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Abstract

The intersection of the post-conflict reconstruction processes established in Nepal's Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2006, and the post-disaster reconstruction effort that swung into action following the country's devastating earthquakes in 2015 provides an important opportunity to observe to what extent synergies between the two reconstruction processes have been successfully exploited. This paper critically examines these two processes, demonstrating that despite a growing recognition of the value of linking these processes by researchers, in practice they often remain separate. It shows how certain actors have framed the post-disaster reconstruction as unrelated to post-conflict activities in order to avoid what they perceive as the risk of politicising – and thus delaying – the post-disaster reconstruction process. The paper suggests that this is a mistake. The process of post-disaster reconstruction is innately political and intricately entwined with the very same issues and activities the post-conflict reconstruction process attempted to address. Moreover, we argue that the entire process is taking place within a political context which is a product of the as-yet unresolved post-conflict polity. Any reconstruction process that does not take this into account risks being undermined by the same challenges that underpinned the country's conflict.

Key Words: Nepal, post-conflict reconstruction, post-disaster reconstruction

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Introduction

The process of reconstruction following a crisis, whether it was caused by armed conflict or natural hazard-related disaster (NHrD) is long and complex. It commonly takes many years to bring to a satisfactory conclusion, if it reaches such a point at all. In a striking number of cases, of which Nepal is a prime example, this process is further complicated when communities are affected by both natural hazard-related disasters and armed conflict. Nepal was still struggling to implement the raft of measures and reforms aimed at rebuilding the country following its ten year civil war when it was hit by two massive earthquakes, triggering a second reconstruction process.[1] This intertwining of the post-conflict reconstruction process (PCR) established in Nepal's Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the post-disaster reconstruction (PDR) effort that swung into action following the 2015 earthquake provides an important opportunity to observe how these two processes affect each other, and to what extent key stakeholders have been able to exploit the synergies between the two reconstruction processes in their efforts to rebuild. In this respect, Nepal's experiences can provide a vital insight to a wider contemporary debate in the fields of disaster risk reduction and post-conflict reconstruction; how should we understand the relationship between the phenomena of violent conflict and NHrDs, particularly the interventions that follow them, and how might this affect the way we approach disasters, be they caused by war or natural hazards? Although to some the two phenomena are entirely separate (see, for example, Albala-Bertrand's work)[2] this paper will use the case of Nepal to

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demonstrate the importance of viewing the two processes within the same framework, as well as providing some insights as to why the idea that conflict and disaster are unrelated persists so stubbornly.

This is particularly important given the complete erasure of the question of war and violent conflict from the flagship global document on disaster risk reduction, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (hereafter Sendai Framework). This document represented a great leap forward in the way the international community addressed disasters when it was signed in 2015. It placed the 'build back better' principle popularised following the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 at the heart of post-disaster reconstruction;[3] firmly favoured a proactive approach to disaster risk management over responding to them *post facto;* and advocated for a cross-sectoral approach that recognises the linkages between disaster risk reduction (DRR), climate change and development, in theory at least.[4] However, a critical opportunity was missed when negotiators decided to remove all references to war and violent conflict from the document's final draft, deeming these to be too political.[5] This striking silence is in spite of overwhelming evidence that some of the world's most vulnerable communities are often affected by a layering of conflict and natural hazard related disasters. Indeed, 50 per cent of the world's NHrD affected populations between 2005 and 2009 (up to 80 per cent in some years) were situated in fragile and conflict affected states.[6] This is a striking example of the devastating negative cycle in which a community's vulnerability to either conflict or disaster is worsened by the effects of the other. As the Nepalese experience described in this article will show, to deny the links between conflict and disaster – particularly on the grounds that the former will 'politicise' latter – is both unrealistic and presents a missed opportunity to break this cycle of mutually reinforcing vulnerabilities and find ways to live up to the idea of building back better after crisis. This is particularly important considering that the experience of Nepal could be compared with a

number of other contexts where the timeline of post-conflict and post-disaster reconstruction differs.

This article represents part of a wider study of the PCR-PDR nexus at the policy level, comparing a number of such cases, including Sri Lanka, where a post-disaster reconstruction process has been followed by the reconstruction after an armed conflict, and Aceh where such two process have taken place concurrently after the 2004 Tsunami disaster that also helped to bring about the end of a civil war. It understands PCR and PDR as the overarching terms to describe a range of activities carried out to repair the physical, political, social and economic fabric of a community after it has been disrupted by conflict or natural hazard related disaster, activities which are distinct from the immediate provision of relief in the aftermath of a crisis.

Methods

The paper is based on 20 in-depth semi-structured interviews with 29 people carried out over three weeks in February 2017, as part of a wider comparative research programme entailing fieldwork in Sri Lanka and Indonesia. Interviewees included representatives of the Nepalese government, local and international NGOs, and international and donor organisations. Given that the focus of this paper is on decisions made with regards to policy, stakeholders were recruited with expert knowledge of post-disaster and post-conflict policy making at the national and international levels. At the national level these included government bodies, local NGOs, and researchers and academics. At the international level representatives of INGOs, international organisations and donor governments were also interviewed. Semi-structured interviews usually lasted between 45–85 minutes, and employed a grounded theory based approach (one that focused on generating theory from data as it was collected, rather than testing the applicability of a previously identified theory)[7]

that enabled the authors to adapt questions as key themes became apparent and triangulate important elements of information as they emerged. These interviews were carried out in Kathmandu, since this is where the policy making community is based. In addition to these elite interviews, the authors also conducted a number of informal focus group discussions with practitioners from a number of international and national NGOs as well as representatives of youth groups. The study also draws on extensive background research into the impact and progress of post-conflict and post-disaster reconstruction so far (including data from the United Nations Common Feedback Project, and reports by international organisations and INGOs), as well as one author's previous research in earthquake affected communities Sindhupalchowk in April 2016, to provide context.

Context

Nepal is a country of diversity in terms of its geography, caste structure and ethno-linguistic groups, where the most recent census (2011) recorded a population of 26.5 million people formed by 125 ethnic and caste groups. Geographically, it is one of the most mountainous countries in the world, home to the towering peaks of the Himalayas, and yet the fertile Terai plains region along the country's southern border plays a key role in its economic and agricultural production. Although the country remains predominantly rural, it is urbanizing at one of the fastest rates in the region, creating both problems and opportunities in a country which still finds itself on firmly on the list of Least Developed Countries (LDCs). It is within this context that both armed conflict and disaster have occurred within a relatively short period of time. The earthquake struck less than 9 years after the end of the war and at a time the Nepali government was still struggling to implement the measures identified in the peace accord (still engaged in the 'reform' and 'peace

consolidation' phases of the post-conflict reconstruction process),[8] compounding the country's physical and socio-economic challenges.

From its inception on 13 February 1996 to the signing of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement on 21 November 2006, the Nepalese civil war caused around 13,000 deaths, thousands more disappearances, and resulted in the internal displacement of up to 150,000 people, claiming a particularly heavy toll on impoverished rural communities. It pitted the Nepalese government against a Maoist insurgency which sought to abolish the country's powerful monarchy and install a 'People's Republic' in its place. As the war drew on the Maoists increasingly exploited widespread dissatisfaction at Nepal's glaring inequality – a product of factors including the country's rigid caste system, urban-rural divide and discrimination against indigenous groups and women – to garner support for their cause.[9] The conflict came to an end after several years of high drama in Nepali public life. The murder of King Birendra and nine other members of the royal family by Crown Prince Dipendra (including himself) in June 2001, was followed by a rapid intensification of violence from both parties and the restoration of absolute monarchy by King Gyanendra in February 2005. This move prompted extensive protests against the authoritarian rule of King Gyanendra and gave the Maoists and mainstream political parties common cause to work together towards the restoration of representative democracy. Soon after, the international community, led by the United Nations, started to channel money into the country in support of the CPA and related peace-building efforts. In addition to measures related to the separation of the warring parties (and the eventual demobilization or integration into the Nepalese armed forces of the Maoist fighters), the peace agreement focused strongly on questions related to the inclusion of previously marginalised groups, and the transformation of the country's political structures. In order to achieve these aims a number of new structures and activities were introduced in the years following the war's end, including a Constituent Assembly,

transitional justice mechanisms such as a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programme for ex-combatants, and physical reconstruction projects for infrastructure damaged during the decade long conflict.

