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## Managing Collaborative Networks in Post-Disaster Recovery: A Case Study of 2015 Nepal Earthquake

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

MANAGING COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS IN POST-DISASTER RECOVERY:

A CASE STUDY OF 2015 NEPAL EARTHQUAKE

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirement for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

by

Barsha Manandhar

2021

To: Dean John F. Stack, Jr.  
Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs

This dissertation, written by Barsha Manandhar, and entitled *Managing Collaborative Networks in Post-Disaster Recovery: A Case Study of 2015 Nepal Earthquake*, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgement

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Florida International University, 2021

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## DEDICATION

In loving memory of my dad Narayan Prasad Manandhar.

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ABSTRACT OF THIS DISSERTATION  
MANAGING COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS IN POST-DISASTER RECOVERY:  
A CASE STUDY OF 2015 NEPAL EARTHQUAKE

by

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Miami, Florida

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Governing the network of public, private, and non-governmental organizations is increasingly becoming the standard practice to ensure effective post-disaster recovery and reconstruction processes and outcomes. While prior research has discussed different challenges in network settings, few studies have examined the challenges faced by public managers who lead post-disaster recovery networks. Similarly, there is a dearth of knowledge on how the management of these networks affects disaster-stricken populations are affected by the management of these networks. This dissertation addresses such lacunae using a case study of the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), an organization established by the Nepali government to execute post-disaster recovery after the 2015 Nepal earthquake. The study's data collection includes semi-structured interviews (n=81) with NRA public managers, representatives of non-governmental organizations, and leaders in Kathmandu Metropolitan City as well as the review of secondary policy documents and media sources.

The dissertation follows a three-essay format. The first essay analyzes challenges of public managers stemming from the organizational design of the NRA, including



centralized decision-making, fragmentation of specialized administrative and implementation bodies, inflexible institutions and practices, limited organizational capacity, and an organizational culture with low regard for collaboration. The second essay explores NRA public managers' challenges from relational aspects of their work, that is, their interactions with other units or organizations. The findings highlight network stakeholders' conflicting goals, priorities, and practices, the lack of trust in one another, and power asymmetries as challenges to public managers. Together, the first and second essays demonstrate how external and internal factors have shaped NRA managers' roles, capacities, and strategies in securing and sustaining collaborative processes and practices. The third essay examines the effect of governance factors on private housing reconstruction outcomes in urban KMC. As a result of the centralized decision-making arrangements, powerful stakeholders avoided or ignored essential features of the housing reconstruction processes, such as identifying beneficiaries, cash assistance distribution, urban poverty, and land tenure. Based on these findings, the essay suggests that power asymmetry between multiple stakeholders in the recovery networks plays a central role in influencing urban private housing reconstruction processes, priorities, and outcomes.

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CDO	Chief District Officer
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CLPIU	Central-Level Project Implementation Unit
CNDRC	Central Natural Disaster Relief Committee
DACFC	Development Assistance Coordination and Facilitation Committee
DCC	District Coordination Committee
DLPIU	District-Level Project Implementation Unit
EEAP	Earthquake Emergency Assistance project
EHRP	Earthquake Housing Reconstruction Project
EM	Emergency Management
EMRP	Earthquake Monastery Reconstruction Project
GMALI	Grant Management and Local Infrastructure
GOLF	Glacier Lake Outburst Flood
GON	Government of Nepal
HRRP	Housing Recovery and Reconstruction Platform
INGOs	International Non-Government Organizations
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KMC	Kathmandu Metropolitan City
LDO	Local Development Officer

MDTF	Multi-Donor Trust Fund
MOCTCA	Ministry of Culture Tourism and Civil Aviation
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOFALD	Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development
MOGA	Ministry of General Administration
MOHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MOUD	Ministry of Urban Development
NAO	Network Administrative Organization
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NPC	National Planning Commission
NRA	National Reconstruction Authority
NRRP	National Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Policy
PDNA	Post-Disaster Needs Assessment
PDRF	Post-Disaster Recovery Framework
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Research Background

The risks and impacts of disasters and emergencies on people and property around the world have now become more frequent and visible compared to previous decades (Roberts, 2019). As a result, policymakers have been increasingly concerned with reducing the risks, vulnerabilities, and impacts of disasters and emergencies. Emergency management (EM) refers to a wide range of policies and practices that are implemented to manage the impact of both natural and human-induced disasters or emergencies. Until the 1980s, emergency management received little attention in the public administration literature (Choi & Brower, 2006). Comfort et al. (2012) noted that—among public policy and administration researchers—interest in emergency management increased after a series of disasters during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Today, emergency management is considered to be an important domain of public administration research and practice, and interest in EM continues to grow.

Emergency management has been defined as the “process of developing and implementing policies that are concerned with mitigation, response, recovery and preparedness” (Petak, 1985, p.3). EM consists of four phases: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. The mitigation phase involves actions that permanently reduce long-term risks to life and property (e.g., stronger building codes, sea walls), ideally implemented prior to a disaster; however, mitigation actions can also be initiated in the aftermath of a disaster (Donahue et al., 2001). The preparedness phase involves actions that improve response mechanisms (e.g., training and drills, early warning systems)



before the occurrence of a disaster (Petak, 1985; Mushkatel & Weschler 1985). The response phase involves actions that occur in the immediate aftermath of a disaster (e.g., search and rescue, medical care) (McLoughlin, 1985). Depending on the severity of the disaster, the response phase might last from a few days up to a week (Fothergill et al., 1999). The recovery phase follows the response phase and typically refers to restoration of a disaster-affected community back to its pre-disaster condition (Chang, 2010; Aoki, 2015). Recovery is considered a long-term phase, and it involves not only rebuilding the physical environment (e.g., housing reconstruction), but also rehabilitating and restoring the natural, social, and economic environment (Smith & Wenger, 2007). Therefore, activities during the recovery phase differ from the preemptive practices involved in the mitigation and preparedness phases and the immediate practices involved in the response phase (Smith & Wenger, 2007; Comfort et al., 2010; Corbin, 2015).

There is a growing body of emergency management research in the field of public administration; however, most of these studies have focused on the response phase, and less attention has been directed toward the recovery phase of EM (McLoughlin, 1985; Sapat & Esnard, 2011; Cho, 2014; Comfort et al., 2002). Scholars have noted that public administration researchers have neglected the recovery phase (Comfort et al., 2010; Corbin, 2015; Ganapati & Ganapati, 2008; Mannakkara & Wilkinson, 2014), despite its importance in: restoring normality in affected populations, providing policymakers with the opportunity to implement risk reduction strategies, and building resilient communities (Ganapati & Ganapati, 2008; Ganapati, 2013). The few studies that have focused on the recovery phase highlighted that the recovery of affected people and places depends on the capacity or agency of people and groups (Nakagawa & Shaw, 2004; Ganapati, 2012;

Ganapati, 2013; Rahill et al., 2014; Hsueh, 2019), the social identities of people (Green et al., 2007; Kamel & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2003; Downey, 2016; Changti & Waddell, 2015), and broader political-economic conditions in affected areas (Green et al., 2007; Kamel & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2003; Finch et al., 2010). Most studies on the recovery phase have also highlighted how disaster recovery efforts are impacted by governance factors, such as collaboration, trust, communication, participation, resource exchange, and power relationships between multiple stakeholders (Comfort et al., 2010; Ganapati & Ganapati, 2008; Marks & Lebel, 2016; Raju & Beker, 2013; Daly et al., 2017; Ganapati & Mukherji, 2019; Aoki, 2016; Fan, 2015).

While studies have highlighted the importance of governance factors, few studies have examined the performance and effectiveness of new recovery organizations that are established to manage post-disaster recovery processes and practices (Johnson & Olshansky 2017; Mukherji et al., 2021). In particular, few studies have investigated the challenges faced by public managers of new recovery organizations, which play a central role in steering the recovery network of stakeholders. The recovery network is a collaborative structure of organizations that are formed through the repeated interactions of organizations to achieve the common goals. The post-disaster recovery network of organizations in Nepal includes different stakeholders, such as the central government, government ministries and departments, international donors, multilateral and bilateral organizations, international non-governmental organizations, national non-governmental organizations, political organizations, community-based organizations, and local government at different levels of government (see background for detail about recovery network). The present study uses the concept of network governance to investigate the

challenges faced by the network managers/ public managers in steering the recovery network, and the linkages between network governance/management factors and private housing recovery outcome in urban Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) following the 2015 earthquake.

## **1.2. Theoretical framework**

This research used the network governance concept to examine and understand recovery governance processes and private housing reconstruction outcomes following the 2015 Nepal Earthquake. Public administration scholars have used various terms, such as policy networks, collaborative governance, network governance, multi-level governance, and meta-governance to describe the new mode of governance (i.e., governance by the collaboration networks of diverse stakeholders at different levels) (Klinj & Koopenjan, 2016; Rhodes, 2017; Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015; Ansell & Gash 2008). The terms describe the interactive, participatory and deliberative processes of making and implementing decisions or policies though certain terms place emphasis on different actors, institutions, interactions, practices, and goals (Isett et al., 2011). More specifically, these concepts emphasized that effective collaboration between diverse stakeholders is important for making and implementing decisions related to complex problems because such interactions ensure effective, efficient, and equitable exchanges of resources, information, and legitimacy. Such collaborative relationships also contribute to effective decision making, collective conflict resolution, and building capacity for joint actions.

A governance network is a web of relationships that is formed and sustained through repeated interactions of actors for making and implementing of policies and service delivery (Klinj & Koppenjan, 2016; Isett et al. 2011; Koliba et al 2011). The effectiveness of the network to maintain and build collaboration and trust within a network is shaped by the interplay between network structures and processes (Klinj and Koppenjan 201; Provan and Kenis 2007). For instance, Provan and Kenis (2007) described three ideal types of collaborative governance structures—ranging from a decentralized collaborative structure (i.e., shared or participant governance) to centralized collaborative structures (i.e., lead organization and NAO models)—to describe effective network governance. They argued that the effectiveness of governance structure depends on four structural and regional contingencies: “trust, size (number of participants), goal consensus, and the nature of the task (specifically the need for network-level competencies)” (p.237). Subsequent studies have also described numerous structural attributes of networks—such as age, size and composition, integration, mode of governance, and network inner stability—that influence network effectiveness (Smith, 2020; Turrini et al., 2010; Provan & Kenis, 2007; Provan & Lemaire, 2012).

Relevant to my study, network scholars have emphasized that a form of centralized collaborative governance structure, such as NAO, is important for the effective management of the collaborative network because it provides centralized location and resources to coordinate network management activities (Provan & Milward, 2001; Huang & Provan 2007; Milward & Provan, 2006). For instance, Provan and Milward (1995) suggested that a network is effective only when resources are directly controlled by the state, and when such control of resources are not fragmented. Similarly,

Saz-Carranza and Ospina (2011) examined immigrant networks in the United States and showed that the NAO mode of governance helped to unite and coordinate a diverse set of network actors and manage conflicts between these network actors that enable the actors to carry out the common goal. In addition, other study suggested that the NAO enhances the accountability of and to the network because the NAO is appointed or elected by existing network stakeholders or actors. The elected actor is responsible for funding, monitoring, and coordinating the activities of the network (Huang & Provan, 2007).

Accomplishing network effectiveness, however, is challenging due to numerous network complexities and tensions (Klijn & Koppenjan 2016; Provan & Kenis, 2007; McGuire & Agranoff 2011; Provan and Lemaire, 2012). For instance, Klijn and Koppenjan (2016) categorized network complexities into substantive complexities, strategic complexities, and institutional complexities. These complexities are related to the differences and conflicts between perceptions and resources, practices and strategies, and rules and goals of network organizations respectively. Similarly, Proven and Lemaire (2012) described challenges due to differences in commitment, cultural clashes, loss of autonomy, coordination fatigue and costs, reduced accountability, and management complexity within a network. Expanding on Provan and Kenis's (2007) work, Saz-Carranza et al. (2016) highlighted power dynamics between stakeholders in shaping the NAO mode of governance.

The major strand of network research has focused on network managers' roles and strategies that are mobilized to address complexities, and to maintain interactions and build collaboration and trust within a network (O'Toole & Meier, 1999; Klijn & Koppenjan, 2010, 2016; Agranoff & McGuire 2001). Network scholars have defined

such network managers' practices or strategies as network governance or network management (Klijn & Koppenjan 2016). Klijn and Koppenjan (2016) defined network governance as "the set of conscious steering attempts or strategies of actors within governance networks aimed at influencing interaction processes and/or the characteristics of these networks" for a desired policy outcome or service delivery (p.11). Network governance concept is based on the assumption that governance network involves diverse types and nature of complexities and tensions that require deliberate management by network managers to achieve effective governance processes, structure, and outcomes (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016; Provan & Kenis, 2007).

Building on previous work, Klijn et al. (2010) categorized network management practices of network managers into four major strategies: arranging, process agreements, connecting, and exploring content (p. 1069)<sup>1</sup>. Agranoff and McGuire (2001) and Agranoff, (2006)—in their descriptions of network management—classified network management practices, what they called new POSDCORB, into: activation, framing, mobilizing, and synthesizing strategies (Agranoff & McGuire, 2001; Agranoff, 2006).<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, Voets (2014) presented five necessary roles of network managers (i.e.,

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<sup>1</sup> *Arranging* refers to arrangements of organizations (e.g., creating new organization, projects, board directors, etc.). *Process agreements* refer to ground rules (e.g., conflict regulating rules, rules to inform actors about decision making, etc.) for interactions among network actors. The process management activities listed above are connecting strategies in network management. *Connecting* strategies are used to mobilize resources and build interactions with other network actors to start the collaboration works. *Exploring content* is a strategy or task to achieve goal congruence (e.g., creating variation in a solution, managing and collecting information) between actors (Klijn et al.,2010, p.1069).

<sup>2</sup> *Activation* refers to a manager's ability to identify, select, and connect with the right set of actors and tap into the necessary resources for effective network management (Klijn et al., 1995). *Framing* involves arranging the network by establishing rules and roles for the network. *Mobilizing* requires the leader to develop and achieve a common goal to achieve network effectiveness. Finally, *synthesizing* refers to creating a favorable environment to enhance the interaction of network participants (Agranoff & McGuire, 2001; McGuire, 2002).

network champion, network promoter, vision keeper, network operator, and creative thinker) for effective use of network channels and management practices (also see Cristofoli et al., 2014; O'Toole & Meier, 2004). In addition to these diverse strategies and roles of network managers, scholars have also underscored network managers' or leaders' network management skills and capacity. O'Leary and Vij (2012) noted the importance of network managers' or leaders' personal, interpersonal, and group management skills. Other scholars have highlighted the leaders' skills to manage conflict and differences and build shared commitment (Saz-Carranza & Ospina 2011; Agranoff, 2007). Silva and McGuire (2010) compared the behavior of leaders in an organization and in network contexts. Their study suggested differences in behavior: leaders tended to exhibit people-oriented behavior (i.e., treating others as equals, creating trust, and shared leadership role) when managing in network contexts. In sum, these roles and strategies will help facilitate communication, deliberation, trust, commitment and the exchange of resources and knowledge, establish common understanding, rules, and goals, and minimize conflicts within the network (Klinj & Koppenjan, 2016; Agranoff & McGuire, 2001; Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015). Network management scholars, therefore, have argued that public managers require appropriate and adequate roles, skills and strategies to manage network structure and processes (Arganoff & McGuire, 2001; Klinj et al. 2010).

While network management scholars have highlighted the major role and strategies of public managers, the literature has not sufficiently investigated the challenges public managers face while managing governance networks. Research is also lacking on how the management of these networks are linked to governance outcome. In

other words, despite a growing focus on the agency of public managers in network management, the influence of organizational contexts (e.g., structure, capacity and culture), network contexts (e.g., nature of relationship between stakeholders), and broader contexts on network management practices is limited. The present study addresses such gaps by analyzing the institutional interventions that were implemented by the Nepali Government and donors to manage post-disaster recovery processes and activities in Nepal after the 2015 earthquake disaster. I expect the influence of organizational factors (e.g., structure, capacity and culture) on public managers' roles and strategies. It is because public administration scholars have pointed out that organizational attributes constraint or facilitate roles and practices of its members that are involved in the making and implementation of organization's decisions or goals (Egeberg, 2020; Christensen and Lægreid 2018). Organizational attributes, such as structure, capacity and culture influence governance processes by creating "bias in cognition, incentives, norms and information" to public managers (Egeberg et al. 2016, p. 33). Therefore, scholars have argued that "governance cannot be adequately explained without including its organizational dimension." (Egeberg et al. 2016, p. 42). Based on these literatures, we posit that organizational contexts and attributes of home organization matters in influencing network management. That is, the attributes of NRA will influence public managers' network management roles, skills, and strategies. In addition, I expect the influence of the differences of power, interests, and priorities on network managers' skills and capacity in shaping network management processes and practices (Klinj & Koppenjan 2016; Saz-Carranza & Ospina 2011; Saz Carranza et al., 2016). The power asymmetry and differences will engender conflicting relations and mistrust between



stakeholders. Since the reconstruction took place in broader social and disaster contexts (i.e., i.e., time compression, abundance of recovery funds and struggle over the control and distribution of funds, post-conflict state rebuilding, and the implementation of new constitution and federalism) (Johnson & Olshansky 2016; Ganapati & Mukherjee 2014; Xiao et al., 2020; Daly et al., 2016; Comfort et al., 2016), I also expect the influence of these contexts on the governance and management of recovery network and the private housing reconstruction practices.

### **1.3. Purpose and Significance of the study**

This research is designed as a three-essay study that examines the three research questions. The specific questions are: (1) How does the organizational context influence public managers' roles and strategies to govern and steer post-disaster recovery networks; (2) how does the relationship between multiple stakeholders of the recovery network influence public managers' role and strategies to govern or steer the network; and (3) how the management of post-disaster recovery network hinder the recovery of those who are affected by the earthquake disaster. The overall goal of this study is to enhance understanding of network governance in post-disaster contexts.

The significance of this research is threefold. First, the emergency management literature in public administration has primarily focused on the response phase as opposed to the post-disaster recovery phase. In particular, the establishment of a new recovery organization, such as NRA, has become the normative governance model for donor-driven projects in disaster recovery context; yet little is known about these organizations. The present study fills this knowledge gap in post-disaster recovery literature by

examining the role and challenges of new recovery organizations and the public managers of these organizations. Second, the study's findings have significant implications for governments facing recovery after disaster events, especially in terms of how they can address the challenges their employees face at the federal, state, and local levels in managing post-disaster recovery. Findings can also inform similar agencies that might be established in other countries to address problems that are complex, uncertain, and urgent, including earthquakes, climate change, or COVID-19. Third, the study will provide policymakers in Nepal and elsewhere with the perspectives of those who are affected by the disaster—which will provide insight into how national level recovery organizations can impact the lives and livelihoods of those who are affected by disasters.

#### **1.4. Research Context and Background**

Information about the socioeconomic and political context of Nepal is necessary to understand the post-disaster recovery governance processes, practices, and outcomes that followed the 2015 earthquakes. The Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal is located between India and China. It has a diverse geography with hills and the Himalayas in the north and plains near the southern border with India. With the adoption of the new Constitution of Nepal (2015), Nepal's administrative units were reclassified from 5 regions, 14 zones, and 75 districts into 7 provinces and 77 districts (see Figure 1). The districts were recently classified into 753 local administrative units, which include 6 metropolitan cities, 11 sub-metropolitan cities, 276 municipalities, and 460 rural municipalities (Central Bureau of Statistics [CBS], n.d.). Nepal is a culturally diverse country with a population of approximately 27 million, representing 126 ethnic groups;

the population is hierarchically divided into different caste groups (Bhattarai & Conway 2020). The local restructuring of administrative units, particularly the declaration of rural to urban areas, also coincide with the Nepal government's and the donor's planning and projects to finance/invest in urban infrastructure for building a “resilient city” or “urban resilience.” Kathmandu City, for instance, is one of the 105 cities of 55 developing countries where GFDRR's and World Bank's in 2017 launched “city resilient program” (World Bank, 2020).

The Shah monarchy ruled Nepal between 1776, when diverse principalities were consolidated into modern Nepal, until 2006. Along with Shah kings, Rana prime ministers (the Rana autocratic regime), with the direct support of British India, also ruled Nepal until 1950. As a result, the Shah monarchy and the Rana rulers and their families and beneficiaries controlled the land, resources, and authority (Regmi, 1976; Pandey, 1989). For instance, the autocratic rulers instituted and expanded administrative/bureaucratic culture, including implementing the *pajani* and *chakari*<sup>3</sup> practices of personnel management in public services, which allowed rulers to recruit, dismiss, and promote civil servants at will. Such practices fostered “patronage, kinship, and other informal groupings” among civil servants as they prioritized the advancement of personal and family interests (Pandey, 1989, p.326). The people’s movement of 1950 ousted the Rana regime, empowered the Shah monarchy, and established a democratic political system; however, in 1960, after only a decade of democratic practice, King Mahendra suspended parliamentary democracy and introduced the partyless panchayat

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<sup>3</sup> The *Pajani* is a practice of annual screening and evaluation of personnel and reorganization of public services by the rulers. *Chakari* is a practice “under which civil servants expressed obeisance and loyalty to their seniors” (Pandey, 1989)

political system, which granted all executive, judicial, and legislative power to the king (Joshi & Rose, 1966). That is, the authoritarian panchayat system controlled all activities of political parties and leaders but allowed international donors' projects for the development and modernization of the nation. The merit-based public personnel administration of Nepal expanded during this period, but it was also plagued by "favoritism, nepotism, and other loyalties" and "extensive corruption" (Pandey, 1989, p. 327). After 1960, high-caste Khas Arya and Newar groups occupied most public administration positions in Nepal and all senior public service positions (Blaikie et al., 1985)<sup>4</sup>. In addition to international projects, the Shah king and the panchayat political institutions promoted hill Khas Arya-centered Nepali nationalism in culturally and geographically diverse Nepal. The pro-democracy movement of 1990, however, ended the partyless panchayat system and established a multi-party democracy.

In 1996, not long after the establishment of the new democratic system and greater engagement with international communities in the 1990s, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) started a guerilla war to establish a new democratic socio-economic system and to end ethnic-, caste-, and gender-related discrimination (Thapa & Sijapati, 2004). In 2006, the decade-long Maoist conflict, which killed about 14,000 people and displaced another 200,000, ended with a comprehensive peace agreement between the Maoists and the existing parties (Thapa, 2011, p. 9), and the Maoists joined the interim government. The first Constituent Assembly (CA), controlled by Maoist and ethnic parties after the first CA election, institutionalized Nepal as a federal democratic republic

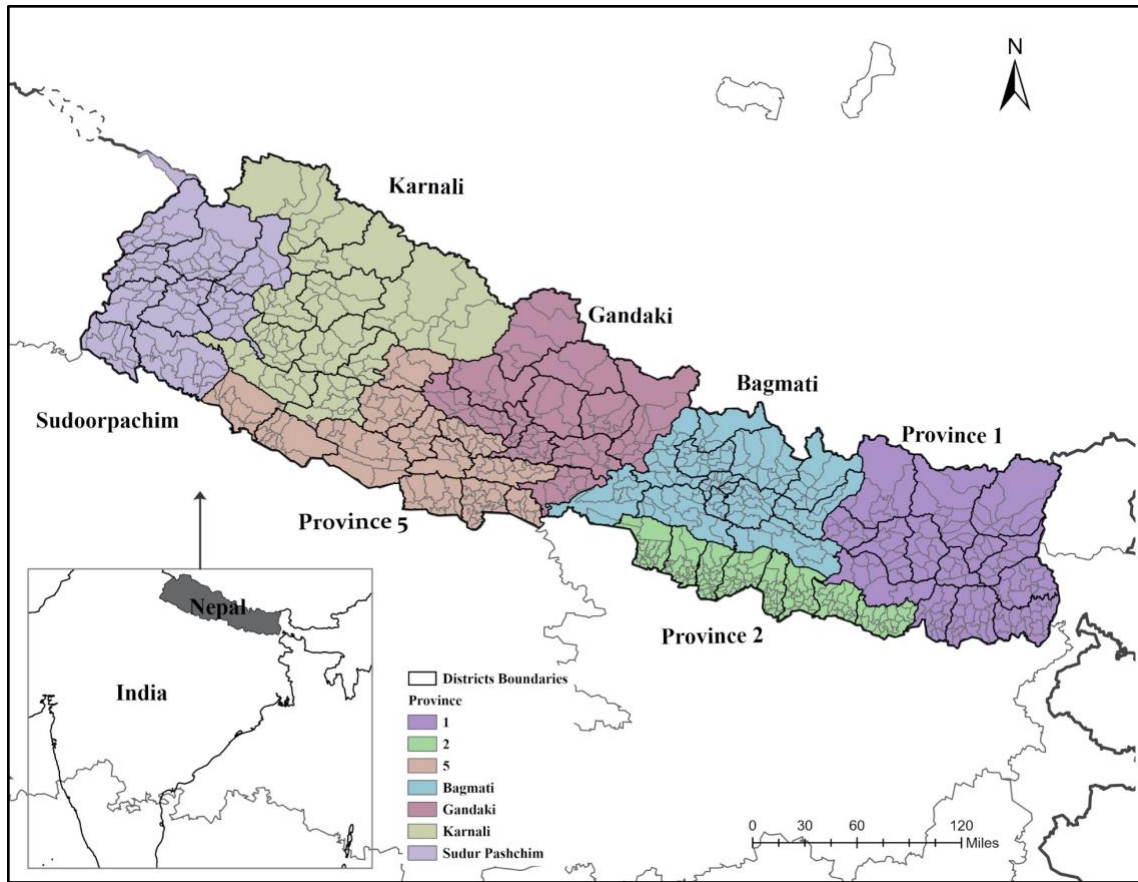
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<sup>4</sup> Blaikie et al. (1985:95) have reported that high caste Hindus from hill groups along with Newar occupied 92 percent of the high officials in the bureaucracy in 1973. High caste hill Hindus comprised 84 percent of civil servant jobs in 1983 and 98 percent by 1998.

and secular nation (Hutt, 2020). Subsequent CAs failed to pass the new constitution because of disagreements between the traditional political parties, the Maoists, and the ethnic parties. Despite political conflicts and disagreements over the federal governance system and provinces, during the crisis that followed the 2015 earthquakes, the traditional parties-controlled government seized the moment and passed the new constitution into law in September 2015 (Hutt, 2020). The new constitution was celebrated by the hill Khas Arya population and protested by the Madhesi population of the Terai region. More than 50 Madhesi people died in the protest. A partial economic blockade by India in support of the Madhesi population was followed by the resurgence of hill-based Nepali nationalism. Subsequent elections in federal, provincial, and local jurisdictions were held, which, by the end of 2017, had implemented the new federal system to restructure the traditional centralized political and administrative governance system. The political transition phase that overlapped with the post-earthquake recovery and reconstruction period was fraught with political instability, violence, and struggles between different political parties and ethnic groups for control of authority and territory.

In addition to social and political contexts, the economic conditions of Nepal have also shaped the post-disaster recovery processes and practices. Nepal is one of the least developed countries in the world. With the large infusion of international financial assistance between the post-conflict period and the post-disaster period, Nepal's GDP increased from USD 12.54 billion in 2008 to USD 34.19 billion in 2019. The international development assistance totaled 23.3% (USD 2 billion, 70% as a loan) of the national budget in the fiscal year 2019–2020 (World Bank, 2020). International economic assistance to Nepal started around 1950 in the context of the Cold War to support the

development and modernization of the country. The assistance of Western countries and bilateral agencies increased after the 1960s (Pandey, 1989). For instance, the World Bank (WB) started its investment project in 1970 and, by 1980, the WB had provided USD 218.4 million for the development of infrastructure. The WB's structural adjustment credit program, implemented in the mid-1980s, intensified and expanded in all sectors after 1990. Between the fiscal years 2010–11 and 2019–20, the WB provided a total of USD 2.9 billion to Nepal. These loans were directed to various sectors, including “peace and reconstruction,” energy, financial reform, education, and others. In terms of post-disaster reconstruction, international multilateral, bilateral, and development organizations had pledged 4.4 billion USD, committed 3.64 billion USD, and disbursed 1.4 billion USD by 2020 (Ministry of Finance [MOF], 2020). Multilateral organizations (e.g., the Asian Development Bank [ADB], the World Bank [WB], the International Monetary Fund [IMF], the European Union [EU], and the United Nations [UN]) and bilateral partners (e.g., Japan, the EU, the UK, the US, China, Switzerland, and Korea) were major donors to the post-earthquake recovery of people and places. Furthermore, the financial assistance of international non-governmental organizations (I-NGOs) has significantly increased in the last decade. In 2019, I-NGO funding to Nepal reached 215 million USD. I-NGOs (e.g., Save the Children, the German Nepal Help Association, World Vision International, Oxfam-GB, Good Neighbors International, Plan Nepal, Care Nepal, and the UN Mission to Nepal) were major donors in the post-earthquake context. In sum, the foreign aid regime, comprised of diverse institutions, and their ideas and practices have played a major role in the post-conflict and post-disaster rebuilding of Nepal (Jones et al., 2004; Rusczyk, 2019).



**Figure 1:** Administrative Map of Nepal, Map by Barsha Manandhar [Data Source: Department of Survey, Nepal]

### 1.4.1. Nepal Earthquake 2015

Nepal is also considered as one of the most vulnerable countries to multiple hazards (Government of Nepal-Ministry of Home Affairs [GON-MOHA], 2015, 2019). The United Nation has ranked Nepal as the 20<sup>th</sup> most hazard prone and vulnerable country and 11<sup>th</sup> in terms of earthquake risk. In addition, GON has considered Kathmandu Valley as the most earthquake prone cities in the world (GON-MOHA, 2015). The 2015 earthquakes hit Nepal at a politically turbulent time in the country’s history. Ongoing disputes over the demarcation of federal provinces contributed to the

political instability, along with post-conflict state restructuring issues following the Nepali's Maoist War (1996-2006). On April 25, a magnitude 7.8 (Richter scale) earthquake struck Nepal—its epicenter was Gorkha District. Following this earthquake, Nepal experienced approximately 300 aftershocks with a magnitude greater than 4 (Richter scale). Among these aftershocks, on May 12, a second major earthquake struck Nepal; the magnitude of this earthquake was 7.3 on the Richter scale (epicenter Mount Everest). I referred to these numerous earthquakes that occurred in 2015 as “2015 Nepal earthquake” in this dissertation. Figure 2 illustrates the districts affected by the earthquakes.

Of the 77<sup>5</sup> districts in Nepal, the earthquake impacted 32 districts. Following the earthquake, donors and Nepali government conducted the assessment of affected people and property. The post-disaster needs assessment (PDNA) report categorized the districts as “severely hit,” “crisis hit,” hit with heavy loss,” “hit,” and “slightly affected” (Government of Nepal-National Planning Commission [GON-NPC], 2015). The first two categories of affected districts were later named as the “highly affected districts”<sup>6</sup> (n=14) and the remaining districts were named as “less affected districts”<sup>7</sup> (n=18). The 2015 Nepal earthquake killed an estimated 8,790 people and injured 22,300 people. The

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<sup>5</sup>After the promulgation of new constitution in 2015, two districts were added, which increased the number of districts to 77. Two additional districts were created from the Nawalparasi and Rukum districts. The new constitution divided Nawalparasi into Eastern Nawalparasi and Western Nawalparasi, and it divided Rukum into Eastern Rukum and Western Rukum.( <https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/new-districts-operating-sans-admin-set>)

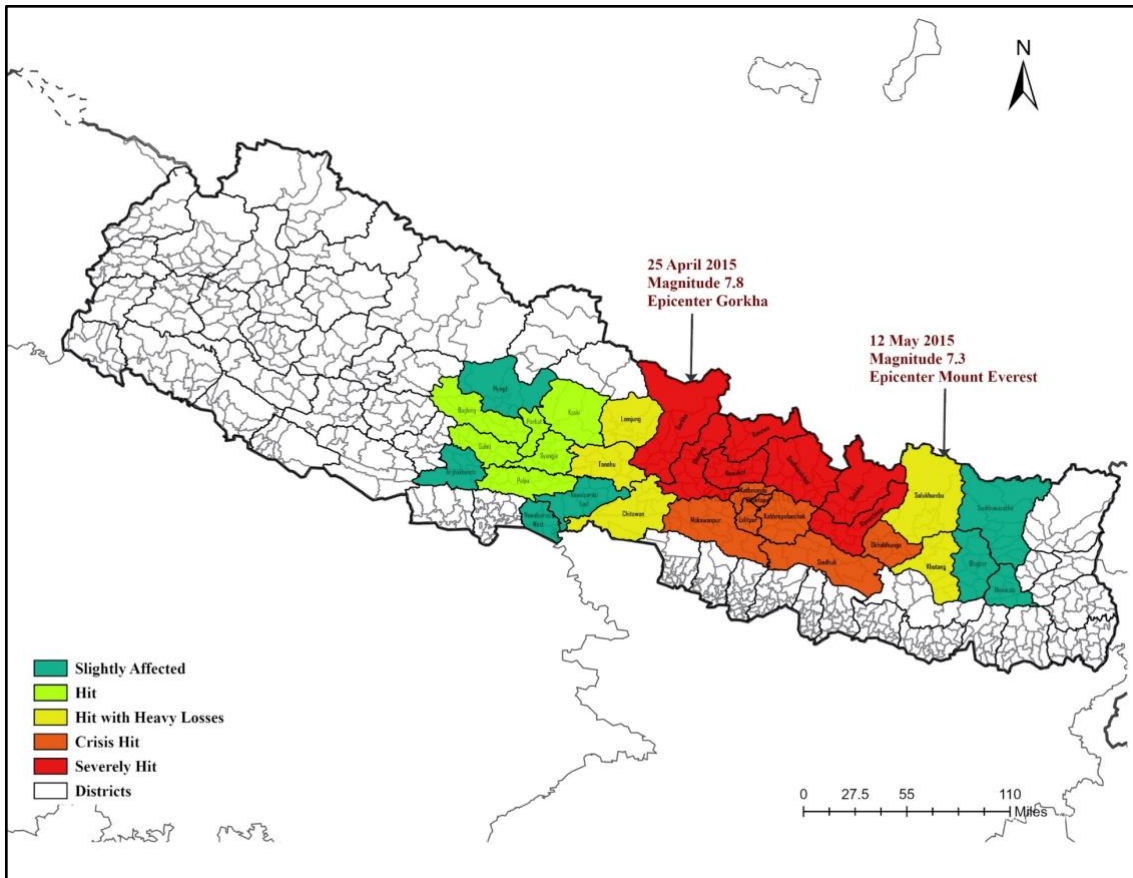
<sup>6</sup> Highly affected districts (Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur, Okhaldhunga, Dolakha, Ramechhap, Sindhupalchowk, Kavrepalanchowk, Sindhuli, Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Dhading, Gorkha, and Makwanpur).

<sup>7</sup> Less affected districts (Sankhuwasabha, Bhojpur, Dhankuta, Khotang, Solukhumbu, Chitwan, Tanahu, Lamjung, Kaski, Parbat, Baglung, Myagdi, Syangja, Palpa, Gulmi, Arghakhachi, Eastern Nawalparasi and Western Nawalparasi)



earthquake had widespread impacts—including an estimated NPR 706 billion or USD 7 billion in damage (GON-NPC, 2015).

Along with causing significant losses of life, the earthquake significantly impacted social sectors (e.g., private and public buildings, cultural heritage sites, health and education), production sectors (e.g., agriculture, irrigation, commerce, industry), and infrastructure sectors (e.g., electricity, communication, transportation, water, and sanitation) (GON-NPC, 2015). Among these sectors, social sectors were the most affected sectors because 86% of the damage is attributed to damage to the housing sector (GON-NPC, 2015). According to the PDNA report (2015), 498,852 houses were categorized as fully collapsed, and 256,697 houses were categorized as partially damaged. The total damage and losses in the housing sector were estimated to be NPR 350,540 million or USD 3.5 million (GON-NPC, 2015).



**Figure 2:** The categorization of Nepal Earthquake 2015 by PDNA, Map by Barsha Manandhar [Data source: Department of Survey, Nepal]

Soon after the earthquakes, the GON organized a high-level meeting of the Central Natural Disaster Relief Committee based on the National Calamity Act 1982. A cabinet-level meeting of government's ministers endorsed the committee's decisions on relief and response actions, including the release of funds for relief, the mobilization of security forces, and calls for international assistance. In addition, many humanitarian and international aid organizations immediately provided financial and logistics support. For instance, more than 100 international search and rescue and medical teams, and 450

diverse international aid organizations, participated in response activities (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [UNOCHA], 2015).

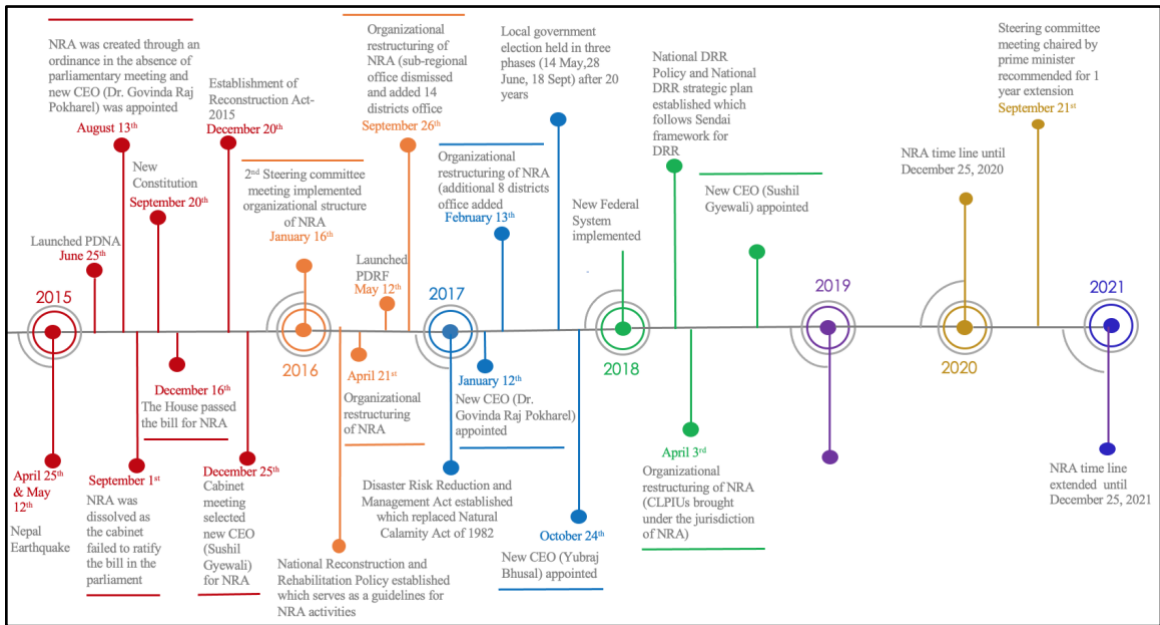
Two months after the earthquake, the Government of Nepal organized an international donor conference—titled “Toward a Resilient Nepal”—to request international financial assistance for the post-disaster recovery and reconstruction of people and property (Government of Nepal-National Reconstruction Authority [NRA], 2016). International bilateral and multilateral organizations, and international donor agencies committed and provided funding to build back a better and more resilient Nepal. While the PDNA report (2015) estimated USD 7 billion for the reconstruction of Nepal, international communities committed USD 3.43 billion and by 2017 disbursed about USD 2.7 billion (GON-NRA, 2016). With the backing of international donor, and bilateral and multilateral organizations (e.g., the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and the European Union), the Nepal government also made a commitment to establish a new recovery organization. Before the establishment of the NRA as a central coordinating body, the NPC was the central body responsible for formulating policies and planning and making decisions related to reconstruction and recovery activities. They prepared the PDNA and the Post Disaster Recovery Framework (PDRF) with the help of government's ministries and partner organizations, including the World Bank, the United Nations, European Union (EU), Asian Development Bank (ADB), and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The PDNA and PDRF are the major reports that guided recovery activities. At various levels of government, earthquake related projects were primarily implemented by different ministries, such as Ministry of Urban Development, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development

through their Central Level Project Implementation Units (CLPIUs) and District Level Project Implementation Units (DLPIUs). For instance, the Ministry of Urban Development and the Ministry of Education implemented projects related to housing and schools respectively. In addition, donors and international organizations directly carried out their recovery work in Nepal through international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), national non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community-based organizations (CBOs).

