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Building Women's Disaster Resilience

An Investigation of Social Capital Generation Through International
Disaster Assistance Following Cyclone Pam

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Abstract

This thesis examines *how* and *to what extent* international aid organisations focused their response and recovery efforts on strengthening women's social capital following Tropical Cyclone Pam (TC Pam) in Vanuatu 2015. It aims to create a better understanding of how humanitarian assistance builds disaster resilience among vulnerable populations, and how a gendered focus within disaster management is realised in practice. A network-based theory of social capital and a qualitative content analysis served as theoretical and methodological benchmarks in the assessment of selected evaluation reports conducted by the Australian Office of Development Effectiveness (2017) and Oxfam (2016). The main finding of this study suggests that international aid organisations in the response and recovery of TC Pam did *not* focus their efforts on strengthening women's social capital through enhancing the form of networks that are crucial for long-term disaster recovery and gender structural change – i.e. vertical networks.

Keywords: Tropical Cyclone Pam, international aid organisations, disaster, gender, women, vulnerability, resilience, social capital, qualitative content analysis

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"Economic and social networks are more resilient than buildings. Buildings crumble, but human resources remain." (Olshansky, 2005:17)

1 Introduction

Climate-related disasters are increasing in frequency, and more individuals are at risk from disasters each year (CRED & UNISDR, 2015:5, Aldrich & Meyer, 2014:255). Anthropogenic climate change will cause rising sea levels and potentially bring more severe storms, droughts, and floods (Aldrich & Meyer, 2014:255). Despite a recent decrease in the absolute number of people dying from weather-related disasters, the upward trend in the average number of deaths during the period 1995-2016 displays a continued vulnerability of communities exposed to natural hazards (CRED & UNISDR, 2015:9).

This study focuses on the imperative role of social capital in increasing resilience to disasters, as previous research demonstrates that communities with higher levels of social capital experience faster recoveries from disasters than others (Aldrich & Meyer, 2014:260; Aldrich, 2011: 83). Aldrich (2011:16), who has conducted several case studies on the role of social capital in building resilience to disasters and speeding up recovery, argues that "high levels of social capital - more than such commonly referenced factors as socioeconomic conditions, population density, amount of damage or aid - serve as the core engine of recovery". Social capital in the form of strong networks provide access to crucial resources in the context of disaster response and recovery (Aldrich & Meyer, 2014:256).

With limited social capital in comparison to men, women are facing increased risk and vulnerability during and especially in the aftermath of disasters. International aid organisations play a vital role during disaster response and recovery, why their programs should contemplate the generation of social capital to increase women's disaster resilience. As Oxfam America suggests, "social capital is one of, if not the most important foundation for community resilience, and thus should be a constant in program design, implementation and monitoring" (2017:62). The question is, does this reflect the reality of humanitarian assistance? As of now, the lack of previous research on the matter leaves us without an answer.

In recognising the importance of social capital in reducing disaster vulnerability, and the centrality of humanitarian aid organisations in mitigating risks and building resilience - this thesis makes use of previous research on disaster vulnerability and social capital, and contributes to existing research by exploring how and to what extent external aid organisations build women's disaster resilience by increasing their social capital during

disaster response and recovery. This paper utilises the case study of Tropical Cyclone Pam (TC Pam) in Vanuatu to analyse the research problem. Due to the exploratory character of this study, the purpose is not to generalise the findings to other settings, but to enhance the understanding of how aid organisations build disaster resilience among vulnerable populations.

This thesis poses the following research question:

"How and to what extent did international aid organisations maintain or build women's social capital during the response and recovery of Tropical Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu 2015?"

The question will be answered through conducting a qualitative content analysis of two evaluation reports carried out by the Australian Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE, 2017) and Oxfam (2016). The subheading below will outline the limitations of this study and is followed by section two, describing the background of the selected case. Section three presents previous research on social capital and disaster vulnerability along with the theoretical framework used in this study. The fourth section discusses the research design, methodology, selected material, the operationalisation of social capital, and concludes with the proposal of an analytical framework. Section five presents the results and analysis and is followed by the final section that provides a summary of the paper, along with recommendations for future research and practitioners within the field of humanitarian assistance.

1.1 Limitations of this study

This study is limited to the assessment of response and recovery activities mentioned in the selected evaluation reports conducted by ODE (2017) and Oxfam (2016). Although the analysis emanates from the actions promoted by Australia's implementing partners, these are considered to reflect the work of international aid organisations active in disaster response and recovery.

As with all research techniques, the choice of conducting a qualitative content analysis has certain limitations. Bryman (2012:306) argues that it "can only be as good as the documents on which the practitioner works", and the analysis usually requires some interpretation of data. Whilst these are concerns, the selected documents will be assessed according to four

criteria of source criticism presented in section 4.2. Moreover, the analytical framework in section 4.3 aims to clarify the process of collecting and analysing the data used in this study.

The choice of methodology along with a single case study as research design will affect the ability to generalise the findings of this study. However, the intention is rather to contribute with knowledge on how aid organisations increase disaster resilience among vulnerable populations. Further research is encouraged to extend the knowledge on the matter and to test the results of this study.

2 Background

The Republic of Vanuatu is an island nation located in the South Pacific region. It is categorised as a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) and is particularly vulnerable to natural hazards and climate change (Rey et al., 2017:259). This vulnerability is further aggravated by socio-economic conditions common of SIDS with issues such as high levels of population growth, rapid urbanisation and migration, isolated populations, high levels of income inequalities, limited human resources, and changing economic conditions (Rey et al., 2017:260).

On March 13 2015, Vanuatu was hit by a category five Tropical Cyclone named Pam that caused severe damage to infrastructure and livelihoods (Rey et al., 2017:260). Estimations suggest that more than 188,000 people, approximately 70 percent of the total population, were affected by the cyclone (ibid). In humanitarian disasters, protection issues arise and TC Pam was no exception (ODE, 2017:53). Amongst other issues, The Vanuatu Women's Crisis Centre reported an increase in domestic violence following the cyclone (ODE, 2017:53). Female-headed households and women with low financial capacities struggled particularly with recovering after TC Pam, experiencing a vulnerability exacerbated by traditional gender roles and norms (Rey et al., 2017:269).

The scope of the damage caused by TC Pam was so immense that an international response was necessary (ODE, 2017:25). Shortly after the cyclone struck Vanuatu, the president, Baldwin Lonsdale, plead for international assistance (ODE, 2017:iv). Several governments provided financial assistance directed partly towards the Vanuatu Government, but mostly towards international aid organisations (ibid). As the largest country donor in the South Pacific, Australia has well-established support systems assisting Pacific Island countries in

managing and recovering from humanitarian disasters—systems that were triggered when the Vanuatu Government appealed for assistance after TC Pam (ODE, 2017:iv). Australia's main implementing partners were Oxfam, Save the Children, CARE International and World Vision (ODE, 2017:32).

A Gender and Protection Cluster was created in Vanuatu on March 13, 2014, led by the Ministry of Justice and Community Services, CARE International and Save the Children (MOJCS & CARE, 2015:2). The cluster was active in the lead up to and response of TC Pam, and worked along with other clusters in mainstreaming gender and protection into the programs of response and recovery (ibid). This proves an important implication for the context of this study, suggesting that women's concerns were adhered to.

3 Theory

The first part of this section outlines previous research on disaster vulnerability and the role of social capital in increasing resilience. Thereafter, different theoretical conceptualisations of social capital will be explored, followed by a depiction of the theoretical framework utilised in this study.

3.1 Previous research

Disasters and vulnerability

Bradshaw (2013:1) argues that unlike the natural hazards that may have evoked them, disasters are socially constructed. A disaster occurs when a society, group or individual are incapable of handling the impact of a natural hazard, i.e. the damages that it might impose on them (Bradshaw, 2013:6). The concept of vulnerability has become a decisive explanatory factor in why natural events have severe socio-economic effects or become 'disasters' for some individuals and not others, "that is, why some groups are more at risk than others" (ibid). Disaster scholars have frequently illustrated this in a popular 'equation': $R = H \times V$, in which R is risk of disaster, H is hazard and V is vulnerability (Bradshaw, 2013:6). Bondesson frames it as 'structurally differentiated vulnerability', suggesting that disaster vulnerability is conditioned by "social and political structures that distribute vulnerability in unequal ways across social groups" (2017:19).

