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“Are we keeping everyone safe from disasters?”

A qualitative case study on how the IFRC promotes an intersectional understanding of gender within disaster risk reduction projects for resilience

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Abstract

Following the increasing number of climatic shocks and disasters, the poor and most vulnerable are disproportionately affected as their already exposed situation becomes further worsened. The gendered impacts of climate disasters have demonstrated how women and girls vulnerable position is exacerbated in relation to existing sociocultural norms and inequalities, making them one of the most vulnerable groups to disasters and climatic shocks. To protect people and communities most-at-risk, measures to strengthen resilience are crucial. Previous studies have identified how organisations implementing activities to strengthen disaster resilience of vulnerable communities tend to merely consider groups as belonging to the binary of ‘women’ and ‘men’. By drawing on existing literature this study will analyse how an intersectional understanding of gender is promoted, which recognises that individuals and groups are situated on a multi-categorical axis where gender intersect with other aspects that influence and affect the opportunities to become resilient. More specifically, this study will analyse the work of the humanitarian organisation IFRC within DRR, resilience and gender. Analysing the perceptions of intersectionality and gender, potential normative challenges and knowledge of aid recipients from a feminist political ecology and intersectional perspective, this study argues that more can be done by the IFRC to promote an intersectional understanding of gender. The findings of the study indicate that there is a gap between theory and practice in terms of how gender and intersectionality is defined and perceived, need to improve needs assessments, consultations with women and other vulnerable groups, awareness-raising and greater inclusion of women and others experiences to make everyone resilient equally.

Keywords: *Resilience, disaster risk reduction, intersectionality, gender, IFRC.*

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List of Abbreviations

CSO	Civil society organisation
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
DRM	Disaster risk management
FPE	Feminist political ecology
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IO	International Organisation
LGBTQIA	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual/Aromantic/Agender
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PE	Political ecology
PGI	Protection, Inclusion and Gender
SFDRR	Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction
SGBV	Sexual- and gender-based violence
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
VCA	Vulnerability and Capability Assessment
WED	Women, Environment and Development

1. Introduction

“Our collective goal is to keep everyone as safe from disasters as possible, and our top priority and focus should be the people most vulnerable and most exposed to risk. This may seem obvious, but we are not consistently acting this way”¹.

Currently, more than 235 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance due to climate change, disasters, extreme climate events and protracted crises (IFRC, 2020-a: 2 & 4; UNOCHA, 2020: 4). Following the increasing number of climatic shocks, the poor and most vulnerable are disproportionately affected by disaster as their already exposed situation becomes further exacerbated (IFRC, 2020-a: 3 & 5; UNOCHA, 2020: 8 & 35; Djoudi et al., 2016). The ongoing COVID-19-pandemic has been seen further aggravating the vulnerable situation of exposed populations, now facing several disasters (UNDRR, 2020). The gendered impacts of climate disasters put women and girls in a vulnerable position which is furthered worsened due to existing sociocultural norms, inequalities and limited access to services, making them one of the most vulnerable groups to disasters and climatic shocks (Ruszczuk et al., 2020; Raju, 2019: 123; Sikandar & Khan, 2019: 217).

Women and girls are more likely to suffer higher rates of mortality, illness and economic destruction when exposed to climate-related disasters due to gendered differences in coping capacity and inadequate access to information (UNDP, 2013; Raju, 2019: 126). After the 1991 cyclone in Bangladesh, the death rate of women was nearly five times as high than men's, representing 90% of all fatalities (Röhr, 2006, UNDP, 2013). In the case of Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar during 2008, women represented 61% of all deaths, whereas after the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 women comprised 70-80% of all casualties (UNDP, 2013; Oven et al., 2019: 140). As gender inequalities enhance the exposure to disasters, increase vulnerability and curb capacity,

¹ (IFRC, 2020-a).

women and girls' ability to anticipate, adapt, and recover from disasters are restricted and their capability to efficiently become resilient after a disaster becomes limited (UNDRR, 2020).

To protect people, communities, and livelihoods most-at-risk, measures to reduce and mitigate disaster risks as well as strengthen resilience are crucial (UNDRR, 2015-a). Resilience encompasses the ability a society or community has to resist, prepare for, withstand, adapt to, transform and recover from risks and disasters in a timely and effective fashion while enduring natural hazards (Ager et al., 2015; UNDRR, 2016; Blyth, 2018; Kim & Marcouiller, 2020; UNDRR, 2017). Disaster resilience concern communities ability to adapt and transform following the anticipated risks of a disaster, rather than responding to the disaster once occurred, to save lives and transform accordingly (Alexander, 2020; Kancharla, 2019: 261; Pinto Santos et al., 2019: 9; Wodder, 2017: 215; Watson, 2017; Lerch, 2017: 9; UNDRR, 2015-a; Walker et al., 2004). Resilience activities targeted at vulnerable communities and groups must recognize that individuals belonging to various social, ethnic and religious groups are differently affected by disaster risks (IFRC, 2020-a: 140). By acknowledging the variety of impacts, intersections, and burdens of groups, disasters can be more efficiently mitigated and efforts to build and promote resilience more carefully implemented to ensure sustainable development and gender equality (IFRC, 2020-a: p. 140; Kinnvall & Rydstrom, 2019: p. 10; UNOCHA, 2020, UNDRR, 2017, GFDRR, n.d.). Resilience of communities and groups is an integral part of disaster risk reduction. DRR measures are implemented to understand, reduce and prevent risks with the goal to build resilience of communities and promote sustainable development (UNDRR, n.d.-b).

Recognising that gender inequalities further aggravates individuals and groups vulnerable position to disasters, a need to integrate gender with an intersectional approach has been identified (Raju, 2019: 122-124; Ramhalo, 2020; Zeeshan, Bashir Khan & Hussein, 2019; Sikandar & Khan, 2019: 218; Bondesson, 2019: 48; Oven et al., 2019: 159). Integrating gender with an intersectional approach means to address the differences in how groups are affected by disasters and have capability to become resilient as well as if and how vulnerable groups such as women are included in projects to build resilience (Raju, 2019: 123; Ramhalo, 2020; Zeeshan, Bashir Khan & Hussein, 2019; Rusczyk et al., 2020; Walch, 2018; Sikandar & Khan, 2019: 218; Bondesson, 2019: 48; Oven et al., 2019: 159). Failing to include women and other vulnerable groups place them in a subordinate, exposed position which increases the risk of them being more susceptible to disasters and unable to become resilient (UNDRR, 2020; Oven et al., 2019:). Inclusion of women and other marginalised groups is not only an integral part for gender-responsive disaster risk reduction, but also a basic human right (UNDRR, 2020).

1.1 Aim and research questions

Engaging with gendered impacts of a disaster in combination with an intersectional perspective can direct future work to move away from the consideration of gender as merely the relationship between men and women, particularly women's vulnerability and exclusion from decision-making relative to that of men (Sikandar & Khan, 2019: 218; Ramhalo, 2020). Such an idea of gender "victimizes women", categorising them as subordinate, vulnerable subjects while also posing the risk of overlooking other vulnerable groups not considered belonging to the binary 'woman' and 'man' (Ramhalo, 2020; Oven et al., 2019: 140). By considering the concept of 'women' as a diverse group situated on a multi-categorical axis with different experiences, socioeconomic situations, capabilities and pre-conditions may better inform resilience-

building activities and DRR measures. For instance, such a group of ‘women’ can include “Single women, woman-headed households, women living with disabilities, pregnant and lactating women, adolescent girls, senior citizens, children, and caste and ethnically based minorities [...]” (Oven et al., 2019: 139-140).

The aim of this study is to survey how the humanitarian organisation International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) promote an intersectional understanding of gender in their disaster risk reduction projects that aim to build resilience. More specifically, an intersectional understanding of gender underscores that ‘women’ are situated on a multi-categorical axis whereby gender interacts and intersects with other aspects such as class, ethnicity, sexuality etc. Such an understanding further recognises that gender and the group of women is not a homogenous and normative body, but rather inhabits differences and hierarchies for which influences the accessibility to resources and capability to become resilient. To promote an intersectional understanding of gender means to acknowledge differences and potential challenges that individuals and the group of ‘women’ have to become resilient after a disaster. Applying an intersectional reading of resilience activities in DRR projects can inform how strategies are inclusive of the different experiences of women, from a multi-categorical axis. To further guide the research process, the point of view that the study will adopt is the assumption that the IFRC can do extensively more in promoting an intersectional understanding of gender in DRR projects for resilience.

By limiting the thesis around the issue of disaster resilience, the aim is to understand if there is a recognition by the IFRC in terms of how groups are differently affected by disasters and how intersecting aspects of class, ethnicity, sexuality etc. influence the ways in which groups can become resilient. Moreover, this study also aims to uncover the potential normative challenges for the IFRC in terms of perceptions in the context for which an intersectional understanding of gender is promoted and how these may

influence the ways in which it is endorsed. Finally, the extent to which local knowledge is considered will also be addressed. Knowledge of the recipients of aid is crucial in resilience-building activities as how risk is perceived can better inform practices of resilience. Additionally, the perspectives of local communities receiving aid on an intersectional understanding of gender may inform if the IFRC's understanding conforms with that of local communities and groups. This study will specifically focus on resilience at the community level which entail how resilience of individuals, groups and households can be strengthened (IFRC, 2014). However, this study also recognises that resilience at local level is intertwined with that at national and governmental level as disasters affects the whole society (IFRC, 2014).

By reason of clarification, previous research has identified the importance of studying potential normative challenges and local knowledge from the perspective of aid recipients. Addressing normative challenges such as power, justice and social equity, can provide the opportunity to focus on other, under-studied aspects in relation to resilience (Weichselgartner & Kelman, 2014). Understanding resilience as a normative agenda for sustainable development may further highlights challenges and opportunities when implementing resilience (Weichselgartner & Kelman, 2014). Regarding local knowledge, existing literature has emphasised the importance of gendered local knowledge, as it is key to build resilience and reduce disaster risks (Odiase, Wilkinson & Neef, 2020; Khan, Rana & Nawaz; Khan, Johar & Baba, 2017). Both aspects of normative challenges and local knowledge of the aid recipients are seemingly integral elements of resilience-building, which is why these aspects will be studied together with how an intersectional understanding of gender is promoted by the IFRC to build resilience.

The focus is on disaster risk reduction projects that deals with disasters and natural hazards such as floods, droughts and landslides rather than man-made disasters. Following the UNDRRs definition, a disaster is “where a natural hazard negatively

meets people”, which is the idea of disasters this study will adopt (UNDRR, n.d.-a). Nevertheless, it is worth noting that natural disasters are increasingly exacerbated by man-made actions such as carbon emissions and deforestation. While most hazards originate from the natural environment, disasters are increasingly recognized as man-made and unnatural (UNDRR, 2015-a.; Alcántara-Ayala & Oliver-Smith, 2017: p. 103 & 117). To answer the stated aims of the study, one overall research question and three sub-questions have been formulated to limit the scope of the study:

“How does the IFRC promote an intersectional understanding of gender into disaster risk reduction projects that aim to build resilience?”

1. *“How is gender and intersectionality defined by the IFRC?”*
2. *“What are the potential normative challenges of promoting such an understanding?”*
3. *“To what extent is local knowledge recognised in resilience-building projects?”*

1.2 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is structured in seven chapters as outlined in the table of contents. The first chapter above have presented the focus of the study, outlined the aim, research question and sub-questions. The second chapter surveys previous research by presenting debates on the role of international organisations within DRR and resilience, intersectionality and gender within resilience and DRR, as well as risk perceptions, local knowledge and gender while concluding in a summary of all discussions. Chapter three constitutes the theoretical framework, where feminist political ecology together with an intersectional approach will be outlined. The fourth chapter deals with the study's methodology, situates the case study of IFRC and discuss the ethical considerations and potential limitations. The fifth chapter analyses the empirical material which is thematically structured according to the sub-questions. The last chapter summarizes the findings of the study, answers the sub-questions and the overall research question as well as concludes directions for future research. Finally, the references are listed as well as the appendices.

2. Previous research

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present an overview of existing studies covering the connections between disaster risk reduction, resilience, gender, intersectionality and risk perceptions. The potential difficulties of international organisations to promote an intersectional agenda within DRR projects aimed at building resilience will also be discussed. By reviewing contemporary literature, the ambition is to further emphasize the focus of this thesis as well as more thoroughly present potential gaps and issues that previous research has indicated.

This chapter is thematically structured where the first section (*2.2 The role of international organisations within disaster risk reduction and resilience*), outline how international aid organisations work with disaster risk reduction and resilience in relation to gender. The following section, (*2.3 Intersectionality and gender within DRR and resilience*), discusses the ways in which gender and gendered issues operate within disaster risks and resilience-building. The third section (*2.4 Risk perceptions, local knowledge and gender*) survey literature focused on how risk perceptions and local knowledge inform disaster risk reduction strategies and resilience-building as well as the need to better understand how knowledge of disaster risks pertains to gender and structural inequalities. The final section (*2.5 Summary*), summarises the previous sections and relevance to this study.

2.2 The role of international organisations within disaster risk reduction and resilience

After a disaster strike, international humanitarian organisations are often one of several actors first to respond to the crisis and deliver relief aid. While all humanitarian

organisations must respect humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence (UNOCHA, 2012), the focus of aid and relief support may differ depending on the nature of disaster and organisation's mandate.

