



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG  
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND LAW

## **More than a trek: On the role of social capital in disasters**

*-An exploratory case study of trekking and adventure companies' efforts in the disaster response after the 2015 earthquake in Nepal*

Department of Business Administration

Corporate Sustainability

Bachelor Thesis

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## **Preface**

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First we would like to thank the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the University of Skövde for giving us the opportunity to go to Nepal to undertake the research for a study through the Minor Field Study scholarship. We would also like to send a special thanks to Mr Ram Sapkota for his generosity, kindness and the provision of the help and information needed to conduct our study. Moreover, the help and support of our friends at Tuki Nepal, with a special thanks to Ewa Söderberg and Marita Bergstrand, has been deeply appreciated. We also want to express our sincerest gratitude to our tutor Conny Overland for all the support during this process, especially during times of hardship. We would like to express our endless gratefulness to all the people that made this journey and study possible.

Producing this study has required countless hours of hard work and has been both tough and a rewarding process of learning. Any errors are our own.

Gothenburg. August 24th, 2015.

Agnes Johansson & Andreas Kölling

## Abstract

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**Background and problem:** The engagement by private sector in disaster response has been increasing throughout the years as well as the interest for social capital in disasters. However, the social capital and private sector engagement in disasters is an area of research which contains plenty of gaps.

**Purpose:** This study's purpose is to explore the private sector engagement in disaster response and to extend the understanding of the role of social capital in disasters. The purpose is to shed empirical light on what difference social capital can make after a disaster, and in what way it could be useful to consider in disaster management.

**Method:** A case study has been conducted where the empirical data has been collected mainly through observations and interviews. The key respondents consisted of representatives from five trekking and adventure companies engaged in the disaster response in Nepal, after the 2015 earthquake. The empirical data has in turn been closely examined and analysed as well as compared and contrasted to a theoretical framework.

**Results and conclusion:** The results show that the trekking and adventure companies mainly participated in the disaster response by providing relief materials to areas which they had some type of connection to. They did so, and were able to do so, because they had access to certain important factors, such as an existing organisation, personnel and modes of transport which enabled them to engage in the disaster response. Moreover, they had social capital that allowed them to collect funds and access critical information.

From our findings we have drawn the conclusion that social capital played an important role in enabling the trekking and adventure companies to both engage in as well as to expand their engagement in the disaster response. All of the key respondents had actively used their social capital and received most of the funding by using it. The results of this study point to the possible advantage of further integrating the private sector and tourism companies in disaster response and disaster management.

**Contributions:** This study contributes and provides implications to the unexplored field of social capital in disaster response and disaster management, especially in relation to the private sector. The findings relates to literature on sustainable tourism and CSR, showing an example of how social capital can be mobilised and play an important role in the aftermath of disasters.

**Key words:** Social Capital, Disaster Management, Disaster Response

## Concepts

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**Disaster:** “A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources” (ISDR, 2009).

**Disaster management:** The coordination and organisation of responsibility and resources in order to handle and address the situation after an emergency or disaster (ISDR, 2009).

**Disaster Response:** “The provision of emergency services and public assistance during or immediately after a disaster in order to save lives, reduce health impacts, ensure public safety and meet the basic subsistence needs of the people affected.”(ISDR, 2009).

**Social Capital:** A theoretical concept popularised by the early work of Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam. The definition used throughout this study is the one by Lin (2001), defining social capital as the resources embedded in one’s social networks, resources that can be accessed or mobilised through ties in the networks.

**Corporate Social Responsibility:** A concept with two basic features, namely that it is manifested in some sort of tangible output and that these outputs or behaviours exceeds the obligatory or regulatory standards set by law. These outputs should be measurable and related to environmental or social activities.

### Abbreviations:

NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation

VSL - Village Savings and Loan

CSR - Corporate Social responsibility

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# 1. Introduction

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## 1.1 Background

### *1.1.1 Background to the study*

On the 25th of April 2015 a 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck Nepal and brought severe destruction to the country. The death toll has reached about 9000 to date (2015-08-19) and more than 500 000 houses are estimated to be completely destroyed (OCHA, 2015). Finding ourselves in Nepal during the earthquake it was inevitable for us to get affected as well as involved. We arrived to Nepal four weeks prior to the earthquake with intentions to do research on a microloan initiative, however, due to the earthquake we decided to redirect our study towards the disaster and disaster response. We observed that there were numerous aid efforts initiated by local trekking and adventure companies and decided that these companies would be the object of our study.

### *1.1.2 Background Nepal*

Nepal is a country bordering India and China with a population of 27,1 million, situated on the southern hill-side of the Himalayas. The country is landlocked and, like many other developing countries, lacks important resources for economic development (Aryal, 2014; Nationalencyklopedin, 2014). This has left Nepal as one of the least industrialised, least urbanised and least developed countries in the world. The share of the population living under the poverty line is 31%. Income inequality is a major issue and corruption is widespread in society as well as in regard to foreign aid. Some steps towards equality have been taken, but inequality and injustice towards marginalised groups such as women and lower-casts is still widespread. A majority of the population subsist as farmers on a relatively overpopulated countryside. The farmer families' situation is burdened with farm rent and food insecurity. Furthermore, the lack of infrastructure and an erratic monsoonal climate add to the difficulties. The number of foreign visitors has been rising as well as the value of the tourist sector. The main tourist attractions are the Himalayas and the wide array of trekking opportunities (Nationalencyklopedin, 2014).

Studies have shown that Nepal is one of the countries in the world that are the most vulnerable to natural disasters, a constantly recurring issue for the country. (Aryal, 2012; UNDP, 2001; MoHa, 2009; Harmeling, 2010). Moreover, the development issues mentioned before as well as the political instability, stifling bureaucracy, passive labor force and lack of funding all add to the vulnerability to disasters (Aryal, 2014).

## 1.2 Problem discussion

According to the Red Cross, disaster management is the “*organization and management of resources and responsibilities for dealing with all humanitarian aspects of emergencies, in particular preparedness, response and recovery in order to lessen the impact of disasters*” (About disaster management, n.d.). There is much complexity and difficulty surrounding disasters and disaster management, with cases such as hurricane Katrina and the Haiti earthquake coming close to mind (Hawkins & Maurer, 2010; Yates & Paquette, 2011). Important aspects of a successful disaster management is efficient communication and coordination as well as a proper division of authority and responsibilities, however it is also here most difficulties can be found (Quarantelli, 1988). Other important aspects, according to Kovács & Spens (2007), are efficient logistics, as well as access to adequate information. Some difficulties in disaster management is the damaged infrastructure, often found in disaster areas, as well as the limited access to information (Kovács & Spens, 2007). Furthermore, aid organisations are often criticised as a consequence of their lack of coordination and cooperation (McClintock, 2005; Sowinski, 2003). Historically disaster management has been recognized as an issue of an almost purely technical nature, isolating the disaster from its social context (Nakagawa & Shaw, 2004; Blaikie et. al, 2014). This notion has changed during the last years, with an increased interest for other factors, such as the social aspects (Drabek, 2005; Tiwari, 2015; Blaikie et al, 2014), the role of economic and social capital, as well as for better inclusion of stakeholders (Aldrich, 2011). Despite the increasing occurrence and magnitude of disasters (Tiwari, 2015), there are relatively few studies on the topic (Aldrich, 2015). For several reasons disasters are hard to study and due to this, disaster research is an area with plenty of gaps in which there is a need for further research (Aldrich, 2015; Aryal, 2014).

A concept which lately has started to gain popularity within the field of disaster research is the concept of social capital (Aldrich, 2015), which aims to capture the resources embedded in one’s social network. Social capital have gained a large and increasing interest within the social sciences throughout the last twenty years, with a preponderance within the political sciences as well as in business management and development studies (Adler & Kwon, 2014; Lin, 2008; Woolcock, 2002). In development studies, the finding that an individual’s social network often is a result of that individual’s socioeconomic status has led to social capital becoming an important factor to consider within this field (Adler & Kwon, 2014).

There have been only a few studies combining the concept of social capital with disaster research, primarily focusing on the impact of social capital on a community. The results show that a higher degree of social capital, in combination with agency, affects the recovery of a community positively (Aldrich, 2011; Krishna, 2001; Nakagawa & Shaw, 2004). Moreover, Aldrich (2015) states that in times of disaster, when the often already very fragile formal support organisation of the developing country tends to fail, social capital is of even greater value. For example, researchers have seen social capital working as a “force multiplier” in the disaster recovery, amplifying the results of governmental and NGO programs. Aldrich (2015) argues that

if the ability to tap into these pools of social capital and networks could be improved, the disaster management efficiency would improve greatly. However, even though there is a consensus of the importance of social capital in disaster research, there is a gap of knowledge within this field resulting in a need for further research (Aldrich, 2015). This is especially true regarding the importance of social capital for the actors participating in the disaster response efforts (Hawkins & Maurer, 2010), indicating that there could be important findings to be made by studying this area.

Moreover, the main focus in disaster research have historically been the role of governments, communities and households, leaving the role of businesses relatively unexplored (Izumi & Shaw, 2015). The engagement by profit driven companies in disaster response has been increasing throughout the years, with attention often being paid toward the efforts of larger companies (OCHA, 2013) which, to our knowledge, has left the role of small businesses quite unexplored. Furthermore, according to Jones (2005) and McGehee et. al. (2010) there is a gap of research on tourism related social capital, implying that this is a field where there is need for more research. Busch and Givens (2013) states that both businesses and governments benefit from working together, for example in public-private partnerships, where they by sharing information and resources, can improve the disaster management and response efforts. Izumi and Shaw (2015) also state that it is important to consider the local knowledge that community level companies hold as well as to integrate them into mutual projects, implying that this could improve the disaster management. Therefore, investigating the aid efforts of local small businesses in the tourism industry and their role as potential mobilisers of social capital is an area of interest.

Disaster management is an area alone in which there is a need for further research. The same applies to the combination of disasters and social capital, as well as research on small local businesses and businesses in the tourism industry in disasters. When combining these dimensions we end up with an unexplored area of research in which several researchers call for further research. This indicates that there are important findings that could be made in all of these areas, which could then be of importance to research as well as for practitioners within disaster response and disaster management. In conclusion, these aspects all point to and suggests that social capital in disaster management is an area of research which needs to be explored.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The object of study will be the emergent aid efforts performed by trekking and adventure companies in Nepal after the 2015 Earthquake. The purpose is to (a) explore how the trekking and adventure companies participated in the disaster response, and (b) thereby extend the understanding of if and how social capital can be mobilised in order to mitigate a disaster. The purpose is to shed empirical light on what difference social capital can make after a disaster, and in what way it could be useful to consider in disaster management.