#### **1.4.2. National Reconstruction Authority**

The NRA was established eight months after the earthquake on 25 December 2015 after the government enacted the “Act Relating to Reconstruction of the Earthquake Affected Structures, 2015 (2072)” [hereafter Reconstruction Act-2015]. This Act established the NRA as a central coordinating body to effectively manage, oversee, and coordinate recovery and reconstruction activities in earthquake-affected districts. In other words, the NRA was established as a new network administrative organization (NAO) or a new recovery organization to manage this network of diverse stakeholders. Its term limit was set for five years. The Act not only assigned roles and responsibilities to NRA officials, but also empowered them to oversee, coordinate, and facilitate recovery efforts of public, private, and non-profit institutions at different levels (GON-MOHA, 2017). The term of the NRA was initially set up for five years (Nepal Gazette-GON, 2016) and the location of its headquarter was established inside the Singha Darbar, Kathmandu. NRA activities are guided by the National Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Policy

(NRRP) 2016 and post-disaster recovery framework (PDRF) 2016-2020. Figure 3 shows the NRA timeline.



**Figure 3: National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) Timeline**

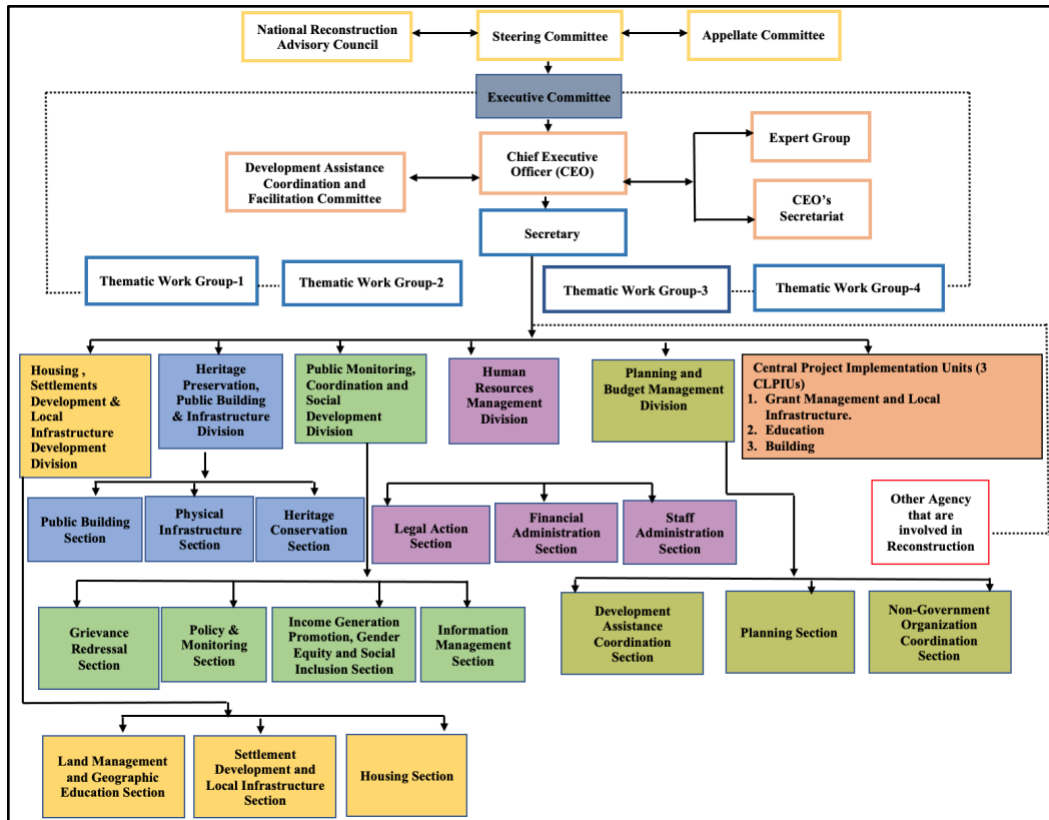
The NRA’s organizational structure consists of several high-level decision-making committees. This includes an Advisory Council, a Steering Committee, an Executive Committee, an Appellate Committee, and a Development Assistance Coordination and Facilitation Committee. The role of the Advisory Council is to advise the Steering Committee. The Council is chaired by the Prime Minister and includes members from the political leaders of affected districts, ministries, the military and five experts from non-governmental sectors (universities, civil societies, and private sectors). The Council meets every six months (GON-NRA, 2016). The Steering Committee is the central body of NRA, and it is chaired by the Prime Minister. The committee is composed of political leaders, two ministries, the National Planning Commission (NPC),

three technical experts of related matters nominated by the government, the NRA Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and the member secretary. The role of steering committee is to approve policies and plans, guide the executive committee in reconstruction activities, allocate the NRA budget, and approve its organizational structure. Similarly, the Executive Committee is chaired by the NRA CEO. Its members include: one representative of the government, four technical experts nominated by the government, and the member secretary (PDRF, 2015). Besides the executive committee, there is Appellate Committee, which hears complaints made by the parties related to the decision or order made by the authority. Furthermore, Development Assistance Coordination and Facilitation Committee (DACFC) monitors and ensures transparency of reconstruction programs and development assistance. The DACFC is chaired by the NRA CEO, and it consists of a of maximum eleven members who are representatives from national and international development partners and civil society (GON-NRA, 2016; Nepal Gazette-GON, 2016).

The organizational structure of the NRA has changed five times since its establishment. While the structure of high-level decision-making committees have not been affected by the restructuring, it changed the executing and implementation structure of NRA. The most recent change occurred after Nepal adopted a federal governance system. Figure 4 presents the current organizational structure of the NRA, which was restructured after a steering committee meeting on April 3, 2018. The organizational restructuring of NRA divisions, district offices, and project implementation units is described below.

## I. Divisions of the NRA

The NRA divisions were frequently merged and divided during several phases of organizational restructuring. The NRA was initially composed of five divisions: (1) Housing and Local Infrastructure; (2) Human Resource Management; (3) Heritage Preservation, Public Buildings, and Infrastructure; (4) Policy Monitoring, Coordination, and Social Development; (5) Planning and Budget Management (see Appendix C). However, after the PDRF, the NRA was reorganized into six divisions (GoN-NRA, 2016); the PDRF recommended distinct divisions for rural housing and urban housing (see Appendix D), along with providing guidance to the NRA on its roles, responsibilities, and institutional arrangement to collaborate and implement reconstruction works. Subsequently, the NRA steering committee re-merged the rural and urban divisions; this committee frequently reorganized other NRA divisions (see Appendix E and Appendix F).



**Figure 4:** Organization Structure of NRA (Main office), Adapted from NRA-Annual Report 2017/18

## II. Sub-Regional Office, District Coordination Committees, and Resource Center

The sub-regional office was established to coordinate between central authorities and local bodies. Six sub-regional offices were established at Gorkha, Dolakha, Kavrepalanchowk, Nuwakot, Kathmandu, and Lalitpur to oversee the reconstruction work and coordinate efforts in 14 severely affected districts (Samiti, 2016). However, after the steering committee meeting on 26 September 2016, the sub-regional office was disbanded, and 14 District Coordination Committees (DCCs) were established in 14 highly affected districts. In total, 22 DCCs (14 for highly affected districts and 8 for less affected districts) were established to serve earthquake affected districts.



The DCCs were established to monitor, coordinate, and evaluate the activities carried out by the NRA at a local level. Each DCCs includes a member of parliament who represents the respective district in which each DCC is established, a Chief District Officer (CDO), a Local Development Officer (LDO). The member of parliament will act as a coordinator of the DDC. After the adoption of the federal structure in 2018, the DCCs were disbanded, and responsibilities shifted to the DLPIUs. In addition to the sub-regional offices and DCCs, the NRA aimed to establish 160 Resource Centers to support at the community level in undertaking their own reconstruction works; however, the resource centers were never established.

### III. Central Level Project Implementation Units (CLPIUs)

The NRA included central project implementation units to expedite the reconstruction works and to ensure coordination within the line ministries. Initially, the CLPIUs were established under the following four key line ministries (1) Ministry of Urban Development (MOUD), (2) Ministry of Education (MOE), (3) Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MOFALD), (4) Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation (MOCTCA). Each of these CLPIUs oversee their respective district level project implementation units (DLPIUs) in all earthquake affected districts. However, after the 2018 organizational reform, the CLPIUs were brought under the jurisdiction of the NRA.<sup>8</sup> Currently, there are three central project implementation units (a) CLPIU-Building; (b) CLPIU- Education; and (c) CLPIU-GMALI (Grant Management and Local Infrastructure). In addition, there are district project implementation units (DLPIUs) in 31

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<sup>8</sup> The NRA steering committee meeting on April 3, 2018, decided to bring CLPIUs under the NRA. The CLPIUs were brought under NRA as the ministries that established CLPIUs were terminated, and some were merged into other ministries after the country adopted a federal structure.

earthquake affected districts. In total, there are 74 DLPIUs. The organizational structure of CLPIUs and DLPIUs are described below.

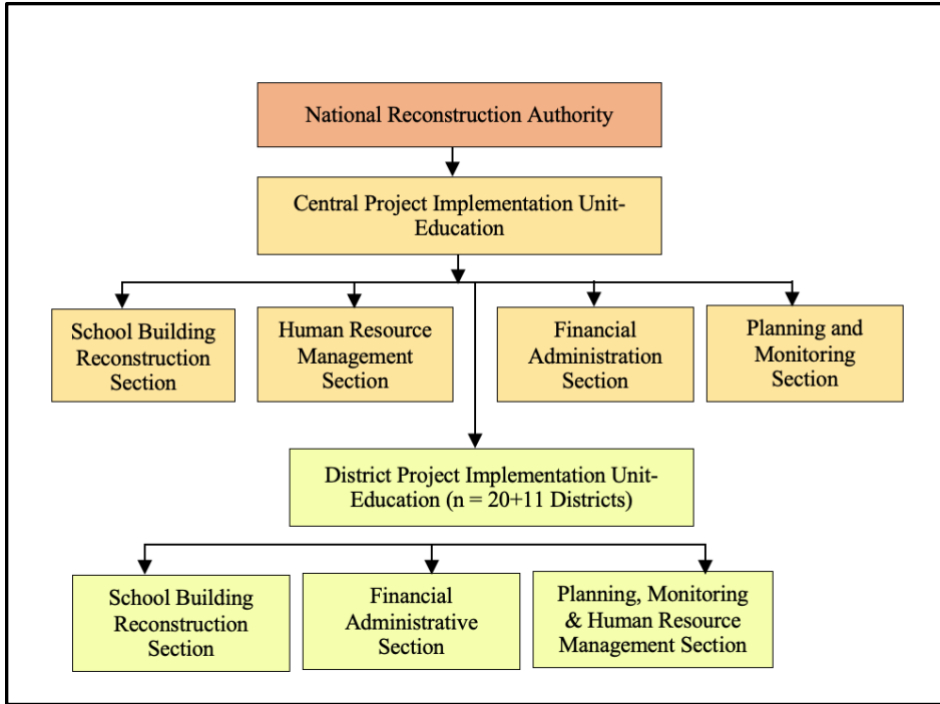
*Central Project Implementation Unit (CLPIU-Education)*

CLPIU-Education was established to reconstruct school buildings that were damaged by the earthquake. The CLPIU-Education office is located in Ratopul, Kathmandu district. The earthquake damaged 7,923 schools and 49,681 classrooms in these schools. The total damage and losses in the education sector is estimated to be NPR 3.31 billion (GN-NPC, 2015). The principle of “Build Back Better” was adopted for reconstruction of schools.

The budget for CLPIU-Education is managed by the NRA. Human resources of this CLPIU include one project director, two sub-project directors, technicians, and administration staff. CLPIU-Education has its own district project implementation units that monitor and implement the school reconstruction projects within districts. Each DLPIU office comprises technical and administrative staff and a project director. In total, there are 31 DLPIUs<sup>9</sup> (NRA Annual Report, 2017/18) (see Figure 5)

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<sup>9</sup> Initially, 20 DLPIUs were established to prioritize the “most affected” districts and, later, the offices were established in 11 additional districts affected by the earthquake.



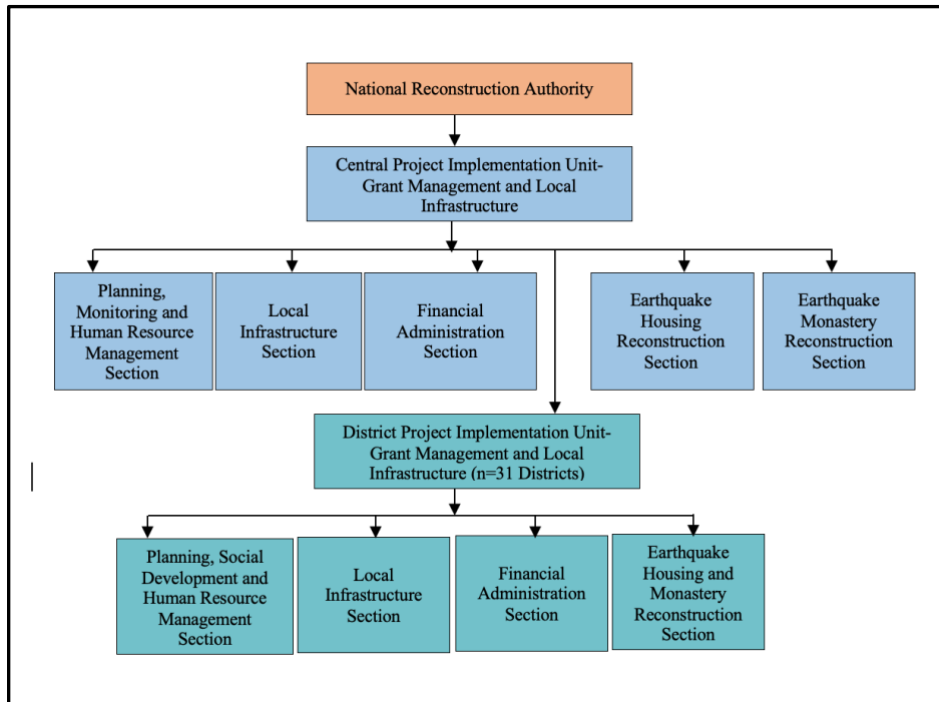
**Figure 5:** Organizational Structure of CLPIU-Education, Adapted from NRA-Annual Report, 2017/18

*Central Level Project Implementation Unit-Grant Management and Local Infrastructure (GMALI)*

The CLPIU-GMALI is responsible for distributing grants to beneficiaries and reconstruction of local infrastructure. Specifically, the implementation unit is responsible for reconstruction and rehabilitation of district roads under the Earthquake Emergency Assistance project (EEAP), reconstruction and maintenance of damaged monasteries under the Earthquake Monastery Reconstruction Project (EMRP). In addition, the implementation unit is responsible for verification of beneficiaries and release of grants to beneficiaries under the Earthquake Housing Reconstruction Project (EHRP).

The office is located in Jwagal, Lalitpur district. The implementation unit consists of one project director and three sub-project directors for each project (EHRP, EEAP,

EMRP) and technical and administrative staff. Similar to other implementation units, the unit established DLPIUs in 31 affected districts. Each DLPIU comprises a project director and technical and administrative staff. The focus of the district implementation units is to monitor, verification of beneficiaries and release grant in their respective districts.

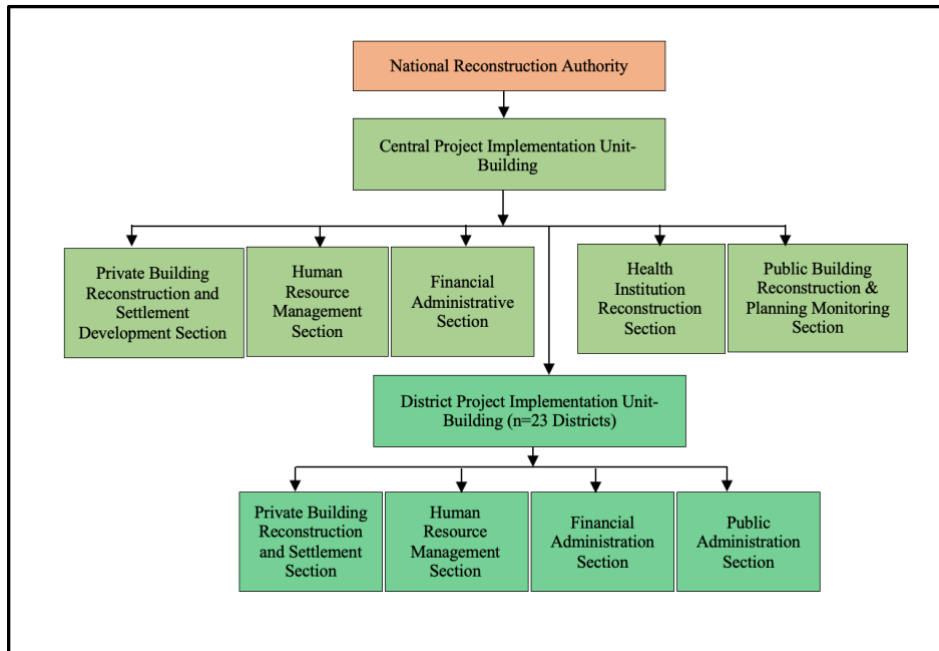


**Figure 6:** Organizational structure of CLPIU-GMALI, Adapted from NRA Annual Report 2017/18

### *Central Project Implementation Unit (CLPIU)-Building*

The CLPIU-Building is located in Babar Mahal, Kathmandu district. The main responsibility of the unit is to carry out the reconstruction and retrofitting work of public and private buildings. More specifically, CLPIU-Building focuses on: (a) rural housing and settlement development, (b) urban housing infrastructure and heritage conservation, and (c) public buildings. Similar to the CLPIU-GMALI, the work is conducted under

EEAP and EHRP projects. The CLPIU-Building comprises one project director and two sub-project directors, technicians, contractors, and administrative staff. CLPIU-Building also has its DLPIUs established in 23 districts to implement the work in each district (see Figure 7). The DLPIU of each district consists of project director and technical and administrative staff.

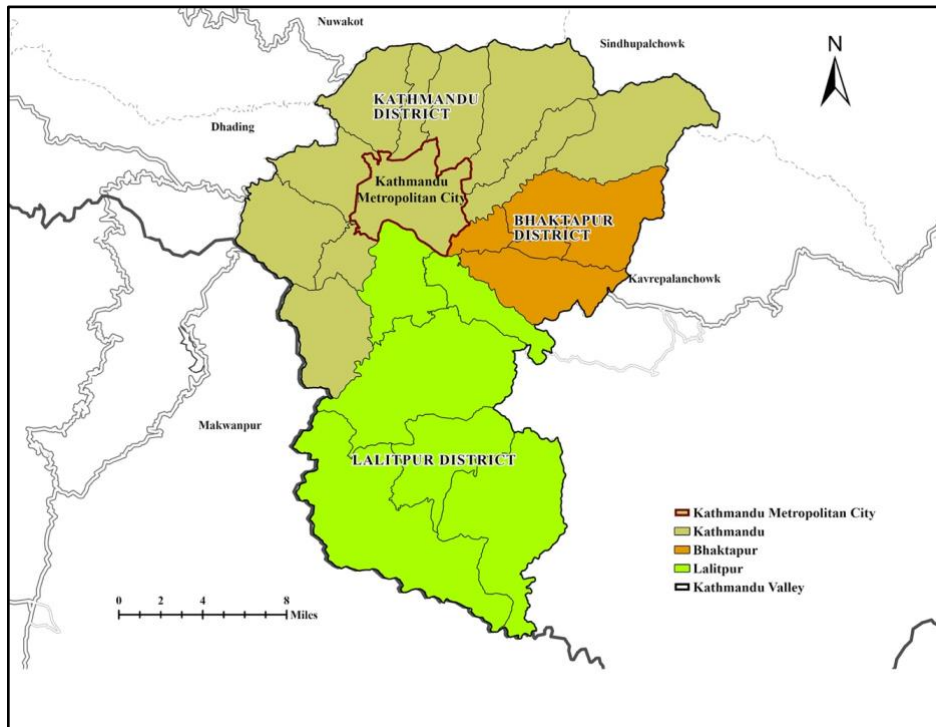


**Figure 7:** Organizational structure of CLPIU-Building, Adapted from NRA -Annual Report 2017/18

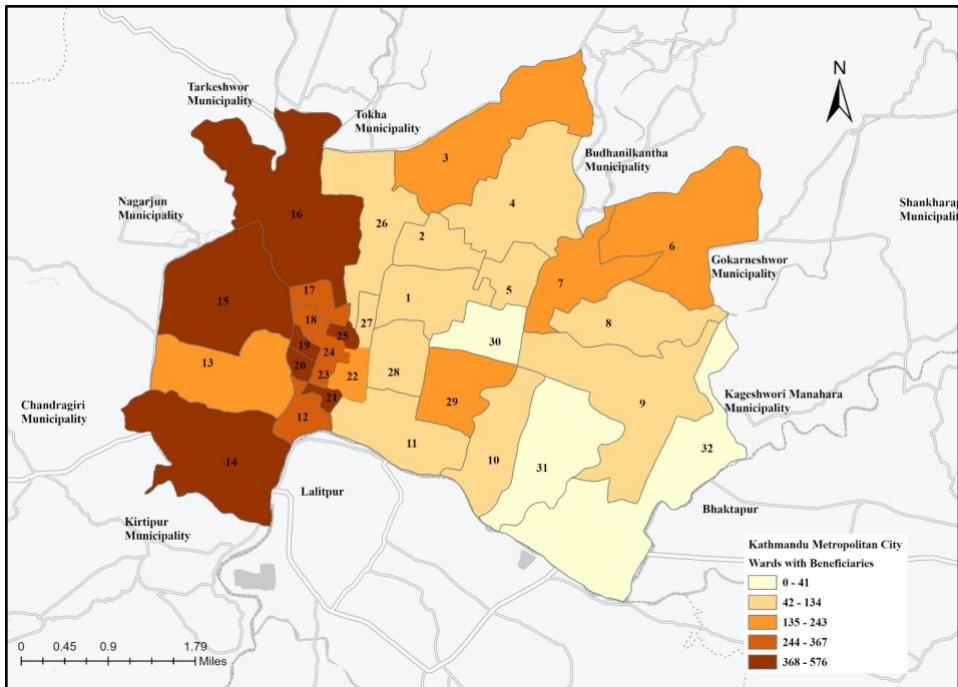
### 1.5. Research Site

My research site for the present study is located in urban Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) which is located in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal (see Figure 8). Kathmandu Valley lies in 27°42'14.40" north latitude and 85°18'32.40" eastern longitude. Kathmandu Valley is surrounded by the Mahabharat mountain range, which consists of four major mountains: Phulchowki in the southwest, Chandragiri in the

southwest, Shivapuri in the northwest, and Nagarjun in the northeast (Rimal et al., 2017; Kathmandu Metropolitan City [KMC] n.d.). Administratively, the Kathmandu Valley consists of three districts: Kathmandu District, Lalitpur District, and Bhaktapur District. Kathmandu District, in particular, consists of one metropolitan city, ten municipalities, and 138 wards—the smallest administrative unit of government. The elevation of KMC is 1,400, and the city is an urban core of the Kathmandu Valley. KMC is located in the Kathmandu district of province no. 3 of Nepal. KMC is the biggest urban city of Nepal with a total population of 1,744,246 and it covers an area of 50.6 Km<sup>2</sup> (Metropolitan City Profile, 2020; CBS, Census 2011). It consists of 32 wards (see Figure 9). The ward offices of KMC were one of my primary sites for conducting interviews. I interviewed ward leaders (presidents, members and social mobilizers) of each ward.

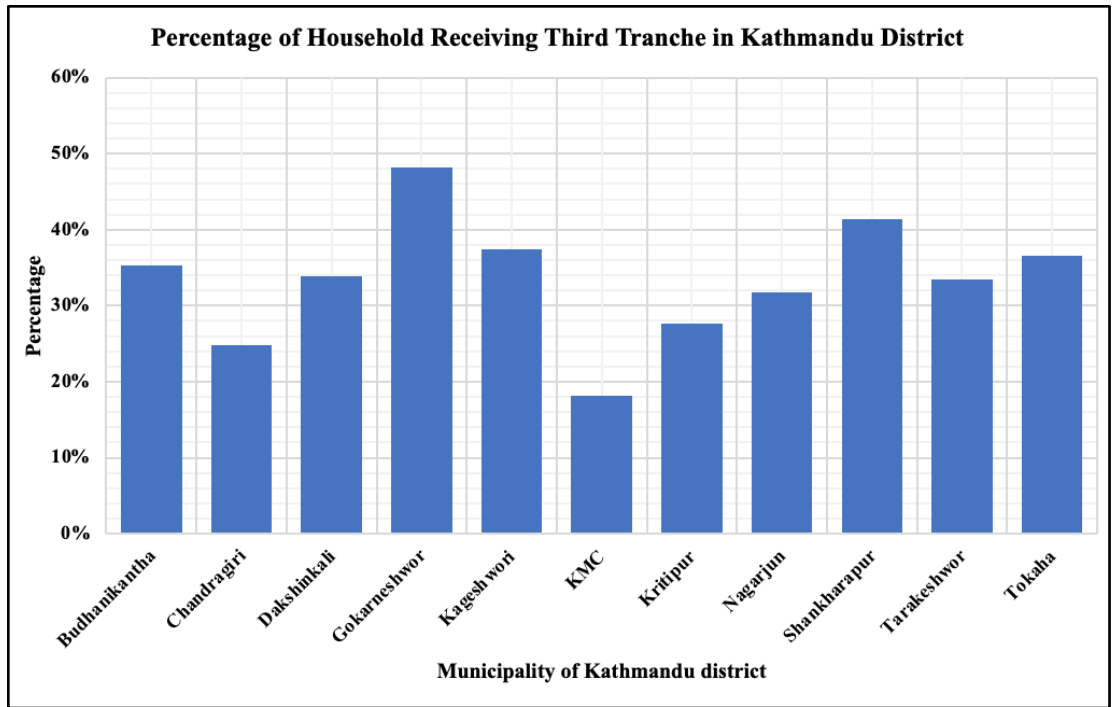


**Figure 8:** Kathmandu Valley, Map by Barsha Manandhar [Data source: MOFALD]



**Figure 9:** Kathmandu Metropolitan City Wards with Beneficiaries, Map by Barsha Manandhar [Data source: DLPIU-GMALI, Kathmandu]

I selected KMC as my primary site to examine—research question 3—the linkages between network governance factors and post-earthquake private housing reconstruction of affected people. It is because the Kathmandu district was categorized as the "highly affected" district. In addition, KMC is a major political, administrative, and tourist center in Nepal, and it has the highest population and housing density in Nepal. The urban core of KMC has old housing structures, heavily impacted by the earthquake (see Figure 3). Compared to other municipalities within Kathmandu Valley and rural affected districts, the speed of housing recovery is extremely slow (i.e., KMC has the lowest percentage of households receiving the third installment of cash assistance that government provided for housing reconstruction following the earthquake (see Figure 9-below).



**Figure 10:** Graph showing percentage of household receiving the third cash assistance(proxy of housing reconstruction)





**Figure 11:** Damaged Private Households in Kathmandu Metropolitan City (Photos by Barsha Manandhar)

### **1.6. Post-Disaster Recovery Network**

For this study, I considered the "recovery network" as a formal collaborative structure of autonomous but interdependent organizations that frequently interact for the common goal of building recovery of affected people after the 2015 Nepal earthquake.

Following the earthquake, diverse organizations or stakeholders collaborated in different stages and sectors of the recovery phase. This includes the central government, government ministries and departments, international donors, multilateral and bilateral organizations, international non-governmental organizations, national non-governmental organizations, political organizations, community-based organizations, and local government at different levels of government. These diverse stakeholders in the recovery network have established collaborative relationships through the exchange of financial resources, human resources, information, knowledge, and legitimacy to facilitate or attain the common goal of recovery and reconstruction.

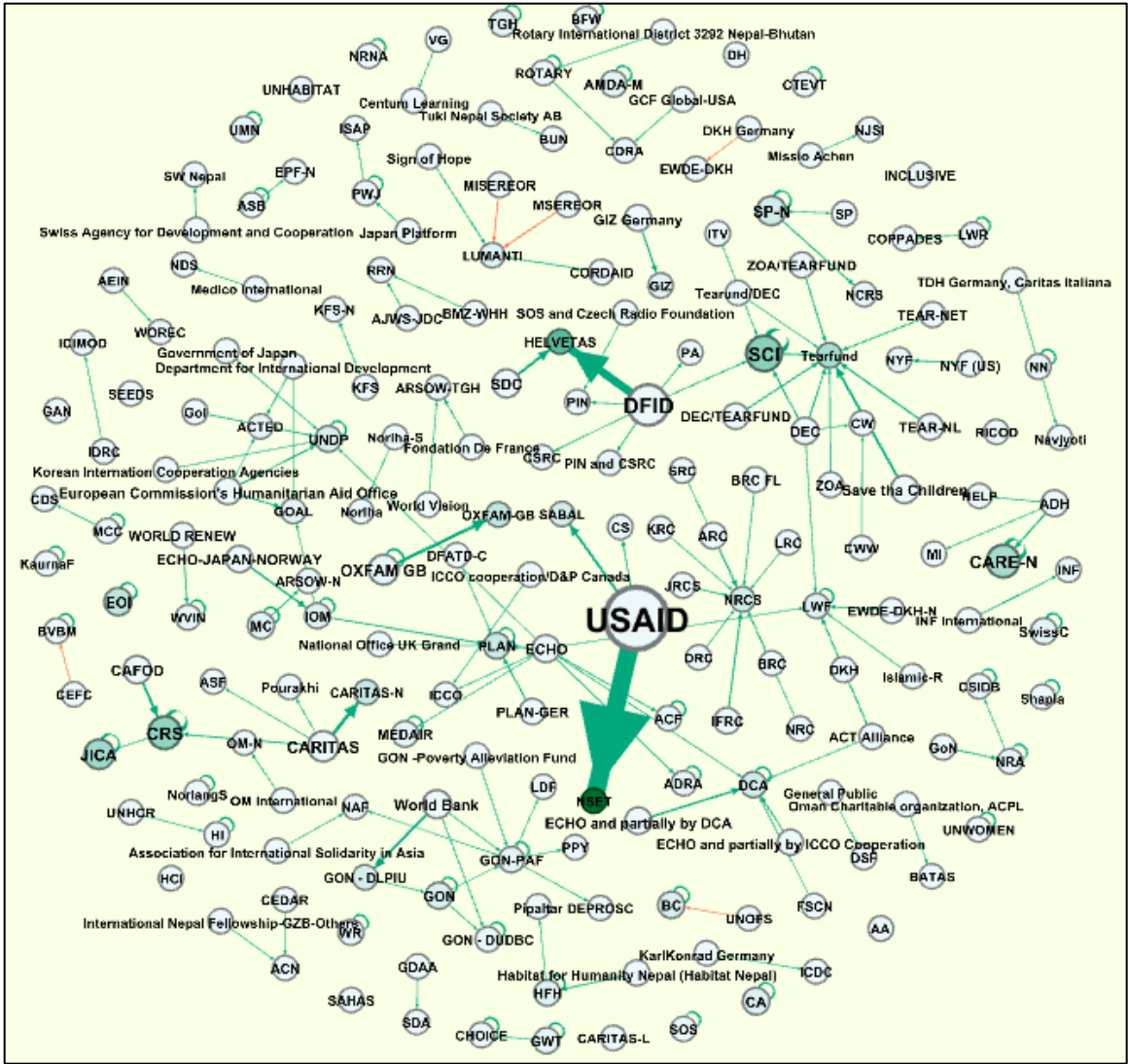
The initial collaborative efforts of the recovery network include the organization of donor conferences<sup>10</sup>, where donor agencies committed to rebuilding a better and resilient Nepal following the earthquake. In particular, the Nepal government's ministries and international agencies, such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and European Union committed to establish new institutions and provide loans and grants. Soon after the conference, the National Planning Commission (advisory body of Nepal) along with line ministries of government and development partners such as the World Bank, the United Nations, European Union, Asian Development Bank, and Japan International Cooperation Agency collaborated to conduct "need assessments" of damage property and places, and the collaborative effort produced the PDNA document. Furthermore, the joint efforts of government ministries and international organizations prepared the PDRF document that became the central framework to implement the

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<sup>10</sup> Donor conference: "Toward a Resilient Nepal"- to request financial assistance for Nepal Reconstruction

recovery measures. Similarly, sectoral line ministries, such as the Ministry of Urban Development and the Ministry of Education established project implementation bodies at their respective ministries to implement recovery and reconstruction activities. In addition, donor agencies and INGOs directly implemented their recovery activities through their collaboration with local levels partner organizations such as international NGOs, national NGOs, private organizations, consultants, CBOs, and local governments.

For an example of a post-disaster recovery network of diverse stakeholders, see Figure 11. The network visualization is just an example of a post-disaster recovery network of organizations. The network shows the flow of post-disaster reconstruction aid from donating organizations to implementing organizations for rural and urban housing projects. While the data are from HRRP 2018, many data points with “not available” [donating or receiving organizations] have been removed to construct the figure. The network is an unweighted and directed graph. Each node represents organizations. The bigger size of a node (organization) indicates higher frequency of aid from the organization (out-degree), whereas the dark green color indicates higher aid receiving organization (in-degree). The green arrows (directed links or edges) show the flow of aid for rural housing projects, whereas few red arrows (directed edges) show the flow of aid for urban housing projects. The size of edges or links indicate frequency of aid. For instance, the edge between USAID and NSET is large, which indicate large frequency of aid flowed from USAID to NSET. Some nodes have self-edges, which indicate that same organizations provided and implemented their recovery projects.



**Figure 12:** Aid Network, Map by Barsha Manandhar. [Software: Gephi; Data Source: HRRP, 2018].

**1.7. Research Approach, Method and Analysis**

The study used qualitative research methodology to examine the challenges of public managers to steer collaborative processes and to examine the linkages between the management of collaborative recovery network and private housing recovery of affected population of urban KMC. The qualitative research approach is useful and appropriate for

my research because it requires in-depth examination of the social, political and institutional contexts influencing the choices and strategies of NRA public managers in managing the recovery network and private housing recovery outcomes. In addition, the qualitative approach is more appropriate because the research was designed to understand diverse experiences and perceptions of public managers' challenges to manage post-earthquake recovery processes and practices. In order to address these questions, I used an explanatory case study of recovery organization that was established after the 2015 Nepal earthquake. Since this study extend beyond the identification of factors shaping the recovery, explanatory case study is useful to address "how" and/or "why" the governance processes and practices are linked to housing recovery outcome (Yin, 2014). Besides, the case study of 2015 Nepal earthquake is ideal for the study because NRA is the first recovery organization established to manage disaster in Nepal which have a time limit of five years. The case study of NRA will provide a better understanding on the challenges faced by the public manager of recovery organization to steer the network of actors and organizations in general. The research adopts an inductive analysis that suggests the gathering of diverse views and experiences of public managers and other interviewees. Following the collection of data, the qualitative information were used to build patterns (sub-themes and themes) to understand public managers' challenges and private housing reconstruction outcomes

In this case study, semi-structured interviews and review of secondary resources were utilized for data collection. Prior to data collection, approval was obtained from Florida International University's Internal Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix A). Below, I describe the method used during data collection and analysis.

### **1.7.1. Semi-structured interviews**

I conducted semi-structured interviews with public managers of the NRA at all levels, ward leaders of KMC, and representatives from INGOs and NGOs. The goal of this approach was to understand the challenges faced by these public managers in their efforts to steer collaborative networks of organizations involved in post-disaster recovery. Semi-structured interviews are an effective data collection method when informal interviews are not possible. The other benefits of the semi-structured interview are that it is flexible, and the interviewer can modify, add, or remove questions during the interview (Bernard, 2017). The sampling techniques for the semi-structured interviews were a mix of purposive sampling, which involves selection of a productive sample that could help to understand a given phenomenon in detail (Marshall, 1996), and snowball sampling, which involves asking respondent to refer other contacts for the interview to the researcher (Bernard, Wutich & Ryan., 2017).

#### **I. Interviews with public managers of the NRA**

Before commencing interviews, I obtained a “Temporary Entry Pass” to access NRA headquarters. The entry pass is required, as the office is located in Singha Durbar where other ministry offices are located, including Office of the Prime Minister and different government' ministries. Hence, I submitted a request letter that stated the purpose of my visit to the NRA office and received the 3 months “Temporary Entry Pass” (See Appendix B).

I conducted a total of 35 interviews with NRA public managers. Specifically, I conducted 16 interviews with public managers located at the NRA headquarters (see Figure 13 and 14 for interviewees' demographic characteristics) This includes executive members, an undersecretary, a joint secretary, and engineers. In addition, I conducted 19 interviews with public managers of central and district implementation units that were located outside of the NRA headquarters. This includes project directors, sub-project directors, field engineers, and consultants. Interviews were concluded upon reaching theoretical saturation (e.g., no new information was being generated) (Bernard, Wutich, & Ryan, 2017). The interviews were conducted face-to face in Nepali language. Interviews were conducted at the location convenient to the participants (e.g., the NRA office). The interviews were audio recorded with the verbal consent of the participants. The interviews lasted from 30-45 minutes, on average. I used a semi-structured interview guide to conduct the interviews (See Appendix H)

## II. Interviews with international and national non-governmental organizations (INGOs and NGOs)

The interviews with NRA officials were supplemented with interviews with representatives from non-governmental organizations. In total, I conducted 15 interviews with representatives of INGOs and NGOs. The respondents included executive directors, project coordinators, and project officers. I conducted face-to-face interviews in Nepalese language, except for one interview that I conducted in English language. The interviews lasted, on average, 30 to 60 minutes. Interviews were conducted in participants' respective offices. The interviews were audio recorded with the informed consent of the participants. An interview guide was used to conduct the interviews (See Appendix I)

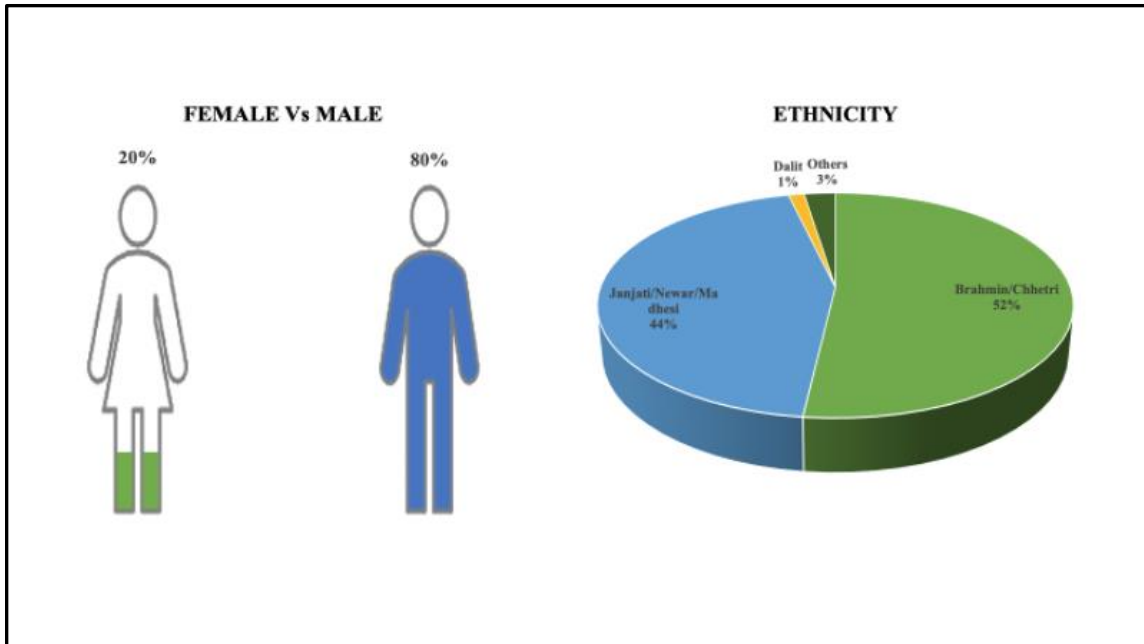
### III. Interviews with ward leaders of Kathmandu districts

Interviews with the ward leaders were conducted to understand local perspectives toward the NRA and to understand how management of the network can enable or hinder the recovery of affected populations. All 32 wards leaders of Kathmandu were selected for the interview. Interviews were conducted with ward leaders of 31 wards; one ward leader did not agree to the interview. I used an interview guide to conduct interviews (see Appendix J). Each interview lasted, on an average, 30 minutes. The interviews were conducted in participants' respective ward offices.