Gendered differences in disaster vulnerability and resilience

Previous research has outlined how and why people respond to a disaster, but little attention has been paid to understanding the gendered differences in response and recovery (Bradshaw, 2013:83). Various case studies indicate that women cannot respond as well as men due "to socially constructed roles and gendered socialisation" (Bradshaw, 2013:83), and women are therefore more likely to be adversely affected in disasters (Zakour & Gillespie, 2013:25). Major disasters that have occurred in past decades, such as the Indian Ocean Tsunami, the Kashmir Earthquake and Hurricane Katrina, have "highlighted the gendered aspects of disaster risk and vulnerability" (UNISDR, UNDP & IUCN, 2009:16). Disasters tend to have the worst outcomes for vulnerable groups, and women and children often face the hardest recovery or comprise the majority of casualties (Aldrich, 2011:86). Various scholars within disaster research suggest that the resilience of an individual or community depends "on its ability to access and use the major forms of capital", such as social capital (Masterson et. al, 2014:36). Resilience both communicates the ability to withstand unforeseen disruptions and is also an appraisal of the ability to recover from the impact of a disaster (Falk, 2015:32). The more assets a person has, the less vulnerable they are (UNISDR, UNDP & IUCN, 2009:45). Despite recent changes in some aid policies and programs, Aldrich and Meyer argue that the common response to the potential risks of a hazard has been to strengthen physical infrastructure, although this will never be enough "in reducing all risk and eliminate vulnerability" (2014:255). Bradshaw adds to this by claiming that the main focus of gender mainstreaming in disaster management has been to increase women's financial and physical capital, which will not enable women to "free themselves from the 'oppressive power structures' in the household and in the community" (2013:109). In other words, these arguments entail a shift of focus in disaster management to other forms of capital, such as social capital, to alter the unequal distribution of disaster vulnerability (Oxfam America, 2017:62; Aldrich & Meyer, 2014:255).

Linking disaster resilience and social capital

Disaster scholars have built up a strong body of literature on the role of social capital in reducing vulnerability during and after a disaster (Aldrich & Meyer, 2014:259). Aldrich (2011:84), who has explored the interaction between post-disaster recovery and social networks, argues that strong social ties can serve as 'informal insurance' during and after a disaster. Social capital in the form of social networks provides access to various assets such as information, aid, financial resources, child care and emotional and psychological support

(Aldrich & Meyer, 2014:256). Communities with higher levels of social capital have proven to recover more quickly from disasters than others, and it also allows for groups to overcome the typical barriers to collective action which commonly impede mobilisation (Aldrich & Meyer, 2014:260; Aldrich, 2011: 83). Furthermore, strong social ties function as a barrier to exit - "one of the potential responses to a crisis" - and thus make individuals within the community more prone to work for a solution together (Aldrich, 2011: 85). Communities with weaker social ties will, according to Aldrich, recover more slowly - if they recover at all (ibid).

On the contrary, Aldrich puts forward the accompanying externalities that may have been overlooked in previous research portraying social capital as a non-excludable resource beneficial to all, namely the 'exclusion of outsiders' (Aldrich, 2011:85). Different groups within a community can be more or less resilient depending on their access to social capital (Falk, 2015:33). Strong social capital is accompanied with a paradox: in-group members gain more resilience to disturbances and have more advantage in coordinating their recovery efforts, while out-group participants "find themselves further on the periphery" (Aldrich, 2011:85). Women are commonly described as having less social capital than men, particularly in places with systemic and structural dimensions of gender inequality (Falk, 2015:31; Zakour & Gillespie, 2013:26). Within this context, there are considerable differences between women's and men's social networks, and inclusion and exclusion are described as gendered processes (Falk, 2015:31). Consequently, women's limited social capital reduces their access to critical resources during and after disaster, and inevitably increases their vulnerability (UNISDR, UNDP & IUCN, 2009:24). Women are often targeted in development policies and programs promoting social capital, why Falk (2015:31) argues that this should be the case for disaster management as well. Although advances have been made within research on gender and disasters, the incorporation of gender issues into disaster response and policies remains limited (Bradshaw, 2013:58). If gender is mentioned, it is commonly as a demographic variable or personality trait, not as the foundation of "a complex and dynamic set of social relations" (Bradshaw, 2013:59).

Humanitarian organisations and disasters
In past decades, scholars and policymakers have pushed for the investment in physical capital (such as roads, buildings, dams and factories) as the "missing factor" in international aid assistance (Aldrich, 2012:158). Hence, bilateral and multilateral actors have allocated billions

of dollars to cover for the 'missing factor' - believed to be crucial for development and disaster management. However, more recent scholarly debates suggest that this typical approach to development and disaster management has had a marginal positive impact, thus arguing for the need of a new, more viable framework (Aldrich, 2012:21).

Disasters tend to expose existing national, regional and global hierarchical structures, and more specifically the inequalities and vulnerabilities within nations (Bradshaw, 2013:101). After a disaster, the recovery phase offers opportunities for transformation, not only of the physical infrastructure, but also of the political and socio-economic conditions. Bradshaw suggests that disasters not only destroy buildings, but also social structures and relations - thus creating a 'window of opportunities' for new ones to develop (Bradshaw, 2013:102). Yet, this belief in transformation of society and societal roles post-disaster has not always been realised in practice, and in some cases inequalities have deepened. Bradshaw argues that "social, economic and political vulnerability are often reconstructed after a disaster, thus reproducing the conditions for a repeat disaster" (ibid).

King (2007:658) writes that humanitarian organisations, along with the community and its citizens, are the core of disaster preparedness, response and recovery. In acknowledging this, disaster management has in the past decades shifted its focus towards a more community-centred approach (ibid). Contemporary understandings of disaster management highlight the need to reduce the vulnerability of populations at risk (Bradshaw, 2013:ix, x). Given the value of social capital in shaping resilience to disasters, some international aid organisations have recently adopted some policies and programs aiming to increase the levels of social capital among vulnerable groups (Aldrich & Meyer, 2014:262). Different practices make use of existing community networks and activities to incorporate "disaster issues and resilience actions" or create new spaces that encourage deepening of social networks (ibid). Some of these initiatives and policy recommendations emphasise social events, time banking, focus groups and the reconstruction of physical and architectural designs to augment social interactions (ibid).

Despite these recent changes in some policies and programs, the main focus of humanitarian aid has been to strengthen financial and physical infrastructure within communities (Bradshaw, 2013:109; Aldrich & Meyer, 2014:255). Aldrich (2012:17) emphasises that if social capital proves critical in the recovery phase, policy makers should reallocate their

resources to build, or at least maintain, social networks among vulnerable groups. It is imperative that international aid assistance focuses on building trust and networks, strengthening civil society and creating new links between citizens – but also recognise that stores of social capital can either increase or decrease through external initiatives (Aldrich, 2012:159-160).

3.2 Conceptualising social capital

3.2.1 Theoretical perspectives on social capital

This thesis uses a network-based theory of social capital that will serve as benchmark for the analysis. The following section provides a description of the broader conceptualisation of social capital and proceeds with the reasoning behind the choice of theoretical framework.

Social capital is a theoretical concept that has been popularised by scholars such as Bourdieu (1997), Coleman (1988), Putnam (1993), and later Lin (2001). Bourdieu explained social capital as one of four types of capital – economic, cultural and symbolic, defining it as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition" (Bourdieu, 1997:51). The volume of social capital is therefore, according to Bourdieu, mainly determined by the amount of other forms of capital an individual possess (ibid). Moreover, he suggested that social capital is dependent of economic capital, "since wealth played a key role in societal achievement and reputation" (Aldrich, 2012:28).

Similarly to Bourdieu, Coleman saw strong parallels between social capital and other forms of capital (Aldrich, 2012:28). He explained social capital as "defined by its function […] a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consists of some aspect of social structures and they facilitate certain actions of actors […] within the structure" (Coleman, 1988:98). Coleman puts forward the different aspects of social capital as obligations and expectations, information and social norms - including sanctions (Coleman, 1988:95). His conceptualisation of social capital has been regarded as highly individualistic and rational (Albrecht, 2017a:20).

Despite its growing recognition in various disciplines, social capital has been subject to a wide debate on how to correctly measure and interpret it (Johnston & Percy-Smith, 2003:327). Conceptual and measurement difficulties have induced the concept to dubious

interpretations, less empirical use, and an "underestimation of its value" (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009:480). Aldrich argues that research on social capital has struggled to determine whether the concept constitutes "the data about, reputations of, and information flowing between members of a groups or if it is the network of relationships and connections" (Aldrich, 2012:29). He suggests that some scholars focus on social capital as the *wires* "through which information and resources run", while others highlight social capital as the *electricity* "running through those wires, that is, the information and resources that are passed back and forth" (Aldrich, 2012:29-30). Putnam, for example, belongs to the first category with his definition of social capital as the "trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions" (Putnam, 1993:167). His definition entails three facets of social capital: *horizontal networks* of interpersonal communication and *norms of reciprocity* that together foster *social trust* (Putnam, 1993:171,173). Putnam further argues that similar to trust, norms and networks - social capital is a public good and "not the private property of any of the persons who benefit from it" (Putnam, 1993:170). Putnam's approach, and other scholars defining social capital as the wires, has been used in various case studies on disasters (Albrecht, 2017a:21).