International humanitarian organisations operating within the field of disaster risk reduction and resilience-building have generally been seen using an approach widely criticised for merely 'arriving, acting and leaving', while reconstituting a community's state similar to that pre-disaster (Arifeen & Nyborg, 2021). Seemingly, such an approach is lacking contextual considerations of structural inequalities and power which may potentially aggravate the precarious and vulnerable situation of communities and disaster conditions (Arifeen & Nyborg, 2021; Petridou, Sparf & Pihl, 2020: 227). As international organisations have a major role in assisting support and relief aid after a disaster, it has been argued for a need of greater attention to vulnerable households and better measures for assessing the levels of vulnerability of households and groups (Arifeen & Nyborg, 2021; Giardina & Fullwood-Thomas, 2020: 280; Alexander, 2020).

Another critique of international organisations operating in the field is the dilemma where practices must conform with donor standards to receive funding and be viewed as legitimate in the international community (Arifeen & Nyborg, 2021; Alcántara-Ayala & Oliver-Smith, 2017: 118). The need for organisations to be viewed as legitimate may potentially affect local structures, risking to restrict some actors to fully exercise their work, or even reinforce inequalities (Arifeen & Nyborg, 2021; Alcántara-Ayala & Oliver-Smith, 2017: 118). To decrease the risk of merely conforming to donor standards, organisations need to engage and involve local groups and vulnerable populations in decision-making processes. Subsequently, activities favouring elites can be prevented and local actors empowered (Arifeen & Nyborg, 2021).

During the latest decades, international humanitarian and development organisations have recognized the importance of resilience-building interventions (Sajjad, 2021;

Alexander, 2020; Titang, 2019; Quandt, 2018). Consequently the ‘Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters’ was established in 2005 to create objectives for reducing vulnerability and risks to natural hazards as well as identify measures to build resilience to disasters (UNDRR, 2005). Its successor, the ‘Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030’ more specifically addresses resilience in its priorities for action in priority 3 “investing disaster risk reduction for resilience” (UNDRR, 2015-b). Both frameworks were created to guide the work on disaster risk reduction and resilience-building among UN member states as well as other organisations. Nonetheless, attention to different experiences and knowledge of women and other groups have been somewhat missing in development policy as promoted by both international and national agencies (Quandt, 2018; Imperiale & Vanclay, 2020).

International organisations have further been criticized for making use of resilience without further contemplating its meaning (Kinnvall & Rydstrom, 2019: 11; Eadie, 2017; Fernandez & Ahmed, 2019). There is therefore a need to critically study and understand the meaning of resilience, how it can play into politics and interests of governmental institutions and international organisations (Kinnvall & Rydstrom, 2019: 11; Eadie, 2017; Quandt, 2018). Similarly, it has been noted that the prominent role of IOs in disaster risk reduction activities have shaped the governance landscape of DRR, influencing existing power relations as well as political and institutional contexts (Ruszczyc et al., 2020; Keating et al., 2016). Granted that international organisations work involves the cooperation of national governments, the objectives of IOs can more easily influence the work of national institutions. Regarding resilience-building, Chaplin, Twigg and Lovell (2019) underscore that organisations must recognise that vulnerable and marginalised groups have the agency to build resilience. Moving away from the “one-size-fits-all” approach to disasters, all groups and individuals can more effectively build resilience (Chaplin, Twigg & Lovell, 2019; Keating et al., 2016). By applying an intersectional understanding to gender in practices of resilience related to

disaster risk, interventions and relief actions can more effectively address the complex interactions and experiences of vulnerability (Chaplin, Twigg & Lovell, 2019).

Finally, it has been acknowledged that there is limited inclusion of gender perspectives in disaster risk reduction activities, despite the increasing awareness of the importance of inclusion (Ramhalo, 2020; Sikandar & Khan, 2019; Quandt, 2018). Here, UN agencies, IOs and NGOs have a responsibility to integrate a gendered approach to address the underlying issues of gender inequality that can cause distorted distribution of relief support and risks (Bondesson, 2019: 50 & 52; Zeeshan, Bashir Khan & Hussein: 2019; Chineka et al., 2019; Sikandar & Khan, 2019: 216). Thus, international and national policies must increase the inclusion of gender perspectives, which currently is regarded as inadequate in international frameworks such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (Bondesson, 2019: 53). Following this critique is the need to advance the participation of women in decision-making processes within DRR and resilience (Jha, 2019: 232; Zeeshan, Bashir Khan & Hussein: 2019). Yet, Khan et al., (2020) notes that recognising and targeting different perceptions in the community for which a DRR project is implemented in is an accepted practice by the larger international community.

2.3 Intersectionality and gender within disaster risk reduction and resilience

While literature studying women in disaster risk reduction is increasingly emerging, there is still a need to advance existing studies on gender from an intersectional approach focusing on intersections on a multi-categorical axis (Raju, 2019: 123 & 126; Chaplin, Twigg & Lovell, 2019). Previous studies have generally studied the vulnerability of women within disasters, diminishing the complex intersections with aspects such as class, ethnicity, disability, and other factors (Raju, 2019: 123). The

need for a more comprehensive understanding of gender within climate disasters may oppose that existing gender imbalances becomes reinforced as well as inefficient risk reduction activities being materialized (Kinnvall & Rydstrom, 2019: 274; Bondesson, 2019: 48; Chaplin, Twigg & Lovell, 2019). Further underscoring the importance of a more complex awareness of gender and gender roles within policy concerning climate change can ensure that strategies are inclusive of all perspectives (Kinnvall & Rydstrom, 2019: 4; Zeeshan, Bashir Khan & Hussain, 2019; Ravera et al., 2016). Hence, disaster risk reduction strategies must consider gender inequality to gain a greater understanding of how survival and recovery unfold within and between different groups (Ramhalo, 2020; Kinnvall and Rydstrom, 2019: 9; Zeeshan, Bashir Khan & Hussain, 2019).

Policies of DRR have been criticized for mostly dealing with women from patriarchal stereotypes rather than integrating a gendered perspective that recognise the diversity within the group of women (Kinnvall & Rydstrom, 2019: 7; Bondesson, 2019: 52; Jha, 2019: 237; Chaplin, Twigg & Lovell, 2019; Ravera et al., 2016; Djoudi et al., 2016). A gendered perspective to disaster risk reduction activities may create a more comprehensive understanding of how roles are shaped through social bodies that create the norms of accessibility to power and rights, but also facilitate the identification of social orders that generate discerned vulnerability (Bondesson, 2019: 52-53; Djoudi et al., 2016; Keating et al., 2016; Quandt, 2018; Thompson-Hall, Carr & Pascual, 2016). For instance, Bondesson (2019: 52) argues that a gender perspective on DRR makes visible the social orders that produce vulnerabilities that are gendered, meaning that access to rights and power as well as norms of behaviour generates differences in who is vulnerable to disasters.

The importance of applying a gendered lens within disaster risk reduction studies have also been noted by several authors (see e.g., Sikandar & Khan, 2019; Zutshi et al., 2019; Chineka et al., 2019; Zeeshan, Bashir Khan & Hussein, 2019). Before, during

and after disasters, women are generally at greater risk than men as gender inequalities and relations positions “[...] women in socially, economically, and politically marginalized positions [...]” (Sikandar & Khan, 2019: 217; Zuthsi et al., 2019: 191, Zeeshan, Bashir Khan & Hussein, 2019; Chineka et al., 2019). To mitigate disaster risks it is essential to recognize how gender can be further exacerbated by class, ethnicity, disability, and other aspects that may render the vulnerability of persons and groups (Sikandar & Khan, 2019: 216; Zeeshan, Bashir Khan & Hussein, 2019; Chaplin, Twigg & Lovell, 2019). At the intersections of gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity and bodyableness, visions and experiences of people and their role, status, ability and power is produced (Kinnvall & Rydstrom, 2019: 5; Raju, 2019: 123; Ravera et al., 2016; Thompson-Hall, Carr & Pascual, 2016). To clarify, the level of vulnerability to disasters as an individual or group experience is determined by what ethnic group, gender, class, sexuality etc., one belongs to, reiterating Crenshaw’s (1989) notion of double-burden positioning individuals and groups as subordinate and/or discriminated against.

Women are often positioned as the most vulnerable in disasters due to the multiple responsibilities they carry e.g., caring for children and elderly, informal work etcetera, in combination with the lack of basic resources and rights (Zutshi et al., 2019: 202; Chineka et al., 2019; Moyo, 2020). While gender is mostly thought of in terms of women and girls, a gendered lens can incorporate the realities of other gendered bodies and non-binary persons that otherwise may be overlooked. Recognising the gender of an individual or group creates a more comprehensive understanding of how a disaster affects the realities of groups and gendered hierarchies in society (Sikandar & Khan, 2019: 216; Zutshi et al., 2019: 193-194). By taking a gendered approach to mitigate disaster risks, groups can become resilient to disasters equally as the needs and vulnerabilities are recognised and appropriate measures can be implemented (Sikandar & Khan, 2019: 224).

Studying gender within disaster risk reduction from an intersectional approach can more efficiently recognise the different identities, needs, priorities and capacities of people as well as the mobile nature that changes the ways in which people prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters (Chaplin, Twigg & Lovell, 2019; Thompson-Hall, Carr & Pascual, 2016). An intersectional approach to disaster risk reduction can also facilitate the understanding of the discerned nature of vulnerability and resilience, as well as uncover the changing aspects that influence vulnerability and resilience (Chaplin, Twigg & Lovell, 2019). As studies and policies of disaster risk reduction often treat the vulnerable and marginalised groups as a homogenous collective, an intersectional lens often distinguish between “[...] people with disabilities, women, children, older persons, minority, and indigenous groups, LGBTQIA, people with chronic health conditions and others who are contextually marginalised” (Chaplin, Twigg & Lovell, 2019). Moreover, everchanging power structures that can make groups “experience both power and oppression simultaneously” are also highlighted by an intersectional lens that make visible vulnerabilities (Chaplin, Twigg & Lovell, 2019).

Analyses of resilience and vulnerability to disasters most frequently depend on sex-disaggregated data where gender categories solely are divided between “men” and “women”, despite that existing research have demonstrate how social roles and responsibilities are shaped at the intersection of class, gender, age, ethnicity, disability etc. which influence a person’s capability to adapt to disaster risks (Thompson-Hall, Carr & Pascual, 2016). Applying an intersectional perspective to gender can improve the understanding of how disasters make groups vulnerable. It may also uncover the reasons for how groups act, providing a more nuanced analysis of how social dimensions of power and gender operates and intersect with various communities living in climate contexts (Thompson-Hall, Carr & Pascual, 2016).

2.4 Risk perceptions, local knowledge and gender

To efficiently mitigate disasters, local knowledge of risks and the understanding of risk perceptions from a gendered perspective are crucial (Odiase, Wilkinson & Neef, 2020; Khan, Rana & Nawaz; Khan, Johar & Baba, 2017). In this context, local knowledge is the knowledge of aid recipients and groups traditionally viewed as ‘beneficiaries’. While social equity in development planning often enhances disaster risk reduction measures and resilience, previous studies have acknowledged that the local community’s risk awareness and knowledge of its own vulnerability is equally as important since it allows for the community to think about resilience more effectively and what needs to be improved (Odiase, Wilkinson & Neef, 2020). Similarly, the community’s understanding of the impacts of natural hazards and risk perception can increase disaster resilience as measures can be developed from the community’s understanding (Odiase, Wilkinson & Neef, 2020). How a community perceives risk is thus essential in terms of how resilience can be boosted, vulnerability assessed, and disaster risks reduced (Odiase, Wilkinson & Neef, 2020).

Risk perception among individuals and groups can differ on the basis of hazard type, socioeconomic status and other demographic factors that determine the judgement of a disaster risk (Odiase, Wilkinson & Neef, 2020; Fernanadez, 2021). Other aspects that may undermine the perception of risk among persons and groups are financial benefits, trust, confidence, fear, awareness and knowledge (Odiase, Wilkinson & Neef, 2020; Khan, Rana & Nawaz, 2020; Khan, Johar & Baba, 2017). As socio-cultural norms widely shape how people behave and perceive disaster risks, social perception is important to understand in terms of how a community, group or individual perceives disaster risks (Odiase, Wilkinson & Neef, 2020; Khan, Rana & Nawaz, 2020; Fernandez, 2021). Additionally, it has been pointed to how risk perception is both socially constructed as well as subjective where the individual's experiences shape the behaviour and perception toward disasters (Khan, Rana & Nawaz, 2020). More

specifically, how traditional gender roles are ascribed men and women influence their respective risk perceptions. For example, women's household responsibilities, informal work of caring for children and elderly as well as what clothes they wear can limit women's capability "to make snap decisions in disaster situations" (UNDP, 2013).

The degree to which a community is aware of and prepared for disasters is a key determinant in how effective disaster management systems and strategies are (Khan, Johar & Baba, 2017). To integrate various risk perceptions from different actors and assessments is one challenge to improve disaster management as decision-makers must determine what measures are most appropriate to implement (Fernandez, 2021). According to Khan, Johar & Baba (2017) DRM should rely heavily on the local community's knowledge and risk perception as they are the first to respond to and manage the disaster risk. By taking the local knowledge into account when designing and planning disaster risk reduction and resilience activities, existing measures can be improved and support to vulnerable populations efficient as additional perspectives are made visible (Khan, Johar & Baba, 2017).

The linkage between gender, DRR and risk perceptions have also been given attention to in previous studies. For instance, Khan, Rana and Nawaz (2020) highlights in their study that local Taiwanese women perceive floods and landslides as riskier than men, as the group of females are more exposed to a greater extent by such disasters given their domestic activities such as working closely to the geographical features most affected by floods and landslides. As gender roles are created via societal norms and social institutions, disaster risk reduction strategies and risk perceptions must recognize the importance of gender and gender perspectives (Khan, Rana & Nawaz, 2020). By integrating gender into decision-makings, increased knowledge about how gender influences the perceptions of risks and disaster risk reduction strategies is made, which can improve the resilience of vulnerable groups (Khan, Rana & Nawaz, 2020).

