Political Stability and its Impacts on Humanitarian Response: Lessons from Haiti and Nepal
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Political Stability and its Impacts on Humanitarian Response

Lessons from Haiti and Nepal

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Abstract

In recent years, disaster relief has emerged as a crucial subject of international development, on which the roles of non-state actors are becoming increasingly visible. There is a debate about the relations between (in)stable political environment and the effectiveness of non-state actors' aid delivery missions in disaster areas. Some argue that a stable political environment with good coordination and sufficient governance capacity could enhance non-state actors' operational effectiveness, while others believe that the weak governance capacity led by an unstable political environment may grant non-state actors more autonomy and flexibility to operate without interference from the authorities. This research aims to navigate this debate through a qualitative content analysis of two cases selected using the most similar system design: the 2010 Haiti Earthquake and the 2015 Nepal Earthquake. Totally 60 documents including official reports published by international organizations and news articles are examined to evaluate the performance of non-state actors and the challenges they face. The findings display a much more effective operation in Nepal led by an established coordination framework, while the relief process was made unnecessarily difficult in Haiti given the lack of effective coordination and transparent information sharing. By enhancing our understanding of the interplay between state and non-state actors, this thesis highlights their complementary roles and emphasizes the importance of carefully considering the local political landscape while carrying out aid delivery.

Keywords: disaster response, non-state Actors, political stability, qualitative content analysis, international development

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We will meet again. Bon Voyage!

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Introduction and Problem Statement

As the development discourse expands, non-state actors are increasingly recognized as crucial actors in development agenda-setting, the challenges they face are also frequently reported. However, the link between political stability and the challenges faced by non-state actors has received less attention, particularly in non-state actors' disaster response initiatives. Therefore, the following research will investigate the correlation between political (in)stability and the effectiveness of aid delivery by non-state actors. The Haiti Earthquake and the Nepal Earthquake are selected as the cases based on a most-similar system design, one occurred in a relatively unstable political environment, and another one occurred in a relatively stable political environment, while other differences across the two cases are minimized.

Since the end of WWII and the emergence of international development discourse, scholars focus on economic growth and poverty alleviation predominately, social aspects of development and freedom of people did not gain sufficient attention until the 1990s (Todaro, & Smith, 2009). More recently, a study by Soriano indicated that disaster relief remains underemphasized as another critical component of comprehensive development, particularly the function of non-state actors during this process in the Global South (2019).

In the wake of a disaster, prompt rescue operations are necessary for minimizing casualties and facilitating post-disaster rebuilding. However, the official mobilization processes are often too slow to respond. In these situations, non-state actors, including local communities and NGOs, could supplement states' roles through their flexibility, specialized skills, and familiarity with local conditions (Mondal, Chowdhury, & Basu, 2015). However, these actors frequently encounter operational challenges despite their potential advantages. For instance, their effectiveness can be hindered by the local political environment, their access to affected areas could also be obstructed by physical and bureaucratic barriers imposed by local authorities, which might delay timely humanitarian aid (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, n.d.). Thus, it is usually argued that the effectiveness of a disaster relief mission is positively correlated with the political stability in

the operating areas. Political stability catalyzes a successful mission with predictable governance and a safe environment for the mobilization of resources, while an unstable political environment often impedes an effective mission due to governance unpredictability (Daly et al., 2020).

However, this argument is in debate. Other scholars point out that the function of non-state actors might be more effective and significant in contexts that lack state capacity or in fields that do not overlap with governments' responsibilities. Thus, non-state actors could exert their influence without being hindered by the de jure administration (Bereczki, 2017). The objective of this research is to examine which narrative is more convincing by an empirical case study on Haiti and Nepal, two developing countries that suffered from serious earthquakes with political stability on different levels.

The academic relevance of this research lies in addressing this debate by comparing disaster relief missions led by non-state actors in stable and unstable political environments. After identifying whether an unstable political environment and the absence of a strong local authority impedes aid delivery or gives non-state actors more room to operate, we can also understand the interrelationship between state actors and non-state actors—whether they are complementary or substitutable for one another. This also offers an indication of the dispute over international organizations' autonomy between liberalism and non-realism. In this research, the conditions that encourage and impede the contributions of non-state actors in disaster relief will also be examined.

Practically, this research could be a reference for both non-state actors and officials at the state level. On the one hand, non-state actors have the opportunity to improve their disaster response strategies, becoming more effective in politically sensitive regions. On the other hand, it is also beneficial for states to identify and address the obstacles that hinder the efficiency of disaster relief operations, which will lead to targeted bureaucratic enhancements and sustainable development outcomes. (Maghsoudi & Moshtari, 2021).

Therefore, this research aims to understand whether political (in)stability impedes or facilitates non-state actors to deliver aid in disaster areas. The research question is as follows:

- *How does political (in)stability affect non-state actors in delivering aid to disaster areas?*

Theoretical Discussion and Framework

Literature Review

The debate on whether an unstable political environment negatively impacts the effectiveness of aid delivery or positively creates more opportunities for non-state actors to act remains unresolved. The complementary relationship between state and non-state actors is only revealed in the traditional developmental fields, such as economic development (Foli & Béland, 2014). Whether the same cooperation pattern will repeat in disaster relief operations remains unclear. To bridge this gap, there are some already existing narratives about why non-state actors often have conflicts with local authorities in delivering aid and humanitarian response, which inspire the research focus and design.

One of the main operational challenges in non-state actors' relief operation arises from the conflict between two key principles: 1) Sovereignty, which prioritizes a state's exclusive right to govern without external interference, and 2) Responsibility to Protect (R2P), which supports the international community's right to intervene coercively if a state fails to protect its citizens (Pattison, 2010). Consequently, whether the aid process led by non-state actors could operate smoothly largely depends on the local context and willingness of aid recipients.

The concept of political opportunity structure also provides insights into how political environments can affect the operations of non-state actors (Tarrow, 1998). These players often have more operational flexibility in open political systems, where democratic principles and civil freedoms are enforced. In addition to direct participation in relief efforts, openness improves the effectiveness and scope of aid delivery by facilitating coordination with government agencies and other groups (Börzel, & Buzogány, 2010). Non-state players, however, frequently face substantial challenges in more restricted political systems. Administrative obstacles, including strict government regulations on operations and financial support, essentially inhibited the mobilization and delivery of relief (Weiss, Seyle, & Coolidge, 2013). Actions may not go as planned even if the affected state is not opposed to external interference and has a strong desire to request assistance from international

organizations, as some countries lack the ability to organize and coordinate effectively and are unable to control the actions of non-governmental forces efficiently. According to a report by UNOCHA, effective humanitarian operations are hampered by issues including attacks on humanitarian premises, violence against aid workers, and looting of humanitarian warehouses. Some initiatives have been temporarily suspended because of the forced evacuation and relocation of humanitarian personnel from critical sites (OCHA, 2023).

In addition, other elements are also critical for a successful disaster relief mission. Logistical challenges, such as blocked access or damaged infrastructure, can be exacerbated by political instability, particularly in isolated areas. Clear and accurate information is essential as well, inconsistent or unreliable information can hinder in-time planning and emergency response efforts, which may lead to the failure to rescue or even lead to further harm (Shaw & Krishnamurthy, 2010).

The above-mentioned theories are all based on the complementary relationship between state and non-state actors, where non-state actors could only function well under the domination and direction of authority. This perspective aligns closely with neo-realist arguments, which emphasize non-state actors' dependency on the state framework. States not only affect their functions through international relations and diplomacy but also shape the operational contexts of non-state actors through domestic regulations and policies (Tarzi, 2004).

Conceptual Framework

Political instability serves as the initial factor that leads to weak governance capacity. For example, disruption including frequent governmental changes or coups may impede the establishment of stable institutions. The differences in policy priorities could prevent the accumulation of necessary knowledge and expertise (Gates et al., 2006). Then, the weak governance capacity, in turn, will negatively affect the coordination among various players, because clear and reliable communication is necessary for effective coordination (Ellingsen, & Östling, 2010). Where governance capacity is weak, the infrastructure for communication may be lacking or unreliable, which might lead to misassigned efforts among stakeholders.

This poor coordination as a result of weak governance has a direct influence on the performance of non-state actors' operations. On the contrary, under a stable political regime, the risk of overlapping or contradictory initiatives is likely to be reduced while resource allocation and aid project execution will also be maximized. As a result, non-state actors and other relevant parties could operate closely to the initial plans which ensure that aid reaches those in need promptly and effectively.