Although social capital entails a variety of definitions, its common denominator is the emphasis on social relations generating productive assets, i.e. accessible resources (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009:487). In the context of disaster resilience, social capital reflects an informal safety net that assists people accessing resources during and after a disaster (Masterson et. al, 2014: 36). It has been identified as an imperative factor for mental health during the recovery phase, and high levels of social capital have proven to positively contribute to "coping efforts and collective efficacy" - since an individual with strong social capital needs less resources in recovering from severe events (Albrecht, 2017a:23).

3.2.2 Network views of social capital

In contrast to Putnam's conceptualisation of social capital, Lin (2001) fits squarely into the latter category, insinuating that social capital is the *electricity* that runs through the wires of social networks (Aldrich, 2012:30). He defines it as "resources embedded in social networks accessed and used by actors for action" (Lin, 2001:25). Lin argues that the value of social capital lies in the access to resources through one's "direct and indirect ties", not in the actual structure or network (Falk, 2015:30, Lin, 2001:19). Similar to previous research conducted by for example Granovetter (1973), Lin advocates open networks and suggests that bridges

within social networks facilitate flows of information and influence (Albrecht, 2017a:21). Granovetter highlighted that sporadic and often informal connections would link different groups of individuals (Aldrich, 2012:27). Close ties commonly hold the same type of information, new information and resources are provided by individuals outside the close network (ibid). Network views of social capital - such as the work of Granovetter (1973) and Lin (2001) - concentrates on the horizontal and vertical aspects of social networks (Aldrich, 2012:31).

Lin suggests four explanations as to why embedded resources in one's social networks can enhance the outcomes of actions (Lin, 2001:19). First, the flow of information is facilitated (Lin, 2001:20). Direct and indirect ties within a social network can provide an individual with information regarding opportunities otherwise not accessible - and likewise "it could provide an organisation or a community about the availability of an otherwise unrecognised individual" (ibid). Second, ties within a social network may wield influence on agents playing a vital role in decision-making involving the individual. Third, "social ties, and their acknowledged relationships to the individual, may be conceived by the organisation or its agents as certifications of the individual's social credentials" (ibid). Ultimately, relationships strengthen identity and recognition. To be assured of and recognised as an individual and member of a social network provides not only emotional support, but also "public acknowledgement of one's claim to certain resources" (ibid). Although Lin's conceptualisation of social capital stems from the field of economics, it has been used in prior research on disasters, for example by Aldrich (ibid; Albrecht, 2017a:21).

In averting a too broad conceptualisation, social capital is usually traced in three dimensions - bonding, bridging and linking social capital (Falk, 2015:29). Bonding social capital refers to relations between individuals who are similar to each other and emotionally close, such as friends or family. Strong bonding social capital proves useful in providing social support and assistance, especially during and after a disaster (Aldrich & Meyer, 2014:259). Bridging social capital allows for 'linkage to external assets', connecting individuals across various ethnic and racial groups, bringing together different communities (Aldrich, 2011:83). Linking social capital connects regular citizens with those that hold positions of authority and power - those who often can distribute scarce resources (Aldrich, 2011:84). Aldrich's research on social capital and disaster recovery builds on Lin's network view of social capital that envisions it "as the resources available through bonding, bridging, and linking social networks

along with the norms and information transmitted through those connections" (Aldrich, 2012:33).

As mentioned earlier, scholars of social capital usually separate between two forms of networks – horizontal and vertical. Bonding and bridging social capital refers to horizontal ties; whereas linking social capital refers to vertical ties (Ferlander, 2007:119). In disaster recovery, horizontal ties are commonly imperative for immediate support, while vertical ties provide longer-term support (Falk, 2015:29). In addition to immediate aid and recovery support, strong horizontal networks enable individuals to receive alerts, undertake precautionary measures and find shelter and supplies (Aldrich & Meyer, 2014:259). Vulnerable groups may have deep reservoirs of bonding capital, i.e. horizontal ties, allowing them to 'get by', while lacking linking social capital, i.e. vertical ties - preventing them to 'get ahead' (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000:227).

Lin points out that social capital is disparately allocated across social groups (Lin, 2000:787). Considerable differences are found "in the social networks and embedded resources between females and males" - with men having weaker horizontal ties but stronger vertical ties, while the opposite applies to women (ibid). Men have larger networks, are connected to larger associations and retain the benefits in associations with other men commonly holding higher positions in hierarchical structures. In contrast, women are affiliated with smaller and more disadvantaged networks, mostly consisting of ties to other women holding lower hierarchical positions (Lin, 2000:788). This enforces closed networks and the "reproduction of resource disadvantages among females" (ibid). In the context of a disaster, recovery initiatives can strengthen 'the voice' of civil society, but some voices may be silenced (Bradshaw, 2013:183). The latter particularly applies to women's voices, and women may instead participate in 'women only' spaces (ibid). Bradshaw highlights that "without care, the disaster for women may be as much the post-disaster interventions as the event itself" (2013:184).

3.3 Social capital: Implications for disaster recovery and policy making

Aldrich describes different external mechanisms for increasing social capital and strengthening existing civil society, referring to various case studies (Aldrich, 2012:160). These efforts include targeted programs promoting management and leadership development which have proven to strengthen both local trust and civic participation, as well as policies providing incentives for community participation (ibid). Moreover, recovery programs

focusing on bringing different people together to build new houses have shown to enhance social capital and deepen trust. Encouraging participation in community services has also proven effective in shortening the psychological recovery after a disaster. Another mechanism for increasing social capital among vulnerable groups is to build or rebuild local institutions, such as community development centres, which provide local citizens with new sources of information as well as ties to each other and to external agencies (Aldrich, 2012:160). Scholars have highlighted the benefit of these centres holding weekly, monthly or annual events in deepening trust and social networks among the citizens (Aldrich, 2012:161). In his own research, Aldrich has measured social capital by collecting data on the number of local voluntary organisations, voting rates, levels of trust and volunteerism, membership local councils and participation in local events and festivals (Aldrich, 2012:15).

The mechanisms of a network-based theory of social capital contribute to a relevant approach within a post-disaster context. Previous research has asserted that a focus on social networks is relevant for social capital and disasters and should be examined further (Albrecht, 2017b:86). The theoretical framework of this thesis will thus build on Lin's conceptualisation of social capital, arguing that the value of social capital within the context of disaster recovery lies in the resources embedded within one's social networks, that can be accessed through ties in the networks (Lin, 2001:25). This thesis will account for, in contrast to Putnam's approach, both horizontal and vertical social networks. It will further recognise the argument put forward by for example Lin and Aldrich, stating that social capital does not function as a public good since it is differentially distributed across social groups (Aldrich, 2012:14).

4 Research design

This section begins by outlining the chosen research design, and is followed by a depiction of the qualitative content analysis. Thereafter, a description of the selected material will be provided along with source criticism.

The posed research question compels for a case study design in order to provide a substantiated analysis that can contribute with knowledge and further understanding of the issue. Bryman (2012:66) writes that the basic case study involves a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of a single case. A case study describes and seeks to understand a phenomenon, and focuses its research problem, theory and empirical analysis on the chosen sample (Woodside, 2010:1-2). Within the field of disaster research, case studies are common

as they allow a deeper and more focused analyses that can illustrate the efficiency of response efforts and prevention measures - subsequently recognising what areas require improvement (Murray et. al, 2012:489).

One of the standard criticisms of the case study design concerns its external validity or generalisability (Bryman, 2012:71). It has been widely debated whether a single case study can yield results that can be generalised to other cases (Bryman, 2012:69). The issue of limited external validity is often countered with suggestions that the purpose of the case study design is not to generalise beyond the chosen case, but rather to "generate an intensive examination of a single case", upon which a theoretical analysis is then elaborated (Bryman, 2012:71). Following this discussion, scholars typically consider a distinction between various types of cases (Bryman, 2012:70). The choice of TC Pam arguably embodies a typical or most-likely case. The typical, or the exemplifying case as Bryman defines it, is often chosen because it epitomises a broader category of cases and provides "a suitable context for certain research questions to be answered" - not because it is extreme or unusual (Bryman, 2012:70). TC Pam can be labelled a typical case of weather-related disasters seeing that it did not have the extreme characteristics of catastrophes, such as the Indian Ocean Tsunami – although it affected a large portion of the population. Moreover, it cannot be sorted as an unusual event, as Vanuatu is categorised as a SIDS and is highly exposed to natural hazards (Rey et al., 2017:259-260).

It could also portray a most-likely case in that it has favourable conditions for the research problem underpinning this study, taking into consideration the presence of international organisations and a gender and protection cluster in the response and recovery of TC Pam (Bryman, 2012:70). The latter suggests that gender related actions were implemented that, in turn, could have influenced women's networks and so their social capital. Moreover, Oxfam, one of the main organisations active in the response and recovery of TC Pam, appear to be aware of the crucial role of social capital in reducing risk and vulnerability (Oxfam America, 2017:62).

