longer-term trends and scenarios, which may possibly contribute to increased accountability for addressing these future risks, even if the primary focus is on current perceived hazards.

The different accountabilities have many different drivers, including the different actors involved, the clarity of institutional roles and the intelligibility of how climate and disaster issues are connected to specific institutional responsibilities.

In Teso region of Uganda, citizens have since 2007 experienced a series of extreme weather events in the form of floods and droughts. CCRI research carried out in three districts of Teso region indicates that both politicians and the civil service in local governments are aware of effects of floods and droughts on the rural population. In general, the discretion of elected district councillors to initiate CCA activities is limited. Support for CCA does not feature as a budget line from central government and is therefore not included in the District Development Plans. However, there are considerable pressures on local government employees to use their time and to 'twist' existing project funding to support local adaptation initiatives. This process is most pronounced at the sub-county (lowest level of local

government), where local government employees are in direct contact with citizens affected by extreme climate events.

A UNDP led and multi-donor and government funded project in Mbale district based on area-based climate change adaptation planning aims to develop an appropriate way to support climate change adaptation. The UNDP/CIP project comprises a range of technically relevant climate change activities and relevant experiences with participatory approaches for involving rural citizens in these activities. However, its implementation as a project, using structures parallel to local government, undermines its relevance for enhancing accountability. Local politicians have little ownership of the project as they have not been involved in its design and management and are unlikely/unable to take over funding of project activities.

Viet Nam's NTPRCC has required all provinces to develop a climate change action plan. In analysing the Thua Thien Hue Provincial Action Plan Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation of Climate Change, it can be observed that the lessons of extreme events are duly noted, while the effects of smaller disasters are also stressed. Analyses point out how climate change is a multiplier of other risks emanating from, above all, population increase. The loss of agricultural land and areas of drainage to industry and urban sprawl is highlighted.

Although there is recognition of the potential negative effects of economic development on vulnerability to climate related hazards, this recognition does not mean that overall development goals and targets for the province are questioned. Some of these targets, such as those related to the continued rapid expansion of aquaculture, fisheries and industrialisation, are accepted as inevitable. Economic development clearly has priority over climate change adaptation. At best, climate change efforts are expected to contribute to reducing the risks associated with economic development. At worse, these risks are ignored.

The list of projects to be implemented illustrates what provincial government expects to be held accountable for. A set of criteria are presented for "priority" projects, which can be assumed to be the most valid expression in the rather long document of what is expected to be the focus of climate change efforts in the future. The following observations can be made regarding these criteria:

- a) The Plan is entirely focused on adaptation, without mention of mitigation.
- b) The first priority is to protect agriculture and farmers.
- c) The second priority is to protect livelihoods and also lives during disasters.
- d) The third priority is poverty reduction.
- e) Taken together these priorities can be interpreted as representing a focus on investing in infrastructure to "climate proof" the existing overall development plan for the province.
- f) One of the other criteria is "urgency". This and the other points suggest that the focus is strongly on the current effects of environmental change, rather than future scenarios.

- g) Passing mention is made of health, biodiversity and other issues in a list of other priority sectors and “zones”, but these priorities are not mentioned in the list of projects to be implemented, with the possible exception of potential positive externalities related to biodiversity in conjunction with mangrove planting.

In the past decade, southern Zambia has experienced a number of extreme floods of the Zambezi River and its tributaries, with significant humanitarian impacts. Apart from these immediate disasters, there is also evidence of rising temperatures and changing rainfall patterns, indicating a gradual climatic change which threatens maize production and thereby food security in the area.

The institutional responses to these events differ: The flood disasters have achieved attention from the central government and from regional and even global media, and the immediate responses have been relatively efficient, if very centralised: During floods, humanitarian relief efforts are coordinated by the DMMU, based in the Vice-President’s Office. The DMMU dispatches task forces to the flooded areas, where they coordinate relief efforts through District Disaster Management Committees (DDMCs). The latter typically consist of district government agencies, local district councils, and international NGOs active in the area. The DDMCs function reasonably during the immediate relief effort and recovery phase, but they are essentially instruments of the central DMMU and tend to dissolve in between emergencies.

By contrast, the problems of rising temperatures and changing rainfall patterns have received rather less attention from the central level. Unlike floods and drought disasters, the general undermining of smallholder maize production is less graphic, more complicated to deal with and contains little scope for quick action with immediate results. District agencies in agriculture, livestock and water are fully aware of the problems, but complain that their workplans and project proposals go unfunded and are sometimes even contradicted by their central level ministries, who insist on continuing existing policies. In response, district line agencies and local governments provide advice that they devise themselves (regardless of government policy), initiate small-scale ad hoc adaptation activities and team up with NGOs working in the area to get their activities funded and implemented. While these efforts are noteworthy and demonstrate that a motivation to support adaptation exists at the district level, they are inevitably small-scale and locked into the larger institutional context of agricultural politics in Zambia.

ii. Between states, civil society, academic community

Links and relationships between local government and civil society are where mutual accountabilities are negotiated and defined along with roles and responsibilities, albeit often in an ad hoc manner. The four countries demonstrate strikingly different trajectories related to these relations. This has to do with the historic role of the state, and also pragmatic efforts to mobilise whatever capacities are available in a given area, regardless of whether these are found in public or private institutions. In some countries, local authorities and NGOs are also searching for partnerships with the academic community as part of their efforts to get a grasp on if and how climate change is generating disaster risks and what might be done to manage these risks. Donors play a significant role in brokering (and arm twisting) in the

relations among local government, civil society organisations and academia to ensure their projects are managed effectively, but the implications of these 'shotgun marriages' for longer term accountabilities are unclear and potentially problematic.