Figure 1

How Political Instability Leads to Less Effective Operations (Assumption 1)
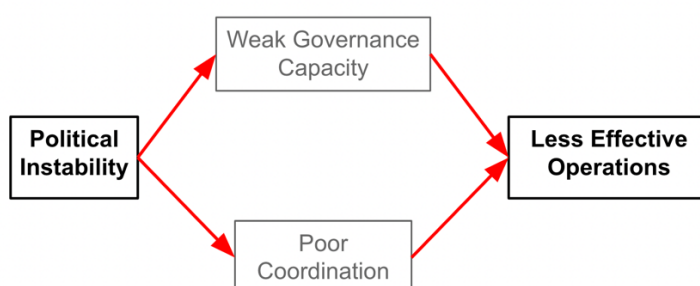
Figure 2

How Political Stability Leads to More Effective Operations (Assumption 1)
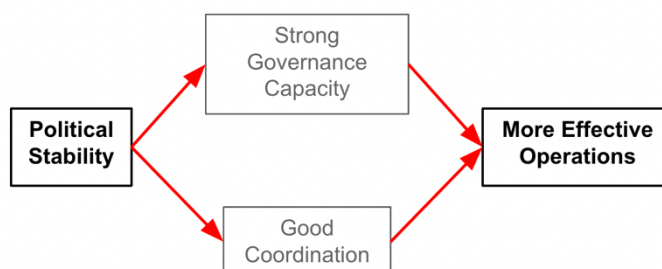
However, some scholars, such as Buthe (2004), try to provide justification and legitimacy for private authority in governance, through which non-state actors can entirely substitute formal institutions in the domains where the de jure authorities are overwhelmed to effectively operate. This shift is changing the landscape of global governance because in that case, the coordination and support from the local governments are no longer determinants of operational effectiveness. A weak government, even a domestic anarchical environment, may provide more opportunities for non-state actors to act, without further interference and

impediment (Bereczki, 2017). The non-traditional players in the Middle East have already proven this point, non-state authorities are established and became the ones to exercise the de facto state function, providing public services and social welfare when the formal governance collapses (Baylouny, 2010).

Figure 3

How Political Instability Leads to Less Effective Operations (Assumption 2)
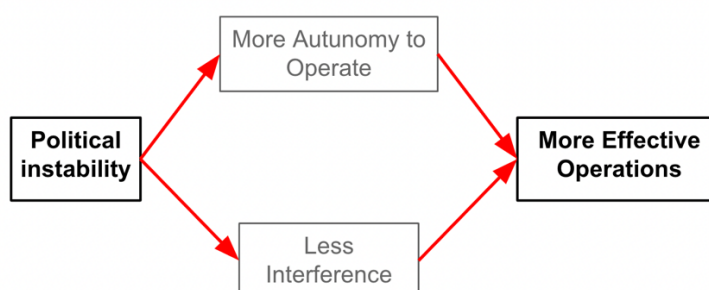
Thus, this study will adopt a theory-testing strategy, aiming to examine which narratives align more closely with the empirical findings. Specifically, this research aims to examine whether non-state actors are able to fill the governance gap with autonomy, or they are limited to be the cherry on the top in the situation of disaster aid delivery.

Conceptualization

The understanding of political stability is important to initiate this research. It involves not only the absence of conflict and the presence of reliable governmental systems that maintain order and enforce the rule of law, but also includes the strength of institutions, the predictability of policy-making, and the continuity of governance. These dimensions are central to the theory discussed (Ake, 1975). The challenges in this study refer to all the logistical, organizational, and contextual obstacles that non-state entities have while providing aid in affected areas. This might include everything from social and political hurdles like bureaucratic obstructions, uncooperative local government, or direct aggression against the mission members, to physical impediments like damaged infrastructure (ACAPS, 2023).

Additionally, it's important to mention the recognized characteristics of non-state actors, ranging from global NGOs to local community groups. Their role in international crises is typically marked by principles of independence, impartiality, and neutrality despite the differences in their objectives, operational approaches, and sources of funding (United Nations General Assembly, 1991). However, the political contexts in which they operate often put these ideas to test, particularly in regions with political instability. For this research, the focus will be on the challenges encountered by international non-state actors, domestic groups such as local communities will not be the target of this research.

Operationalization

Independent Variable – Political (In)stability

Political (in)stability is a multifaceted variable determined by various factors simultaneously. Thus, for its operationalization, a set of measurable indicators has been identified to reflect on the societal situation and state governance. Firstly, frequent leadership changes, particularly if they come from non-electoral processes like coups, which indicate that there are no exist established procedures for peaceful handovers of power, are usually critical signs of an unstable political environment (Lijphart, 1999). Non-peaceful transitions frequently raise the country's security risks. It may be challenging for non-state actors to run efficiently and safely given these dangers. Consistent and stable policy environments are necessary conditions for successful aid delivery, the aid projects might be halted or redirected halfway due to the government priority shifts, which will lead to inefficiency and waste (Riddell, 2008). Second, political unrest, including political violence, demonstrations, and civil unrest are also indicators of a country's level of stability because they may undermine the government's ability to carry out its functions (Collier & Sambanis, 2005). Conflict zones and regions with high levels of political violence, for example, present risks to aid workers and can interfere with the delivery of assistance, which impacts the most vulnerable populations (Duffield, 2012). Third, effective public service delivery and law enforcement are signs of stable institutions, which are necessary for preserving social order and promoting economic growth. For these reasons, institutional effectiveness is a crucial measure of

political stability (Kaufmann, Kraay, & Mastruzzi, 2010). Aid can be misdirected from its intended aims and less successful when weak institutions are present, with problems including corruption, bad management, and insufficient supervision (Ramalingam, 2013). Fourth, a population that trusts and supports its political system, indicated by high levels of political involvement and voter turnout in civic activities, might be a sign of a stable political climate as well (Putnam, 1994). High voter turnout often indicates a healthy democracy in which the public takes an active role in governing. Governments are frequently held responsible and transparent for their policies and actions, including the efficient use of foreign aid and prompt disaster relief (Winters, 2010).

Dependent Variable – Effectiveness of Aid Delivery

Official documents as well as experiences and observations of the practitioners are used to capture the challenges and understand how political (in)stability affects humanitarian access in disaster-affected regions. However, evaluating the effectiveness by only examining the presence or absence of practical challenges in disaster relief missions is far from sufficient. More nuanced categorizations and detailed sub-categories are indispensable. Three main categories are set to evaluate the aid delivery missions: 1) High Effectiveness, 2) Limited effectiveness, and 3) Serious challenges.

"High Effectiveness" identifies the cases where the outcomes of the relief mission align with the demands and expectations of stakeholders. Drawing from Comfort (2007) who addressed how to improve crisis management across different actors, 1) Prompt response; 2) Adequate resources and 3) Coordination among actors are all necessary conditions for a successful disaster relief mission. An effective disaster response requires not only quick delivery of all the demanded resources but also the ability to unite all relevant stakeholders for long-term success (Oden et al., 2012). In contrast, "Serious challenges" describes the context in which international non-governmental bodies face obvious operational obstacles, which constrain the capacity for rescue and aid delivery. Based on the Humanitarian Access Overview published by ACAPS (2023), a non-governmental organization for providing independent humanitarian analysis, the obstacles encountered by non-state actors primarily

include 1) logistical challenges, such as problems relevant to transportation, infrastructure, and access to remote areas; 2) Bureaucratic or political obstacles, which include impediments put by bureaucracies or government regulations; 3) Resources constraints, which refers to the limitations on funding, personal, equipment and all the essential supplies. In addition, a middle ground is also necessary. Thus, "Limited effectiveness" is designed to describe the case in which the initial relief objective was reached to some extent while the assistance is not sufficient to cover all the affected areas.

The coding frame will be displayed after the research design is introduced, while the complete coding book will be attached to the Appendix. The following graph shows how the concepts relevant to this research are measured via observable indicators.

Research Design and Methodological Justification

Research Method

The upcoming research will employ a comparative case study approach, focusing on international engagement and aid delivery following two natural disasters: one that occurred in a relatively more stable political environment- the Nepal earthquake (2015) and another one that occurred in a relatively less stable environment – the Haiti earthquake (2010).