It is clear that in this time some progress has been made, for example in areas such as DDR and the inclusion of the Maoists in the political process, and there seems little chance now that the Maoists would take up arms again. However, it would be a mistake to present the conflict as having been resolved. In fact, some of the most important factors in this conflict have not been effectively addressed in the decade following the war's end. This was highlighted by the violent and widespread protests that greeted the government's hurried promulgation of a new constitution in 2015, and would eventually claim 45 lives.[10] To many, particularly from the country's large Madhesi and Tharu communities, the new constitution represented a regression on key issues such as citizenship, federalism, inclusion and representation. Politics in Nepal remain highly unstable, characterised by frequent changes in government, the threat of violence and the persistence of the same pernicious inequalities that first led the Maoists to take up arms.[11] Therefore, despite the time that had passed it is appropriate to understand Nepal in 2015 as still in the midst of negotiating post-war transition, challenged by conflict drivers.

It was against this backdrop that further tragedy struck in the spring of 2015, when the country was shaken by two devastating earthquakes. The first, on 25 April, had a magnitude of 7.8 and resulted in the deaths of nearly 9,000 people, injuring tens of thousands more and destroying or damaging around 755,000 houses. The second, an aftershock which struck as the relief operation was in full swing on 12 May, was slightly less severe at 7.3 but still resulted in several hundred deaths, adding more strain to an already highly difficult situation. Although the government and agencies operating in Nepal had been preparing for 'the big one' for some time, the relatively light toll brought about in urban centres such as Kathmandu

meant that many consider the country to have had a lucky escape. However, as with the conflict that preceded it, residents of rural areas bore the brunt of the tragedy, suffering the highest damage and presenting the greatest challenge to relief and reconstruction efforts. As the figures below demonstrate, there is a significant overlap between conflict and earthquake affected areas to the north of Kathmandu (including Rasuwa, Gorkha, Dhading, Sindhupalchowk and Nuwakot). Although the areas in the far West that were most affected by the conflict were spared the worst of the earthquake, places such as Rolpa and Rukum were still classified as 'moderately affected' by humanitarian actors.
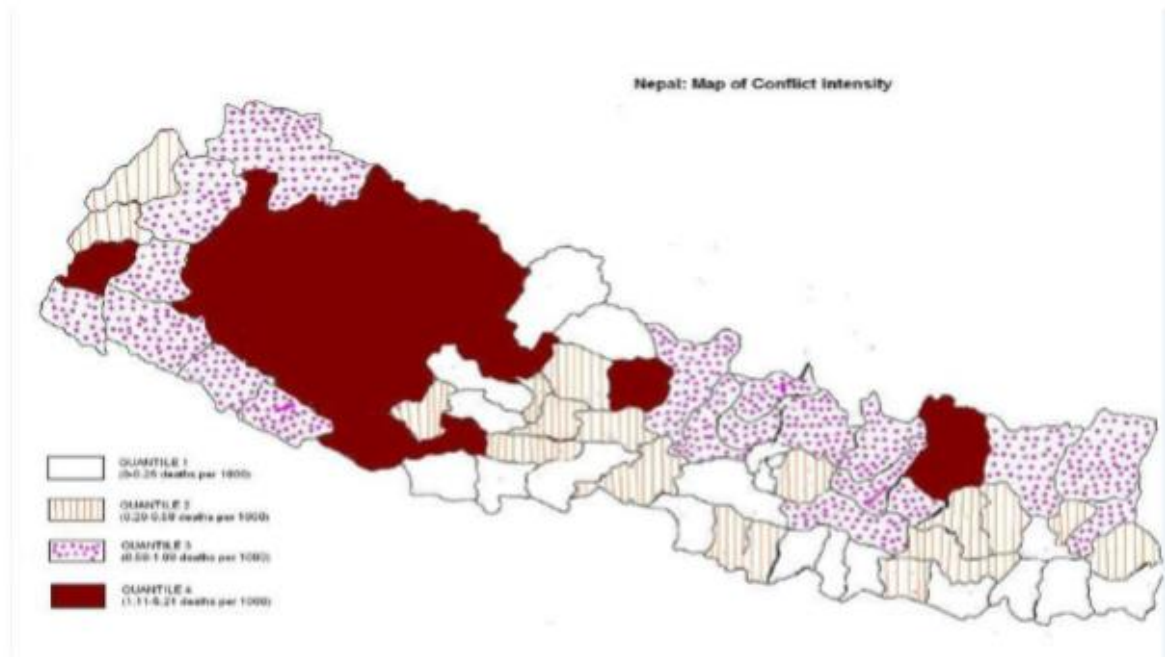
Figure 1. Map of conflict intensity in Nepal Civil War (Source: Do and Iyer 2010)

Figure 2: Map of deaths and injuries from 2015 Earthquake by intensity (Source: MapAction 2015)

The international response to the earthquake was significant – as well as mobilising immediate relief efforts, a donor conference held in June 2015 raised pledges of US$ 4.4 billion towards reconstruction efforts. However, the reconstruction effort was severely hampered by a crippling five month-long fuel blockade by members of the country's Madhesi community protesting their under-representation in the newly adopted constitution. This prevented key imports of fuel from across the border with India, severely hampering the economy and leading to shortages of medicine, cooking gas and vital reconstruction materials. Nearly two years on from the earthquake, at the time this research was carried out, there was widespread concern at the pace of reconstruction, both from internationally and in affected communities. In a survey of 2,100 affected households carried out by the UN in January 2017, 55 per cent of respondents still felt that their main reconstruction needs were not being addressed, and only 49 per cent felt that reconstruction was making progress.[12] These perceptions are mirrored by slow progress in the official housing reconstruction programme. By September 2017 construction had started on only 87,525 of the 631,781 eligible households, with fewer than 20,000 having been reported as completed.[13]

These two events, and perhaps even more significantly their aftermaths, have had an immense impact on the political, social and economic landscape of the country. They have laid bare tensions around challenging issues of inclusion, land rights and poverty, they have led to an influx of external actors and influences, particularly from the Western donor architecture, and they have repeatedly challenged the ways in which power is embedded in Nepalese government and society. Despite this the two processes – the post-conflict and post-disaster – have rarely been considered together in the Nepalese context. Nonetheless, there are compelling reasons to interrogate them side by side, not least the growing body of literature interrogating the link between climate change and related disasters and conflict,[14]

how conflict affects communities' resilience to climate and natural hazard related disasters,[15] and to what extent NHrDs make conflict more likely.[16] Asking to what extent recent the two reconstruction processes have been related to each other helps us to better understand the context in which the earthquake response has occurred, and elucidates the considerable practical and theoretical linkages between them, as will be discussed in the next section.[17] Increasingly researchers focused on responses to such humanitarian crises are highlighting the need to pay 'attention to ongoing historical and political processes in the design of recovery programming',[18] and underlining the potential of 'combining disciplines' in order to develop effective responses to rebuilding in the wake of conflict and disaster.[19] It is for this reason that this paper proposes to explore the links between post-conflict and post-disaster reconstruction in Nepal, with a view to understanding to what extent the former has influenced the latter, and whether any salient lessons have been learned between the two processes.