In Nepal, non-governmental entities have been engaged by the government – primarily owing to donor pressure or requirements – to facilitate disaster or adaptation planning and policy/strategy development through the funds made available by donors. At the district level, NGOs are more active than government agencies in taking up the climate change agenda. They have perceived the emerging issue of climate change as new source of funding. This has reconfigured relations between district NGOs and national level agencies (donors and INGOS). INGOs are forming informal alliances at district level to coordinate the adaptation and disaster related activities. INGOs and few NGOs at national level have formed the Climate Change National Network to facilitate the debate on climate change issues and share information among members. Such networks have been instrumental to territorialize the climate change market place. It has helped the members to acquire knowledge and information about climate change funding and also build alliances to access such funds. On the other hand, government agencies at district level often merely 'participate' in the activities organised by NGOs. There is little evidence that climate change has been incorporated into government activities, which has limited the space for district level agencies to respond to the growing demand from communities and NGOs. Only a few government agencies such as the DISCO (District Soil Conservation Office) are in a position to claim that they are contributing to climate change adaptation because their conventional activities are aligned with the climate change adaptation activities

In Viet Nam the role of INGOs has never been great and is in decline along with the decline in donor development funding. They never had a central role. CBDRM efforts and mangrove planting to protect coasts from storms have been an important focus. Sometimes cooperation with local authorities is good, but from the local government perspective these initiatives are generally described as marginal. Local authorities express frustration with training, risk mapping efforts and other initiatives that do not lead to wider implementation as they are not then replicated with governmental budgetary allocations. By contrast, local authorities are often active in seeking support from the Vietnamese academic community to find ways to address risk. For example, the rapidly expanding rubber production in Quang Binh province was devastated by Typhoon Wutip in 2013 as the young trees were splintered, leaving smallholders with massive accumulated debt. As a result the provincial government decided to host a research conference in 2014 to look for ways to reduce these risks in the future.

Very recently a new element has emerged which may have profound impact on the accountability of local government for disaster response. After Typhoon Wutip little support was received from international humanitarian agencies, but this was more than compensated by "ephemeral organisations" (Lanzara, 1983) of former residents of the affected areas and other concerned citizens who responded to news reports and information on the internet. Spontaneously organised through Facebook, they came to the communities that they had read about and generally went straight to the households that were said to be worst

affected. This bypass of local authorities was in contrast to early relief efforts by INGOs that went via authorities. If this trend continues, it could change the structures of accountability for disaster response. Already some local authorities report that they have reduced their own relief support since affected people are receiving often considerable volumes of support from these new relief structures. The same authorities express grave concerns that this media driven response did not result in well targeted and equitable distributions.

iii. Between politicians and civil servants

Governance at meso level is very strongly related to the ways that politicians hold civil servants to account for the quality of their work, and also the 'qualities' that they demand, as the latter is not always appropriate from a risk reduction perspective.

In southern Zambia, extreme floods and droughts have become an arena for Local Government Councillors, MPs and Chiefs to assert pressure on government agencies and build local support. This includes calls for better protection against floods and demands for more decentralised drought and flood response mechanisms. In some areas, floods are also being used to challenge authority and rights to land and water more broadly. For example, in Kazungula District local politicians argue that state protection of certain forest areas is no longer morally defensible, and that forest areas should be de-gazetted for settlement of populations at risk from floods. In some cases, such claims reflect valid and legitimate concerns of local citizens, and can be seen as a new arena for expressing grievances over governance and rights. In other cases, they are apparently efforts at personal political posturing that is not followed through after elections, for example. Whatever the case, such pressure from local politicians tends to place civil servants at the meso level in a difficult position. Even with the best of intentions, their scope for responding is often limited by conditions determined by other political elites, namely those at the national level.

In one Ugandan district (Amuria), the late and inadequate national government response to the 2007 floods became a central theme during the election for district council. An opposition politician used people's discontent with government DRR efforts as an election platform and was elected as chairman of the district council. During his term, the council formulated an Environmental Ordinance that addressed conservation of wetlands, a key component of long-term CCA to floods. Using the power vested in this Environmental Ordinance, the District Environmental Officer led a process of formulating a concrete Wetlands Development Plan that has stopped the expansion of wetlands rice cultivation and preserves the wetlands as a buffer for floods.

In Central Viet Nam, increased perceived importance of disaster risk management is evident in the relationship between politicians and civil servants. Communist party officials are increasingly holding civil servants accountable for disaster risk management (primarily disaster response) problems or failures. While this process has been transparent and highly publicized, it is not formalized and reflects what appears to be a growing priority of the Communist Party. Recently, there have been several highly-publicized episodes of civil servant firings and demotions due to weak disaster response as well as corresponding changes in structures and procedures. This has demonstrated (publicly) the role of the Communist Party in monitoring and promoting accountability from the civil service for their responsibilities for flood and storm control preparedness and response.

iv. Role of investment plans in creating platforms for renegotiating governance roles

The development and implementation of investment plans and mechanisms are not just technical mechanisms for allocating funds, but actually highly politicised processes through which governance of DRR and CCA is negotiated in real terms (i.e., with real money). They may therefore contribute to overcoming some of the ambiguity that has characterised these governance issues thus far.