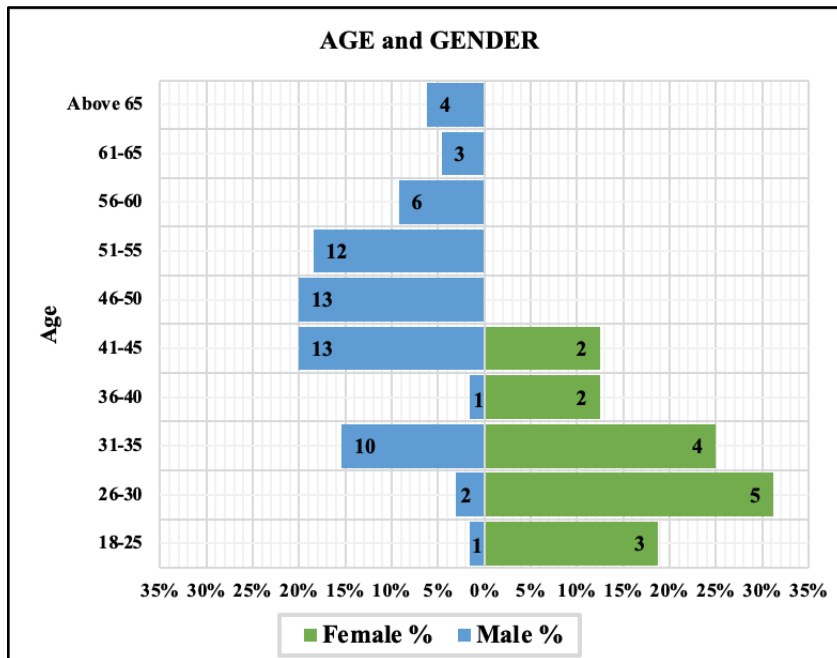
#### **1.7.2. Review of Secondary sources**

The interviews were supplemented with data from secondary sources. I reviewed NRA's earthquake reconstruction and recovery related policies, annual reports, monthly newsletters and other official publications. I also reviewed publications of INGOs and newspaper reports from three national daily newspapers (The Kathmandu Post, The Himalayan Times, and The Republica). These sources allowed me to understand the institutional and political context of the NRA.

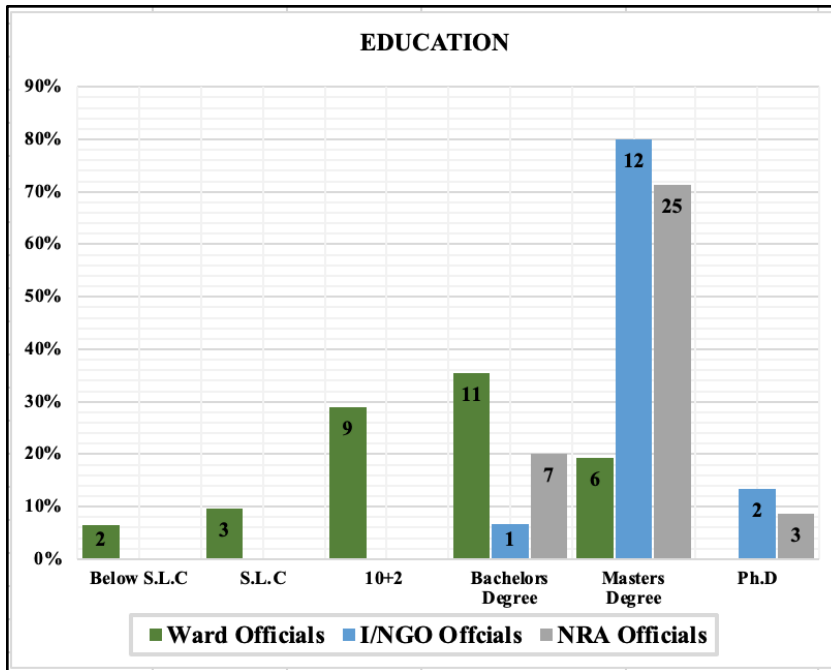




**Figure 13:** Demographic details of interviewees



**Figure 14:** Chart showing age and gender of interviewees



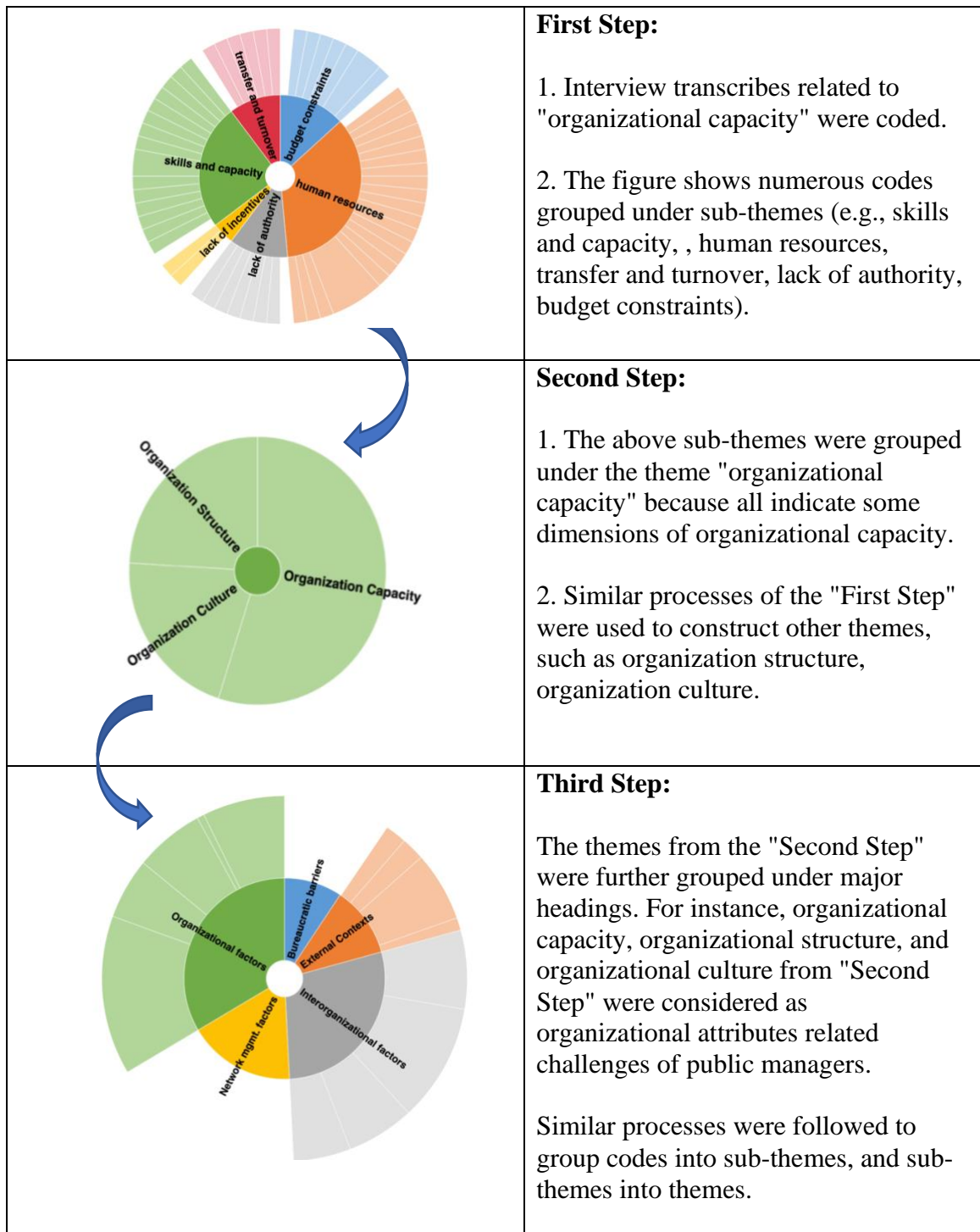
**Figure 15:** Chart showing education of interviewees

### 1.7.3. Data Analysis

The main goal of qualitative data analysis is to organize and transform raw data into findings. I used NVivo-12 to analyze the qualitative data. NVivo-12 software provides a platform to organize and code data and identify themes. Various studies have identified that using the computer assisted analysis software, such as NVivo, improves speed and accuracy in terms of consistency in coding, and increases validity and robustness in analyzing qualitative data in comparison to traditional manual approaches (Siccama & Penna, 2008; Zamawe, 2015).

Initially, interview recordings were transcribed and translated word-for-word into English and uploaded into NVivo. Secondary qualitative data (e.g., policies, rules and regulations, project reports) collected for the study were also uploaded for analysis in NVivo. After the transcription, the first step is to begin coding using the software by

reading and analyzing the interviews and documents line-by-line. I used first cycle structural coding method as proposed by Saldana, (2009). The structural coding is type of coding process, where the researcher codes the data according to the research question or topic of inquiry. The codes are then collected and grouped together into sub-themes for further analysis (Saldana, 2009). In the second cycle coding, I categorized and grouped the codes into subthemes and sub-themes into themes (see Figure 16)



**Figure 16:** The hierarchy of codes were constructed using NVivo 12 Software.

## **1.8. Main findings**

This study addresses three research questions. Each question is examined in a standalone chapter. The first question (Chapter 2) examines challenges related to organizational dimensions of NRA that hinder public managers as they steer the network of actors in post disaster recovery. The findings showed that NRA public managers face five main challenges within their organization while steering post-disaster recovery networks: (1) centralized decision-making that influenced collaborative processes; (2) fragmentation of specialized administrative and implementing bodies; (3) inflexible institutions (i.e., rules and regulations) and practices; (4) limited organizational capacity (e.g., staff, resources); and, (5) an organizational culture and leadership skills that does not necessarily value collaboration. The second question (Chapter 3) examines what and how relationships between multiple stakeholders influence NRA public managers' roles and strategies to govern or steer post-disaster recovery networks. The findings suggest that differences in priorities and practices, conflict and competition over resources and authority, and distrust between network participants hinder a network manager's ability to steer the network of actors involved in recovery. The third question (Chapter 4) examines how governance factors shape private housing reconstruction outcomes in urban KMC. As a result of the centralized decision making and implementing arrangements, powerful stakeholders avoided or ignored urban housing reconstruction processes, such as the identification of beneficiaries and urban housing problems, distribution of appropriate cash assistance, urban poverty, and urban housing and land tenure. In addition, findings revealed that the goals and interests of donors and non-governmental organizations shaped private housing reconstruction priorities and practices

Based on these findings, this paper argues that the centrality of power asymmetry between multiple stakeholders in shaping urban private housing reconstruction processes, priorities, and outcomes.

### **1.9. Layout of the Dissertation**

The overall goal of the study was to explore challenges that network/public managers face while steering multi-stakeholder networks in post-disaster contexts and to examine how governance of recovery networks can enable or hinder the recovery of earthquake affected populations. The dissertation is organized as follows. Following the brief introduction of research questions, theoretical framework and literature, research background, and methods in Chapter 1, I examine research questions and present findings and discussions in standalone chapters. Since the theoretical framework and post-disaster recovery literature are described in detail in each chapter, I have only briefly introduced the sections in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 focuses on challenges related to organizational context or attributes (e.g., structure, capacity, culture) and how this influences the network management strategies of public officers. Chapter 3 presents the challenges of NRA's network managers because of the nature of relationships within diverse public managers (intraorganizational relationship) and between different network stakeholders (interorganizational relationship); the chapter explores how relationship factors influence network managers to govern the network or managing collaboration in the recovery network. Chapter 4 details the linkages between network management/governance factors and post-disaster private housing recovery in urban KMC. In other words, the chapter examines how a new recovery organization, established to manage the recovery network,

can hinder or enable housing recovery of earthquake affected populations in an urban area (i.e., KMC). Finally, Chapter 5 concludes with the discussion of main findings, strengths and limitations of the research, policy implications, and suggestions for future research.

## **CHAPTER 2: PUBLIC MANAGERS' CHALLENGES IN NETWORK GOVERNANCE: MANAGING MULTI-SECTOR STAKEHOLDERS IN POST- DISASTER RECOVERY IN NEPAL**

### **2.1. Introduction**

The establishment of a new network administrative or management organization has become the standard institutional intervention in post-disaster recovery governance. In most donor-driven post-disaster reconstruction projects, a centralized management authority is established to effectively steer interactions between stakeholders within a network. Some scholars have noted that centralized mode of collaborative governance structures [i.e., the network administrative organization (NAO)] can facilitate collaboration among organizations that are involved in addressing complex and urgent problems, such as emergencies or disasters (Provan and Kenis 2007; Johnson and Olshanksy 2016; Saz-Carranza and Ospina (2011); Comfort, 2002; Kapucu, 2006). Similarly, network scholars have underscored the critical role, skills, and capacity of network managers or leaders in achieving desired outcomes (Agranoff & McGuire, 2001; Provan & Kenis, 2007; Klijn et al., 2020). Studies have highlighted the importance of a network management authority and highlighted the roles that network managers play in the effective governance of the network; however, little is known about how the central authority of a post-disaster recovery network steers or sustains interaction processes between diverse stakeholders. More specifically, little is known about the challenges faced by network managers (e.g., public managers) of the recovery management



organization who are responsible for managing multi-stakeholder networks in post-disaster recovery contexts.

Thus, this paper investigates the challenges faced by public managers of recovery organizations while leading the post-earthquake recovery network in Nepal. Specifically, this chapter focuses on how the Nepal Reconstruction Authority (NRA) (i.e., the new recovery management organization that was established after the 2015 Nepal earthquake) shaped the network management practices of public managers. Public managers face a range of inter-organizational and external challenges; however, this paper primarily focuses on challenges related to organizational dimensions of the NRA. The specific objective of the paper was twofold. The first objective was to analyze the organizational challenges that network managers face while governing the recovery network. In particular, this paper aimed to examine how organizational structure, capacity, and culture influenced the network management role and strategies of public officers of NRA. The second objective was to uncover how the organizational dimensions of a new organization (e.g., an NAO) are linked to the governance of post-disaster recovery network.

This study builds on—and contributes to—the growing literature on the post-disaster recovery phase of emergency management (Johnson and Olshansky 2016; Ganapati & Mukharji 2019; Comfort et al. 2010; Kapucu 2014). I aimed to expand understanding of the importance and limitations of recovery organizations, such as the NRA, that are often established to manage post-disaster recovery governance and effective service delivery (Johnson and Olshansky 2016; Mukharji et al. 2021). By exploring home organization related challenges of public managers in their decision

making and implementation processes, this research contributes to the understanding of new recovery organizations and centralized post-disaster recovery governance in general.

To detail and describe the challenges that NRA public managers face while managing networks of public and non-public organizations, this paper used the concept of network governance. Network governance is a conceptual framework that emphasizes the management of network by public managers to reduce the challenges and complexities of the network and to secure collaborative interactions between network actors (Klijn & Koppenjan 2010; Agranoff & McGuire 2001; Meier & O'Toole 2001). Network management scholars, in particular, emphasize deliberate strategies of public managers for the effective management of governance networks (Agranoff & McGuire, 2001; Provan & Kenis, 2007; Klijn et al., 2020). While these scholars emphasize on the management of networks, the influence of organizational factors (i.e., structure, capacity, culture) on public managers have not been exhaustively investigated in the network governance literature because network management primarily focus on conscious steering attempt of actors on facilitating interaction processes (Klijn and Koppenjan 2016; Smith, 2020; Egeberg et al., 2016; Rivera, 2016). I expect the influence of organizational factors (e.g., structure, capacity and culture) on public managers' roles and strategies. It is because public administration scholars have pointed out that organizational attributes constraint or facilitate roles and practices of its members that are involved in the making and implementation of organization's decisions or goals (Elberg 2020; Christensen and Læg Reid 2018). Organizational attributes influence governance processes by creating a "bias in cognition, incentives, norms and information" (Egeberg

et al., 2016, p.33). Hence, the present study aimed to examine the organizational dimensions that influence network governance.

I conducted a semi-structured interviews with 81 respondents of governmental and non-governmental organizations and local leaders of KMC. The interviews were supplemented by document analysis of legislation, government reports, and news reports. Data from the interviews and the documents were analyzed using NVivo qualitative data analysis software using first and second cycle coding techniques. Based on the examination, the study finds that NRA public managers face five main challenges within their organizations while leading post-disaster recovery networks: (1) centralized decision-making processes that influenced collaborative processes; (2) fragmentation of specialized administrative and implementing bodies; (3) inflexible institutions (i.e., rules and regulations) and practices; (4) limited organizational capacity (e.g., staff, resources); and, (5) organizational culture and leadership skills that do not necessarily value collaboration. Based on the findings, the paper argues the centralization of post-disaster recovery governance in ruling governments and government bureaucracies rather than in the NRA.

Below is a description of the network governance framework. I used this theoretical framework to analyze and understand the role of the recovery organization and public managers in steering the post-disaster recovery governance. Next, I reviewed post-disaster recovery phase of emergency management and recovery governance literature. After presenting a brief background of the NRA and the present study's research design and methodology, I present my empirical findings, discussions and conclusion.

## **2.2. Literature review and Theoretical framework**

Public administration scholars have used various terms, such as policy networks, collaborative governance, network governance, multi-level governance, and meta-governance to describe the new mode of governance (i.e., governance by the networks of diverse stakeholders) (Klinj & Koopenjan, 2016; Rhodes, 2017; Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015; Ansell & Gash 2008). The terms describe the collaborative processes of decision making or implementation, though certain terms place emphasis on different actors, interactions, goals, and practices (Isett et al. 2011). A governance network is a network of diverse actors (e.g., individuals or organizations) that includes both horizontal and vertical interactions to address contemporary social and environmental problems (Isett et al. 2011; Klinj & Koppenjan, 2016; Koliba et al 2011). The governance of governance networks (i.e., networks of actors), however, is considered as network governance. Klinj and Koppenjan (2016) defined network governance as "the set of conscious steering attempts or strategies of actors within governance networks aimed at influencing interaction processes and/or the characteristics of these networks" (p.11).

The effectiveness of network to produce desired outcomes is shaped by the interplay between network structures, processes, and management practices. Provan and Kenis (2007) described three ideal types of collaborative governance structures—ranging from a decentralized structure (i.e., shared or participant governance) to centralized structures (i.e., lead organization and NAO models). In a shared governance structure, roles and responsibilities are shared among all network stakeholders. In the NAO model, a new organization is established with central authority for facilitate collaboration within

the network of organizations. In the lead organization structure, an existing network actor has central or leading roles and responsibilities. The effectiveness of each network structure depends on four structural and regional contingencies: “trust, size (number of participants), goal consensus, and the nature of the task (specifically the need for network-level competencies)” (Provan & Kenis, 2007, p.237). Subsequent studies have also described numerous structural attributes of networks—such as age, size and composition, integration, mode of governance, and network inner stability—that influence network effectiveness (Smith, 2020; Turrini et al., 2010; Provan & Kenis, 2007; Provan & Lemaire, 2012).

Relevant to our study, network scholars have emphasized that a form of centralized governance structure, such as NAO, is important for the effective management of the collaborative network because it provides centralized location and resources to coordinate network management activities (Provan & Milward, 2001; Huang & Provan 2007; Milward & Provan, 2006). For instance, Provan and Milward (1995) suggested that a network is effective only when resources are directly controlled by the state, and when such control of resources are not fragmented. Provan et al. (2004) examined health and human service networks and showed that a separate network administrative organization (NAO) is critical to ensure collaboration and manage conflict between organizations. Similarly, Saz-Carranza and Ospina (2011) examined immigrant networks in the United States and showed the advantages of the NAO mode of network governance. The NAO mode of governance helped to unite and coordinate a diverse set of network actors and manage conflicts between these network actors that enable the actors to carry out the common goal. In addition, other study suggested that the NAO

enhances the accountability of and to the network because the NAO is usually appointed or elected by existing network stakeholders or actors. The elected actor is responsible for funding, monitoring, and coordinating the activities of the network (Huang & Provan, 2007). Because the NRA mirrors an NAO form of collaborative governance structure, this study explored the challenges faced by NRA network managers while managing governance processes, including trust relationships and collaboration between diverse actors and organizations within and between the post-disaster recovery networks.

Accomplishing network effectiveness, however, is complicated and challenging due to numerous governance challenges (Provan & Kenis, 2007; Klijn & Koppenjan 2016; McGuire & Agranoff 2011; Provan and Lemaire, 2012). For instance, Klijn and Koppenjan (2016) categorized network complexities into substantive complexities, strategic complexities, and institutional complexities. These complexities are related to the differences and conflicts between perceptions and resources, practices and strategies, and rules and goals of network organizations respectively. Expanding on Provan and Kenis's (2007) work, Saz Carranza et al. (2016) highlighted power dynamics between stakeholders in shaping the NAO mode of governance.

Consequently, a strand of network governance research has focused on network managers' roles and strategies that are mobilized to address complexities, and to maintain and build collaboration and trust within a network (O'Toole & Meier, 1999; Klijn & Koppenjan, 2010, 2016; Agranoff & McGuire 2001). Network scholars have defined network managers' practices or strategies as network management (Klijn & Koppenjan 2016). Most scholars have focused on network managers' roles and strategies (Voets 2014; Agranoff & McGuire 2016; Klijn & Koppenjan, 2010; Koliba et al. 2011). For

instance, Voets (2014) presented five necessary roles of network managers (i.e., network champion, network promoter, vision keeper, network operator, and creative thinker) for effective use of network channels and management practices (also see Cristofoli et al., 2014; O'Toole & Meier, 2004). In addition, Agranoff & McGuire, 2001 focused on activation, framing, mobilization, and synthezation strategies to manage networks (see also Agranoff, 2006). These strategies will help the network managers identify and select the appropriate actors and resources, establish rules and norms, achieve common goals, and minimize conflicts (Agranoff & McGuire, 2001). Some scholars have, therefore, focused on network managers' skills to manage the network. O'Leary & Vij (2012) noted the importance of network managers' personal, interpersonal, and group management skills. Other scholars have highlighted the skills to manage conflict and differences and build shared commitment (Saz-Carranza & Ospina 2011; Agranoff, 2007).

Despite a growing focus on the agency of public managers in network management, the consideration of organizational contexts and dimensions (e.g., structure, capacity, and culture) of a home organization in shaping network management roles, skills and strategies of public managers is limited in network governance literature (Egeberg et al. 2016; Egeberg 2020; Agronoff 2016). Public administration scholars have pointed out that organizational attributes constraint or facilitate roles and practices of its members that are involved in the making and implementation of organization's decisions or goals (Elberg 2020; Christensen and Læg Reid 2018). Organizational attributes, such as structure, capacity and culture influence governance processes by creating "bias in cognition, incentives, norms and information" to public managers (Egeberg et al. 2016,

33). Therefore, scholars have argued that "governance cannot be adequately explained without including its organizational dimension." (Egeberg et al. 2016 2016: 42).

One of the major attributes of a formal organization is its organizational structure. An organizational structure is defined as "a codified system of positions and their respective role expectations." It shapes the behavior, decisions, and practices of public officers by creating incentives or disincentives for those public officers (Egeberg, 2020, p. 2). Organizational chart, for instance, indicates the structure of an organization, with the position and role of actors. Organizational capacity is another major attribute of an organization, which refers to organizational resources (i.e., financial and human resources) and talents (i.e., effective leadership) that facilitate organizational performance (Ingraham et al., 2003). Organizational culture, on the other hand, is a set of values, norms, and beliefs that exist in an organization (Shafritz, Ott & Zang, 2015). Organizational culture guides organizations to undertake necessary actions and decision making. Studies have explored how emergency management collaboration activities (i.e., communication, information sharing) can be hindered by differences in organizational culture among organizations in a network (Harrald, 2006; Comfort, 2007). Based on these literatures, I posit that organizational contexts and attributes of home organization matters in influencing public managers' network management roles, skills, and practices. That is, the attributes of NRA will influence public managers' network management roles, skills, and strategies. Therefore, this study investigated the challenges of public managers of the NRA that was established following the 2015 Nepal earthquake.



## Post-disaster recovery governance

Emergency management (EM) is an important domain of public administration because it encompasses a wide range of institutions and the processes and practices used to manage risks and impacts of emergencies or disasters (Petak 1985; Henstra & McBean, 2005). Scholars and practitioners have categorized EM into four different but interrelated phases: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. The mitigation and preparedness phases are preemptive phases. The response and recovery phases occur after a disaster. The response phase immediately follows a disaster and extends for a few months, whereas recovery is a long-term management phase that may extend for decades. Early works defined recovery “as a time of returning to normality” (Fothergill et al., 1999, p.164; Quarentelli, 1999; Chang, 2010). The recent definition of recovery, however, incorporates the idea and practices of “build back better.” The GFDRR—a global consortium led by the World Bank—has defined the “build back better” as “an approach to post-disaster recovery that reduces vulnerability to future disasters and builds community resilience to address physical, social, environmental, and economic vulnerabilities and shocks” (Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery[GFDRR], n.d., p.2 ).”

The post-disaster recovery phase presents complex, multidimensional problems that can be multijurisdictional in certain cases. In addition to technical and management problems, the recovery intersects with social problems. That is, socially, economically and politically marginal people and their places are not only disproportionately affected by the disaster, but they also differentially recover after the disaster (Tierney & Oliver-Smith 2012; Smith & Birkland, 2012; McCaughey et al., 2018). Moreover, the recovery phase involves diverse and multi-stakeholders who have competing interests in the control and

the management of large sums of disaster funds that have been designated for reconstruction efforts (Xiao & Olshansky, 2020). The recovery phase, therefore, is a perfect example of what is considered a "wicked problem" in public administration (Rittel & Webber, 1973).

As a result of these complexities within the recovery phase of EM, scholars in public administration have continued to examine the impacts of governance models on recovery processes and outcomes. While there has been a shift from the traditional bureaucratic system to a more decentralized and collaborative governance model, the practices of centralized and bureaucratic governance structures are still used to manage risks and impacts of catastrophic disasters (for examples, see Johnson & Olshansky, 2016). However, most studies have criticized this command and control governance structure and endorsed decentralized and collaborative governance in disasters or emergencies (Tierney, 2012; Comfort & Kapucu, 2006; Kapucu, 2014; United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction [UNISDR], 2005, 2015). The decentralized mode of governance generally refers to the distribution or devolution of power, authority, and resources from a central location or government to local governments or non-governmental organizations or community-based organizations. Decentralized and collaborative governance emphasize deliberation, collaboration, and trust relationships between diverse actors and organizations within the network of stakeholders for the management of emergencies (Comfort et al., 2012; Kapucu, 2005; Janseen et al., 2010; Miller & Douglas 2015). Numerous studies in the response phase have shown that the decentralized governance model facilitates the exchange of resources, authority, and information needed for effective governance outcomes (Kapucu & Vanwart, 2006;

Hooper, 2007; Bowman & Parsons, 2009; Kapucu & Demiroz, 2011; Nolte & Boeingk, 2013; Comfort et al., 2012; Kapucu, 2005; Janseen et al., 2010). In addition, scholars have noted that collaborative efforts ensure participatory, accountability, and fairness in decision-making and implementation (Koliba et al., 2011).

Effective recovery governance, however, is shaped by many factors and conditions. For instance, Eikenberry et al. (2007) asserted that effective coordinating structure are needed to integrate organizations involved in disaster recovery. They also emphasized the need for common operating practices for disaster response and recovery among federal, state, and local governments and the private and non-profit sectors. Similarly, the Comfort et al. (2010) study on the recovery of Hurricane Katrina recommended a sequence of steps for effective governance processes, such as: “building a common knowledge base, reallocating responsibilities and resources among a wider set of actors in the region, fostering mutual adaptation among actors engaged in recovery operation and their changing social and physical environment, and designing appropriate set of instruments, technology and protocols to support informed, timely decision and actions (p.677).” Similarly, Vasavada (2013) suggested that the trust and goal consensus among the network actors are important factors for effective recovery efforts. Many studies have stressed the importance of citizen participation and engagement for effective recovery governance processes (Kewit & Kewit, 2004; Alam & Rahman, 2019; Ganapati and Ganapati, 2008). An increasing number of studies have also found that pre-existing formal and informal relationships between actors or organizations are needed to facilitate effective collaborative processes in the recovery phase of EM (Raju & Beker, 2013; Coles et al., 2012).

Despite the widespread use of collaborative network governance model, scholars have noted that collaborative processes (i.e., collaboration, participation, decentralization) are partly or entirely excluded in the recovery phase. For instance, citing the urgency of recovery work or time compression, scholars have noted that citizen participation and engagement were discouraged in post-disaster recovery projects (Olshansky et al., 2008; Ganapati & Ganapati, 2008). Several studies on Nepal's 2015 earthquake have highlighted the lack of collaboration, participation, and inclusion of local governments and local communities (Daly et al., 2017; Shrestha et al., 2019, Lam & Kuipers, 2019; Mukherji et al., 2021). They also suggested that post-disaster recovery policies discouraged decentralized governance—citing the lack of local capacity and resources to address a large-scale disaster problem.

While the establishment of a new and hybrid recovery organization for the administration or coordination of recovery practices and processes has become a standard intervention in donor driven post-disaster reconstruction initiatives, scholars do not yet fully understand challenges and barriers of network managers of recovery organizations in managing and governing post-disaster recovery networks. The paper contributes to the gap by explaining challenges of NRA's public managers in facilitating and managing the post-earthquake collaborative recovery network of Nepal.

#### **2.4. Research Background**

The 7.8 magnitude earthquake and subsequent aftershocks hit Nepal on April 25, 2015. The earthquake, directly and indirectly, affected individuals and communities in 32 of Nepal's 77 districts. For instance, nine thousand individuals were killed and eight

million individuals were displaced/affected. The post disaster needs assessment report estimated earthquake damage to be USD 7 billion (Government of Nepal- National Planning Commission [GON-NPC], 2015).

Moreover, on June 25, 2015, two months after the earthquake, the Government of Nepal organized an international donor conference—titled “Toward a Resilient Nepal”—to request financial assistance for Nepal's reconstruction (GON-NPC, 2016). International organizations (bilateral, multilateral, and donor organizations) committed and provided funding to build back a better and more resilient Nepal. The post disaster needs assessment (PDNA) report of the National Planning Commission (NPC) estimated USD 7 billion for the reconstruction of Nepal; however, international communities committed USD 3.43 billion and by 2017 disbursed about USD 2.7 billion (GON-NRA, 2016). Similarly, Government of Nepal made a commitment during the donor conference to establish a central coordinating body to oversee reconstruction works and manage funds. In June 2015, the government announced that it would establish the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA); however, it was not until six months later, in December 2015, that the government passed the “Act Relating to Reconstruction of the Earthquake Affected Structures, 2015 (2072)” [here after Reconstruction Act-2015]. The disputes among political parties to control NRA practices influenced the promulgation of the Reconstruction Act-2015 (Sharma et al., 2018).

The NRA was established eight months after the earthquake in December 2015 to effectively manage, oversee, and coordinate recovery and reconstruction activities in the earthquake-affected districts. In other words, the NRA was established as a new network administrative organization (NAO) to manage networks of diverse public and non-public

actors and institutions. Its term limit was set for five years with a possibility of extension for one year. The Act not only assigned roles and responsibilities to NRA officials, but also empowered them to oversee, coordinate, and facilitate recovery efforts of public, private, and non-profit institutions at different levels (Government of Nepal-Ministry of Home Affairs [GON-MOHA], 2017). NRA activities are guided by the National Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Policy (2016), and the post-disaster recovery framework (2016-2020).

The NRA main office is located in Singha Darbar, Kathmandu, and its organizational structure consists of three high-level policy and decision-making bodies: National Advisory Council, Steering Committee, and Executive Committee (See Figure 4). The National Advisory Council and Steering Committee are headed by the Prime Minister. The advisory council advises the steering committee in the formulation of policies and plans related to reconstruction and the allocation of funds to the NRA. Similarly, the steering committee provides direction for effective reconstruction, approves policies and plans prepared by the executive committee, and approves the NRA's budget and organizational structure (GON-NRA,2016). The third decision making body—the Executive Committee—is chaired by chief-executive officer (CEO). The main duties include drafting policies and plans, which are sent to the steering committee for approval. In addition to the committees, the organizational structure of NRA comprises five divisions and three central project implementation units (CLPIUs). The three CLPIUs are: CLPIU-Education, CLPIU-Building, CLPIU-GMALI (Grant Management and Local Infrastructure). Initially, CLPIUs were under the jurisdiction of respective ministries or sectoral ministries. Similarly, there are district project

implementation units (DLPIUs) under each CLPIU (See Figure 4). District Coordination Committees (DCCs) were established to coordinate efforts with district offices. However, after an organizational reform<sup>11</sup> in 2018, CLPIUs were shifted to the NRA, and the DCCs were disbanded and their responsibilities were shifted to DLPIUs.

## **2.5. Methods and Data Analysis**

This study examined how organizational context influences public managers' roles and strategies to govern and steer post-disaster recovery networks. To achieve the aims of the study, fieldwork in Nepal was conducted from July 2019 to September 2019. The study's main data collection method involved semi-structured interviews (n=81). Of these, 35 interviews were conducted with NRA public managers across different levels and units, 15 interviews were conducted with representatives from non-governmental organizations (both international and national), and 31 interviews were conducted with ward leaders in Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC).

Both purposive and snowball sampling was used to identify interviewees. The initial set of interviewees was identified through analysis of documents (e.g., government websites and newspapers) and key informants, and the sample was expanded via snowball sampling. The duration of interviews varied from 30 to 45 minutes. The interviews were conducted in Nepali and recorded using an audio recorder with the permission of interviewees. The recorded interviews were then transcribed and translated in English simultaneously. I supplemented the interviews with a review of secondary

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<sup>11</sup> A local government election was held in 2017 after 19 years. After the local government election, the three-tier governance structure was adopted, which dismantled the district office and hence the NRA had to reform its organizational structure.

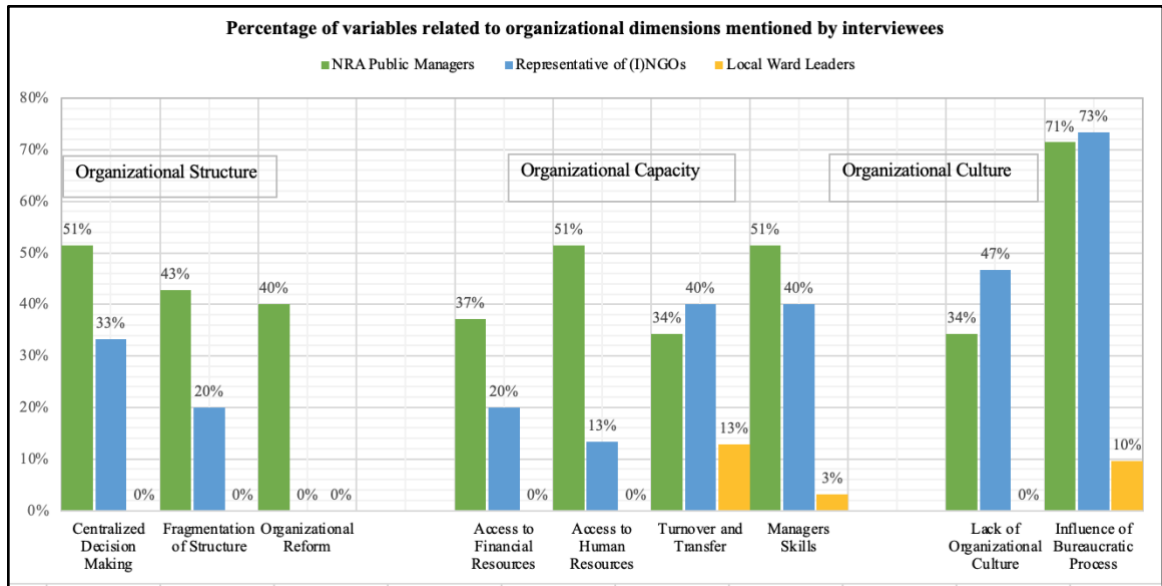
sources, such as government reports (i.e., PDNA, PDRF) and policy documents (i.e., Reconstruction Act of Nepal).

For analysis of data, I imported the transcribed interviews into the NVivo-12 qualitative data analysis software and coded them. The interview transcripts were read line-by-line for coding. The coding started with first cycle (i.e., structural and process coding) and second cycle (i.e., pattern coding) coding techniques. Important codes that represented the challenges of public managers related to organizational context were selected and presented in this study.

## **2.6. Findings**

The findings are presented below in different headings. The findings suggest that the organizational context—which includes structure, capacity, and culture—plays an important role in shaping the governance of collaborative recovery networks. In particular, it examined the organizational attributes of network managers' "home organization"—in this case, the Nepal Reconstruction Authority (NRA)—to understand their challenges in steering post-disaster recovery networks. As shown in Figure 17, the analysis indicates three major themes related to organizational structure: centralized decision making, four themes related to organizational capacity, and two themes related to organizational culture.





**Figure 17:** Percentage of variables related to organizational dimension by interviewees category

### 2.6.1. Challenges due to organizational structure

Findings from the present study suggest that the organizational structure of the organization influenced public managers' network management practices, roles, and capabilities.

#### Centralized decision-making structure

First, findings indicated that the structure of the NRA consists of high-level policy making bodies (i.e., Steering Committee, Advisory Council, Executive Committee) that are dominated by political leaders, bureaucrats, and government experts. In these committees, there is no provision to include participation of local governments and local communities. This suggests that NRA's authority and resources are controlled by the ruling government and government bureaucrats.

In addition, the NRA's organizational structure was restructured many times. Initially, the NRA was established as an executive body—with 4 CLPIUs that function as implementation bodies. Each CLPIU was a distinct project implementation unit that was formed to work on post-disaster recovery; the CLPIUs were each housed within one of four ministries: Ministry of Urban Development (MOUD); Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MOFALD<sup>12</sup>), Ministry of Education (MOE), and Ministry of Culture Tourism and Civil Aviation (MOCTCA). These 4 CLPIUs were later brought under the umbrella of the NRA to expedite reconstruction activities. Also, after a local government election, the NRA underwent another organizational reform in 2018 that dismantled the District Coordination Committees (DCCs). Additionally, the number of CLPIUs was subsequently reduced to 3 CLPIUs: CLPIU-GMALI (grant management and local infrastructure); CLPIU-Education; and CLPIU-Building. The division and subdivisions of the NRA main office or executive body were also frequently merged or separated. This created instability within the organization that hindered the public managers' ability to govern the network. Below is a description of the identified sub-themes of challenges related to organizational structure.