The choice of a single case study as a research design is motivated by the ambition to contribute to the knowledge and further understanding of how aid organisations build resilience among vulnerable groups. The chosen case study is illustrative of various aspects important for the research on disaster resilience and vulnerable groups. As described in the

background section, women were most adversely affected by the cyclone and the response induced a large influx of international aid organisations – two imperative aspects for this study.

4.1 Method of analysis

Through an exploratory qualitative content analysis, this thesis will examine how and to what extent external aid organisations focused their recovery efforts on strengthening women's social capital during the recovery phase of Cyclone Pam. The more general phenomenon that this case study intends to generate a better understanding of is how humanitarian aid organisations build disaster resilience among vulnerable populations.

Qualitative content analysis moves beyond simply counting words to examining language in a profound way, for the purpose of arranging substantial amounts of text into an adequate number of categories that depict comparable meanings (Hsiu-Fang & Shannon, 2005:1278). The aim of a content analysis is "to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study" (ibid). Hsiu-Fang and Shannon defines it as "a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (ibid). The emphasis of a qualitative content analysis is "placed on documents that have not been produced at the request of a social researcher", instead the selected materials are "out there, waiting to be assembled and analysed" (Bryman, 2012:543).

The chosen methodology allows for a systematic description and understanding of texts, as opposed to a quantitative research strategy which would emphasise quantification in the collection of data (Bryman, 2012:36). While recognising the strength of a quantitative study in yielding numerical data and potentially a high degree of reliability (Bryman, 2012:36), the main purpose of this thesis is not to numerically quantify targeted efforts of building social capital. Instead, the ambition is to provide an analysis of *how* networking activities are incorporated into aid programs and to what extent activities by international aid organisations focus on increasing social capital among women. This thesis will examine a single case which generally reduces the feasibility of generalising the results. However, it does allow the analysis to examine the selected case in more detail. For the purpose of complementarity, interviews with members of concerned organisations could have been conducted in order to further broaden the understanding of their response to TC Pam. This will however not be part

of this study due to its limitation in time and resources. The selected method and material, described in more detail below, are considered sufficient in providing a substantial and relevant discussion of the research problem.

Hsiu-Fang and Shannon (2005:1278) present three distinct forms of content analysis, all with an aim of providing "knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study". This study emanates from one of the models, *conventional content analysis*, commonly used with a research design that aims to describe a phenomenon (Hsiu-Fang & Shannon, 2005:1279). In this context, the network-based theory of social capital along with its dimensions of vertical and horizontal networks will guide the process of assessing the selected material.

To begin the process of a content analysis, it is imperative to narrow down the research problem to precisely defined questions that will be posed to the text, these will first be presented in section 4.3 (Esaiasson et al., 2017:216). The answers to these questions constitute the solution to the research problem (ibid). This study has identified categories in previous research that will function as a sounding board when creating questions. It takes an open-ended approach, meaning that there are no predetermined answers to the questions - they are instead subject to findings in the text. Hence, the content of these preliminary categories, and their ultimate design, is dependent on the findings. Due to the limitation of research on women's social capital after disasters, it is not possible construct complete categories beforehand, which is why they must remain open for interpretation and modification. A quantitative approach would have required predetermined, clearly constructed, categories in a coding scheme, which further motivates the choice of qualitative approach (Esaiasson et al., 2017:200). To counter the concern of reliability, I will test for the stability of measurement by applying the test-retest method, meaning that I will readminister the analysis of the same material on a later occasion to observe whether the results are the same (Bryman, 2012:169).

The analysis will not include the category *relief actions* (complete list of excluded relief actions in Appendix I). These actions are implemented in terms of more urgent emergency management programs, and do not promote the active participation of the local population. These actions are therefore not conceived to have any significant effects on women's networks.

4.2 Material

The material for this study partly consists of an evaluation report published by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in 2017. Conducted by its independent branch, The Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE), it systematically reviews not only DFAT's explicit funding scheme during and after TC Pam, but also the efforts of humanitarian organisations supported or funded by DFAT (ODE, 2017). It does not evaluate long-term recovery activities as the projects under this funding had not begun at the time of conducting the report (ODE, 2017:19). DFAT's funding was limited to four organisations that were considered to have well-established relationships with affected communities - World Vision; Save the Children; CARE and Oxfam (ODE, 2017:32). These organisations did not only play a valuable role in Vanuatu after TC Pam, they are also important actors in the larger context of international humanitarian aid.

Complementary to this evaluation, a report conducted by Oxfam in 2016 will be assessed in the analysis. It reviews and evaluates Oxfam's response to TC Pam, which provides an important insight into the work of one of the main international aid organisations that were active after the cyclone. Time constraints, along with a limited availability of other comprehensive response evaluations, motivates the choice of solely analysing one organisational report. Furthermore, recovery activities commonly have a broad focus, why many organisations do not explicitly mention gendered aspects of the response in their evaluation reports.

Bryman (2012:544) identifies four important criteria for assessing the quality of documents. First, the *authenticity*, concerning the genuineness of the evidence and origin. Second, the *credibility*, lifting the importance of the evidence being free from distortion and error. Third, *representativeness*, asking if the evidence is typical of its kind, or if not, if the extent of its uncommonness is known. Fourth, *meaning* - considering if the evidence is clear and comprehensible (ibid). Official documents deriving from private sources, such as organisations, are presumably authentic and meaningful (Bryman, 2012:551). However, some scholars emphasise issues of credibility and representativeness, arguing that these sources cannot be regarded as providing objective accounts of information (ibid). Others suggest that these documents have be "viewed as a distinct level of 'reality' in their own right", meaning

that the analyst needs to consider the context in which they were produced and their intended audience (Bryman, 2012:554).

Although a secondary source, the evaluation conducted by ODE provides a detailed and independent account of the humanitarian assistance deployed after TC Pam, with data collected through document reviews, key informant interviews and a field trip to Vanuatu. It illuminates several key aspects of the efforts pursued by DFAT's implementing partners - partners that reflect an array of organisations typically used in humanitarian responses (ODE, 2017:31). In regard to Bryman's four criteria of source criticism, ODE's evaluation can arguably be considered to score relatively high on all - while issues of credibility and representativeness are important to consider. As with the evaluation conducted by Oxfam, it is questionable whether the documents can be regarded as providing objective accounts of information. ODE's evaluation arguably gains more credibility with its transparency in methodology and overall process of collecting data - while the opposite applies to Oxfam's evaluation. Moreover, since the first report reviews not only the funding of a governmental agency, but also the efforts of international organisations, its intended audience is potentially broader than that of the latter report, which might be directed towards its donors and other organisations. This could affect the credibility of Oxfam's report, as the organisation might want to appear in a certain manner to attract further donations.

Nonetheless, both sources are considered valuable, reliable and sufficient in contributing to a substantial and relevant discussion with reference to the research problem.