Moreover, increasing the awareness of disaster risks at community level can deepen individual and groups' knowledge of how risks are perceived and should be tackled (Khan, Rana & Nawaz, 2020).

Looking more specifically on the connection between local knowledge and disaster resilience, the former has been recognised as a key element in boosting the latter (Sarabia et al., 2020; Sardi, Razak & Zaini Bakri, 2019; Le Masson, 2015, Shi, 2019: 245; Pinto Santos et al., 2019: 5). Acquiring the relevant knowledge and skills to tackle disaster risks and related circumstances are important for building resilience, as it can facilitate more comprehensive understandings of what resilience means for the local community (Shi, 2019: 245; Nogueira de Moraes & March, 2019: 217). When a disaster occurs, the dynamics of the community and the relation to its environment unfolds as well as the ability to respond and adapt to the crisis. Here, the existing local knowledge of the community is important as it can be instilled to reduce vulnerability since the community is the first to respond to the disaster and are most knowledgeable of its own context (Kinnvall & Rydstrom, 2019: 2).

While the integration of local knowledge to reduce and mitigate disaster risks and build resilience of communities have been acknowledged as essential, other studies have observed the need to advance the understanding of local knowledge and how it operates and intersects with power (Imperiale & Vanclay, 2020; Rumbach & Foley, 2014; Pinto Santos et al., 2019: 10). Kumar (2019: 207) has argued that disaster risk reduction policies tend to be drafted without consultations with local communities, thus overlooking indigenous knowledge and lacking cultural sensitivity. Therefore, it is crucial to encompass local knowledge for disaster risk reduction in national and international policies for more sustainable, culturally sensitive, and effective agency (Kumar, 2019: 207). Similarly, issues of gender inequality and whose knowledge counts must be addressed in DRR before it is possible to advance the development and scale up interventions (Tanyag & True, 2019: 42). Here, an intersectional approach to

disaster risk reduction and resilience can be implemented, to increase the understanding of how gender relations intersect with knowledge which may influence the ability of groups and communities to adapt and respond to disaster risks (Chaplin, Twigg & Lovell, 2019). By linking localised knowledge with gender-inclusive policies, a more holistic understanding of disaster risks as well as vulnerability can be provided as various perspectives are addressed (Kinnvall & Rydstrom, 2019: 12 & 30). Similarly, resilience can provide circumstances for which knowledge of vulnerabilities can be produced (Titang, 2019). Such knowledge production can moreover guide the type of management and actions needed to reduce disaster risks (Rumbach & Foley, 2014).

2.5 Summary

This chapter on previous studies have presented the role of international organisations working with disaster risk reduction and resilience, the connection between intersectionality and gender and the importance of risk perceptions, local knowledge and gender to build disaster resilience. The chapter has identified several gaps within existing studies that points to the lack of contextual considerations of power relations within resilience and DRR activities; more complex awareness of gender and gender roles within DRR policy; the need to study gender within DRR and resilience from an intersectional perspective; how risk perceptions that inform DRM and resilience activities must consider gender; and, the necessity to understand how local knowledge and power intersects in resilience-building efforts. Moreover, the section on previous research has also indicated the importance of addressing the above-mentioned gaps, including how gender roles underpin risk perceptions of the anticipated impact of natural hazards; how local knowledge can be better utilized to improve the understanding of risks; and, the need for an intersectional analysis to address underlying issues and power hierarchies to make groups become resilient more equally.

3. Theoretical framework

3.1 Introduction

As expressed in the first chapter, international humanitarian organisations are not consistently keeping the most vulnerable safe. Addressing who the most vulnerable are, moving away from the binary of ‘women’ and ‘men’ by applying an intersectional perspective can advance the understanding of how individuals and groups are affected by disasters, their experiences, how they can become resilient as well as the potential challenges. Only when these differences are recognised and understanding of how groups are situated along multi-categorical axes for which influence their respective experiences, socioeconomic situations, capabilities and pre-conditions, the most vulnerable can be regarded as safe. The point of departure for this study is therefore that the IFRC can do extensively more to promote an intersectional understanding of gender into disaster risk reduction for resilience.

To explore if the assumption that more can be done by looking at how gender and intersectionality is perceived, potential normative challenges and local knowledge of aid recipients, the theory of feminist political ecology combined with an intersectional approach will be applied. The framework of FPE combined with an intersectional approach allows for analyses of intersections of gender with other aspects in relation to how power relations influences access of environmental resources, how social identities are constructed as well as examines the nexus of power, nature and knowledge. How the IFRC defines gender and intersectionality, the potential normative challenges as well as how local knowledge is recognised can be more easily answered, as FPE and intersectionality combined allows for studies of power relations, makes visible normative challenges of gendered issues and intersectional aspects, and highlights the local knowledge of aid recipients.

The first subsection (3.2. *Feminist political ecology*) constitutes theory of feminist political ecology. The section will present, explain and describe the focus of the theory as well as what aspects it aims to uncover in the analysis. The second section (3.3 *The roots of intersectionality explained*) will ground the theoretical understanding of intersectionality. The third section (3.4 *Bridging intersectionality and feminist political ecology*) describes how an intersectional approach to FPE complements the latter, whereby the interactions of both frameworks provides a more comprehensive critical analysis of the relationship between intersectionality, gender, agency and knowledge. The final section (3.5 *Summary*) explains how the theory of feminist political ecology combined with an intersectional approach will be substantiated in the analysis of the empirical material. The last section will also clarify how the theoretical framework will be used, how the theory will aid the understanding of the empirical material as well as how it can possibly facilitate to achieve the stated aims.

3.2 Feminist political ecology

In 1996, Rocheleau, Thomas-Slyter and Wangari released the book *Feminist Political Ecology: global issues and local experiences* which set out the conceptual framework of feminist political ecology to add to feminist analyses and approaches to political ecology (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slyter & Wangari, 1996; Bauhardt & Harcourt, 2019: 62). Frustrated with the focus of mainstream environmental discourse on modernist and humanist analyses, FPE developed as a movement pinpointing gendered relations to the environment while critiquing the capitalist, patriarchal nature of political ecology (Bauhardt & Harcourt, 2019: 62; Rocheleau, Thomas-Slyter & Wangari, 1996: 4). By employing a gendered perspective in relation to ecological change, whereby gender interacts with aspects of class, race, culture and ethnicity, FPE can provide a more holistic, feminist critique of international development practice (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slyter & Wangari, 1996: 4; Rao, 2020; Mollet & Faria, 2013). For this study, a gendered perspective can make visible how inclusion of gendered voices and

experiences are considered within resilience projects of sustainable development practices.

As a subfield within political ecology, FPE considers the analysis of ecological issues from an approach that includes feminist theory, objectivity and practices as imperative in understanding who has “access to, control over, and knowledge of natural resources” (Braun, 2015: 22; Sundberg, 2017; Agostino, 2019: 278; Rao, 2020). It specifically focuses on the ways in which gender and power relate to other forms of difference such as class, race, ethnicity and other significant aspects of political ecological life (Mollet & Faria, 2013; Sundberg, 2017). By looking at the intersections of gender with other aspects, the theory questions practices of how power influences the access, flows and control of environmental resources from local to global scale (Buechler et al., 2015; Braun, 2015: 22; Sundberg, 2017; Rao, 2020). How access to resources is gendered can be made visible in the context of disaster risk reduction and resilience by applying the perspective of FPE.

Feminist political ecology works at the nexus of nature, power and knowledge where analyses of how unjust relations are (re)produced and how social identities constructed in and by relations of nature are made (Sundberg, 2017). FPE also questions how ecological knowledge is established, whose knowledge is legitimized and who is seen as an environmental actor (Sundberg, 2017). Questions of knowledge production within FPE builds on the work of Harding (1986) and Haraway (1991) that claim that patriarchal gender norms instruct who is legitimized as a knowledge producer, what is regarded as knowledge and how such knowledge is constructed (Sundberg, 2017). The role of gender in knowledge production is therefore key in FPE, as analyses of how women and other groups are consistently excluded as knowledgeable agents and disadvantaged in policy practice that render them inferior, brings critical attention to how environmental resources are distributed and accessed (Sundberg, 2017; Braun, 2015: 21; Rao, 2020). More specifically, recognising that the most vulnerable groups

by gender, race, class and ethnicity are unjustly impoverished in climate extremes, analyses of the consequences of neglecting gender differences in development projects targeting climate change combined with issues of social equity, justice and imbalances in power relations can be more thoroughly understood (Rao, 2020; Buechler & Hanson, 2015: 4 & 8).

Within this subsection of political ecology, three bodies of work, ecofeminism, feminist science studies and feminist critiques of development has informed and strengthen the framework of feminist political ecology (Sandberg, 2017). Similar to FPE, the work of ecofeminism also aims to confront and obstruct the hierarchical dichotomies between “[...] human/nature, men/women, North/South [...]” while critiquing the patriarchal capitalist nature of political ecology, although in a different way (Bauhardt & Harcourt, 2019: 63). Notwithstanding the similarities between FPE and ecofeminism, the former complements the latter by including intersectional aspects, fixed knowledge, decoloniality and queer ecology (Bauhardt & Harcourt, 2019: 63). Additionally, the framework of feminist political ecology combines the necessity of environmentalists to include feminism for multifaceted analyses with the relevance of including global environmental issues in feminist politics (Bauhardt & Harcourt, 2019: 63).

Concerning the third branch of study, feminist critique of development, scholarship has illustrated how development projects have excluded or oppressed women (Sundberg, 2017). The framework of FPE has further demonstrated how development projects led by Western feminists characterize women in low-income countries as victims, e.g., the WED agenda, denying the diversity of women’s knowledge, experiences and agency by homogenizing the representation of women (Sikandar & Khan, 2019; Sundberg, 2017; Ravera et al., 2016; Quandt, 2018). Thus, the need for consultations with women to make relevant resources, livelihood strategies, and knowledge visible and inform future development policy is further reinforced via FPE (Sundberg, 2017; Agostino,

2019: 278). Succinctly, “if and when women are excluded as agents of environmental change” researchers and other stakeholders risk (re)enforce gender inequalities and power relations (Sundberg, 2017). In the context of disaster risk reduction and resilience, greater inclusion of women’s voices, experiences and access to natural resources must be considered within projects to make everyone resilient equally.

3.3 The roots of intersectionality explained

In 1989, Kimberlé Crenshaw developed the theory of intersectionality, highlighting the pressing need for a multi-categorical axis in the field of feminist theory, critical race studies and antiracism (Crenshaw, 1989). Following the critique of analyses of sexism and racism focusing on the “otherwise-privileged group members” as presenting only a fragment of a more complex phenomenon, intersectionality was founded (Crenshaw, 1989). The idea of intersectionality, using Black women and their experiences as the set-out for analysis, was to establish a new analytical structure that addressed the particular ways in which Black women are subordinated and subjects to double-discrimination, i.e., experiencing racism as Black and sexism as a woman but together experiencing discrimination on a multi-categorical axis (Crenshaw, 1989). The common adoption of a single-issue framework in gender and race studies at the time was seen as marginalising Black women as the discourses were, and still are, shaped to respond to one experience of discrimination or the other (Crenshaw, 1989; 1991). Crenshaw (1989) emphasised the need for a bottom-up approach, placing the needs and problems of those most disadvantaged at the centre.

Intersectionality also recognizes that power relations are strengthened when a discourse of e.g., sexism fails to acknowledge the significance to another such as race (Crenshaw, 1991). A recognition of how structures and systems of gender, class and ethnicity converge must be made to make interventions inclusive and aware of the different experiences of discrimination between and among groups (Crenshaw, 1991). Rather

than dealing with different categories and identities of groups and individuals, intersectionality circulates around how categories and identities in their specific context are dependent on a set of dynamics of analysis or political significance (Cho, Crenshaw & McCall, 2013). Intersectionality focuses specifically on how power works when overlapping identity categories are created and deployed, in diffuse and differentiated ways (Cho, Crenshaw & McCall, 2013). To clarify, intersectionality deals with power and structural inequalities rather than identity (Cho, Crenshaw & McCall, 2013).

As noted in the introduction, there is a need to study how groups are affected by disasters as well as how they become resilient in light of gender and intersectionality. The group of 'women' are generally thought of as disproportionately affected by climatic events and disasters, seen also in the SFDRR 2015-2030 where disaster risk reduction measures should empower women. Moreover, women's experiences and vulnerability is often considered relative to that of men. While recognising the need for greater attention to how women can deal with disaster risks and become resilient, it is equally important to acknowledge that women are not a homogenous group. Women cannot only be discriminated against on the basis of gender but also class, ethnicity, sexuality, disability etc., which simultaneously influence how and to what level 'they' are affected by disasters. Applying an intersectional understanding of gender for disaster-resilience can inform if and how strategies are inclusive of the different experiences of women, from a multi-categorical axis. Moreover, an intersectional understanding of for whom resilience is promoted can reveal how power operates and if structural inequalities are (re)inforced.

3.4 Bridging intersectionality and feminist political ecology

Since the emergence of feminist political ecology, the field has continuously expanded to include other important aspects in addition to gender (Mollet & Faria, 2013; Buechler et al., 2015; Buechler & Hanson, 2015; Sundberg, 2017; van den Berg, 2019; Bauhardt & Harcourt, 2019). Following the increased attention to the destabilization of gender, the idea of intersectionality has been pursued to more comprehensively account for the ways in which systems of power operate (Sundberg, 2017; Ravera et al., 2016). By implementing an intersectional approach within FPE, the framework offers new means to understand the everyday practices and activities in societies and how these are situated (van den Berg, 2019: 62-63; Ravera et al., 2016). An intersectional approach also complements the theory of FPE by challenging power relations, exploring agency among various actors, avoiding essentialism and including “[...] differences of gender, race, class, sexuality, age and ability” (Bauhardt & Harcourt, 2019: 9; Ravera et al., 2016).