In Viet Nam, meso level investment planning embodies a balancing act between national policies on the one hand, and provincial, district and commune priorities on the other. Regarding climate and disaster-related funding specifically, sometimes diverging priorities between provincial DONREs and DARDs come into play as well. These different pressures are reconciled through the drafting of the Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP), a five-year plan which delineates investments and priorities. The drafting process may reveal actors' investment priorities most transparently, as public statements are set aside and the realities of accessing a limited amount of funding take over.

Supplementing this are the new provincial Climate Change Action Plans (described above), which can be seen as new fora for negotiating the place for climate change related investments. While interviews in Thua Thien Hue Province suggest that the initial Action Plan and associated investment priorities closely mirror those of the SEDP, this may be partly due to low meso-level capacity in developing specifically climate change targeted projects. The presence of this Action Plan as a new area for negotiation, however, may offer space for change in future mechanisms of governance in relation to CCA and DRR.

With respect to the actual projects proposed in the Action Plan, over 90% of the funds are to be allocated under the heading "Projects to build, apply and deploy applications of science and technology in order to reduce disaster risk and climate change". Of this, all but one of the projects is focused on infrastructure. The remaining project is for procurement of equipment for disaster response. The priorities emphasise the need to coordinate efforts horizontally among different public agencies at provincial level. It is effectively recognised that climate investments are unlikely to be driven by climate change concerns alone, but will be dependent on a convergence of goals and efforts among other sectors at provincial level. Little attention is paid to vertical coordination with district and commune (municipal) authorities.

In Viet Nam, prioritisation processes of meso-level projects exemplify this. Meso-level socio-economic development and related plans typically include proposals for major projects, overarching development goals and related funding requests, making infrastructure projects more likely to be included than smaller, low-budget soft projects. As the Action Plan will largely determine the climate change response for the province, this bias will have concrete consequences for how CCA and DRR governance is perceived.

c. At community level

i. Are village level authorities “in the loop”

In all four countries, accountabilities today are such that village level authorities are largely excluded from the discussions of real investments and systems (apart from being told what to do to implement plans). The district and provincial levels, despite being ‘one step removed’ from local communities, are largely responsible for mediating between national policies and the need to address risks where they exist. There is a spatial challenge in perceiving of a province, with perhaps over a million inhabitants, or a district, with a population of tens of thousands, as being a channel to the ‘community’ because they are labelled as ‘local government’. The officials and politicians at this level are generally a long way from the ‘community’, and they are sometime more interested in the risks faced by their own urban community than the hinterlands. This suggests critical questions about how ‘community based’ DRR, CCA, etc. could be integrated into emerging governance systems where the meso level has a central role. It also raises questions about the extent to which it is possible to address the problems that have been highlighted in the critique of the ‘community based’ discourse for its undifferentiated perception of vulnerability within communities and among those who are effectively excluded from communities (Cannon and Müller-Mahn, 2010). If the DRR and CCA agenda is being formulated by meso-level authorities who are likely to, at best, make ‘spot checks’ at village level, what are realistic expectations regarding accountability to the most vulnerable?

Dolokha District in Nepal has been ranked as a district highly vulnerable to climate change primarily due to the threat of a Glacier Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF). But district level actors see landslides as of much greater significance than GLOF as disaster risks. GLOFs are more of an ‘existential threat’ – if it happened it might be of catastrophic significance, but a threat to be lived with given the more immediate lived experience of landslides.

This disjuncture of views between the district and the NAPA has arisen from two rather different knowledge frameworks. On the one hand, the threat of GLOF comes from a scientific/technocratic knowledge framework that sees vulnerability as an outcome of climate-induced natural hazards. Indeed, GLOFs have become in many ways the symbol of Nepal’s vulnerability to climate change, and they featured strongly in the NAPA documents and carried a heavy weight in the district vulnerability ranking. This framework, in its analysis of the causes of vulnerability, invites a specific technical response to address to these causes. This is reflected in the creation of planning frameworks developed out of administrative spatial organisation (district and Village Development Committee (VDC)), VDC organisational structures, early warning systems, training and creating awareness.

In contrast, the sub-district experientially derived view of landslides as the major source of climate induced disaster risk is underpinned by a knowledge framework of vulnerability being contextual. Thus, although the households in Ward 8 Bhirkot described the specific intense rainfall event of August 8th 2012 that led to mass land slumpage, house damage and in two cases physical destruction, they traced the root causes of this back to a feeder road wrongly sited and badly constructed in the 1990s. The feeder road was built by a contractor with Congress party affiliations who through bribery of district officials and the use of gangs to

break up a three months protest at the road by villages (who also filed a court case), short cut the route the road should have taken to avoid damage and in the process undercut the underpinnings of the village lands. Small-scale landslides and subsidence appeared within a few years after this construction and a feeder road constructed by the VDC at the top end of the slope in 2008 (driven to all appearances by rent seeking practices of the VDC political members) further contributed to the events of August 8th 2012.

It should be noted that this account of the pathology of the Bhirkot landslide is not one that the Dolokha DDMC (District Disaster Management Committee) appears to have any knowledge of or interest in. The DDMC mandate is interpreted solely in terms of providing very limited short term relief to the event and as far as could be ascertained, there has been no further engagement since then and at present no interest in recovery or prevention.