4.3 Operationalisation and Analytical Framework

The operationalisation of the network-based theory of social capital will be carried out through two dimensions of social networks discussed in previous research - vertical and horizontal networks. This division is made considering that bonding and bridging social capital are similar in that they typically induce horizontal networks, while linking social capital usually generates vertical networks (Ferlander, 2007:119). The table below builds on the theory in the context of disaster recovery, and explains how the network-based theory of social capital has been operationalised in this study.
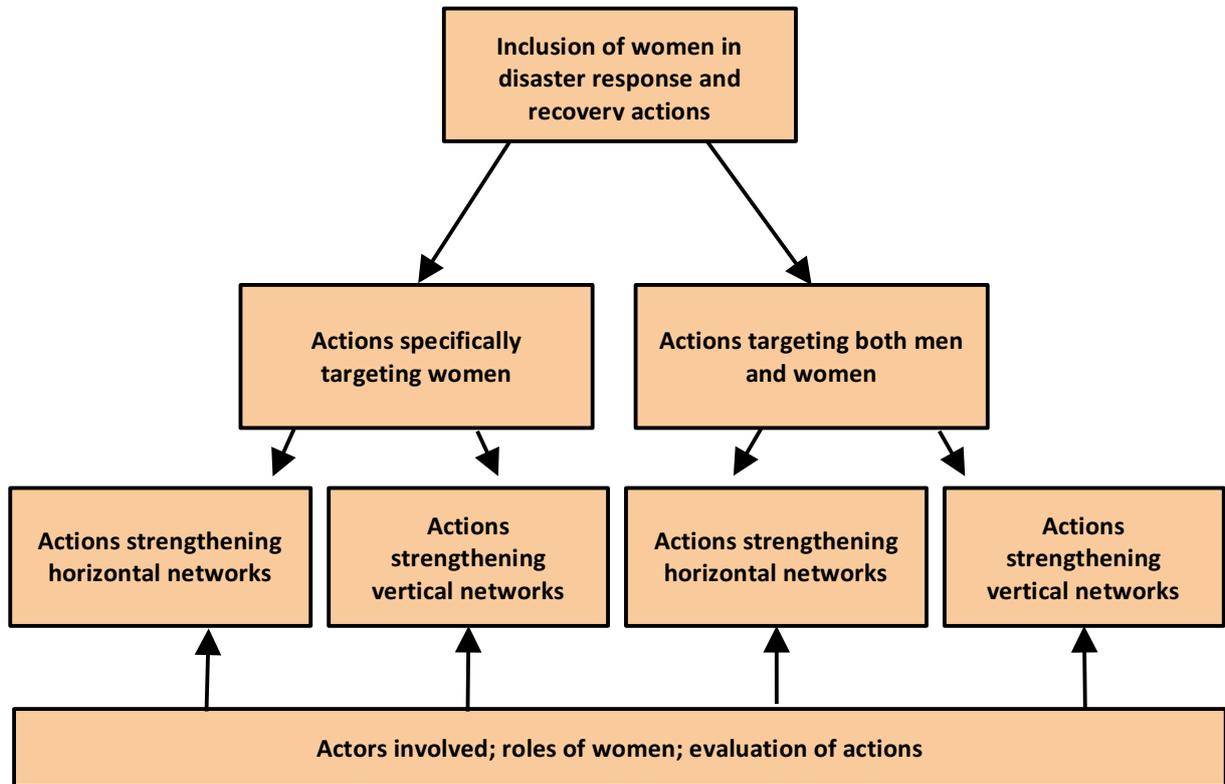
Table 1. Operationalisation of social capital

Framework categories	Horizontal networks (bonding and bridging social capital)	Vertical networks (linking social capital)
Description	▪ Relations between individuals who are similar to each other and emotionally close, such as friends or family ▪ Relations between individuals across various ethnic and racial groups, external community ties	▪ Connects regular citizens with those that hold positions of authority and power
Post-disaster application	▪ Provides social support and assistance ▪ Vital for immediate support ▪ Creates ability to overcome collective action problem ▪ Provides linkage to external assets	▪ Involves translocal connections to international organisations and government agencies; such links help survivors and villages more quickly and easily acquire often scarce resources after a disaster from beyond their typical reach ▪ Vital for longer-term support
Operationalisation: Humanitarian organisation's efforts to increase social capital among women	▪ Grows from organisation's efforts to strengthen women's connections with friends/family and across groups	▪ Grows from organisation's efforts to strengthen women's connections to those with authority/power
Possible actions	▪ Programs bringing different people together in construction ▪ Programs encouraging participation in community services ▪ Programs focusing on rebuilding institutions that ties citizens and communities to each other	▪ Programs promoting management and leadership development ▪ Policies providing incentives for community participation ▪ Programs focusing on rebuilding local institutions, such as community development centres that provide citizens with information and ties to external agencies

Building on the above operationalisation of social capital, the following analytical framework will serve as a reference point for the questions presented below, while also guiding the structure of the analysis. The aim of providing a coherent and comprehensible framework is to prevent systematic errors and to assure reliability and internal validity, why it furthermore

is imperative for the operational definition to correspond with the theoretical definition (Bryman, 2012:389-390).

Figure 1. Analytical Framework

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                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │   Inclusion of women in  │
                    │   disaster response and  │
                    │     recovery actions     │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                       ↙                    ↘
          ┌──────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────┐
          │  Actions specifically│   │ Actions targeting both│
          │    targeting women   │   │     men and women     │
          └──────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────┘
            ↙            ↘              ↙              ↘
┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐
│Actions       │ │Actions       │ │Actions       │ │Actions       │
│strengthening │ │strengthening │ │strengthening │ │strengthening │
│horizontal    │ │vertical      │ │horizontal    │ │vertical      │
│networks      │ │networks      │ │networks      │ │networks      │
└──────────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────────┘
        ↑             ↑                  ↑                 ↑
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│      Actors involved; roles of women; evaluation of actions      │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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The following questions will be used when assessing the material and the efforts of international aid organisations in the aftermath of TC Pam:

1. What recovery activities included both men and women?

2. What recovery activities targeted women specifically?

3. Which activities could potentially have strengthened women's horizontal networks?

4. Which activities could potentially have strengthened women's vertical networks?

5. What actors were involved in the activities, except for women?

6. What roles did women have in the activities?

7. What was the general evaluation of the international response?

5 Results and analysis

This section explores how and to what extent international aid organisations focused their response and recovery efforts on strengthening women's social capital post TC Pam. It does so by describing the findings of this research arranged in a logical sequence based upon the analytical framework and questions presented above. The results will be interpreted under each subheading with the analysis mainly centred under sections 5.2 Horizontal Networks and 5.3 Vertical Networks. A complete summary of the results guided by the questions is presented in Appendix II.

5.1 Response and recovery activities

This part outlines the response and recovery activities that included both men and women, and activities that specifically targeted women. Only activities mentioned in the material along with implementing actors, in this case international aid organisations, will be included in the analysis, as the inclusion of all other activities could potentially yield uncertain results.

5.1.1 Activities targeting both men and women

In the first three months of responding to TC Pam, international actors promoted various activities involving the local population (ODE, 2017:26). Ten activities were found to not explicitly address the involvement of women, supposedly targeting a broader population. Small scale trials of cash for work programs were initiated by some organisations, Oxfam arranged cash payments for clearing debris and supported farmers with vouchers to purchase agricultural supplies (ODE, 2017:51). ODE's evaluation suggests that cash transfers were a preferred form of assistance in supporting recovery for some groups, but not all affected by TC Pam (ibid).

Other organisations communicated "program activities and schedules to communities using posters and notice boards, having a help desk at distribution points and post-distribution monitoring using feedback and complaints boxes available at distribution sites and other public locations, and in one case, a feedback hotline" (ODE, 2017:52). Additionally, some organisations focused on providing psychosocial support to affected populations, including 386 Early Childhood teachers (ODE, 2017:34). The evaluation does not disclose any further details regarding the length or procedure of this activity.

Since the target groups of these programs are not specified in the evaluation conducted by ODE, the extent of women's involvement is unknown. A concern raised in the evaluation could be significant for this matter, describing "how the response had largely targeted men and not consulted them [*women*] at any point on their specific needs" (ODE, 2017:34). This indicates that women may not have participated in the programs described above to the same extent as men. The uncertainty of women's involvement makes it difficult to draw any conclusions about their roles in these activities.

However, some activities explicitly promoted the active inclusion of both men and women. Oxfam supported 26 income-generating activities (IGA) involving 210 households, through actions such as "identifying business opportunities; establishing IGA groups and supporting them with governance; running business and technical skills training; assisting with business plan development and appraisal; providing start-up cash and materials; overseeing product quality development; and providing marketing support" (Oxfam, 2016:3). Some of the business opportunities identified were "sewing, baking, poultry, fishing, peanut processing and selling, cooperatives stores, and concrete block-making" (ibid). Women, who comprised 46% of the IGA participants, mainly engaged in sewing, poultry, baking, block-making, cooperatives stores and peanut processing, and "three IGA groups (two sewing and one chips and rice selling) are now fully run by women" (Oxfam, 2016:3-4). Oxfam also organised community workshops "to develop action plans that were implemented via community-led WASH rehabilitation busy bees", along with workshops in Community Drinking Water Safety and Security Planning (DWSSP) (Oxfam, 2016:2). These sessions encouraged local water committees to be proactive about water quality (safety) and water quantity (security), while they also mobilised community-led water and sanitation system rehabilitation works. Both men and women were targeted as active members of these committees and have, according to Oxfam, responded with positive feedback (ibid).

Other activities targeting both men and women included disaster risk training offered to school teachers, and hygiene awareness sessions where participants received information, education and communication materials (ODE, 2017:34).

Oxfam further focused on improving "the inclusion of people with disability in disaster management" (Oxfam, 2016:5). This was done by "strengthening community-based disabled peoples' organisations and committees, raising community awareness of disability inclusion

in disaster management and enhancing the networks, referral systems and capabilities of disability service providers to link cyclone recovery support to people with disabilities" (ibid). Moreover, Oxfam promoted shared responsibilities in communities affected by the cyclone, by building "awareness of gender inequalities and support women's roles and leadership in community committees" (ibid). Overall, Oxfam appears to have included a broad range of different participants in their response and recovery programs, with a focus on assisting those most vulnerable.

5.1.2 Activities specifically targeting women

For the purpose of this study, it is important to learn where the focus of improving women's disaster resilience was centred - that is, by examining what type of response and recovery activities that specifically targeted women. Based on the material, seven response and recovery activities were identified in this category.