Two sides of the same coin? Understanding post-conflict and post-disaster reconstruction together

The existing academic literature has evolved in recent years to suggest there are significant links between natural hazard related disasters and violent conflicts, and between the reconstruction that follows these events. As we shall discuss below, both processes are concerned with vulnerabilities, and both often deal with the same issues, using similar tools and often involving the same institutional actors. We can also consider PDR and PCR as both forming part of the wider liberal architecture of humanitarian intervention, with all the normative meaning and baggage that this might entail. However, this does not make the two processes interchangeable. As we shall see, there are important differences in the nature of

these reconstruction processes, from the nature of the triggering event and the psychological impact of this on affected communities, to specific types of activities unique to PDR and PCR, to the willingness of donors to get involved. It would be a mistake, then, to believe that one type of intervention will address the other's needs by default – a more nuanced approach is necessary.

Whilst noting essential differences between the two types of crisis, the 'complex political emergencies' literature of the 1990s noted that a key element of the nexus between post-disaster and post-conflict was around how armed conflicts and natural hazard related disasters could exacerbate the conditions for each other from a vulnerability perspective.[20] The most vulnerable groups in society are often affected by a 'layering' of natural hazard related disasters and social conflict or ongoing violence,[21] with victims of the most severe disasters from Aceh, to Nepal, Sri Lanka and Haiti also having suffered the effects of serious or prolonged conflict. This layering effect makes the communities concerned even less able to respond to the impact of a natural hazard related disaster,[22] whilst the effects of disaster on the availability of resources and the resilience of a society can make conflict more likely (see Uexkull's work on drought and conflict, or Peters, Keen and Mitchell for an overview of the coincidence of conflict and disaster).[23] This represents what Vivekananda et al. see as the 'negative cycle' in which conflict induced fragility increases vulnerability to climate change and natural hazard related disasters, which in turn diminishes human security and fans the flames of conflict.[24] As Nel and Righarts noted 'natural disasters significantly increase the risk of violent civil conflict both in the short and medium term, specifically in low and middle-income countries that have intermediate to high levels of inequality, mixed political regimes, and sluggish economic growth'.[25] At the same time violent conflict drastically diminishes a country's ability to prevent, mitigate and respond to disasters, exacerbating the

vulnerabilities that turn hazards into disasters, such as economic capacity and resources, effective governance and institutions, and community participation and accountability (see Twigg for further discussion of the characteristics of disaster resilient communities).[26] The layering and interaction between disaster and conflict vis à vis physical, socio-economic and political vulnerabilities therefore mean that it is not always feasible, or advisable, to attempt to treat post-conflict and post-disaster reconstruction as two separate processes. Moreover, focusing on the links between the two – be that by applying lessons learned from one process in the other, or integrating activities from PDR into PCR processes and vice versa – presents an opportunity to intervene in this negative symbiotic relationship, to break the mutually reinforcing circle in which both conflict and disaster increase communities' vulnerability and lessen their ability to withstand, or prevent, the next round of suffering.

The extant literature highlights some links and overlaps between PCR and PDR, as contemporary approaches these processes share a holistic outlook on rebuilding in the aftermath of crisis. Although both maintain an important focus on the challenges of physical reconstruction, particularly as this pertains to infrastructure and shelter, they also seek to address a broader range of issues relating to economic and social reconstruction, such as restoring livelihoods and strengthening governance and legal structures.[27] Of course, whilst there are significant similarities between the processes of post-conflict and post-disaster reconstruction it is also important to acknowledge their differences. Whilst much can be learned and shared between them, it is clear that these activities are not interchangeable. Albala-Bertrand argues that the nature of the 'triggering event' that brings about the disaster has crucial consequences for the nature of the disaster, distinguishing the exogenous nature of the triggering event in an NHrD from the endogenous nature of most conflict causes.[28] This is an important point, although his argument that 'the institutional endogeneity of these

triggering events, associated to society's proneness and vulnerability, is what makes socially made disasters more complex than natural ones' comes perilously close to falling into the trap of ignoring the political reasons through which a natural hazard becomes a disaster, and underplays the vast complexity of NHrD's (of which Nepal is a prime example).[29] It is imperative to acknowledge that some concerns that arise in post-conflict reconstruction efforts, such as DDR of ex-combatants or the implementation of a conflict-ending political settlement, are not present in post-disaster works (though the activities used to achieve them, like work to restore livelihoods, may be similar in some cases). In addition, the trauma caused to affected communities by conflict and NHrD is most often quite different, due to the nature of the crisis, the speed of its onset and the way that blame for the suffering produced is attributed. As Simpson puts it 'a house collapsing has a different death spell to the attack of an angry and anonymous mob'.[30] This in turn has an impact on the kind of community mobilisation witnessed following conflict and disaster. The moment of apparent unity and upsurge in mutual support between communities in disaster affected countries is a well-documented phenomenon, what Oliver-Smith and Hoffman called the 'brotherhood of pain',[31] and Solnit the 'extraordinary communities' of disaster.[32] This rise in volunteerism and solidarity in the immediate aftermath may also happen within certain groups following conflict (for example, support by neighbouring or diaspora members of the same ethnic or religious group), but this lacks the unifying force often witnessed after disaster, albeit for varying amounts of time.

Another key characteristic that is often attributed to post-conflict reconstruction to mark it out as different from post-disaster reconstruction is the apparently political nature of the former. This, it is suggested, makes donors more likely to intervene in the seemingly apolitical context of a natural hazard related disaster when they might be more wary of doing

so in the highly politicised aftermath of violent conflict.[33] Ilan Kelman's work on 'disaster diplomacy', however unsuccessful he shows this to be, demonstrates how the post-disaster moment presents a perceived opportunity for even political foes to offer support to affected countries.[34] Certainly, this distinction seems to be quite widely adopted, and influences the way that many stakeholders perceive and react to conflicts and NHrDs. De Torrente has criticised attempts to challenge the positioning of humanitarian action as apolitical. He argues that attempts to link humanitarian action to the political goals of the international community, such as peace-building or development, 'sacrifice' the neutrality, impartiality and independence of humanitarian action (often known as the 'humanitarian imperative').[35] Humanitarian action's claims to impartiality have been criticised, though – as Hillhorst argues, whilst the humanitarian imperative is undoubtedly important, in practice it is far more ambiguous and politically contingent than its proponents might hope.[36]

This paper argues that to see post-conflict as political (acts caused by man) and post-disaster as apolitical (acts of God) is to fundamentally misunderstand the nature of disasters. Here again the literature suggests this to be a false dichotomy, and one that prevents effective interventions that break the cycle of conflict, vulnerability and disaster. Adopting Pelling's definition of natural hazard related disaster as the 'outcome of hazard and vulnerability coinciding', it is clear that it is the vulnerability of certain groups – an altogether manmade and thus political situation – that makes a hazard into a disaster.[37] That is to say, all disasters, whether they stem from an earthquake or a conflict, are essentially manmade. There is a widespread acceptance amongst disaster researchers today that so called 'natural disasters' are not natural.[38] Interventions must therefore address these human-made and eminently political vulnerabilities – poverty and inequality, for example – if they are to be effective. In this way, post-disaster reconstruction is just as political as post-conflict reconstruction, even if it is commonly perceived not to be the case.