The case selection is based on a most-similar system design (MSSD), which aims to reduce the differences across the two cases under examination (Haiti and Nepal) while emphasizing the independent variables, political stability, as the primary variable that differs. Specifically, both Haiti and Nepal are underdeveloped countries with comparative GDPs, suffering from earthquakes at similar levels, and struggling with comparable infrastructural problems, including traffic issues because of their unique geographical locations: Haiti as an isolated island, whereas Nepal as a landlocked country (Human Rights Watch, 2024). Many alternative explanations for differences in the outcomes of disaster response might be ruled out by this approach.

Data analysis

This research will principally be based on official reports from governments and international agencies with standardized data, which is essential for a rigorous comparison of Nepal's and Haiti's disaster relief operations. Supplementary to those official reports, news articles will also be included to enhance the analysis with wider social effects that the official narratives might miss. Relief Web, a humanitarian information portal attached to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), serves as the primary source of information. All the humanitarian reports and press releases within the timeframe about the disasters will be taken into account. However, there are thousands of literatures posted after the disasters happened, it is not feasible to analyze all the materials. Thus, a random sampling will be established for each case, totally 60 pieces of documents including news articles and official reports published by international organizations were analyzed, 30 of which are relevant to the disaster relief process of the 2010 Haiti Earthquake while 30 of them are relevant to the 2015 Nepal Earthquake.

The collected data on Haiti and Nepal will be analyzed in the form of qualitative content analysis. To compare the effectiveness of disaster relief operations in a stable and unstable political environment, content analysis allows researchers to thoroughly examine the contextual insights and multifaceted nature of each relief mission, which are shown by official reports or news articles (Halperin & Heath, 2020). By collecting reliable sources and applying flexible and adaptable methodologies and systematic design, this research aims to uncover the nuanced relationships between the effectiveness of relief efforts and contextual factors, specifically political (in)stability. Individual sentences or short paragraphs will be used as recording units. On the one hand, this allows precise analysis by capturing specific ideas that might be lost in larger text, on the other hand, this also preserves the necessary contexts for understanding the materials that a single word cannot achieve (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009).

The coding frame below provides information on about how to apply these concepts to narratives from official documents or news articles (See Table 1)

Table 1

Coding Frame

Category	Description	Indicator	Code
High Effectiveness	The performance of aid delivery missions aligns with the demand and expectations	Prompt Response	PR
		Adequate resources	AR
		Good Coordination	GC
Limited Effectiveness	Initial relief objective was reached to some extent while it was insufficient	(Resources/Funds/Progress) Insufficient	LE
Serious Challenges	Non-state actors face obvious operational obstacles during relief missions	Logistic Obstacles	LO
		Bureaucratic or Political Obstacles	BP
		Resource Constraints	RC

Quality Assurance

This research ensures the validity and reliability by measures taken at each stage, including the selection of research methods, data collection and data analysis.

Cases are chosen using a Most-Similar System Design (MSSD), by maximizing the similarities between the two cases and minimizing the influence of confounding variables, thereby highlighting the effect of a stable or unstable political environment on the effectiveness of the NGO's disaster response. Causality and internal validity, therefore, can be ensured through this approach. Simultaneously, the selected cases may represent a broader group of landlocked and island states among impoverished nations that are vulnerable to natural catastrophes, which contributes to external validity, or generalizability. Due to the clear criteria of case selection and the structured comparison of the two cases, it is easier for subsequent researchers to reproduce a similar analysis and thereby test the findings of this research, which could enhance its reliability (Anckar, 2008).

The timeframe of the investigation will be limited to 5 years prior to the earthquake: 2005-2010 for Haiti, and 2010-2015 for Nepal. Given the extensive volume of sources available within the timeframe, a random sampling strategy is employed for this qualitative

content analysis based on the documents from ReliefWeb. Random sampling of large

qualitative datasets not only broaden observations and increases the generalizability but also

helps ensure each document has an equal possibility to be selected and thereby reduces bias

(Marshall, 1996). The contextual depth will be enhanced by the variety of sources that

provide insights into the pre-disaster political climate, the intermediate response after the

disaster, the main international bodies that participated and the challenges they faced in both

Haiti and Nepal (Panke, 2018).

Findings and Analysis

The Situation in Haiti and Nepal

Before presenting the findings from qualitative sources, owning a detailed

understanding of the political environment in Haiti and Nepal before the two earthquakes is

vital for examining the impact of political (in)stability on non-state actors' disaster response.

The following section provides a comprehensive introduction to the political climate in the

two countries, with a description of the disasters themselves.

Political Climate

Haiti, an island country in the Caribbean Sea, has always been regarded as one of the

least developed corners of the world (Pierre, 2020). Unfortunately, the glory of the

independence movement did not bring prosperity and stability to Haiti. Hopes for Haiti's

development have been increasingly undermined with repeated civil unrest, coups, frequent

but destructive natural disasters and environmental degradation, despite the continued influx

of foreign aid from international organizations and developed countries such as the U.S

(Girard, 2015). Nepal, by contrast, is progressively moving towards democratization and

constitutional governance, particularly after the formal end of the long-lasting civil war in

2006. Although the political situation in Nepal is still characterized by high fragmentation,

corruption and ethnic tension, the severe political disruptions in earlier decades have mostly

been calmed, and the overall governance performance is still far better than that of Haiti

(Hachhethu, 2000). A few reputed datasets have quantified the political conditions in both

countries, the data extracted from the Fragile State Index (FSI) and Global Peace Index (GPI) are presented below. Created by the Fund for Peace, the FSI examines the vulnerability of countries across the world, based on 12 factors related to social, economic and political pressures that affect stability. With a maximum score of 120, a higher number indicates higher fragility. The GPI, ranges from 1-5, with higher scores showing lower peacefulness of certain countries. For each country, the FSI data of the 5 years period prior to the disaster will be extracted, however, there is no GPI data before 2008, thus, the time frame will be limited to the 3 years before each disaster.

Table 2

Fragile State Index (FSI) of Haiti and Nepal

Haiti				Nepal			
Year	Score	Rank	Avg. Score	Year	Score	Rank	Avg. Score
2006	104.9	8th	101.7	2011	93.7	27th	92.0
2007	100.9	11th		2012	93.0	27th	
2008	99.3	14th		2013	91.8	30th	
2009	101.8	12th		2014	91.0	31st	
2010	101.6	11th		2015	90.5	35th	

(Fund for Peace, 2023)

Table 3

Global Peace Index (GPI) for Haiti and Nepal

Haiti				Nepal			
Year	Score	Rank	Avg. Score	Year	Score	Rank	Avg. Score
2008	2.07	102nd	2.073	2013	1.99	84th	1.940
2009	2.09	110th		2014	1.95	80th	
2010	2.06	98th		2015	1.88	64th	

(Vision of Humanity, 2023)

From 2006 to 2010, the average score of Haiti's FSI was 101.7, ranking between 8th and 14th out of 179 countries, which indicates that through these 5 years, Haiti had always

been one of the most fragile countries in the world. With a slightly lower score, 92.0, Nepal's situation is more stable than that of Haiti, ranking between 27th to 35th. A similar trend is shown by the GPI, where Haiti ranked from 98th to 102nd in case of peacefulness out of about 160 countries. Although the differences in the ranking and score between these two countries are not considerable, the significant improvement of Nepal from 2014 to 2015 is notable, when the ranking of peacefulness rose 16 positions. This might be because of Nepal's transition towards a federal democratic republic and the subsequent enhancement of constitutional rule (Gyawali, 2018).

In the period before the earthquakes, both Haiti and Nepal struggled with low policy continuity led by a high frequency of leadership changes, although they happened in different patterns. This was a time of political unrest and instability in Haiti. After Jean-Bertrand Aristide was overthrown in 2004, a transitional administration exercised power until René Préval was elected in 2006 (Sagás, 2023). However, he had several difficulties during his administration, such as intense political turmoil and the catastrophic 2010 earthquake that severely devastated the country's governmental systems (Joseph, 2018). Similarly, after the end of Nepal's decade-long civil war, leadership transition repeated in the process of new constitution building. The newly established secular republic experienced several short-lived governments and a few prime ministers during this period, because of the difficulties for different political parties to build a strong and resilient coalition, with each political group wanting to direct the country to a new governing framework (International IDEA, 2015).

Regardless of the frequent administration changes, Nepal's political system has been built to promote political stability and long-term constitutional reform. On the contrary, Haiti's political processes used to be reactive and crisis-driven rather than proactive.