Oxfam, one of the main organisations active in the response to TC Pam, states in their evaluation report the following:

> "Oxfam's focus on gender and protection in the Tropical Cyclone Pam response has been to safely address the basic needs of all community members — including women, young people and people with disabilities — to promote women's empowerment and equal decision-making between women and men". (Oxfam, 2016:5)

With this statement, Oxfam confirms a gender-sensitive approach to disaster management – acknowledging their understanding of the differential impact and vulnerability of women during and after disasters. This is an important implication for the underpinning research problem of this study.

Specifically targeting women, three Women's Information Centres were established, "ensuring women could access information and assistance, including referral of gender-based violence and child abuse cases" (ibid). Women, as recipients of information and assistance, presumably adopted a more passive role in this activity and mainly engaged with those providing support. Additionally, support was given to 36 women's groups "to lead the improvement of food security and livelihoods" (ODE, 2017:34). Although the meaning of the latter is not elaborated on further in the text, it could potentially be linked to the work of organisations, such as CARE, making sure that women comprised at least half of the teams

monitoring food and non-food item distributions (ODE, 2017:53). It has been suggested that the involvement of women in this type of activity contributes to a fairer distribution of items while they also help in identifying protection issues (ibid). Supposing that women were active participants in the improvement of food security and livelihoods, it is debatable whether the motivation behind it challenges women's traditional roles as caretakers - or promotes them rather. Bradshaw argues that "these stereotypical caring roles that women take on are then further reinforced by international actors and international aid, which seek out women and women's groups as the 'beneficiaries' of projects, thus reinforcing the notion of a feminised responsibility to care" (2013: 153). This further has the potential to affect women's ability to expand their existing networks - an issue that will be elaborated upon in section 5.3.

Oxfam continues to describe implemented initiatives supporting women to earn an income (2016:5). Women were encouraged to gain new skills in, for example, "community sanitation planning, toilet construction, business planning and technical aspects of water safety and security management" (ibid). They were also given vouchers tailored to meet their needs (ibid). Oxfam further claim to have supported women's roles and leadership in community committees (ibid), an activity which is not described in greater detail but seemingly promotes the active participation of women. At the national level, voices of women and youths with disabilities were amplified in a two-day forum on Women in Emergency Response and Recovery, facilitated by international organisations in partnership with the Vanuatu Government (ibid).

The aim of the activities specifically targeting women mainly appear to have promoted their active participation. The focus on many activities seem to be placed on the integration of women into labour markets or similar – which is more likely to generate stronger horizontal networks.

5.2 Horizontal networks

As described in section 4.3 Operationalisation and Analytical Framework, horizontal networks are enhanced through efforts of strengthening women's connections to friends, family, and individuals across ethnic groups and communities. In the context of disaster recovery, strong horizontal networks prove imperative in providing social support and assistance, while they also increase the ability to overcome collective action problems.

This analysis has identified nine out of seventeen activities that potentially could have strengthened women's horizontal networks. These include:

- ❖ Skills training in community sanitation planning, toilet construction, business planning and technical aspects of water safety and security management
  - potentially strengthened networks between women, community members and other communities
- ❖ Voucher-handouts to support women earning their own income
  - potentially strengthened networks between women, community members and other communities
- ❖ Cash for work programs to clear debris: *potentially strengthened networks between women, community members and other communities*
- ❖ Income-generating activities (IGAs)
  - potentially strengthened networks between women, community members and other communities
- ❖ Participation in monitoring of food and non-food item distributions
  - potentially strengthened networks between women, community members and other communities
- ❖ The support given to 36 women's groups to lead the improvement of food security and livelihoods
  - potentially strengthened networks between women
- ❖ The promotion of shared responsibilities in communities through building awareness of gender inequalities
  - potentially strengthened networks between women, families, friends and community members
- ❖ Community workshops
  - potentially strengthened networks between women and community members
- ❖ Disaster risk training
  - potentially strengthened networks between women and community members

The use of the word *potentially* is relevant in the context of this analysis as there is no actual evidence of an increase in women's social capital post TC Pam. This study focuses on *how* and *to what extent* aid organisations focused their response and recovery efforts on

strengthening women's social capital - not if they succeeded in doing so as this would require a different type of research and collection of data.

Group activities aiming to integrate women into the labour market, such as the skills training; voucher-handouts; cash for work programs; and IGAs, could be considered to fall under the same category encouraging the active participation of women and the interaction with others deriving from similar backgrounds. The same applies to the activities promoting women's participation in teams monitoring food and non-food item distributions, as well as the support of women's groups to lead the improvement of food security and livelihoods. One could presume that these types of group activities promote cooperation and communication among participating women. In light of this, it is possible to suggest that women's ties to other women and community members were enhanced during the span of these activities - thus resulting in stronger horizontal networks.

Drawing on a similar approach to women's empowerment, Oxfam was active in the promotion of shared responsibilities within communities through building awareness of gender inequalities (Oxfam, 2016:5). Although this activity lacks further description of how it was implemented and who participated, this type of actions can arguably result in a deeper understanding of group behaviours and traditional gender roles. A more profound understanding of one another could have a positive effect on relationships within communities, families and between friends. This activity is thus perceived to potentially have enhanced women's horizontal networks.

Another activity that might have strengthened women's horizontal ties is the disaster risk training offered to school teachers. Although the evaluation conducted by ODE does not reveal the extent of women's involvement, it is conceivable that school teachers as a group consists of both men and women. It is furthermore likely that such an activity is implemented as a group exercise – why it possibly had an influence on women's horizontal networks.

Among these activities potentially strengthening women's networks, it is necessary to consider women's roles - whether they have participated as active or passive agents. As discussed in section 3.3, response and recovery activities that are considered to build social capital are those that provide incentives for community participation. Thus, if women are involved as active participants in these programs, it is more likely that they are in a position

where they can expand their social networks and subsequently change their social position. As for the activities mentioned in this section, they all appear to promote women's active participation.

5.3 Vertical networks

Vertical networks are strengthened through efforts of connecting regular citizens with those that hold positions of authority and power. Strong vertical networks help survivors to access often scarce resources beyond their typical reach, and has been described as crucial for longer-term support.

This analysis has identified three out of seventeen activities that potentially could have strengthened women's vertical networks:

- ❖ The establishment of Three Women's Information Centres
  - potentially strengthened networks between women and external actors holding positions of some authority
- ❖ The realisation of the Women in Emergency Response and Recovery forum
  - potentially strengthened networks between women and external organisations, decision-making bodies and individuals holding positions of authority
- ❖ The support of women's roles and leadership in community committees
  - potentially strengthened networks between women and individuals holding positions of authority

The establishment of three Women's Information Centres ensured women's access to information and assistance, and provided support in gender-based violence and child abuse cases (ODE, 2017:26). The evaluation does not disclose any details regarding the individuals providing the assistance, but the purpose of these centres seemingly promotes women's access to information through ties to external actors. As the description of this activity does not mention any interaction among the women seeking assistance, it is likely that the establishment of these centres mainly enhanced the links between women and external actors holding positions of some authority or power, i.e. the ability to assist. To provide support in gender-based violence and child abuse cases arguably requires some degree of knowledge acquired through higher education or similar, thus enabling other women to obtain knowledge

and assistance otherwise not available in their existing networks. This instigates why women's vertical networks potentially were amplified.

Second, the realisation of the Women in Emergency and Recovery forum involved both local and external actors. Oxfam partnered with the Department of Women's Affairs, CARE International, UN Women along with other organisations and held a two-day forum lifting the voices and priorities of women in the discussion of post-cyclone plans and practices. More than 140 participants from different communities, "including members of women's organisations, disability organisations and humanitarian agencies" attended the event (Oxfam, 2016:5). Oxfam asserts that lessons and recommendations from the forum were shared with government agencies and non-governmental actors, and that they will "continue to promote these internally and with other organisations" (ibid).

The framing of this event suggests that participating women engaged with several external organisations in the discussion of response and recovery practices deployed after TC Pam. This can thus be regarded as an activity that potentially strengthened women's vertical networks, as ties to participating external agencies were reinforced. However, noticing that some of the participants represented local organisations, it is debatable to what extent the forum was effective in building vertical networks - as one could presume that many of these representatives already had established links to external agencies.

Third, Oxfam mentions that they "have worked with women, men and male leaders to promote shared responsibilities, build awareness of gender inequalities and support women's roles and leadership in community committees" (2016:5). To know the extent of these activities, and how they were pursued, would require additional research as no further details are provided in the evaluation. The information given, however, suggests that Oxfam not only attempted to strengthen women's horizontal networks within their communities by promoting shared responsibilities, but also their vertical networks by supporting their roles and leadership in community committees - connecting them with individuals holding positions of authority.