The organizational structure of the NRA comprises high-level policy-making committees and a hierarchical executive or administrative body. The high-level decision-making bodies include the Advisory Council, Steering Committee, Executive Committee, Appellate Committee, and a Development Assistance Coordination and Facilitation Committee. The first three decision-making committees are dominated by political

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<sup>12</sup> Currently, the name of the ministry is the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA)

leaders, former and extant government bureaucrats, and government nominated "experts." For instance, the prime minister of Nepal chairs the advisory and steering committees. Consequently, political leaders and government bureaucrats directly influence decision-making processes. Expressing frustration over the lack of power and authority of the NRA in making and implementing decisions, a respondent from CLPIU-GMALI said: *"Unlike the direct influence of prime minister in ministries or departments, NRA was established as an autonomous body, not a ministry or any department. ...., but it does not have any freedom or autonomy<sup>13</sup>."* Another senior bureaucrat, in a recent web-based seminar to evaluate NRA achievements, highlighted the lack of NRA's authority: *"NRA projects have to go through the National Planning Commission and multitier approval processes<sup>14</sup>".* Another major body of a hybrid governance system is the executive body that carries out daily operational decisions and coordinating activities through the CEO and horizontally specialized administrative departments. The project implementation units, however, were under the existing line ministries until the 2018 organizational reform of the NRA. The executive body constitutes many horizontally specialized sections or departments. That is, the NRA's tasks have been horizontally divided and allocated according to purposes and sectors. For instance, the NRA has a housing department that makes operational decisions and carries out all housing-related tasks and responsibilities. Secretaries and undersecretaries, senior career bureaucrats, and technical experts from existing line ministries lead each section or department. Citing the large

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<sup>13</sup> Career public managers [I used "career public managers" to indicate permanent government officers who are recruited after passing civil service test and "public managers" to indicate temporary staffs of NRA], CLPIU-GMALI, 14 July 2019.

<sup>14</sup> National Reconstruction Authority, 28 November 2020, 1:23:37

number of administrative departments, many technical staffs mentioned that the NRA focused more on administrative activities rather than the implementation of recovery activities. For instance, an NRA main office engineer said: "*Although we need some administrative sections for initial coordination, we have too much focus on administration in NRA. NRA should have more technical departments to carry out reconstruction works*"<sup>15</sup>. Indicating "too many committees and administrative departments," a former chief secretary of Nepal in a recent web-based seminar described NRA as a "cumbersome organization"<sup>16</sup>.

In addition to the cumbersome organizational structure as described in above paragraphs, I observed that the centralized decision-making structure was a major source of challenges for NRA public managers while steering the recovery network. While the policy-making committees were designed to have collaborative structures, these committees lack representatives of independent non-governmental organizations, local governments and local communities. The Prime Minister and current and former bureaucrats, in consultation with financial organizations, control most decision making. Comparing Nepal's recovery processes with India's Gujarat post-earthquake recovery project, a respondent from an NGO—who specialized in the housing sector—described centralized disaster governance in Nepal.

*"Unlike recovery processes in Gujarat ... the government has adopted one-door policy. The government determines housing designs; government regulates budget*

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<sup>15</sup> Public manager-Engineer Main office, 21 August 2019

<sup>16</sup> National Reconstruction Authority, November 2020, 59:09

*allocation and makes decisions on [recovery] priorities. In the name of one-door policy, our policy is very strict and rigid<sup>17</sup>."*

In addition, criticizing the difficulty to implement reconstruction activities due to the lack of their participation in the policy-making processes, a senior officer of a humanitarian organization stressed: "*humanitarian and INGOs should have been included as a stakeholder in decision making so that implementation activities could have been easier and faster<sup>18</sup>."* Furthermore, decision-making committees completely lack representation and participation of local communities. Likewise, before the restructuring of the NRA in July 2018, DCCs were the primary district (i.e., "local level") structure that had the power and authority to coordinate, monitor, and appraise the activities of the NRA. DCCs comprises a "Member of Parliament," Chief District Officer, and Local Development Officer. In addition, a DCC "may...invite any official of a body, woman and social activities<sup>19</sup>" to join the committee to carry out coordination, monitoring, and appraisal of NRA activities at the district level. According to the NRA annual report (2018), there were 22 DCCs, one in each affected district. After the 2018 organizational reform GON dismantled all DCCs, and the work was handed over to the DLPIUs

Furthermore, NRA's executive body also lacks adequate internal administrative decentralization. As a result, I observed the lack of collaboration with local-level community organizations and local government—where the actual implementation of recovery and reconstruction activities occur. Many engineers of CLPIUs' and DLPIUs'

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<sup>17</sup> NGO officer, 21 August 2019

<sup>18</sup> INGO officer, 20 August 2019

<sup>19</sup> Reconstruction Act, Section 25 (5)

mentioned that the lack of extension offices (i.e., resource centers) at the ground level made it difficult to coordinate efforts. As one officer said: "*one of the main problems of coordination was because we only have NRA structure at the district level (i.e., DLPIUs)*"<sup>20</sup>. While the NRA had DCCs before 2018 to work with reconstruction at the local level, and DLPIUs after restructuring at a district level, many respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of NRA resource centers at the local level. Ground-level NRA extension offices were initially conceptualized and implemented in some areas for a limited time, but they were never established in all areas and were soon dismissed. "*NRA's structure looks good from outside, but our office does not have a presence at the local ward level. We have nothing at ward level*"<sup>21</sup>, a consultant for a district level project implementation unit said. He further added that they face challenges when they "*have to work in collaboration with the municipality*"<sup>22</sup>. Another public manager at the main office also said that "*the NRA does not have its own structure in the local level and had to depend on other agencies. Therefore, we have communication gap at the local level*"<sup>23</sup>.

#### Fragmentation of administrative body

Another major finding: NRA officials faced increased challenges due to factors related to multiple fragmentations of the horizontally specialized structure of the NRA. First, many administrative departments showed that the executive body is horizontally

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<sup>20</sup> Career public manager, CLPIU-Education, 23 August 2019

<sup>21</sup> Public manager NRA-Consultant DLPIU GMALI, 8 July 2019

<sup>22</sup> Public manager NRA-Consultant, DLPIU GMALI, 8 July 2019

<sup>23</sup> Public manager NRA, Main office, 21 August 2019

fragmented into many sectoral departments. Additionally, the staffing of diverse human resources from ministries into the fragmented sectoral departments had generated conflicts and competitions rather than the collaborations and interactions that are essential for effective governance of the network. Reflecting on diverse and incompatible employees in departments, and the resulting effects of such differences, an officer said, *"NRA is like a puzzle game, just like different puzzle pieces are brought together. The staffs were brought from different places and not even sure if they fit together"*<sup>24</sup>.

Second, many interview respondents mentioned even greater fragmentation within executive offices (i.e., the NRA main office) and project implementation units. While GON established a powerful autonomous body for recovery and reconstruction activities, all project implementation bodies (CLPIUs and DLPIUs) were under respective line ministries<sup>25</sup> rather than the NRA until the 2018 organizational reform. Many respondents mentioned that the separation of implementation and executive bodies created many challenges for public managers. Due to the fragmentation of bodies, some interviewees reported barriers to carry out coordination and joint tasks. Others reported difficulties related to carrying out multiple responsibilities. A career public manager from a central level project implementation unit said: *"Because of the [separation], we had to respond to both our line ministry and NRA"*<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> INGO officer, 26 August 2019

<sup>25</sup> Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Ministry of Urban Development, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration.

<sup>26</sup> Career public manager, Deputy Director CLPIU-Building, 4 July 2019

Furthermore, many respondents complained that the executive offices lacked the authority to mobilize project implementation units that were under line ministries. For instance, a respondent from CLPIU-GMALI mentioned,

*Before 2018 restructuring, we had difficulty to carry out work because NRA had no authority to directly mobilize CLPIU's engineers or employees. NRA had to request and get approval from respective ministries. For example, CLPIU-GMALI was under MOFALD. Therefore, MOFALD's secretary or ministry had to approve to mobilize engineers or employees of the ministry<sup>27</sup>.*

Describing the sources of difficulty in joint activities—due to the fragmentation of CLPIUs and DLPIUs from the executive office—an official from headquarters said, *"In the first half of the NRA, the chain of command of NRA employees was line ministries, and naturally they [public officers] were more accountable to their respective line ministries."* The spatial location of office premises of NRA's departments has further exacerbated the fragmentation. Some mentioned challenges related to communication and meetings because offices of CLPIUs and DLPIUs, and the NRA executive office, were located in different areas. The NRA central executive office is located inside the Singha Darbar premises—a highly secured and gated space which house offices of major government ministries. As an engineer said: *"our challenge of coordination is because of our office locations. We are not at the same location. Head offices of each department are in different places. If we had related bodies of an organization at the same place, we would have better communication and frequent meetings<sup>28</sup>."*

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<sup>27</sup> Career public manager, Deputy Director CLPIU-GMALI, 5 July 2019

<sup>28</sup> Public manager engineer, NRA main office, 21 August 2019



Furthermore, differences in public managers' affiliation with different government ministries and non-governmental organizations impacted their loyalty and accountability to the NRA and to reconstruction priorities. Many public managers who were transferred or came from different ministries never considered NRA-related tasks as their primary job. They were more loyal to their respective ministries. A senior public manager-said: *"We rarely felt that these reconstruction activities were our own [primary] job"<sup>29</sup>*. Such dynamics have not only affected organizational stability and capacity, but also impacted the accountability of career public officers; according to a senior public officer: *"since many public officers came from different line ministries for temporary basis and since they had a feeling of going back to their respective line ministries after the work, they were not committed and accountable to NRA"<sup>30</sup>*.

#### Constant organizational reform of NRA

The Nepal government reformed the organizational structure of NRA four times in four years. That is, sectoral departments of NRA were repeatedly merged and divided during the reforms (see Appendixes C, D, E, F). For instance, the 2018 organizational reform placed all CLPIUs and DLPIUs under the administrative hierarchy of the NRA; these units were formerly under ministries. Likewise, the 2018 organizational reform merged four CLPIUs into three: CLPIU-Building, CLPIU-GMALI, and CLPIU-Education. Similarly, the 2016 organizational reform (see Appendix D) merged the

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<sup>29</sup> Career Public manager-engineer, NRA main office, 25 July 2019

<sup>30</sup> Career public manager, Deputy director, CLPIU-Education, 23 August 2019

separate public housing and private housing units into a single building department. Describing the merger, a respondent expressed additional task burdens and dual responsibilities to public managers: *"they mixed public and private housing in one. We could have achieved better and fast result in private housing if we had two separate departments<sup>31</sup>"* He also expressed the dissatisfaction with the 2016 merging of formerly separate urban and rural housing sections into one housing section (Appendix D). Similarly, GON disbanded the DCCs—the primary local-level governance structure that coordinated, monitored, and appraised the NRA activities in each affected district. The NRA's DLPIUs subsequently assumed the roles and responsibilities of the DCCs.

### **2.6.2. Challenges due to organizational capacity**

Findings suggest that limitations in organizational capacity and flexibility hindered the ability of NRA public managers in their network management roles and practices. The challenges of public managers are described in different headings.

#### Limited human and financial resources of NRA

One of the consistent answers from respondents was that the NRA had limited human resources, and this limitation impacted the organization's capacity to effectively manage, maintain, and sustain collaborative networks. One interviewee explained: *"NRA does not have required budget and has authority to hire staffs...we tried very hard to get new staffs and staffs from other ministries but did not get much help from ministries and*

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<sup>31</sup> Career public manager, CLPIU-Building, 4 July 2019

*the government*<sup>32</sup>". Many respondents also expressed that, although the NRA was established to carry out the special task of emergency recovery, the processes of hiring contractors, recruiting staff, and everyday administrative activities are similar to regular government work. For instance, when asked about the NRA's lack of human resources, one CLPIU official noted how traditional bureaucratic processes influence the recruitment and transfer of human resources, and noted that the CLPIU remains dependent on ministries to obtain human resources:

*We need approval from the Ministry of General Administration to hire temporary staff as well as hire contractor similar to the regular process. For example, if I need to hire and select the contractor then I need do as a regular process by giving 30-day notice, I cannot hire by selecting from the previous work, who have certain level of reconstruction experience*<sup>33</sup>.

Although the Reconstruction Act has provisions about the financial autonomy of NRA (i.e., ability to establish, mobilize and access reconstruction fund), such provisions were never fully implemented. The majority of NRA officials stated that the NRA lacks the financial resources and authority to obtain necessary funds. Instead, all financial decisions and processes related to the NRA are made by the Ministry of Finance. As one respondent from CLPIU-GMALI said: "*NRA cannot even manage a small budget. We have to depend on the finance ministry*<sup>34</sup>". Another senior officer from a CLPIU said that

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<sup>32</sup> Career public manager, CLPIU-GMALI, 14 July 2019

<sup>33</sup> Career public manager-Engineer, CLPIU-Education, 23 August 2019

<sup>34</sup> Career public manager, CLPIU-GMALI, 14 July 2019

the NRA depends on the Ministry of Finance to approve and allocate the budget—similar to a regular budgetary process: "*We do not have support from the Ministry of Finance, they always say that they do not have money and freeze the money and does not give a decision on time*<sup>35</sup>." Several public officers also stated that the NRA lacks the adequate authority or freedom related to the management, mobilization, or oversight of financial resources. As one said:

*We had a discussion to make policies that fit the context and issues of disaster, but [in practice] everything [and policies] is like in normal time. For example, we have to depend on the Ministry of Finance for our budget, and the concept of reconstruction fund was developed but it was not implemented*<sup>36</sup>.

#### Turnover and transfer of NRA staffs

Another commonly mentioned challenge of NRA officials is the lack of organizational resources which shape officers' roles and capacities to make and implement decisions related to network management. Respondents frequently mentioned that public offices faced challenges due to the frequent turnover and transfer of officers at different levels, or the lack of stability of human resources, which impacted the public officers' abilities to lead. Many respondents mentioned frequent turnover and vacant positions of NRA leadership and its impact the governance of recovery networks. More specifically, many mentioned that the NRA's CEO position frequently changed with the change in central governments, which impacted organizational capacity and governance

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<sup>35</sup> Career public manager, CLPIU-GMALI, 14 July 2019

<sup>36</sup> Career public manager-Engineer, CLPIU-Education, 23 August 2019

of the network. " In the *last three years, CEO has changed three times*" because of political influence. An engineer from main office said<sup>37</sup>: *"If the leader changes all the time, you will not have consistency in policies, practices and uniformity in running organization."* Another mentioned that the turnover of CEO led to the reorganization or change in extant working processes and practices—causing setbacks ranging from *"3 to 4 months"* in the formation of a new team and completing governance activities. Similarly, many respondents mentioned that the secretary of the NRA frequently changed, and the position often remained vacant. In a period of approximately five years, the NRA secretary changed six times. For instance, an NRA officer mentioned: *"the position of secretary in our agency remain vacant for some time and during that time we had coordination problems"*<sup>38</sup>. Likewise, another officer stated that senior public officers were frequently transferred or sought transfers from the NRA: *"They are just like tourists from other agencies. They come to NRA if they like, and they again go back to line ministries if they don't like"*<sup>39</sup>. Similarly, there was very high turnover among field-level officials, such as engineers of project implementation units. The turnover impacted coordination activities with local communities and organizations. Many mentioned that the NRA faced difficulties in hiring and retaining field officers due to a lack of motivation and incentives. Relating the frequent change of field level officials to the lack of job security among temporary technical staff, a career public manager from the main office mentioned: *"It was very hard to hire and retain staffs because they did not see any*

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<sup>37</sup> Public manager-Engineer, NRA main office, 21 August 2019

<sup>38</sup> Public manager-Engineer, NRA Main office, 21 August 2019

<sup>39</sup> Career public manager, CLPIU-GMALI, 21 August 2019

*opportunities in this agency. We even had difficulty to recruit director position for district offices [DLPIUs]<sup>40</sup>." Another recalled engineers' protests demanding higher emolument and daily allowance: "They protested every year for daily allowances. I think local staffs would have been motivated to work if the agency has thought about this in the initial phase and provide daily allowances for them<sup>41</sup>."*

### Skills of public managers or leaders

As described above, limited resources and limited access to resources were major challenges due to organizational attributes that affected the roles and practices of officers. Another factor that was mentioned by respondents was the NRA's lack of skilled and experienced leaders. As most senior positions of administrative departments were filled by career public managers from line ministries, many technical staff, in particular, expressed that the NRA lacked: "*experienced, knowledgeable and expert staffs<sup>42</sup>*". As one respondent said: "*NRA has become a dumping site of staffs. Line ministries only send human resource from their agency who are not very productive in their agency<sup>43</sup>."*

While few interviewees mentioned that senior public managers or leaders were skillful in maintaining public relations during their disaster management work, most public managers of the NRA expressed that leaders of NRA lack the skills necessary to

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<sup>40</sup> Career public manager, NRA Main office, 8 August 2019

<sup>41</sup> Career public manager, NRA Main office, 8 August 2019

<sup>42</sup> Career public manager-engineer, NRA Main office, 9 August 2019

<sup>43</sup> Career public manager, CLPIU-Building, 28 August 2019

identify and mobilize expertise and staff within the NRA. A public manager of DLPIU said: "*NRA leadership should have the capacity to identify and utilize the expertise that we have in the NRA*<sup>44</sup>." More importantly, others mentioned that senior leaders lacked skills to manage differences and conflict within the NRA. As the NRA comprises diverse employees, with distinct power, interests and perceptions, its internal dynamics are shaped by the conflict and competition between staffs. Therefore, many respondents mentioned that it was important for leaders to manage these differences or conflicts. "*In NRA we have diverse employees. We have so much difference. Therefore, I think, leaders should have the capacity to unite the differences*<sup>45</sup>." Another NRA official mentioned that role of senior public managers is important to "*solve problems such as the conflict over personal ego and hierarchy between lower-ranking public officers of sectoral departments*<sup>46</sup>."

Some stressed that leaders should possess a range of management skills in order to effectively manage a diverse staff. As one explained: "*Leaders should not manage non-public offices in an authoritative and hierarchical manner like the government offices.*" He also mentioned that <sup>47</sup>"*rather than becoming a boss of a government office*" leaders should have the capacity to listen and learn from junior staff and they should "*motivate staffs to participate and express their views and ideas about disaster*

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<sup>44</sup> Public manager-Consultant, DLPIU-GMALI, 8 July 2019

<sup>45</sup> Public manager-Engineer, NRA Main office, 21 August 2019

<sup>46</sup> Public manager-Engineer, NRA Main office, 21 August 2019

<sup>47</sup> Public manager-consultant, DLPIU-GMALI, 8 July 2019

*management in meetings.*" But lower-level staff, such as engineers, mentioned in interviews that senior public managers of NRA rarely encouraged junior public managers (e.g., engineers) to participate in meetings. They mentioned that meetings were rarely held. *"We used to have meetings in the past. Now, senior staff never make an effort to encourage staff to participate in meetings. Now I even don't remember when we had a meeting last time."* As one engineer<sup>48</sup> at NRA headquarters said: *"We should have some form of organized interaction between staff of different levels to motivate them, but no one cares about meetings now"*.

In addition, some interviewees mentioned that NRA senior leaders lacked the capacity to manage external resources and stakeholders (e.g., organizations) that are important for effective management of recovery network. There was a sharp reduction in the involvement of international non-governmental and humanitarian organizations, and NRA leaders lacked the skills and ability to tap such resources; commenting on these factors, an NRA consultant said: *"NRA was not able to tap into all the INGO resources..... It is not because they lack resources, but our leaders and NRA were not able to convince and coordinate with them"*<sup>49</sup>. Other respondents mentioned that political leaders and NRA leaders failed to understand the daily practices and funding processes of non-governmental organizations and subsequent reduction of INGO's participation in reconstruction activities.

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<sup>48</sup> Public manager-engineer, NRA main office, 21 August 2019

<sup>49</sup> INGO officer, 4 September 2019



### 2.6.3. Challenges due to organizational culture

In the present study, findings suggest that NRA public managers faced challenges due to lack of organizational culture and prevalence of traditional bureaucratic culture.

#### Lack of organizational culture

NRA leadership was also influenced by the following challenges: bureaucratic culture and institutional processes that guide the role, responsibilities, and resources of the NRA and its staffs. Many non-public NRA officers mentioned that Nepal's traditional bureaucratic culture and administrative practices hindered the NRA's organizational capacity and public officers' roles and responsibilities as recovery network managers. Some mentioned that, as a new organization, the NRA lacked a predictable set of informal organizational values or norms or practices to guide NRA officials' roles, responsibilities, and practices. *"Although NRA has been formally and legally recognized as an organization, it is really hard to say that it is an organization"*. An INGO respondent<sup>50</sup> said referring to the inconsistency and unpredictability of practices, *"that the NRA does not have its own culture as different peoples were gathered from different sources."* Whereas others public managers mentioned the continuity of traditional bureaucratic culture and its influence on NRA public managers' roles, behavior, and practices. Because public officers from line ministries occupied the most senior positions in the NRA executive office and implementation units, bureaucratic culture and practices prevailed within the NRA.

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<sup>50</sup> INGO officer, 28 August 2019

### Influence of bureaucratic processes

Several respondents mentioned the prevalence of administrative practices and processes that explained bureaucratic culture and mentality of public managers.

Explaining this "*bureaucratic mindset*," one respondent said: "*We have this mentality of creating obstacles rather than facilitating works of others*<sup>51</sup>." Another said, "*We have the culture of taking satisfaction by obstructing administrative process within many people of NRA*<sup>52</sup>." One of the officials from a non-governmental organization said: "*there is a bureaucratic mindset overall in the government agency, the file does not go from one officer to another for the approval process. On one occasion we had to go around 20-22 days daily to the office to get the approval*<sup>53</sup>". Another official from a non-governmental organization explained that approval to start urgent projects was delayed by administrative processes:

*One of our projects was sent one year before but still, it is not approved. The file goes from one ministry to another ministry. It is both from normal and post-disaster the procedural work takes more time than the expected time that the situation becomes frustrated for the development workers*<sup>54</sup>.

An NRA central office engineer agreed that delays and long bureaucratic processes were common in the NRA, and he expressed dissatisfaction with the administrative process:

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<sup>51</sup> Career public manager, NRA Main office, 25 July 2019

<sup>52</sup> Career public manager, CLPIU-GMALI, 14 July 2015

<sup>53</sup> INGO officer, 29 August 2019

<sup>54</sup> INGO officer, 27 August 2019

*“Since this is government work, it is what it is. We have delays and delays. A document that comes here has to go through different departments and authorities, including secretary and CEO.” He said:<sup>55</sup> "Government's administrative process takes a long time, and sometimes we don't like it too."*

Comparing Nepal's recovery processes with Gujarat-India's post-earthquake recovery processes, a respondent from an NGO specialized in the housing sector described the inflexibility of institutional rules related to disaster governance in Nepal; the respondent felt that this inflexibility hindered the collaborative practices of NRA public officers:

*Unlike [post-earthquake recovery] in Gujarat [India], the Nepal government has adopted one door policy. The government determines housing designs; government regulates budget allocation and makes decisions on [recovery] priorities. In the name of one door policy, our policy is very strict and rigid<sup>56</sup>.*

A consequence of the bureaucratic obstacles and inflexibility was a steep reduction in the number of partner organizations/actors or non-governmental organizations involved in long-term housing recovery work. As one INGO respondent mentioned:

*There were about 300 partner organizations during the early recovery phase and now it has decreased to 12 to 14 organizations. The government was not able to attract INGOs in the shelter because of all bureaucratic hassles, not because they*

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<sup>55</sup> Public manager-Engineer, NRA main office, 21 August 2019

<sup>56</sup> INGO officer, 21 August 2019

*do not have resources... The government should be flexible and should have the capacity to tap INGOs resources*<sup>57</sup>.

Remarking on the difficulties in implementing reconstruction projects—due to the bureaucratic processes and inflexibility of the NRA—a senior officer of a reputed humanitarian organization stated: "*if implementation activities are related to disaster reconstruction work, the government should create an easier environment to work for us, development programs [reconstruction activities] are different and difficult*"<sup>58</sup>.

## **2.7. Discussion**

This study investigated the challenges that network managers face while leading multi-stakeholder networks in the context of post-earthquake recovery in Nepal's 2015 Gorkha earthquake. These challenges are described in different topics. First, our observations suggest that most of the NRA's decision-making authority related to reconstruction was centralized in high-level committees that are dominated and controlled by ruling governments, political leaders, and government bureaucrats. While the NRA was established as an autonomous authority to manage disaster governance and undertake reconstruction responsibilities, the centralization of authority in high-level committees constrained NRA's capacity to provide adequate resources and stability to its public managers. Similarly, I observed the fragmentation of the administrative body in horizontally specialized sectoral units. Furthermore, the NRA was divided into administrative units and implementation units. The senior positions of NRA's

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<sup>57</sup> INGO officer, 4 September 2019

<sup>58</sup> INGO officer, 26 August 2019

administrative units are controlled by career public officers of different ministries, whereas implementation units are directly under the influence of line ministries. Therefore, the fragmentations indicated the control by and conflict between ministries or bureaucrats. The fragmentation also impacted the NRA's stability and capacity. Consequently, these organizational conditions have impacted public officers' network management roles, responsibilities, and strategies. In addition, I observed frequent structural reform of the new organization that shaped the stability of the organization.

Second, our observations suggest the limited organizational capacity of the NRA to support or facilitate NRA officers' network management role and practices. I found that the NRA has limited access to disaster funds and human resources. In addition, the NRA lacks the power and authority to access the resources necessary to govern the recovery network. Finally, the limited collaborative skills and values of NRA leaders, and stringent bureaucratic rules and processes, suggest that the NRA has limited organizational capacity and flexibility, which are important in post-disaster recovery network management.

Taken together, my analysis of interviews highlights the influence of central government and government bureaucracies in shaping the nature of the organizational structure, capacity, and culture. These organizational dimensions, in turn, shaped public managers' roles, behavior, and practices to manage and sustain interactions of organizations in the recovery assistance network. This study of challenges faced by NRA officers reveals that the centralization of disaster governance authority, resources and practices in the ruling governments and traditional government bureaucracies. In other words, the lack of decentralization of power to access financial resources, human

resources, and authority impacted NRA officials' roles, capacity and commitment. While the NRA was established as an autonomous authority to manage disaster governance and undertake reconstruction responsibilities, the centralization of authority constrained the NRA's capacity to provide adequate resources and stability to its employees.

Network scholars have argued that concentrating authority and resources into a centralized structure, such as a network administrative organization (NAO), is appropriate when the size of the network is large, trust between organizations is limited, and the need for network competencies is high (Provan & Kenis, 2007). Our study on centralized governance of a recovery network, however, highlights that the new centralized authority was shaped by political and bureaucratic influences and interests. The NAO governance structure, which defines the recovery network and NRA administrative role, was shaped by the struggle to control and manage the large sum of disaster funds—in the context of political and administrative federalization of Nepal. Therefore, our findings align with findings from Saz-Carranza and Ospina (2011): the role of power dynamics is critical in shaping network governance structure.

In addition, studies on post-disaster recovery governance in Nepal have highlighted the greater centralization of recovery governance in the NRA. For instance, Daly et al. (2017) noted that the centralization of roles and rights in the NRA has not only hindered decentralization in post-disaster recovery governance, but also limited housing reconstruction in the urban settings of Nepal. Likewise, Lam and Kuipers (2019) noted that, although national policies emphasized decentralized disaster governance, reconstruction processes are highly top-down and centralized because the NRA is the “supreme authority controlling and coordinating all the reconstruction activities” at the

ground level (p.325). The NRA restricted NGO's reconstruction activities without obtaining their approval—citing the illegality of the work. Similarly, Shrestha et al. (2019) highlighted that the centralization of disaster governance in the NRA dismissed the role and important contribution of "social elites" (p.208) in disaster management. In addition, they noted that Nepal's disaster policies and practices created "limited opportunities" for local community participation and gender inclusion in disaster management because of the nexus of "experts from bureaucracy, NGOs and donor agencies" and their underlying "custodial culture and scientific tradition" (Shrestha et al., 2019, p.212). Collectively, above scholars showed the centralization of post-disaster governance in the NRA. This study, however, highlights the centralization of post-disaster governance in ruling governments and government bureaucracies. I argue that the lack of decentralization of decision-making and evaluation in the NRA were the major challenges that NRA managers faced. That is, the influence of ruling governments and government bureaucrats continued to hinder the NRA's stability, capacity, and flexibility. The centralization of authority in the ruling government and government bureaucrats—rather than in the NRA—therefore, hindered management and governance of the multi-stakeholder recovery network.

Studies have shown that all forms of disaster governance systems have challenges and failed to deliver intended services to affected people and places. For instance, local marginal populations, such as women, renters, squatters, and poor people, were ignored in decentralized governance arrangements (Daly et al., 2017; Ganapati & Mukherji, 2019). Ganapati and Ganapati (2008) highlighted how the World Bank housing project bypassed civic participation in the name of urgency in Turkey. Similarly, centralized

recovery governance has been widely criticized for its failure of civic participation, inclusion, communication, and collaboration (Miller & Douglass, 2015). Rather than the inherent importance of centralized or decentralized governance arrangements, our study emphasized the importance of political and bureaucratic influences and contexts in post-disaster reconstruction. Our paper only highlights the limitations and complexities of a centralized governance structure that has been increasingly employed in the contexts of post-disaster governance in donor-funded projects (Kapucu ,2012; Moynihan, 2009; Jha et al., 2010). Findings related to the influence of broader political-economic contexts are consistent with the Jones et al. (2014) study on pre-disaster risk governance and the Comfort et al. (2017) study on early recovery findings in Nepal. As post-disaster reconstruction involves the management of a large sum of disaster funds (e.g., USD 4.4 billion in the case of Nepal), political leaders and traditional government bureaucrats showed unwillingness to relinquish their authority and dominance in the management of the reconstruction.

Previous studies have shown that network management depends on skills, capacity, and strategies of network managers or leaders' collaborative skills, capacity, and strategies (Agranoff & McGuire, 2001; Klijn & Koppenjan 2016). My findings similarly suggest the importance of public managers' skills, capacity, and values for network management practices or strategies. This study, in particular, highlighted the importance of organizational contexts and dimensions under which public managers carry out their roles, responsibilities, and practices. Organizational dimensions and contexts have been recently neglected in the research literature due to the increasing focus on exogenous factors in the concept of governance or network governance; however, the



present study provides a better understanding of the linkages between organizational dimensions and network governance. Therefore, our findings align with those of Egbert et al. (2016): "governance cannot be adequately explained without including its organizational dimension" (p. 42). The above description suggests that organizational context and attributes directly influence public managers' network management roles, capabilities, and practices, which are the major determinants of governance or network effectiveness (Turrini et al., 2010; Smith, 2020).

Our observations also suggest drawbacks of the new and hybrid organization in addressing collaborative management of wicked problems because the new recovery organization suggested the instability of the organization, limited organizational capacity, inconsistency, and inflexibility to undertake complex and urgent reconstruction practices and activities. The new organization also lacked established working practices and culture. Therefore, I align with scholars who have argued that flexible and adaptive organizations are necessary to address wicked problems—such as disaster recovery—which are dynamic, urgent, and multidimensional in nature and which involve multiple stakeholders and cut across administrative, territorial, and political boundaries (Xiao & Olshansky, 2020; Comfort et al., 2011; Ganapati & Ganapati 2008; Head & Alford 2015). In addition, the establishment of the new organization in politically unstable and bureaucratically controlling countries like Nepal may not achieve the intended benefits. The present study highlights that the new institutional interventions to tackle post-disaster recovery management are not only flawed because of their design and function, but they grossly misunderstood the contexts under which such interventions were developed and performed. The centralization of authority and resources in ruling government and

bureaucrats continuously influenced the new recovery organization, public managers, and their governance processes and practices. The elephant in the room, however, is the role and practices of international financial and international development organizations, which should be investigated in future studies.

## **2.8. Conclusion**

This study examined the challenges that public managers face when leading a network of actors in a newly established recovery organization in Nepal. This organization was created after the 2015 Nepal earthquake. Specifically, the paper focused on the organizational challenges that public managers face within their organizational and how such challenges influence post-disaster recovery governance. The study presents three major organizational dimensions challenges of public managers (i.e., structure, capacity, and culture). Based on these findings, the study argues that centralization of decision-making authority, and dominance by the ruling government and government bureaucrats, hindered the public managers of the recovery organization (i.e., the NRA) in their management of the network of actors involved in recovery.

The study offers the following policy recommendations. First, the organization (i.e., recovery organization) established to work for emergency management should have more financial autonomy to carry out its projects effectively and complete them in a timely manner. Second, the organizational structure should be created in a decentralized manner by eliminating bureaucratic red tape that gives more authority to the recovery organization to carry out its activities more effectively. Third, I propose that the organization should promote different trainings (i.e., leadership and conflict

management) and team building activities to enhance the capacity of their staff. In addition, the organization should focus on building motivation for their staff by providing incentives and awards. While the study sheds light on challenges related to network managers in recovery contexts, future studies on recovery organizations are needed. The establishment of new organizations to manage networks after disaster events has become a common practice, mostly in developing countries. Future studies should explore recovery organizations in other, similar contexts to provide more insight on the challenges of public managers.

**CHAPTER 3: THE CHALLENGES OF MANAGING A POST-DISASTER  
RECONSTRUCTION NETWORK: DIFFERENCES, CONFLICTS, AND POWER  
ASYMMETRY**

**3.1. Introduction**

Governance relating to natural disasters has shifted in recent years. Specifically, there has been a shift in the ideas, policies, and practices of governance in disaster contexts. With this shift, a large number of diverse public organizations, international financial institutions, national and international NGOs, and local governments and communities are increasingly engaged in collaborative networks to address the impacts of such disasters, which were primarily the domain of a central government in the past. These collaborative networks or relationships shape the exchange of resources, information, and influences between diverse stakeholders. Such interactions contribute to building trust, shared commitment, and common understanding between stakeholders. Network governance research, in the context of public administration, has emphasized the central role of network managers or public managers of an organization in securing and sustaining collaboration within a network. Scholars have argued that network managers use different strategies, such as activating, framing, arranging, connecting and synthesizing, to facilitate integration and manage network complexities and challenges (Klijn and Koppenjan 2016, Lamaire and Provan 2012, Agranoff and McGuire 2006). While public administration (PA) scholars have shown the central role of public officers in establishing, maintaining, and sustaining collaborative networks of multiple stakeholders in different research sectors, the PA post-disaster governance literature has

not exhaustively addressed this strand of research. Most post-disaster governance studies in PA have focused on the immediate relief and response phase—with limited research on the recovery phase of emergency management. The establishment of a new recovery management organization has become the common practice in donor-driven post-disaster reconstruction projects for the governance of diverse stakeholders; however, public officers/network managers of such organizations face challenges in managing these recovery networks, and the exploration and understanding of these challenges remains limited.

The present study examined the diverse challenges of public managers of the Nepal Reconstruction Authority (NRA)—a recovery management organization—while leading a post-earthquake reconstruction assistance network of organizations (hereafter: recovery network). Public managers face numerous and diverse challenges while managing recovery organizations (Johnson and Olshansky 2016, Comfort et al. 2010); however, the present study focused on relational factors within the NRA and between the NRA and other stakeholders. In particular, this investigation focused how relationships between multiple stakeholders influence public managers' roles and strategies to manage a collaborative recovery network. To examine the inter-organizational relationships related challenges of network managers, I conducted semi-structured interviews (n=81) with respondents from the NRA, INGOs, NGOs and local leaders of Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC). I found differences in priorities and practices, and I found conflict and competition over resources and authority and distrust between network participants. Findings suggest that contentious relationships between network

stakeholders and the centrality of power asymmetries in hindering network managers' roles and capacity to make and implement network management practices.

Using the case of post-earthquake reconstruction and challenges of public managers of the NRA, I reviewed the post-disaster recovery governance literature and ultimately provide contributions to expand this body of research (Comfort et al., 2010; Kapucu and Garayev, 2016; Tierney & Oliver-Smith, 2012; Johnson & Olshansky, 2016; Smith & Birkland 2012; Daly et al., 2017). Numerous studies have investigated the nature and importance of collaboration between organizations or stakeholders in immediate relief and response after disasters (Harrald, 2006; Moynihan, 2012; Fleming et al., 2015, Birkland & Waterman 2008; Nolte & Boenigk, 2011; Kapucu, Garayev & Wang, 2013; Simo & Bies, 2007; McGuire & Silvia, 2010); however, few studies have focused on governance of the long and complex recovery phase (Comfort et al., 2010; Sapat & Esnard, 2011; Cho, 2014). Moreover, few studies have focused on how pre-existing and post-disaster relationships, communication, civic participation and inclusion, goal congruence, and trust can impact collaboration processes and capacity in the recovery phase. Moreover, there is limited understanding of the contentious processes involved in the recovery phase (Olshansky et al., 2008; Comfort et al., 2010; Kapucu, 2014; Ganapati & Ganapati, 2008).

To detail and describe the challenges that NRA network managers face in their roles, the present study used the concept of network governance. Network governance is a form of collaborative governance that emphasizes the management of network actors or interactions for the effective exchange of resources between network actors or stakeholders in securing and sustaining network effectiveness (Klijn & Koppenjan,

2016). This concept not only highlights the relationships between network governance structure and processes for effective network governance outcomes, but also emphasizes network managers' roles and strategies in managing both governance processes and structure (Klijn & Koppenjan 2016; Provan & Kenis 2007; Agranoff & McGuire, 2001). Therefore, the present study highlights the influence of the relationship factors that challenge network managers in their efforts to govern a network or secure collaboration in a network.

In the next section, I describe our theoretical framework and the research literature on which our study builds and to which our study contributes. Following this, I describe the study's area and methodology, and I provide background information on the 2015 Nepal earthquake. I describe interventions that were initiated to manage and coordinate the reconstruction network of stakeholders. Next, I present our empirical findings from our interviews and document analysis, where I describe relational sources of challenges of public managers. Following the section on empirical findings, I discuss findings and conclusions.

### **3.2. Literature Review and Theoretical framework**

Emergency management (EM) is a domain of public administration research and practice that encompasses a wide range of institutions, processes, and practices that are used to manage the risk and impact of emergencies or disasters (Petak 1985; Henstra & McBean, 2005). Scholars and practitioners have categorized EM into four different but interrelated phases: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. Mitigation and preparedness phases are preemptive phases. The mitigation phase refers to the prevention

and minimization of disaster effects through structural (i.e., levees, dikes) and nonstructural measures (i.e., mitigation plan, warning system, public education etc.). The preparedness phase includes planning for emergencies, which can include creating evacuation plans and creating supply lists (e.g., food, emergency kit) that will be needed after the disaster (Henstra, 2010; Mushkatel & Weschler 1985). Post-disaster EM includes response and recovery phases. The response phase immediately follows a disaster and lasts up to few days up to a week whereas the recovery phase is a long-term emergency management phase that may span decades. Response phase activities include conducting search and rescue operations, and the recovery phase includes rebuilding damaged structures and for resuming normal lives (Forthergill et al., 1999; McLoughlin, 1985). Early works defined recovery “as a time of returning to normality” (Forthergill et al., 1999 p. 164; Chang, 2010). However, after the implementation of the Sendai Framework (2015-2030), the idea of reducing disaster risk has been incorporated into recovery and recovery has been redefined from “returning to normal” to “build back better” for building resilient communities. The recent incorporation of preemptive ideas and practices into recovery is one of the many sources of challenges within the recovery phase.

Compared to the other phases of EM, post-disaster recovery is considered to be a complex undertaking due to manifold challenges related to management and governance (Johnson & Olshansky 2016; Comfort et al., 2010; Kapucu, 2016; Smith & Birkland 2012; Tierney & Oliver-Smith, 2012). The recovery phase is a long-term phase of EM that may extend for decades and, thus, recovery necessarily presents challenges related to changing political and economic contexts and changing needs and desires of affected



people (Tierney & Oliver-Smith, 2012). In addition, post-disaster recovery and reconstruction in developing countries involve substantial grants and loans from donors and, for this reason, conflict and competition arises between diverse stakeholders for the control and management of these disaster funds (Xiao & Olshansky, 2020, Johnson & Olshansky 2016). For instance, scholars have indicated that central governments show unwillingness to implement decentralized recovery governance because of the lack of local capacity, resources and accountability to undertake a large-scale disaster challenge (Miller & Douglass, 2015). Additionally, the recovery phase includes multidimensional (e.g., housing recovery, business recovery, social psychological recovery, etc.) and multijurisdictional problems that require urgent solutions or are shaped by time compression (Olshansky et al., 2008; Johnson & Olshansky 2016; Ganapati, 2013; Philips, 2015). Time compression refers to the urgency of doing things or undertaking the activities (i.e., decision making, information exchange) in time and quick manner (Olshansky et al., 2012). Citing the urgency of post-disaster recovery measures, scholars have reported that citizen participation and engagement were excluded in post-disaster recovery processes in many countries (Johnson & Olshansky 2016; Olshansky et al., 2008; Ganapati & Ganapati, 2008). In sum, recovery is considered to be a long, complex, and contentious EM phase (Comfort et al., 2010).