In the case of the political unrest during the 5-year period before the disaster happened, the situation in Haiti was much worse than that in Nepal. Haiti fell into endless chaos after President Aristide was expelled, which quickly developed from pure political conflicts to widespread criminal violence (Schuberth, 2015). Gang violence, kidnappings, and riots were exacerbated by disparities and external political pressure and further accelerated by

the lack of a functioning government and judiciary system (Kolbe, 2013). Instead, the nature of the unrest was more political in Nepal if there was any turbulence, which was organized around the drafting of a new constitution by marginalized groups, who called for better representation. With the specific objective in mind, the unrest was constrained, aiming at transforming Nepal into a more stable country with the establishment of the 2015 constitution, unlike the systematic chaos in Haiti, which led to more serious fragility (Upadhyay, 2015).

The institutional effectiveness in Haiti was significantly destroyed by various issues, such as systemic corruption, inadequate infrastructure, and poor management. Even substantial foreign assistance and intervention were unable to stop the deterioration quickly or successfully in institutional performance, because these problems were so deeply rooted (Ramachandran & Walz, 2015). During this period, there was barely any improvement in the delivery of public service. Up until the time of the earthquake, critical sectors such as health, education, and law enforcement remained dysfunctional and extremely vulnerable to natural disasters (Échevin, 2011). On the contrary, during the 5 years before the earthquake, Nepal was in a transition stage, aiming at building a new governance framework. Proactive measures were taken to federalize the state and overcome past conflicts and ethnic imbalances, to improve government capacity. Despite frequent leadership shifts in Nepal, there was a significant improvement in the accountability of government until 2015 (Upadhyay, 2015).

Given the long-term political instability and widespread corruption, public trust in Haitian government institutions is considerably low, which made the citizens skeptical of Haiti's political process (Johnston & Weisbrot, 2011). This distrust is made worse by the regular occurrence of natural catastrophes and the weak economy, in which the government is frequently regarded as inefficient (Taft-Morales, 2011). As a consequence, Haiti usually witnesses a relatively low voter turnout in the election process. The turnout in the 2006 general elections was 59.3%, while this number decreased dramatically drop to only 23% in 2010, due to the occurrence of earthquakes (Election Guide, n.d.). Similar to Haiti, political

instability and corruption have eroded public trust in Nepal as well. However, changes have become more obvious, particularly with the 2015 passage of the new constitution. Though progress is gradual and uneven across the country, they have established the foundation for raising public trust (Gellner, 2014). A high level of public engagement was shown in the 2013 Constituent Assembly elections, 78.3% of the population presented, indicating the citizens' high confidence in the state function (Election Guide, n.d.).

2010 Haiti Earthquake and 2015 Nepal Earthquake

On January 12th, 2010, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake hit Port-au-Prince, making it one of the most destructive natural catastrophes in modern history. The catastrophe killed the lives of almost 300,000 people and left over 1.3 million people homeless. 300,000 houses, 80% of schools, and more than half of the hospitals were destroyed, causing significant damage to the already poor infrastructure. The total damages are estimated to be $7 billion to $14 billion, around 100% to 200% of Haiti's GDP (Daniell, Khazai, & Wenzel, 2013). The Haitian government put search and rescue as the first priority in order to find and save the survivors buried under the debris. However, the magnitude of the earthquake continued to overwhelm the administration, under the pre-existing instability and poverty, so they requested international support for immediate rescue and long-term reconstruction (DesRoches, et al., 2011). A wide range of non-state actors participated in the disaster relief promptly, including multiple UN agencies which provided security and logistical support via its Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), and other international organizations such as the Red Cross and Doctors without Borders who offered emergent medical care and relief supplies (Margesson & Taft-Morales, 2010).

The 2015 Nepal earthquake was occurred on April 25th on a 7.8 magnitude near the capital city of Kathmandu, followed by multiple aftershocks, including a large 7.3 magnitude quake on May 12th. It was the most fatal earthquake in Nepal's recent history, 9,000 individuals lost their lives and over 22,000 were injured (Hall et al., 2017). Apart from the severely damaged infrastructure and a large amount of displaced people, Nepal's rich cultural legacy was also significantly harmed. The National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) was

founded to coordinate all post-disaster relief activities, including providing financial aid to victims, providing subsidies and technical help to support the reconstruction (Shrestha & Pathranarakul, 2018). Both international NGOs and local communities played key roles in distributing aid to affected areas, although they face serious challenges given the unique terrain of Nepal (Cook, Shrestha, & Htet, 2016).

Data Analysis & Discussion

After coding useful information from each document and classifying it into different categories under the coding frame, the results are displayed by the following figures, which compare the effectiveness of the disaster relief operations in Haiti and Nepal and the main challenges faced by non-state actors respectively. A general pattern can be found from the collected data, although it may need a more nuanced understanding of each sub-category.

First, the presence frequency of each code will be introduced briefly for both Haiti and Nepal. After that, representative codes for all three categories, 1) High effectiveness, 2) Limited Effectiveness and 3) Serious challenges, will be carefully analyzed to investigate the causal mechanism between political (in)stability and the effectiveness of aid delivery missions. Finally, the differences between the two cases will be discussed comparatively.

The effectiveness of disaster relief operations in Haiti and Nepal shows a significant difference in response to the earthquakes. According to the information update and evaluation by the participants of those operations, there is only 1 code that shows prompt action after the earthquake happened in Haiti in January 2010, while the number of the same code for Nepal is 5. Although both countries encountered resource shortages during the disaster, Nepal still has a better record than Haiti, which results in 3 codes of adequate resources, the number for Haiti, however, is only 2. The most visible difference was brought out by the code of coordination, only 3 codes of Haiti show good cooperation among participants, while 13 are shown by Nepal.

In terms of the situation when the initial objectives of players in the relief operation are achieved to a certain extent while unsolvable matters still exist, the number of codes in

both countries is equal with each other: 4 codes resulted from 30 pieces of documents in each case.

Both countries met serious challenges facing the earthquakes. The evaluation of documents results in 14 statements about the political or bureaucratic obstacles in Haiti, 6 codes more than that of Nepal. The result also shows that Haiti encountered more frequent resource insufficiency than Nepal, the number of codes is 9 and 5 respectively. However, a different pattern was shown by the logistical obstacles, on which Nepal faced more challenges, 8 statements were made about Nepal while only 6 were made about Haiti. In addition, 5 and 2 statements about other kinds of challenges were discovered in Haiti and Nepal respectively.

To gain a better understanding of the effectiveness of disaster relief missions in the two cases and the challenges in the progress, the following section will be divided case by case. The first section will focus on the situation in Haiti by evaluating the collected statement while the second section will focus on the situation in Nepal. Simultaneously, the two cases will be compared with each other with a discussion on the potential causal mechanism between the political (in)stability and the effectiveness/challenges faced by non-state actors.

High effectiveness of non-state actor's relief operation

Figure 4

Codes that show high effectiveness of disaster relief that meet the expectations of stakeholders.
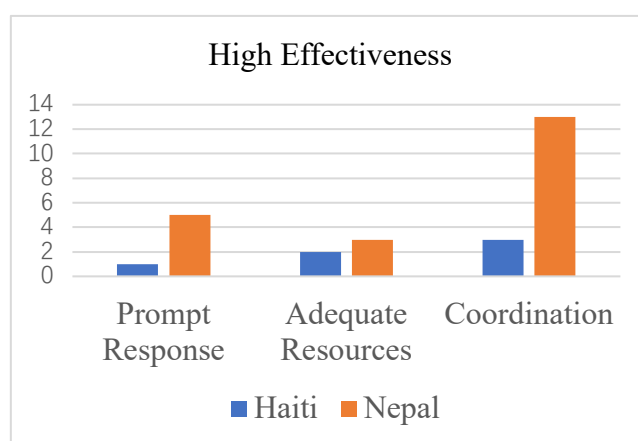
According to Figure 4, when evaluating the effectiveness of non-state actors' relief operations after the earthquakes on the aspects of prompt response, adequate resources and coordination among various actors, Nepal's performance is significantly better than Haiti's, even the 2015 Nepal Earthquake is even more serious in magnitude.