#### **1.4 Research question**

How did the trekking and adventure companies, in Nepal, participate in the disaster response, and what role did social capital play in this process?

#### **1.5 Limitation of the study**

This study will focus on exploring the aid efforts performed by the trekking and adventure companies and what role social capital play in this process. Important players such as the government in Nepal, NGOs and international aid organisations will be considered, however, they will not be the focus of the study. The study is limited to the immediate period of time after the earthquake which was centered on the disaster response phase, meaning that the study will have its focus there. The study will therefore not go deeply into describing longer-time effects or other aspects primarily characterised by the recovery phase.

Moreover, the trekking and adventure companies participating in this study are geographically limited to Nepal, hence the observations and findings could be based on national conditions, such as the institutional setting in Nepal. Also the study is carried out during a specific disaster, the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, meaning that there might be conditions specific to this disaster that also influence the findings of this study, which might not be the same in other disasters or countries. Therefore applying the results of this study to other countries and situations should be made with caution. Furthermore, these specific conditions render that the research conducted in this study will be hard to replicate, meaning that it will be hard to confirm the findings and results of this study. However the researchers still believe that future research can gain from the findings of this study.

## 1.7 Outline of study

This study is composed of the following chapters: Introduction, methodology, theoretical framework, empirical findings, analysis and conclusion. The outline is as follows.

1. *Introduction* - The first chapter introduces the reader to the study. It provides a background to the study and discussed topic, which is followed by a problem discussion, the purpose and relevance of the study as well as the research question. Lastly limitations and an outline of the study are presented.
2. *Methodology* - The methodology chapter presents and explains the process of research and data collection as well as describing and motivating the methodological considerations. It also covers how the empirical findings are analysed and discussed.
3. *Theoretical framework* - This chapter presents and summarises relevant literature and prior research on social capital and disaster management.
4. *Empirical findings* - In this chapter the empirical findings from observations and interviews are presented in order to answer our research question.
5. *Analysis* - This section presents a discussion and analysis of the similarities and disparities found when comparing the theoretical framework to the empirical findings.
6. *Conclusion* - The final chapter aims to cross-examine and integrate the research question, purpose of the study, empirical findings and analysis leading to the conclusion of this study. Lastly, suggestions and implications for future research are provided.

## 2. Methodology

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### 2.1 Project introduction

The day before the earthquake we arrived to Pokhara, the second biggest city of Nepal, from the rural Nepalese village Jyamrung. We were very lucky to be in Pokhara, since the city was not badly affected by the earthquake. Finding ourselves thrown into this strange situation, we decided to focus our study on the disaster response following the earthquake. We naturally adopted an inductive research approach, initiated by the interesting and revealing conversations with many local help initiatives during the initial days after the earthquake. In order to try to make ourselves useful and to gain information, we spoke to many different people and local help initiatives.

Nine days after the quake we were, with the help from the trekking gear shop owner Ms Rashna, able to bring necessities such as tarps, kerosene and cooking oil to Jyamrung which had been severely damaged by the earthquake. We spent three nights in the Jyamrung village together with Ram (chairman of the NGO Tuki Nepal we had been working with), distributing the goods and documenting the damages in order to help planning the aid efforts of Tuki Nepal. In total we walked around to five villages in the area and spoke to a wide array of different people; ranging from people and families in the villages to military, school and hospital personnel as well as Nepalese people who were working in Kathmandu or abroad but now had come home in order to help. Thereafter we went to stay with Mr Ram in Kathmandu until our flight home on the 14th of May. In Kathmandu we met with a few other people who had different initiatives to help the response efforts and we also went with another organisation to the area Sindhupalchowk to assist distributing food.

We found that there were numerous initiatives on a local level assisting in the aid efforts and that many of them were adventure and trekking companies. We also noticed that these companies seemed to have access to certain important resources which allowed them to engage in the disaster response and aid work in an effective way. This revelation led us to form this study.

### 2.2 Scientific approach

#### 2.2.1 Case study approach

When choosing how to approach a study it is critical that it is suitable to the problem of the study as well as the research question. A case study approach is favourable when (a) the fundamental research questions are “how” or “why” questions, (b) the researcher has limited or no influence over the situation and behaviour, and (c) the focus of the research is a present and contemporary phenomenon. One of the major advantages of the case study approach is its ability to take in evidence from a wide variety of sources such as documents, observations and interviews (Yin, 2014). The case study method has some limitations, where some argue that the case study

method is “primitive and limited” (Yin, 2014; Eisenhardt, 1989). However, when executed correctly the case study method is a strong and viable method of research (Yin, 2014). According to Aryal (2014) that is especially the case when investigating human behaviour and action in response to disasters.

We had already chosen the case study methodology for our first research project as it was the most suitable approach for our research then. After the earthquake we soon found ourselves in a new case, switching our focus towards the disaster response, a contemporary phenomenon over which we reined no control. We are asking a how question and we want to understand the real world case behind the research problem, we therefore, in accordance with the previously stated motives by Yin (2014), consider the case study approach to be the most suitable for this study. Furthermore, when switching the focus of our study we also discovered that it now represented an unusual case and presented the opportunity to test current theory both within social capital and disaster management, which in turn could result in a revealing findings, all important rationales to consider when choosing a case according to Yin (2014).

## **2.3 Research method**

### *2.3.1 Qualitative disaster research method*

Phillips (2014) writes that qualitative research usually stand in opposition to the deeply-rooted research approach of positivism, where the core idea is that the social reality can be predicted and supposedly also controlled. The naturalistic approach, also known as constructivism, stands quite to the contrary with the core idea that it is essential that social reality is understood in a broader, more complex and contextual way. The naturalistic research approach moreover require a more flexible and emergent research design, which allows for the research to adjust as it progresses (ibid.). Since natural disasters are hard or even impossible to anticipate, a well-prepared positivist, quantitative study or deductive approach might not be feasible according to Phillips (2014). Furthermore, disasters often generate a rare and complex situation which may not be beneficial for the traditional deductive and positivist study approach. Researching the complex situation found in disasters requires a higher degree of flexibility as characterized by the inductive and naturalistic research approach. By using that approach the researcher is able to draw explanations from the data, instead of deductively testing hypotheses. This enables the researcher to more successfully capture, assess and analyse the complex environment surrounding unanticipated disasters (ibid.).

What makes the qualitative disaster research different from a traditional qualitative study is the *environment or context* under which the study is taking place, due to the unique circumstances in disasters. According to Phillips (2014) this is especially true during the time of disaster response. Nonetheless, the aim of qualitative research and qualitative disaster research are identical. The aim is to gather meaningful data from a complex social setting that reveal the experiences of people and organisations (Phillips, 2014). Bryman and Bell writes that the main reason for a

qualitative study lies in the will to capture different perspectives, important contextual factors as well as in-depth information (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

### *2.3.2 Justification of choice of research method*

As we found ourselves in the middle of a disaster we did not have the ability to prepare for a large quantitative or deductive study. This led us to naturally adopt a qualitative and inductive research approach. The complex environment found in disasters made us adopt the naturalistic approach as we wanted to understand the case in a more open and nuanced way. Further, in line with the argumentation of Phillips (2014) we believe that it will prove a greater tool in answering our research question. After all, disaster research, as a field of research, has more openly embraced the publishing of qualitative studies far more than other disciplines (Phillips, 2014). Furthermore, the emergent process of the naturalistic research approach allows for the revealing of critical insights that might otherwise be passed unnoticed (*ibid.*). Another reason behind adopting a qualitative approach is our desire to create greater understanding for the case, the research question and the complexity behind it. We have also adopted a multidisciplinary approach, as our interest of research span over multiple scientific disciplines.

Lastly, as we were in Nepal before and during the earthquake we had access and an insight in the country prior to the disaster. This knowledge and the fact that we, in contrary to most research in the disaster research field, were there during the disaster and not only afterwards, gives us prospects of arriving at important findings (Aryal, 2014). Additionally we already had access to the disaster area and important stakeholders which are essential aspects of a successful disaster research (Stallings, 1997; 2006).

## **2.4 Research approach**

In a case study the research purpose, as described by Yin, is either exploratory, descriptive or explanatory. The descriptive case study is used when the purpose is to describe a current phenomenon, the “case”, in its real-life context. The explanatory is used when the purpose is to explain how or why some real life situation came to be. The exploratory is used when the purpose is to research a problem which has not been clearly defined, lack clarity, and that results into a wide set of outcomes, in turn often generating new research questions and research. The most important aspect of a case study is its ability to research and explain causal links in real-life situations that otherwise are too complicated to capture (Yin, 2014).

### *2.4.2 Justification of research approach*

We have mainly adopted the exploratory and explanatory approach to this case study. As argued earlier, the discerned area of research is quite unexplored leaving us the possibility of arriving at revealing findings and important implications for further research, which is why the exploratory approach is essential. However, we also aim to answer the “how” in our research question, where the explanatory approach is important in our aim to explain how the trekking and adventure

companies engaged in the disaster response and what role social capital played in that process. This leaves us with, and justifies a combination of the exploratory and explanatory approach.

## **2.5 Research design**

Case studies include either single or multiple cases as well as different levels of analyses. Yin (2014) states that it is possible to make a case study without a formal design, however he also states that it can make the study stronger and also simplify the research process. For our first case study we adopted the single-case embedded design as stated by Yin (2014), a design which we did not need to change as we switched case. In the final case, our research is centered on how the trekking and adventure companies engaged in the disaster response, thus, the trekking and adventure companies represents the “*single case*”. However, we aim to contrast and broaden the findings there with interviews from other key informants and relevant stakeholders. This is done in accordance with the single-case embedded design, as described by Yin (2014), which allows for the use of subunits of analysis. The aim here is to give a more nuanced view on the larger picture as well as to extend the width of research and analysis generating a deeper insight into the case, which according to Yin (2014) are some of the key motives for using the embedded version of the single-case design. However, Yin also states that it is of utter importance to balance the attention given to the subunits to ensure that the larger picture is not overlooked (Yin, 2014), something which we have strived to do throughout the research process.