Studies have focused on management and governance factors that shape the post-disaster recovery of people and places. Scholars have debated which governance models should be used to effectively administer and manage recovery processes and practices. Recently, scholars and international disaster policies have stressed the importance of—and argued for—decentralized and collaborative governance in disaster contexts

(Tierney & Oliver Smith 2012; Comfort et al., 2010; Kapucu, 2014; Johnson & Olshansky 2016, Smith & Birkland 2012). The decentralized governance model facilitates exchanges of resources, information, and influence that are necessary to build trust, shared understanding, and capacity for effective collaboration of diverse stakeholders (Smith & Birkland 2012, Tierney & Oliver-Smith 2012). For instance, Comfort et al., (2010) study on the recovery after Hurricane Katrina pointed out the imperatives of communication and information exchange between diverse stakeholders for building collaborative capacity and shared understanding that foster timely decision and actions. In addition, many studies have stressed the importance of citizen participation for effective recovery governance processes (Kweit & Kweit (2004). Studies have highlighted that preexisting interorganizational and interdependent relationships impact collaboration between organizations in the recovery phase (Jung et al., 2019; Raju & Baker 2013). Other studies have suggested that trust and goal consensus among network actors can facilitate effective recovery efforts (Vasavada, 2013). Additionally, many large-scale donor-driven post-disaster reconstruction initiatives have adhered to and emphasized some form of centralized or hybrid form of governance structure (Johnson and Olshansky 2016, Mukherji et al., 2021). The establishment of a recovery management organization, in particular, has become the common practice in managing post-disaster processes and practices; however, little is known about the challenges such organizations and public officers/managers face in managing the complex recovery phase. Therefore, building on the network governance or network management concept, the present study explored the influence of relational

factors on NRA public officers' roles and strategies in managing a post-disaster recovery governance network.

### Network Governance and Management

I used network governance to understand relationship or interaction related challenges of network managers in managing collaborations in the post-disaster recovery network. Network governance is a framework that emphasizes intricate relationships between governance structure, processes, and management practices in making and implementing decisions for a desired collaborative outcome (Emerson & Nabatchi 2015; Klijn & Koppenjan 2016; Provan & Kenis 2007). Klijn and Koppenjan (2016) defined network governance as “the set of conscious steering attempts or strategies of actors within governance networks aimed at influencing interaction processes and/or the characteristics of these networks” (p. 11). In other words, network governance is essentially the management of a network or governance network to manage and sustain collaboration between network participants. The concept emphasizes both horizontal collaboration (i.e., trust relationships between interdependent network actors) and vertical collaboration (i.e., command-and-control relationships) in shaping effective governance outcomes (Klijn & Koppenjan 2016; Klijn et al., 2020; Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015; Ansell & Gash, 2008; Isett et al. 2011). Scholars have suggested that collaborative interactions secure and sustain the exchange of resources. Such relationships contribute to effective decision making, collective conflict resolution, and building capacity for joint actions. Network governance also emphasizes network governance structure and associated collaborative processes. Provan and Kenis (2007), for instance, described a

participatory collaborative model (i.e., shared governance structure) and two centralized collaborative models of governance structure (i.e., lead organization and network administrative organization (NAO) structure) and highlighted the linkages between the governance structures and network characteristics, such as trust, goal consensus, size, and network-level competencies.

The effectiveness of network, however, is challenging for a number of reasons. For instance, Klijn and Koppenjan (2016) described three major types of network complexities, including substantive complexities, strategy complexities, and institutional complexities. Similarly, Proven and Lemaire (2012) described challenges due to differences in commitment, cultural clashes, loss of autonomy, coordination fatigue and costs, reduced accountability, and management complexity within a network. Furthermore, scholars have noted operational limitations (e.g., power asymmetries between organizations), performance limitations (e.g., a measurement of network effectiveness), and bureaucratic limitations (e.g., role of government actors) (McGuire and Agranoff, 2011, Saz-Carranza and Ospina 2011). Likewise, O’leary and Vij (2012) listed the challenges of managers in steering networks. These challenges include: (1) balancing autonomy and interdependence, where managers in the network not only need to handle the single program or organization but also need to connect with other network members; (2) working with diverse organizations with diverse cultures, missions, and goals; (3) knowing when to undertake participatory and authoritative behavior; and (4) generating new ways to use limited resources and taking account of all the factors when managing the network. In sum, these indicate network challenges due to differences in

perceptions and resources, practices and strategies, and rules and goals between network participants.

As a result, some network scholars have focused on network management practices or strategies to maintain and build collaborations within a network (O'Toole & Meier 1999; Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016; Klijn et al., 2010; Provan & Kenis 2007; Agranoff & McGuire, 2001). Network management refers to “all the deliberate strategies aimed at facilitating and guiding the interactions and/or changing the features of the network with the intent to further the collaboration within the network processes” (Klijn & Koppenjan 2016, p.11). Building on previous work, Klijn et al. (2010) categorized network management practices of network officers into four major strategies: arranging, process agreements, connecting, and exploring content (p. 1069). *Arranging* refers to arrangements of organizations (e.g., creating new organization, projects, board directors, etc.). *Process agreements* refer to ground rules (e.g., conflict regulating rules, rules to inform actors about decision making, etc.) for interactions among network actors. The process management activities listed above are connecting strategies in network management. *Connecting* strategies are used to mobilize resources and build interactions with other network actors to start the collaboration works. *Exploring content* is a strategy or task to achieve goal congruence (e.g., creating variation in a solution, managing and collecting information) between actors (Klijn et al.,2010, p.1069). Other scholars have focused on network leaders' “nurturing” and “steering” practices for the management of the network (Cristofoli et al., 2014, p. 82). To nurture the network, public managers act as facilitators or mediators. They promote interaction among network partners through information exchanges and conflict management (Cristofoli et al., 2014; O'Toole &

Meier, 2004). Agranoff and McGuire (2001) and Agranoff, (2006)—in their descriptions of network management—classified network management practices, what they called new POSDCORB, into: activation, framing, mobilizing, and synthesizing strategies (Agranoff & McGuire, 2001; Agranoff, 2006). *Activation* refers to a manager's ability to identify, select, and connect with the right set of actors and tap into the necessary resources for effective network management (Klijn et al., 1995). *Framing* involves arranging the network by establishing rules and roles for the network. *Mobilizing* requires the leader to develop and achieve a common goal to achieve network effectiveness. Finally, *synthesizing* refers to creating a favorable environment to enhance the interaction of network participants (Agranoff & McGuire, 2001; McGuire, 2002). In addition to these diverse strategies of network managers, scholars have also underscored network managers' or leaders' network management skills and capacity.

Some scholars have suggested that network managers' or leaders' skills and behaviors contribute to building trust relations and securing collaboration between stakeholders. Focusing on leadership skills, O'Leary and Vrij (2012) pointed out network manager's personal, interpersonal and group management skills. Similarly, Saz-Carranza and Ospina (2011) and Agranoff (2007) focused on skills to manage conflict and differences and to build shared commitment. Silva and McGuire (2010), on the other hand, compared the behavior of leaders in an organization and in network contexts. Their study suggested differences in behavior: leaders tended to exhibit people-oriented behavior (i.e., treating others as equals, creating trust, and shared leadership role) when managing in network contexts. Other scholars have described different roles of network managers. Expanding on the three management roles proposed by Agranoff (2003),

Voets (2014) presented five roles that network leaders must perform to effectively use network channels and management practices. The five roles are: network champion, network promoter, vision keeper, network operator, and creative thinker. Voets (2014) argued that the network will be effective if multiple dedicated leaders perform all five roles while managing the network. Collectively, these indicate the primary focus on network managers' agency to secure and sustain collaborative interactions between stakeholders; however, the focus on the influence of interaction and network context on public managers is limited. Drawing from the diverse challenges and complexities inherent in a governance network, the present study posited that contentious relationship and power asymmetry influence NRA public managers' roles and practices in governing a post-disaster recovery network.

### **3.3. Research Background**

Two major earthquakes with a magnitude of 7.8 (epicenter Gorkha District) and 7.3 (epicenter near Mount Everest) hit Nepal on 25 April and 12 May 2015, respectively. The earthquake hits Nepal when the country was experiencing a political transition that included promulgation of new constitution after the decade-long Nepal's Maoists War. The earthquake, directly and indirectly, affected individuals and communities in 32 districts of Nepal. For instance, this natural disaster resulted in more than nine thousand deaths and it displaced/affected eight million people. The post disaster needs assessment (PDNA) report published by donors and government agencies estimated the earthquake damage to be approximately USD 7 billion (GON-NPC, 2015).

The Government of Nepal organized an international donors conference on 25 June 2015—two months after the earthquake. The donor’s conference raised USD 3.43 billion for reconstruction and recovery works (GON-NRA, 2016). During the conference, the Government of Nepal announced that it would establish an autonomous agency to oversee reconstruction works and manage reconstruction funds (Sharma & Najjar, 2015). Although the Nepal government made arrangements to establish NRA, several factors delayed the NRA launch, including political turmoil and disputes between political parties over control of NRA funds. The NRA was established eight months after the earthquake on 25 December 2015 after the government enacted “Reconstruction Act - 2015”. The term limit of the NRA was set for five years with the possibility of a one-year extension—in the case the work was not completed within the five-year timeline. NRA activities are guided by the National Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Policy (2016), and Post-Disaster Recovery Framework (2016-2020).

The NRA organizational structure comprises three major high-level decision-making bodies: Advisory Council, Steering Committee, and Executive Committee. The Prime Minister chairs the Advisory Council and steering committee. The Advisory council and Steering committee are mainly composed of members of political parties, former prime ministers, and government bureaucrats. The steering committee duties include approval of NRA policies and budget. The executive committee is chaired by the CEO of NRA and it consists of four experts, nominated by the government, and a member secretary. The Steering Committee’s duties include preparing policies and plans.

In addition, the NRA consists of three central level project implementation units (CLPIUs) that are responsible for implementing reconstruction projects; CLPIU-GMALI



(grant management and local infrastructure), CLPIU-Building, and CLPIU-Education: CLPIU-GMALI (grant management and local infrastructure) is responsible for providing grants to earthquake beneficiaries, CLPIU-Building is responsible for construction of public and private buildings, and CLPIU-Education is responsible for construction of earthquake damaged schools. These CLPIUs oversee their respective (DLPIUs) in all 32 earthquake affected districts to implement and monitor works in the districts. Before the organizational reform of the NRA in 2018, the CLPIUs were under the respective ministries. However, after this organizational reform, the NRA assumed oversight of the CLPIUs.

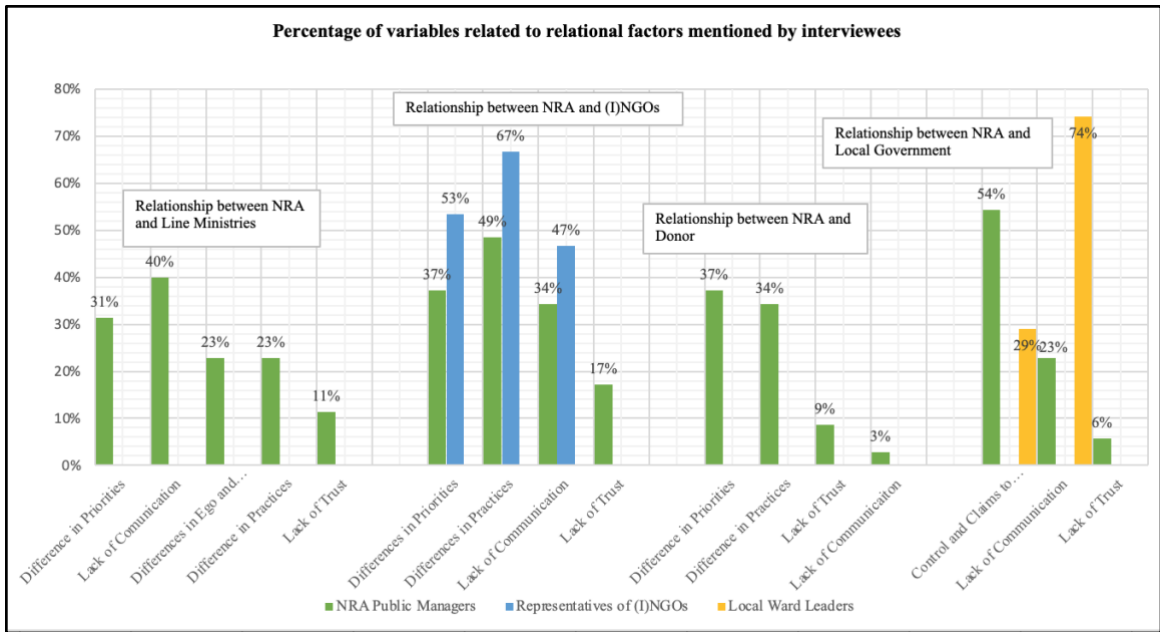
### **3.4. Methods and Data Analysis**

The present study is a qualitative case study of post-disaster recovery after the 2015 Nepal earthquake. The primary data collection method for this study was semi-structured interviews with public officials of the NRA within different levels and units (n=35), representatives of non-governmental organization (n=15), and ward leaders of Kathmandu Metropolitan City (n=31). The study participants were initially identified through the organization's website (purposive sampling). The sample was later expanded using snowball sampling techniques. The interviews were conducted in Nepali and recorded using an audio recorder with the permission of interviewees. The recorded interviews were then transcribed and translated in English simultaneously. I supplemented the interviews with a review of secondary sources, such as government reports (e.g., PDNA, PDRF) and policy documents (e.g., "Reconstruction Act -2015"). The interviews lasted for 30-45 minutes. The interviews were concluded upon reaching

theoretical saturation (e.g., no new information generated) (Bernard et al., 2017). The interviews were translated and transcribed word-for-word in English and coded for themes and patterns using NVivo-12 software.

### **3.5. Findings**

This section examines the challenges faced by NRA public managers in their efforts to steer a post-disaster recovery network of organizations following the 2015 earthquake in Nepal. The NRA was established to address the recovery of earthquake affected places and properties. One of the major responsibilities of the NRA was to manage and coordinate diverse government and non-government organizations. However, I observed differences and disagreements in priorities, power, and practices between diverse organizations involved in the recovery assistance network. These differences and disagreements challenged public managers' roles and strategies to secure and sustain collaborative processes and capacities. Figure 17, present the themes related to relational factors that influence the public managers roles and strategies to manage networks. In following paragraph, I briefly summarized three major findings.



**Figure 18:** Percentage of variables related to relational factors by interviewees category

### 3.5.1. Relationship within public managers of the NRA

As described in the background section, the NRA is the central recovery management body that is responsible for governance of the post-disaster recovery network. In this network, post-disaster reconstruction decisions are carried out by high-level committees. The NRA administrative body comprises a diverse assortment of public managers with different backgrounds and loyalties. In particular, the CEO and executive members are political appointees nominated by elected officials; senior NRA public managers are career bureaucrats from different line ministries. In addition, the NRA employees include temporary public managers (e.g., engineers, sub-engineers, diverse consultants).

I observed differences among the diverse public officers as the major source of challenges that hindered collaborative relationships and cooperative activities within the network. For instance, an interviewee from an INGO described the incompatibilities

between diverse public officers: *“NRA is like a puzzle game, just like different pieces are brought together, staffs were brought from different places and not even sure they fit<sup>59</sup>.”*

In addition, many respondents mentioned that the lack of formal and informal working relationships between public managers has affected collaborative activities: *“We are from different places and we do not know each other or have acquaintance.”* An interviewee from the NRA said<sup>60</sup>: *“I think we lack trust between staffs and have difficulty working together.”* To describe the lack of familiarity and trust between officers, an interviewee described the differences between NRA public officers and explained that time is needed to build trust and collaborate together; the interviewee used a metaphor for the junction of two well-known rivers of Nepal: *“NRA is like a confluence of the Trisuli River and the Seti River.”* He continued, stating that: *“black color water from the Trisuli river and white color water from the Seti river do not dissolve into one another until travelling a long distance<sup>61</sup>.”*

In addition, personal ego over hierarchy and authority of NRA public officials were a major factor that hindered collaboration. Many interviewees reported sporadic meetings, limited sharing of information, and inconsistent attendance of meetings due to conflicts over hierarchy and authority between public officers from different sectoral units and different positions in the hierarchy. One public manager summarized the conflicts within the NRA with a Nepali proverb: *“ तैई रानी मैई रानी कसले भरछ कुवा को पानी.<sup>62</sup>”* The

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<sup>59</sup> INGO officer, 26 August 2019

<sup>60</sup> Career public manager, Deputy Director CLPIU-GMALI, 14 July 2019

<sup>61</sup> Public manager, Consultant-CLPIU-GMALI, 8 July 2019

<sup>62</sup> Public manager, Engineer- CLPIU-Building, 23 July 2019

proverb, in this context, refers to the lack of collective action or collaboration because of conflicts over hierarchy and ego among public managers. An engineer—located in NRA headquarters—explained the impact of such conflicts on the daily collaborative practices of the NRA:

*In NRA, we have different departments and there are four to five undersecretaries in different departments. Undersecretaries do not attend meeting if other undersecretaries call a meeting because of the personal ego and issue of who is superior among undersecretaries<sup>63</sup>.*

Likewise, another high-level CLPIU officer reported how these conflicts hindered communication and information sharing: *“We need to put our ego aside and stop thinking that this is GMALI staffs and that is Building staffs.”* He said: *“if we only compete to maintain our own hierarchy, then there will be a problem of communication and information sharing<sup>64</sup>.”* Conflicts were not limited to public managers representing different sectoral units and different positions within the hierarchy; conflicts and tensions over power were widespread between administrative and technical staffs and between government officers and consultants of the NRA. For instance, one interviewee said: *“a lower-level career public officers of administration do not obey what an under-secretary of technical department says<sup>65</sup>.”* Collectively, this statement resonates with comments

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<sup>63</sup> Public manager, Engineer-Main office, 21 August 2019

<sup>64</sup> Career public manager, Deputy Director-CLPIU-GMALI, 14 July 2019

<sup>65</sup> Public manager, District support Engineer-Main office, 25 August 2019

from another NRA engineer, who mentioned that the conflicts, competitions, and tensions have added difficulty: “*to coordinate between sections and departments*”<sup>66</sup>.”

Conflicts between diverse public managers are further exacerbated by the deliberate control of—and the lack of access to—information within the administrative hierarchy of the NRA. Many interviewees mentioned that internal tension and dissatisfaction between public managers due to the lack of information sharing and transparency in information exchange between NRA officials at different levels of government. For instance, a few interviewees mentioned that information was shared only between a selected clique of public managers that was defined by the political identities of public managers: “*We have a problem of information short circuit. Sometime some blocks [department] are devoid of any information. I think because of such condition there is a lack of motivation for staffs to work*”<sup>67</sup>.” One engineer shared her frustration over the lack of information sharing between all department and officers within the NRA, stating:

*In bureaucracy, information has to pass from different hierarchy ...from undersecretary to joint secretary to secretary to CEO. We have politically appointed CEO and if someone in lower hierarchy is politically active and connections, information directly go from lower to CEO without sharing of information with others in the hierarchy*<sup>68</sup>.

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<sup>66</sup> Public manager, District support Engineer-Main office, 21 August 2019

<sup>67</sup> Public manager, Engineer- Main office, 21 August 2019

<sup>68</sup> Public manager, Engineer-Main office, 21 August 2019

### 3.5.2. Relationship between public managers of the NRA and line ministries

As mentioned above, the NRA was established to manage, oversee, and coordinate recovery and reconstruction activities in the earthquake-affected districts of Nepal. In other words, the NRA was established as a new network administrative organization (NAO) to manage networks of diverse public and non-public actors and institutions. The NRA acts as an executive body and the implementation of reconstruction projects were carried out by the line ministries. A separate project implementation unit was established under each line ministry (i.e., MOUD, MOEST, MOFALD, MOTCA) to carry out the recovery projects.

Our findings show that the differences in priorities between the NRA and line ministries were major sources of challenges that seriously hindered the efficacy of collaboration networks. Several public officers mentioned the lack of common mission, shared recovery objectives, and mutual commitment between public managers or between sectoral ministries. Such challenges influenced joint working, information exchanges, and communication. An interviewee from the NRA—a main office engineer—said: “*We have goal differences within employees of NRA and between organizations.*” Stressing the need for “*common goals*” and the “*internalization*” of shared recovery missions, he further said that such differences “*have impacted joint working*”<sup>69</sup>. For instance, interviewees frequently reported that differences in understanding the urgency needed to complete reconstruction activities within the five-year term limit. Explaining this difference as a source of difficulty in joint activities, an

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<sup>69</sup> Public manager, District support engineer-Main office, 21 August 2019

official from NRA headquarters mentioned that line ministries and career public officers considered recovery work to be regular public management work rather than emergency work: “*Line ministries considered [recovery work] as a regular program*<sup>70</sup>.” Similarly, another high-level officer reported that many NRA career-public officers do not understand the need for quick administrative processes to complete the reconstruction work within the NRA’s five-year time limit. He said: “*In case of regular work, ....it can be transferred to next year and next year if it does not complete on time, but NRA's emergency work is not a regular work*<sup>71</sup>.”

In addition, the competition and struggle between ministries and the NRA over the control of disaster funds have shaped the access to—and exchange of—financial and human resources. Thus, most interviewees reported that the NRA had limited capacity to undertake collaborative activities and that the NRA depended on the Ministry of Finance and other ministries for budget and human resources. A high-level officer from the central project implementation unit said: “*We do not have support from the Ministry of Finance, they always say that they do not have money and freeze the money and does not give decision on time*<sup>72</sup>”. Expressing dissatisfaction over the control by ministries and political leaders, an NRA officer angrily said: “*this is an autonomous agency, not a ministry or departments*<sup>73</sup>...”

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<sup>70</sup> Public manager, NRA main office, 25 August 2019

<sup>71</sup> Career public manager, Deputy Director, 14 July 2019

<sup>72</sup> Career public manager, Deputy Director, 14 July 2019

<sup>73</sup> Career public manager, Director, 15 July 2019



### 3.5.3. Relationship between the NRA and INGOs and NGOs

Some of the major stakeholders in the post-disaster recovery network were international non-government organizations—such as Care-Nepal, Save the Children, Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), and Oxfam-Nepal—and national non-government organizations—such as Lumanti and National Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET). The analysis of interviews shows difficulty in collaboration between NRA and INGOs and NGOs—primarily due to differences in power and priorities. Differences in priorities and practices between the NRA and I/NGOs hinder public managers' efforts to maintain and coordinate organizations in addressing recovery activities. For instance, an official from NRA headquarters expressed that non-governmental organizations, in particular, are guided by their own interests and priorities and, thus, NRA public managers faced difficulty in managing and coordinating post-disaster activities: “*NGOs like to do their projects in districts where they already have some sort of existing project and familiarity.*” This high-level official continued: “*We like them to go in earthquake affected districts, but they say that they only have funded for particular place. INGOs are only interested to go to easy and accessible areas, and they only take easy type of work*<sup>74</sup>”. In addition, NRA officials mentioned that they are more interested in the software part, which includes educational programs, awareness programs, and training projects. “*NGOs are more interested on software part like training program and distribution of pamphlet,*” one DLPIU public manager stated,

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<sup>74</sup> Public manager, NRA main office, 25 August 2019

*“but we need hardware parts such as reconstruction of school and houses that is long-lasting<sup>75</sup>.”* Whereas non-government organizations stated that their priorities depend on the nature of the project. A respondent of NGO said *“sometimes the hardware is not necessary at all such as in mental health project.”* He continued, *“government at all levels expect hardware part from us....but development philosophy says that there should a balance in hardware and software activities<sup>76</sup>.”* Similarly, another public officer revealed that partner organizations prioritized working in rural areas where issues of land tenure are unambiguous and land values are extremely low. This allowed for construction of single-room “resilient houses” with the USD 3,000 relief grants. *“We want INGO, NGOs and donors to go in all places where there is problem, but they want to launch their[housing reconstruction] projects in easier, accessible and familiar areas<sup>77</sup>.”*

Moreover, many NRA public officers expressed that INGOs and NGOs avoid communication and coordination with the NRA. A public manager from NRA headquarters expressed displeasure due to INGO and NGO reluctance to share information and come under the oversight of the NRA:

*We have some problem working with INGOs and NGOs. First, they do not want to come under our platform, and they want to work outside of our oversight. Second, since, this is reconstruction work, we need to have some consistency in practices,*

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<sup>75</sup> Public manager, Director-DLPIU-GMALI

<sup>76</sup> INGO officer, 27 August 2019

<sup>77</sup> Career public manager, NRA main office, 9 August 2019

*but they work on their own and they do not consult, inform or work in collaboration with us*<sup>78</sup>.

Likewise, another public manager expressed mistrust in INGOs and NGOs because of their unwillingness to share information with the NRA:

*We face difficulty working with INGOs .... we have large investment, but very weak communication. They are doing work, but they do not report about what type of work they are doing and with what mission. They do not inform. They get approval for one thing and do something different in field. We have misunderstanding and mistrust*<sup>79</sup>.

However, another officer from a non-governmental organization disagreed and mentioned that they go to meetings organized by Housing Recovery and Reconstruction Platform and meetings between INGOs and NRA officials. He said, “*we go to every month and share our challenges and experience from the field, but they neglect those things and only criticize us saying that you have not followed this and that process.*”<sup>[2]</sup> Additionally, the interviews with non-government officials revealed that they were frustrated over public officers' overreliance on rigid bureaucratic procedures and their refusal to understand different methods of operations or working procedures of INGOs/NGOs. As one of the INGOs/NGOs officials said: “*one of our projects was delayed as the area was not listed in the NRA list of affected districts.*” He continued:

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<sup>78</sup> Career public manager, 25 July 2019

<sup>79</sup> Career public manager, NRA main office, 25 July 2019

*“they do not understand that after our projects are approved by our donor, we cannot change the working area<sup>80</sup>”.*

#### **3.5.4. Relationship between the NRA and donors**

The major providers of loans and grants for the post-disaster reconstruction activities were: international financial organizations (e.g., the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, the Asian Development Bank), multilateral and bilateral organizations (e.g., the United Nations' organizations, European Union, the United States Agency for International Development, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Department for International Development), and various countries. According to some senior officers, the NRA had fewer problems coordinating with donor agencies because of the similarities *in* reconstruction policies, goals, and practices. For instance, an officer from NRA headquarters said: *“While we have differences in organizations goals, priorities and working practices, they conduct within the boundary of NRA's policy, guidelines and our objectives. Therefore, we do not have much problem working with donors.”* However, few senior public managers were skeptical and stressed the Janus-faced nature of donors: *“Donors have two faces. One is visible and another is hidden (donor को खाने दाँत एउता हुन्छ, देखाउने दाँत अर्को हुन्छ।)”*. An NRA official expressed his distrust on donors' practices:

*“In public, they just say anything, which are eye catching and attractive thing, but in reality, it is different. For example, India's provided one billion dollars as an*

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<sup>80</sup> INGO officer, 4 September 2019

*“aid” for reconstruction, but there is a catch. Despite the aid, we have not been able to utilize about 75 percent of the aid because of different condition<sup>81</sup>.”*

Moreover, donors’ conditionalities in grants and loans were reported as barriers in NRA collaboration and reconstruction activities by a several interviewees: *“Loan is government's money<sup>82</sup>”*. Stressing the government's ownership of donor loans, an officer in the grant management office said: *“when they provide a loan or grants, they will present a lot of conditions. They will say do this and do that, fulfill this and fulfill that. Their conditions sometime added difficulty in collaboration with donors<sup>83</sup>.”* More specifically, another mentioned that donors usually wanted us to spend money in *“their priority area - the area where it is easy to spend money<sup>84</sup>.”*

### **3.5.5. Relationship between the NRA and local governments**

The collaborative or interactive relationships between the NRA and local communities were nonexistent. Similarly, I did not find collaborative relationships between the NRA and local governments. The organizational structure of the NRA was envisioned to establish offices at the district and local levels to ensure coordination among NRA and local communities. The post-disaster recovery framework (PDRF) specifies that NRA will establish 7 Sub-Regional Offices to coordinate efforts between

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<sup>81</sup> Public manager, NRA main office, 25 August 2019

<sup>82</sup> Career public manager, Deputy director, CLPIU-Education, 23 August 2019

<sup>83</sup> Career public manager, NRA main office, 25 July 2019

<sup>84</sup> Career public manager, NRA main office, 9 August 2019

central authorities and local bodies, 31 District Coordination Committees (DCCs) to coordinate with district offices, and 160 Resource Centers at the local level. However, only 14 DCCs were established and Resource Centers were never established. In addition, the NRA organizational structure consists of CLPIUs and their respective DLPIUs under line ministries; subsequently, oversight of project implementation units was shifted to the NRA. After Nepal adopted its federal system, an NRA organizational reform in 2018 disbanded the DCCs, and DDCs responsibilities were shifted to DLPIUs. While the NRA claims that it effectively coordinates at local levels with local governments, collaboration and coordination with KMC is limited or non-existent with KMC wards. That is, interviewed local leaders and social mobilizers of thirty-one wards reported that collaboration and joint activities with the NRA is completely absent. For instance, a social mobilizer in a KMC ward said: *“they never contact us. They never share information. We have to look at their website to find changes in policies related to the distribution of relief funds<sup>85</sup>.”*

Several network characteristics or interorganizational factors influenced collaborative relationships with local governments of KMC and wards. Many public officers mentioned the increasingly difficulty to work and coordinate with local organizations (e.g., political parties and local governments and local leaders) primarily because of the increasing claims of rights, resources, and responsibilities in recovery management at a local level. The new constitution of Nepal was promulgated in 2015 after the long Nepal's Maoist War (1996-2006). After adopting the new constitution, the

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<sup>85</sup> Social mobilizer, KMC ward office, 9 July 2019

local government's election was held in 2017 after a long gap of 19 years. The local government offices were without local elected leaders until the 2017 local election. After the election of local government, local leaders started to claim and assert more rights and resources at the local level in recovery management. In particular, local government and leaders have a feeling that they are now independent government, and they should have rights to make local decisions related to recovery management. An engineer from NRA headquarters described the increasing claims of authority among local leaders: “*They think local level decision making related to beneficiary is now under their jurisdiction, and they claim that now they have rights to make decision not NRA*<sup>86</sup>.” This engineer from NRA headquarters also recalled disagreements between NRA officials and local governments from his days in field—he said: “*local governments now say that NRA does not have to monitor and evaluate again after they provided the list of beneficiaries from their area*<sup>87</sup>.” Some engineers reported that working at the local level could be dangerous due to demands of local leaders, who often threatened the local public managers if their demands were not met. The engineers reported challenges—especially when working in unfamiliar rural areas. He stated: “*If you are not very careful when you talk with locals, you might not even come back to your home*<sup>88</sup>.” Another engineer from the project implementation unit said that political relationships and electoral politics drive local government political leaders to demand disaster cash assistance from government for

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<sup>86</sup> Public manager, Engineer-Main office, 21 August 2019

<sup>87</sup> Public manager, District support Engineer, 21 August 2019

<sup>88</sup> Public manager, Engineer, CLPIU-Building, 23 July 2019

"fake beneficiaries": "*Local government leaders have a perception that their voter should get the relief money*<sup>89</sup>."

Whereas the local community representatives' experiences and views on collaboration with NRA's public managers are different, almost all local government leaders from the Kathmandu Metropolitan City that I interviewed expressed that NRA officials do not make efforts to engage with local communities. Many mentioned that NRA have neither shared information with local governments nor listened to local peoples' demands and problems. A ward leader of KMC succinctly expressed NRA's relationships with local governments and local communities. He said, "*They [NRA] do not do anything for us. They do not coordinate with us. They do not value our concern; they do not listen to us. We do not have any say on their policy. They just come and do their work. NRA has a monopoly.*"

### **3.6. Discussion**

Using the framework of network governance, I analyzed the source of challenges faced by public/network managers as they steer a post-disaster recovery assistance network. I examined the relationships between NRA and stakeholders to understand the impact of relationships on public managers' roles, capacities, and practices in managing interactions between network stakeholders. I observed differences in priorities and practices, and I observed conflicts over the control of—and access to—resources and authority involving the NRA and other stakeholders. These factors influenced frequent

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<sup>89</sup> Public manager, Engineer, CLPIU-Building, 23 July 2019



interaction and trust in the recovery network. These contentious relationships demonstrate how power asymmetries or power imbalances among stakeholders can shape collaborative interactions. Below, I present discussion of the findings in subsequent paragraphs.

The analysis suggested the differences in understanding and priorities among NRA public managers and between the NRA and line ministries on the nature of emergency work. Public managers frequently mentioned that career public managers and line ministries do not understand the urgency of post-disaster reconstruction work because they consider reconstruction activities to be regular government work. The lack of common understanding has hindered NRA public managers' capacity and authority to manage and sustain collaborative activities among the stakeholders. These differences in understanding stem from differences in experiences and loyalties. That is, career public managers were trained in bureaucratic culture and practices and, therefore, they consider emergency work to be regular government work; on the other hand, public managers—who have experiences working with donors, I-NGOs, and NGOs—are familiar with the "time-bound" nature of such projects. In addition, bureaucratic practices in the context of post-disaster reconstruction are guided by efforts to control and influence decision making and the distribution of disaster funds.

Additionally, the government's bureaucratic control and influence on decisions related to reconstruction funds and activities may be related to the lack of trust in international donor agencies to manage disaster funds. There is a general consensus and mistrust among Nepali people and government officers that international agencies and their associated non-governmental organizations and consultants are guided by their own

interest and priorities. That is, government officials have a perception that Nepali people and their problems are donors' and INGOs agencies' "*magi khani bhado*"<sup>90</sup>, which refers to the idea that certain problems are represented by donors or INGOs to develop projects for their own economic benefit. Hsu and Schuller (2020) also noted that donors and international agencies mismanaged and misappropriated reconstruction funds and assert authority in post-disaster contexts in Haiti (Hsu & Schuller, 2020).

Similarly, I noted differences in priorities and practices between the NRA and partner organizations and how these differences impact collaborative processes within the network. That is, I observed challenges prompted by differences in working practices, priorities, and approaches between the NRA and partner organizations. Although each partner organization has unique priorities and practices, organizations in general were more involved in reconstruction projects in areas or sectors that are easier, accessible, familiar in nature. In other words, our findings reveal that partner organizations preferred working in sectors that are free from social, political, and geographical difficulties and have technical solutions, such as the construction of school buildings, government buildings, hospital buildings, and roads and trainings. In addition, partner organizations were primarily interested in providing training, seminars, and education and awareness programs ("software part"). One reason for differences in priorities and practices among partner organizations is that they are the major sources of loans and grants for post-disaster housing reconstruction. Johnson and Olshansky (2016) noted that the body that controls disaster funds has the power to make and implement decisions, priorities, and

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<sup>90</sup> Several government officials and local leaders expressed the same sentiment and used the exact phrase to express their mistrust on partner organizations.

practices. Donor-driven projects are bound by time; this may be another reason why it was difficult to mobilize and convince partner organizations to participate in collaboration and common reconstruction priorities. In other words, the priorities and approaches of donors and I-NGOs might be related to what Johnson and Olshansky (2016) called “time compression” in post-disaster recovery studies (see also Ganapati and Ganapati, 2007; Ganapati & Mukherji, 2014). The need to complete projects within a short time might have motivated partner organizations to take easier and familiar tasks. More critically, reconstruction issues are primarily political economic questions that are beyond the scope of donor and INGO capacity, resources, and time. In addition, senior public managers, such as executive staff, are highly connected to partner organizations because of their prior history of work as consultants or experts. They may also act as informal lobbyists between donors and government agencies. For senior career public officers and bureaucrats, partner organizations are a future place of employment and consultancy for themselves and their families. Such relationships between public managers and donors provide less incentive to control and question donor and I-NGO practices and priorities—even when they do not align with disaster recovery and reconstruction priorities and practices. These differences in priorities and practices between stakeholders indicate that the NRA and public officers have limited power, capacity, resources, and incentives to mobilize, convince, and control donors and I-NGOs recovery practices. In sum, the underlying theme in all the differences in priorities and practices indicate that power asymmetries or power differences between the NRA and partner organizations influence collaborative decisions and practices.

Second, I observed conflicting relationships between the NRA and stakeholders that influenced collaborative activities in the recovery network. In particular, the conflict and competition between NRA public managers have impacted managers' management capacities, responsibilities, and practices to secure and sustain "collaborative dynamic" or reduce complexities within the recovery network. Several public managers mentioned of conflicts over hierarchy and ego among public managers and how this impacted joint meetings and communication between public managers of different sectors and departments. NRA public managers also expressed dissatisfaction over the lack of access to information and transparency among public managers within the NRA. The access to information and communication between public managers within hierarchies is important to enhance capacity and accountability of public managers in their management roles.

Similarly, I observed conflicting relationships between the NRA and line ministries. The NRA was created as an autonomous body to coordinate and manage conflicting recovery processes and practices; however, the ruling government and ministries (i.e., bureaucracy) continued to control the resources, rights, and responsibilities of the NRA. The lack of adequate exchange of resources and authority impacted collaboration and trust relationships between the NRA and line ministries. In addition, line ministries and government agencies control and influence NRA reconstruction activities because ministries oversee all administrative processes and practices of NRA. Another consideration is that the central government's control over resources and authority may have been guided by broader political and social contexts. That is, the centralization of post-disaster reconstruction in ruling governments and bureaucracy must be understood in the context of post-conflict state rebuilding efforts

following the decade long violent Maoist conflict and another decade long struggle between Nepal's ethnic groups over new federal structure and new constitution of the Federal Republic of Nepal (Schneiderman et al., 2015). After the promulgation of new constitution in 2015, a federal governance system was implemented, which challenged bureaucratic control of public affairs in Nepal. The struggle—for control of power, authority, and resources—between new administrative bodies under the federal governance system coincided with the centralization of post-disaster reconstruction.

Furthermore, I observed many examples of conflicting relationships that shaped trust between the NRA (i.e., government) and partner organizations. For instance, interviewees expressed dissatisfaction over the imposition of different conditionalities by donors while providing financial and technical support. Similarly, while very few INGOs are involved in reconstruction activities, interviewees mentioned that INGOs showed unwillingness to collaborate and share information or come under NRA oversight, and they frequently deviated from initial agreements. In addition, NRA career public managers reported that partner organizations lack financial transparency. This suggests limited trust in donor agencies. This doubt or distrust of donors, however, has not hindered strong dependency relationships for disaster loans and grants.

Moreover, most local interviewees expressed a lack of trust in the NRA due to the NRA's control over rights, responsibilities, and resources. The lack of trust is also the primary reason why many local leaders have increasingly claimed their rights, resources, and representation in the management and implementation of reconstruction activities. While local leaders claim is primarily related to the changes prompted by the new federal governance system in Nepal and promulgation of new constitution, public managers

mentioned that local leaders are motivated by their own interests and electoral politics. Many interviewees mentioned that they have less trust in central government agencies regarding transparency and management of large disaster loans and grants that the government has received from international communities.