Prompt response refers to the start of relief operations immediately after the disaster happens or the efficient reconstruction and recovery of normal life in the later stage. Gross-level participation is indispensable for prompt response, and community-based approaches help local needs to be identified and addressed quickly. This was indicated by the statement that "Local communities, volunteers, youth groups, the private sector and neighbouring countries joined the effort" (OCHA, 2015). Governmental foresight was also a crucial factor in Nepal's prompt and coordinated response to the earthquake, which is a model of proactive disaster management. This includes the government's heavy investment in earthquake preparedness and training, and the stock of important supplies in anticipation of the earthquake (Subedi, Hetényi & Shackleton, 2020). This advanced planning makes resources readily available and distributable immediately after the disaster happens. As a statement indicates, "The government was seen by victims as being the largest provider of aid, potentially because of the 'one door' policy, with all aid materials to be channeled through the government" (The Asian Foundation, 2015, p. 2). In addition, the coordination and communication among different actors are enhanced by the establishment of relevant institutions, such as the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Authority (NDRRMA), who command the action of different actors, including civilian and military forces, as well as international assistance groups (Bhandari et al., 2020).

However, the record of Haiti on this aspect is not ideal. Haiti's heavy dependence on foreign aid creates a dependency mindset and a less accountable government, which prevents the development of local capacity and expertise necessary when facing severe crises (Gros, 2012). Although the Haitian government requested international assistance promptly after the disaster, it is difficult for them to do anything proactively except wait for foreign intervention (Margesson, & Taft-Morales, 2010). "Using hand powered rubble crushers supplied by CRS,

communities removed almost 1.5 million cubic feet of rubble" (Catholic Relief Services, 2015, pp. 1--2). Such inefficient last resort is usually a drop in the bucket, which led to the miss of valuable opportunities. Similarly, due to the scarcity of local resources, the shortage of supplies in Haiti is more severe, even though there is relief after international aid arrives (Margesson, & Taft-Morales, 2010). In addition to the lack of local capacity, the ineffectiveness of disaster relief also resulted from the poor coordination of different stakeholders. Without a unified command structure and central coordination mechanism, already scarce resources are frequently used inefficiently, and the actions of international organizations, local authorities and communities sometimes overlap with each other (Van de Walle & Dugdale, 2012). Despite their best efforts, the flood of assistance organizations frequently resulted in misunderstandings and disputes about jurisdictions, since there was no established structure for efficiently assigning duties or communicating information among all the involved parties (Aldrich, 2019).

In summary, the political stability of Nepal, in sharp contrast to Haiti's circumstances before the 2010 tragedy, is a contributing factor to the country's relatively successful reaction to the earthquake. The comparatively stable political environment of Nepal facilitated the establishment of a disaster management framework and the engagement of capacity building, which is helpful for the government to respond swiftly and effectively. However, the absence of stable governance in Haiti resulted in poor infrastructure for disaster management and inadequate coordination among the various players engaged in the emergency response, which resulted in delayed actions, misallocation of resources, and an overall less effective response to the disaster situation.

The conditions when the initial objectives are achieved to a certain extent

Figure 5

Codes that show the initial objective of disaster relief were reached to some extent.
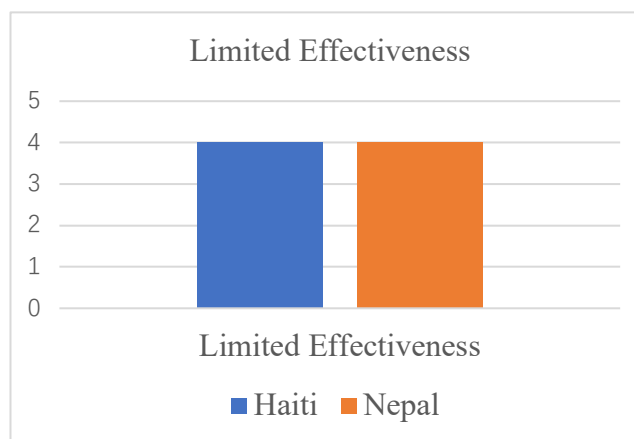
As seen in Figure 5, the codes that show the limited effectiveness of disaster relief were equal in both Haiti and Nepal. Indeed, although the poor coordination and efficiencies in aid distributions caused by political instability largely diminishes the relief progress in Haiti, there are still significant achievements. By emphasizing the function of local communities, the report published by PAHO (2012, para. 4) states that "Haitians themselves responded swiftly and effectively, saving many lives before foreign help could arrive." In addition, despite many practical constraints and the lack of coordination, the influx of international aid still set a record for humanitarian assistance (Margesson & Taft-Morales, 2010). Similarly, the successes in Nepal were made possible by the government's prompt implementation of disaster response plans and efficient use of resources that had been allocated in advance, while it was also limited by challenges such as logistical issues which cause delay and loss of pace in resources supply: "With the winter on the way, we must ensure adequate shelter and food security, particularly for more than 80,000 families" (UNRC Nepal, 2015, para. 2).

When coding the collected documents, the difference between "High effectiveness" and "Limited effectiveness" usually lies in whether the limitations of the aid delivery activities are acknowledged. If the relief operation is progressing orderly towards its initial goals, but the progress or outcomes do not fully meet the objectives, or the resources are insufficient to support the progress, it will be categorized as limited effectiveness.

The situation when disaster relief operations meet serious challenges

Figure 6

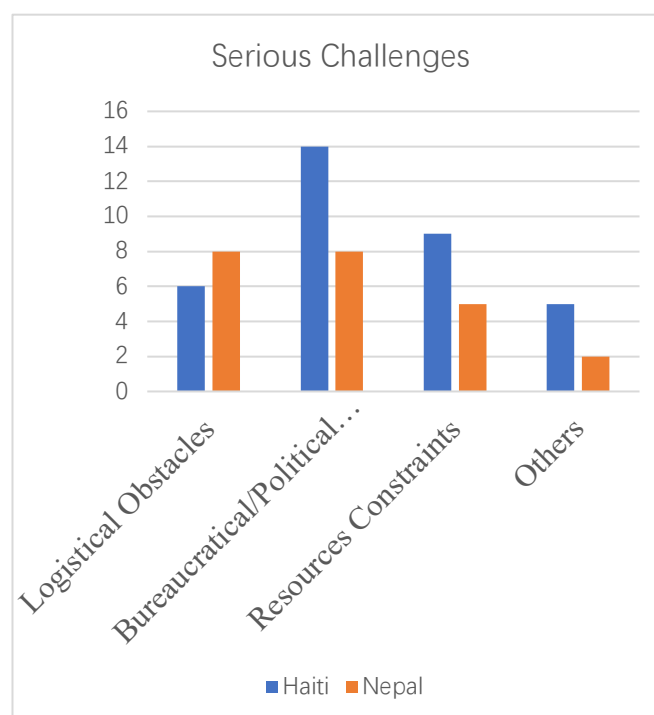*Codes that reveal serious challenges during disaster relief.*

Figure 6 displays the number of codes on the challenges encountered by non-state actors. Although the challenges and constraints are less severe in Nepal than that in Haiti, it is still not neglectable, particularly in the aspect of logistical issues, which is the only domain where it shows more difficulties than Haiti. As a landlocked country located along the Himalayas, the transportation infrastructure in Nepal is already quite underdeveloped, with goods transportation relying primarily on air-transport and a few mountain roads connecting China and India (Bhandari, Shahi & Shrestha, 2012). The earthquake, followed by landslides, has made things even worse. "Due to floods, landslides or snow some of the targeted populations could not reach the distribution sites." (IFRC, 2016a, p. 12). Compounded by the monsoon, "Hundreds of villages destroyed by the earthquakes could be reached only by helicopter or on foot, often days away from the nearest road." (OCHA, 2015). To make matters even worse, when air transport became particularly crucial, the airport could not accommodate landings by large aircraft due to runway damage (UNDP, 2017c, para. 1).

The political obstacles displayed during the earthquake were largely caused by the establishment of the new constitution and the subsequent unrest on the Nepal-India border. The negative impact of political instability on disaster relief and aid delivery is reflected in

the border closures caused by protests surrounding constitutional reform, which "caused challenges for importers to import raw materials and goods into the country. This caused shortage of general supplies as well as raised market prices drastically" (IFRC, 2016a, p. 22). Although no intended bureaucratic impediment was set by the authorities to limit the operations by non-state actors, the tension caused by constitutional conflict still impacts the efficiency of aid delivery indirectly, particularly through the limitation of essential resources. Due to Nepal's underdeveloped economy and geographical reasons, many critical disaster relief resources are already scarce, such as funds, skilled labour, and materials (IFRC, REACH & Shelter Cluster, 2015). These shortages have been further exacerbated by logistical issues led by political conflict, especially in fuel supply. This not only affects trucks' and aircrafts' transportation speed but also makes the approaching winter seem particularly urgent (IFRC, 2016a, p. 22; UNRC Nepal, 2015, para. 6).