Similarly, Agostino (2019: 10-11) note that feminism within FPE does not only consider women, but rather all types of “Others”, meaning those whose perspectives are crucial to a process where diverse realities and decolonising knowledge are engaged with. The “Others” refers to sexual, cultural, class, ethnic and indigenous (Agostino, 2019: 10-11; Mollet & Faria, 2013). An intersectional analysis makes social structures, relations, processes and policies visible as well as how such aspects shape and/or constrain social experiences within the realm of inequality while bringing attention to how identities and social positionings are multiple and mutually constitutive (Braun, 2015: 21-22).

Integrating intersectionality with feminist political ecology can more fruitfully highlight how environmental resources and struggles over assets are sites for (re)productions of social inequalities such as gender, race, class and environmental

justice (Braun, 2015: 22; Mollet & Faria, 2013). As FPE understands issues of power by emphasizing how the role of everyday practices from local to global sites sustain unequal relations of power, intersectionality extend the understanding of women's, men's and non-binary person's experiences of environmental change to not exclusively concern gender (Buechler et al., 2015: 233). Moreover, an intersectional approach within FPE further highlights how other social inequalities such as class, race, ethnicity and sexuality interact with gender, as well as make some oppressed, vulnerable and/or responsible (Buechler et al., 2015: 233; Mollet & Faria, 2013). More specifically, for the purpose of this thesis, an intersectional approach to FPE will focus on gender as situated on a multi-categorical axis interacting with other aspects such as ethnicity, which determines the accessibility of natural resources and ability to influence DRR projects to build resilience and be voiced.

3.5 Summary

As demonstrated, FPE deals with gendered perspectives to ecological change and aims to uncover who has access, control and knowledge of natural resources in relation to how resources are distributed, and power operates along local to global scale. Attention is also given to how gender and gendered power interacts with class, ethnicity and culture, taking various "differences" into consideration. The framework further highlights how international development practice and policy occasionally exclude women and other groups as knowledgeable agents of ecological change, where questions of who produces the knowledge, what knowledge matters and how it is constructed are raised. Moreover, FPE employs intersectionality for a more holistic understanding of the diversity in experiences of environmental struggles over resources and (re)productions of social inequalities by including aspects of gender, ethnicity, class and disability and how these intersect.

For the purpose of this study, the theoretical framework of FPE and intersectionality will inform the research question and sub-questions by making visible empirical explanations for how an intersectional understanding of gender is promoted, the potential normative challenges as well as how local knowledge of beneficiaries is considered within projects for disaster resilience. To clarify, normative challenges include socio-cultural norms, power, agency and accessibility to resources whereas local knowledge covers the experiences and understanding of local communities aid recipients, generally considered ‘beneficiaries’.

More specifically, FPE and intersectionality can aid the understanding of how an intersectional understanding of gender is promoted by IFRC by moving away from the binary of women and men in disasters. In terms of how potential normative challenges can be understood and identified with the help of the theoretical framework, FPE and intersectionality recognises that categories and identities in their specific context are dependent on a set of dynamics of political significance. Thus, acknowledging that groups are identified and situated on basis of the specific context may have implications for how activities are implemented, who is included and participate as well as the success of promoting an intersectional understanding of gender. The framework can demonstrate how knowledge of the local communities is considered with resilience-building activities as it highlights how the experiences of e.g., women are included or excluded in terms of accessibility to resources and how development policy has been informed. The knowledge production of local beneficiaries will also be studied, analysing the role of gender and how vulnerable groups face the risk of being excluded as knowledgeable agents in DRR projects to build resilience. Existing structures and power relations both in local communities as well as between the beneficiaries and IFRC can also be made visible with the use of this framework.

4. Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the methodological standpoint, research design, types of data collection, ethical considerations, positionality and reflexivity as well as the limitations to this study. The methodology has been guided by the aims of the study, to study how the IFRC engages with and understand the intersectional concept of gender, the potential normative challenges of promoting such an understanding as well as to what extent knowledge of the aid recipients are taken into consideration in DRR projects for resilience.

The first sub-chapter (*4.2 Feminist standpoint*) discusses the standpoint of the study, taking a feminist approach that is rooted in a post-structural feminist epistemology. The section also includes a reflection on the feminist standpoint in relation to other feminisms. The second sub-chapter (*4.3 Positionality and reflexivity*) outlines the researchers position in relation to the study, why it is important to acknowledge as well as how the positionality and reflexivity has influenced the data both in terms of collecting and analysing it. The third section (*4.4 Research design*) covers the reason for doing a qualitative case study as well as situates the case of the IFRC. The fourth part (*4.5 Data collection*) outlines how the data has been collected, how content analysis and semi-structured interviews were used as well as a discussion of confidentiality, consent and ethical considerations. The final section (*4.6 Limitations*) covers the potential limitations of the study.

4.2 Feminist standpoint

This study takes a feminist methodological standpoint, recognising that gender studies cannot be understood without attention to other aspects such as race, class, sexuality which defines the ways in how persons interact (Leavy & Harris, 2019: 4). Doing

feminist research allows the study to challenge gender-based inequalities that are prevalent around the world by approaching the issue from a critical stance (Leavy & Harris, 2019: 5). Feminist research adopts multi-perspectives such as intersectionality to highlight the ways in which gender-based oppressions and marginalisation are interlinked with positionalities such as class, race and ablism (Leavy & Harris, 2019: 43 & 45). As this study will analyse how an intersectional understanding of gender is promoted within DRR projects to build resilience, a feminist methodology seemed most appropriate granted the recognition of gender as inevitably interlinked with other aspects such as race and class. Adopting a feminist methodology takes a critical stance to challenge gender inequalities within DRR projects that aim to build resilience.

Nonetheless, it is important to address the potential limitations and challenges of adopting a feminist standpoint. One restraint concerns the lack of generalisability as feminist scholarship is fundamentally political and relies on local contexts and relations for which it is established (Leavy & Harris, 2019: 27). Additionally, the multi-perspective of feminist methodology deals with aspects that are “fluid” which may “create their own marginalisation” as new voices and perspectives are constantly included in such scholarly work (Leavy & Harris, 2019: 27).

More specifically, this study is grounded within a post-structural feminist epistemology. Post-structuralist feminist epistemology is concerned with how we become gendered subjects in the process of discourse and subjectification (Leavy & Harris, 2019: 78; Davies & Gannon, 2011). Feminist post-structuralism emphasises how binaries are constructed by power relations and maintained by accepting “normality, rationality and naturalness to the dominant term in any binary, and in contrast, how the subordinated terms are marked as other, as lacking, as not rational” (Davies & Gannon, 2011). The binaries explored are generally male/female and heterosexual/homosexual which in turn are outlined onto additional binaries, e.g., rational/irrational, or normal/abnormal (Davies & Gannon, 2011). Post-structural feminist epistemology recognises that gendered subjects are historically and socially

constituted whereby challenging such constituencies create agency (Davies & Gannon, 2011). Considering that the post-structuralist feminist framework belongs to environmental feminisms (Leavy & Harris, 2019: 77), it deemed most suitable to situate the research within such an epistemology as this study deals with disaster risk reduction and resilience as well as how gender and inclusion is considered.

As this study takes a feminist standpoint, it is necessary to reflect on how the researcher defines as a feminist. Following Haraway's (1988) reasoning of feminist objectivity as situated knowledges, the position the researcher inhabits determine what knowledge is produced when doing research. Studying how gender situates knowledge and knowing can circumvent the risk of "being everywhere but nowhere all at once" (Haraway, 1988). While this study takes a post-structuralist feminist epistemology, there are various types of feminism with different focus. Generally, feminist thought is seen emerging in three waves and beyond, the first wave liberal feminism, the second radical/cultural feminism as well as materialist/socialist feminism and in the third wave post-structural and post-modern feminism developed (Leavy & Harris, 2019: 31). Beyond the third wave more specified types of feminist thought such as intersectional feminism, Marxist feminism and Black feminism have cultivated. Given my position as a white feminist located in a Western setting ascribes me privileges other non-white feminists may not have. Such privileges may subconsciously affect what type of knowledge is produced and how.

4.3 Positionality and reflexivity

When doing research, it is important to reflect on the researchers position in relation to the study. Positionality refers to how the researcher views the world, its location in a social and political context as well as their position when doing research (Holmes, 2020). How the researcher situates herself in relation to the research and her epistemological assumptions will influence the study (Holmes, 2020). Moreover,

positionality is formed by the researchers belonging to e.g., gender, ethnicity, class, disability, geographical location etcetera (Holmes, 2020).

This section will therefore discuss my positionality, as a white Swedish female living in a country where I have not myself experienced disaster risks of natural hazards. As a student who identifies as having a critical feminist epistemological stand-point this assumption have inevitably influenced the study's questions. Acknowledging my own epistemological standpoint, I tried to ask as open and objective questions to all respondents, removing my own subjective views. Another aspect that might have influenced the study was the cultural differences between the respondents and myself, which could have had implications for the interview data as some information could have been "lost in translation" or not included if seen as a matter of course.

In terms of reflexivity, when collecting the data, I attempted to be aware of my positionality as context-dependent and shaped by the reflexive process of reviewing new data. In doing so I recognised the importance of being self-critical and reflecting on my own unconscious perceptions and subjective thoughts of why certain data should be included or not. Similarly, during the semi-structured interviews reflexivity was considered, as my positionality could unknowingly affect if, how and which follow-up questions were asked. By being self-critical during the interviews, I tried to reflect on my positionality as a feminist researcher and how that could influence the data.

Actively reflecting on my positionality and reflexivity, I recognised the different power relations between myself and the respondents whereas I was, contrary to the assumption that the interviewer is in the dominant position (Valentine, 2005: 114-115), in what could be considered an inferior position. The reason for considering myself in an inferior position was my quite limited practical experience from working with disaster risk reduction, resilience and gender² whereas both respondents had worked

² My previous experience merely concerned working with anticipatory action within DRR as an intern at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

within the field of disaster risk reduction and resilience for more than a decade. Their senior experiences can be seen as giving them the ‘upper-hand’ potentially steering answers to a certain direction, providing certain answers considered as more relevant as the semi-structured interviews allowed for new topics to be explored. Their senior position can also have implications for what data was collected as certain information could have been left out that was considered as tacit. Yet, it is also acknowledged that I, as the researcher, also runs the risk of “getting the story wrong” given my positionality (Leavy & Harris, 2019: 121). To decrease this risk, both respondents was given the opportunity to receive the transcript and recording after the interview.

4.4 Research design

4.4.1 *Qualitative case study*

This study will take the form of a qualitative case study, studying how the IFRC promotes intersectional aspects of gender into DRR projects that build resilience. By adopting a qualitative case study, in-depth, rich descriptions and analysis of the specific case can be generated, seeing as this type of study is regarded as more “robust” (Yin, 2016: 6; Yin, 2014: 57).

Qualitative research generally studies the meaning of people’s lives, represents the views and perspectives of the respondents, contributes to new insights that can facilitate understanding of social behaviour as well as acknowledges the relevance of multiple sources (Yin, 2016: 9). As this study aims to understand and explain the perspectives of the IFRCs understanding of gender as intersectional, a qualitative case study deemed to be most suitable. In the following section, the case of the IFRC will be outlined, describing the humanitarian organisations history and work with disaster risk reduction, resilience and gender.

4.4.2 Situating the case: The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

The reason for studying the case of the IFRC in relation to DRR, resilience and gender is that the organisation is the world's largest humanitarian network operating in 192 countries (IFRC, n.d.-c). Given the IFRC's wide-reaching support to reduce disasters and build resilience as well as its mandate to influence other humanitarian actors working in the field, it is of relevance to study how the organisation promotes an intersectional understanding of gender within DRR projects for resilience as it can influence the work of other stakeholders.

The organisation was founded in the aftermath of WW1 with the pursuit to enable better cooperation between countries to relieve humanitarian suffering and target needs (IFRC, n.d.-b). Guided by their vision to prevent and alleviate human suffering to maintain and promote human dignity and peace, IFRC's work centres around four core areas: "promoting humanitarian values, disaster response, disaster preparedness, and health and community care (IFRC, n.d.-d).

The IFRC constitute, together with ICRC and National Societies, the world's largest humanitarian network called the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (IFRC, n.d.-e). The three components of the Movement are all aligned under the vision of providing protection and support to affected populations in disasters and conflicts. To distinguish their different mandates and work, the IFRC works through the National Societies, by supporting and promoting the work done by national actors (IFRC, n.d.-e). Currently, the National Societies is made up of 192 individual associations all over the world (ibid). Dissimilar to the ways in which IFRC and the National Societies are interlinked, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an independent organisation under the Movement, who works with protecting the lives and dignity of victims of war and violence, providing them with assistance (ICRC, n.d.-f).

4.4.3 Working with disaster risk reduction, resilience and gender

For more than three decades, the IFRC has focused its work on community-led disaster risk reduction and climate risk management (IFRC, 2020-b). By promoting a community-based approach that is holistic, context-appropriate and efficient, the organisation acknowledges that communities and individuals face risks caused by natural hazards at all levels as well as the pressing need for affected populations to become resilient. Such an acknowledgement may in the long-term reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change (IFRC, 2020-b).