## **2.6 Method for empirical data collection**

As stated earlier, the naturalistic research promotes an emergent research approach that stem from the unfolding of the research itself. This generates a situation where the qualitative disaster research *evolves throughout the empirical data collection and analysis*. The researchers continuously consider the collected information and modifies the research, meaning that in qualitative disaster research the analysis starts at the same time as the data collection (Phillips, 2014). In an article by Spradley (1980) the author describes this process by stating that it starts by the researcher asking oneself “what is the situation here” and then goes on to aim attention to really understand the situation and the social interactions, processes and complexity surrounding it.

As mentioned earlier, we merely found ourselves in a disaster due to the earthquake and through the emergent naturalistic research approach our research has continuously evolved from the start. At first we wanted to get an overview of the situation and that is how our interest started. Our general method of empirical data collection was more or less identical as described to Spradley (1980). The earthquake struck, we were there and started by asking the question: “*what is the situation here*”. Our next step was to try to really understand the situation and the social context behind it, and from there our research and method has continuously evolved.

### 2.6.1 Primary sources

Primary data is collected first-hand by the researchers, commonly by interviews, surveys or observations. Collecting primary data can be time consuming, however it can prove essential for the researchers to answer their research question (Gutmann, 2014). Furthermore, the authors emphasize the importance of empirical data as a resource to develop theory by actively mobilising and problematizing current theory. Implicating that empirical data is important in revealing new findings as well as critically assess existing theory (ibid.).

In this study the collection of empirical data was primarily carried out during the field study in Nepal. The key empirical data is made up by interviews with either the CEO of the trekking and adventure companies or other key personnel at the company. We also made complementing phone interviews in Sweden with a Swedish representative from the UN as well as with a representative from the Red Cross. Furthermore, we interviewed plenty of locals in both Pokhara and Jyamrung (and some neighbouring villages), as well as collected observational data from these places and Kathmandu. Our aim is to base our findings on the interviews with the trekking and adventure companies as they relate to our research problem and question directly. The goal of our other interviews and observational studies is to broaden, nuance and contrast the findings made from the interviews of the trekking and adventure companies. Furthermore, we aim to compare the data and findings with current research and theory, as well as to compare the similarities and discrepancies found there and between the different participants of the study, enhancing the possibility of discovering important findings.

### 2.6.2 Sample design

We have adopted a sample design characterised by the emerging sampling which allowed for the sample selection to evolve over time. According to Lincoln & Guba (1985) the naturalistic research approach requires a sampling design which allows for an emerging sampling. In the emerging sampling the selection of the next case is derived from the first case which then guides the researcher towards the concept of *theoretical saturation* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Theoretical saturation is achieved when the researcher is fairly capable of foreseeing what the findings of the next interviewee will be (Phillips, 2014), a concept we have strived to apply to in order to strengthen our findings. Being two researchers allowed us to more thoroughly examine what the interviewees had said and to what degree the collected data from the different interviewees corresponded. However, due to the situation after the earthquake as well as due to the safety considerations and time and resources at hand for this study, we had to limit ourselves in regard to number of respondents and interviews.

### 2.6.3 Sample selection

The process of selecting whom to talk to and interview, where to go and what to observe as well as choosing which documents and articles to include in the research is decided by the sample selection process (Phillips, 2014). There are two different primary methods of sample selection. There is the probability sampling method, which utilises some form of random selection and

therefore is representative for a population. The other method is the non-probability sampling method which does not use any form of random selection and therefore is not representative for a population (Quinlan, 2011; Phillips, 2014). Phillips (2014) writes that the probability sampling method is very challenging under the conditions which disaster research is carried out, however, the advantage is that the sampling can be made without bias. On the other hand, the probability sampling also risk compromising the qualitative disaster research as it could neglect the most important respondents for the case, resulting in a limited approach and possible loss of critical data. Phillips (2014) concludes that these problems can be dealt with and accommodated by the non-probability sampling.

We chose, or merely initiated, a sample selection process characterised by the non-probability sampling method. At first our aim was just to acquire information about the situation after the earthquake. This led us to start talking, and shortly interviewing, people that were engaged in the disaster response in some way. We did not limit our sampling to begin with by specifying any particular criteria of whom to interview. Later on, we focused our research on the trekking and adventure companies which led us to spend a substantial amount of time and effort to interview them and observe their work. Due to the use of the non-probability sampling in this study we are restricted to qualitative research as the sample is not representative for a population, and according to Bryman and Bell (2015), as well as Yin (2014), generalisations therefore should not be made. However, according to Yin (2014) the empirical findings can still be used to shed light on theory, which we aim to do.

Moreover, disaster research normally also uses standard methods as used by other qualitative researchers. One commonly used method in sample selection, according to Phillips (2014), is the *snowball sampling*, in which prior interviewees are asked for other relevant people to interview (Phillips, 2014). We applied the snowball sampling method in much of our research as we tried to use the access and connections at hand, which mean that a great deal of the interviews and observations were carried out because of our initial location and connections. The first interviews, however not directly used in this study, were conducted before the earthquake struck as our initial study was concerning the microfinance project in Jyamrung. Several of the interviews for this study were conducted in Pokhara, as we were more or less stuck there for 9 days due to safety considerations.

#### *2.6.4 Empirical data collection*

Some of the most commonly applied strategies for data collection in qualitative disaster research are interviews, observations, visual research and documents (Phillips, 2014). According to Phillips (2014) the most used method is interviewing, which is also the most used method in case study research according to Yin (2014). For disaster research it is quite common that interviews are not carried out the same way as in other qualitative research. Disaster research requires a greater extent of situational adaptability as the conditions are sprung out of the disruptive characteristics of disasters and therefore following the conventional rules for conducting

interviews might be hard. Phillips (2014) proposes a few certain steps to consider when conducting interviews. These steps are to (1) *Create questions*, (2) *Select a setting and set an appointment*, (3) *Obtain consent*, (4) *Listen and take notes carefully*, (5) *Guide the interview*, (6) *Organise and summarise*, (7) *Transcribe*, and lastly to (8) *Code*. Moreover, Phillips (2014) states that correctly following these steps will help the researcher accommodate some of the difficulties when interviewing in disaster research and to secure the correct research measures (Phillips, 2014).

Due to the nature of the situation and research, we initiated interviews with people we thought were interesting from a general point of view. Fortunately we had already studied interview technique for our prior research. We initially used unstructured interviews and later, through our emergent research design, the latter interviews were formed by more similar questions as our field of research was narrowed. As argued by Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) the unstructured form of interviews have the potential of revealing information and insights that otherwise could have been hard to find or could not be predicted by the researcher. Further, they argue the importance to develop interview questions and that open questions are preferable as they produce greater detail in data, as well as allows for the respondents to focus on what they find important. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). In line with Eriksson and Kovalainen, we applied an unstructured approach which led to open interview questions. We also applied the steps, presented above, by Phillips (2014). We made sure to select appropriate settings, obtain consent as well as listen and take notes carefully. Being two researchers allowed us to divide some of the work during the interviews. Usually one of us had the main responsibility to guide the interview and the other was focusing on taking notes. We developed a system where we, as soon as possible, went over what the interviewee had said and organised and summarised the data. We chose not to transcribe the interviews in full as that would have required us to spend a great deal of time on that instead of focusing on further research. It was merely a necessary step of prioritising due to the time limit in this study. Nonetheless we are confident our otherwise rigorous system of going over, revisiting and summarising our interviews and data will prove sufficient in ensuring the quality of our research. Bryman and Bell (2015) state that the most common way of recording an interview when conducting qualitative interviews is by tape recording. However, this might cause discomfort to the interviewees (Bryman and Bell, 2015) which is why we chose not to use a tape recorder. Our field study lasted from the 1st of April to the 14th of May and all interviews but two were made in that period of time. The interviews with the representatives from the UN and Red Cross were made in Sweden. The length of the interviews varied to a great extent depending on the situation, how much time the respondent had and how fruitful the information given was. Approximately they lasted from 5 minutes to 1 hour. The key respondents were all interviewed for about 1 hour and with some of them we conducted multiple interviews.

### 2.6.5 Respondents

Participants of the study are presented in the following tables

**Table 1 - Key respondents:**

Key respondent	Company	Primary Business
Mr Ram Sapkota	Mountain Delights	Trekking
Mr Lila Nath Sapkota	Nepal Trekking Team	Trekking
Mrs Tessa Lama	Rapidrunner expeditions	Adventure sports
Mr Deepak Adhikari	L.N. Treks & Expeditions	Trekking and volunteering
Mrs Inka Gurung	Far Away Adventures	Trekking and rafting

**Table 2 - Other respondents:**

Other Respondent	Organisation	Occupation/role
Mr Christian Di Schiena	The UN (and MSB)	Coordinator/UN task force
Mrs Ylva Jonsson Strömberg	The Red Cross	Head of program unit
Mr Sanish Maharjan	Church in Nepal	Disaster relief initiator
Mr Björn Söderberg	Social entrepreneur (and MSB)	Disaster relief initiator/informant

#### 2.6.5.1 Key respondents

**Mountain Delights:** Mr Ram Sapkota is the CEO and founder of Mountain Delights. He was the initial contact in Nepal for our study and the chairman of Tukee Nepal, which was conducting the microfinance project. We rented a room at his house in Kathmandu while we were there and we also spent time at his office as well as in Jyamrung together with him. Interviews with Mr Ram were carried out numerous times during our time in Nepal, and both semi-structured interviews as well as various conversations make up the collected data.

**Nepal Trekking Team:** We came in contact with Mr Lila Nath Sapkota through the snowball sampling method. We asked Mrs Ewa Söderberg, the chairwoman of the Swedish organisation Tuki Nepal, if there was anyone else that would be interesting to interview for our study and she gave us his contact info. We met up with Mr Lila Nath Sapkota in Kathmandu over coffee and conducted an interview in a conversational manner for approximately one hour. We also went with him to the orphanage where he once grew up.