Nevertheless, aside from logistical difficulties given the poor infrastructure prior to the earthquake, serious challenges occurred much more frequently in the Haiti earthquake, for various reasons stemming from a lack of government capacity. The political and bureaucratic inadequacies are particularly pronounced, mainly due to the local government's inability to coordinate and unify actions among different stakeholders. As a statement indicates: "The overall effectiveness of international efforts was undermined because many foreign actors, including most NGOs, worked with minimal coordination and with little or no regard for the authority of the Haitian government" (Pan American Health Organizations, 2012, para. 7). In that case, the in-time information cannot be shared with the situation update, which results in missed opportunities for earthquake victims to receive special treatment (para. 9). The limited capacity of Haitian government also undermines its ability to manage and allocate essential resources effectively, including food, medical aid, and shelter materials (Disaster Emergency Committee, 2015, para. 8). Even when the urgent demands were acknowledged by the authorities, it is difficult to be put into practice (Amnesty, 2015, p. 8). In addition, widespread corruption made the problem worse by preventing resources from reaching people who required them the most. Corrupt government officials used this as an opportunity to profit

from the catastrophe (Pierre-Louis, 2011). Therefore, political instability not only threatened immediate response efforts but also prolonged the suffering of earthquake victims, since the governance failure resulted in a catastrophe which was deeper than necessary.

Some claim that in the absence of intense government monitoring, non-state actors may be able to engage in the relief environment with greater autonomy, allowing them to adapt to local needs without being constrained by bureaucracy. The data from the 2010 Haitian earthquake, however, clearly demonstrates the drawbacks of this perspective (Bereczki, 2017). The absence of governance not only fail to empower non-state actors at all but impeded their efforts by creating a chaotic environment where coordination and resource allocation were difficult. On the contrary, a proactive government and an institutionalized structure for crisis management in Nepal contributed to better coordination and communication amongst all stakeholders, including non-state organizations. A robust local governance structure is then confirmed as a necessary condition for an efficient and comprehensive humanitarian action.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study investigates how political (in)stability impacts non-state actors' disaster relief operations, particularly on the effectiveness of the missions and the challenges they encountered during the 2010 Haiti Earthquake and the 2015 Nepal Earthquake. It also illustrates the importance of a stable political environment and an effective governance structure for enhancing non-state actors' performance in disaster response.

The findings of this comparative case study indicate the crucial role played by a stable political environment in determining the success of aid delivery. In Haiti, where instability was pronounced, relief missions were primarily challenged by a lack of governance capacity caused by instability, although the unrest did not impede disaster relief progress directly. Without effective coordination among various stakeholders and transparent information sharing, the relief process was made unnecessarily difficult. In contrast, with a comparatively better political climate, the aid deliveries in Nepal also perform better thanks to the more

structured approach offered by the government, which enabled a more effective allocation of resources and a quicker response to the catastrophe.

With the increasing frequency of natural disasters globally, understanding these dynamics is of great significance in responding to unexpected challenges. Theoretically, this study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence that confirms the impacts of political stability in facilitating the operational capabilities of non-state actors, emphasizing the importance of mobilizing resources and coordinating actions. Simultaneously, it challenges the perspective that non-state actors can optimize their capacity when the local authorities are too weak to provide supervision. This research can then enhance our understanding of the dynamics between state and non-state actors and highlight the complementary roles that both must play. Practically, this research may provide critical insights to both non-state actors and policymakers. For non-state actors, there is a clear indication that when planning disaster response strategies and putting them into practice, it is vital to consider the local political landscape, an adaptable and flexible plan could help to mitigate the risks and challenges in aid delivery missions, particularly in politically sensitive regions. For policymakers, this research emphasizes the importance of an effective governance structure and coordination capacity, suggesting them to give up the illusion of being fully dependent on external intervention. If policies and strategies can be revised based on evolving academic research, we might be able to mitigate the damage with more effectiveness, saving more lives and reconstructing in a better way.

However, this research is not without limitations. Only two case studies were included in this study, which only focus on the relief missions after one disaster type, although most of the variables are controlled strictly. As a result, the full spectrum of the interaction between political (in)stability and non-state actors' operational effectiveness may not be revealed comprehensively. Further research might enhance its findings by expanding the scope to cover more diverse political environments and more types of natural disasters.

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Appendix (Code Book)

Types	Sub-Categories	Example	State
High Effectiveness	Prompt Response (PR)	"Using hand powered rubble crushers supplied by CRS, communities removed almost 1.5 million cubic feet of rubble. Nearly 389,000 cubic feet of it was recycled and used for foundations of more than 4,500 transitional shelters and 300 latrines." (Catholic Relief Services, 2015)	Haiti
		"The United Nations, donors, international NGOs and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies immediately mobilized resources and reprogrammed activities. On 29 April, the Humanitarian Country Team launched the Nepal Earthquake Flash Appeal to provide protection and relief to 2.8 million people." (United Nations, 2016)	Nepal
		"The progress so far is encouraging. As of the end of November, more than 430,000 households have received the first of three payments to rebuild their homes under the government's housing reconstruction program." (World Bank, 2017)	Nepal
		"The staff and volunteers also provided spontaneous assistance in affected communities, including caring for and transporting the injured people, helping out as caregivers in medical facilities, setting up temporary shelters and toilets." (IFRC, 2016a)	Nepal
		"Over 100 international search and rescue and medical teams arrived in Nepal within 24 hours. Local	Nepal

	communities, volunteers, youth groups, the private sector and neighbouring countries joined the effort." (OCHA, 2015)	
	"While the earthquakes in 2015 hindered efforts to reduce poverty in Nepal, rapid recovery of small business and associations limited the length of time people were without livelihoods. New opportunities were also seized." (UNDP, 2017b)	Nepal
Adequate Resources (AR)	"The government was seen by victims as being the largest provider of aid, potentially because of the 'one door' policy, with all aid materials to be channeled through the government."(The Asia Foundation, 2015).	Nepal
	"CARE has met the immediate shelter needs of 179,750 people in the last five years and supported 4583 families with longer-term shelter solutions, reaching over 22,900 people." (CARE, 2015)	Haiti
	"First, the immediate shelter response was remarkable – 1.5 million displaced people had some form of shelter within 4-5 months." (World Bank, 2015)	Haiti
	"Food assistance was delivered to over 2 million people and some 2 million people continue to benefit from sustained water and sanitation support. Basic medical services were re--established in 99.8 per cent of the community healthcare centres." (UNCT Nepal, 2015)	Nepal
	"More deliveries took place in birthing centers after the earthquake. While 55 percent of women had delivered in a birthing center before the earthquake, the percentage increased to 72 after the disaster. Home	Nepal

	deliveries decreased from 43 to 21 percent." (UNCT Nepal, 2017)	
Good Coordination (GC)	"First, it emphasized closer coordination, for example, not only with national implementing agencies but with other development partners during rescue, relief, early recovery, and post-disaster assessment efforts. All partners and donors had to use a common platform for planning and implementing reconstruction programs to avoid inefficient, overlapping deployment of resources." (Asian Development Bank, 2022)	Nepal
	"In addition to shortcomings in the response, the report highlights a number of successes. One example was PAHO/WHO's deployment of the logistics and supply management system LSS/SUMA, which provided critical information and was one of the few international instruments that was directly managed by national authorities." (Pan American Health Organizations, 2012)	Haiti
	"As a result of the Aid Management Platform (AMP), transparency and accountability of aid information in Nepal has improved in recent years."(UNDP, 2016)	Nepal
	"UNICEF partnered with the national broadcaster – Radio Nepal to air radio programmes for earthquake affected populations. These programs helped ensure accountability to affected populations by providing them with a channel to give feedback to humanitarian responders on their concerns and needs" (UNICEF, 2016b)	Nepal