In Viet Nam input into investment plans formally comes from commune, district and provincial levels (and incorporates requirements of national target programs, policies and laws). The micro, or village-level governments have thus little formal input, and must direct their requests and priorities through the commune levels, whose suggestions will then go through the district prioritisation process before reaching the provincial level, where Socio-economic Development Plans (SEDPs) are actually drafted. The negotiation of priorities and preferences thus occurs on a significantly higher level than the village level, and their input is seemingly minimal at best. This seems to reflect the infrastructural bias of the plans, where procurement of contractors will inevitably require a basis in the provincial administrative structure to manage large projects. There may also be economies of scale in coordinating these investments. Commune authorities are therefore unlikely to have direct ownership of these projects, even if the planned investments would have significant impact on the economic development of their communities. It should be recognised that mobilising and channelling of investments is always seen as a responsibility of the provinces, in coordination with national authorities that may be directing the international investments upon which the implementation of new climate change funded initiatives will eventually depend.

In Zambia there is formally an effort to establish "Satellite" Disaster Management Committees at ward level (i.e., between district and community level). These are provided for under the Zambian DRR act and have been established in some locations during or following disasters such as floods or extreme droughts. Their sustainability and broader institutionalisation has however been very limited, and in many locations they have never been established or are defunct. Parallel efforts to establish sub-district committees for disaster response and adaptation are, however, ongoing in some areas and are typically promoted by NGOs or other actors, such as Chiefs and MPs, outside the formal DRR framework. Major donor funding is furthermore underway for sub district adaptation planning in Zambia through CIF funds, with a decision to focus on sub-district planning units. Such efforts by non-state actors to support and develop climate and disaster governance mechanisms below the district level may on the one hand foster platforms for holding district level authorities more accountable in DRR and CCA. On the other hand, it also poses challenges to meso-level institutional actors in terms of capacity for dealing with and navigating in a landscape of emerging institutional multiplicity and increasing challenges to public authority.

Uganda has also established formal Disaster Management Committees at the district and sub county level. These are operating in parallel to local government and report directly to OPM. The CCRI study found that the Disaster Management Committees were dormant and only re-established when funding for DRR activities become available in response to major floods or droughts. The sustainability and preparedness of Disaster Management Committees is therefore low. In practice the Disaster Management Committees draw their members from local government politicians and staff.

ii. Private investors and local risk

Despite the exclusion of village officials from the vertical discussions, private investments are changing the landscape of risk (for better or for worse) at local level, which has implications for governance even if the ways that private investments are governed in relation to risk are sometimes 'below the radar' due to greater attention being paid to policies and public investment flows.

Private initiatives shape risk. In Viet Nam, development of aquaculture in coastal areas has largely been driven by the private sector and significantly shapes the landscape of risk regarding both CCA and DRR. Aquaculture is in many instances an adaptation to increasing salinity in coastal areas that has reduced productivity and profitability of crops to the point that even the poorest farmers are searching for alternatives. These agricultural transformations can also generate increased risk as aquaculture is reliant on controlled salinity levels, which may be difficult due to climate uncertainty and variability. Heavy rains can kill shrimp when salinity suddenly drops, and ponds are often vulnerable to flooding. It is often local governments which must address the CCA and DRR consequences of these privately-driven changes in production systems, which create new demands on control of water and spread of disease that can wipe out production in a large area. There are some examples of where large international aquaculture investors are introducing technologies to avoid risks. Coastal seawater based systems pump in and expel sea water, minimising the need for control over sensitive riverine and lagoon ecosystems. These capital-intensive systems produce limited benefit to local communities, but may generate some employment and perhaps tax revenues.

Public-private partnerships also affect the landscape of risk. In Viet Nam, they are being used strategically to manage risk, for example in the telecommunications sector, where such partnerships are encouraged in disaster response. In Thua Thien Hue Province, there is an annual meeting (normally in August) of government flood response agencies with private telecommunication service providers before the flooding season to ensure coordinated response. The meeting aims also to strengthen coordination by distributing tasks and responsibilities among different partners. The telecommunication group, including Viettel, Vinaphone and Mobilephone, has their own Committee for Flood and Storm Control. The representatives of the committee attend the annual meeting to report on their activities, achievements, lessons learnt regarding disaster risk management in the last year, and to plan for the next year. Activities of the telecommunication group regarding disaster risk reduction include: (i) improving infrastructure (communication offices and cables), (ii) improving facilities for information transformation, and (iii) capacity building for their staff on disaster risk management through training to enhance capacity of staff to ensure information transmission during disasters.

In many other instances, however, the manner in which the private sector affects local risk – and how it might mitigate risk – are overlooked. This is the case in Zambia, where the roles and responsibilities of private investors vis-à-vis financing and sustainability of DRR and adaptation efforts is still very much in its infancy or entirely unnoticed. One example of this is a community-based adaptation scheme in Sesheke district in southern Zambia. Here, a group of community members have been provided with a simple pumping system in order to develop alternative incomes through small-scale gardening. This has been a success, in so much as the vegetables produced under the scheme are meeting a strong demand from traders and global franchise supermarkets in the more dynamic markets across the border in Botswana and Namibia. The income generated from this trade has helped diversify incomes and allows households to purchase food when their own crops fail during droughts or floods. However, the pump scheme is financed through donor funds and is facilitated by government extension workers. Options for replicating the project are slim, because the small scale farmers who are most in need of it lack the necessary funds to make the initial investments. The notion that the supermarkets across the border might help finance operation and replication of such projects (and thereby help meet their own unsatisfied demand) has so far not been considered or explored.

Engaging explicitly with the role of the private sector in DRR and CCA is clearly both necessary and valuable. Though the examples given above indicate the opportunities presented by the private sector, private enterprises also enhance risk, for example through food hoarding in times of drought. What is clear is that beyond vague calls for public-private partners, the private sector is starting to be recognized as a player in the landscape of risk, with implications for governance that deserve to be put 'on the radar'.

iii. Can citizens demand accountability?