**Nepal Earthquake Appeal:** We came in contact with Tessa Lama at the initiative Nepal Earthquake Appeal in Pokhara. It was a big, if not the biggest, local aid initiative in Pokhara. This emergent aid effort was made up of the following companies and organisations:

- Paddle Nepal
- SATHI Nepal
- Rapidrunner Expeditions
- Karmaflights
- Kriayt Social Business
- Environmental & Welfare Committee
- Babu Adventures

Tessa Lama is the CEO of the adventure company Rapidrunner Expeditions. While we were in Pokhara the people at Nepal Earthquake Appeal were very busy, although Mrs Lama managed to set aside about 30-minutes for an interview with us. We would have liked to interview another person at the Nepal Earthquake Appeal as well but due to their busy schedule we decided that we had to settle for one interview with them.

**L.N. Treks & Expedition:** We found Mr Deepak Adhikari in Pokhara, the CEO of the trekking company L.N. Treks & Expedition. He is also the first vice president of the umbrella organisation Trekkers agencies association of Nepal (TAAN) and was in charge for the aid efforts of TAAN in Pokhara. The interview with him was mainly unstructured, with a few key questions, lasting for about an hour.

**Far Away Adventures:** In a similar manner as with Mr Sapkota, namely via Ewa Söderberg, we got in touch with Inka Gurung, the CEO of Far Away Adventures and founder of the NGO Himalayan Adventure Girl. Since she was in Sweden at the moment, our conversation was per email. Just by asking her to describe what had happened and what her process after the earthquake had looked like, we received thorough answers, covering mainly all the points in which we were interested.

#### *2.6.5.2 Other respondents*

**UN and Red Cross:** Although not the center of our research, we attempted to interview some of the larger aid organisations in Nepal but they declined our requests and we soon realised they were too busy with the aid work there. After arriving to Sweden we conducted two telephone interviews with Swedish representatives, Mr Christian Di Schiena from the UN as well as Mrs Ylva Jonsson Strömberg at the Red Cross. Both had been to Nepal during the disaster response and had insight to their respective organisations' work there.

**Sanish Maharjan:** We got in contact with Mr Maharjan as he was a friend of our Swedish friend Sara Löved. We had the opportunity to accompany Mr Maharjan to Sindhupalchowk where they were going to distribute food and relief materials. Mr Maharjan is a student of development studies and a driving spirit in a few different Christian organisations in Nepal. He is

interesting for our research because of his commitment to helping in the disaster response, spending resources and weeks of his time, in the aftermath of the earthquake trying to help. We spent almost 24 hours with Mr Maharjan, mostly in a car, which gave us plenty of hours to speak. This gave us the possibility to conduct the interview in an almost solely conversational manner, not having to worry about time running out before getting the answers to our inquiries.

**Björn Söderberg:** Mr Söderberg is a Swedish entrepreneur living in Kathmandu. He was engaged in the disaster response by Tuki Nepal and we came in contact with him through the organisation. We conducted a short interview with him in Kathmandu.

#### *2.6.6 Presentation of empirical data*

In the fourth chapter “Empirical findings” we present our empirical data. The presentation is structured by starting with an introduction to the trekking or adventure company and then an introduction to the respondent him- or herself. Then the interview/findings are presented under the rubric “*How did you help?*”. We have chosen to structure it in this way to make a clearer and more structured presentation of our empirical data. In doing so we attempt to facilitate the clarity of the report and to ease the understanding for the reader. As stated above, with some of our respondents we conducted multiple interviews, and conducted field observations with them, while with others we just conducted one interview. We therefore have more data and a deeper insight into the work of some of our respondents in comparison to others, resulting in the empirical data varying in scope and length between the respondents in the Empirical findings section. The empirical data under the rubric “*How did you help?*” was mainly extracted by asking that same question as well as well-chosen follow-up questions.

## **2.7 Developing the Theoretical framework**

This section describes the process through which the theoretical framework was developed as well as what forms of literature that has been used in this study. The aim is to clarify the research process as well as making it as transparent as possible.

### *2.7.1 Literature sources*

In producing a theoretical framework three different forms of literature can be used, namely primary, secondary and tertiary (Saunders et. al., 2009). Primary literature are normally studies conducted on topics for the first time, producing valuable insights and implications for further research. These studies are reliable and can preferably be used if producing a study in the same area of research. On the contrary they are quite hard to access. The secondary type of literature is generated from already existing literature. It can be described as primary literature which has been re-written and published another time such as books and journals. One of the most widespread sources are the academic journals, where the research is closely scrutinised before publication, ensuring the quality. One advantage of secondary literature is that it saves time for

the researcher. The tertiary sources, mainly the use of internet and databases or search engines, allow for the researcher to quickly browse the topic (Saunders et. al., 2009).

All three forms of literature sources have been used throughout this study. In creating an understanding and insight in the topic, tertiary sources were used at first. Also secondary sources proved an efficient and important tool in acquiring a basis of information and knowledge. Primary sources have been used when including certain theoretical concepts or ideas, in an attempt to ensure the quality of the theoretical framework. All sources of literature have naturally proved an important tool in assessing previous research and helping us to form our research as well as to clarify the research question and when forming the theoretical framework.

Most articles, journals and also books used in this study have been found by using the Gothenburg University database (GUNDA) as well as the search engine Google Scholar. Due to the multiple disciplines of research concerning our study a wide range of literature have been used. Keywords used for finding relevant literature have been: “Disaster management”, “Private sector in disasters”, “Disaster risk management”, “Disaster vulnerability”, “Disaster research”, “Qualitative disaster research”, “Social capital”, “Social capital in disasters” and “Corporate social responsibility”.

### *2.7.2 Critical review of sources*

This study builds on a wide array of sources, for the methodological section as well as the theoretical framework. Many of the authors have produced primary literature, hence new research and concepts, however secondary sources have been used in order to use our time efficiently as well as when there was no available primary literature on the subject. For the methodological considerations, Robert K. Yin’s book “Case study research: design and methods” has been a cornerstone. This book has been cited 96158 times as of today (2015-06-18) and he is widely known for his work on case study research.

## **2.8 Method for empirical data analysis**

### *2.8.1 Case study analysis*

According to Yin (2014), analysing case study data is harder than other research as the techniques of case study analysis have not yet been clearly defined. Two of the general strategies, as stated by Yin (2014), is to work the data from the “ground up” and to examine rival explanations. The “ground up” strategy builds on an inductive approach, where the researcher thoroughly examines and revisits the data in search for relevant patterns and concepts to strengthen the quality of the findings and research. We have used both the “ground up” technique as well as the examination of rival explanations, which according to Yin (2014) are two strategies that work well together. In line with Yin (2014) we have also adopted an emergent strategy, characterised by a system where the research question, collected data, empirical findings have been revisited and rigorously re-examined in order to find concepts or codes of

interest. Moreover, our emergent strategy has also been in line with the reasoning of Phillips (2014), which states that when conducting qualitative disaster research the analysis begins at the start of the research process. The initial analysis has been quite simple and straightforward which then emerged into a deeper and more extensive analysis and case (Phillips, 2014).

### 2.8.2 *Quality of the findings*

Yin (2014) states there are four aspects to consider in order to establish the quality of social research. There is:

- *Construct validity* - using the proper operational procedures.
- *Internal validity* - to consider rival explanations and establish causal relationship.
- *External validity* - clarify to what extent the findings of the study can be generalised.
- And lastly, *Reliability* which refers to the replicability of the study (Yin, 2014).

To ensure construct validity we have, in line with Yin (2014), used and triangulated data from multiple sources with the aim to establish a chain of evidence as well as made categorised and structured notes that has helped organise and ensure the quality of our research. With the aim of building internal validity we have applied the, by Yin (2014), proposed techniques of pattern matching and explanation building. The technique of pattern matching strive to strengthen the findings and analysis by matching patterns in the data. Yin (2014) states that explanation building is also a type of pattern matching, although more advanced. Furthermore, according to Yin (2014), the explanation building technique have not been clearly defined in operational terms, however revising propositions and the data, as well as comparing details and possible other explanations are important parts of the process of explanation building. In the explanatory part of our case study we aim to explain “how” the trekking and adventure companies engaged in the disaster response. According to Yin (2014), the causal links can be complex and hard to confirm, which is why it is important to properly examine and revise the evidence. Moreover, in exploratory case studies explanation building plays an important role as part of creating hypotheses, putting forward ideas for further research (Yin, 2014), something which we also aim to do. We have also considered rival explanations throughout the analysis and research process.

In relation to the external validity, we have clearly stated that our case should not be considered a sample of a population and that generalisations therefore cannot be made. Although, in accordance with Yin (2014), we can make analytical generalisations through comparing our findings to the theoretical framework. Regarding the reliability, this study has been conducted under unique circumstances and it will therefore be hard to replicate. However, we have strived for an open and transparent approach in this case study, with a rigorous methodological section to facilitate the replicability. With this approach it will be easier for other researchers to conduct a similar case study, with the goal to minimise the bias and errors as well as to compare the findings of this study (Yin, 2014).

## **2.9 Ethical position**

Yin (2014) states that, in order to produce a high qualitative case study, it is important to produce high quality analyses, which is demanding on the researchers having to make sure they attend all the collected data and present it without interpretation and consistently consider rival explanations. The authors of this study want to ensure the reader that they have made their utter best to attend all data and to present it, as well as our analysis without bias and as nuanced as we possibly can in order to produce a high qualitative analysis and study. As qualitative disaster researchers, we have also done our best to follow the methods and guidelines of in qualitative disaster research, especially those put forwards by Phillips (2014), in order ensure the quality of our study.

## 3. Theoretical framework

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### 3.1 Introduction to Theoretical framework

As previously stated in the introduction, the purpose of this study is to (a) explore how the trekking and adventure companies participated in the disaster response, and (b) thereby to extend the understanding of if and how social capital can be mobilised in order to mitigate a disaster. Furthermore, our research question is: *“How did the trekking and adventure companies participate in the disaster response, and what role did social capital play in this process?”* As stated in the methodology section, this case study has an exploratory and explanatory purpose. The exploratory is important because of the underresearched nature of this area of research, implying that there could be important findings to discover. The explanatory is important because another purpose has been to explain the “how” in our research question. Moreover the purpose has also been to test and shed light on current theory. To fulfil these purposes it is critical that we first present current research on the field. That is why this third chapter, presents and summarises relevant literature and prior research. First, relevant literature and concepts on the field of disaster management are presented. Secondly different definitions of social capital are presented, followed by a more comprehensive description of the concept. Lastly research on the private sector and the tourism sector in disasters are presented as well as the current research on social capital in disasters.