The organisations work in disasters and crises is divided into several areas such as shelter, disaster law, climate-smart disaster risk reduction etcetera. Focusing on the latter, the aim is to help communities reduce the risks they are facing, boost resilience and prepare for crisis (IFRC, n.d.-g). Climate-smart disaster risk reduction involves reducing the impact of a disaster and climatic shocks by helping communities to adequately prepare for and cope with the consequences (IFRC, n.d.-g). Reducing disaster risks is a continuous multi-sectoral process that involves all areas of a society, e.g., livelihoods, education and healthcare (IFRC, n.d.-g).

Declaring the climate crisis as an acute humanitarian crisis, IFRC reaches 52 million people vulnerable to disasters in 160 different countries (IFRC-action; IFRC, n.d.-g). To ensure disaster risk reduction and increase resilience of vulnerable communities, “IFRC will mobilize a significant scale-up in climate-smart DRR activities led and managed by communities” (IFRC, n.d.-g). The different activities implemented range from early warning early action, community knowledge and awareness raising, legislation for climate-smart disaster risk reduction to risk assessment and planning as well as reduction of disaster impacts (IFRC, n.d.-g). Looking more specifically at the activity of community knowledge and awareness raising, emphasis is on improving the public’s awareness of risks and how to deal with these effectively (IFRC, n.d.-h). In terms of the organisation's work on gender, gender equality should be permeated in all

activities and projects while respecting diversity and reaching all vulnerable groups and individuals (IFRC, 2013). The organisation also has policies on gender and diversity, where the concept of intersectionality is included, which will be analysed in the next section on empirical analysis and discussion.

4.5 Data collection

This sub-section discusses the methods of collecting data, namely content analysis as well as semi-structured interviews. The process of data collection has been recursive, meaning that an initial exploration of the data was made whereby a sense of the type of data was maintained, thoughts and ideas noted, before starting the process of thematically analysing the data in a systematic method (Leavy & Harris, 2019: 155-156). In total 14 different materials were analysed, as presented in the table below.

Type of data collected	Number
Semi-structured interviews	2
Secondary textual documents	12

4.5.1 *Content analysis*

This paragraph will shortly introduce the documents prior to the analysis. All documents, the keyword used to collect them, and number of pages can be found in appendix 4. Four of the reports are case studies part of a wider project aimed at surveying the level of effectiveness in national laws, policies and institutional frameworks in supporting gender equality in DRM and to prevent and respond to SGBV in disasters (IFRC, 2017-a; 2017-b; 2017-c; 2017-d). Two documents are IFRC

policies, one addressing gender and diversity (IFRC, 2020-c) whereas the other covers disaster risk management (IFRC, n.d.-i). The next two texts are frameworks guiding the work of the organisation focusing on gender and diversity issues between 2013-2020 (IFRC, 2017-e) as well as on community resilience (IFRC, 2014). The final documents are an evaluation of an earthquake response operation in Nepal (IFRC, 2019) a practical guide to gender-sensitive approaches for disaster management (IFRC, 2010), and a handbook on a participatory tool called vulnerability and capability assessment (VCA)(IFRC, 2006).

The documents were collected via purposive sampling using a keyword search to obtain relevant data. By purposively sampling data according to the keyword search, the ambition was to ensure that relevant and sufficient material was generated. The keywords used were “gender” and “disaster risk reduction”. The secondary data was obtained from IFRC’s website³ where certain parameters were selected in the index called “Find documents by”. For the “Type of Disasters/Category”, disaster risk reduction and gender were selected. For “Type” evaluations (all types) and case study/research were selected. Finally, for “Organisation” the IFRC was selected. The reason for limiting the keyword search to these categories was to generate relevant documents in line with the scope and focus of study. In total, the search generated five articles that included both “gender” and “disaster risk reduction”.

After the first keyword search the majority of the sources focused on sexual- and gender-based violence in within disaster risk reduction projects. This focus was something initially not considered as relevant, however, as the theme of SGBV appeared to be included in almost all of the documents during the first keyword search this has steered the study to adapt. As the aim is to understand how the IFRC promotes an intersectional understanding of gender in DRR projects for resilience, the focus on SGBV may have implications for how gender is considered as well as how resilience

³ <https://www.ifrc.org/en/publications-and-reports/evaluations/>

is thought of. Evidently, the aspect of SGBV is key in the organisations work with disaster risk reduction and resilience. While not initially included in the chapters on previous research and theory, a shorter reflection on SGBV will be included in the analysis, looking at the IFRC’s understanding of resilience and gender as intersecting with sexual- and gender-based violence.

As the first keyword search only generated five articles that included both keywords of “gender” and “disaster risk reduction” it was deemed necessary to perform an additional search on IFRC’s general website⁴. The difference between the first and second keyword search was that the second search was informed by the interview participants, meaning that they recommended certain documents to be included in the empirical analysis. In a sense, the second process of collecting data took the form of a snowballing sampling as the interview respondents were asked to recommend textual documents of relevance.

As this study will analyse textual documents in the form of publications and research reports, a qualitative content analysis was made. A qualitative content analysis allows for systematic analyses from the theoretical framework, where the collected data will be interpreted to uncover meanings, motives and purposes in the form of written content (Halperin & Heath, 2012: p. 310 & 318; Leavy & Harris, 2019: 171). In line with feminist standpoint, content analysis allows for analysis of the politics of representation within documents, studying how norms of gender are constructed and maintained, how gender inequality is established and how dominant representations and ideologies benefit patriarchal power (Leavy & Harris, 2019: 171). A feminist content analysis study the representations and exclusions whereby ideas and norms about sexuality, gender, age, class and race intersect and are created (Leavy & Harris, 2019: 171-172).

⁴ <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/>

Qualitative content analysis is in nature inductive, whereas themes emerge and are identified through a recursive process of collecting and analysing data from which the analysis is later structured (Halperin & Heath, 2012: 327; Leavy & Harris, 2019: 181). This study will therefore take an inductive approach, identifying themes that emerge from the data analysis. During the content analysis, more than 16 different themes emerged from the textual documents. To structure the analysis thematically, all themes were revisited and eventually reached its saturation concluding in six themes; gender roles, limited access to resources, participation, social inclusion, discrimination against women and informal/formal work. These themes have been further revised and compared to those that emerged during the qualitative interviews, which will be discussed in the next sub-section.

By analysing the content in these different textual documents ranging from projects and evaluations to frameworks, policies and guidelines the ambition is to uncover the practices of IFRC in understanding gender, intersectionality, resilience and disaster risk reduction as operationalised by the organisation. The content analysis will also be complemented by semi-structured interviews to understand if and how the written documents converge with how IFRC works with an intersectional understanding of gender, potential normative challenges as well as how local knowledge of aid recipients is considered.

4.5.2 Semi-structured interviews

As part of the data collection, interviews were made with two participants. The interviews were semi-structured conversations with a purpose, allowing the interviewees to establish their own narrative of experiences working with disaster risk reduction and resilience (Valentine, 2005: 111). Semi-structured interviews allows for generating material in a rich, detailed and multi-layered way which produces more in-depth data in comparison with e.g., a questionnaire. These types of interviews rely on words and meanings, which allows for a textual approach once analysed (Valentine,

2005: 111). The aim is to understand the lived experiences of individuals operating in a certain context, rather than generalising and providing a representative picture of what is being studied (Valentine, 2005: 111). Similarly, this study aims to understand the experiences of how IFRC promotes an intersectional understanding of gender and how different experiences are included in resilience strategies. Thus, conducting qualitative, semi-structured interviews was deemed most suitable for this type of study.

Prior to the interviews, two interview guides divided into themes on gender, vulnerability and differences, and IFRC's work with gender equality, DRR and resilience were created. While semi-structured interviews do not necessarily rely on predetermined questions, an interview guide allows the respondents to shape the interview from their own experiences as well as ensure that the researcher's interests are covered (Mason, 2004: 1020). The interview guide constituted questions that functioned as guidance if needed but also to ensure that relevant themes were covered (Mason, 2004: 1020). According to Valentine (2005: 119) formulating key questions, so called hangers, can be helpful in reminding the researcher what angles that should be explored but also to ensure that relevant information is composed.

The interview guides with questions and themes can be found in appendix 1 and 2, followed by a list of respondents. The reason for formulating two interview guides was that respondent 1 was a current employee at the IFRC and could represent the organisation's view, whereas respondent 2 was no longer employed and therefore only talked about DRR, resilience and intersectionality in general from a DRR practitioners view. Thus, the interview guides were adapted to gain as much information and relevant data from the interviewees as possible.

During the interviews, several themes emerged⁵ in line with the already pre-determined questions. The themes that emerged were the following: gendered roles, exposure to

⁵ For coding tree, please see appendix 6.

disasters, agents of change, access to resources, inclusivity, socio-cultural norms, local knowledge, social inclusion, equal participation and diversity. Comparing these to the concluding themes from the content analysis, it can be noted that these overlap and are very similar. The analysis is thematically divided in an attempt to encompass all these subjects.

In terms of potential obstacles in recruiting interviewees and knowing who is most relevant to interview, I sent out an interview request in the contact box at IFRC⁶ website as well as contacted the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre via the email address available at their website⁷. The reason for including the Climate Centre is that the institution informs the IFRC on disaster preparedness and response, training and technical instruments (Climate Centre, n.d.). While existing studies, generally recommend directly contacting a named individual (Valentine, 2005: 118), a general request to the organisation was how the respondents were recruited.

Both interviews were conducted via Zoom and followed the guidelines of the note on informed consent⁸. The interviews were recorded on the computer and lasted between 30-40 minutes. The recordings were transcribed after each interview to ensure that no details got lost and that the impressions from the interviews were still 'fresh'. Transcribing the interviews helps to systematically arrange and analyse textual data (McLellan, MacQueen & Neidig, 2003). The recordings have been transcribed to keep the exact words and formulation of sentences as close as possible to how they have been worded by the respondents. Thus, the quotations in the analysis consist of everyday language such as "you know" and some quotations may not be considered in line with academic language.

⁶ <https://www.ifrc.org/en/Contact-us/>

⁷ <https://www.climatecentre.org/contact>

⁸ For note on informed consent, see appendix 5.

4.5.3 Confidentiality, consent and ethical considerations

Prior to the interviews, a note on informed consent was distributed to each participant to ensure that they were informed about the proceedings of the interview and could consent to being audio recorded. To consent participation and allow the interview to be recorded, the participants had to read aloud the final sentence on the note as to verbally consent: “By signing this consent form, I certify that, I Your Full Name, understand and agree to the terms of this agreement. Date: Today’s Date”⁹.

The note on informed consent also specified that all information and responses will be kept confidential. Confidentiality in research involves ensuring the research participants that no information will be disclosed without consent as well as present the findings in a way which ensures that the participants are not identified (Wiles et al., 2007). One way of ensuring confidentiality is anonymity of all participants, which is why this study have named the participants according to when the interviews were conducted i.e., respondent 1 and respondent 2.

When doing research, it is important to consider if and how ethical aspects can influence the process and results of the study (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Ethical concerns are an integral part of doing all kinds of research and is an aspect to consider both in qualitative as well as quantitative research (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). By reflecting on the power relation between myself and the respondents, it is acknowledged that the respondents could potentially steer the interview in the direction they wished for as they are highly experienced in the field of DRR, resilience and gender.

Additionally, in terms of how the data is protected, all respondents received a note of informed consent which states that the data will be saved on the researcher's computer until the study is published then to be deleted. The process of anonymising the data

⁹ See appendix 5.

was challenging as it was decided to keep the professional titles of both respondents. The reason for maintaining the titles was to demonstrate the reliability and relevant experience of both respondents. Both interviewees verbally agreed for their titles to be included in the study. While anonymising can be seen as an issue the verbal agreement was deemed discharging this challenge.

4.6 Limitations

This last methodological chapter will discuss the limitations of this study, primarily focusing on the data collection. The study has several limitations, one being the use of secondary data in the content analysis as there is a risk of selectivity by the researcher (Bowen, 2009). While the selection of secondary data can be seen as somewhat selective in terms of how it was collected the proceeding is described in section 4.4.1 to ensure transparency. When dealing with secondary data it is also important to consider the reason for why a document was produced, the intended audience as well as types of references used in the document as it can decrease the risk of data that is biased (Bowen, 2009).

Another limitation to this study is the number of interviews. While only two interviews were conducted with one current employee and one previously employed, this study recognises that additional interviews could add additional perspectives to how IFRC understand and promote an intersectional understanding of gender in their DRR projects that build resilience. Nonetheless, the two interviews reached their saturation and provided relevant information. Additionally, to address this potential limitation additional textual documents were included to a total of 12 secondary sources constituting 717 pages.

Finally, it is necessary to reflect on potential limitations of working with a single case study. One limitation is that of replicability and generalizability, meaning that a restudy is made possible following the same research procedures and/or sufficient information

of the first study and that the results are applicable in other settings and studies for which are generalised. Yet, as previously expressed, this study aims to generate in-depth rich descriptions of a specific case rather than make generalisable findings for which can be restudied. Moreover, this study analyses the data from an interpretive analysis meaning that the respondents beliefs and answers are described for which are connected with the positionality and epistemology of the researcher. Analysing the findings from an interpretative perspective, focusing on the interview respondents experiences and content collected from secondary data, the ability to generalise will be absent.

5. Empirical analysis and discussion

This chapter consists of the empirical findings as collected from the qualitative interviews and secondary data. The chapter is structured according to the sub-questions including thematically divided sections following the themes that emerged during the interviews and content analysis. Each section ends with an analytical summary where the findings are concluded, and each sub-question answered. As presented throughout this study, the analysis is permeated by the assumption that the IFRC can do extensively more in promoting an intersectional understanding of gender in DRR projects for resilience.