The vertical nature of governance described in this paper is problematic for citizen 'voice'. That local government itself often lacks a voice in CCA and DRR governance bodes ill for the voice of the individual, especially that of a vulnerable or marginalized individual. However, the discussions above do indicate a political awareness of the importance of individual voice in certain circumstances, for instance at the ballot box.

Nonetheless, expression of and response to citizen voice can be far from democratic. Voice is related to 'whose risks count', including gaps in the risk reduction agenda related to wealthy/poor, crop/livestock/aquaculture producers, etc. The CCRI research indicates that local governance structures are coming under a range of pressures. Due to the social contract to respond to disasters remaining relatively strong and to media coverage and awareness of the political benefits and hazards related to being seen to respond to disasters, accountability may even be becoming reinforced. However, the centralisation and politicisation of many response functions suggests that the capacity of citizens to use their voice in influencing the nature of response may be limited. There is little indication at this point that citizens are demanding accountability for addressing longer-term risk trends or the factors that generate risk. Economic development trumps risk reduction and rich and poor alike appear to give priority to maintaining growth and accept the risks associated with demographic change as inevitable. In the research areas, there may be some civil society organisations that are aware of how these trajectories are generating risk, but we see little

evidence that this has led to significant mobilisation to question prevailing development models.

In Nepal a landslide in Lamjung (and this strongly contrasts with that of the Bhirkot landslide in Dolokha district) has become something of a 'cause célèbre'. It has attracted a national press; a delegation from the village went to the district headquarters (at their cost) to demand relief, and a small group then went up to Kathmandu (at their cost) to meet with the Minister of Forest and Soil Conservation. He in turn immediately convened an expert group, and within four days a task group was sent from Kathmandu to assess the situation and report back.

What has driven this response is the politics of patronage rather than any sense of rights or entitlements. First, this is a relatively, for Nepal, socially homogenous village with a very strong sense of collective identity. Second, the village is well connected to one of the district MPs and he was influential in guiding the village in what to do, in intervening at the district level and in taking the delegation to the Minister. Third, the Minister himself also comes from the district. This, therefore, is a disaster where in some respects 'the response' has been maximal and action visible.

What can be seen here is a model of 'calamity response', but a very minimalist one which distributes a degree of relief but nothing more. One villager talked of their behaviour in terms of 'a child crying to their parents' hoping for comfort but perhaps not much else. In this sense one might talk of an element of social contract in this, not as an individual in relation to the state, but more as a 'community' in relation to the state. What seems to be much stronger is the more horizontal collective social contract within the village. Here (and in the Bhirkot study) there is evidence of collective action that offers more than the state does. A recognition of this pre-existing collective action seems absent from the Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) approach to disaster planning and capacity building at the village level.

Thus, the district distributed relief of Rs 20,000 to each of the six households threatened by the landslide – at best 5% of what it might cost to relocate. It sent the army and police to have a look, but essentially pushed the case up to central government saying that it was too big for the district to handle. For the District soil conservation officer (DISCO) the Bonje landslide was a 'big headache', and he admitted he has no budget or technical means to deal with it. In 2012, a group of experts pronounced that the landslide was stable and that there was no concern. The report from the group of experts who visited after the 2013 event has yet to be seen by anyone – even the DISCO officer. This increasingly looks like a case of 'masterly inaction'.

On the other hand, at the district level district disaster plans, VDC (Village Development Committee) disaster planning and capacity building are in full swing. The NRCS is pursuing its model of planning and disaster response at VDC and village level. It appears highly normative with no evidence that its 'plans' or 'capacity building' efforts have any effects. In Lamjung there is also the Hariyo Ban programme led by WWF with Care International and funded by USAID and running in parallel and separate from the DDC and the Red Cross. This is working within a conservation framework (in a conservation 'corridor') in relation to climate change on community adaptation planning, a programme of which the DISCO was

highly dismissive. The relations between the Red Cross, the Hariyo Ban, the DISCO office and the District Disaster Committee appear to be limited. The DDC and District work within the confines of their traditional mandate with little funding and despite talk at the national level of what will be done, very little of this appears to be visible in Lamjung.

By contrast, in Viet Nam, citizen demands for protection from natural hazards have meant that disaster preparedness is accorded much attention. Down to commune and even village levels, authorities have enacted elaborate planning and monitoring practices. In the research areas, each household is assigned an evacuation location, household level food supplies are checked and pre-and post-storm season planning is conducted annually. In addition, drills are often run to ensure preparedness, and officials have clearly delineated areas of responsibility; if someone dies 'on their watch,' they are held accountable. Some district level officials mentioned that during flood and storm season, so much of their time is allocated to such duties that they struggle to fulfil non-flood or storm related duties.

3. Other processes impacting on changing CCA/DRR governance

a. Decentralisation

Proposals for new climate governance structures and disaster related chains of command are not always aligned with parallel decentralisation processes that shift power to meso levels. This is evident in Zambia, for instance, where there is a significant disconnect between national and local levels in terms of policy development and coordination in sectors related to climate change. One reason for this is the lack of de facto decentralisation. Although Zambia officially has a decentralisation policy, there has so far been little real devolution of authority and budgets to District Councils. Recently, some Councils have started referring to floods, droughts and climate change as a main argument for devolution. In the media and in letters to the central government, they have pointed out that their responsibility to facilitate local development is impossible if they are not provided with greater control over funds and decision-making in DRR and CCA. While the link between the DRR, CCA and decentralisation is not always forged so explicitly, it is often at play at the meso level and between levels.