The existing literature on post-disaster recovery and reconstruction has highlighted how pre- and post-disaster factors and conditions can shape collaboration in recovery networks. Studies have shown how preexisting formal and informal relationships can facilitate effective collaboration and trust in the context of post-disaster recovery governance (Raju & Baker 2013; Comfort et al., 2010; Kapucu & Garayev, 2013; Coles et al., 2012; Jung et al., 2019). Other scholars have examined the impact of civic engagement, participation, and inclusion in decision making related to post-disaster recovery of affected people and places (Ganapati & Ganapati, 2008; Bakema et al., 2017). In particular, the Comfort et al. (2010) study on recovery after Hurricane Katrina noted the importance of communication and information exchange for building common understanding of—and commitment to—problems and solutions, shared decision making, and development of technical capacity for joint action. While the recovery phase is considered to be a “long, complex and contentious process,” the contentious process has not been the central focus in the post-disaster recovery governance literature. Few studies in recovery that have shown the influence of goal differences and conflicts over resources in shaping governance processes. For instance, Comfort et al. (2010) cursorily cited the differences in goals and conflicting relationships in their research after Hurricane Katrina. Similarly, Kapucu (2014) found that goal differences play a role in shaping collaboration and recovery outcomes. Some studies of recovery processes on the recovery context of

Nepal have briefly mentioned the control over the resources by donors, GON ministries and the lack of resources sharing with locals (Comfort & Joshi, 2017; Lee, 2016; Pandey, 2018; He, 2019). I argue that the central processes deserve more than a passing note.

The lack of collaboration in recovery and reconstruction in Nepal is not only driven by the lack of clear and specific rules guiding the participation and inclusion of non-governmental organizations, local government and local communities (Shrestha et al., 2019; Lam & Kuipers, 2019), but also shaped by the differences in understanding and priorities, conflicts over the control of resources and underlying power relations between diverse stakeholders. The present study contributes to the literature on governance in post-disaster recovery contexts; this study highlights contentious processes and the power asymmetries between stakeholders as the central processes in the recovery phase. The study argues that contentious relations—driven by power asymmetries between stakeholders—shape the collaborative activities that hinder network managers’ ability to steer the network.

According to the network governance concept, effective collaboration between diverse stakeholders is important for making and implementing decisions because it ensures effective, efficient, and equitable exchange of resources and information to address the problem. Network governance is based on the assumption that a collaborative network is associated with diverse challenges, tensions, and complexities that require appropriate management by network managers (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016; Provan & Kenis, 2007; Lemaire & Provan, 2012; Saz-Carranza & Ospina, 2011; Agranoff, 2007). In other words, network scholars have argued that network managers’ roles and strategies play a role in securing and sustaining interactions and collaboration in a network (Klijn &

Koppenjan, 2016; Agranoff, 2006). Network scholars have suggested that challenges related to roles, skills, time, and resources impact effective network collaboration.

As this chapter has shown, network managers have agency to shape relationships and networks; however, their behavior, roles, responsibilities and capacity to manage are limited by the power-laden contexts under which they operate. The power, influence, and interests of central governments, traditional bureaucracy, and the coalition of international donors far exceed the abilities and strategies of network managers or leaders in the context of a developing country like Nepal. Similar to our present observations, McGuire and Agranoff (2011) highlighted the role of power asymmetries and conflict in the practices of public managers. In addition, our findings suggest that effective network processes are shaped by the differences, power asymmetries, and conflicts between network actors; thus, our findings align with those of Saz-Carranza and Ospina (2011): power differences are important predictor of network effectiveness. Therefore, we contribute to this body of knowledge by highlighting the influence of differential power and interests of stakeholders in shaping public managers' roles and strategies to manage the recovery network.

### **3.7. Conclusion**

The study concluded that the contentious relationship between various stakeholders hindered the public managers' efforts to carry out joint activities. In the context of the NRA—the recovery organization that was established after the 2015 earthquake in Nepal—the present study found that NRA public managers faced three major relational challenges in their roles as managers. The three major challenges are: (1)



differences in priorities and practices, (2) conflicts and competition over resources and authority, and (3) the lack of trust between network participants. Findings suggest that contentious relationships between stakeholders have shaped public officers' roles and strategies to govern collaborative processes or network.

The study would have provided more insights into the nature of relationships between high level governing stakeholders if the interviews were conducted with political leaders, representatives from donor agencies, and bureaucrats from line ministries that participated in policy making for reconstruction, including formulation of the “Reconstruction Act-2015” and the design and establishment of the NRA. These interviews would have provided a clearer picture regarding the delayed establishment of the NRA; difficulties and conflicts between stakeholders in designing the NRA's organizational structure.

Future studies focused on Nepal should involve data collection with these officials to provide more insight into the topic. In addition, similar studies should be conducted in other contexts to further explore the influence of relational factors on the effectiveness of the network. Additional investigations on the interactions between these diverse stakeholders—through network analysis—should also be performed to provide a visualization of the interactions. Findings from this research have important policy implications. First, the study can guide policy makers to make clear rules and guidelines to avoid conflicts over hierarchies and maintain commitment and accountability of public managers. Second, the study can also inform policy makers to eliminate bureaucratic red tape for emergency management works.

## **CHAPTER 4: GOVERNANCE FACTORS SHAPING POST-DISASTER HOUSING RECONSTRUCTION IN URBAN NEPAL**

### **4.1. Introduction**

Following the decade-long Maoist's War, Nepal experienced an extended period of social and political chaos, which was exacerbated by conflicts and tensions as policy makers drafted a new constitution. It was in this context that the 7.8 magnitude earthquake and subsequent aftershocks hit Nepal. The earthquake impacted the lives, livelihoods, and properties of many people in 32 of 77 districts of Nepal. A large number of buildings collapsed in urban and rural areas. The earthquake killed 8,790 people and displaced about 1 million people. In the Kathmandu Valley alone, earthquakes damaged and destroyed about 114,398 private houses (Housing Reconstruction and Recovery Platform [HRRP], 2020). Soon after the earthquake, public and non-public agencies committed to rebuilding a better and more resilient Nepal by providing financial and technical support. The Government of Nepal (GON), with support from donor agencies, established a new governance structure to oversee and implement housing reconstruction in affected districts. In addition to the promulgation of the “Act Relating to Reconstruction of the Earthquake Affected Structures, 2015 (2072)” (hereafter Reconstruction Act) and the formation of several high-level policy making committees at different levels, central governments and donor organizations helped establish a central recovery organization: The National Reconstruction Authority (NRA).

As of 2019, the Housing Recovery and Reconstruction Platform (HRRP)<sup>91</sup> data on urban Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) reveal that only 18 percent of affected households had received all of the government's housing reconstruction cash assistance, which was distributed in three installments to eligible beneficiaries. This percentage also indicates the total number of reconstructed houses.<sup>92</sup> Even, there was general consensus among government bureaucrats, international donors, INGOs, NGOs, local governments, and residents that housing reconstruction in urban KMC has been slow and progress has been limited. Despite promises of building back a better and more resilient city in policy documents (i.e., PDNA and PDRF), these data highlight gaps in private housing reconstruction in urban KMC.

Using the case of private housing reconstruction in urban KMC, the present study investigated how the management of a recovery network hindered the recovery of earthquake affected populations. In other words, this study aimed to answer the following question: how are network management factors linked to private housing reconstruction outcomes in KMC? To explore this question, this paper examined who controls, makes, and implements housing reconstruction decisions, and how relationships between multiple stakeholders shape private housing reconstruction decisions. The findings showed that authority and resources were centralized in ruling governments and government bureaucracies—rather than in the NRA—which hindered NRA officers' roles

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<sup>91</sup> Housing Recovery and Reconstruction Platform (HRRP) provides coordination support services for the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), Building and Grant Management and Local Infrastructure (GMALI) Central Level Programme Implementation Units (CLPIUs), other relevant government authorities, and Partner Organizations (POs)."

<sup>92</sup> This excludes non-compliance houses.

and capacity to make and implement housing reconstruction decisions at different levels. In addition, findings revealed that the interests and priorities of donors and non-governmental organizations shaped private housing reconstruction decisions and practices. As a result of these centralized decision making and implementing arrangements, powerful stakeholders avoided or ignored urban housing reconstruction processes, such as the identification of beneficiaries and urban housing problems, distribution of appropriate cash assistance, urban poverty, and urban housing and land tenure issues. Based on these findings, this paper argues that power asymmetry in recovery network—or differential power relations— between multiple stakeholders play a central role in shaping urban private housing reconstruction processes, priorities, and outcomes.

This study builds on, and contributes to, the post-disaster housing recovery and reconstruction literature. Scholars have highlighted the relationship between different pre- and post-disaster factors in facilitating and hindering housing recovery after large scale disasters. In particular, post-disaster recovery and reconstruction are shaped by: the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the affected population; the social, political, and economic systems under which reconstruction initiatives are designed and implemented; the type and nature of the governance system that shapes decision making and implementation; and the nature and severity of the problem or disaster (Johnson & Olshansky, 2016; Ganapati and Mukherji, 2019; Tierney & Oliver-Smith 2012; Smith & Birkland, 2012). Researchers have shown that governance and management factors influence post-disaster recovery outcomes. However, there is only limited understanding of how network governance or management factors influence post-disaster recovery

outcomes. We explored this knowledge gap by drawing on the concept of network governance in public administration.

Network governance is a framework that emphasizes intricate relationships between governance structure, processes, and management practices in making and implementing decisions for a desired collaborative outcome. According to the network governance concept, effective collaboration between diverse stakeholders ensures effective, efficient, and equitable exchanges of resources, information, and influences to address the problem. Network governance is based on the assumption that a collaborative network is associated with diverse challenges, tensions, and complexities that require appropriate management by network managers (Klinj & Koppenjan 2016; Provan & Kenis 2008; Lamine & Provan 2012; Saz-Carranza and Ospina 2011). In other words, interactions and collaborations in a network are secured and sustained by network managers' roles, skills, time, and resources; these interactions and collaborations help shape public service delivery or outcomes (Klinj & Koppenjan 2016; Agranoff, 2016).

This chapter proceeds with an overview of the literature related to post-disaster housing reconstruction and network governance framework. Next, I provide the background information of the study and methods. Then, I provide research findings and discussion. I conclude the chapter by providing policy implications and directions for future research

## **4.2. Literature review and Theoretical framework**

Before exploring the use of network governance to analyze and understand factors related to post-disaster housing recovery, the paper presents a brief description of the

post-disaster recovery phase of emergency management and presents a literature review on the linkages between governance or management factors and post-disaster housing recovery.

The recovery phase is one of the four phases of the emergency management cycle, which includes: preparedness phase, mitigation phase, response phase, and recovery phase. Early works defined recovery “as a time of returning to normality” (Fothergill et al., 1999, p.164). The recent definition of recovery, however, incorporates the idea and practices of resilience<sup>93</sup>. The post-disaster recovery phase involves a long, complex, and contentious processes of rebuilding after a disaster (Comfort et al., 2010). Scholars and practitioners have categorized the recovery phase into different but overlapping stages to highlight diverse processes and practices involved in each phase. For instance, Hass, Kates and Bowden (1977) divided recovery into four overlapping periods that include different activities and timelines: the emergency period, the restoration period, the replacement reconstruction period, and the commemorative, betterment and developmental reconstruction period. Other scholars simply divided recovery into two phases: short term recovery (i.e., damage assessment, arranging temporary shelter, etc.) and long-term recovery (i.e., debris management, recovery and reconstruction of infrastructure, etc.) (Philips 2009)<sup>94</sup>. Furthermore, Philips (2015) listed eight dimensions

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<sup>93</sup> The United Nations office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), for instance, defines recovery as “the restoring or improving of livelihood and health, as well as economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets, systems and activities, of a disaster-affected community or society, aligning with the principles of sustainable development and 'build back better' to avoid or reduce future disaster risk” (UNDRR, n.d.,).

<sup>94</sup> UNDP (2016) has categorized recovery into three stages: early-, medium-, and long-term recovery. “Early recovery begins with the quick interventions, such as cash for work or food for work. Medium term interventions aim at rebuilding shelter, infrastructure and livelihoods. Long-term interventions work toward building government capacities and reducing risk of future disaster” (p.12)

of the recovery phase, including housing recovery, business recovery, debris management, infrastructure and lifeline re-establishment, environmental recovery, historical and cultural resource preservation, social psychological recovery, and public sector management. These descriptions illustrate the complexity of the post-disaster recovery phase. The sources of complexity, however, depend on numerous factors and conditions shaping the recovery phase, which are described below—within the specific focus of post-disaster housing recovery and reconstruction.

The post-disaster recovery of affected people and property is shaped by many factors. Studies have shown that recovery among marginalized populations can be slow, due to their pre-existing social, political, and economic circumstances, rather than the severity of the damage (Peacock & Morrow, 1997; Quarentelli, 1999; Fothergill et al., 1999; Fothergill & Peek, 2004). These studies have suggested that the pre-existing conditions after the disaster usually deteriorate, which hinder the post-disaster recovery of affected populations. For instance, Finch et al. (2010), which investigated the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, suggested that there was a relationship between slow recovery and pre-existing social vulnerabilities in New Orleans. According to their study, populations in the mid-range categories of social vulnerability recovered slowly because they did not qualify for outright assistance and they did not have the economic resources to recover on their own (Finch et al., 2010). Similarly, Kamel and Loukaitou-Sideris (2003) highlighted the uneven distribution of federal assistance in the aftermath of the 1994 Northridge Earthquake. They showed that poverty and lack of access to federal assistance and limited availability of local resources—in an area with a predominantly Hispanic, low-income and immigrant population—were factors that shaped long-term

housing recovery of affected populations. Likewise, Green et al. (2007) examined factors affecting slow recovery of the African American population after Hurricane Katrina. They suggested that the low-income African American population—that was concentrated in an area impacted by Hurricane Katrina—was not provided with access to resources to rebuild homes, did not received flood insurance because the area was not designated as a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood zone, and did not have resources to build on their own. The abovementioned studies, in general, suggest that structural factors and government policy decisions play a critical role in influencing the housing recovery of disaster-affected people.

Furthermore, other studies have focused on the interests and priorities of international organizations in determining post-disaster housing recovery outcomes. For instance, the Tafti (2015) study on two earthquake affected cities—Bhuj, India (2001) and Bam, Iran (2003)—showed how the strict policy of the World Bank, which set the eligibility criteria of recovery assistance based on the pre-earthquake land ownership, impacted access to housing assistance among: lower income tenants and sharers, women without land rights, and squatters. Additionally, Mukherji (2015) showed that the lack of a clear and comprehensive housing policy impacted recovery of low-income renters and the poor population after the 2001 earthquake in Gujrat, India. Housing recovery of affected populations was impacted by: inadequate affordable housing, failure to differentiate different types of landlords and renters' households, failure to recognize land tenure issues, and issues of equity. These studies stressed the uneven distribution of resources to different groups of people and places based on race, gender, ethnicity, and class. That is, post-disaster housing recovery policies and regulations are often



discriminatory because the distribution of resources is affected by the identities of people or their social, economic, and cultural identities or statuses (Finch et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2012; Fussell et al., 2010).

In addition to social, political, and economic factors noted above, the interests and power of stakeholders shape the post-disaster housing recovery of affected people. Many scholars have suggested that bureaucratic and centralized government has a growing role and influence in the management of post-disaster recovery and reconstruction (Mukherji et al., 2020; Johnson & Olshansky 2016; Daly et al., 2016). Governments are central stakeholders in post-disaster processes and initiatives; however, other stakeholders are involved in making and implementing decisions in disaster contexts, including international donors, multilateral, and bilateral organizations, INGOs, NGOs, CBOs, local governments, and local organizations. For instance, powerful United Nations (UN) institutions, bilateral agencies, and financial organizations—who control ideas, knowledge, and resources related to recovery and resilience—have influenced policy decisions in Nepal (Jones, 2016; Ruzczyk, 2019; Shrestha et al., 2019). Tafti (2015), for instance, showed how the political pressure and knowledge produced by key institutions, such as the World Bank, influenced housing assistance policy and eligibility criteria, which—in turn—added barriers to obtain financial assistance in poor and marginal communities. Therefore, a governance structure that facilitates communication and collaboration between diverse stakeholders is critical for effective recovery processes and outcomes, which are further discussed below.

Existing studies have highlighted the linkages between governance factors and post-disaster housing recovery and reconstruction. For instance, the Comfort et al. (2010)

study on recovery after Hurricane Katrina suggested that communication between diverse stakeholders and citizen participation were crucial to building collaborative capacity and shared understanding, which fostered timely recovery decisions and actions (see also Opdyke et al., 2017; Kewit & Kewit, 2004; Alam & Rahman 2019). Similarly, the Lam and Kuipers (2019) study in Nepal showed that lack of community participation and exclusion of vulnerable groups from decision making and implementation have hindered the achievement of resilient community— primarily because of confusing duty roles, inadequate human resources, and lack of communication. Likewise, Hamideh and Rongerude (2018) examined the rebuilding of low-income public houses in Galveston after Hurricane Ike in 2008. Despite federal regulations, court orders, and available resources, only a few housing units were rebuilt during the recovery phase. The study noted that, aside from pre-existing social conditions, housing reconstruction was impacted by barriers to participation in the decision-making process—due to marginal social conditions (i.e., social vulnerability). While these studies highlighted linkages between governance processes and housing recovery outcomes, others have stressed the importance of external contexts in shaping such linkages.

Scholars have also suggested that broader contexts play a role in shaping the linkages between governance processes (i.e., collaboration, participation, and trust relationships) and housing recovery outcomes. For instance, Comfort et al. (2016) discussed how political and social contexts in Nepal after the 2015 earthquake shaped the exclusion of local NGOs and local governments in decision making, which—in turn—impacted timely housing recovery outcomes. Similarly, some scholars have highlighted the central role of time compression in post-disaster housing reconstruction processes and

outcomes (Olshansky, 2007; Ganapati & Mukherji, 2014). Collectively, these studies suggest linkages between governance factors and effective housing reconstruction outcomes and the influence of broader contexts on such linkages; however, little is known about how a newly established recovery management organization can facilitate or hinder post-disaster housing recovery. The present study used the case of post-disaster private housing reconstruction initiatives in urban KMC to explore the linkages between network governance or management factors and private housing reconstruction in urban KMC.

#### Network governance

This research used the network governance concept to investigate post-disaster private housing reconstruction processes and outcomes in the urban KMC of Nepal. Network governance is a framework that emphasizes intricate relationships between governance structure, processes, and management practices in making and implementing decisions for a desired collaborative outcome. Moreover, in network governance, effective outcomes are shaped by horizontal collaborations—defined by trust relationships between interdependent network actors—and vertical collaboration—defined by bureaucratic and hierarchical relationships (Klinj & Koppenjan 2016, 2020; Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015; Ansell & Gash, 2007). Provan and Kenis (2007) described a participatory model (i.e., shared governance structure) and two centralized models (i.e., lead organization and administrative organization structures) and suggested that network effectiveness or outcomes are defined by a network's structural and processual characteristics—including: trust, goal consensus, size, and network competencies.

According to the network governance concept, effective collaboration between diverse stakeholders—which can be measured by a wide variety of metrics—is important for making and implementing decisions related to complex problems because such collaboration ensures effective, efficient, and equitable exchanges of resources, information, and influences. Network governance is based on the assumption that a collaborative network is associated with diverse challenges, tensions, and complexities that must be appropriately managed by network managers (Klinj & Koppenjan 2016; Provan & Kenis 2008; Lamaire & Provan 2012; Saz-Carranza & Ospina, 2011). In other words, network managers’ roles, skills, time, and resources are important to secure and sustain interactions and collaborations in a network, which help shape public service delivery or outcomes (Klinj & Koppenjan, 2016; Agranoff, 2016).

### **4.3. Research Background**

Two months after the 2015 earthquake, Nepal’s government organized an international donor conference—titled “Toward a Resilient Nepal”—to raise financial assistance for Nepal's reconstruction (GON/NPC 2016, PDNA). International donors, bilateral and multilateral organizations committed and provided funding to build back a better and more resilient Nepal. Needs assessment reports from the National Planning Commission (NPC) estimated that USD 7 billion USD would be needed for the "reconstruction of Nepal"; however, international communities committed about USD 2.9 billion and, by 2017, about USD 655.81 million had been disbursed. With the backing of international agencies (e.g., the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and European Union), Nepal’s government committed to establishing new institutional arrangements

during the conference. Before the establishment of the NRA as a central coordinating body for managing post-disaster recovery and reconstruction, the NPC was centrally responsible for formulating policies and planning and making decisions related to reconstruction and recovery activities. The NPC prepared Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) and Post Disaster Recovery Framework with the help of line ministries of the government and core reconstruction partners, such as the World Bank, the United Nations, European Union, Asian Development Bank (ADB), and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The PDNA and PDRF are the major reports that guided recovery activities. Moreover, government's ministries were the major project implementation bodies at different levels of government.

Until the NRA assumed full responsibilities for recovery after it was established, many post-disaster recovery activities were carried out by sectoral line ministries through their respective CLPIUs and DLPIUs. For instance, the Ministry of Urban Development and the Ministry of Health carried out projects related to housing and health, respectively. Similarly, donor agencies and international and national non-government organizations were also involved in recovery projects. Before the NRA, most financial institutions directly provided loans and grants to sectoral ministries to carry out recovery projects. In addition, donor agencies and INGOs directly carried out their recovery work in Nepal through international NGOs, national NGOs, and CBOs.

Six months after the “Toward a Resilient Nepal” conference, in which Nepal’s Government committed to establishing a new coordinating body to manage recovery and reconstruction, Nepal enacted the “Act Relating to Reconstruction of the Earthquake Affected Structures, 2015 (2072)”. The Act established the NRA as a central coordinating

body to "effectively" manage, oversee, and coordinate recovery and reconstruction activities in earthquake affected districts. The act assigned roles and responsibilities to NRA officials, and empowered them with rights to oversee, coordinate, and facilitate the recovery efforts of public, private, and non-profit institutions at different levels (Nepal Disaster Report, 2017). The NRA's governance structure comprises high-level policy making bodies, such as the national advisory council, steering committee, executive committee, appellate committee, and development assistance coordination and facilitation committee. Nepal's prime minister chairs the advisory council and steering committee. The chief executive officer (CEO) chairs the executive committee, and the CEO performs the daily activities of the NRA. Additionally, the NRA has three Central Project Implementation Units (CLPIU): (1) CLPIU-Building, which is responsible for private and public housing reconstruction; (2) CLPIU-Grant Management and Local Infrastructure (GMALI), which is responsible for disbursing reconstruction grants to beneficiaries; and (3) CLPIU-Education, which is responsible for reconstruction of earthquake affected schools (see Figure 4).

The GON categorized the earthquake affected districts as *highly affected districts* (i.e., 14 districts) and *less affected districts* (i.e., 18 districts) to prioritize the highly affected districts. After the survey of affected beneficiaries, the NRA provided USD 3,000 cash assistance to beneficiaries in three installments or tranches for the reconstruction of damaged houses. First tranche of USD 500 was provided after signing the partnership agreement; the second tranche of USD1500 was granted after the construction of the house reached the plinth level; the third tranche of USD 1000 was given after the construction reached ring beam level. In addition, for partially damaged

houses, the NRA offered a retrofitting grant valued at approximately USD 1000 (HRRP, 2017). GON and the NRA briefly launched a low interest housing credit or bank loan of USD 25,000 for urban areas and USD 15,000 for rural areas.

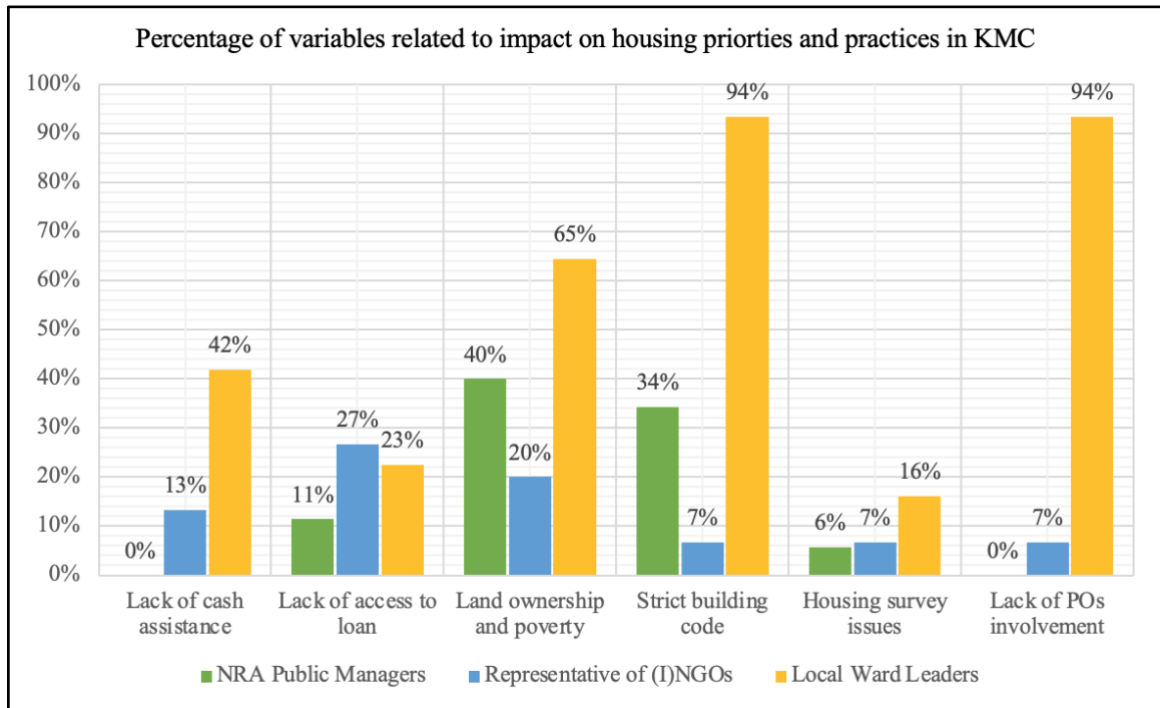
#### **4.5 Methods and Data Analysis**

The present study is based on a qualitative case study of post-disaster private housing reconstruction in the urban areas of Kathmandu city. I chose Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) of the Kathmandu Valley because it was one of the most earthquake affected districts in Nepal. Compared to other municipalities within the Kathmandu Valley, KMC had the lowest percentage of households receiving the third (i.e., final) installment of housing recovery cash assistance. In particular, HRRP data of 2019 on urban KMC showed that only 18 percent of households had received all three tranches of cash assistance (HRRP, 2019). I used semi-structured interviews to collect primary data from interviewees. I conducted interviews with public managers of the NRA (n=35), representatives from INGOs (n=15), and ward leaders (n=31) of KMC. Participants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Aside from one interview conducted in English, all interviews were conducted in Nepali language. The interviews were audio recorded with the verbal consent of the participants. Each interview lasted for 30-45 minutes. The interviews were transcribed and translated in English simultaneously and coded using first cycle (i.e., structural and process coding) and second cycle (i.e., pattern coding) methods (Saldana, 2009). In addition to the primary data collection, I also reviewed and analyzed secondary sources, such as policy documents, newsletters and

reports of INGOs, and newspaper articles. The relevant codes were selected and presented in this study.

#### 4.6. Findings

In the following paragraphs, I describe findings related to the role of central stakeholders (i.e., central governments, bureaucracies, partner organizations, the NRA, and local governments) in making and implementing policy decisions and practices. In addition, I present relationships between multiple stakeholders to highlight the decisions and practices that were made and prioritized and highlight the decisions and practices that were neglected. I show how these governance processes are linked to post-disaster private housing reconstruction in KMC. Figure 18 shows the variables related to housing priorities and practices that are influenced by the governance processes.



**Figure 19:** Percentage of variables related to housing priorities and practices in KMC by interviewees category



#### **4.6.1. Factors related to ruling governments and bureaucrats**

Nine months after the 2015 Nepal earthquake, the government of Nepal, with the help of international donor agencies, created a governance structure to carry out housing reconstruction processes and practices in affected districts. Based on the newly created Reconstruction Act, Nepal's government established post-disaster recovery and reconstruction bodies—what senior bureaucrats called a "*cumbersome*" and a "*hybrid*" governance structure. The structure included multiple bodies. First, the structure comprises five high-level decision-making committees (see Figure 7). The committees included the prime minister, political leaders of major parties, government bureaucrats from sectoral line ministries, senior officers from government development and enforcement agencies, ex-bureaucrats, and government nominated experts. As a result, central governments and government bureaucrats controlled most decisions related to reconstruction policies, processes, priorities, and practices (see below).

Second, the NRA has highly fragmented specialized departments that are occupied by a diverse assortment of public officers with distinct backgrounds and loyalties. It has a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) nominated by the government, and executives, senior bureaucrats and career public managers, and other public managers (e.g., consultants, engineers). In addition, the NRA has central level project implementation units (CLPIUs) that carry out reconstruction activities. CLPIUs are mostly staffed by career-public managers from ministries—in addition to diverse public managers (e.g., engineers, consultants). While the executive or administrative body of NRA and project implementation units are composed of diverse staffs, they are dominated and controlled by career-public managers of government ministries and

departments. Furthermore, while the executive body and implementation units are active at the central and district levels, they do not have permanent organizational structure at the local level of government. The NRA's local governance structures (e.g., "resource centers") were initially conceptualized and implemented in some areas for a limited time, but they were never expanded to all areas and they were soon dismantled. A project implementation unit officer, who was interviewed for the present study, said: "*NRA's structure looks good from outside, but we have nothing at the ward level [of local government]<sup>95</sup>.*" Similarly, another officer mentioned that the local structure of project implementation units is operational only at the district level and not at the municipal and ward levels: "*We only have NRA structure at the district level [e.g., District Project Implementation Units (DLPIUs)] which is one of the main challenges of coordination at the local level<sup>96</sup>.*" The GON discontinued resource centers, citing the lack of "*adequate funding*" and "*the need to cut costs for the actual reconstruction of affected people's property.*" The lack of adequate administrative decentralization within the NRA's organizational structure suggest the dominance of government bureaucracy and centralized post-disaster governance structure.

Third, before the restructuring of the NRA in July 2018, District Coordination Committees (DCCs) were the primary and only "*local level*" post-disaster governance structure that had power and authority to coordinate, monitor, and appraise the activities of the NRA. DCCs were formally established in 22 highly affected districts, and each DCC comprised a member of parliament, Chief District Officer (CDO), Local

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<sup>95</sup> Public manager NRA, DLPIU-GMALI, 3 July 2019

<sup>96</sup> Public manager NRA- Consultant, DLPIU-GMALI, 8 July 2019

Development Officer (LDO), and a member<sup>97</sup>. This shows the dominance of government administrators at the district level. After 2018, instead of further decentralization and devolution of disaster management to local governments and communities in Nepal, the GON formally disbanded all DCCs. The NRA DLPIUs assumed the roles and responsibilities of the DCCs. The disbandment of DCCs and the lack of representation of local governments and communities in any governing structure further substantiate centralized governing structure.

#### Government control of NRA rights and resources

While the Reconstruction Act established the NRA as an autonomous body with power to make decisions about financial and human resources, most NRA interviewees in the present study reported that the NRA lacked power to make decisions related to reconstruction processes and practices. Speaking at a recent public forum to evaluate the NRA's achievements, a senior NRA official highlighted the NRA's lack of authority to make decisions pertaining to reconstruction projects. "*NRA projects have to go through the National Planning Commission and multitier approval processes*<sup>98</sup>". Similarly, showing frustration over ministries' and political leaders' increasing control of NRA processes and practices—despite the autonomous status that the Reconstruction Act granted to the NRA—an NRA officer said, "*this is an autonomous agency, not a ministry*

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<sup>97</sup> "...any official of a body, woman and social activities." -Reconstruction Act, Section 25 (5)

<sup>98</sup> National Reconstruction Authority, 28 November 2020, 1:23:37

*or department*<sup>99</sup>..." Similarly, comparing Nepal's reconstruction processes with India's Gujrat post-earthquake recovery project, an interviewee from an NGO, who specialized in the housing sector in the Kathmandu Valley, described disaster governance as highly centralized in Nepal: "*Unlike recovery processes in Gujrat [India], the government [in Nepal] has adopted one-door policy. The [Nepali] government's NRA determines housing designs, government regulates budget allocation and makes decisions on [reconstruction] policies*<sup>100</sup>."

Interviewees' reports of control over disaster resources and authority further substantiated that control of decision making by central government and bureaucracy. While the NRA has legal autonomy concerning financial decisions, such provisions were never fully implemented. The majority of interviewed NRA officials reported that the NRA lacks the financial resources to carry out reconstruction activities because of government control. Many mentioned the strict control of disaster finances by the Ministry of Finance. For instance, an interviewee from CLPIU-GMALI said: "*NRA cannot even manage a small budget. We have to depend on the Ministry of Finance*<sup>101</sup>." Similarly, another mentioned that they do not receive timely or adequate support from the ministry: "*they always say they do not have money, freeze money or delay the process*<sup>102</sup>."

Additionally, in response to the question about the NRA's primary challenge, most interviewees consistently mentioned that the NRA had limited human resources—

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<sup>99</sup> Career public manager, Director CLPIU-GMALI, 14 July 2019

<sup>100</sup> NGO officer, 21 August 2019

<sup>101</sup> Career public manager, Deputy Director CLPIU-GMALI, 5 July 2019

<sup>102</sup> Career public manager, Deputy Director CLPIU-GMALI, 14 July 2019

because the NRA had no authority to hire staffs and all processes had to go through the Ministry of General Administration. For instance, one NGO interviewee, who was active in housing constructing in urban and semi-urban areas of Kathmandu Valley, similarly mentioned inadequate human resources to complete the workload of NRA public managers at the local level: *“In one of the areas where we work there are many wards and there were only two engineers recruited for the entire area”*. She said, *“therefore it took long time to complete assessment, get approval of cash assistance, and delayed the reconstruction works<sup>103</sup>.”*

#### Government influence on the NRA's organizational structure

Furthermore, I observed multiple fragmentations of post-disaster governance structure and frequent organizational reforms. This finding shows that the governance structure is highly fragmented into different committees (e.g., the Steering Committee, Advisory Council, Executive Committee). In addition, the fragmentation of NRA's organizational structure is primarily based on working sectors, purposes, and geography. For instance, the executive or administrative body and implementation units are fragmented. In addition, NRA executive body is fragmented into different departments. Similarly, implementation units are fragmented into separate units. These fragmentation of governance bodies are further intensified by the physical location of office premises of NRA departments. Therefore, some mentioned challenges of communication and

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<sup>103</sup> NGO officer, 21 August 2019

meetings because of the separate locations of the NRA's executive, CLPIUs, and DLPIUs office premises: "*our challenge of coordination is because of our office locations.*" As an executive public manager said: "*We are not at the same location. Head offices of each department are in different places. If we had related bodies of an organization at the same place, we would have better communication and frequent meetings.*"

The GON and NRA addressed the issues of fragmentation through the organizational reform of 2018. The GON reformed the NRA four times in four years, which merged existing fragmentations and divided internal sectoral departments. The 2018 organizational reforms merged and placed all project implementation units, formerly under ministries, under the administrative hierarchy of the NRA. The NRA also merged its four sectoral CLPIUs into three units: CLPIU-Building, CLPIU-Grant Management and Local Infrastructure, and CLPIU-Education. The reform also merged and divided sectoral departments of the NRA's administrative body. For instance, the NRA merged public housing and private housing units into one unit under the building department. Similarly, urban and rural housing departments were merged. In sum, the highly fragmented and demographically diverse governing structures were constantly reorganized during the NRA's five-year time period (see Appendixes C, D, E, and F for representations of the different organizational structures and reforms)

#### Government influence on the NRA's demography

Many interviewees mentioned that there was frequent turnover and transfer of officers, which impacted the public officers' abilities to carry out network management practices. For instance, many mentioned that the NRA's politically appointed CEO

frequently changed alongside changes in the central government, which impacted the governance of reconstruction processes and practices. An engineer from NRA headquarters said: *“If the leader changes all the time, you will not have consistency in policies, practices and uniformity in daily operation of the organization<sup>104</sup>.”* One INGO coordinator shared an insider story about political interference and the impact of turnover on NRA daily operations: *“After Govinda [Raj Pokharel] was sacked [Sushil] Gyawali became CEO, and his new team destroyed all internal arrangements and operational decisions<sup>105</sup>.”* Likewise, another officer stated that senior career public officers were frequently transferred or sought transfers from the NRA: *“They are just like tourists from other agencies. They come to NRA if they like, and they again go back to line ministries if they don't like.”* Similarly, I observed high turnover of field-level officials, such as engineers of project implementation units. For instance, many mentioned that the NRA faced difficulty in hiring and retaining field officers due to a lack of motivation and incentives. Relating the frequent change of NRA field-level public managers to the absence of job security of temporary technical staff, an officer of the Redressal Division mentioned: *“It was very hard to hire and retain staffs because they did not see any opportunities in this agency. We even had difficulty to recruit director position for district offices [DLPIUs]<sup>106</sup>.”*

In addition, many interviewees mentioned that the skills and capacity of leaders impacted their effectiveness in making and implementing collaborative decisions. Few

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<sup>104</sup> Public manager-district support engineer, NRA main office, 21 August 2019

<sup>105</sup> INGO officer, 4 September 2019

<sup>106</sup> Career public manager, NRA Main office, 8 August 2019

interviewees mentioned that NRA leaders, in general, were knowledgeable and skillful after decades of experience in government bureaucracies and non-governmental sectors; however, many of the non-career public managers that I interviewed expressed that the NRA lacks the “*experienced, knowledgeable, and expert staffs*” necessary to carry out collaborative activities. Some stressed that leaders should possess different collaborative skills in the context of diverse staff. For example, one interviewee said: “*Rather than becoming a boss of a government office.*” This interviewee continued: “*leaders should have the capacity to listen and learn from junior staffs*” and they should “*motivate staffs to participate and express their views and ideas about disaster management in meetings.*”<sup>107</sup> Likewise, a consultant in a DLPIU mentioned that leaders must understand employee capacity and expertise within the organization to effectively and efficiently “*mobilize and utilize*” these factors. Lower-level staff, such as engineers, mentioned in interviews that leaders of the NRA rarely encourage junior public managers (e.g., engineers) to participate in meetings; these staff also mentioned that meetings are rarely held for any type of daily recovery activities. One engineer at NRA headquarters said: “*We used to have meetings in the past. Now, senior staffs never make an effort to encourage staff to participate in meetings. Now I even don't remember when we had a meeting last time*”<sup>108</sup>. In addition, many interviewees reported that senior leaders lack skills to manage differences and conflicts between diverse employees within the NRA. One interviewee said: “*In NRA we have diverse employees. We have so many differences.*” The interviewee continued: “*I think, leaders should have a capacity to unite*

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<sup>107</sup> Public manager NRA- Consultant, DLPIU-GMALI, 8 July 2019

<sup>108</sup> Public manager NRA-engineer, NRA main office, 21 August 2019



*the differences*<sup>109</sup>.” In addition, while few mentioned that some NRA leaders were skillful in maintaining public relations with external stakeholders, other interviewees mentioned that leaders lacked capacity to manage external resources and stakeholders. An INGO officer reported that leaders lacked the skills and abilities to manage the sudden reduction of international non-governmental and humanitarian organizations and leaders failed to tap these resources for reconstruction activities; this INGO officer said the: “*NRA was not able to tap all the INGO resources..... It is not because they lack resources, but our leaders and NRA were not able to convince and coordinate with them*<sup>110</sup>.”