However, as with the activities mentioned in section 5.2 Horizontal Networks, it is important to consider whether implemented activities are consciously constructed for both men and women. Bradshaw (2013:183) highlights the problem with disaster response and recovery

initiatives that are supposed to strengthen 'the voice of civil society', while in reality some voices remain unheard. The latter particularly applies to women, as their participation is usually encouraged within 'women only' spaces (ibid). This has the potential to result in the "reproduction of resource disadvantages among females" (ibid). Judging from the descriptions of the activities mentioned in this section, two out of three activities could potentially have succeeded in raising the voices of women outside of the 'women only' spaces. These include the support of women's roles in community committees and the Women in Emergency and Recovery forum. Both of these activities involve various participants from different hierarchical levels of society and thus extend the reach of women's voices beyond their horizontal networks. The Women's Information Centres may connect women to external actors holding positions of some authority, but the description does not suggest any broader interaction.

Referring to previous research on disaster vulnerability, scholars argue that women cannot respond to disasters as well as men due to socially constructed roles (Bradshaw, 2013:83). Emanating from this, social capital is unequally distributed across social groups and there are distinct disparities "in the social networks and embedded resources between females and males" (Lin, 2000:787). In contrast to men, women tend to have stronger horizontal networks allowing them to 'get by', but weaker vertical networks preventing them to 'get ahead' (Lin, 2000:788; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000:227). Moreover, women's networks are usually smaller than those of men, with fewer accessible resources. Women's disaster vulnerability and resource disadvantage thus partly stem from a lack of strong vertical networks. This implies that a focus on increasing women's vertical networks could induce a potential structural change, consequently reducing women's vulnerability to disasters.

The realisation of the three activities described above is considered to have encouraged the connection between women and external actors, decision-making bodies, and other individuals holding positions of authority to a wider or lesser extent. However, compared to the nine activities that were found to potentially have strengthened women's horizontal networks, the number of activities in this section suggests that there were limited efforts among international aid organisations to strengthen women's vertical networks post TC Pam. Hence, there is the possibility that aid efforts did not remarkably affect women's social capital. This is an important finding, considering that TC Pam is described to embody a most-likely case in this study, expected to conform to expectations on the relationship between

efforts of international organisations and the generation of women's social capital. Oxfam, seemingly aware of the imperative role of social capital in reducing vulnerability, did not aim their attention at strengthening women's vertical networks.

5.4 General evaluation of the international response

Guiding the international response to TC Pam, The Humanitarian Action Policy "recognised that international humanitarian assistance is most effective when it builds on and further develops existing skills and local capacities so that ultimately countries can manage humanitarian assistance without international assistance. This is best achieved when assistance reinforces the capacities of government and civil society at all levels in the affected country, rather than displacing or undermining them" (ODE, 2017:43). Stemming from this policy perspective, programs deployed by DFAT's main implementing partners post TC Pam commonly built on "existing disasters preparedness programs with Community Disaster Committees (CDCs) and were largely effective at addressing the needs of communities and building local capacity. A strength of the work undertaken by the NGOs was their focus on gender and protection" (2017:32). However, the international response has been criticised on several fronts.

Vanuatu's National Disaster Committee considered the international assistance valuable, but expressed that many international organisations "worked separately from the government in order to increase their visibility" (ODE, 2017:27). Moreover, criticism was directed at how the cluster meetings had been run. Local organisations described that international actors displayed a lack of cultural awareness and sensitivity and that cluster meetings had been dominated by white male stakeholders - leaving local actors feeling disempowered (ibid). During the course of the evaluation conducted by ODE, many international organisations recognised this and expressed a similar discomfort (ibid).

Responding quickly to TC Pam was prioritised over other aims, which potentially harmed relationships with local actors and reduced general effectiveness and sustainability (ODE, 2017:27). While there was a need for international organisations to respond to Cyclone Pam, in some instances they took on roles that could have been played by local actors, including local private businesses (ODE, 2017:44). The international response has received criticism "for being foreign-driven, undermining government systems, and lacking accountability" (ODE, 2017:28). Despite international efforts of being accountable to affected populations,

several communities experienced that their voices had not been sufficiently considered in the design and adaptation of the response. Community members participating in the evaluation conducted by ODE described the "ineffectiveness of complaints mechanisms and the lack of attention to the voices of sub-groups within the community" (ODE, 2017:52).

The Vanuatu Women's Centre that was part of the Gender and Protection cluster, along with other national actors, conveyed that their knowledge, resources and expertise had not been sufficiently used by international organisations (ODE, 2017:54). Through their established networks across Vanuatu, they could have ensured assistance, counselling and other services directed at the most vulnerable groups (ibid). Despite assessments recognising more affected groups such as female-headed households, they were not prioritised in the assistance provided by international organisations but instead, in some instances, received help from within their communities (ODE, 2017:51). Moreover, international actors typically consulted community leaders, but community leaders are generally older men (ODE, 2017:52). Women have expressed that the international response mainly targeted men and did not consult them at any time about their needs. Stakeholders also felt that there was a lack of information about items being distributed and "who was entitled to what" (ibid). These critiques were noted early in the response phase at the Women in Emergency Response and Recovery forum (ibid).

Another critical aspect to discuss is the lifespan of the activities described in the analysis as having potentially enhanced women's networks. The evaluations do not contain information about the length of the activities, although it is mentioned that "the humanitarian deployments were valuable but could have been more effective if deployments were lengthened, phased and had structured handovers" (ODE, 2017:4). One could assume that programs promoting participation in for example the reconstruction of homes or buildings terminate when initiating actors leave. Long-term projects are perceivably those that encourage participation in already established institutions, such as local councils or committees. The duration of activities is an imperative factor to consider when exploring the effectiveness of network-building activities. Projects that finish when implementing actors leave may have a marginal impact - if any at all - on women's social capital.

6 Conclusion

This section will summarise the results and analysis, and discuss these in relation to the research problem underpinning this study. It will further reflect on the results in relation to the

theoretical framework; research design and method chosen for the analysis, and conclude with implications for future research and practice.

Disaster vulnerability is inequitably distributed across social groups. Women - especially single women, female-headed households, elderly women and women with disabilities — confront greater risks in the wake of disasters. In comparison to men, women may not have the necessary resources to respond to and recover from disasters.

The imperative role of social capital in reducing vulnerability to disasters has been acknowledged by scholars, policy-makers, and practitioners — yet little to no research exists regarding how this has been realised in practice. Manifested through weak social networks, women's limited social capital reduces their access to critical resources during and after disaster, and inevitably increases their vulnerability (UNISDR, UNDP & IUCN, 2009:24).

Contributing to this research gap, this thesis has explored *how* and *to what extent* international aid organisations focused their actions on increasing women's social capital following TC Pam. A network-based theory of social capital served as a theoretical framework for the study, and the research problem was analysed using a qualitative approach. The results demonstrate that among seventeen response and recovery activities found in the evaluations to have targeted the participation of men and women, nine were identified to potentially have strengthened women's horizontal networks and three activities were found to potentially have enhanced women's vertical networks. This suggests that there were limited efforts among international aid organisations to maintain or build women's social capital through enhancing their vertical networks following TC Pam. The activities specifically targeting the active participation of women appear to have focused on the integration of women into the labour market, which potentially had a greater effect on their horizontal networks rather than vertical networks. Considering that women are depicted to have stronger horizontal networks but weaker vertical networks preventing them to 'get ahead' – it is questionable whether international aid organisations managed to increase women's social capital at all.

The evaluations examined in this study do not explicitly mention social capital or networks, why the described activities have been *interpreted* through a qualitative content analysis as either strengthening women's horizontal or vertical networks. The operationalisation of social capital and analytical framework presented in section 4.3 provide a clear directory for how

this interpretation has been realised. Although these findings *indicate* how and to what extent women's networks were strengthened post TC Pam, it is imperative to keep in mind that other activities implemented by international organisations may have been overlooked due to the limited selection of material used in this study. The choice of conducting a single case study analysed through a small sample of material further limits the possibility to generalise the results of this paper. However, the aim is rather to enhance the understanding of how aid organisations build disaster resilience among vulnerable groups through a focus on increasing their social capital. Further research is encouraged to extend the knowledge on this matter. I recommend conducting interviews with involved organisations and stake-holders, as the limited scope of this study did not allow for this to be realised.

Considering that TC Pam served as a most-likely case in this study, and that the results demonstrate an insufficient focus of response and recovery efforts on building social capital among women – one can question whether different organisations have succeeded better in other cases. By implication, future research could investigate this proposition through conducting larger case studies or by using a different methodological approach. A different or broader operationalisation of social capital, to include trust and norms, could further yield an extended coding scheme and potentially a more nuanced view of social capital in the disaster context.