### 3.2 Disaster management

The terms emergency management, crisis management and disaster management have been used more or less synonymously and refer to the *pre-disaster* preparedness, the response and relief *during disasters*, and the *post-disaster* recovery and rebuilding (Tiwari, 2015). However, with the aim to be consistent and not confuse the reader, this study we will only be using the term disaster management. There has been much debate over the definitions of disaster and disaster management, however, according to Drabek (2005) most sociologists are agreeing that the goal in disaster management is to minimise potential hazards and losses as well as to maximise the safety of the population. Furthermore, this is done through the implementation of a sequence of tactics and strategies throughout all phases of disaster management, namely preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation (Drabek, 2005). The definition by the Red Cross is as follows *“Disaster Management can be defined as the organization and management of resources and responsibilities for dealing with all humanitarian aspects of emergencies, in particular preparedness, response and recovery in order to lessen the impact of disasters”* (About disaster management, n.d.). It is important for the reader to know that disaster management is a research field where different disciplines carry out research and make contributions. According to Tiwari (2015), one of the more predominant is sociology which has contributed with, among other things, creating the basis for understanding disasters as a result of both natural and social factors. There has also been a wide range of research made by other disciplines, among them economics,

public policy and psychology as well as the natural sciences which has contributed with the basis for how to understand and mitigate disasters (Tiwari, 2015). The many different disciplines engaged in disaster research have generated a quite vast and diverse literature on disaster management with different definitions and different vocabulary. This sub-chapter will present and summarise relevant literature on disaster management with an emphasis on findings from sociology, logistics and management.

In the article "*Disaster crisis management: a summary of research findings*" by Quarantelli (1988), initially published in the *Journal of Management studies*, the author goes through and summarises difficulties in disaster management from a management perspective. According to Quarantelli (1988) there are difficulties in disaster management, especially in concern to the communication and coordination efforts as well as the division of authority and responsibilities. The difficulties in communication can be found internally within the organisations as well as in the external communication between organisations. It can also be found in the communication within systems of organisations as well as in regard to the communication to and from the public. The coordination problems stem from the difficulty of reaching consensus among organisations as well as the overarching difficulty to successfully coordinate in any larger disaster. Problems of who is responsible and holds authority can be traced to the loss of personnel with authority due to the insurmountable workload, jurisdictional disagreements and conflicts over new responsibilities (Quarantelli, 1988). According to Quarantelli (1988) there will always be an element of management difficulties in disasters, however, the author goes on to argue that pre-disaster planning can help greatly in reducing the difficulties, implying that with better disaster management more lives can be saved and negative impacts be limited.

An important aspect for a successful disaster response, according to Kovács & Spens (2007), is efficient logistics and the sheer speed at which needed items can be transported to areas in need. Information and real-time communication is another factor that can make the difference between a successful and failed disaster response. For example, actors within aid need precise information about the situation as well as the specific needs in order to be able to create adequate and accurate plans of action. (Kovács & Spens, 2007). Moreover, when disasters hit aid operators will in most disasters have to operate with a damaged infrastructure. This is especially true for underdeveloped regions as they are more apt to greater destruction to their infrastructure when disasters hit. In the case of earthquakes this is very true, causing much greater destruction to countries with poor construction as well as weak housing. Furthermore, in disasters the information and knowledge of the situation is usually very limited (Kovács & Spens, 2007). The disaster response operations of aid organisations are commonly criticised, in particular as a consequence of their lack of coordination and cooperation (McClintock, 2005; Sowinski, 2003). The main problems in the immediate disaster response, from a logistical perspective, is in the coordination of supply, the unpredictable demand as well as the essential aspect of transporting the needed goods to the disaster victims (Kovács & Spens, 2007). Another problem, which has been increasing throughout the last years, are unsolicited donations which contribute to the

clogging of airports and storage capacity as well as create redundancies of unneeded goods (Kovács & Spens, 2007).

Initially, disaster management was only concerning the capacity of performing relief and rescue efforts and was seen as an issue without any larger connection to a social context (Nakagawa & Shaw, 2004; Blaikie et. al, 2014). Moreover disasters were also seen as something separate from society and were therefore dealt in separation from the context of society. (Blaikie et. al, 2014). Social scientists, especially within the field of sociology, were opposed to this notion and started to incorporate social aspects to the field of disaster research and as a result disasters were understood as a result of both natural and social factors (Drabek, 2005; Tiwari, 2015; Blaikie et al 2014). The core idea behind this is that the losses and negative impacts from disasters can be greatly reduced by recognising the social factors behind the negative impacts.

In light of this understanding, management of disasters emerged to focus on disaster risk as a way to better handle and mitigate the negative impacts from disasters (Tiwari, 2015). Moreover, in recent years, the term disaster risk management has gained increased attention due to the increased recognition of the importance of the concept of risk. The current focus on disaster risk management is, according to Tiwari (2015), largely attributable to the work of social geographer Mileti. Mileti (1999) writes that the work of researchers in the 1970's largely helped to shift the focus in disaster research towards including the social, economic and political factors of a disaster. The critical idea was that with better preparedness, mitigation, planning and management of land-use the negative effects of disasters could be greatly reduced (Mileti, 1999).

Building on this idea, Mileti (1999) argues that there has been a false assumption that society can control and protect itself from nature with the use of technology and become "safe". Moreover, arguing that there has been a static and linear approach to the problems of disasters, viewing them as one-time events that can be solved (Mileti, 1999). It has also been argued that the problems with natural disasters cannot be resolved in isolation (Blaikie et. al, 2014; Mileti, 1999) and that society has not succeeded in limiting the losses from disasters due to a more rudimentary problem, primarily due to the unnatural relationship to nature itself (Mileti, 1999).

Moreover, other researchers have found it essential to create a shift towards the concept of vulnerability. According to the Red Cross, vulnerability is a relative and dynamic concept and can be defined as "*the diminished capacity of an individual or group to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a natural or man-made hazard.*" Vulnerability is often a product of poverty. Isolation, insecurity and defenselessness are factors that increase the vulnerability when groups or individuals face risks and stress (About disasters – What is vulnerability, n.d.).

The core idea of incorporating the concept of vulnerability is that the losses and negative impacts from disasters can be greatly reduced by recognising and integrating the concept of vulnerability. In the article by McEntire (2005), which builds on a broad range of prior research, the author argues for the need and advantage of integrating the concept of vulnerability into disaster

research as well as disaster management. An important aspect that vulnerability underscore, according to Morrow (1999) and Blaikie et. al (2014), is that women, children and minority groups are often disproportionately affected by disasters and that they also tend to hold less economic, social and political power which impedes their recovery (Morrow, 1999; Blaikie et. al, 2014). The strength of the vulnerability focus is the underscoring of essential factors that previously had been overlooked, which helps in mitigating and responding to these vulnerabilities (McEntire, 2005), ultimately limiting the negative impacts of disasters.

According to Blaikie et. al. (2014), it has been confirmed that there are linkages between the global economy, national economic policy and vulnerability which can lead to involuntary vulnerability and risk to developing nations. Wisner (2001) writes that the current economic and political power structure is critical for the understanding and prevention of future disasters, concluding that there is a need to create a framework that integrates and deals with the various risks and negative side-effects of globalisation. Wisner concludes that “*Absolute safety is not a human right. Safety from avoidable loss, injury and death is*” (pg. 49; Wisner, 2001), something which a broader and more integrated perspective on vulnerability can help facilitate according to Wisner (2001) and McEntire (2005).

The occurrence and impact of disasters have been increasing in the last decades (Tiwari, 2015) and it is recognised that society today is characterised by greater risk and complexity due to growth in population, increasing urbanisation and global warming (Nakagawa & Shaw, 2004; World Bank, 2013). In an attempt to cope with the situation the international community has been changing approach from the traditionally reactive to a more proactive and preventive approach to disaster management (Tiwari, 2015). However, according to Tiwari (2015), to really handle the situation requires an improved ability to anticipate disasters and harm before it occurs and the ability to respond more adequately to disasters after it has occurred. Furthermore, Tiwari (2015) argues that managing disasters today call for increased learning and internalisation as well as adaptability and flexibility to change. It also requires better coordination and cooperation with a wide set of stakeholders and organisations in order to achieve a common purpose (Tiwari, 2015).

In summary:

- There are major problems regarding communication, coordination and cooperation in disaster management and disaster response.
- Disasters used to be seen as one-time events which could be fixed - more or less as an issue of engineering.
- Initially, the focus of disaster management was only on the disaster relief and response.
- Over time, disaster research has developed to integrate risk into the concept of disaster management.
- Today there is a lot of focus on preparedness and mitigation and researchers call for greater integration with a wide set of stakeholders.

### 3.3 Social capital

Social capital is a theoretical concept popularised by the early work of Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988, 1994), Woolcock (2000), and Putnam (1994, 1995). Coleman's definition is that social capital is the information, trust and norms of reciprocity inhering in one's network. He explained that in contrast to physical capital, being wholly tangible, social capital merely exists in the relations between individuals (Coleman 1988).

The importance of well working networks and institutions in order for an individual, a community or a company to succeed in various aspects was first recognised by theorists in the middle of the nineteenth century. Though this notion was widely neglected in research for the next coming decades, great interest towards what later would be called social capital rose among several disciplines in the 1990's (Lin, 2008; Woolcock, 2002). This interest still seems to be increasing, which can be seen by assessing the number of research papers published in the area each year (Adler & Kwon, 2014).

The concept of capital was first defined by classical economists as either natural or produced. In the middle of the last century the neoclassical economics added human capital as another form of capital, indicating that without skilled and motivated workers the other forms of capital cannot be utilized effectively. While human capital reflects the skill or capacity of an individual, social capital is found in the relations between individuals, companies or institutions (Woolcock, 2002; Bourdieu, 1986). The notion to assess these relations as capital is that this interaction and organisation between economic agents are used in order to create growth and add value (Grootaert & Van Bastelaer, 2001; Woolcock, 2002; Adler & Kwon, 2002).

Social capital share similarities and have differences with other forms of capital. As for all forms of capital, social capital is a long-lived asset in which you can invest other resources with the expectation of getting benefits, which in this case might manifest as either solidarity, power or superior information (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Lin, 2008). It can also be used as a substitute, for example by providing someone who lack physical assets with a social network that can support them instead. More often it is probably used as a complement, enhancing efficiency and productivity (Adler & Kwon, 2002).