The aims of both processes also differ in significant ways. Post-conflict reconstruction aims, in the words of the World Bank, 'to facilitate the transition to sustainable peace after hostilities have ceased and to support economic and social development'.[39] The five key dimensions of security, governance, socio-economic recovery, transitional justice and reconciliation are all considered part of the post-conflict reconstruction process and often used interchangeably with peace-building.[40] These are pursued via a wide range of specific programmes such as the rebuilding of infrastructure, services and housing, return of displaced populations, re-establishment of institutional structures for governances, reintegration of ex-combatants, clearance of landmines, trust building between divided communities, and the revitalisation of local employment and livelihoods. Post-disaster reconstruction, on the other hand, is today governed by the mantra 'build back better' now ingrained in key documents such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. This approach recognises the exceptional – and fleeting – circumstances that come together in the post-crisis landscape, and encourages the planners and agencies involved in the reconstruction process to make the most of the opportunities for improvement that these rare circumstances present.[41] In both cases, however, the post-crisis context is seen as a moment of opportunity to improve on what went before, and to address the social, economic and physical structures that contributed to the onset of conflict or disaster. This can be seen as an acknowledgement that it is impossible to return to the *status quo ante* following conflict or disaster, given the impact of people's experiences of conflict and reconstruction, and the very passage of time.[42] To attempt to do so would result in reconstruction that papered over the cracks (physical and psychosocial) caused by the crisis, and was perceived as inauthentic by local communities.[43]

Both PCR and PDR interventions from the international sphere are also strongly connected to the aims and methods of the international liberal peace architecture, and as such are linked by their normative underpinnings and key methods, as well as by the criticisms levelled at them. Although PCR has long been acknowledged as an activity at the heart of the liberal peace-building agenda, there is an increasing recognition that a great deal of PDR interventions can also be seen in this light.[44] This is not only due to the fact that the cast of characters carrying out these activities at the international level are often the same, but also because of the growing number of cases in which PDR activities have been used to try and assist peace-building aims, not always successfully (the cases of Sri Lanka and Aceh following the 2004 tsunami have prompted a wave of scholarship on this).[45] As well as bringing together many of the same actors and institutions, the liberal architecture of PCR and PDR also employs similar methods. For example, practitioners intervening in the aftermath of conflict and disaster alike increasingly turn to participatory methods.[46] Stakeholder participation in reconstruction projects is widely held to have a range of significant benefits to the rebuilding process, including better information gathering,[47] the empowerment of local communities,[48] and even an opportunity to help affected communities deal with their trauma.[49] It is no surprise, then, that stakeholder participation and consultation has become a buzzword in reconstruction after both conflict and disaster. This, along with the focus in both processes on community resilience and 'bottom up' thinking, can be viewed as part of the 'local turn' that has come to characterise the liberal peace-building architecture in recent years.[50] . This paper will seek to understand what are the barriers, then, that have prevented the two processes from being linked in practice (for example, by PDR processes to explicitly pursue goals linked to conflict, or by PCR processes contributing to disaster risk reduction goals) when there appears to be ample evidence for doing so in theory.

Missed opportunities? Interrogating the disconnect between post-conflict and post-earthquake processes in Nepal

If the question we posed at the beginning of this research was 'to what extent has Nepal's experience of post-conflict reconstruction influenced its approach to post-disaster reconstruction?' the answer very quickly became quite clear during our interviews. It has not. Time and again, interviewees from across the spectrum of Government representatives,[51] NGOs,[52] donors, [53] and International Organisations [54] that we engaged with informed us that the two processes were entirely separate, to the extent that several stated they believed it had 'never occurred' to anyone to link the two [55], or to attempt to apply lessons learned from the post-conflict reconstruction process in the aftermath of the earthquake. Even the rare interlocutors we spoke to who had attempted to integrate a systematic conflict-sensitive approach to their post-earthquake work still saw this process as fundamentally separate from the post-conflict reconstruction activities that had been taking place since 2006. [56] This was despite a wide acknowledgement, particularly amongst international representatives, that many of the key challenges that had bedevilled the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement continued to occupy a prominent role in their considerations when planning post-earthquake interventions.[57]

In this light, it becomes important to try and understand why there has been such a singular reluctance to link the two processes or to integrate learning from Nepal's decade long experience of post-conflict reconstruction into the huge effort to rebuild after the 2015 earthquake. The response to this is twofold, as will be explored in greater detail below. Firstly, there appears to be a wish on the part of many stakeholders to avoid what they perceive as the risk of politicising the PDR process. This desire has led to the deliberate distancing of post-earthquake activities from the distinctly political activities and issues pursued in the post-conflict. Secondly, it appears that numerous stakeholders believe that the

kind of reconstruction that takes place following a disaster such as an earthquake is so fundamentally different to that which follows a conflict, that there is little value in considering them together. And yet, as we shall demonstrate, the nature of the reconstruction that has taken place in Nepal since 2015 (or has failed to take place, as the case may be) demonstrates the process to be innately political and intricately entwined with the very same issues and activities the post-conflict reconstruction process attempted to address. This investigation views reconstruction as both 'Political' (situated in the framework and practice of politics of Nepal) and 'political' (bound up with questions of power, inclusion and inequality). Crucially, and as discussed in greater detail in the final section of the paper, it understands that the discourse around both types of politics in Nepal today has in large part been constituted and framed by the post-conflict settlement. As we argue in the final section of the paper, the entire process is taking place within – and being strongly affected by – a political context which is wholly a product of the tensions and compromises of the as-yet unresolved post-conflict polity.

Act of god or act of man – disputing the political nature of the post-disaster

It did not recognise who is well off, who is poor, who is marginalised… excluded people, it doesn't recognise, the earthquake didn't recognise.[58]

The quote above perfectly encapsulates one popular narrative identified during this research, the unifying, indiscriminate and ultimately apolitical nature of the earthquake, and by extension, of the relief and reconstruction that followed it. To many the earthquake represented a force outside Nepal's tumultuous and often controversial politics, one that took no notice of the faultlines of caste, gender, ethnicity or wealth that define life, and opportunity, for many Nepalese citizens. They pointed to the outpouring of national unity that

followed the disaster as proof that this event was above politics. As one representative of the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction put it 'Disaster is something that everyone comes together. You can forget any past, any disparity or party to the conflict, we're trying to save one another and trying to come together and work for the common good'.[59]

The initial weeks following the disaster were repeatedly recalled as a time when Nepalese society came together across political, social or ethnic lines to work together, occupying large numbers of young people in volunteering and encouraging many urban residents to engage with their impoverished rural counterparts, many for the first time. As Oliver-Smith and Hoffman noted, this behavior is 'not at all atypical of disaster victims in many cultural contexts', though the duration of this sentiment is bounded in time and often challenged by emergency relief and reconstruction activities.[60] For one participant, this harked back to a better time, a 'social harmony' that existed before people were 'indoctrinated' by the conflict and its aftermath.[61] In fact, the phrase 'social harmony' has a specific meaning within Nepalese political discourse, and is often used in contrast with the idea of inclusivity. The demand for social justice via greater inclusivity in Nepalese society originates in the Maoist's wartime aims of advancing the rights of indigenous groups, lower caste citizens and women in the civil war, and was subsequently enshrined in the CPA. These aims are summarised in clause 3.5 of the CPA, which states:

In order to end discriminations based on class, ethnicity, language, gender, culture, religion and region and to address the problems of women, Dalit, indigenous people, ethnic minorities (Janajatis), Tarai communities (Madheshis), oppressed, neglected and minority communities and the backward areas by deconstructing the current centralised and unitary structure, the state shall be restructured in an inclusive, democratic and forward looking manner.

The idea of social harmony represents the social contract that was in place before that, in which the acronymic ideal suggested by one interviewee of 'Never Ending Peace And Love'[62] was maintained by conforming to a unitary and hierarchical national identity defined by the monarchy and high caste elites. In this vision inclusivity is, in fact, a threat to social harmony (as based on a homogenous and stratified national identity), just as politics is a threat to post-earthquake unity.