A more subtle linkage between these three is evident in Viet Nam. Here, there has been a long and complex decentralisation and public administration reform process whereby the state has attempted to empower meso level institutions while retaining a firm central grip on overall policy. The desire of central government to retain control over a diverse country and the desire of local authorities to retain their autonomy is reflected in the oft cited Vietnamese saying that 'the rule of the emperor stops at the village gate'. The geographic distances, divisions during the precolonial and colonial periods and the need for devolved decision-making during the course of the war all created centrifugal pressures, but at the same time generated a commitment by the state after the war to reassume centralised control, which has some cases led to disastrous economic policies. The process of moving towards decentralisation in Viet Nam has moved "in fits and starts" (Wescott, 2003:24), but has picked up speed over the past decade. Acceptance of the need to formalise and even encourage decentralisation has been enshrined in new policies related to public administration reform. In 2003, a new policy decentralised many functions to the district level (Decree No 79/2003/NĐ-CP). In 2005, new regulations on decentralisation from central

government to local authorities were promulgated and applied, along with efforts to improve the competence and responsibility of local government. The links and the responsibility of local government to the population were more explicitly defined and reinforced as well.

The effects of the decentralization policies are evident in the meso-based governance of both disaster risk management and CCA. Climate change policies and directives are perceived and implemented by local government within broader structures that determine their roles and responsibilities. In interviews at provincial and district levels, there are clear indications that local authorities are struggling to understand how they can mobilise their own human and (limited) financial resources to respond to new climate demands within broader efforts to achieve economic development targets. They also stress, and indeed are proud of their efforts to take strong steps to respond to the needs of their constituents before, during and (somewhat less) after disasters. They are proud that they do not wait for support from higher levels, but have the capacities to act themselves.

b. Markets and urbanisation

Markets are driving major changes in agriculture and rural development, and in most cases the pursuit of both urban and rural driven economic growth almost inevitably outweighs concerns about disaster risk and climatic hazards. Governance to prevent maladaptation is in many countries not on the agenda, as authorities pursue DRR/CCA goals only if they coincide (and do not conflict) with plans for economic development.

In Viet Nam the ways in which markets are influencing land use, and with that risk, are intertwined with urbanisation processes wherein expansion of both residential and industrial areas are reducing land available for run-off, expanding risks of landslides, etc. Our findings show little evidence that awareness and concerns regarding climate and disaster risk are leading to more risk aware governance in the fora where plans for maladaptation are being formulated. Two factors appear to underpin this failure to address Priority Area 4 of the HFA. First, there is an implicit recognition that, even though disaster risk is a growing concern, the ambiguous causality between maladaptation and disasters means that it is highly unlikely that any politician will be held to account for 'development induced disasters'. Second, as will be described below, faith in infrastructural solutions has meant that, even if these risks are recognised, there is assumed to be an infrastructural solution to overcome them. One could even postulate that the arrival of climate resources may be creating a moral hazard wherein these new infrastructural solutions can be expected to soon 'come online' and that concerns about reproducing risk are therefore unwarranted given the solutions soon to be implemented.

There are some caveats to these observations. Commune and district officials are aware and do complain that new road construction, removal of sand from riverbanks (often illicit) for construction and some production priorities (e.g., the example of rubber in Quang Binh noted above) can aggravate risk. The question is whether these concerns are ultimately headed in the juggernaut process of Vietnamese economic development today.

c. Infrastructure biases

Investments in risk reduction are being made in some of the research areas, but the selection of these investments is not necessarily 'evidence based'. The nature of the above

trends contributes to a tendency to see infrastructure as the solution for risk reduction, regardless of the problem that generated the risk. This also puts into question assumptions about the extent to which 'community based' modalities and planning processes can overcome these inherent biases. There are dangers that the 'no regrets' rhetoric surrounding CCA can feed into a tendency to invest in pre-existing economic development agendas based on infrastructure without critical analyses of whether these are appropriate or even if they constitute maladaptation and increase risks for some. There may be tendencies to label certain investments as implying 'no regrets' before the potential for regrets emanating from the overall development package of which they are a part has been fully explored.

In Viet Nam the primary focus of adaptation efforts from both flood and storm control efforts and longer-term climate adaptation is on large infrastructural investments, including construction of sea and river dykes and dams to protect homes and agricultural/aquacultural land from flooding (where these are feasible). The main financing and choice of these investments are ultimately the responsibility of national government and the result of tendencies or biases in funding procedures, as mentioned above. Provinces, however, are able to influence project selection and usually have a central role in managing the contracts for these initiatives.

Vietnamese efforts to protect the population from extreme climate events are especially dominated by the construction of sea and river dykes. Due to its location and geography, sea dykes are very important for Viet Nam to protect resources and the population from hazards, particularly flooding. This is a historical trend, and some observers have implied that commitments to build and maintain these dykes are indicative of the overall state of the social contract. As early as the Ly dynasty (1009-1225) sea dykes were built along the banks of the Red river, Ma river and Lam river in the North of Viet Nam. Since that time, the construction and repairing of dykes has been a major priority in disaster risk reduction efforts of the country. Over the centuries, the building of dyke systems has been so central to protecting the population as to come to be associated with the culture and economy of the nation.⁵

Prior to the extreme floods that occurred in Central Viet Nam and the Mekong Delta in 1999 and 2000, it was suggested that the decline of central planning and associated collective institutions led to declining investments in maintaining this system of dykes (Adger, 1999), but this seems to have changed after these extreme events and with growing national awareness of climate change. Many interviewees noted increased prioritisation of and funding for infrastructure from the central government in the aftermath of the 1999 flood.