Although social capital can be converted into other forms of capital, it is considered "sticky", especially in comparison to financial capital, which is the form of capital with the highest liquidity (Bourdieu, 1986; Jones, 2005). Social capital also has the distinction from economic capital that it needs maintaining, and that it, in line with human capital, accumulates with use. While physical capital depreciate at a predictable rate when used, a maintained social capital will probably appreciate, since the levels of trust and solidarity rises over time (Adler & Kwon, 2002).

Social capital can in some situations be looked upon as a collective good since one person's use of a network will not make it less available for others. Similar to other collective goods there is not a complete internalisation of the positive externalities generated by the production, why it often will tend to be under produced and undervalued (Grootaert & Van Bastelaer, 2001). Despite this it is not a pure public good in the sense that individuals can be excluded from using it, for example by being shut out of a network (Coleman, 1988). Hayami chooses to call it a *local public good* in order to capture these features (Hayami, 2009).

One thing making the practical application of social capital problematic is that it is not owned by any individuals, but instead relies on the connection between them. It can therefore be very elusive in the sense that if one of the agents decides to withdraw, the connection, and with it the social capital, will suddenly be lost (Adler & Kwon, 2002).

### 3.3.1 Social capital and its field of application

How to correctly measure and interpret social capital has been widely discussed, both within and between disciplines, resulting in it sometimes being referred to as a "*slippery concept*" (Johnston & Percy-smith, 2003). A too broad extension of the concept, trying to capture everything not included in the conventional forms of capital, might lead to it saying nothing. Portes said in his article from 1998 that "*The point is approaching, at which social capital comes to be applied to so many events and in so many different contexts as to lose any distinct meaning*" (Portes, 2000, p. 44).

In order to avoid this negative broadening of the concept, several frameworks dividing social capital into different, hopefully more manageable, categories were created (Adler & Kwon, 2014). Woolcock and Szreter showed in 2004 a way in which social capital can be divided into horizontal and vertical connections, a framework still widely used (Adler & Kwon, 2014; Szreter & Woolcock, 2004)

1. First there is the *bonding* capital, capturing the close horizontal relations between immediate family, friends, business associates or members of the community sharing the same demographic characteristics.
2. Secondly there is the *bridging* capital which spans a bit further than the bonding, connecting people more heterogeneous to each other, though having similar economic and political status.
3. Third and lastly there is the *linking* capital, which is the vertical ties between people of different level of power and influence, such as between a community and a formal organisation (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004).

A way to explain the differences is to regard bonding social capital as a way to *get by*, and bridging and linking social capital as a tool to *get ahead* (Narayan & Woolcock, 2000). In general people have a lot of bonding capital, less bridging and only a few linking contacts. How

your social network is constructed often depends on your socioeconomic status, where poor people, especially in rural areas, often lack bridging and linking social capital, instead depending more on their bonding capital (ibid.). This notion has made social capital an important factor to consider in development studies, and the research in this field has increased considerably throughout the last years (Adler & Kwon, 2014).

A peculiar aspect of social capital is that it can be both an input and an output of collective action, meaning that the causality can be hard to research. As an example a strong, well working, village council might have derived from a strong bonding capital in this community, but it can also be that it was the village council being the factor generating the social capital (Jones, 2005).

Moreover, it is also important to be wary of the distinction between *access* to social capital and the *use* or mobilisation of it (Lin, 2008). As for most definitions it is the access to it that is being referred to. While it at first might look like the same thing, having access to a social network or using it, research have shown that it is often not the case. Some people might have an extensive social network but still hesitates to use it, while others do not, as a result of contextual factors or personal traits (ibid). With the object of measuring an agent's social capital, one could try to assess the network or look into the utilised contacts, both methods having its perks and downsides, though the access perspective have been dominating the research (ibid.). In Lin's definition of social capital he tries to capture this, and his more individual-focused, network-based definition will be used as a reference throughout this study.

*Social capital is defined as the resources embedded in one's social networks, resources that can be accessed or mobilized through ties in the networks (Lin, 2001, chapter 2).*

Despite it being a very complex field to study, most of the theorists agree that social capital really captures something important, and that, after 20 years of intensive research, the value of the overarching concept is no longer under controversy. Based on this, Adler and Kwon suggests that future research should be focused on exploring the niches and methodology rather than the concept as a whole (2014). One of the biggest challenges, as Johnston and Percy-Smith put it, is to make sure that the right measures are being used, reflecting the context in a meaningful way (Johnston & Percy-Smith, 2003; Jones, 2005).

Putnam's book: *Making democracy work: Civic traditions in modern Italy* has come to be one of the key works in the field of social capital, contributing greatly in popularising the concept (Johnston & Percy-Smith, 2003). The book is investigating how the density of membership in formal organisations in different regions of Italy reflects the democratic efficiency of these particular places (Putnam, 1994). The findings showed a strong positive correlation, indicating that denser rates of membership generate better working, more efficient, democratic institutions (ibid.). In this study, Putnam uses his measurement of membership as an equivalent to measuring

social capital, hence claiming that it is the stock of social capital inherited by these regions causing the democratic institution to work well or not (ibid.).

Putnam's approach of measuring membership density as a proxy of social capital worked very well in this context and has been used widely since, but has also been criticised. Krishna states that this proxy is not suitable in all cultures. As an example he describes that in the Indian culture, where he is active, almost all formal organisations are initiated by the government, hence membership being a bad measure for civic engagement (Krishna, 2004). Instead he developed a locally adapted scale where the respondents assess whether they prefer to make certain actions alone or collectively, measuring the level of trust, solidarity and reciprocity in the community (ibid.). Both Putnam (1995) and Krishna (2004) had a community approach, trying to assess the total stock of social capital inherited by certain communities. Even though the focus in this study will be more on the individual or organisation mobilising their network, Krishna's observation regarding the possible cultural differences in how social capital manifests itself is important to keep in mind.

In summary:

- *Social capital is defined as the resources embedded in one's social networks, resources that can be accessed or mobilized through ties in the networks (Lin, Chapter 2, 2001).*
- Social capital is a local public good.
- One can divide social capital into bonding, bridging and linking capital in order to capture the different variations.
- There is a point making the distinction between the *access to*, and the *mobilisation of* social capital.
- Social capital is hard to measure since its manifestations varies across cultures.

### **3.4 Private sector in disasters**

There has been a growing recognition internationally of the importance of the private sector in disaster management and risk reduction (UNISDR, 2009; Zyck & Kent, 2014). To date, the majority of private sector engagement in disaster management has been in disaster response and relief (Roeth 2009; Izumi & Shaw, 2015; UNISDR, 2009). According to a report by UNOCHA (2006) the majority of private sector engagement in disaster relief takes place independently. According to Izumi and Shaw (2015) and Oglesby and Burke (2012), to successfully increase and improve the involvement of the private sector there is a need for greater collaboration between stakeholders. Busch and Givens (2013) states that both businesses and governments benefit from public-private partnerships in which they, by sharing information and resources, can improve the management of disasters and response efforts. Furthermore, Izumi and Shaw (2015) states that it is important to consider the local knowledge that community level companies hold and to support the private sector efforts as well as to integrate them in mutual projects. Turner et. al. (2008) discovered that the role of the private sector was greater in the response to cyclone

Nargis in Myanmar 2008 than comparable cases. This is because of the restriction on the involvement of international aid agencies put up by the Myanmar government, which resulted in the local private sector playing a greater role in the disaster relief and logistics (Turner et. al., 2008; Zyck & Kent, 2014). Zyck and Kent goes on to state that the private sector also plays an important role as an “...*alternative to international aid agencies, particularly in middle-income, ‘emerging’ and state capitalist economies, as well as in states which are sensitive regarding their internal affairs.*” (pg. 1, Zyck & Kent, 2014). Even so, Zyck and Kent (2014) identifies that there are contexts where the private sector’s engagement might not be sufficient. Examples of this are highly sensitive conflict situation and different kind of protection, such as from gender and sexual-based violence.

In the correct contexts, Zyck and Kent (2014) writes that local level companies are important since they often make use of the resources and material they have in order to aid affected people, giving the example of small and medium-sized local businesses playing an important role just by investing in their own recovery, which then enables the local markets to resume. They are also important as providers of credit which supports the local livelihoods to resume. Regardless, they are often overlooked by aid agencies as well as larger firms (Zyck & Kent, 2014). In the evaluation of the Indian Ocean tsunami by Parakrama (2007), he points to the fact that most lives were saved by neighbouring communities and that the bypassing of the local and national responses resulted in a suboptimal international aid response and recovery. Furthermore Parakrama argues that the way the aid sector is funded encourages an over-emphasis of the own organisations work and an understatement of the local aid efforts (Parakrama, 2007).

#### *3.4.1 Tourism sector in disasters*

As argued by Faulkner (2001) there is an absence of research on how the tourism sector and tourist companies responds to disasters. This is surprising considering the importance and size of the tourism sector as well as due to their reliance on a positive perception of the sector (Ritchie, 2008). Furthermore, Ritchie (2008) argues, in line with prior presented research on disasters and disaster management, that future attention and research ought to be focused on pre-disaster activities such as planning and preparation, as well as be of a multidisciplinary kind.

Furthermore, due to the tourism sector being comprised of a great number of small enterprises he goes on to argue that national tourist organisations or industry associations have an important mission in facilitating a change towards more active strategies to disasters (Ritchie, 2008).

In summary

- A majority of the engagement in disaster management by the private sector has been in disaster response.
- Even though their contributions are important they are often overlooked by governments and aid organisations.
- There is a need for more knowledge and facilitation of disaster management strategies for the tourism sector.

### 3.5 Social capital and disaster management

Nakagawa and Shaw (2004) point out that the learnings from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake of 1995 in Japan indicates that solutions ought to be multidisciplinary, and that it is of great importance to incorporate the social perspectives along the technical solutions (Nakagawa & Shaw, 2004). From both qualitative and quantitative data they could draw the conclusion that, “*At every stage of the disaster cycle (rescue, relief and rehabilitation), the communities played the most important roles among other concerned stakeholders*” (ibid., p. 27).