The National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), the government body set up to oversee the earthquake reconstruction process, was also at pains to ensure their response steered away from the kind of thorny political issues they feared would slow the process down. They prioritised a 'blanket' approach to the delivery of relief and reconstruction aid. [63] Under this all earthquake affected households were provided with the same level of support, such as the first of three proposed tranches of funding to rebuild earthquake resistant houses, regardless of their relative wealth, social exclusion or the size of the destroyed or damaged property. This, they felt, was the fairest way to quickly deliver help to all that needed it, and could be seen as reflecting the ideal of humanitarian action as neutral, impartial, independent and (above all) swift. [64] Although, as Collinson, Elhawary and Muggah remind us, the humanitarian imperative is rarely as free of politics as it may seem, and this 'separation from politics is difficult to maintain in practice, as humanitarian action invariably shapes and influences the structures and processes that cause vulnerability and suffering: humanitarian action has clear political consequences, irrespective of whether it has political aims at the outset'. [65]

The choice to use a blanket approach instead of a needs-based one was in some ways pragmatic, and acknowledged the way that political infighting might otherwise slow down the distribution of desperately needed aid. However, as shall become clear later in this section, it was also part of a deliberate decision by the Nepalese authorities to put an end to

programming centred around apparently political issues such as identity and inequality. As one international donor representative noted 'Targeted programming, identity based or targeted programming is absolutely unacceptable now in Nepal. The bureaucracy just will not let you do it'. [66] Another representative of an International Organisation described the difficulties they had faced trying to get the NRA to approve a questionnaire that acknowledged the diversity of indigenous groups living in an affected area, instead of using the catch-all term *Janajati*. [67] In this way the line of separation between 'political' issues related to the conflict and CPA and the 'apolitical' earthquake has once again been reinforced, even though the vulnerabilities at the heart of the disaster are innately political.[68] The Nepalese government's reluctance to acknowledge caste and ethnicity-based inequalities in its response may be born of the concern that to do otherwise could risk stirring up a hornet's nest of identity based hostilities at a sensitive time. However, this approach ignores the fact that some groups were disproportionately affected by the earthquake, both due to their physical location (such as Tamang, Newar and other hill Janajati populations) and due to their lack of socio-economic resources relative to higher caste groups. In effect, choosing to ignore pernicious inequalities in their response to the earthquake could in fact be understood as reflecting the 'social harmony' approach described above.

For all that some actors view post-disaster reconstruction in Nepal as apolitical, in reality this is far from the case. For one thing, the mechanisms and processes of post-disaster reconstruction represent a rich political and economic resource that local political elites are competing to capture, politicising the whole process, something which local NGOs were particularly wary of.[69] This is true from the very top of the NRA, whose CEO is a political appointment, and has already seen three changes in leadership (brought about by a change in government) since its inception in the summer of 2015.[70] It is also true in the structure and functioning of the NRA, particularly its relationships with other Ministries and government

bodies, which one observer characterised as 'left deliberately being opaque' to ensure that 'the NRA would essentially come last in that hierarchy'.[71] For those not in power at any given moment, slowing down the work of the NRA has been an effective way to prove that their political rivals are unfit to govern. The politicisation of the mechanisms of earthquake reconstruction in fact reaches all the way to the level of delivery, where political parties jockeyed to include their supporters on beneficiary lists (as one interviewee wryly noted 'everyone has their list in their pocket. They come with their own list'[72]) and there was an open acknowledgement that local NGOs working as partners had their own clear affiliations to the parties.[73] It is difficult, then, to claim that PDR is apolitical when its apparatus is defined by political bargaining from root to branch.

Perhaps more significantly, this framing of the post-disaster as stubbornly apolitical also represents a deliberate attempt on the part of the government, and perhaps some members of the international community, to draw a line under the post-conflict peace-building phase of Nepal's history and definitively move the focus to the earthquake reconstruction.[74] Although this may at first glance seem like a natural response to the most pressing issue of the day, numerous participants informed us that this shift away from rights-based or advocacy work related to the post-conflict had in fact begun in 2013, well before the earthquake struck.[75] This observation was supported in meetings with representatives of the Ministry for Peace and Reconstruction – the focal point of post-conflict work in the country – who informed us that all their goals had already been achieved, and the Ministry was ready to be dissolved.[76] This assessment on the state of progress towards achieving the ideals set out in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was not shared by local NGOs or international actors.[77] Nor does it reflect the approach held by theorists such as Lederach and Dudouet who see peace as cyclical and continuously remade, rather than something that could be declared 'done'.[78] It certainly appears as though the Nepalese authorities seized on the earthquake as

an opportunity to refocus attention away from the difficult political issues of the post-conflict settlement (which, in the words of one donor country representative, they 'never wanted to deal with' anyway)[79] to something perceived as less political and more unifying. Certainly the way in which the new constitution was 'fast-tracked' through in the aftermath of the earthquake, after nearly a decade of wrangling in the Constituent Assembly had failed to resolve key issues, suggests a readiness on the part of the Nepalese elites to use this opportunity to lay the work of the post-conflict to rest. In this way the vulnerabilities exposed in the post-disaster response, and the nature of the government's reaction, amply support characterizations of these kinds of disasters as politically significant.

'Totally separate': bridging the perception gap between PCR and PDR

Having a lot of experience in the post-conflict reconstruction, do you see any similarities between the two processes? Are there areas you think that the post-earthquake could have learned from the work you have been doing?

Maybe the technical designs, but nothing else.[80]

A striking element to emerge from the interviews carried out for this research was the extent to which stakeholders in Nepal frequently considered the mandates and activities of post-conflict and post-disaster reconstruction to be fundamentally different from one another.[81] The total lack of collaboration or experience sharing between the NRA and the Ministry for Peace and Reconstruction, the bodies tasked with overseeing post-earthquake and post-conflict reconstruction respectively, was emblematic of this approach. Representatives of both bodies underlined that it was the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction's job to rebuild the public buildings damaged in the conflict (such as police stations and bridges) and the NRA's job to focus on the private property, the houses,

destroyed by the earthquake.[82] Whilst it is true that the housing reconstruction that makes up such a large part of the NRA's daily work did not figure at all in the MPR's mandate, it seems reductive to suggest that these are the limits to the two bodies' work. Indeed, this view of reconstruction obscures the work on economic and social reconstruction at the heart of the mandate of each institution. As one local researcher pointed out, the narrative that PDR in Nepal was simply about rebuilding private housing has not come about by accident, but is part of a deliberate framing of the post-disaster, warning that when 'actors create that narrative, it's picked up by the people as well'.[83]

The Nepalese government was not the only stakeholder for whom systematic knowledge and experience sharing about PDR and PCR programming was not prioritised. Several donor agencies explained that even though they could clearly see the value of linking the two processes, the structure of their organisations, and the nature of the 'machinery' of international disaster response, made this near impossible.[84] In many institutions these activities continue to be managed and implemented from within different departments and viewed as essentially different activities from one another. As one donor agency representative, a post-disaster specialist, explained

Now I'm thinking, if we would like that kind of conflict transformational approach in a reconstruction project, it's possible, but I think it's going to be really complicated because we have to ask another section at the headquarters to have the analysis through their conflict related lenses and blah blah blah. And then these two sections definitely have totally different ideas. And then the co-ordination would be really difficult and anyway co-ordination for BBBs [Build Back Better] are too much. So, yeah, it's going to be super challenging.[85]

And yet, as established above, the communities these actors seek to help have often been effected by a layering of disaster and conflict, resulting in the kinds of extreme vulnerability

that turns a hazard into a disaster.[86] If the international architecture of relief and reconstruction is to meet its commitments to 'build back better' then they surely need to move beyond the working structures that currently envisage post-disaster and post-conflict response as fundamentally separate activities. As Vivekananda et al. point out, academic research could provide a vital first step in addressing this tendency to consider disaster and conflict in silos, as could encouraging development practitioners and agencies to rethink their structures.[87]