5.1 An intersectional understanding of gender

This section will address the first sub-question “*How is gender and intersectionality defined by the IFRC?*” After revisiting the themes from the content analysis and interviews, the concluding themes were gendered roles, agents of change, diversity and intersectionality. By including these themes in the analysis, different aspects of how gender and intersectionality is considered may emerge. Highlighting the findings by looking at these thematic aspects, the first research question can be more easily answered for which an intersectional understanding of gender is made.

The first section (*5.1.1 Defining gender and intersectionality*) will discuss how IFRC policies and documents define gender and intersectionality including the themes of gendered roles, diversity and intersectionality. The second section (*5.1.2 Exploring the perceptions of gender and intersectionality*) will explore how gender and intersectionality is perceived in projects and “on the ground”, covering the theme of agents of change, where it will be analysed how agency is considered and how power relations are reinforced or challenged. The theme agents of change will more specifically highlight the gendered nature of volunteers, needs assessments, awareness-

raising and how the binary of women and men situate individuals and groups to be more vulnerable to disasters. The final section (5.1.3 *Analytical summary*) will summarise the discussions in the first two sub-headings in relation to previous research and theoretical framework.

5.1.1 Defining gender and intersectionality

As expressed in previous research, there is a growing recognition of the different impacts disasters have on groups and how these impacts differ based on age, disability, nationality or other sociocultural and ethnic differences (IFRC, n.d.-i). The IFRC regards gender equality as a global challenge that adversely affects development and financial growth, augment discrimination, exclude certain individuals and groups from accessing resources, healthcare services, education and other public services (IFRC, n.d.-i). Consideration is also given to the various forms gender inequality can take, and that it is entrenched in power relations (IFRC, n.d.-i). In the strategic framework on gender and diversity, the IFRC has underscored that gender is inaccurately being used as a concept that deals with issues solely associated with women (IFRC, 2017-e). The framework recognise that men can endure discrimination and violence on the basis of gender (IFRC, 2017-e). The work on gender and diversity matters is labelled as “inclusive and takes into account all those who are vulnerable to inequality, harm and loss of basic rights because of their gender.” (IFRC, 2017-e). Social differences between men and women are considered changeable and rooted in cultural norms which dictates the roles, power and access to resources (IFRC, 2017-e).

Respondent 1 noted that “*all Red Cross work is guided by the seven fundamental principles as well as the IFRC policies including the gender and diversity policy. So, whatever we do is guided and influenced by these and other policies*”. Respondent 1 also emphasised that “*the gender policy is more specifically focusing on, there are two important aspects in the diversity policy, one is the equal benefit to both men and*

women, and then equal opportunity and participation of men and women in Red Cross activities so there are these two aspects and so we are working to ensure this.”

The IFRC gender and diversity policy defines gender as a non-binary aspect of individuals “socially determined identity that relates to masculinity and femininity” (IFRC, 2020-c). It is also recognised that gender roles are interchangeable and differ between cultures as social and structural gender norms influence individuals and communities roles, power, rights and access to services as well as resources (IFRC, 2020-c). Additionally, a definition on intersectionality is included, which refers to that “[...] individuals have several layers to their identities, such as gender, ethnic origin, nationality or citizenship, age, disability, language, political opinions, religious beliefs, social background, sexual orientation, physical appearance and colour that are woven together” (IFRC, 2020-c). As a combination of these factors, individuals and groups can suffer discrimination. Applying an intersectional lens allows for the combination of all forms of discrimination to be studied and how these affect the individual (IFRC, 2020-c).

Defining gender and intersectionality as the above recognises that there are multiple factors that shape gender roles and limits the access to resources, power and rights which are socially structured. While previous research has criticised DRR and related policies for failing to integrate a gendered perspective and rather dealing with women from patriarchal stereotypes, the IFRC policies and frameworks as presented above can be seen doing the opposite. Evidently, it can be noted that at policy level the IFRC raise awareness of how discrimination is enacted along the lines of gender, ethnic origin, nationality etcetera, recognising that gender and intersectionality is interlinked.

Finally, it has been noted that SGBV increases during disasters, yet data on to what extent is lacking (IFRC, 2017-a). The IFRC view measures against SGBV as an integral part of reducing the vulnerability of groups after a disaster and also notes that it “arises from social, cultural and religious practices that subordinate women, and may also

make it unacceptable for men or women, girls or boys, to step outside socially assigned gender roles (including people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual or intersex).” (IFRC, 2017-a). Again, at policy level it can be deemed that there is a clear understanding of gender as intersectional which this quote illustrates.

5.1.2 Exploring perceptions of gender and intersectionality

This chapter will discuss the perceptions of gender and intersectionality in projects “on the ground” to build resilience. According to respondent 1, the gender and diversity policy objectives are not too challenging to include: *“in the field it is not that difficult to apply it. When it comes to the Red Cross target population we have a very clear set of target populations. These include the most vulnerable people, meaning children, women and also the family with single parents, disabled, old people and so on. So women and girls and also families headed by mothers are traditional Red Cross target groups. The gender is included in the Red Cross assistance”*. This quote illustrates that gender is included in the target population and assistance, yet little consideration is made to potential differences in the group of women more than as mother-headed households, disabled and elderly.

To ensure a culture of inclusion and diversity, the IFRC implements measures to establish policies and governance on PGI (IFRC, 2020-c). Establishing such tools have resulted in women increasing their self-awareness and confidence allowing them “to take control over their own lives.” (IFRC, 2019). Another important provision is advancing gender equality and diversity in humanitarian assistance to ensure gender sensitivity (IFRC, 2020-c). Recognising women’s special needs, such as lactating, pregnant etcetera, are important in the context of a disaster as they otherwise face aggravated vulnerability (IFRC, 2017-d).

Considering how gender is included in disaster risk reduction projects for resilience, respondent 2 noted that, *“it’s [gender] been a blind spot unfortunately, almost*

completely, at least from policy level [...]”. What is more, respondent 2 explained that *“[...] if you are looking at mapping gender concerns and needs, and making sure that they [the women] get that and ensuring that the gender-based roles and responsibilities that they have in terms of making sure that they have water, [...], and on personal hygiene, looking at I mean even things as sanitary napkins, privacy, more water for lactating women because they need more water, those kinds of things no, they have not been on the DRR agenda at all.”*. This quote illustrates that while gender is included in theory, it seems to be overlooked in practice. In line with the reasoning presented in the theoretical framework, women and other groups are disadvantaged in policy practice which this quotes demonstrates by overlooking the needs and personal hygiene of women.

The rationale behind such a policy gap was considered by respondent 2, reasoning that *“probably one of the reasons has been [...] a male-dominated sector, most of the people that respond have been men, even in humanitarian agencies. If you look at the Red Cross I mean the figures should be given on the website in terms of how many volunteers are men and how many are women, and that vary hugely between countries but I do not think that they initially was any move to try to understand, you know, that women need to be there at the forefront, especially in societies where there are a lot of sociocultural norms where women may not be able to interact with men.”* The idea of gender as underpinned by patriarchal norms and structures becomes specifically evident in this quote, where the binary between women and men is further reinforced in such practices as described above. From the perspective of an intersectional approach to FPE, this quote illustrates how social inequalities formed by patriarchal norms make women vulnerable as their needs are inadequately included but also that the majority of participating volunteers are men.

Similar to the reasoning that gender and intersectionality is prominent in theory and less in practice, the findings from analysing the Global Study points to how gender is used interchangeably with women due to the inadequacy of definitions of the concepts

of gender and gender inequality in legal contexts (IFRC, 2017-d). Moreover, the available data on gender in the context of disasters distinguishes the impacts according to sex and regards gender equality as women's inequality (IFRC, 2017-d). Seemingly, what is construed in policy about gender did not conform to the findings in the Global Study.

How gender has been applied “on the ground” by the IFRC has had implications for the organisations volunteers. Respondent 2 reminisced that: *“I remember when I just joined the Federation, I had been invited to an international meeting as a speaker, [...] I remember one person going up from the audience talking about some disaster in his state, and he said that you know the Red Cross was just fantastic, those volunteers were just super in the Red Cross, but he said that I like to point out that, you know, there weren't any women there, and a lot of the women I [he] know in the villages refuse to come out and be treated by the male volunteers or, you know, go with them [the male volunteers] wherever they had to, so it took a lot of time for groups of women to be collected so they could feel safe enough to move out and go with them [the male volunteers]. So he said, you know, one of the things that I want you to do is recruit many more women as women volunteers.”* This quote clearly demonstrates the gap between policy and practice, as has been outlined throughout this entire section, where sensitivity gender issues and awareness to gender roles in certain local contexts has been inadequately considered. It also points to how patriarchal norms underpin aid and development projects where the majority of volunteers are men that provide support.

In terms of how intersectionality is considered within DRR projects, respondent 2 reasoned that *“society is segregated on gender lines and when we talk about intersectionality it becomes even more difficult. Because, you know, when we are looking at really the third gender, the LGBTI, even when you are mapping concerns, and you know this is not only for the Federation it is for all DRR organisations, [...] nobody even thinks about it, and even you know privacy or any of those, even disability for that matter, women-headed households. But it has not been like you're really sitting*

with women mapping what they want, making sure that their gender-based roles and responsibilities are recognised, and then giving relief. And in terms of rehabilitation and reconstruction, they are not there.” While it has been maintained that there is a gap between how gender and related activities are defined in policy and implemented in practice, this statements implies that intersectionality has not been considered in DRR projects for resilience but rather completely disregarded where groups outside the binary of men and women are further made vulnerable.

Nonetheless, respondent 2 remarked that: *“But the point is that they [the IFRC] are now trying to look at all this, but their mandate really stops with relief and response. So even though yes in theory they do, you know, rehabilitation and maybe even reconstruction but obviously they have not yet invested in resources to take them all the way and lead to resilience of women too, or of men for that matter. I think [...] mandates of organisations and you know what they are supposed to be doing also makes a lot of difference.”* illustrating how the mandate of IFRC, as an emergency relief actor in humanitarian crises, has potentially led the organisation to not fully consider effective resilience measures that are gender-sensitive. Rather, it can be argued that the work of the IFRC taps into the critique of merely “arriving, acting, and leaving” as outlined in the chapter on previous research.

5.1.3 Analytical summary

How the IFRC define gender and intersectionality as well as how these two aspects are perceived in practice “on the ground” has been explored in the previous sub-sections. This sub-chapter has demonstrated how gender and intersectionality is well thought out in theory yet how in practice several challenges remain. The definitions of gender and intersectionality address to certain extent how vulnerable persons and groups are gendered along a multi-categorical axis where aspects of gender, ethnicity, nationality, disability etcetera interact and shape gender roles. To answer the first sub-question *“How is gender and intersectionality defined by the IFRC?”* it can be concluded that

there is awareness on policy-level how gender intersect with other aspects such as ethnicity and class as well as the importance of intersectionality. Yet in practice there is a lack of non-male volunteers and inadequate needs assessments which risks tapping into patriarchal structures. The need to increase awareness of how those not considered belonging to the binary of women and men are vulnerable and affected by disasters was also highlighted.

Analysing the findings from the framework of FPE and intersectionality, the analysis demonstrates how vulnerable groups by gender, race, class and ethnicity are unjustly impoverished due to the neglect of gender differences and imbalances in power relations. Additionally, the ways in which gender and gendered power relate to other forms of difference such as class can arguably be seen neglected. Permeated by the assumption that the IFRC can do extensively more to promote an intersectional understanding of gender, the analysis has demonstrated that improvements in how gender and intersectionality is promoted in projects and activities after a disaster to strengthen resilience are needed.

5.2 Potential normative challenges

This section will address the second question: “*What are the potential normative challenges?*” discussing the potential normative challenges IFRC face when attempting to promote an intersectional understanding of gender in DRR projects for resilience. As disclosed in the introductory chapter, analysing potential normative challenges can highlight otherwise under-studied aspects of power, justice and social equity. Normative challenges can also address potential challenges and opportunities when implementing resilience activities. The themes that emerged were gendered roles, social inclusion, participation, power relations and socio-cultural norms. These aspects will guide the sub-chapter outlining the intersections between an intersectional understanding of gender with normative challenges.

5.2.1 Diverse understandings of social inclusion & gender roles

As an integral part to ensure inclusion of all groups of a community in DRM, the IFRC promotes social inclusion with the aim to advance gender equality and diversity as well as prevent discrimination based on gender or diversity (IFRC, 2017-e). To ensure social inclusion, activities that create opportunities for women, girls, men, boys and those from other diverse backgrounds to take part in equal sharing of power and participate in all types of decision-makings should be promoted (IFRC, 2017-e).

Inclusion should be considered as a way to reduce inequalities on the basis of social backgrounds, identities, roles and power relations (IFRC, 2020-c). Providing inclusive services means giving equitable access to resources for all (IFRC, 2020-c). In the work of disaster risk reduction, respondent 1 said that *“In DRR, one of the principles we [IFRC] promote, as the same with UNDRR and other agencies, is the inclusive disaster risk reduction, meaning that so no one, no group is marginalised or excluded in DRR. So this is the common principle applied by DRR practitioners. Not only Red Cross but other organisations that are working for this common principle of inclusive DRR”*.

Yet, respondent 1 explained that *“but in some countries, especially in countries where women’s role is limited to taking care of the internal issues of the family etc. women’s role in society is relatively lower than other countries. In those countries, it is hard to bring about a positive, enhancing women’s role.”* This quote demonstrates that while social inclusion is promoted by the organisation, without sufficient recognition of contextual gendered roles both from the IFRC and national institutions it is challenging to ensure inclusion of all in resilience-building activities.