	"Most of these UNVs are now working for the NRA, as well as different ministries and organizations involved in recovery and reconstruction, forming part of a growing pool of national experts who continue to transfer their skills onto other engineers they supervise." (UNDP, 2018)	Nepal
	"The Nepal Red Cross has designated responsibilities in disaster preparedness and response in the government's contingency plans at national and district levels. The largest humanitarian organization in Nepal, it has national coverage." (IFRC, 2016c)	Nepal
	"We will work with the government to improve implementation in projects. This will mean addressing issues around financial management, procurement, contract management, and project staffing." (World Bank, 2017)	Nepal
	"'When faced with tough challenges like the monsoon season, landslides and difficult terrain, we are proud of how we have been able to support the Government and people of Nepal and respond to the challenges overall,' Mr. McGoldrick said." (UNRC Nepal, 2015)	Nepal
	"All law enforcement agencies, including the courts, have started to digitize legal deeds and cases to prevent loss of critical data and information—which has come about in large part with UNDP's support" (UNDP, 2018)	Nepal
	"NRCS as an auxiliary to the Government of Nepal, works closely with the Ministry of Health and	Nepal

Population (MoHP) in conducting the health activities."
(IFRC, 2016a)

"The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement supported NRCS in delivering emergency relief to earthquake survivors and has been helping NRCS assist affected communities with longer term recovery through an integrated programme approach covering shelter, health, water and sanitation, and livelihoods. These activities are in line with an agreement with the Nepal Reconstruction Authority and in coordination with other key ministries of Nepal under the Government recovery framework." (Nepal Red Cross, 2017)	Nepal
"The recovery strategy for shelter is based on the national recovery package of the Government of Nepal (GoN), which is central to the development of the Movement partners' supported project plans." (IFRC, 2017)	Nepal
"Haiti's cholera outbreak killed thousands. CRS built cholera treatment units, medical incinerators, laboratories and storage facilities for seven partner hospitals. With our partners, CRS provided soap, water-purification tablets and hygiene guidance to 450,000 families." (Catholic Relief Services, 2015)	Haiti
"In Haiti, governments, civil society, the private sector and other UN agencies are working together to make the country more resilient against future disasters." (UNDRR, 2010)	Haiti

		"As a trusted partner of the Government of Nepal, UNDP has been providing the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) with the technical expertise necessary for the Authority to better roll out its mandate and serve the public."(UNDP, 2017)	Nepal
		United by a common goal to help Nepal's disaster-struck communities, SRC employed the "many helping hands" approach, and rallied its partners to share best practices and resources in rebuilding. The collective wisdom increased productivity and expedited the rebuilding process. SRC also leveraged its network to understand the requirements of the Nepalese authorities, and worked with its rebuilding partners to obtain the necessary local approvals. (Singapore Red Cross, 2017)	Nepal
Limited effectiveness	(Resources/Fund/Progress) Insufficient	"We are encouraged by the significant improvement in the capacity and professionalism of the Haitian National Police. However, it is not yet able itself to provide security throughout the country. The Government of Haiti should therefore pursue vigorously efforts to strengthen the capacity of the National Police." (United Nations, 2014)	Haiti
		"The report says Haitians themselves responded swiftly and effectively, saving many lives before foreign help could arrive. However, the domestic response was severely limited by the devastation of the country's capital and the impact on government staff and facilities." (Pan American Health Organizations, 2012)	Haiti

"Although much has been achieved, the international community must not become complacent about the pace of progress or the outstanding needs,' says Christian Aid Country manager Prospery Raymond, who was in Port-au-Prince at the time of the earthquake." (Christian Aid, 2015)	Haiti
"Overall, the assessment found wide and successful coverage of humanitarian assistance across all affected areas with an overall 77% households reporting that they received shelter assistance since the earthquakes." (IFRC, REACH, Shelter Cluster, 2015)	Nepal
"Despite visible progress in several areas, such as the reconstruction of infrastructure such as hospitals and schools, many Haitians are still homeless or unemployed and in need of humanitarian assistance." (Malteser, 2015)	Haiti
"There have been numerable unforeseen delays, …… Under such circumstances, the overall implementation rate during the reporting period looks promising and activities are moving forward." (IFRC, 2017)	Nepal
"However, current progress towards recovery has been limited, and despite 74% of households in the priority districts reporting damage by the earthquakes, only 5% report that repairs or rebuilding works have been completed and a further 8% are currently being repaired." (IFRC, REACH, Shelter Cluster, 2015)	Nepal
"While much has been achieved, the humanitarian community remains committed to meet remaining	Nepal

needs," said Jamie McGoldrick, Humanitarian Coordinator in Nepal. "With the winter on the way, we must ensure adequate shelter and food security, particularly for more than 80,000 families." (UNRC Nepal, 2015)

Serious challenges	Logistical Obstacles	"The city has grown w/o a sustainable logic; Lack of public spaces, especially in Port-Au-Prince; Inadequate urban road networks About 40% of the informal inhabitants facing the risk of landslides and more than half of the informal settlements in Port-au-Prince susceptible to flooding" (IFRC, 2011)	Haiti
		"Difficulties in transport and access to the main humanitarian operation hub (MINUSTAH's logistic base or LogBase) where most cluster coordination meetings are conducted" (ALNAP, 2010)	Haiti
		"The airport was operating beyond capacity, and the port was severely damaged (though it was later repaired to receive shipments)." (ALNAP, 2010)	Haiti
		"The damage to, and excessive demand on, the international airport and the destruction of the Port-au-Prince port made it extremely difficult to import much-needed relief supplies during the critical early phase, and rapidly led to the use of the airport in Dominican Republic as a transit point for supplies, equipment, and humanitarian staff." (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2010)	Haiti
		"The immediate needs included emergency shelter, emergency health care, and logistics (with support to	Nepal

airlift), which are a major challenge for relief operations in the mountainous region." (ECHO, 2016)

"The emergency response presented complex logistical challenges. For instance, landslides blocked roads during the monsoon, requiring the Red Cross to assess on an hourly basis which routes were safe enough to transport emergency aid." (IFRC, 2016c)	Nepal
"The earthquake response took place in a rugged and largely inaccessible geographical operating environment. Hundreds of villages destroyed by the earthquakes could be reached only by helicopter or on foot, often days away from the nearest road." (OCHA, 2015)	Nepal
"But from a recovery standpoint, the acute shortage of fuel and construction materials, along with the government's preoccupation with managing another set of public hardships, presented logistical difficulties and delays." (World Bank, 2016)	Nepal
"Distributions continued even during the monsoon and winter period. In some areas, the terrain was inaccessible which led to delays in distribution. Also, due to floods, landslides or snow some of the targeted populations could not reach the distribution sites." (IFRC, 2016a)	Nepal
"Being a landlocked country with a mountainous geography, Nepal relies heavily on air routes to transport aid and supplies during times of emergency……However, about a week or so later, large	Nepal

aircrafts were unable to land at the airport as the runway was damaged from the influx of flights delivering aid." (UNDP, 2017c)	
"Some sites were so remote that our staff and partners had to literally trek rivers and climb hills to access. In areas too mountainous and hard to access on foot, donkeys had to be deployed to transport construction; and in others, only human porters walking on feet could reach the site. Our partners had to brave the elements to lay the foundation for buildings." (Singapore Red Cross, 2017)	Nepal
"Everything came down with the earthquake and it's blocking everything. Everything is just right there where it fell, and the city was already so congested that it's just making things incredibly difficult." (Catholic Relief Services, 2010)	Haiti
"Many organisations continued to access the Logistics Cluster service facilities through the critical winter months of January and February, as the fuel crisis had delayed their winterisation aid distributions." (Logistics Cluster, 2016)	Nepal
"As land ownership issues and logistics delay the massive rebuilding efforts needed, the basic tarpaulin shelters received by the majority of those made homeless is proving little match for heavy rains and the impending hurricane season." (ShelterBox, 2010)	Haiti

Bureaucratic or Political Obstacles (BP)	"The lack of a recognized and trusted place within the cluster structure for common decision-making with international partners, including to a great extent the international military, resulted in coordination structures being established with a strong military lead." (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2010).	Haiti
	"However, the overall effectiveness of international efforts was undermined because many foreign actors, including most NGOs, worked with minimal coordination and with little or no regard for the authority of the Haitian government." (Pan American Health Organizations, 2012)	Haiti
	"A critical shortcoming of the response was the lack of information sharing among different care providers. This led to lapses in follow-up care for surgical patients, including amputees, and missed opportunities for quake victims to get specialized care." (Pan American Health Organizations, 2012)	Haiti
	"The volatile security situation in the south of the country hampered the movement of trucks across the border with India. The uncertainty of the situation required constant monitoring and guidance from the Logistics Cluster." (Logistics Cluster, 2016)	Nepal
	"Shelter remains a priority need – yet humanitarian organizations planning to support families to rebuild their homes are waiting while the government clarifies its guidelines." (IFRC, 2016b)	Nepal