More than just a structural issue, though, this view of post-conflict and post-disaster activities as completely unrelated once again reflects the policy of the Nepalese authorities to seize on the post-earthquake as a moment of opportunity to reduce work linked to the post-conflict settlement and refocus attention on the earthquake reconstruction, perceived as less political. This can be clearly witnessed in the increasingly rigid line being drawn by the Nepalese government between so-called 'hard' programming, for example infrastructure provision, and 'soft' programmes, such as advocacy and rights-based work, which the government recently mandated must comprise no more than 30 per cent of a donor's activities. Although respondents overwhelmingly recognised that there is a massive need for physical and infrastructure reconstruction in the country – the challenges are immense, with hundreds of thousands of houses still to rebuild in a deeply challenging terrain – several expressed deep concerns that this 'anti-soft' policy undermined their ability to rebuild effectively and in a holistic manner.[88] They pointed out that many of the central challenges of reconstruction identified in the NRA's flagship document, the Post Disaster Needs Assessment, such as gender equality, social inclusion and social protection, could not be addressed through the provision of infrastructure alone. Some went further, suggesting that the government had 'capitalised' on the earthquake response to increase 'hard' programming at the expense of 'soft' because 'rights-based programming is a threat to them. Because

you're increasing community capacity to make demands on the government.'[89] Interestingly this concern echoes Krampe's findings regarding the impact of the introduction of small hydro-electric projects in some villages in rural Nepal. Rather than increasing the state's legitimacy, he explains 'the construction of the micro-hydropower project has facilitated interactions within both villages that have resulted in more local autonomy. This increase in local autonomy has in turn inhibited a positive effect on the legitimacy of Nepali state actors'.[90] Some interviewees suggested that these demands go unmet due to simple lack of capacity. However, others argued that this is because despite the all the experiences of the conflict and its aftermath, successive Nepalese governments have continued to represent a small minority which is unwilling to surrender any more of their power and influence, and fearful of 'soft' programming that might further embolden non-elites (IV2[91]). As one head of a local NGO memorably put it 'no amount of research or reporting or advocacy will change this; that the important decisions of Nepal are made by four, hill Brahmin males*' (IV4[92]).

Seen in this light, the move to keep the lucrative business of rebuilding after the earthquake firmly separate from the difficult, and controversial, post-conflict questions around identity and inclusion could be interpreted as a way of protecting the position and influence of elite actors in Nepal. To those researchers who have theorised the path dependency of disaster outcomes this should come as no surprise. Instead of providing a clean slate or catalyst for change, the aftermath of a disaster often produces an 'accelerated status quo', accentuating existing political and social stresses.[93]

This is firmly to the detriment of post-earthquake reconstruction in Nepal. The most important and complex issues of the reconstruction process identified in the government's own assessments – land, social inclusion, gender equality – are inherently political. They cannot be addressed, nor can effective reconstruction in all its forms (social and economic, as well as physical), without understanding and engaging with the political context. Although

there appears to be a recognition of this within the NRA itself, who told us that social reconstruction was 'the biggest and hardest' challenge they faced,[94] it is undermined by restrictions on 'soft' programmes, and the persistent perception that post-earthquake activities are fundamentally different to the extensive work carried out in the aftermath of the country's long civil war. In actual fact, as a comparison of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the Post Disaster Needs Assessment demonstrates, many of the issues at the heart of the peace agreement, such as land reform and inclusivity, are also central to the challenge of building back better today.

'Dysfunction by design' or 'the order of disorder' – the impact of the post-conflict polity

Beyond overlaps in activities and the centrality of certain key issues to PDR and PCR processes in Nepal, however, there is a larger, structural issue that makes it impossible to understand the post-earthquake context of Nepal without also referring to its post-conflict status. That is to say, that the conflict outcomes – as yet unresolved – created a particular political space in which Nepalese earthquake reconstruction is taking place, and which produces distinct effects on this process. This is no surprise, given that one of the Maoists' primary aims throughout the conflict, and a key bone of contention with the government, was to bring about a restructuring of the state.[95] Understanding and acknowledging this context would make reconstruction more effective and more responsive to its local context.

Some observers we spoke to characterised this situation as 'dysfunction by design' – the idea that the government has a vested interest in making the reconstruction process as opaque and slow as possible, in order to reinforce their control over the power and resources of the centre. [96] Seen in this light, the painfully slow progress of reconstruction could be understood as a strategic choice to maintain the distance between elites and society as a whole, and

eventually lessen the demands on the centre both by encouraging earthquake victims to take reconstruction into their own hands. Numerous interviewees expressed the belief that most housing reconstruction would eventually be done on an ad hoc basis by homeowners, outside of the NRA's formal programme, by a public accustomed to not relying on state services.[97] This would ensure their focus remains on the pressing concerns of shelter and reconstruction assistance, rather than the pernicious and complicated questions of identity, inclusion and inequality. Such an interpretation would also consider repeated efforts to ensure that the 'apolitical' activities of PDR are perceived as wholly different to the 'political' questions of PCR, as set out in the previous sections, as another element of this strategy to maintain the power of the centre.

However, seen through another lens this situation can be understood not as a cynical governance strategy, but as a product of the as-yet undecided nature of the political space in Nepal today, the 'order of disorder' in the words of one interviewee.[98] The end of the civil war in Nepal brought about a definitive end to the old order, with the suspension of the monarchy, the institution of a Constituent Assembly and the inclusion of the rebel Maoists into mainstream politics. And yet, to paraphrase Gramsci, whilst the former regime has surely ended, the new one has yet to be fully born. Nepalese politics is defined by instability and short termism. Two consecutive Constituent Assemblies laboured from 2008 and 2013 to try to define the framework of government in Nepal without success, until the promulgation of a constitution was 'fast tracked' in the aftermath of the earthquake, prompting widespread violent protest. Governments rarely last a year, with the resulting alternations in power resonating throughout the structures of power from Ministry to Village Development Committee level. This situation – both product and symptom of Nepal's post-conflict settlement – clearly resonates with Bauman's interpretation of Gramsci's interregnum, which he described as;

Extraordinary situations in which the extant legal frame of social order loses its grip and can hold no longer, whereas a new frame, made to the measure of newly emerged conditions responsible for making the old frame useless, is still at the designing stage, has not yet been fully assembled, or is not strong enough to be put in its place.[99]

This space of political uncertainty is producing very real effects on the post disaster reconstruction process. The NRA has been hamstrung by the removal and reinstatement of politically affiliated appointees at its head. As one local academic asserted, the NRA is 'directly co-constituted with the post conflict politics', which is the politics of constant alternation.[100] Concerns emerge from nearly every stakeholder involved in post-disaster reconstruction, but particularly from local actors, that the delivery of the programme is bound up with political parties.[101] On a very simple level, the transfer of institutional memory and learning is rendered near impossible against a background of constant political churn.[102] That this space of political uncertainty is a direct result of the conflict in Nepal and the settlement that followed it puts lie to the idea, oft repeated, that post-conflict and post-disaster processes are entirely separate and have no bearing on each other. Once again, this supports a view of disaster responses as both 'politically revelatory',[103] and prone to reflecting a more acute and pressing version of the political and social trends that existed before the disaster struck and that contributed to the way that a natural hazard to disaster.[104] In fact, every action taken under the aegis of post-earthquake reconstruction is being carried out in a context that is specific to Nepal's post-conflict, buffeted and reshaped by the tensions and negotiations that continue to define this moment in the country's history. The politics of disaster in Nepal are the politics of its post-conflict – the two are so intricately linked that to try and treat them separately can only lead to failure.

Conclusion

This research has demonstrated a very real and problematic gap between rhetoric and practice when it comes to the interaction of post-disaster reconstruction and post-conflict reconstruction processes. The academic literature increasingly points to the interaction of these two processes from a vulnerability perspective, to the similarity in a number of their activities and processes, and to the tension between the way both processes can trigger the introduction of new paradigms, whilst also representing the concentrated expression of pre-existing social and political context. Similarly, many interviewees acknowledged how vital questions at the heart of Nepal's post-conflict reconstruction period have also proved key to the country's post-disaster challenges. But despite this, the reality of reconstruction on the ground since the earthquakes in 2015 shows that the two processes are not being linked. In fact, PCR and PDR processes have been kept in silos, largely due to structural and political reasons.