Analysing the level of awareness of gender roles in IFRC projects, respondent 1 reminisced on the work in the aftermath of cyclone Nargis where it was noted that *“[...] it was very hard and challenging to ensure that the women representative accounts at least 40 or 50% of the total number of community committees. It was very hard even*

though we explained why it was important, because women's role in that society was very low, only legally enacted by men so to trying to influence this change was challenging.". While cyclone Nargis occurred in 2008, this statement indicate that at the time awareness of gendered roles was not included in measures to ensure equal inclusion of men and women. Arguably, this demonstrates the contrasting views on gender roles by the IFRC (at the time at least) as compared to the local community as inclusion of women was challenging.

Contrasting views on gender roles by the IFRC and the local community was also implied during the interview with respondent 2, who took the Indian Ocean tsunami as an example: *"So you know I mean even in tsunami, for instance, they gave them [men] boats, fishing lines and things like that but what about the on-shore space where women actually make those nets, sort out the fish, market that, all those things were not thought of. So a huge gap."* While this example is referring more explicitly to women's informal role in the domestic labour, it indicates that gendered roles were not recognised and thus further excluded women's needs in relief services. The quote also points out that disregarding women's role in the informal sector can further place them at the margins of poverty where they lack suitable tools for producing an income, which further adversely influences their ability to become resilient.

Furthermore, respondent 2 highlighted that: *"The second thing that tsunami did was that it did not only look at relief and response but also at rehabilitation and reconstruction, so a lot of fishermen's communities I would say, although women do a lot, all of the on-shore work you know most of them are still called fishermen's societies or you know it is the fisherMEN¹⁰ that go out and catch all fish but a lot of the fisher folks do other work and other things [...]"* indicating that the participation of women could be regarded as overlooked given that the fisher-societies are focused on the men's role and responsibility. Existing cultural norms are thus of great importance in

¹⁰ Emphasis on men.

understanding how gendered roles have implications for how an intersectional understanding of gender is promoted but also to avoid tapping into a patriarchal agenda.

Finally respondent 2 concluded that *“I mean no official today is going to say I’m not going to work on gender. At least we have reached there. But having said that, how do you do that? I think this is the kind of way forward that we really need to do.”*

5.2.2 Participation and power relations

To ensure gender-responsive DRM, equal participation of local groups is crucial to promote gender equality (IFRC, 2017-d). Participation refers to women’s ability to influence decisions and agendas in decision-making processes (IFRC, 2017-d). In the case of Ecuador, a minimum level of participation by women was urged to be mandated in risk management committees (IFRC, 2017-b). It was advised that a minimum percentage of 30% committee members that are female was preferable (IFRC, 2017-b). In the work of IFRC, local groups and individuals are considered as, in the words of respondent 1: *“we treat them not only as aid recipients but also regard them as agents of change, people who can and should actively contribute to the development of their lives and so to strengthen their resilience. So their participation in the community activities and implementation of Red Cross programmes, that is very crucial for the sake of sustainability.”*

Regarding aid recipients as agents of change implies that everyone in the community have equal capability to participate and contribute to strengthen resilience. Arguably, such a perspective fails to consider contextual gendered relations, the intersections between gender, class, ethnicity, disability etcetera which shape the ability to participate, influence and contribute to resilience-building. Disregarding existing norms risk reinforcing notions of gender inequality, and subsequently hinder an intersectional understanding to be promoted.

Contrastingly, respondent 1 also noted that “[...] *the community alone cannot achieve its resilience, they may achieve it to certain level but not to a satisfactory level, so in order to be sustainable and resilient, each community should be connected with relevant regional and national authorities and institutions.*”. This quote quite contrastingly recognises that community members, as agents of change, cannot alone achieve resilience to a satisfactory level without support from other institutions. Such a recognition of communities own capability can arguably be seen as tapping into white saviourism, where the organisation must save the “Other” victim from disasters. Following the reasoning in the paragraph above, as indicated in previous research, an intersectional reading on the challenges of the community to reach resilience on its own can uncover the reasons for how groups act as well as provide a more nuanced analysis of how social dimensions of power and gender operates and intersect with various communities living in climate contexts.

To indicate the level of exposure to disasters groups or communities endure as well as their capability to withstand natural hazards, the Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment is used (IFRC, 2006). Participation ranges from simply attending to being able to influence and decide in processes (IFRC, 2006). In the VCA, local individuals and groups are regarded as active participants in development initiatives to strengthen their own capacity in resisting disaster risks and building resilience (IFRC, 2007). In the words of respondent 1, participation is key in raising awareness via tools: “*So these tools [VCA, risk mapping, observations, transect walk, seasonal calendar, focus groups, community surveys] are very useful and also practical in different aspects, [...] also this is a participatory tool so it is not just Red Cross coming and doing the assessment, rather it is done with the active participation of community people so the final voice the product is co-owned by the Red Cross and also community people*”.

While the VCA is co-owned by the organisation and the community, previous research has identified that IOs operating in the field of disaster risk reduction have been found influencing existing power relations as well as political and institutional contexts. To

recognise this potential challenge, an intersectional understanding of gender can further address the risk of some being excluded from participating in resilience activities.

5.2.3 Analytical summary

This chapter has analysed the potential normative challenges of promoting an intersectional understanding of gender by looking at how social inclusion and gender roles are perceived by the IFRC and local community, as well as how participation of local communities and potential power relations within DRR projects to build resilience are considered. Applying the framework of FPE together with intersectionality arguably demonstrates that there is a lack of awareness of power and intersectionality in how gender roles are shaped and created. Similarly, failing to include aspects of intersectionality risks reinforcing patriarchal norms, white saviourism and power relations when assuming that all people in a community are able to participate and actively contribute to building resilience. As also indicated in the previous research, disregarding the varying capabilities and opportunities can further reinforce unequal power relations where only the local elites are included and able to participate in projects. Failing to recognise gendered roles further taps into the notion identified in previous research how organisations runs the risk of negatively influencing existing power relations when excluding vulnerable populations.

To answer the question “*What are the potential normative challenges of promoting such an understanding?*”, one normative challenge identified in this analysis concern the understanding, or lack thereof, of gender roles – how disregarding these makes the promotion of an intersectional understanding limited or non-existent. Another normative challenge is the question of who is included in activities, as social inclusion and participation will ultimately influence existing roles, power relations and inequalities. Finally, aligned with the assumption that the IFRC can do extensively more to promote an intersectional understanding of gender, this chapter concludes that

a more advanced intersectional understanding of gender, participation and power relations is needed.

5.3 Recognition of local knowledge

As outlined in the chapter on previous research, attention to different experiences and knowledge of women and other groups have been somewhat missing in development policy as promoted by international and national agencies. The focus on the local aid recipients knowledge and risk perceptions can influence activities to determine how resilience is boosted and disaster risks reduced. This section will address the final question *“To what extent is local knowledge recognised in resilience-building projects?”* following the assumption that the knowledge of beneficiaries is not included to the extent for which is necessary. The themes that emerge and will help limit the analysis are socio-cultural norms, awareness-building, gender roles and intersectionality. These aspects will aid the analysis in studying how local knowledge is considered by the IFRC, whose knowledge is included as well as how knowledge of aid recipient informs DRR projects for resilience. Existing literature has emphasised the importance of gendered local knowledge, as it is key to build resilience and reduce disaster risks. Both aspects of normative challenges and local knowledge of the aid recipients are seemingly integral elements of resilience-building.

By reason of clarification, socio-cultural norms will be more specifically addressed in this section rather than the previous on normative challenges, as how knowledge is produced and considered also is underpinned by assumptions and socio-cultural norms. Additionally, more data was covered and collected of socio-cultural norms in connection to local knowledge of aid recipients. Nonetheless, the study acknowledges that socio-cultural norms is also equally relevant to potential normative challenges.

5.3.1 Socio-cultural norms and gender

To adequately inform disaster risk management, improve gender equality and counteract SGBV, women's formal and informal roles are of significance (IFRC, 2017-d). Government institutions such as disaster management agencies must be more open and recognise that women have limited access to formal institutions (IFRC, 2017-d). Raising awareness of socio-cultural norms, traditional gender roles and knowledge production that can challenge barriers for women to become resilient is of importance, as they are disproportionately affected by disasters (IFRC, 2017-b).

The knowledge and experience of local communities in disasters is important as it can be instilled to reduce vulnerability (IFRC, 2017-c). Specifically looking at women's role in knowledge production in relation to existing socio-cultural norms respondent 1 noted that: *“still there is work to be done to increase women's participation [...], not only [in] Red Cross programmes but also the community programs in general. And also increasing the women's position and role in the society that is also something that is to be given priority”*. Similarly, the policy on gender and diversity issues expresses that opportunities to share knowledge about gender, diversity and intersectionality should be encouraged as well as how ways to promote these aspects, increase participation and access to resources and opportunities (IFRC, n.d.-i). Failing to recognise women's traditional roles may potentially lead to local knowledge being overlooked which is crucial for understanding how to best manage risk or build resilience. As noted in the previous research, combining local knowledge with that of the international organisations such as the IFRC can provide a more holistic understanding of disaster risks and vulnerability.

One way to perceive the local knowledge of the communities is through the use of participatory tools, in the words of respondent 1: *“[...] another good tool is the focus group discussions, focus group we mean women, children, old people and religious people and so on, so we target these key people and also these people they sit down*

and share their experiences and problems so it's a good way identifying the common issues faced by members of each group.” This quote not only highlights the importance of resilience-building as a participatory process, but also how knowledge production and risk awareness is included and recognised by the IFRC and National Societies working on the ground with emergency relief and response.

Contrastingly to what was anticipated in the methodological framework, the empirical findings mostly covered the knowledge of local volunteers of the IFRC. Respondent 2 remembered a workshop with Red Cross volunteers about gender and intersectionality: *“[...] one of the questions that we asked was, you know we give them a situation and we say in this situation, how do you ensure that women are brought in and you are looking at gender and intersectionality? And we give them a few options and it is interesting that people really didn't know how to do it, they have not been trained, they do not have any exposure. [...] a lot of the community people that have been trained are not from grassroot organisations or from villages, they may be city-based so they have no idea what really needs to be done. You know do you [the volunteers] talk to all women, do you talk to women and men separately, you know do you map their needs separately? These were questions that came up.”* Interestingly, this quote illustrates the other side of the coin, namely the local knowledge of IFRC volunteers in resilience-building activities. Arguably, both perspectives of knowledge of the beneficiaries and knowledge of volunteers have strong implications for how DRR projects and resilience activities are designed and performed. Also, the linkage between these two types of knowledges may influence how an intersectional understanding of gender is considered granted that the volunteers are not from the villages nor share similar intersecting aspects of gender, ethnicity, class or disability etcetera.

As a way forward in how organisations such as the Red Cross could go about this issue of volunteers not knowledgeable about the specific contextual gender issues in the villages, respondent 2 suggested that: *“[...] I think there are several strategies that*

organisations can employ and the government often reaches out to civil society organisations, to the Red Cross, for help. So you know this is a way for their own [Red Cross] capacities can be built and then they can put it in their own policies to cease and say yes you need a consultation in every village; in every village and every town to see what are the solutions to make sure that you people have these capacities built on gender and intersectionality, make sure that everybody's views are taken, needs are mapped, so yeah there are ways going about it.” Again, the connection between the aid recipients knowledge and that of the volunteers is implied. Yet the heavy focus on the knowledge of volunteers runs a risk of reinforcing existing power relations and neglecting the perspectives of the aid recipients, falling into the trap of saviourism complex where the knowledge of volunteers is assessed as more relevant.

Nonetheless, the IFRC has focused its efforts to understand resilience from the communities perspective, listening to their own experiences of the complexity of resilience in combination with further studies and analyses (IFRC, 2014). IFRC also recognises that the community members know how things work and how to improve their lives (IFRC, 2014).

5.3.2 How is risk perceived?

How local communities understand risk impacts the level of vulnerability, exposure to natural hazards as well as their ability to build capacity and withstand disaster risks. Recognising how communities and groups perceive risk as based on their current knowledge of previous hazards and capability to assess the magnitude of the potential disasters is, as indicated in the previous research, important as such knowledge informs how resilience can be built.

The gendered differences of risk perceptions determines the capacity to cope with natural hazards and other disaster risks as well as the varying access between women and men to receive information (IFRC, 2017-d). This was also evident in the case of

death rates in Sri Lanka following the tsunami, where “the female population showed a significantly higher mortality than the male” which could be seen as attributed to gender-related issues and traditional roles in work and occupation (IFRC, 2017-d). These gender roles were more specifically seen in the form of women staying behind to look out for their children and relatives, more men were capable of swimming and climbing trees than women, as well as women working on the shore along the coastline whereas men were out on the sea (IFRC, 2017-d). Such findings implicate that the level of risk perception is strongly influenced by traditional, existing gender roles for which women tend to care for and protect children and relatives whereas men did not. This indicated the importance of understanding socio-cultural norms and context-specific gender roles when providing relief support, activities to reduce disaster risks and build resilience.

In terms of resilience-building activities more specifically, the VCA also identifies the level of exposure to a disaster and the communities capability to withstand natural hazards (IFRC, 2006). As supported by the SFDRR 2015-2030, the VCA tool should promote the use of knowledge and education to build resilience at all levels as well as add a gender perspective to its assessments (IFRC, 2006). The framework for community resilience that guides IFRCs work recognises the importance of the perceptions of members of the local community as they “are most likely to know how things around them work and how their lives can be improved” (IFRC, 2014). Acknowledging the importance of local aid recipients perceptions of risk, resilience and knowledge may further influence how gender and intersectionality is considered as gender roles and ideas of gender differ depending on the context where the IFRC is present.