The majority of dykes in Viet Nam are made from earth, therefore, dykes are constantly being eroded and need to be maintained, repaired and upgraded on a regular basis. Scientists have recommended "softer" measures such as planting mangroves to protect sea dykes and for other aspects of environmental protection. In the early 1980s, mangrove planting and rehabilitation projects were begun with the support of different international organisations such as the Red Cross societies of Denmark and Japan. More than 20,000

⁵ <http://thethaovanhoa.vn/133N20110112091830165T0/de-viet-nam-xung-dang-la-di-san-nhan-loai.htm> (December 20, 2013)

hectares of mangroves were planted and rehabilitated in northern provinces of Viet Nam.⁶ Efforts for mangrove afforestation, protection, rehabilitation and dyke construction are underway in many coastal areas. According to Nguyen Xuan Dieu, director of the National Department for Dyke Management and Flood and Storm Prevention, mangrove forests play an important role in protecting sea dykes. To maintain and develop the mangrove forests, the Department has a strategy stretching to 2020. Plans include rehabilitating 324,000 hectares of mangrove forest; protecting and restoring 20,000 hectares of existing forest; and planting and managing 124,000 hectares of new mangrove forest areas. In addition, they aim to develop mangrove forest conservation in ways that are congruent with improving the means of subsistence for local people in the forest areas. Mangrove-planting initiatives, however, are largely driven by NGOs and donors.

This is also the case regarding many other 'soft' adaptation efforts, including awareness-raising and capacity-building. Notably, though, DRR activities integrating these 'soft' strategies with 'hard' infrastructure are typical and unquestioned. A convergence of DRR and CCA in Viet Nam may therefore contribute to an integration of soft strategies into CCA as well.

4. Conclusion: What is the state of the social contract

a. The disparate nature of public accountability

Governance of CCA and DRR reflects the state of the social contract for addressing human suffering caused by disasters. The range of government agencies that take action (or fail to act), their scope and position in the hierarchy of decision making, and the factors that induce them to act reflect their relationship with and perceived responsibilities to their citizenry. Our research has revealed extensive differences in this regard – some governments are goaded to respond to extreme events through media, civil society or donor pressure, while others take up disaster response without hesitation. The social contract for responding to gradual climate changes resulting in recurrent shocks, but perhaps not clearly identifiable 'disaster's, are influenced by a very different set of factors. The following two final examples illustrate the range of motivations and limitations behind social contracts.

In the Nepalese hills, landslides are the most important disasters in terms of frequency, though effects are very small scale and localised compared to what is seen in the terai (plains) of Nepal and in Vietnam, Uganda and Zambia. Historically most of Nepal's population has lived in the hills, and only since the 1950 has it expanded in the terai. The dispersed and small scale nature of disasters linked to landslides in the hills may be a contributing factor to the limits of the social contract with respect to responses to disaster between the Nepalese state and its people. But there are also grounds for thinking that the Nepalese NAPA (and the donors behind it) may have got it completely wrong given the weight they have given to designing elaborate technological solutions to address the risk of GLOFs rather than landslides in the hills. Moreover, for the NAPA this has led to a ranking of hill districts as the most climate change 'vulnerable' districts while other evidence points to the terai as experiencing greater numbers of displacement and deaths.

⁶ <http://vietnamnews.vn/Sunday/Features/197665/man-groves-to-the-rescue.html> (December 20, 2013)

Particularly with regard to flood and storm control, in Viet Nam there are explicit policies, regulations, roles and task assignments in place at all levels. Public sector actors are thus held accountable for preparing for and responding to potential disasters. The prevailing social contract means that the government of Viet Nam would not consider delaying any response to a disaster or delaying creation of appropriate institutional structures while waiting for outside assistance. Accountabilities are anchored in transparent institutionalisation of disaster response, based on clear-cut chains of command and predetermined allocation of roles and responsibilities. This is not the only basis for accountability. Even with respect to more gradual environmental change, the roles of agricultural authorities in advising farmers how to change their production systems to adapt to the risks that they currently face are not in question. Both of these types of responses reflect a trend over the past twenty years moving away from central planning and towards decentralised and demand driven (accountable) meso level institutions.

b. From disaster response to comprehensive disaster risk management

The social contract for disaster risk management is strikingly different in different country contexts. In Zambia, for instance, explicit decisions have been made not to assist those who remain settled in certain high-risk areas, which suggests a limited and highly politicised social contract regarding disaster risk reduction. This can be compared to the Vietnamese social contract regarding disaster risk reduction, where a focus on strengthening housing, pre-positioning relief supplies and planning evacuation routes for those living in high-risk environments is central to disaster preparedness.

Regarding disaster response, however, more similarities and a generally stronger social contract are evident. In Zambia politicians want to be seen providing disaster response and relief. Even the government of Uganda, which has sometimes needed public goading to acknowledge events as a disaster and provide associated assistance, reacts when they are unable to ignore an extreme event. While this does not point to a strong social contract, it does indicate that across the country case studies, government officials show a political understanding of being seen to respond, and thus an understanding of the importance of the social contract and the legitimacy it endows. However, the social contract does not seem to extend to situations where disaster risk reduction is not politically rewarding. Politicians across the country case studies generally do not prioritise disaster risk reduction over citizens' demand for socio-economic development.