	"Commending Nepalis on their resolve to address these issues with a spirit of flexibility and compromise, Mr Feltman encouraged political leaders to overcome urgently current differences on constitutional arrangements through inclusive dialogue and parliamentary process." (UNDPA, 2016)	Nepal
	"The downside risks have been compounded recently by political strikes in various parts of the country. The political strikes prior to and after the promulgation of the new constitution are disrupting production, distribution networks, and external trade. Some political parties are not satisfied with certain provisions in the new constitution, which was passed through a majority vote in the Constituent Assembly, and have been intensifying their protests over the past five weeks." (Asian Development Bank, 2015)	Nepal
	"The humanitarian crisis created by the earthquakes is now being compounded by the political unrest in the country's southern belt following the promulgation of the new Constitution of Nepal in September 2015, creating a challenging operational environment." (UNICEF, 2016)	Nepal
	"But from a recovery standpoint, the acute shortage of fuel and construction materials, along with the government's preoccupation with managing another set of public hardships, presented logistical difficulties and delays." (World Bank, 2016)	Nepal

"The relocation proposed by the mayor does not respect the right to adequate housing, OHCHR said in a press release, noting that the lack of basic services and the poor-quality shelters means that the former camp residents will be much more vulnerable than they were in the camp." (UN News, 2011, July 22)	Haiti
"He argued that "massive, aggressive intervention is required" and said the Haitian government had clamped down on the importation of goods, making it difficult for humanitarian assistance to get to beneficiaries." (Church World Service, 2010b)	Haiti
"Raymond also said that authorities must address the issue of any concerns about corruption - a reason often cited for why all but a fraction of the international aid pledged to Haiti by donor governments has not been delivered." (Church World Service, 2010b)	Haiti
"The closure of the Nepal/India border caused challenges for importers to import raw materials and goods into the country. This caused shortage of general supplies as well as raised market prices drastically." (IFRC, 2016a)	Nepal
"The already fragile nature of Haiti's governance institutions, compounded by the loss of important government personnel and severely damaged infrastructure, left the government of Haiti in a particularly difficult situation following the earthquake"(ALNAP, 2010).	Haiti

"Elections are expected in 2016 or 2017. Many local government posts are vacant. Protests about a new constitution effectively closed the border with India from September 2015" (IFRC, 2016c).	Nepal
"New antigovernment demonstrations are expected as well as socioeconomically motivated demonstrations", says Uluç Baslanti, Finn Church Aid's Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean in Port-au-Prince. The situation may indeed get more unstable, especially if the government is not able to install a new Prime Minister" (Finn Church Aid, 2015).	Haiti
"In the international emergency effort, the role of the government was largely ignored, of course also due to the fact that the government was absolutely incapable of functioning in the beginning" (Finn Church Aid, 2015).	Haiti
"The Secretary-General looks forward to a solution to the political crisis in the country and calls on the Haitian people and all political actors to remain calm, since any deterioration in the security situation will have an immediate impact on the efforts to contain the ongoing cholera epidemic." (UN News, 2010)	Haiti
"However, many cases of forced evictions of IDPs –, for example, cases in which only a part of the camp population was evicted – are not captured in any statistics." (Amnesty, 2015)	Haiti
"The Haitian state is working hard to remedy the chronic political instability in the country but is struggling to put into place an electoral process that is	Haiti

	satisfactory to the political parties, civil society and the elected chambers." (Handicap International, 2015)	
	"Residents were informed by megaphone that they had 30 minutes to leave their houses before demolition began. With so little time, most could not collect their belongings, which were destroyed in the demolition or looted. The demolitions amounted to a forced eviction, as the main safeguards required under international law were not respected." (Amnesty, 2015)	Haiti
	"Describing other challenges, he said those included the complicated task of coordinating temporary shelter camps and tackling complex land laws and regulations." (UNDGC, 2010, July 12)	Haiti
Resources Constraints (RC)	"The Haitian government stopped accepting flights Thursday because ramp space at the airport in Port-au-Prince was saturated and no fuel was available, said Federal Aviation Administration spokeswoman Laura Brown." (Doe, 2010)	Haiti
	"Stocks of vital medicines, vaccines and antibiotics are critically low. More than 200,000 families are still living in temporary shelters following the earthquakes with conditions becoming dire during the winter season." (UNICEF, 2016)	Nepal
	"The shortage of land for new homes, stalled reconstruction plans and weak government all made it harder for the national and international leaders and aid agencies to work together towards the same goal." (Disasters Emergency Committee, 2015)	Haiti

"The Nepal/India border closure and the fuel shortage situation remained the operational risk to the Nepal earthquake operation until the first quarter of the year 2016. Due to fuel supply shortage all field movements were limited and this impacted on the implementation causing unforeseen delays." (IFRC, 2016a)	Nepal
"The primary reasons cited for the low rate of repair and reconstruction were lack of funds (97%), lack of skilled labour (38%), lack of materials (39%) and lack of knowledge (25%)." `(IFRC, REACH & Shelter Cluster, 2015)`	Nepal
"The fact that there were such capacity and resource constraints, infrastructure was so poor, all of those things give a context which is even more challenging than what we faced with Indonesia and Sri Lanka with the tsunami response." (Catholic Relief Services, 2010)	Haiti
"This massive logistical undertaking can be achieved, Mr. McGoldrick says, but the lack of fuel is significantly affecting distribution of goods." (UNRC Nepal, 2015)	Nepal
"The December 2014 Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) shows that 79,397 individuals are still living in 105 IDP sites. 5,939 displaced families living in 21 camps are considered at risk of forced evictions (low and high risks). 41,045 people living in 26 camps are considered to be particularly at high risk of flooding. As on December 2014, an estimated 15,515 households or	Haiti

62,637 IDP individuals were not targeted by any return or relocation programs." (OCHA, 2015)	
"There is no adequate system in place to provide urgent care, despite the existence of a National Plan for the Elimination of Cholera." (Doctors Without Borders, 2015)	Haiti
"In February, about 500 meals were served daily at the community-based sites; now the program in Petite Riviere, has been cut back to two or three times a week." (Church World Service, 2010a)	Haiti
"The Haitian Constitution recognizes the right to adequate housing. But this is only on paper. In practice, this is not respected". (Amnesty, 2015)	Haiti
"However, to date, only a few hundred million dollars of the $10 billion pledged has actually been paid by various countries and donors. It is high time that these promises were kept; things need to move faster." (Médecins du Monde, 2010)	Haiti
"The humanitarian work already being done in Haiti, some of which I saw today, has already saved tens of thousands of lives. But it is not enough to curb the loss of life, or equip Haitians to tackle this crisis themselves" (OCHA, 2010)	Haiti
"A key lesson to be learned from recent earthquakes is the importance of good risk governance in the form of strong institutions, planning and regulatory oversight and, above all, political commitment to reducing disaster risk." (UNDRR, 2016)	Nepal

Others	"Furthermore, 10 percent of Haiti's medical staff were either killed or subsequently left the country. This was, quite simply, catastrophic." (Doctors Without Borders, 2015)	Haiti
	"There is not however a concerted approach to partnership, capacity building or the long term roles of national organisations."(United Nations Human Settlements Program, 2012)	Haiti
	"The international humanitarian community with the exception of the organisations already established in Haiti for some time did not adequately engage with national organizations, civil society, and local authorities."(Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2010)	Haiti
	"Six months after a 7.0 magnitude earthquake ravaged Port-au-Prince and left some 1.6 million Haitians homeless, less than 2 per cent of the $10 billion pledged to help rebuild the country had been received, according to the Haitian Government's Special Envoy to the Secretary-General, who addressed the Economic and Social Council today in a joint event of its operational and humanitarian segments, on transitioning from relief to development in the Caribbean nation." (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2010, July 13)	Haiti
	"The majority of respondents (82.8%) stated that they did not receive help from outside their community, with the proportion being higher (88.8%) in crisis-hit areas compared to the Kathmandu valley (74.5%) and the severely hit areas (83.0%)." (UNFPA & IOM, 2017)	Nepal

"I have to wait in line to get water and there isn't enough. The other day, something went wrong at the source and we didn't get water for two to three days. Water is a necessity. We need water for hygiene. If tomorrow we don't get water, this area will become unhygienic, epidemics will start spreading." (IFRC, 2015b)

Nepal