Risk perceptions is closely interlinked with vulnerability, as the former influences and affects the latter. To recognise the vulnerabilities and issues faced by community members from various groups, respondent 1 explained how focus groups are used:

“Another good tool is the focus group discussions, focus group we mean women, children, old people and religious people and so on, so we target these key people and also these people they sit down and share their experiences and problems so it’s a good way identifying the common issues faced by members of each group”. Contrastingly to the perception that focus groups discussions are used to map and identify the common issues faced by various community members, respondent 2 experienced that “[..] *“it has not been like you’re really sitting with women mapping what they want, making sure that their gender-based roles and responsibilities are recognised, and then giving relief”.* Arguably, these discrepancies may indicate the gap between policy and practice where the IFRC have formulated inclusive tools to identify needs and issues whereas in practice these are difficult to implement or non-existent as expressed in the last quote.

The need for more to be done in practice can also be found in respondent 2’s reasoning where the need for capacity-building among locals that are part of, or understand, the realities of grassroots groups: “[...] *I think you know capacity-building itself is such a huge need in terms of way forward [...] each organisation if they can have a group of people whom they can tuck in to do this kind of capacity-building at the grassroots level you know people who understand the grassroots reality, a lot of volunteers that would have understand these grassroots realities can become trainers themselves”.* Highlighting the linkage between local aid recipients and local volunteers at the IFRC can be seen as combining the two – suggesting that locals who are part of, or merely have good insights into, the grassroots level should become trainers to help build resilience, identify the needs of the people and groups and understand gender roles. Such an initiative could not only inform the level of vulnerability and needs to build resilience, but also for resilience activities to be gender-sensitive and understand intersecting socio-cultural norms that situate individuals and groups at certain positions in the community.

Similarly, respondent 2 expressed that there are areas of improvement in terms of including aid recipients knowledge together with increasing the capacities on gender and intersectionality of local volunteers: *“So I think there are several strategies that organisations can employ, and the government often reaches out to CSOs to the Red Cross for help. So you know this is a way for their own [IFRC] capacities can be built and then they can put it in their own policies to cease and say yes you need a consultation in every village and in every town to see what are the solutions to make sure that we you have people have these capacities built on gender and intersectionality, make sure that everybody’s views are taken, needs are mapped, so yeah there are ways going about it. This requires a huge amount of awareness, generation and sensitivity from the top-level.”*

5.3.3 Analytical summary

This section has addressed the question of how knowledge of local aid recipients is taken into consideration in DRR projects that build resilience. The findings have indicated that in terms of local knowledge, the perspective of volunteers of the IFRC operating at local level is more often emphasised than that of aid recipients. As presented in the chapter on previous research, focus was on local knowledge of aid recipients rather than that of local volunteers and development practitioners. This implies that there is a further need of clarifying what local knowledge implies on a more general level. Such an understanding may have further implications for informing development policy and practice for disaster risk reduction and resilience measures.

As has been argued throughout this sub-chapter, there is seemingly a gap between policy and practice in terms of how the knowledge of local aid recipients is included. This gap poses potential challenges to if and how needs and issues of local groups are considered, if resilience practices are informed by local conditions and structures as well as if existing socio-cultural norms and gender relations are considered in the creation of resilience-activities.

To answer the third sub-question, “*To what extent is local knowledge recognised in resilience-building projects?*” it can be noted that at policy level, the perspectives of local aid recipients are recognised as crucial since they are most knowledgeable about their surroundings and how to improve their situation. This is also implied in IFRC’s participatory tools such as focus groups and VCA. Yet, knowledge that is gender-sensitive and aware of socio-cultural norms can be further recognised in resilience-building projects. As indicated in the findings, further consultations and capacity-building of gender and intersectionality is needed. Applying the perspective of FPE and intersectionality, consultations with women are needed to make relevant resources and knowledge visible to inform future policy and work. Evidently, such consultations are currently inadequate which poses the risk of women and other groups knowledge and experiences excluded. From the theoretical point of view, the IFRC can do more in recognising the knowledge and experiences of the most vulnerable groups by gender, race, class and ethnicity and how gender differences perpetuates power relations. It can be argued that local knowledge is recognised to a certain degree. Following the overall assumption of this study, it can also be concluded that more work is needed which specifically addressed the experiences of local aid recipients and their understanding of risk, vulnerability, needs, gender and intersectionality.

6. Summary, conclusion and future recommendations

This final chapter will summarise the empirical findings, answer the overall research question, provide a conclusion and finally present future recommendations both in terms of how the IFRC can improve their work in further promoting an intersectional understanding of gender in their disaster risk reduction projects that aim to build resilience as well as avenues for future research.

This study has examined how the international humanitarian organisation IFRC defines and perceives gender and intersectionality, the potential normative challenges of promoting an intersectional understanding of gender as well as to what extent local knowledge of aid recipients have been considered within resilience-building projects. The study has aimed to make visible the importance of recognising that individuals and groups are situated on a multi-categorical axis whereby gender interacts and intersects with other aspects such as class, ethnicity, sexuality etc., thus moving away from the binary of women and men. Moreover, this study has aimed to demonstrate how an intersectional reading of resilience activities in DRR projects can inform if and how strategies are inclusive of the different experiences of women, from a multi-categorical axis. Recognising that gender and the group of 'women' is not a homogenous and normative body, but rather inhabits differences and hierarchies, influences the accessibility to resources, knowledge production and capability to become resilient.

The analysis structured by all three sub-questions have highlighted that there is a gap between theory and practice in terms of how gender and intersectionality is defined and perceived, the awareness of gender roles, social inclusion and participation in promoting an intersectional understanding of gender as well as for how local knowledge of aid recipients is considered and existing socio-cultural norms. The theoretical framework of FPE and intersectionality has further aided the analysis by highlighting how vulnerable groups by gender, race, class and ethnicity are unjustly impoverished due to the neglect of gender differences and imbalances in power

relations, the lack of awareness for gendered power and intersectionality in how roles are shaped which have implications for how groups become resilience equally, and, the neglect of women as knowledgeable agents poses the risk of women and other groups being excluded and their experiences disregarded. All these findings have implications for how resilience is considered and how resilience can be made equal for all.

Finally, to answer the overarching research question of “*How does the IFRC promote an intersectional understanding of gender into disaster risk reduction projects that aim to build resilience?*” it can be argued that the IFRC does to a certain extent promote an intersectional understanding of gender in theory at policy level, where gender and intersectionality are well thought out and recognises that individuals are gendered along a multi-categorical axis where aspects of gender, ethnicity, nationality, disability etc., interact and shape gender roles. However, how the IFRC promote an intersectional understanding of gender in practice can arguably be regarded as a shortcoming, where activities and measures “on the ground” fail to perceive gender and intersectionality as how they are formulated in policies, frameworks and guiding documents. It can further be concluded that the assumption that has permeated this study, that the IFRC can do extensively more to promote an intersectional understanding of gender, has proven to be valid.

Regarding future recommendations, it would be interesting to make a comparative study looking at how other humanitarian organisations understands gender and intersectionality both in theory and practice as this study has specifically looked at the IFRC. Moreover, this study has only covered the perspectives of development practitioners working with DRR and resilience. It would therefore be of interest to capture the perspectives of aid recipients, how such groups understand gender, intersectionality, challenges and knowledge within disaster risk reduction projects aimed at building disaster resilience. Recognising that there is a gap between theory and practice in how gender and intersectionality is perceived and considered, future

research should further explore the wider structural factors between donors, development practitioners and beneficiaries, notions of intersectionality, the interlinkages between normative challenges and knowledge production as well as other related aspects to ensure that there are practices and measures that includes non-binary groups of women and men and their experiences.

To conclude, to keep everyone safe from disasters there is a need to further invest in gender-sensitive measures that recognises the importance of an intersectional reading of resilience activities to inform if and how strategies are inclusive of the different experiences of women and other groups from a multi-categorical axis. By raising awareness, building capacity, increasing the inclusion, participation and knowledge of women and other vulnerable groups while being sensitive to normative challenges of power, justice, social and political equity, everyone can be made resilient equally.

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Appendix 1: Interview guide for the first interview

Theme 1: Gender

- “What is your experience working with IFRC’s Gender Policy in DRR and resilience projects?”
- “In your experience, would you say that it is difficult to apply the gender policy in your work?”
- “Would you say that it is important to apply the gender policy in DRR and resilience projects, and why?”

Theme 2: Vulnerability & Differences

- “Are you familiar with the Vulnerability and Capability Assessment?”
 - “How does the VCA assess vulnerable individuals and groups?”
 - “What types of categories do the assessment include?”
 - “Could you tell me the reasoning as to why these categories are included?”
 - “In your experience, are there any challenges with categorizing vulnerability and capability in the way they are categorized?”
- “Does the VCA recognise how individuals and groups may face several burdens in a disaster due to their belonging to a certain class, ethnic group, sexuality or disability?”
 - “Are you aware of any existing practices that recognize how groups are differently affected by disasters and disaster risks?”
- “In your experience, how does IFRC work with inclusion in DRR projects that aim to build resilience?”
 - “Are there any specific activities or approaches?”
 - “Gender sensitivity or equality?”

Theme 3: IFRC's work with gender equality, DRR and resilience

- Could you tell me what the main challenges and opportunities IFRC are facing when working toward gender inclusivity in DRR and resilience projects?
- Do you have any concrete examples?

End of Interview

- In terms of your work ahead, what would you say are the next steps? What can be improved or advanced in terms of gender equality within DRR and resilience?

Appendix 2: Interview guide for the second interview

- What is your experience working in the field of DRR and resilience?
- Would you say that there is an awareness of that the policies perhaps need to be modified better, or does it lie more in the mandate that organisations are not fully equipped?
- In your experience has gender been an integral part in these DRR efforts or in the recovery or rehabilitation? How has gender been incorporated, or not perhaps, in these activities and projects?
- Would you say that there is some sort of awareness to gender in the target groups? How does the characterisation or classification look for these target groups? Is it sensitive to gender issues perhaps?
- In terms of the work ahead in the field of DRR and resilience, what would you say are the next steps, or what needs to be done to ensure better gender inclusion and gender equality?

Appendix 3: List of interview respondents

Interviewee	Title	Interview Date	Interview Tool
Respondent 1	Coordinator in DRR and Resilience Approaches and Tools, IFRC	2021-04-15	Zoom
Respondent 2	Founder Trustee, Alternative Futures, (Ex-employee at IFRC)	2021-04-20	Zoom

Appendix 4: List of secondary data

TITLE	PUBLISHER	YEAR	LENGTH	KEYWORDS	TYPE OF DOCUMENT
Final Evaluation - Nepal Earthquake Response Operation	IFRC/NRCS	2019	132 pages	Disaster risk reduction; Gender	Evaluation
Zimbabwe Country Case Study: <i>Effective law and policy on gender equality and protection from sexual and gender-based violence in disasters</i>	IFRC	2017a	40 pages	Disaster risk reduction; Gender	Case study
Ecuador Country Case Study: <i>Effective law and policy on gender equality and protection from sexual and gender-based violence in disasters</i>	IFRC	2017b	44 pages	Disaster risk reduction; Gender	Case study
Nepal Country Case Study: <i>Effective law and policy on gender equality and protection from sexual and gender-based violence in disasters</i>	IFRC	2017c	56 pages	Disaster risk reduction; Gender	Case study

Global Study: <i>Effective law and policy on gender equality and protection from sexual and gender-based violence in disasters</i>	IFRC	2017d	80 pages	Disaster risk reduction; Gender	Research report
Gender and Diversity Policy	IFRC	2020	8 pages	N/A	Policy
Disaster Risk Management Policy	IFRC	No date	6 pages	N/A	Policy
A practical guide to Gender-sensitive Approaches for Disaster Management	IFRC	2010	86 pages	N/A	Guidelines
Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues 2013-2020	IFRC	2017e	8 pages	Gender	Strategy
IFRC Framework for Community Resilience	IFRC	2014	24 pages	N/A	Framework
VCA Toolbox: with reference sheets	IFRC	2007	182 pages	N/A	Toolbox
What is VCA? An introduction to vulnerability and capacity assessment	IFRC	2006	51 pages	N/A	Handbook

Appendix 5: Note on informed consent

Department of Human Geography, Faculty of Social Sciences, Lund University
SIMV02 Global Studies: Master's Thesis (Two Years) – Spring 2021

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. Please accept this form as an official invitation to participate in an interview as discussed in our previous e-mail communication. The purpose of this form is to provide you with the information about your involvement and your rights as a participant of this research.

Your participation in this study will consist of an online, one-on-one semi-structured interview lasting no longer than 1 hour. The chosen platform for the interview is Zoom. You can choose whether or not to use a webcam.

During this interview, you will be asked a series of questions about your experience as an employee at IFRC working with disaster risk reduction and resilience. Your participation remains entirely voluntary at any stage of the interview. You have the right to pass on any question. At any time, you may notify the researcher that you would like to stop the interview and your participation in the study.

The interview will be audio recorded through Zoom's recording function. The digital copy of both this recording and the subsequent transcription (carried out by the researcher) will be securely stored on the researcher's computer. The transcription can be provided to you per your request.

All of your information and interview responses will be kept confidential. All real names and identifying information acquired in this interview will not be associated with any part of the written report of the research and will be permanently deleted after the completion of the research.

For any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the researcher at: utv15ebo@student.lu.se. You may also contact my thesis supervisor at the Department of Human Geography, Lund University using the following contact information: Muriel Côte – muriel.cote@keg.lu.se

Please save a copy of this letter for your future reference. If wished, you may also request a digital copy of the finished manuscript from the researcher. At the beginning of our interview, you will also be requested to read out loud the section below as a form of vocal consent.

SIGNATURE

By signing this consent form, I certify that, I **Your Full Name**, understand and agree to the terms of this agreement.

Date: **Today's Date**

Appendix 6: Coding tree