This reality also serves to question the nature of the social contract and disaster risk reduction. A more comprehensive risk reduction, i.e., risk reduction integrated into all aspects of development and government activity, is far from evident. Instead, stopgap measures and retrofitting of existing structures and systems seem to be the norm. This may be due to the way DRR has been presented and received, the capacity of governments to comprehend the complex implications of risk, and their capacities to allocate human and financial resources to act. Regardless of the causes, it indicates a social contract based on a limited and probably inadequate standard for DRR, which is thus unlikely to compel comprehensive risk reduction.

c. Situating CCA within the 'day jobs' of meso level bureaucrats

The point of departure for climate advice has too often been directive and normative: Telling people what to do; but we know from other development efforts that telling people what to do (and perhaps then just sending them on a course) is not very effective. This normative approach to development programming comes all too often without an understanding of the existing responsibilities and roles of the institutions and people who are supposed to do all this climate change stuff. In Viet Nam there are already indications of a 'training and mapping fatigue' at meso level. We have to recognise that meso level officials already have a 'day job', and we need to understand their capacity and motivations for responding to climate change in relation to what they are already doing.

The fact that an awareness of CCA has been slow to emerge at the meso level can be seen as a failing of the international climate change community and its structures, where a singular focus on one issue overshadows attention to the integrated nature of realities on the ground. The civil servants in districts and municipalities struggling with climate change adaptation may also be those working with distribution of new seed varieties or ideas for planting practices, managing local water and irrigation schemes, attracting private investments, or a slew of other challenges. Climate change is just one aspect of their everyday efforts to fulfil their responsibilities and uphold the social contract. Our research has indicated that presenting climate change to civil servants as a single, isolated issue is unlikely to penetrate the juxtaposition of existing challenges for which they are responsible.

Longer-term climate change response is clearly not (yet) locked into clear structures of local accountability. The emphasis is on grand plans, developing scenarios and the design and prioritisation of investments, the implications of which are far from the day-to-day decisions and governance relations at the meso level.

Furthermore, the social contract regarding longer-term adaptation is much weaker than that for responding to known, current risks. Civil servants are often already integrating CCA related to the recurrent smaller floods and droughts they are all too aware of into their existing responsibilities, though they might not explicitly identify it as adaptation per se. This reflects the fulfilment of the social contract as they seek to perform their duties, which are often impacted by climate uncertainty and variability. Outside assistance might therefore be most apt when it identifies climate change aspects of agricultural extension or water management, for example, so that adaptation can be explicitly addressed as part of an approach that is integrated into people's 'day jobs'. Helping civil servants and citizens address climate change impacts they are already trying to cope with could also aid in strengthening the social contract by reducing the ambiguity surrounding climate change.

d. Governance, politics and the media

In the past, calls for better governance of disaster risk management have tended to emphasise three components: more 'political will', greater risk awareness, and implementation of 'best practices'. It was assumed that there would be synergies among these three. Our research suggests that it is time to unpack the black box of political will to understand how, due to greater transparency deriving from increasing media coverage, governance is being influenced by growing 'political will', but that the result is not necessarily best practices.

Disasters are becoming news. This is partly the result of coverage in the mass media, and partly due to the spread of information through social media and the internet. As a result of this, pressures on politicians are growing. This has led to increased public accountability for disaster response, and to some extent for preparedness. In some instances it has resulted in the public bypassing governance structures to respond directly to disasters reported in the news. We have seen limited evidence, however, that the increased awareness of disasters created by the media is leading to greater understanding and demands for accountability regarding the underlying factors that generate risk. These factors, and the trade-offs that are assumed (rightly or wrongly) to be inevitable in reducing these risks are too complex to generate greater public accountability. As a result, increased focus on disasters by the media and politicians is not necessarily leading to shifts in governance structures that reflect 'best practices' in DRR.

Furthermore, the amorphous lure of climate change funding and a creeping increase in public awareness about the links between climate change and disasters may generate different pressures on political structures in the future, but so far it seems that this is characterised more by 'running for the trough' of new climate funds than by 'good governance'.

e. National governance, the 'community' and the missing meso: searching for good enough governance

The findings of this paper show that there are indeed elements of a social contract for DRR and CCA at meso level, but they are variable according to context. The potential to build 'good enough governance' (Grindle, 2007) around this social contract is overlooked due to an over emphasis on national policies, targets and investment plans, and the hierarchical structures that are required to roll them out. In these planning processes the potential dynamics that might support (or at least not undermine) the social contract of street level bureaucrats (Lipsky, 2007) are overlooked due to ignorance and disinterest in local governance and the range of other responsibilities and accountabilities that enmesh the meso level. It also has to be recognised that in some contexts, such as Nepal, it may not be just a matter of building better supply or demand for public goods which the good governance agenda focuses on, but more a question of addressing some of the basic collective action problems concerning the establishment of a social contract that have yet to be resolved.

We have found little evidence that 'community based' CCA or disaster risk management projects are making significant inroads in meso level governance 'from the other end'. The civil society structures that are driving the community based agenda are for the most part too isolated from local government, too fragmented and too reliant on (and accountable to) donors with unreliable and short-term commitments to these small projects. 'Best practices' they may be, but it is difficult to discern a plausible theory of change through which they may have a more profound impact on governance. This may change if the large scale investments in CCA start to flow, but there are indications thus far that prevailing biases towards infrastructural solutions are likely to displace attention to modalities that are thus far associated with training and mapping without resources for implementation, and 'serial pilots' that are never scaled up.

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