To integrate social capital into disaster management, and especially post-disaster recovery, has gradually come to be an important part of the broad field of disaster research (Aldrich, 2015). Studies have shown that in times of disasters, formal support organisations often fail, and people are therefore more likely to reach out to their family, friends and social networks in order to gain support, further stressing the importance of social capital in the context of disasters. According to Aldrich (2015), the access to networks connecting you to people outside of your community or country, is extremely critical in times of disasters, making it possible to convert your social capital into tangible resources such as money and goods. Comparative studies have shown that communities with a greater bridging and linking social capital recover faster and more satisfying than communities having to rely only on their bonding capital (ibid.).

Furthermore, greater social capital facilitate collective action and creates a culture of reciprocity, both of these factors being crucial after disasters. In order to start rebuilding and provide disaster relief, collective action is needed, both by helping out on the spot but also by sharing information and knowledge. The culture of reciprocity is of great importance as well, minimizing the risk of free-riders, who otherwise might thrive in these chaotic times where governmental instances usually hindering them may not be functioning (ibid.).

Moreover, in a case study conducted in rural India, Krishna (2001) drew the conclusion that it was the *combination* of strong social capital and agency that could predict the degree of development in the villages, rather than the social capital by itself. In villages with strong agency, namely good leaders, these leaders functioned as mobilisers, being able to direct and utilise the social capital in an efficient way. In the recovery process researchers have seen examples of social capital working as a “force multiplier”, amplifying the results of governmental and NGO programs. Aldrich (2015) argues that if the ability to tap into these pools of social capital and networks could be improved, the disaster management efficiency would improve greatly.

There is a consensus regarding the importance of social capital in disasters, however, the area is still in need of further research, especially on different actors and the mobilisation of the social capital (Hawkins & Maurer, 2010). Until now disaster research has tended to focus on governments, communities and households, forgetting other stakeholders such as businesses

(Izumi & Shaw, 2015). Aldrich concludes in his book *Social Capital in Post Disaster Recovery: Strong Networks and Communities Create a Resilient East Asian Community*, that countries, in order to enhance resilience and speed up the recovery rate, should embrace a social capital view in their policy making. A synthesis of the recommended policy implications is to further engage local stakeholders and communities in the disaster response work while making sure to promote already existing networks (Aldrich, 2015).

In summary:

- Disaster management has with time incorporated social factors and also started to incorporate the concept of social capital.
- Social capital is of great importance in disasters, when formal support organisations often tends to fail.
- In combination with good agency, social capital can work as a “force multiplier”, enhancing the effect of governmental and NGO programs, promoting recovery after disasters.

## 4. Empirical findings

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### 4.1 Our experience

While doing some shopping in the basement of a supermarket, the earthquake hit 11.56 on the 25th of April. Running up the stairs in panic we gathered in the middle of the road, standing tightly squeezed together with Nepalese shop owners and other tourists. The ground continued to shake for about two minutes, creating an extremely odd and scary feeling, like standing on a sea with big waves going through the tarmac. Afterwards we were shocked and we soon understood that this earthquake was something way out of the ordinary. A lot of people were crying while others tried to call relatives and check for news updates. Since Pokhara did not suffer greater physical damage, the stories heard from Kathmandu of complete chaos were absent. However, during the days after the earthquake there were many aftershocks and we mainly tried to stay in open spaces while trying to gain new information about the situation.

The lack of information made the situation very uncertain, with plenty of rumours being spread regarding eventual new earthquakes as well as the state of the rest of the country. Meanwhile the aftershocks continued to come, making people run out on the streets every other hour. Some people we met said they think that the food might start running out soon in Pokhara, as most of the food in Nepal were either processed, packed or imported through the central hubs in Kathmandu. Another uncertainty was the conditions of the roads and infrastructure. Could one go to Kathmandu or were the roads shut down? In Pokhara most shops and restaurants started opening up like usual within a few days, adding a spooky feeling, as if nothing had happened. When we got to Kathmandu almost two weeks later most shops were still closed as a large part of the population had chosen to go back to their respective home villages. They did so both in an attempt to help but also to make sure to be out of the city if another earthquake would hit. In Kathmandu people were sleeping in outdoor camps spread out on the very few open spaces. Gravel parking areas, the golf course and even the few sidewalks in Kathmandu were packed with tents, tarps and people sleeping.

After nine days in Pokhara we were able to go back to Jyamrung village. Whilst there we walked to four neighbouring villages as well. In these total five villages almost all houses had collapsed or were badly damaged. As we got there people had started to look ahead and build temporary houses. Most people witnessed that they had not received much help, if any, from the government and that they did not think that much help would come from them. Furthermore many people witnessed that they thought that the larger organisations, such as the UN and Red Cross among others, would have arrived and managed to help faster. Many people worried about food. Depending on how badly their houses had collapsed, some families had managed to extract both food and seeds from their houses while some had not been able to extract any. One family we spoke to said they had food for three days ahead and another that they had food for about a week. As most of the schools were demolished another worry was how to rebuild and get the

school started again. Fortunately, no diseases had started spreading and most people had access to a working toilet, which is important for keeping the hygiene. The biggest concern for most families was how to manage to build a monsoon safe shelter in time before the monsoon, and also how they would afford to build a new house in the autumn. Most people in rural areas of Nepal, like the village of Jyamrung, have no savings. Some families have either family members or some friend that lives and works in either Kathmandu or abroad as guest workers, mainly in parts of the Middle East such as Qatar and the UAE. These families rely greatly on the contributions of these family members, as they are not able to support themselves otherwise. We met one man who had just come home from Qatar to help his family. He said that he sends about 500-600 US dollars every month, a significant amount for a family in Nepal. Furthermore, after arriving to Kathmandu we also went with another organisation to the area Sindhupalchowk which they were transporting food to. In this area the destruction was even worse, as more or less all buildings were torn down completely.

## **4.2 Key respondents**

### ***4.2.1 Introduction to Mountain Delights (& Tuki/Tukee Nepal)***

Mountain Delights (MD) is the trekking and adventure company of which Mr Ram Sapkota is the CEO and founder. MD is an outspoken “social” company with the goal not only to make a profit but also to ensure a positive social and environmental development through their business. Their aim is to set a positive example for Nepalese trekking companies.

Mr. Ram is also the chairman of the Nepalese NGO Tukee Nepal, which has a sister organisation in Sweden, Tuki Nepal. They have worked together since 2005 in the Jyamrung area and has, as stated before, managed to rebuild the school, start a health clinic, install a micro hydropower station and support countless of children through a sponsor program. Tukee Nepal and MD have a very close relationship as they are both sprung out of Mr Rams drive and engagement. According to Mr Ram, Tukee Nepal has no costs for an office or administration as all of the administration is done in the premises of MD and by himself or other MD staff. Resources of MD are so forth used to enhance the work of Tukee Nepal as well as to limit the costs for the NGO. The idea, according to Mr Ram, is to make sure that all donations to Tukee Nepal go straight to the intended purpose. Additionally, a part of the profit of MD every year goes to the work of Tukee Nepal. According to Mr Ram, people in Jyamrung see Tukee Nepal and MD as the same thing and their names are more or less used interchangeably.

#### ***4.2.1.1 Ram Sapkota***

As stated before, Mr Ram is the CEO and founder of Mountain Delights. The company was started in 2004 and he has been the CEO there since. Social issues always have always been important to Mr Ram and he had had an engagement in the village with the goal to improve the development there since before MD and Tukee Nepal was started.

#### *4.2.1.2 Interview - How did you help?*

Ram expresses that there are a wide range of reasons for his engagement and the engagement of the organisations Tukee and Tuki Nepal in Jyamrung after the earthquake. The most important being the long involvement of MD and Tuki Nepal in the village, which has resulted in a situation where people expect that they will get help from them. Since he has grown up in Jyamrung he has family and friends there, now in much need of his help. For example he stated that only in the initial hours after the first earthquake several people had called him and asked for help and telling him how they were relying on it.

The work of Tukee Nepal relies to a great extent on the donations collected by the Swedish sister organisation. Mr Ram expresses that when the earthquake hit, Tukee Nepal started organising relief efforts almost immediately, and did not first apply for money from the Swedish organisation as they otherwise do for other projects. He said that the need was great and that there was no time to hesitate, as well as that he was confident that they would get the funding. The first step in the aid work and disaster response was to supply tarp and food for the villagers so they could have roof over their heads and food to eat. The government of Nepal had arranged for the Village development committees (VDCs has a similar function to a municipality) to register who and how organisations were helping out, in order to try to distribute the aid more equally between areas. Mr Ram signed up to take responsibility for the help for three wards out of nine, wards being parts of the municipality, for the Jyamrung village.

Within two days the help from Tukee Nepal had reached Jyamrung, where the first help reached the area closest to the road. The first step as stated before was to bring food and shelter. Within ten days, all of the three wards under the responsibility of Tukee Nepal had received 3 kg rice per person as well as 1 kg sugar and 1 litre of cooking oil per 10 person. It quite quickly became a shortage of tarps in Kathmandu, however Tukee Nepal tried to supply as many tarps as possible, using all of Mr Ram's contacts. In this phase all people in the village received the same amount of food while the tarps were divided after who was in the greatest need of shelter. Because the demand and need for tarps was much greater than what Tukee Nepal was able to supply, many families had to share tarps with other families.

The second phase of the disaster response of MD was focused on helping the people to build temporary houses which would withstand the monsoon that was coming in June (about one month later). They brought in a few experienced construction workers to the village and built example houses which the people could come and observe, so that they later could build their own shelters in the same way. Tukee Nepal also bought tools which they distributed to the three wards they were responsible for. The people could then borrow tools which facilitated the construction of temporary houses. Another important aspect was to, as soon as possible, build a temporary house for the health clinic so that the medical needs could still be attended. Moreover an important factor for the recovery was to get the school running again. Mr Ram stated that

quite soon after the earthquake the local government decided that the schools should open ten days later, however, to the disappointment of Mr Ram there was no plan or help from the government. They therefore decided to build a temporary school until the school could be properly rebuilt. Mr Ram expresses that this third step of rebuilding the school and the health clinic would cost about \$40,000. Usually Tuki Nepal receives about \$50,000 - 70,000 per year. However, by starting an earthquake emergency fund they managed to collect almost \$70,000 in only the first two weeks after the earthquake. Mr Ram states that many of the contributors for Tuki Nepal come from former customers of MD, having visited Nepal and maybe even the Jyamrung area, now feeling connected to the country. Mr Ram states that he was contacted by former customers, some which had not visited Nepal for the last ten years, now eager to help. Moreover, Mr Ram also states that the earthquake and rebuilding of Nepal is an opportunity to bring people closer and to rebuild a better country.