The results further have potential implications for practitioners and policy-makers in the humanitarian field, as the findings suggest that a shift of focus in actions and policies aiming to reduce women's risk and vulnerability to the effects of disasters is needed.

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Appendix I. Relief Actions Excluded from the Analysis

Health	• Distributions of essential sanitation and hygiene materials (Oxfam, 2016:2. • Treatments at health clinics (ODE, 2017:2). • Reparation of health facilities (ibid), • Children vaccinated against measles (ODE, 2017:34). • Construction of accessible toilets, distribution of menstrual hygiene materials and information (Oxfam, 2016:5)
Education	• The establishment of Temporary Learning Spaces allowing children to return to school (ODE, 2017:26). • Repairs to schools (ODE, 2017:34). • Repairs and replacement of damaged learning materials and equipment in schools (ibid).
Shelter	• Shelter assistance (ODE, 2017:2). • Distribution of tarpaulin sheets and tool kits (ODE, 2017:26).
Food and livelihoods	• Construction or rehabilitation of community and school hand-dug wells, rainwater catchments and water supply systems (Oxfam, 2016:2). • Distribution of clean water (Oxfam, 2016:3). • Large-scale gravity-fed water supply system reconstructions (ibid). • Distribution of seeds and livelihoods kits (ibid). • Distribution of food (Oxfam, 2016:6).

Appendix II. Qualitative Content Analysis: Results

1. What recovery activities included both men and women?	- Community workshops to develop action plans that were implemented via community-led WASH rehabilitation busy bees (Oxfam, 2016:2) - Community Drinking Water Safety and Security Planning workshops (ibid) - Psychosocial support given to 386 Early Childhood teachers (ODE, 2017:34). - Disaster risk training offered to school teachers (ODE, 2017:34). - Cash for work programs (ODE, 2017:51). - Vouchers were offered to farmers to buy agricultural supplies (ibid). - International organisations communicated "program activities and schedules to communities using posters and notice boards, having a help desk at distribution points and post-distribution monitoring using feedback and complaints boxes available at distribution sites and other public locations, and in one case, a feedback hotline" (ODE, 2017:52). - Oxfam promoted shared responsibilities in communities, by building awareness of gender inequalities (ibid). - Oxfam worked to improve the inclusion of people with disability in disaster management. This was done through "strengthening community-based disabled peoples" organisations and committees, raising community awareness of disability inclusion in disaster management and enhancing the networks, referral systems and capabilities of disability service providers to link cyclone recovery support to people with disabilities" (ibid), - Oxfam supported 26 income-generating activities (IGAs) comprising 210 households, through actions such as "identifying business opportunities; establishing IGA groups and supporting them with governance; running business and technical skills training; assisting with business plan development and appraisal; providing start-up cash and materials; overseeing product quality development; and providing marketing support" (Oxfam, 2016:3).
2. What activities targeted women specifically?	- The establishment of three Women's Information Centres (ODE, 2017:26). - The support of 36 women's groups to lead the improvement of food security and livelihoods (ODE, 2017:34). - The participation of women in teams monitoring food and non-food item distributions (ODE, 2017:53) - Voucher handouts tailored to meet the needs of women to support them earning an income (Oxfam, 2016:5). - The realisation of the Women in Emergency Response and Recovery forum (ibid)

	• The skills training in community sanitation planning, toilet construction, business planning and technical aspects of water safety and security management (ibid). • Oxfam's support of women's roles and leadership in community committees (ibid).
3. Which activities could potentially have strengthened women's horizontal networks?	• Monitoring of food and non-food item distributions: *potentially strengthened networks between women, friends, other communities* • The support given to women's groups to lead the improvement of food security and livelihoods: *potentially strengthened networks between women* • IGAs: *potentially strengthened networks between women and other community members* • Skills training: *potentially strengthened networks between women and other community members* • Voucher-handouts: *potentially strengthened networks between women and other community members* • Cash for work programs: *potentially strengthened networks between women and other community members* • The promotion of shared responsibilities in communities through building awareness of gender inequalities: *potentially strengthened networks between women, family, friends and within communities* • Community workshops: *potentially strengthened networks between women and community members* • Disaster risk training: *potentially strengthened networks between women and community members*
4. Which activities could potentially have strengthened women's vertical networks?	• The establishment of Three Women's Information Centres: *potentially strengthened networks between women and external actors holding positions of some authority* • The realisation of the Women in Emergency Response and Recovery forum: *potentially strengthened networks between women and external organisations, decision-making bodies and individuals holding positions of authority* • The support of women's roles and leadership in community committees: *potentially strengthened networks between women and individuals holding positions of authority*
5. What actors were involved in the activities, except for women?	• Community workshops to develop action plans: *men, external actors* • Community Drinking Water Safety and Security Planning workshops: *men, external actors* • Women's Information Centres: *external actors* • Psychosocial support: *men, external actors* • Support given to women's groups to lead the improvement of food security and livelihoods: *external actors* • Disaster risk training: *men, external actors* • Monitoring of food and non-food item distributions: *men*

	• Cash for work programs: *men* • Vouchers offered to farmers: *men* • Vouchers offered to women: *only women* • Communication of program activities and schedules to communities using posters and notice boards, help desks at distribution points and post-distribution monitoring using feedback and complaints boxes: *men, external actors* • Skills training: *only women* • Oxfam's promotion of shared responsibilities in communities: *men, external actors* • The support of women's roles and leadership in community committees: *men, external actors, decision-making bodies* • The Women in Emergency Response and Recovery forum: *potentially men, external actors, decision-making bodies* • Oxfam's work to improve the inclusion of people with disability in disaster management: *men, external actors* • IGAs: *men, external actors*
6. What roles did women have in the activities?	• Community workshops to develop action plans: *active, participating in workshops* • Community Drinking Water Safety and Security Planning workshops: *active, participating in workshops* • Women's Information Centres: *passive, receiving tailored information* • Psychosocial support: *passive, receiving assistance* • Support given to women's groups to lead the improvement of food security and livelihoods: *active, leading the improvement of food security and livelihoods* • Disaster risk training: *passive in receiving information, active in the practice* • Monitoring of food and non-food item distributions: *active, monitoring food and non-food distributions* • Cash for work programs: *active, participating in programs* • Vouchers offered to farmers: *passive in receiving vouchers, active in using them* • Vouchers offered to women: *passive in receiving voucher, active in using them* • Communication of program activities and schedules to communities using posters and notice boards, help desks at distribution points and post-distribution monitoring using feedback and complaints boxes: *mostly passive, receiving information* • Skills training: *active, participating in skills training* • Oxfam's promotion of shared responsibilities in communities: *passive, receiving information* • The support of women's roles and leadership in community committees: *active, participating in committees*

	• The Women in Emergency Response and Recovery forum: *active, participating in the forum* • Oxfam's work to improve the inclusion of people with disability in disaster management: *active, participating in activities and committees* • IGAs: *active, participating in activities*
7. What was the general evaluation of the international response?	• Programs commonly built "on existing disasters preparedness programs with Community Disaster Committees (CDCs) and were largely effective at addressing the needs of communities and building local capacity. A strength of the work undertaken by the NGOs was their focus on gender and protection" (ODE, 2017:32). • International assistance was considered valuable by Vanuatu's National Disaster Committee, although many international actors worked separately from the government" in order to increase their visibility" (ODE, 2017:27). Furthermore, discontent was expressed regarding the cluster meetings, in which local organisations experienced a male, international domination of the proceedings - consequently drowning local voices. Many stakeholders from the Vanuatu government, the United Nations, Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and other organisations retrospectively recognised and expressed discomfort with how cluster meetings had been run (ibid). • Responding quickly to TC Pam was prioritised over other aims, which potentially harmed relationships with local actors and reduced general effectiveness and sustainability (ibid). • The international response "has been criticised for being foreign-driven, undermining government systems, and lacking accountability" (ODE, 2017:28). • Despite assessments recognising more affected groups such as female-headed households, they were not prioritised in the assistance provided by international actors but instead, in some instances, received help from within their communities (ODE, 2017:51). • The Vanuatu Women's Centre conveyed that their knowledge, resources and expertise had not been sufficiently used by international organisations. Through their established networks across Vanuatu, they could have ensured assistance, counselling and other services directed at the most vulnerable groups (ODE, 2017:54). • Several communities experienced that their voices had not been sufficiently considered in the design of the response and the actual adaption of the response (ODE, 2017:52). Community members participating in the evaluation by ODE "described the ineffectiveness of complaints mechanisms and the lack of attention to the voices of sub-groups within the community" (ibid). • International actors typically consulted community leaders, but community leaders are generally older men. Women have expressed that the international response mainly targeted men and did not consult them at any time about their needs (ibid).

	• Stakeholders also felt that there was a lack of information about distributions and "who was entitled to what". These critiques were noted early in the response phase at the Women in Emergency Response and Recovery forum (ibid).