#### **4.6.2. Factors related to partner organizations**

Donor agencies were central stakeholders in the post-disaster housing reconstruction network of Nepal; this diverse group of agencies included international financial organizations, bilateral and multilateral organizations, INGOs, and NGOs. Donor organizations, in particular, had direct influence on every stage of project cycle because they control information and resources guiding reconstruction activities and indirect influences through well-connected former government bureaucrats and experts. Many interviewees mentioned that they have “*good working relationships*” and “*collaboration*” with donor agencies because these agencies directly provide technical and financial resources to reconstruction efforts; however, some reported distrust and lack of collaboration between the NRA and partner agencies due to differences in priorities and practices. For instance, several interviewees reported distrust in donor

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<sup>109</sup> Public manager NRA- District support engineer, 21 August 2019

<sup>110</sup> INGO officer, 13 September 2019

agencies because of their different conditions and requirements to access loans and grants. A senior career-public officer said: *“When they provide loans and grants, they will present a lot of conditions. They will say to do this and do that, fulfill this and fulfill that.”* This officer continued: *“Their conditions sometime add difficulties in collaboration with donors.”* Donor agencies directly implemented housing reconstruction in many districts through their privately hired consultants and contractors and they managed and controlled post-disaster loans through Multi-Donor Trust Fund <sup>111</sup>(MDTF). Thus, some interviewees expressed concern and distrust in donor agencies because these agencies are show reluctance to share information about the disaster finances. A career-public officer at CLPIU expressed the need of more transparency in disaster finances of partner organizations that come through off-budgetary processes; this officer said: *“some finances need to be tracked, donors need to disclose and share information about finances and procurement processes to make it more transparent to government and general public<sup>112</sup>.”* Similarly, many NRA public officers expressed distrust in the practices of INGOs and NGOs largely because of their unwillingness to abide by the initial MOU<sup>113</sup> with GON. For instance, an NRA career public officer expressed that INGOs and NGOs are reluctant to share information and come under the oversight of the NRA. *“We have some problem working with INGOs and NGOs... they do not want to*

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<sup>111</sup> Multi-donor trust fund is established to support Government of Nepal rural housing reconstruction. It is administered by World Bank.

<sup>112</sup> Career public manager, NRA-CLPIU-Building, 4 July 2019

<sup>113</sup> Each partner organization sign a tripartite agreement with NRA and ministries to launch their reconstruction project.

come under our platform, and they want to work outside of our oversight<sup>114</sup>.” Another public officer expressed distrust in (I)NGOs because of their unwillingness to share information about reconstruction with the NRA:

*We face difficulty working with (I)NGOs ....we have large investment, but very weak communication. They are doing work, but they do not report about what type of work they are doing and with what mission. They do not inform. They get approval for one thing and do something different in field. We have misunderstanding and mistrust.*<sup>115</sup>

Other interviewees cited that NRA priorities differed from those of donor agencies and how these differences influenced collective decision making and implementation and housing reconstruction in urban and rural areas. An interviewee from an organization, which closely worked with the NRA and donor agencies, said: “*The World Bank and other donors don ’t want to go in places where there are [reconstruction] gaps or problems.*” This interviewee continued: “*They launch project only in their priority areas*<sup>116</sup>.” Another mentioned that donor agencies prefer to work in “*familiar areas*” where they believe it is “*easier to spend money.*” Similarly, many mentioned the difficulty in collaboration between the NRA and non-governmental organizations because of the differences in interests and priorities. According to a high-level official from NRA headquarters: “*NGOs like to do their projects in districts where*

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<sup>114</sup> Career public manager-Information management, NRA main office, 25 July 2019

<sup>115</sup> Career public manager- Heritage conservation, NRA main office, 25 July 2019

<sup>116</sup> INGO officer, 13 September 2019

*they already have some sort of existing project and familiarity.” This official continued: “We like them to go in earthquake affected districts, but they say that they only have funded for particular place. NGO are only interested to go to easy and accessible areas<sup>117</sup>”. In addition, donor, INGOs and NGOs are more likely to focus on the “software part,” which refers to educational programs, awareness programs, and training projects. “NGOs are more interested on software part like providing training program and distribution of pamphlet,” a district project implementation unit officer said, “but we need hardware part, such as the construction of houses and schools<sup>118</sup>.” Therefore, donor organizations and INGOs are absent in urban areas.*

#### **4.6.3. Impacts on housing reconstruction processes and outcomes**

Local communities—including elected representatives of local governments, non-elected representatives of community organizations, and affected communities—are the major local stakeholders in post-earthquake reconstruction projects. The analysis of interviews and policy documents show dissatisfaction between the NRA and local governments as a result of limited collaborative relationships and the lack of distribution of resources and authority to local governments. The information sharing between the NRA and local governments and communities was negligible. While the NRA claims that it frequently coordinated at local levels with local governments, especially with municipalities and wards in the case of KMC, such relationships were few with KMC's local government and non-existent with ward-level local governments and local

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<sup>117</sup> Public manager-Government experts, NRA main office, 25 August 2019

<sup>118</sup> Career public manager-NRA DLPIU-GMALI, 29 July 2019

communities. Interviewees mentioned that the NRA occasionally coordinated with KMC's disaster management committee “*when necessary,*” but they rarely had direct contact with local governments at ward levels. They mentioned that the NRA occasionally communicated with ward-level governments through physical letters when they needed information about beneficiaries. As one leader said, “*NRA only sends us letter. They do not coordinate with us*<sup>119</sup>.” Local ward leaders and social mobilizers expressed frustration with the NRA's hesitation to share information about frequent policy changes. “*NRA does not inform about policy changes. We have to look their website,*”<sup>120</sup> one leader said: “*we were not informed about the recent deadline extension, we got information from newspapers*<sup>121</sup>.” As the NRA did not share information with local governments and communities about changing cash assistance and bank loan process to beneficiaries’, a leader mentioned that the NRA did not provide information about “*recent change in loan processes.*”. The local leader further added that she “*had to go to the bank and gather information regarding bank's loan processes*<sup>122</sup>” to share with beneficiaries.

Most local leaders mentioned that the NRA's engagement with local governments and communities related to urban reconstruction policies and processes was negligible. Citing the lack of real engagement with local governments and local communities, one interviewee mentioned the attitudes and practices of NRA engineers: “*Only junior staffs*

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<sup>119</sup> Ward Social Mobilizer, 17 July 2019

<sup>120</sup> Ward Social Mobilizer, 14 July 2019

<sup>121</sup> Ward Leader, 24 July 2019

<sup>122</sup> Ward Leader, 14 July 2019

*come here once a year. An engineer came here recently to do re-survey...these officials come for one day and immediately ask us to contact them with beneficiary.” A ward leader said: “They do not take our opinion” and “listen to our problems<sup>123</sup>.” Another leader mentioned: “in this ward nine people have filed complains about reconstruction (gunaso darta), but we still have not heard anything and decision have not made yet.<sup>124</sup>”*

Responding to the question on the NRA’s role at the local level, one ward leader echoed the frustration of many local interviewees over the lack of participation and engagement of local governments: *“We have complaints about NRA.”* This ward leader continued: *“They do not do anything for us. They do not coordinate with us. They do not value our concern; they do not listen to us. We do not have any say on their policy. They just come and do their work. NRA [government] has a monopoly<sup>125</sup>.”* Local governments and leaders, therefore, feel that they are unheard and unvalued even in the context of this new mode of federal government. It is for this reason that local leaders refused to take on responsibilities without rights in post-disaster reconstruction.

More importantly, as a result of centralized decision making and control of resources and authority, I observed the limited responsibilities and rights of local governments to make decisions and manage resources related to private housing reconstruction—even after the promulgation of the new constitution, implementation of the new federal system, and election of local government representatives. *“People say*

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<sup>123</sup> Ward Leader, 10 July 2019

<sup>124</sup> Ward Social Mobilizer, 10 July 2019

<sup>125</sup> Ward Leader, 14 July 2019

that 'Singha durbar ko adhikar ghar ghar ma'<sup>126</sup>, but our [local] rights are no different than the Panchayat system,"<sup>127</sup> A local ward leader said, "during the Panchayat system our work was limited to certify family relationships, now it is same<sup>128</sup>." Moreover, other ward leaders mentioned that local government rights, in the case of post-earthquake reconstruction, do not include local attesting (certification) rights because the NRA even did not approve local governments' list of beneficiaries of post-earthquake cash assistance which they prepared following the earthquake. Expressing dissatisfaction over the indirect control of local governments by central government through the career public officers at each local government bodies, one interviewee stated: "If staffs [e.g., secretary] of KMC and wards comes from the central government's ministry and if they dominate [ ], our rights are just like the panchayat system<sup>129</sup>." Rather than more rights that were promised by the new federal governance system, local leaders reported more local rights and responsibilities were recentralized to the government after federalism was implemented in Nepal.

### Housing survey, assessment, and identification of problem

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<sup>126</sup> It refers to the decentralization of power and authority to local governments and communities from centralized control of central government.

<sup>127</sup> Panchayat System is a party-less political system that existed between 1960-1990 in Nepal. The King of Nepal directly ruled the government through his appointed ministers. After 1990, Nepal adopted a multiparty democratic governance system. In the following decade, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists) started an armed revolution against the government, which killed more than 10,000 people and displaced millions. The war started in 1996 and ended in 2006. After the comprehensive peace process of 2006 between the Nepali government and Maoists, Nepal was declared The Federal Republic of Nepal. The new constitution of the Federal Republic of Nepal was promulgated in 2015.

<sup>128</sup> Ward Leader, 17 July 2019

<sup>129</sup> Ward Leader, 17 July 2019

After the earthquake, the NRA and partner organizations assessed the earthquake damage to houses in order to provide appropriate financial support to affected people. In KMC, social mobilizers and local representatives of each ward—who received training from the NRA and donors to categorize the houses as “*damaged*” and “*partially damaged*” houses—surveyed the houses and prepared the list of beneficiaries. Approximately one year after the earthquake, NRA engineers carried out additional surveys in KMC, based on the previous list, to weed out “*fake beneficiaries*” and created a new list. The repeated NRA surveys contributed to delayed decisions related to financial assistance and excluded many affected households from the list of beneficiaries. Many questioned the validity of the assessment and expressed that the NRA failed to understand local contexts related to housing damage. A local leader, who also helped carry out the initial local survey, reported that NRA engineers lacked understanding of local housing complexity of KMC's urban residents: “*NRA engineers did not even go inside houses to assess the damage.....so how do they know about the shared wall system*<sup>130</sup>.” Many mentioned that NRA engineers, who had recently completed their education, did not have the knowledge and experience needed to carry out the assessment; interviewees also reported that some engineers accepted bribes from affected people so that they could be included in the list. One local leader said: “*The engineer is also not doing the good work, they took money saying that they will keep their name in beneficiary list*<sup>131</sup>.”

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<sup>130</sup> Ward Leader, 4 August 2019

<sup>131</sup> Ward Social Mobilizer, 5 August 2019



Housing assistance program:

The Post Disaster Recovery Framework (PDRF) listed 23 programs to reconstruct urban housing following the earthquake (PDRF, 2016-2020, p.71). Programs that were directly related to the housing recovery of affected households included: “housing reconstruction,” “housing credit, repair and retrofit,” “material supply, enterprise, livelihood,” “sustainable housing services,” “rental housing for poor,” “integrated re-clustering of settlements,” policies for safer housing, and capacity and institutional development to build back better. While most programs that were conceived in the PDRF to help support urban housing were never implemented, the government and donors did launch financial assistance programs for urban housing reconstruction. For instance, after the identification of beneficiaries of cash assistance, reconstruction projects adopted a “blanket approach” to provide cash assistance to all earthquake affected households in 32 districts. The government provided the first installment (USD 500) to all affected people after the agreement. The second and third installments were contingent upon evidence of construction of the plinth and first floor respectively. In addition to repair and retrofitting subsidies of USD 1000 for affected houses, the GON and NRA briefly offered a low interest housing credit or bank loan of USD 25,000 for urban areas and USD15,000 for rural areas (Ward Leader interview, August 5, 2019).

But all local residents who were interviewed reported that constructing “safe houses” with this meagre cash assistance in KMC was not possible because house construction in the city is extremely expensive. While most rural beneficiaries received the USD 3000 financial assistance in three installments, it was too little and arrived too late for the majority of urban affected people. As one leader said: “*we need USD 5000*”

*just to demolish and remove the debris of a house.*” Similarly, many NRA engineers commented that the retrofitting program proposed by donor agencies the donor agencies lacked understanding of local realities because the expensive design did not match with the USD 1,000 cash assistance for retrofitting. Many urban beneficiaries vented frustrations about the one size-fits-all policy of government, which ignored the complex and distinct problems of urban affected households. For instance, one interviewee described that the same amount of cash assistance was offered in the rural Barpark area of Gorkha and urban KMC: *“they made same policy for the Barpark [Gorkha] and Kathmandu. That is not fair<sup>132</sup>.”* Another similarly mentioned that *“the policy for the Kathmandu [city] should not be same as the policy for [rural] Humla [district] and Jumla [district]”* <sup>133</sup>.

In addition to the small and insufficient financial assistance for urban housing reconstruction, the building codes and bylaws—which were modified after the earthquake to ensure “structurally safe and resilient housing”—further burdened the affected people in urban areas. In particular, access to the cash assistance and low interest bank loans was undercut by GON and KMC building permit and national building code requirements. Requirements for a KMC building permit included: an identification for the building permit applicant, building design/plan, certification by a registered architect, cadastral extract of the land lot, proof of land ownership/lease, building plan, lot plan, proof of tax payment, structural plans, and required fees. In addition to the structural

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<sup>132</sup> Ward Leader, 17 July 2019

<sup>133</sup> Ward Leader, 9 July 2019. Humla and Jumla districts are two of the most remote and rural districts of Nepal.

requirements for new houses, the national building code 105:1994 (new building code 105:2020) required a minimum of 2.5 *ana* (855.625 sq ft) land parcel size with an additional 10 ft if the land shares a boundary with a road. Due to these land ownership requirements, one ward leader mentioned that affected people have not received financial assistance and built houses.

*In this ward there was 54 people who filed the complaint and NRA listed only 44 people as beneficiaries. Only 19 did the formal agreement with NRA. Among 19, only 3 took the third installment. Other people could not get the approval of building permit because of the issues with land ownership-[nakhsha pass nabhayeko]<sup>134</sup>.*

Similarly, in the case of access to bank loans, rather than facilitating loan processes, the central government and banks back out from their initial commitments and strictly enforced the building permits requirements and codes for new houses in the urban areas. In particular, people borrowing funds to construct a house were required to present the land title in the name of borrower to present as a personal collateral. As one leader said: *“To take NRs. 25 lakh (USD 2500) loan from a bank, you need to have NRs 60,000 (USD 600) income and a minimum of 2.5 ana land (with additional 10 ft land if the land share boundary with a road<sup>135</sup>”*. Another mentioned how the government's requirement to give up certain areas of land along the road as the right of way has hindered housing

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<sup>134</sup> Ward Leader, 14 July 2019

<sup>135</sup> Ward Leader, 18 July 2019

reconstruction in KMC: *"The house near the Maitidevi Temple [also by the road] is in critical condition, but people are still living there, they cannot reconstruct the house. Even the house is hard to retrofit<sup>136</sup>.* Most interviewees, therefore, reported that requirements related to KMC building permits, and new GON and KMC building codes, were major hurdles to reconstruct new houses in the KMC.

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<sup>136</sup> Ward Leader, 14 July 2019

## Urban land issues and poverty

All housing reconstruction initiatives, including the distribution of financial assistance, depended on the housing and land tenure of affected households, which were briefly addressed in the PDNA document; however, the PDRF document masked the land and housing tenure issues and it did not account for poverty of the urban population. Some land ownership issues of rural residents were addressed during post-disaster reconstruction; however, reconstruction projects failed to prioritize urban land tenure and poverty issues that fundamentally shaped access to financial resources and housing reconstruction in urban KMC. These issues are described in detail below.

Many urban affected families<sup>137</sup> in KMC do not have private ownership of the land and house on which they are living because the household head, usually the male parent (father, grandfather), has the formal title of the property. Many families who are usually poor, either live together as a single joint family in a house or as a nuclear family in the house divided among siblings with a shared wall<sup>138</sup>. Among poor households in KMC's urban settlements, the fragmentation of a house and land among siblings with a shared wall between generations have made the house and land parcels so small (1.5 ana, which is equal to 513.375 sq ft) that they cannot be transferred and mortgaged because plots that are less than 2.5 ana (855.25 sq ft) cannot have private ownership unless jointly owned by all siblings. Moreover, when the area of a house is too small to divide vertically with a shared wall, household heads usually assign provide an apartment (each

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<sup>137</sup> A household is called an independent family, in a Newar traditional practice, if the family does not cook and eat together even if they live in a same house.

<sup>138</sup> Shared wall is a vertical boundary that separate one house into two separate houses.

level or a floor of a building) to each sibling in the house. Siblings may or may not have individual private ownership of the divided house or the divided apartment (floor), but the families have informal ownership with rights to use, manage, and exclude others from their apartment. Such houses or apartments without individual private titles cannot be formally transferred or mortgaged. Because affected households cannot transfer, mortgage, or construct a house on a small plot, the failure to identify and address these houses and land tenure issues of poor household impacted access to financial assistance, bank loans, and reconstruction of damaged houses.

Similarly, many local residents do not have private ownership of the land and house. For instance, some people who have lived on *Guthi land* for decades do not have land titles because *Guthi land* is a type of state land that is granted to institutions such as temples, monasteries, schools, hospitals, and orphanages. Therefore, institutions, not individuals, have ownership of *Guthi land*. However, because many families have been living in houses built on such land for many decades, they have informal and customary use and access granted by institutions holding such ownership. Many Newar<sup>139</sup> families in KMC are still living in houses constructed on “*Guthi land*” or may have rented their homes to other families. In addition, there are many families living in squatter or Sukumbasi settlements. Families of such settlements do not have private ownership and their formal and informal rights to live in such settlements may not be protected by any customary institutions (i.e., local informal community organizations or committees). In the case of *Guthi land* and Sukumbasi settlements: because residents do not have land

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<sup>139</sup> Newar is an ethnic group of Nepal. The Newar ethnic group (which is internally heterogenous) is considered to be the early and major inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley. According to the 2011 Nepal Census Bureau, Nepal has 126 ethnic groups.

tenure security and may face potential eviction from the land if they demolish to reconstruct their damaged houses, these individuals did not demolish their damaged houses to reconstruct. In addition, because such land and houses cannot be transferred and mortgaged, affected families continued to live in such houses or rent them to non-family members. As one local leader said:

*In this ward the people faced challenges to get the second installment as some people did not have land certificate, some are 'Sohabasi'.<sup>140</sup> And some people used the first installment for their personal use, so these peoples did not come to do the agreement for second installment. Among 120 people who took first installment only 20-25 households used the money for reconstruction of their houses<sup>141</sup>.*

Another local leader also mentioned:

*NRA should have assessed in detail about the problems of Kathmandu before making any plans and policies. In Kathmandu, there are people living in a land since long time (may be 100 years) and they do not have land ownership. There are also people who living in slum area (Sukumbashi) and they do not have land title. Their houses are damaged now<sup>142</sup>.*

All stakeholders were well aware of the problem: the government and donors "neglected" this problem or did not take it "seriously." From the very beginning, this problem was framed as a "rural problem"—the government and donors ignored the

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<sup>140</sup>Recently invented politically correct word for "Sukumbasi" (landless) people.

<sup>141</sup> Ward Leader, 17 July 2019

<sup>142</sup> Ward Leader, 5 August 2019

widespread damage and suffering of the denizens of KMC and urban population and the extreme poverty of urban residents. As one local leader said: *“Nepal government thinks that Kathmandu people are rich, and they have ignored us. They only think that people outside Kathmandu is in need of the grant money<sup>143</sup>.”* Another ward leader reported poverty in his constituency: *“In Kathmandu, many people are extremely poor. People are living in abject poverty. For example, in Aashan [name of urban core area in KMC], people are living in every floors of a house<sup>144</sup>.”* (see Figure 3)

#### **4.7. Discussion**

This paper examined how management of a recovery network affected private housing reconstruction processes and outcomes in urban KMC. I argue that the interests and priorities of powerful stakeholders shaped collaborative relationships between stakeholders and private housing reconstruction practices in urban KMC. Consequently, the dominant path that emphasizes the centrality of recovery organization as the panacea in the management of collaborative network produced limited benefit to urban poor and marginal people. In the following paragraphs, I discuss the findings. In addition, I situated findings within the existing literature on post-disaster housing recovery and reconstruction.

Despite the creation of an autonomous recovery organization (i.e., NRA) to govern post-earthquake housing reconstruction in Nepal, I observed that ruling governments and government bureaucracies controlled and dominated the post-

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<sup>143</sup> Ward Leader, 9 July 2019

<sup>144</sup> Ward Leader, 4 August 2019



earthquake governance structure—including the recovery organization. In addition, political leaders and appointees from government bureaucracies dominated and controlled the administrative body of the NRA. These dominances of government and bureaucracy indicate limited decentralization of authority and resources to NRA. Moreover, the NRA's lack of resources and authority, the fragmentation of NRA's governance structure, and the NRA's repeated organizational reforms allowed governments and partner organizations [discussed below] to maintain their control and influence over reconstruction processes and practices. More importantly, despite the claim of the "owner-based approach" in post-disaster housing reconstruction, local governments and communities of KMC were absent from decision making processes.

This centralization must be interpreted in the broader political and economic context of Nepal. The 2015 earthquake and post-disaster construction occurred following the decade-long violent Nepal Maoist's war and another decade of conflicts between Nepal's ethnic groups over the new constitution and federal structure of Nepal. This period saw the rise of the Maoist party and marginal ethnic groups as strong political forces. The adoption of the federal governance system, after more than a century of the centralized system in Nepal, also challenged the dominance of traditional political parties and centralized bureaucratic control of public affairs in Nepal. That is, the struggle between new administrative bodies located at different levels of government over the control of power, authority, and resources coincided with the recentralization of post-disaster reconstruction by central governments and bureaucracies.

Moreover, ruling governments and bureaucracies struggled to control disaster funds because such financial control and allocation provide electoral benefits to political

leaders and economic benefits to leaders and bureaucrats; additionally, these entities were genuinely motivated by the fear of—or desire to reduce—potential financial mismanagements and misappropriations. In particular, political leaders and government officers had a general distrust of international financial organizations—particularly the interests and priorities of these organizations. Many interviewees questioned partner organizations' commitments to effectively and transparently use post-disaster funds. In addition, some interviewees expressed doubts about humanitarian organizations' missionary goals and development organizations' goals to empower ethnic groups (see Dahal 2012, cited in Jones et al., 2014). These are also the underlying reasons for the promotion of a "one-door policy"<sup>145</sup> by the government. In addition, the government and bureaucrats did not believe that local governments had the capacity and accountability to manage large amount of disaster funding. For instance, fearing the misuse of funding by “fake beneficiaries,” GON and the NRA controlled the survey of beneficiaries and post-disaster cash assistance to affected people. The above discussion indicates that the ruling government and bureaucracies dominated the NRA; this discussion also indicates that NRA officers lacked management capacity, responsibilities, and practices, which are required to secure and sustain a “collaborative dynamic” or reduce complexities within the recovery network.

I also observed government (i.e., NRA) mistrust of partner organizations. When asked about donor agencies, many interviewees expressed dissatisfaction over the

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<sup>145</sup> One-door policy is a governments effort to reduce the duplication of recovery and reconstruction projects and funding of non-governmental organizations. Partner organization's projects were required to go through approval process– the tripartite agreement between partner organization, related ministry, and NRA

imposition of different conditionalities while providing financial and technical support. Likewise, interviewees mentioned that INGOs and NGOs demonstrated unwillingness to share information and come under NRA oversight, and INGOs and NGOs deviated from initial agreements. NRA career public officers also expressed that partner organizations lack financial transparency. In particular, I observed differences in priorities and practices among partner organizations. Although each partner organization has different priorities and practices, partner organizations chose to have greater involvement in reconstruction projects in areas or sectors that were easier, accessible, familiar, and technical in nature. Our findings reveal that partner organizations preferred working in sectors that were free from social, political, and geographical difficulties and have technical solutions, such as the construction of school buildings, government buildings, hospital buildings, and roads and preparedness trainings. Partner organizations were more interested in providing trainings, education, and awareness programs—what public managers called the “software parts.” Similarly, these organizations preferred working in rural areas—where the issues of land tenure were unambiguous and land values are extremely low (i.e., clearly within emergency relief budgets). These are the exact reasons why donor organizations completely avoided working in urban areas like Kathmandu Metropolitan City.

One reason for the differences between NRA and partner organizations in priorities and practices is because partner organizations have greater power and influence over rules and policies guiding post-disaster reconstruction processes and practices. Johnson and Olshansky (2016) suggested that the body that controls disaster funds has the power to make and implement decisions, priorities, and practices. In Nepal, donor

agencies were the major sources of loans and grants for post-disaster housing reconstruction. Another reason that NRA officers were unable to coordinate or convince partner organizations in common priorities and practices is because donor projects are bound by time and guided by easier (technical and apolitical) processes and activities. In other words, partner organizations' priorities and approaches might be related to what Olshansky and Johnson (2016) have called “time compression” in post-disaster recovery studies (Ganapati & Mukherji, 2014). Although compressed time or time-bound nature of donor projects are not unique to disaster management as claimed by disaster scholars because every social and development project of donors, in particular, are bounded by time. The responsibility to complete projects within a short time might have motivated partner organizations to carry out easier and familiar paths and tasks. In contrast, urban reconstruction issues are difficult and complex tasks. Most often, there are political and economic factors (such as urban poverty, land and housing tenure, land values and availability) that are tied to urban vulnerabilities (i.e., social, political, economic, and infrastructure issues). Therefore, narrow interests, resources, and time of donors and INGOs may not be compatible with efforts needed to solve urban problems. As one local leader said: “*urban housing issues are not like the distributing noodles, these are difficult task*<sup>146</sup>.” In addition, senior public managers of the NRA and line ministries are guided by their own interests and relationships with partner organizations. For instance, senior public managers of the NRA, such as executives of major departments, are highly connected to partner organizations because many have prior work history as consultants

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<sup>146</sup> Ward Leader, 9 July 2019

or experts in these organizations. For top career public officers and bureaucrats, partner organizations are viewed as a future place of employment and consultancy after retirement from public services. Such relationships between public managers and donors provide less incentive to control, question, monitor, or evaluate donor's and INGO's practices and priorities—even when they are incompatible with disaster recovery and reconstruction problems and priorities.

Furthermore, I observed the complete lack of engagement with local governments and communities in making and implementing decisions related to housing reconstruction in urban KMC. Consequently, I observed numerous flaws in the assessment of affected houses in KMC because of the lack of involvement of local governments and leaders—who were aware of the complex housing and land tenure system. The government (i.e., the NRA) dismissed the local government's beneficiaries list and conducted repeated assessments of damaged houses in the name of identifying "fake beneficiaries." This centralized approach delayed the assessment, hindered the identification of problems, and left out many affected households from the beneficiaries' lists. Another major reason for the delay in KMC could be related to the constant framing of the earthquake-related damage and destruction as a "rural problem" and naming of the earthquake as the "Gorkha Earthquake." Framing helped ignore urban issues and shifted the private housing reconstruction priorities and practices to rural areas. While the reconstruction of rural areas was necessary and important, this paper shows how government and donor organizations avoided urban private housing issues. In urban areas, reconstruction priorities, instead, shifted to the construction of government buildings, school buildings, and temple constructions and preparedness activities. The case in point is that

construction was prioritized for prominent cultural heritage sites, such as Rani Pokhari and the Dharahara Tower in urban KMC, which were intended to serve as indicators of progress for all reconstruction in Nepal<sup>147</sup>.

Moreover, using the “blanket approach,” the government and donors provided USD 3,000 cash assistance in three installments. While the USD 3,000 cash assistance might have helped poor people in rural areas to build their houses or buy land to build houses, this amount was insufficient to help the urban residents. This one-size-fits-all policy largely ignored the complexity of urban problems. Additionally, the second and third installments of this assistance were contingent upon house and land ownership, which excluded a large number of poor affected people who had no formal ownership titles. Similarly, the highly touted low-interest bank loan program never materialized for poor people because access to the loans was also tied to private land ownership. Again, a large number of poor people who were living in “*Guthi land*” or “*Squatter settlements*” did not receive cash assistance because they lacked formal property titles. Furthermore, while few reconstructed their houses without going through formal legal processes to build houses in the early recovery phase, the government enforced the national building code later in KMC, which controlled housing reconstruction without following the codes and obtaining building permits. These findings show a mismatch between the post-earthquake private housing reconstruction decisions at all levels and the local realities of urban housing problems and poverty.

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<sup>147</sup> see the Kantipur daily [<https://kathmandupost.com/national/2021/04/22/billions-spent-on-dharahara-but-schools-reconstruction-suffering-in-lack-of-funds>] [<https://kathmandupost.com/editorial/2021/04/25/phallic-fallacies>]

Our findings align with and differ from other studies of post-disaster private housing reconstructions. Our finding on the role of pre-existing social and economic conditions of affected people in shaping the reconstruction of houses by themselves is similar to findings in other studies on post-disaster housing reconstruction (Fothergill & Peek 2004; He et al., 2018). That is, people who had access to financial resources and sources of income have reconstructed their houses and those without such access are still living in “risky houses” in urban KMC. While this is an important determinant shaping the reconstruction of damaged houses, the paper finds that urban poor people would have reconstructed houses if the government had helped them through appropriate policies to access financial assistance (e.g., low-interest bank loans) and if the government had addressed long-standing housing and land ownership problems and made appropriate decisions related to the implementation of national building codes rather than blanket enforcement of the codes. Therefore, my findings are consistent with many post-disaster housing reconstruction scholars who have argued that the government's strict and inappropriate policy decisions and rules to govern post-disaster reconstruction are the major factors that hinder housing reconstruction of poor and marginal people.

More importantly, my findings are also consistent with findings from previous studies that showed the influence of structural factors (e.g., uneven distribution of state resources based on identities of people and places) on housing reconstruction (Kamel & Loukaitou-Sideris 2003; Green et al., 2007; Mukherjee 2015; Tafti 2015). In my case, urban KMC and poor residents of the urban areas are deprioritized in favor of urban public (i.e., government or non-private) building construction and rural private housings. My findings highlight the important role of donors such as the World Bank in instigating

state-led processes of uneven distribution of resources to the people and places in the context of Nepal. Tafti (2015) and Mukherji (2015) have also highlighted the influence of the World Bank's interests and priorities in post-disaster housing reconstruction projects in Gujrat, India. My findings also differ with recovery governance studies that focused on the relationship between governance and outcomes. In contrast to previous findings on the centralization of governance in the NRA (Mukherji et al. 2020; Daly et al., 2016), my findings indicate that authority and resources are centralized in ruling governments and government bureaucracies— rather than in newly established recovery organizations (e.g., NRA). This finding is consistent with the increasing role of central governments in the management of large-scale post-disaster reconstruction processes and activities (Johnson and Olshansky, 2016).

In sum, the present study's findings highlight how power asymmetries or underlying power relations of ruling governments, bureaucracies, and donor organizations are central to shaping collaborative interactions and housing reconstruction priorities and practices. The interests and priorities of powerful stakeholders shaped decisions related to housing reconstruction processes and practices that created barriers in their engagement and deliberation with local governments and local communities. The findings suggest challenges of NRA and public officers to mobilize, convince, and govern diverse stakeholders in housing reconstruction processes and practices. More importantly, certain private housing reconstruction decisions failed to facilitate housing reconstruction of poor residents in KMC and they overlooked root causes of urban vulnerabilities; these decisions included: the assessment and categorization of beneficiaries, financial assistance for housing reconstruction and repair, and the



implementation of national building code by powerful stakeholders (i.e., central government, bureaucracies, and donor organizations). The local communities' underlying problems were never heard, voices were never respected, deliberation was never emphasized, needs were never tackled, and rights were never secured. Instead, the interests and priorities of central governments and donor agencies set a precedent for all reconstruction processes and practices. These interests and priorities of powerful stakeholders explain why private housing reconstruction in urban areas failed. The desire of governments and international financial and bilateral agencies to build "resilient cities" must consider and address urban vulnerabilities.

#### **4.8. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the findings suggest that the NRA had a lesser role in governing the recovery network and making important decisions on recovery and reconstruction processes. More importantly, decisions related to the reconstruction and recovery process (i.e., formulation of policies related to financial assistance, building codes, and categorization of beneficiaries) were influenced by powerful stakeholders, such as ruling government, bureaucrats, and donor agencies. Therefore, findings from this study suggest that power differences between network stakeholders were a central influence on the linkages between network management and post-earthquake private housing reconstruction processes and outcomes. Consequently, donor-driven post-disaster reconstruction interventions (i.e., new recovery organization, new rules, and new policies) in urban areas of developing countries (e.g., Nepal) may not necessarily produce

the intended housing reconstruction outcomes because of the mismatch between major stakeholders' priorities and complex urban vulnerabilities.

The study would have provided more local-level insight (affected people's perspective and lived experiences) on the relationship between governance factors and housing recovery outcomes if the interviews and focus group were conducted with the affected populations. Hence, future studies should include interviews or focus groups with earthquake affected populations. The present study offers policy recommendations. First, the organization established to govern recovery should focus on the implementation of decisions—because power and authority that are assigned in policy documents do not usually translate into practice. Second, policy makers should reassess policies to include active participation from local governments and local communities in decision making processes. The findings revealed that the NRA prepared a separate beneficiary list and did not consider the list that was initially prepared by local government. Hence, local governments should be given authority and should be allowed to participate in the activities undertaken in their area; these governments have better knowledge of their areas and local populations. However, only giving authority and resources to local government is not enough; the government should make proper arrangements to ensure more accountability of local leaders and less impact of local power relations.

Third, policy makers should differentiate between rural and urban areas when formulating policies. Rural and urban areas have different problems, and the government should not focus on quick fixes and provide one solution for all problems. There should be a separate governing arrangement in place to focus on the urban issue rather than merging rural and urban issues. Because the NRA's departments focusing on urban

housing and rural housing issues were merged into one department, the initial focus of urban housing shifted to rural housing, and urban areas were neglected due to a range of unique problems (i.e., access to land, urban poverty, urban housing settlements etc.). The government should have supplemented the bank loans because, in the context of an urban area, the grant amount was lower than the amount needed for the preliminary step of demolishing an existing house. Similarly, governments should provide separate provisions on building codes, as the strict building codes discouraged the urban population from reconstructing their houses and forced them to live in risky houses.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This dissertation sought to understand the challenges faced by network managers as they govern post-disaster recovery networks and to understand how the management of a recovery network shapes the recovery of earthquake affected populations. Establishing a new governance structure to manage post-disaster recovery has become a common practice in post-disaster donor-driven projects. That is, the recovery organization—which is referred to as a "network administrative organization" by network governance researchers and practitioners—plays a leading role in governing a post-disaster recovery network. Using the case study of the Nepal earthquake in 2015, this dissertation explored the challenges faced by the network managers of a new recovery organization—the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA)—which was established to govern post-disaster recovery processes and practices. Based on the analysis of interviews and public documents, findings indicate that post-disaster recovery governance and reconstruction practices are shaped by powerful stakeholders, including ruling governments, bureaucracies, and donors—rather than the NRA and public offices.

First, the organizational structure of the NRA hindered the abilities of network managers to effectively govern the network. While the GON and partner organizations established the NRA as an autonomous body in accordance with the Reconstruction Act, decision making and implementation related to housing recovery was highly centralized in governments and bureaucracies. The prime minister, ex-prime minister, political leaders, and former government bureaucrats controlled most decision-making committees. The central governments and bureaucracies, thus, influenced the

organization's structure, capacity, and culture—which directly impacted the roles and capacity of NRA public managers to undertake collaborative activities. For instance, administrative and implementing bodies were frequently fragmented and merged, which created confusion of authority and dual workloads. In addition, findings reveal that limited organizational capacity and flexibility hindered the network managers' abilities to steer the network. For instance, the NRA lacked access to financial and human resources, and it depended on line ministries for financial and human resources—namely, the MOF and MOGA, respectively. The NRA's public managers also faced challenges due to frequent turnover and transfers in high-level positions (i.e., CEO, Secretary, and career public officers) and low-level positions (i.e., engineers, district sub-engineers, and consultants). While transfers in high-level positions, such as CEO and Secretary were related to politicization because they were political appointees, transfers among career public managers were due to traditional bureaucratic culture. The frequent turnover in lower-level positions was observed because two key areas were lacking: motivation (i.e., the NRA was established for limited time period; no possibility of promotion to permanent position) and incentives (e.g., no travel allowance). In addition, lack of collaborative leadership skills among NRA public managers exacerbated challenges related to organizational capacity. Next, lack of organizational culture, and prevalence of traditional bureaucratic culture, challenged NRA public managers' abilities to steer the recovery network.

Second, the study investigated relationship challenges of network managers within their own organization and between different stakeholders, which influenced network governance practices. The findings reveal that differences in interests, conflicts

over hierarchy, and lack of trust between public managers within the NRA increased difficulties in joint activities and relationship building. The NRA is composed of diverse staffs from different sectors, which influenced conflicts and collaborative relationships within the organization. The differences between NRA personnel contributed to issues such as personal ego over hierarchy, and lack of trust between public managers. Next, findings noted differences in mission, organizational culture, and priorities between line ministries and public managers of the NRA. The line ministries implement the projects and they are the most influential in post-disaster recovery activities. In addition, the analysis of interviews shows that differences in interests, priorities, and practices resulted in mistrust-between the NRA and partner organizations. The contentious relationship among stakeholders are the major challenges of public managers to encourage and facilitate collaboration between organizations.

Third, this dissertation examined the linkages between governance processes and housing reconstruction of the earthquake affected population in urban areas of Nepal. Findings revealed that post-earthquake reconstruction in the urban KMC) was impacted by centralized governance structure, contentious relationships between stakeholders, and differences in priorities and practices of stakeholders. The network of influential stakeholders—which comprises ruling governments, government bureaucracies, and donor organizations—deliberately ignored issues surrounding urban housing reconstruction because reconstruction in urban areas involves complex and broader political-economic issues. Furthermore, inflexible institutional and bureaucratic practices of the central government added numerous barriers to housing reconstruction, forcing

poor urban residents to live in risky houses, sell their homes or move, or construct non-compliant houses.

### **5.1. Overall contributions to the literature**

This study builds on and contributes to the growing body of research on the post-disaster recovery phase of emergency management (Johnson & Olshansky, 2016; Comfort et al., 2010; Kapucu, 2014; Ganapati & Mukherji, 2019; Tierney & Oliver-Smith 2012; Smith & Birkland, 2012). I aimed to expand the understanding of the importance and limitations of recovery organizations, such as the NRA, which are often established to manage post-disaster recovery governance and effective service delivery. By exploring the challenges of public officers of new recovery organizations to make and implement decisions, this research contributes to the understanding of linkages between post-disaster recovery governance and housing recovery outcomes in three major ways.

First, while the post-disaster recovery governance literature on Nepal has noted the centralization of governance in the newly established recovery organization (Daly et al. 2017, Lam and Kuiper 2019, Shrestha et al. 2019, Mukherji et al. 2021), my findings indicate that governance was centralized in ruling governments and bureaucracies—rather than the NRA. In particular, my findings show the influence of central governments and government bureaucracies in shaping organizational structure, capacity, and culture, which—in turn—influenced public officers' roles, capacities, and strategies in governing the recovery network.

Second, previous studies have emphasized the importance of pre-existing and post-disaster relationships, communication, civic participation and inclusion, goal

congruence, and trust in shaping collaboration processes and capacity in the recovery phase (Kweit & Kweit 2004; Comfort et al., 2010; Kapacu 2014; Raju & Baker 2013; Ganapati & Ganapati, 2008; Kapucu & Garayev, 2013; Coles et al., 2012); however, there is limited understanding of contentious processes in recovery and reconstruction after a disaster. The present study contributes to the literature on governance in post-disaster recovery by highlighting contentious processes (i.e., differences, conflicts, and lack of trust) and power asymmetries between stakeholders as the central processes in recovery phase. This study finds that power asymmetries between stakeholders shape collaborative activities and network managers' practices.