And yet, for all that some actors may be reluctant to acknowledge it, PDR in Nepal is intensely political, and bound up with many of the key political challenges of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement – land, identity, inequality, rights, and power. Policy-makers and practitioners in Nepal are reluctant to 'politicise' PDR by explicitly linking it to the PCR period, drawing on the knowledge and expertise that has been built up over ten years of CPA implementation, fearing that this may further delay and already sluggish process. But this means that the impact of PDR on power relations and conflict drivers is not being acknowledged. This might help to explain why the year after the earthquake the country witnessed a significant flare in violence in the restive Terai region, followed by a devastating fuel blockade. Actions carried out in the name of earthquake response – notably the fast-tracked constitution – have caused consternation in marginalised communities and rocked the fragile foundations of peace in Nepal.

Understanding reconstruction as political is important; it underlines the fact that reconstruction is social as much as physical, with power relations and social mores subject to a process of rebuilding, as well as the physical fabric that has been destroyed. Such an approach sees processes of destruction and reconstruction as two sides of the same coin, and deplores what Flint and Kirsch describe as the 'false dichotomy' between war and peace, before and after,[105] and a linear view of peace and conflict also rejected by Lederach.[106] Reconstruction is also 'Political': In the past decade a growing subfield of disaster studies has highlighted that disasters are not only created by political forces, but create important political repercussions.[107] Olson and Gawronski underline the function of disasters as 'politically revelatory events' which expose existing vulnerabilities and the quality of political leadership to affected communities.[108] As this research has demonstrated, in Nepal PDR is both linked to politics as it relates to the government and political parties, and as it relates to the perennial political challenges of equality, citizenship and inclusion. What is more, both of these types of politics are directly linked to the country's post-conflict context, and the implementation of its PCR processes and structures.

Responses to disaster or conflict, then, should not be seen as purely technical or purely political, nor should their field of action be viewed as a clean slate. Instead they should take into account the full gamut of social relations and political context that were in place before, during and after the onset of the emergency. This approach has increasingly been acknowledged by academics (as evidenced by many of the articles referenced earlier in the text) as well as by many researchers and policy-makers, who have advocated, for example, for conflict sensitive approaches to post-disaster reconstruction (see publications by the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery or the Humanitarian Practice Network for examples of this). However, as this research has demonstrated, whilst these links are

being made in theory, when it comes to practical applications and policy making on the ground, PDR and PCR are still often seen as fundamentally unrelated processes.

Failing to acknowledge the politics of post-disaster reconstruction not only undermines progress made in addressing conflict drivers over the past decade, it also means that PDR is destined to fall short of its goals. At a practical level reconstruction has been hamstrung by political alternation at the centre and politicisation at the point of delivery. Mistrust of 'soft' reconstruction (seen as too political) means that vital social and economic reconstruction is not taking place, and a reluctance to countenance targeted programming that acknowledges structural inequalities means the most vulnerable communities are not being adequately supported. At a conceptual level, the focus of disaster work continues to move towards risk reduction, prevention and preparedness (as encapsulated in the Sendai Framework), and building the resilience of communities is at the heart of this. This raises an important question for Nepal: How can community resilience be built without addressing unresolved political questions around inequality and inclusion? The tabling (although unsuccessful) of a constitutional amendment aimed at resolving some of the concerns raised by Madhesi community in August 2017, and the holding of long awaited local elections in the following November, show the country continuing to take steps to implement the peace process agenda and 'transition into federal, secular and inclusive state from a centralised, Hindu and an exclusive state'.[109] This remains as much a work in progress as the post-earthquake reconstruction. Seen from this perspective it is vital to understand the complex interplay of vulnerability and resilience, conflict and disaster, in order to meet the challenge of building communities that are resilient to natural hazard-related disasters and conflicts alike.

This is not just a lesson for Nepal. As mentioned at the start of this paper, there are a great many communities that find themselves subject to a layering of conflict and disaster and searching for more effective means of responding to both. Nepal's experience provides a

salutary lesson in the futility of trying to entirely separate PDR and PCR processes, and suggests that reconstruction cannot be effective if it fails to acknowledge the politics of this process. This is all the more important given the failure of the Sendai Framework to address the question of conflict in its guidance. Understanding the politics of the post-conflict and post-disaster nexus in Nepal provides a vital example of how the post-conflict experiences of a country can impact on its post-disaster trajectory, just as choices made in the PDR process affect conflict drivers, and can undermine or bolster its PCR progress.

End Notes

[1] Thapa and Ramsbotham, Two steps forward, one step back.

[2] Albala-Bertrand, Complex emergencies versus natural disasters.

[3] The 'Build Back Better' principle asserts that recreating pre-disaster conditions is inadequate, and that the reconstruction of disaster affected communities should aim to improve the living conditions of disaster-affected communities and address the vulnerabilities that contributed to the disaster in the first instance. See WCDRR Issue Brief, Rebuilding After Disasters.

[4] Wahlstrom, New Sendai Framework; Kelman, Climate Change and the Sendai Framework.

[5] Prior and Roth, Global Disaster Politics Post Sendai.

[6] Peters and Budimir, When disasters and conflict collide.

[7] Glaser, Discovery of Grounded Theory.

[8] Ozerdem, Post Conflict Reconstruction, 38.

[9] Thapa and Sharma, From insurgency to democracy.

[10] Human Rights Watch, 'Like we are not Nepali'.

[11] Lawoti, Competing nationhood and constitutional instability.

[12] UN Common Feedback Project, Issue: Reconstruction.

[13] HRRPN, Private Housing.

[14] Hsiang, Burke and Niguel, Quantifying the influence of climate.

[15] Vivekananda, Schilling and Smith, Climate resilience.

[16] Dahlberg, Rubin, and Vendelø, Disaster Research.

[17] Macrae et al., Conflict, the continuum and chronic emergencies; Kapucu and Ozerdem, Managing emergencies and crises.

[18] Christoplos and Harvey, Adding it all up? 231.

[19] Duijsens, Addressing fragilities, 224.

[20] Duffield, Complex emergencies; Harmer and Macrae, Beyond the continuum; Keen, Complex emergencies.

[21] Godschalk, Urban Hazard Mitigation; Scheffran et al., Climate change and violent conflict.

[22] Clarke et al., *Post-disaster reconstruction*.

[23] Uexkull, Sustained drought, vulnerability and civil conflict; Peters, Keen and Mitchell, When disasters and conflicts collide.

[24] Vivekananda, Schilling and Smith, Climate resilience, 488.

[25] Nel and Righarts, Natural disasters and the risk of violent civil conflict.

[26] Twigg, Characteristics of a disaster-resilient community.

[27] See Sorensen, Women and post-conflict reconstruction; Barakat, After the conflict; Anderlini and El Bushra, Post-Conflict Reconstruction; Call and Cousens, Ending wars and building peace; and Suhrke, Reconstruction as modernization, for discussions of the breadth of activities carried out under the aegis of post-conflict reconstruction, and Clarke et al., *Post-disaster reconstruction*; Amaratunga and Haigh, *Post-disaster reconstruction;* Kapucu and Ozerdem, Managing emergencies and crises; and Kennedy et al., The meaning of 'build back better', for an overview of different post-disaster reconstruction activities.

[28] Albala-Bertrand, Complex emergencies.

[29] Albala-Bertrand, Complex emergencies, 189.

[30] Simpson, *The political biography of an earthquake*, 12.

[31] Oliver-Smith and Hoffman, The angry earth.

[32] Solnit, A paradise built in hell.