Third, while my findings align with those of previous studies who have shown the importance of governance and management factors in shaping post-disaster recovery outcomes (Johnson & Olshansky 2016; Olshansky et al., 2008; Kamel & Loukaitou-Sideris 2003; Green et al., 2007; Mukherji 2015; Tafti 2015; Ganapati, 2013; Daly et al., 2017; He et al., 2018), there is limited understanding of the linkages between governance factors and the post-disaster private housing reconstruction in urban KMC. This study focused on the challenges of the NRA and public officers in mediating governance and housing reconstruction. My findings suggest that, following a disaster, a new recovery organization—established to manage a network of agencies and donor-driven recovery projects— is inadequate because of the interests and priorities of powerful stakeholders— rather than the NRA and public managers.



## **5.2. Strengths, Limitations, and Opportunities for Future Research**

The study has several strengths. First, the study contributes to the research literature on the recovery phase of emergency management, with a particular focus on the challenges of public managers of a recovery organization established to govern a recovery network. In particular, this study contributes understanding of how public officials or managers steer the network of actors and organizations, and it contributes understanding of the linkages between the management of networks processes and housing recovery outcomes. Second, this study used qualitative data collection that provided in-depth understanding on the recovery organization that was established after the disaster, and the challenges that network managers of that recovery organization faced when steering the recovery network. Data from interviews with network managers of the recovery organization allowed me to identify and examine their unique opinions and viewpoints on different challenges they face when governing a network—which I described in three chapters in this dissertation. In addition, interviews with personnel from non-governmental organizations, such as (I)NGOs, and interviews with local government officials, helped shed light on their perspectives on post-disaster recovery governance. Their responses provided understanding on the extent that recovery organizations involve local governments and other network actors in their decision-making processes. Furthermore, in-depth interviews with diverse stakeholders facilitated exploration and understanding of contentious relationships between multiple stakeholders—which would have been difficult to accomplish with other data collection methods.

While qualitative methodologies possess several strengths, they also have limitations. The limitations of the study point to opportunities for future research. First, data collection for this research excluded ex-bureaucrats and donors (i.e., world bank, USAID, etc.) who were involved in the establishment of the recovery organization (i.e., NRA). In addition, senior public managers of line ministries who played major role in policy making related to reconstruction were excluded. Future studies should include these individuals to provide more insight on the nature of relationships between high-level governing stakeholders. Additionally, future studies should include these individuals to understand factors and conditions shaping delays in establishing the NRA. In addition, interviews with these major policy making individuals will help to understand difficulties and conflicts between political leaders, government bureaucrats, and donor agencies in designing the organizational structure and financial mechanism of the NRA and post-disaster recovery.

Second, at the local level, the study is limited to interviews with KMC ward leaders to explore the factors that hindered or enabled the recovery of earthquake affected populations. The study provided knowledge on diverse factors and unique problems of urban areas (i.e., KMC) that hindered the earthquake affected populations abilities to recover; however, the interviews with ward leaders might not cover all the aspects of the affected populations. Hence, future studies should conduct focus groups with affected populations to understand their personal experiences. Third, the present study only focused on the urban area of Kathmandu district with a particular focus on KMC. Hence, future studies should conduct comparative explorations of urban, peri-urban, and rural areas to understand the context of other earthquake affected areas. The research is

transferrable to other disaster-recovery contexts—where issues are similar to those in Nepal. This research may also be helpful to a comparative study where similar recovery organizations have been established to manage post-disaster recovery activities.

### **5.3. Implication for Policy and Practice**

This study offers recommendations for implementation of policy and practice. First, when new recovery organizations are formed to coordinate recovery processes and practices, the government and donor-organizations should make necessary arrangements to ensure that this new organization is not overly influenced by government bureaucracies at all level of governments. In addition, appropriate linkages with political leaders at all levels would benefit decision making and implementation. When political contexts are unfavorable, rather than establishing a new recovery organization, existing government ministries (e.g., project implementation units) should solely be assigned responsibilities to implement recovery and reconstruction projects. However, government and donors should implement and enforce necessary mechanisms to ensure accountability (including incentives and de-incentives) at all level of hierarchies and throughout the project cycle. Second, the recovery organization should have adequate and necessary authority and access to financial and human resources. In addition, the government should avoid frequent organizational reforms, fragmentation of structure, and demographic turnover and transfer to maintain adequate organization stability. However, flexibility in rules guiding recovery processes and practices would help to match the uncertainty and urgency in emergency work. The demographic composition or personnel of a recovery organization should facilitate interoperability between public officers rather than

promoting silos of sectoral units. Third, while the ruling governments, political leaders, and bureaucracies are the most powerful stakeholders that will influence recovery processes and practices, partner organizations (e.g., donors and I-NGOs) could help reduce the influence of government bodies by making recovery finances and processes more transparent and more accountable. My findings indicate the lack of transparency of partner organizations prompted the centralization of disaster management authority and resources.

Fourth, partner organizations' recovery activities should be guided by the priorities of the problem rather than by easier and familiar projects and locations. Priorities should be identified and assessed early, and these activities should include adequate engagement with local communities, local governments, and independent organizations. Finally, policy makers should consider policies that include local governments and affected communities in decision making processes. There should be a proper mechanism for their participation in decision making processes, and their suggestions should be integrated into policies. My findings indicate a lack of participation from local governments or communities in decision making processes in the context of urban areas—which led to the total neglect of a range of problems associated with these areas. The policy makers provided blanket solutions to tackle recovery and reconstruction issues. However, the issues in rural and urban areas are different and, therefore, each area demands specific solutions. The post-disaster recovery projects provided an opportunity to address long-standing urban poverty and housing issues; however, the negligence of governments and donors wasted this opportunity to rebuild a stronger, more resilient Kathmandu Metropolitan City.

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## **APPENDIX**

## APPENDIX A: IRB Approval



Office of Research Integrity  
Research Compliance, MARC 414

### MEMORANDUM

**To:** Dr. Nazife Emel Ganapati  
**CC:** Barsha Manandhar  
**From:** Elizabeth Juhasz, Ph.D., IRB Coordinator *EJ*  
**Date:** July 1, 2019  
**Protocol Title:** "Managing Collaborative Networks in Post-Disaster Recovery: A Case Study of 2015 Nepal Earthquake"

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The Florida International University Office of Research Integrity has reviewed your research study for the use of human subjects and deemed it Exempt via the **Exempt Review** process.

**IRB Protocol Exemption #:** IRB-19-0239      **IRB Exemption Date:** 07/01/19  
**TOPAZ Reference #:** 107961

As a requirement of IRB Exemption you are required to:

- 1) Submit an IRB Exempt Amendment Form for all proposed additions or changes in the procedures involving human subjects. All additions and changes must be reviewed and approved prior to implementation.
- 2) Promptly submit an IRB Exempt Event Report Form for every serious or unusual or unanticipated adverse event, problems with the rights or welfare of the human subjects, and/or deviations from the approved protocol.
- 3) Submit an IRB Exempt Project Completion Report Form when the study is finished or discontinued.

**Special Conditions:** N/A

For further information, you may visit the IRB website at <http://research.fiu.edu/irb>.

EJ


APPENDIX B:

TEMPORARY PASS to enter NRA's office

नेपाल सरकार  
**राष्ट्रिय पर्यावरण प्राधिकरण**  
 सिंहदरवार, काठमाडौं, नेपाल

**अस्थायी प्रवेश पत्र**

नाम: वर्षा माकडर राष्ट्रिय पर्यावरण प्राधिकरण  
 काम: अध्ययन  
 ठेगाना: काठमाडौं - २३  
 ना.प्र.नं.: ६८३५ शाखा आयोजना  
 अवधि: ३ महिना  
 राष्ट्रिय पर्यावरण प्राधिकरण



प्रमाणित गर्नेको सही सम्बन्धित व्यक्तिको सही

(सहस्र) नविकरण गर्ने मिति

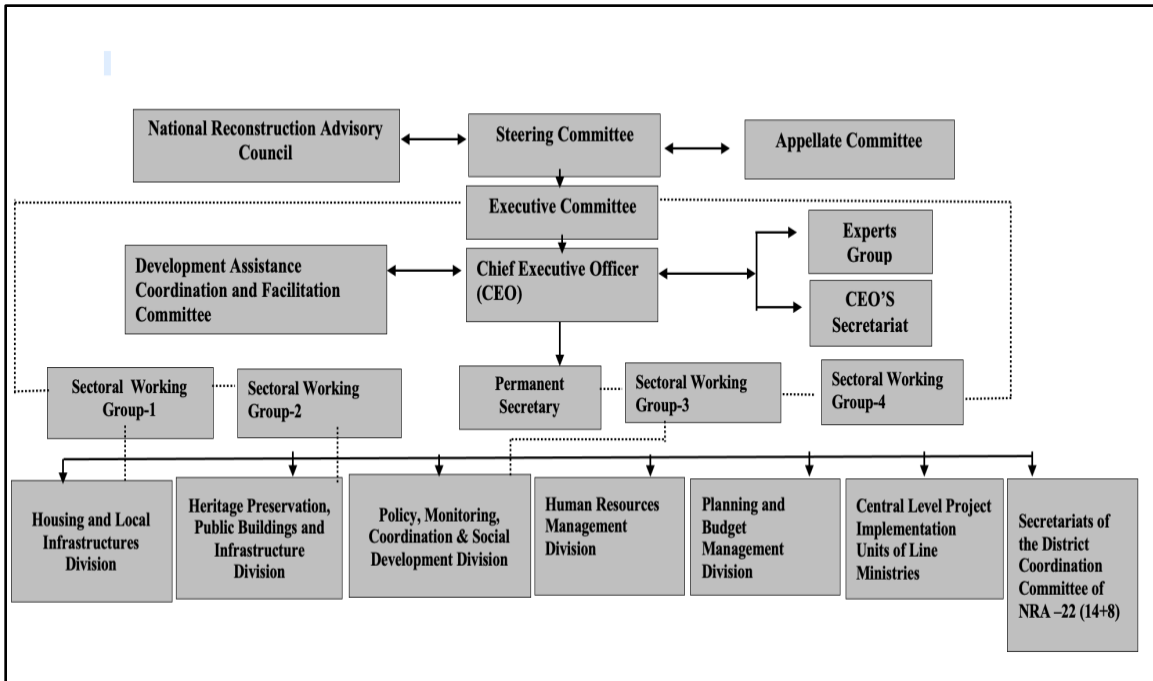
मिति देखि	नविकरण गर्ने मिति सम्म	प्रमाणित गर्नेको दस्तखत

यो परिचय-पत्र कसैले पाएमा सम्बन्धित कार्यालय, जिल्ला प्रशासन वा प्रहरी कार्यालयमा बुझाई दिनुहोला ।

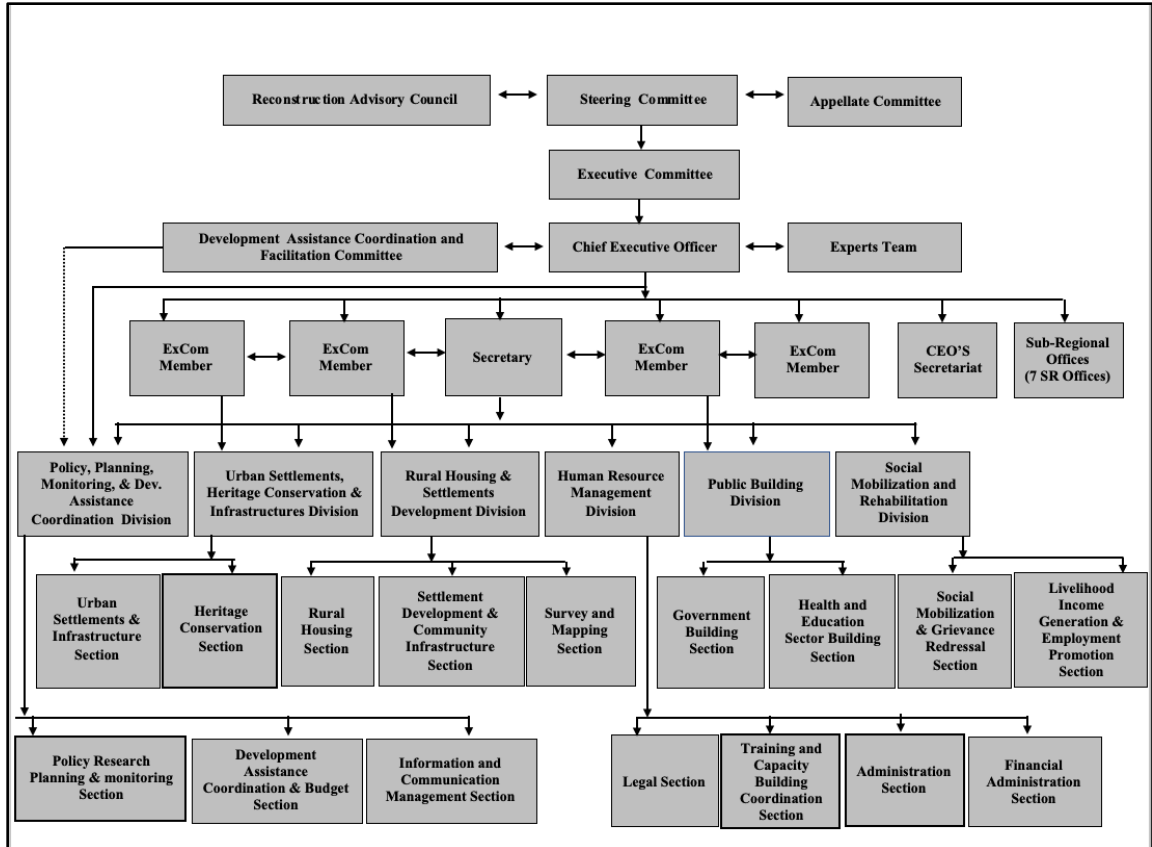


## APPENDIX C

### NRA organizational Structure after 2<sup>nd</sup> Steering Committee Meeting on 16 January 2016 after the establishment of NRA



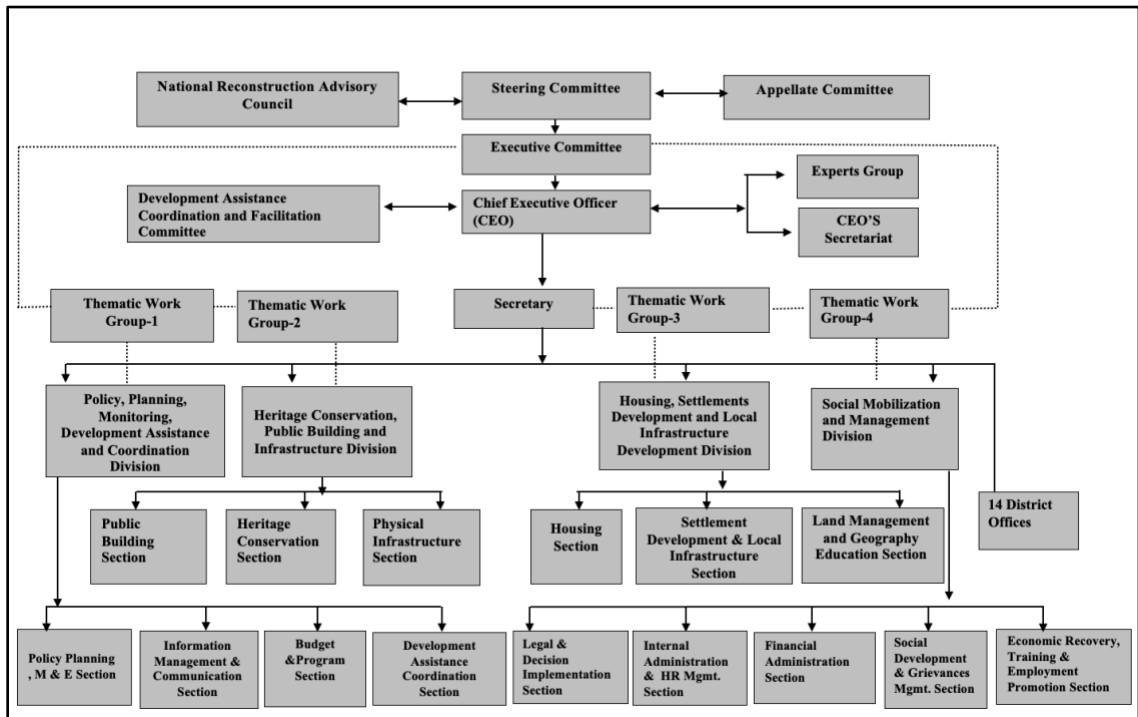
**APPENDIX D**  
**NRA organizational Structure after Post-Disaster Recovery Framework (PDRF)**  
**approval on 21 April 2016 Steering committee meeting**



**APPENDIX E:**

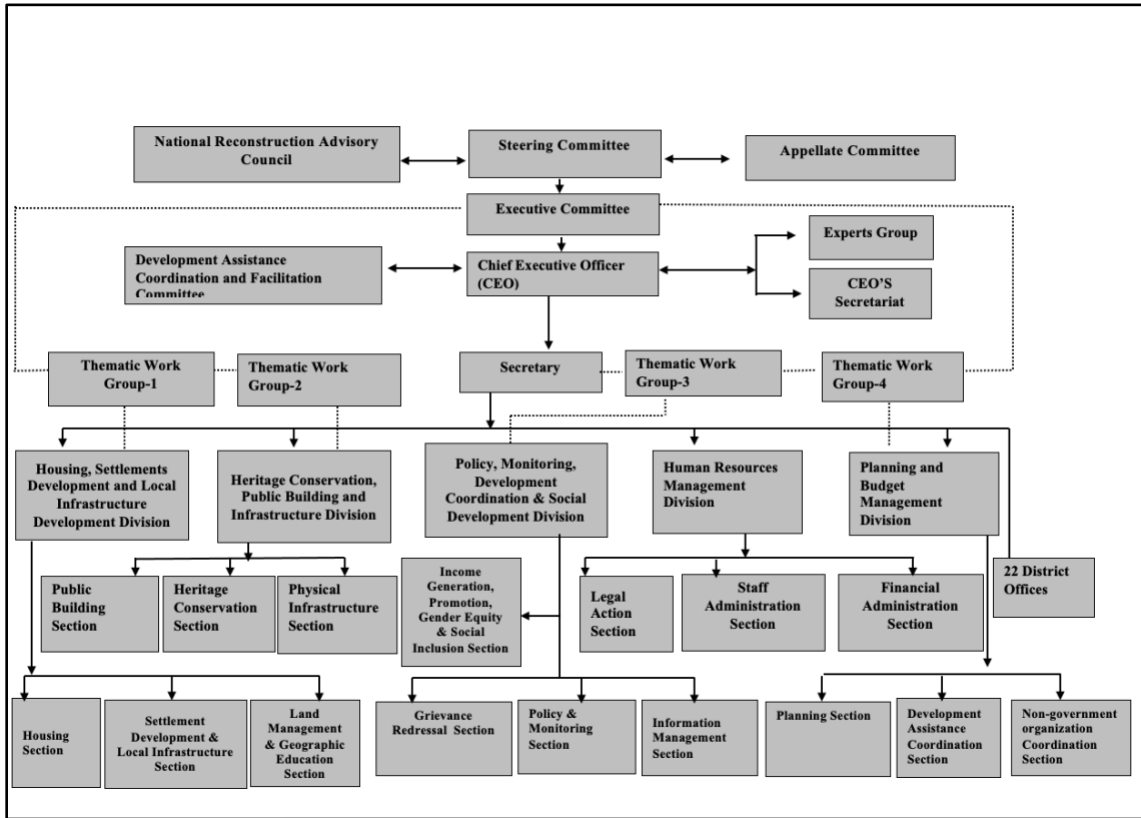
**NRA organizational structure after the committee meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2016**

**(SR offices dismissed and added 14 district offices)**



**APPENDIX F:**

**NRA Organizational Structure after Steering Committee Meeting on 13 February  
2017 (Additional 8 district office added)**



## APPENDIX G: CONSENT FORM

### ADULT VERBAL CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

(INTERVIEWS)

Managing Collaborative Networks in Post-Disaster Recovery: A case study of 2015

Nepal Earthquake

#### SUMMARY INFORMATION

Things you should know about this study:

- **Purpose:** The purpose of the study is to inform policy makers on how they can ensure coordination during post-disaster recovery in Nepal.
- **Procedures:** If you choose to participate, you will be asked to talk about the challenges public managers face in ensuring coordination among actors involved in post-disaster recovery, how they overcome these challenges, and how they can be better prepared for these challenges as well as your professional background.
- **Duration:** This interview will take about one hour.
- **Risks:** There are no risks involved in the study. You might have some discomfort in talking about the organization you work for.
- **Benefits:** There are no direct financial benefits for participating in the study. However, the study will help public managers understand the challenges they face in managing organizations involved in disaster recovery and provide guidance on how these challenges could be overcome.

- **Alternatives:** You may choose not to take part in the study.
- **Participation:** Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please carefully read the entire document before agreeing to participate.

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

You are asked to participate in a research study entitled “Managing Collaborative Networks in Post-Disaster Recovery: A case study of 2015 Nepal Earthquake.” The purpose of this study is to understand the recovery process and inform policy makers on how they can ensure coordination during post-disaster recovery in Nepal.

### **NUMBER OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS**

You were selected as a possible participant in the study due to your involvement in the recovery process. If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of 42 interviewees in this research study.

### **DURATION OF THE STUDY**

Your participation for the interview will take approximately one hour of your time.

### **PROCEDURES**

If you agree to be in the study, I will be asking you some questions about the challenges public managers face in ensuring coordination among actors involved in post-disaster

recovery, how they overcome these challenges, and how they can be better prepared for these challenges as well as your professional background. Feel free to stop me and ask any time you have questions during the interview.

If you do not mind, I would like to record the interview.

### **RISKS AND/OR DISCOMFORTS**

There are no risks involved in the study. You might have some discomfort in talking about the organization you work for. You can refuse to answer any question that you do not feel comfortable answering, however.

### **BENEFITS**

There will be no direct financial benefits to you. However, the study will help public managers understand the challenges they face in managing organizations involved in disaster recovery and provide guidance on how these challenges could be overcome.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

You may choose not to take part in the study. Any significant new findings developed during the course of the research which may relate to your willingness to continue participation will be provided to you.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The records of this study will be kept private and will be protected to the fullest extent provided by law. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher team

will have access to the records. However, your records may be inspected by authorized University or other agents who will also keep the information confidential.

### **USE OF YOUR INFORMATION**

When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity. They will be disclosed only with your permission. If your photographs, videos, or audio-tape recordings will be used for educational purposes, your identity will be protected or disguised.

### **COMPENSATION & COSTS**

There are no costs to you or compensation for participating in this study.

### **RIGHT TO DECLINE OR WITHDRAW**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to participate in the study or withdraw your consent at any time during the study. You will not lose any benefits if you decide not to participate or if you quit the study early. The investigator reserves the right to remove you without your consent at such time that he/she feels it is in the best interest.

### **RESEARCHER CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have any questions about the purpose, procedures, or any other issues relating to this research study you may contact *Barsha Manandhar* (Principal Investigator) on +977 9841992910/ +1 (305) 299-0924 or [bmana002@fiu.edu](mailto:bmana002@fiu.edu).



## **IRB CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you would like to talk with someone about your rights of being a subject in this research study or about ethical issues with this research study, you may contact the FIU Office of Research Integrity by phone at +1 (305) 348-2494 or by email at [ori@fiu.edu](mailto:ori@fiu.edu).

Do you have any questions for me?

Do you provide your consent to participate in this research project?

Can I continue?

## **APPENDIX H: NRA IINTERVIEW GUIDE**

### **ROLE IN RECOVERY**

*We will start our conversation with questions about your unit's and your role and responsibilities within the NRA.*

1. Can you briefly tell me about your unit's responsibilities within the NRA?
2. What are your responsibilities within the NRA?

### **CHALLENGES FACED IN COORDINATING RECOVERY**

*Now I would like to ask you some questions about the challenges NRA officials like yourself face in coordinating with different agencies to undertake post-disaster recovery and reconstruction.*

3. What are the most important challenges NRA officials like yourself face in coordinating recovery?

*[Probes: Can you elaborate more on these? What makes these important challenges?]*

*[Note: Mention the following examples ONLY IF the interviewee is having difficulty coming up with an answer: Infighting between government agencies, power imbalances, overlapping jurisdictions, different organizational interests and organizational cultures.]*

4. How do you deal with these challenges?
5. Who or what helps you the most as you work towards overcoming these challenges?

## **CHALLENGES FACED IN WORKING WITH OTHER ACTORS**

*I also would like to ask you some questions about specific challenges you face as you deal with different actors. The actors may be different levels of the NRA, other public agencies, non-profit agencies or private sector firms. Please note that I will be repeating the same questions for different agencies here.*

6. Can you please tell me the most important challenge NRA officials like yourself face in dealing with other units within the central office of NRA?

*[ Probes: For example, different divisions, committees, and PIUs]*

7. Can you please tell me the most important challenge NRA officials like yourself face in dealing with other units within the NRA at district level (e.g., District Level Project Implementation Units)?

8. Can you please tell me the most important challenge NRA officials like yourself face in dealing with government agencies other than the NRA at the central level (e.g., the Prime Minister's Office, other ministries such as education, home affairs, and tourism)?

9. Can you please tell me the most important challenge NRA officials like yourself face in dealing with government agencies other than the NRA at the district level (e.g., District Administrative Offices)?

10. Can you please tell me the most important challenge NRA officials like yourself face in dealing with government agencies at the local level? (e.g., metropolitan, sub-metropolitan, municipalities, rural municipalities)?

11. Can you please tell me the most important challenge NRA officials like yourself face in dealing with international aid agencies involved in recovery (e.g., the World Bank, USAID, CRS, Tearfund)?
12. Can you please tell me the most important challenge NRA officials like yourself face in dealing with Nepalese non-governmental agencies involved in recovery (e.g., Oxfam, Care-Nepal, Save the Children, Lumanti)?
13. Can you please tell me the most important challenge NRA officials like yourself face in dealing with private sector agencies involved in recovery (e.g., firms involved in housing reconstruction, Dhurmus Suntali Foundation)?
14. Can you please tell me the most important challenge NRA officials like yourself face in dealing with those who are affected by the earthquake (e.g., their emotional well-being)?
15. Can you please tell me the most important challenge NRA officials like yourself face in working in a post-disaster environment?  
  
[Probes: (e.g., the pressure to finish things quickly)]
16. Earlier you mentioned that the most important challenges NRA officials like yourself face in coordinating recovery are \_\_\_\_\_. Is there anything you would like to add now?
17. You also told me that NRA officials like yourself deal with the challenges of coordinating recovery by \_\_\_\_\_. Is there anything you would like to add now?

18. You noted earlier that \_\_\_\_\_ helps NRA officials like yourself deal with the challenges of coordinating recovery. Is there anything you would like to add now?

## **PREPARING FOR DEALING WITH CHALLENGES**

*Now that we have talked about some of the challenges you face at work, I would like to ask you a few questions about how NRA officials like yourself can be prepared for the challenges they face in coordinating recovery.*

19. In what ways do you think NRA officials like yourself feel prepared for the challenges they face in coordinating recovery?
20. In what ways do you think NRA officials like yourself feel not prepared or underprepared for the challenges they face in coordinating recovery?
21. If you were to be the CEO of the NRA, how would you prepare NRA officials like yourself for dealing with the challenges they face in coordinating recovery?
- [Probes: legislative guidelines on recovery, clear regulations on NRA's roles and responsibilities in recovery, clear roles and responsibilities of all levels of government in recovery, guidelines on how to ensure inter-agency coordination]*
22. What would be your top priority in preparing NRA officials like yourself for dealing with the challenges they face in coordinating recovery?
23. Can you tell me why this issue would be your priority?

## **NRA AND THE AFFECTED POPULATIONS**

*I also have a few questions about NRA's relationship with populations affected by the earthquake.*

24. How does the NRA receive input from those who are affected by the earthquake on its policies and programs?
25. How does the NRA inform those who are affected by the earthquake about its policies and programs?
26. In what ways do you think the NRA helps the recovery of those affected by the earthquake?
27. In what ways do you think the NRA can do better in terms of recovery of those affected by the earthquake?
28. If a person affected by the earthquake wants to file a complaint with the NRA, what does s/he need to do?

## **NRA'S ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

*Now I will ask you a few questions about your thoughts on the NRA itself.*

29. What are your thoughts on NRA's organizational structure?
30. How would you evaluate the coordination of recovery in Nepal?
31. Why do you think this is the case?
32. In what ways does NRA's organizational structure help coordination of recovery?
33. In what ways does NRA's organizational structure hinder coordination of recovery?

34. If you had a chance to establish a new organization in place of the NRA to coordinate recovery, how would you structure that agency?
35. In what ways would this agency be similar to the NRA?
36. In what ways would this agency be different than the NRA?

## DEMOGRAPHICS

*For analysis purposes, I need to fill out the following section about your background.*

1. How old are you?

- |                                |                                   |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18-25 | <input type="checkbox"/> 46-50    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 26-30 | <input type="checkbox"/> 51-55    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 31-35 | <input type="checkbox"/> 56-60    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 36-40 | <input type="checkbox"/> 61-65    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 41-45 | <input type="checkbox"/> Above 65 |

2. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Below S. L. C.         | <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's Degree   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> S. L. C.               | <input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 + 2 or equivalent   | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |  |

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Please mark your gender below.

- Male                       Female                       Prefers not to say

4. The name of unit and agency do you work for (please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. How long have you been working for this agency?

- Less than 1 year                       More than 3 years
- More than 1 year but less than 2  
years
- More than 2 years but less than 3  
years



**REFERRAL**

*If it is OK with you, I would like you to suggest a few individuals for me to contact. These individuals could be NRA officials at different levels or representatives of international aid agencies, Nepalese non-governmental organizations or the private sector that are in contact with the NRA or are knowledge about the NRA.*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Agency</i>	<i>Contact Information (Tel., Email)</i>

THANK YOU!

## **APPENDIX I: I/NGOs IINTERVIEW GUIDE**

### **ROLE IN RECOVERY**

*We will start our conversation with questions about your role within your organization.*

37. Can you briefly tell me about your organization activities related to earthquake recovery?
38. What are your responsibilities within the organization?

### **CHALLENGES FACED IN COORDINATING RECOVERY**

*Now I would like to ask you some questions about the top three challenges faced in coordinating recovery.*

39. What is the most important challenge NRA and other non-government agencies officials like yourself face in coordinating recovery?  
*[Probes: Can you elaborate more on this? What makes this an important challenge?]*
40. How do you deal with this challenge?
41. Who or what helps you the most as you work towards overcoming this challenge?
42. What is the second important challenge NRA and other non-government agencies officials like yourself face in coordinating recovery?  
*[Probes: Can you elaborate more on this? What makes this an important challenge?]*
43. How do you deal with this challenge?
44. Who or what helps you the most as you work towards overcoming this challenge?

45. What is the third important challenge NRA and other non-government agencies officials like yourself face in coordinating recovery?

*[Probes: Can you elaborate more on this? What makes this an important challenge?]*

46. How do you deal with this challenge?

47. Who or what helps you the most as you work towards overcoming this challenge?

### **CHALLENGES FACED IN WORKING WITH OTHER ACTORS**

*I also would like to ask you some questions about specific challenges you face as you deal with different agencies from the public, non-profit and private sector. Please note that I will be repeating the same questions for different agencies here.*

48. Can you please tell me the most important challenge non-government officials like yourself face in dealing with the NRA?

49. How do you deal with this challenge?

50. Who or what helps you the most as you work towards overcoming this challenge?

51. Can you please tell me the most important challenge non-government officials like yourself face in dealing with government agencies other than the NRA at the central level (e.g., the Prime Minister's Office, ministries)?

52. How do you deal with this challenge?

53. Who or what helps you the most as you work towards overcoming this challenge?

54. Can you please tell me the most important challenge non-government officials like yourself face in dealing with government agencies other than the NRA at the district level (e.g., District Administrative Offices)?

55. How do you deal with this challenge?

56. Who or what helps you the most as you work towards overcoming this challenge?
57. Can you please tell me the most important challenge non-government officials like yourself face in dealing with government agencies at the local level? (e.g. metropolitan, sub-metropolitan, municipalities, rural municipalities)?
58. How do you deal with this challenge?
59. Who or what helps you the most as you work towards overcoming this challenge?
60. Can you please tell me the most important challenge non-government officials like yourself face in dealing with other non-government agencies involved in recovery?
61. How do you deal with this challenge?
62. Who or what helps you the most as you work towards overcoming this challenge?
63. Can you please tell me the most important challenge non-government officials like yourself face in dealing with those who are affected by the earthquake (e.g., their emotional well-being)?
64. How do you deal with this challenge?
65. Who or what helps you the most as you work towards overcoming this challenge?
66. Can you please tell me the most important challenge non-government officials like yourself face in working in a post-disaster environment (e.g., the pressure to finish things quickly)?
67. How do you deal with this challenge?
68. Who or what helps you the most as you work towards overcoming this challenge?

## **PREPARING FOR DEALING WITH CHALLENGES**

*Now that we have talked about some of the challenges you face at work, I would like to ask you a few questions about how non-government officials like yourself can be prepared for the challenges they face in coordinating recovery.*

69. In what ways do you think non-government officials like yourself feel prepared for the challenges they face in coordinating recovery?
70. In what ways do you think non-government officials like yourself feel not prepared or underprepared for the challenges they face in coordinating recovery?
71. What would be your top priority in preparing non-government officials like yourself for dealing with the challenges they face in coordinating recovery?
72. Can you tell me why this issue would be your priority?

## **I/NGOs AND THE AFFECTED POPULATIONS**

*I also have a few questions about organizations relationship with populations affected by the earthquake.*

73. How does your organization receive input from those who are affected by the earthquake on its policies and programs?
74. How does your organization inform those who are affected by the earthquake about its policies and programs?
75. In what ways do you think your organization helps the recovery of those affected by the earthquake?
76. In what ways do you think your organization can do better in terms of recovery of those affected by the earthquake?

## **PERSPECTIVE ON NRA'S ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

*Now I will ask you a few questions about your thoughts on the NRA.*

77. What are your thoughts on NRA's organizational structure?
78. How would you evaluate the coordination of recovery in Nepal? Why do you think this is the case?
79. In what ways does NRA's organizational structure help coordination of recovery?
80. In what ways does NRA's organizational structure hinder coordination of recovery?
81. If you had a chance to establish a new organization in place of the NRA to coordinate recovery, how would you structure that agency?
82. In what ways would this agency be similar to the NRA?
83. In what ways would this agency be different than the NRA?

## DEMOGRAPHICS

*For analysis purposes, I need to fill out the following section about your background.*

6. How old are you?

- |                                |                                   |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18-25 | <input type="checkbox"/> 46-50    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 26-30 | <input type="checkbox"/> 51-55    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 31-35 | <input type="checkbox"/> 56-60    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 36-40 | <input type="checkbox"/> 61-65    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 41-45 | <input type="checkbox"/> Above 65 |

7. What is the highest degree of level of school you have completed?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Below S. L. C.         | <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's Degree   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> S. L. C.               | <input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 + 2 or equivalent   | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |  |

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Please mark your gender below.

- Male                       Female                       Prefers not to say

9. The name of unit and agency do you work for (please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

10. How long have you been working for this agency?

- Less than 1 year                       More than 3 years
- More than 1 year but less than 2  
years
- More than 2 years but less than 3  
years

**REFERRAL**

*If it is OK with you, I would like you to suggest a few individuals for me to contact. These individuals could be NRA officials at different levels or representatives of international aid agencies, Nepalese non-governmental organizations or the private sector that are in contact with your organization.*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Agency</i>	<i>Contact Information (Tel., Email)</i>

THANK YOU!



## **APPENDIX J: LOCAL LEVEL INTERVIEW GUIDE**

Thank you. Now, we can proceed with our discussion

1. Can you briefly tell me how your community was affected by the earthquake?
2. How would you assess the recovery in your community? Please explain why you think this way.
3. Which organizations have helped your community the most since the earthquake?  
Please tell me their names.
4. What are your thoughts on the NRA?
5. What are your top concerns regarding the NRA?
6. How do you think the NRA has handled the recovery needs of your community since the earthquake?
7. In what ways do you think the NRA has helped recovery in your community since the earthquake?
8. In what ways do you think the NRA has hindered recovery in your community since the earthquake?
9. In what ways has the NRA been effective in helping those affected by the earthquake in Nepal? Please explain.
10. In what ways has the NRA not been effective in helping those affected by the earthquake in Nepal? Please explain.
11. How does the NRA inform those who are affected by the earthquake about its policies and programs?

12. How does the NRA receive input from those who are affected by the earthquake on its policies and programs?
13. If a person affected by the earthquake wants to file a complaint with the NRA, what does s/he need to do?
14. Do you feel that people affected by the earthquake have a say in NRA's policies and programs? Please tell me why you think way.
15. If you had a chance to establish a new organization in place of the NRA to coordinate recovery, how would you structure that agency?
16. In what ways would this agency be similar to the NRA?
17. In what ways would this agency be different than the NRA?

*Is there anything else you would like to share that we have not yet touched upon?*

*Let me summarize the key points of our discussion. Does this summary sound complete? Is there anything you would like us to revise?*

===== THANK YOU! =====

## DEMOGRAPHICS

*For analysis purposes, I need to fill out the following section about your background.*

11. How old are you?

- |                                |                                   |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18-25 | <input type="checkbox"/> 46-50    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 26-30 | <input type="checkbox"/> 51-55    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 31-35 | <input type="checkbox"/> 56-60    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 36-40 | <input type="checkbox"/> 61-65    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 41-45 | <input type="checkbox"/> Above 65 |

12. What is the highest degree of level of school you have completed?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Below S. L. C.         | <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's Degree   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> S. L. C.               | <input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 + 2 or equivalent   | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |  |

\_\_\_\_\_

13. Please mark your gender below.

- Male                       Female                       Prefers not to say

## VITA

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- 2006 Bachelor of Science in Environment Science  
Tribhuvan University, Nepal
- 2010 Master of Science in Environment Management  
University of Wolverhampton, UK
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## PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Zhu, J., Manandhar, B., Truong, J., Ganapati, N. E., Pradhananga, N., Davidson, R. and A. Mostafavi. 2017. Assessment of Infrastructure Resilience in the 2015 Gorkha Earthquake. *Earthquake Spectra*. 33(S1): S147-S165.

Mukherji, A., N. E. Ganapati., Manandhar, B. 2021. Panacea or Problem: New Governance Structures for Disaster Recovery. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 52, 101960

Ganapati, N. E., Manandhar, B., Zhu, J., Mostafavi, A., & Pradhananga, N. Vulnerable Households in Nepal: Factors Enabling or Hindering Their Recovery After the 2015 Earthquake, *American Society for Public Administration Conference*, Atlanta, March 2017.

Manandhar, B., Ganapati, N.E. Governing the collaborative network: A case study of post-disaster recovery of 2015 Nepal Earthquake, *American Society for Public Administration Conference*, Washington D.C, March 2019.

Manandhar, B., Haensel, K., Ganapati N. E. The state of Emergency Management Research in Public Administration: What We Study and What We Don't Study. *Southern Political Science Association 91st Annual Conference*, San Juan, January 2020.

Manandhar, B., Ganapati, N.E. Managing Disaster Governance in Nepal: Interorganizational Collaboration in Post-Disaster Recovery. *American Society for Public Administration Conference*. Anaheim, California, April 2020 [Accepted but canceled due to COVID-19].

Manandhar, B., Ganapati, N.E. Governing the collaborative network: A case study of post-disaster recovery of 2015 Nepal Earthquake. *45th Annual Natural Hazard Workshop*, Broomfield, Colorado, July 2020 [Virtual Conference].

Manandhar, B., Ganapati, N.E. Public Managers' Challenges in Network Governance: Managing Multi-Sector Stakeholders in Post-Disaster Recovery in Nepal. *American Society for Public Administration Conference*. April 2021 [Virtual Conference].

Manandhar, B., Ganapati, N.E. Governance Factors shaping Post-Disaster Housing Reconstruction in Urban Nepal. *46th Annual Natural Hazard Workshop*, Broomfield, Colorado. July 2021 [Virtual Conference].