[33] Ferris, Natural disasters, conflict, and human rights.

[34] Kelman, Disaster diplomacy.

[35] De Torrenté, Humanitarianism sacrificed.

[36] Hillhorst, Dead letter or living document?

[37] Pelling, *The Vulnerability of Cities*. 5.

[38] See, for example, Bosher and Chmutina, Disaster Risk Reduction for the Built Environment; and Kelman et al., Learning from the history of disaster.

[39] Barakat, *After the conflict*, 10.

[40] Ramsbotham, Miall and Woodhouse. *Contemporary conflict resolution*. Ozerdem, Post Conflict Reconstruction.

[41] Amaratunga and Haigh, *Post-disaster reconstruction of the built environment*. Charlesworth, *Architects without Frontiers*.

[42] Clarke et al., *Post-disaster reconstruction.*

[43] Kapucu and Ozerdem, Managing emergencies and crises. The question of authenticity in reconstruction is important – Clarke et al. argue that the reconstructed landscape should in some way match, and therefore be endowed with meaning by, the 'internal landscape' of communities living there, whilst the UNESCO's Nara Document on Authenticity underlines the role of authenticity as a guarantor of the 'collective memory of humanity.

[44] Mac Ginty and Richmond, Hybrid Peace.

[45] Including but not limited to Le Billon and Waizenegger, Peace in the wake of disaster?, Hyndman, Siting conflict and peace; Kennedy et al., The meaning of 'build back better'; and Uyangoda, Ethnic conflict.

[46] For example, see Chopra and Hohe, 'Participatory intervention' on participatory post-conflict interventions, or Siriwardena and Haigh 'Stakeholder consultation in the reconstruction process' for a discussion of community participation in PDR.

[47] Siriwardena and Haigh, Stakeholder consultation in the reconstruction process.

[48] Clarke et al., *Post-disaster reconstruction*.

[49] Pelling, *The Vulnerability of Cities*.

[50] Mac Ginty and Richmond, The local turn in peace building; Leonardsson and Rudd, The 'local turn' in peacebuilding.

[51] Author interview with Representative of Ministry for Peace and Reconstruction, Kathmandu, 7 February 2017. Author interview with Representative of National Reconstruction Authority, Kathmandu, 6 February 2017.

[52] Author interview with Nepali NGO representative, Kathmandu, 7 February 2017. Author interview with Nepali NGO representative, Kathmandu, 9 February 2017.

[53] Author interview with Donor government representative, Kathmandu, 3 February 2017. Author interview with Donor government representative, Kathmandu, 08/02/17. Author interview with Donor government representative, Kathmandu, 14 February 2017.

[54] Author interview with International organization representative, Kathmandu, 6 February 2017. Author interview with International organisation representative, Kathmandu, 16 February 2017.

[55] Author interview with Donor government representative, Kathmandu, 9 February 2017.

[56] Author interview with Donor government representative, Kathmandu, 9 February 2017.

[57] Author interview with Donor government representative, Kathmandu, 9 February 2017. Author interview with International organization representative, Kathmandu, 2 February 2017. Author interview with International organization representative, Kathmandu, 7 February 2017. Author interview with International organization representative, Kathmandu, 16 February 2017.

[58] Author interview with Nepali NGO representative, Kathmandu, 9 February 2017.

[59] Author interview with Representative of the Ministry for Peace and Reconstruction, Kathmandu, 7 February 2017.

[60] Oliver-Smith and Hoffman, The angry earth, 158.

[61] Author interview with Nepali NGO representative, Kathmandu, 9 February 2017.

[62] Author interview with Nepali NGO representative and academic, Kathmandu, 8 February 2017.

[63] Author interview with Representative of the National Reconstruction Authority, Kathmandu, 6 February 2017.

[64] De Torrente, Humanitarianism Sacrificed.

[65] Collinson, Elhawary and Muggah, States of Fragility, 286.

[66] Author interview with Donor government representative, Kathmandu, 8 February 2017.

[67] Author interview with International organization representative, Kathmandu, 2 February 2017.

[68] Pelling, *The Vulnerability of Cities.*

[69] Author interview with Nepali NGO representative, Kathmandu, 10 February 2017. Author interview with Nepali NGO representative, Kathmandu, 9 February 2017. Author interview with Nepali NGO representative, Kathmandu, 9 February 2017.

[70] Author interview with International organization representative, Kathmandu, 6 February 2017.

[71] Author interview with Donor government representative, Kathmandu, 8 February 2017.

[72] Author interview with Nepali NGO representative, Kathmandu, 7 February 2017.

[73] Author interview with Nepali NGO representative, Kathmandu, 10 February 2017. Author interview with International charity representative, Kathmandu, 16 February 2017.

[74] Author interview with Nepali NGO representative, Kathmandu, 6 February 2017.

[75] Author interview with Nepali NGO representative, Kathmandu, 9 February 2017. Author interview with Nepali NGO representative, Kathmandu, 7 February 2017.

[76] Author interview with Representative of the Ministry for Peace and Reconstruction, Kathmandu, 7 February 2017.

[77] Author interview with International organization representative, Kathmandu, 2 February 2017. Author interview with Nepali NGO representative, Kathmandu, 7 February 2017. Author interview with Donor government representative, Kathmandu, 8 February 2017. Author interview with Donor government representative, Kathmandu, 14 February 2017.

[78] Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*; Dudouet, Civil resistance and conflict transformation

[79] Author interview with Donor government representative, Kathmandu, 14 February 2017.

[80] Author interview with Representative of the Ministry for Peace and Reconstruction, Kathmandu, 7 February 2017.

[81] Author interview with Representative of the Ministry for Peace and Reconstruction, Kathmandu, 7 February 2017. Author interview with Donor government representative, Kathmandu, 8 February 2017. Author interview with Representative of the National Reconstruction Authority, Kathmandu, 6 February 2017. Author interview with Donor government representative, Kathmandu, 9 February 2017. Author interview with Nepali NGO representative, Kathmandu, 7 February 2017.

[82] Author interview with Representative of the Ministry for Peace and Reconstruction, Kathmandu, 7 February 2017. Author interview with Representative of the National Reconstruction Authority, Kathmandu, 6 February 2017.

[83] Author interview with Nepali NGO representative, Kathmandu, 9 February 2017.

[84] Author interview with Donor government representative, Kathmandu, 3 February 2017. Author interview with Donor government representative, Kathmandu, 14 February 2017. Author interview with International organization representative, Kathmandu, 6 February 2017.

[85] Author interview with Donor government representative, Kathmandu, 3 February 2017.

[86] Clarke et al., *Post-disaster reconstruction*; Scheffran et al., Climate change and violent conflict.

[87] Vivekananda, Schilling and Smith, Climate resilience.

[88] Author interview with Donor government representative, Kathmandu, 9 February 2017. Author interview with Donor government representative, Kathmandu, 8 February 2017. Author interview with Nepali NGO representative, Kathmandu, 9 February 2017.

[89] Author interview with Donor government representative, Kathmandu, 14 February 2017.

[90] Krampe, Empowering peace, 54.

[91] Author interview with International charity representative, Kathmandu, 13 February 2017.

[92] Author interview with Nepali NGO representative, Kathmandu, 9 February 2017.

[93] Klein, *The shock doctrine*; Pelling and Dill, Natural disasters as catalysts, 22.

[94] Author interview with Representative of the National Reconstruction Authority, Kathmandu, 6 February 2017.

[95] Thapa and Sharma, From insurgency to democracy.

[96] Author interview with Donor government representative, Kathmandu, 8 February 2017.

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Figure Captions

Figure 1. Map of conflict intensity in Nepal Civil War (Source: Do and Iyer 2010)

Figure 2: Map of deaths and injuries from 2015 Earthquake by intensity (Source: MapAction 2015)