#### ***4.2.2 Introduction to Nepal Trekking Team (& Namaste Sweden Society)***

Nepal Trekking Team is a Nepalese trekking company that was started in 2010. Namaste Sweden Society (NSS) started 2003 and is a Swedish/Nepalese NGO working on various projects, such as a women tailoring project and sponsoring school fees.

##### ***4.2.2.1 Lila Nath Sapkota***

As for Mr Ram, Mr Sapkota also looks upon himself as a social entrepreneur, providing eco- and homestay treks. In 2014 he was the “Ecotourism Advisor” of Trekking Agencies Association of Nepal (TAAN) for the western region, working hard to promote sustainable trekking options. He grew up in Barmali, a governmentally owned orphanage in Kathmandu, and claims that his upbringing led to his engagement in working for mitigating social injustices in Nepal.

##### ***4.2.2.2 Interview - How did you help?***

The first focus of their help was on relief and according to Mr Sapkota there was a big problem with coordination. He had seen many examples of help from people and organisations ending up in the same village. Further, he stated that some villages, because of the people there having contacts, received much more help than other, more remote villages.

Namaste Sweden Society receives donations from many different contacts in Sweden. Among them are former trekking customers and organisations such as Rotary, Lions Club and others. Before the earthquake Mr Sapkota was in Sweden in order to meet his Swedish associates in NSS. While having a lecture about Nepal in Uppsala University, one of the students raised his hand, telling him the terrible news of the disaster. Two days later Mr Sapkota was back in Nepal, with a promise of disaster relief funding from NSS. He also emailed all of Nepal Trekking Team’s old customers and published a lot on their Facebook page in order to generate awareness of the situation. After doing so he received a lot of funding, primarily from former customers. Thanks to this collected money they could soon be out in the villages, distributing food and hygiene products.

Mr Sapkota stresses the need for help in constructing new houses since most Nepalese people simply do not have the necessary resources to build new houses themselves. He would like the government to help more but states that he does not think that the government will do much. He fears that if there will be no help from outside for these villages, the monsoon shelters will be too rudimentary, risking the health and belongings of the people living in them. He is worried that the newly built houses will be as fragile as the ones destroyed in the earthquake if there is no one to help them. In order to help the people in the countryside to build steady monsoon shelters he tries, with help from his Swedish associates, to find constructing engineers willing to volunteer.

#### ***4.2.3 Introduction to Nepal Earthquake Appeal***

Nepal Earthquake appeal is a cooperation between the following companies:

- Paddle Nepal
- SATHI Nepal
- Rapidrunner Expeditions
- Karmaflights
- Kriayt Social Business
- Environmental & Welfare Committee
- Babu Adventures

##### ***4.2.3.1 Tessa Lama (& Rapid Runner)***

Mrs Lama is the CEO of the company Rapidrunner expeditions, one of the companies making up the Nepal Earthquake Appeal. Rapidrunner expeditions is an outspoken environmentally friendly company that offers white-water adventures, rafting and kayaking expeditions. Mrs Lama is originally from the UK but has lived in Nepal for the last 8 years.

##### ***4.2.3.2 Interview - How did you help?***

Mrs Lama stated that their priority in the beginning was to “*just go*” and help with food and shelter, and that at first most of the companies in the Nepal Earthquake Appeal started to engage in this individually. Quite soon they realised that it would be much better to coordinate the efforts and soon started cooperating and performing their efforts under Nepal Earthquake Appeal (NEA). According to Mrs Lama, the idea of the NEA was to “*fill the gap*” before the UN and other large organisations would fill in. First this gap was thought to be 2-3 days long but at the time of our interview Mrs Lama thought they would have to go on for at least 3-4 weeks more weeks. She expressed great disappointment towards the work of the UN and the larger organisations, especially regarding the time it took for them to reach the affected areas and to distribute relief materials. She gave an example of how they had witnessed an UN truck driving around in a remote area in great need, without any relief material, only to reconnoitre the area. According to Mrs Lama in this first phase, when the needs are tremendous, it is much more important to provide relief quickly than to have a perfect plan of how to go about it. Concluding

on this matter she stated that they could at least have brought supplies in the truck to distribute while they were reconnoitring.

Furthermore, Mrs Lama expresses a great disappointment at the government of Nepal as she thinks they “*want to be looked upon as heroes*” instead of focusing on providing good and efficient disaster response and aid. She states that the government is generally quite corrupt and that they cannot be trusted. She gave the example that the government, after the earthquake, wanted the international community and aid organisations to pay taxes on the aid material they brought to Nepal, as well as that they blocked some of those who did not comply. Further, she stated that the government also tried to convey aid donations to be given to the government instead.

According to Mrs Lama they used their offices in Pokhara as the base of their operations. From there they e-mailed everyone in their database and told them about the situation and that they were doing their best to help, in an attempt to collect donations. The companies also used their respective social media accounts, such as Facebook, through which they provided information of their efforts and the situation. She stated that a lot of the donations came from former customers and that these people probably felt a need and will to give, partly because of the great needs after the earthquake but also because they had been there themselves and “*gotten close to the area*”. They also received cash donations on the spot, as well as provided a list of the materials that was most needed, which people then could buy themselves and donate. They also received hundreds of offers from tourists that wanted to help as volunteers. The collected money was spent mainly on relief materials, such as food, shelter, clothes and blankets. She said they both received and spent about \$10-15,000 every day.

They used the offices and storage rooms of the companies that were involved. Many of the trucks and buses that the companies owned were used for transporting the material. Most of the guides went home to their respective villages, which Mrs Lama said proved to be a good source of information. Through their guides they were able to get knowledge about the state of their respective villages, what they needed in form of supplies and the conditions of the roads. She states that there had been events of trucks being threatened on the road by hungry and desperate people, resulting in them now trying not to send westerners on these tours in order to avoid unnecessary attention.

Mrs Lama expressed that one of the key points to why they managed these operations was because they were “*legal enough to not get in trouble and not official enough to get dragged into meetings with the government*”. According to Mrs Lama, the government started blocking newly registered aid initiatives and organisations and that they instead wanted these to give their donations to the government. She also stated that some of the large organisations either got dragged into meetings or other types of bureaucracy which impeded the disaster response of these organisations.

#### ***4.2.4 Introduction to L.N. Treks & Expedition (& TAAN)***

L.N. Treks & Expedition is a Nepalese trekking company which offers a wide arrange of treks as well as volunteering opportunities. The Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal (TAAN) is an umbrella organisation of with the goal to, in cooperating with the government, develop and promote adventure tourism in Nepal as well as to play a significant and conducive role in mitigating the negative environmental impacts in Nepal.

##### ***4.2.4.1 Deepak Adhikari***

Mr Adhikari in Pokhara is the founder and CEO of L.N. Treks & Expedition and also the first vice president of the Trekking Agencies Association of Nepal (TAAN). He grew up in a village in rural Nepal.

##### ***4.2.4.2 Interview - How did you help?***

Mr Adhikari states that after the earthquake he felt the need to help because he knew he could. His company is a member of TAAN and he states he thought it was a good idea to use TAAN as a platform to collaborate the aid efforts from. They started by talking to people from different areas that they knew, in order to get information about the situation and what help was needed, as well as which roads were open. Their first aid efforts consisted mainly of sending food and shelter, Mr Adhikari states that tarps have been especially important as it provides good shelter. Their first aid efforts were focused on Gorkha, one of the worst affected districts after the earthquake. Later when the international aid organisations had arrived they switched to other areas that had not received any help. One problem he emphasises is that many of the remote areas are hard to reach and had not gotten any help.

We asked Mr Adhikari if he thought there were any problems in the coordination of the disaster response but he said that the aid efforts from Pokhara had been quite well coordinated. Although, he emphasised that Nepal is not ready for a disaster and to handle and cope with the needs after one. Furthermore, Mr Adhikari points out that there is a great need of help from the outside if Nepal is to make a good recovery, both from foreign governments, international aid organisations and NGOs. One major problem according to Mr Adhikari, besides the need for food, shelter and new temporary houses, is that many of the villages in Nepal have lost their seeds in the collapsed houses. Some families had successfully recovered their seeds while other people and villages might lack seeds for the next planting season. To just replace the seeds might, according to Mr Adhikari, seem easy, but it is important to remember that the seeds used are adapted to the local environment and conditions, and have been used there for a long time. Hence, replacing them with other seeds might not work very well. Another problem is that hills have been "cracked" because of the earthquake, and if the coming monsoon is bad it would result in big landslides that, according to Mr Adhikari, might cause great damage. Furthermore, he is disappointed at the government and points to the fact that the government has been replaced

almost every second year for a very long time which has resulted in shifting policies and a lack of leadership in Nepal.

We asked Mr Adhikari if they had used social media and e-mailing in an attempt to collect donations. He told us that they had not done so thus far, but that they might further ahead if they feel it is needed, concluding that they were managing quite well for now.

#### ***4.2.5 Introduction to Far Away Adventures (& Himalayan Adventure Girls)***

##### ***4.2.5.1 Inka Gurung***

Mrs Gurung is the CEO of the Swedish travelling agency Far Away Adventures, arranging trekking and kayaking trips in Nepal, India and Bhutan. Sprung out of her long time devotion for both Nepal and white water rafting she also founded the NGO Himalayan Adventure Girls (HAG) in 2008, an organisation engaged in employing and educating young Nepali women as rafting guides. The idea of the organisation is to distribute the resources generated by tourism not only to the men, who traditionally have been the only ones working as guides, but to women as well.

##### ***4.2.5.2 Interview - How did you help?***

During the earthquake Inka Gurung was in her home in Gagnef, Sweden, and immediately she started to search for ways to help. After a day she got in touch with the girls at Himalayan Adventure Girls and was thereafter able to transfer a small amount of money to them to cover for their necessities. The girls soon went home to their villages to help and reported back to Mrs Gurung about the massive destruction and the huge need for help. When she found out how bad the situation was, adding to it that Western Union removed the fees on money transfers to Nepal, she decided to start a fundraising. Together with a friend from France, working as a journalist, they created an account at the webpage Gofundme. First she thought of giving the money to the Red Cross, knowing they have long experience of working in disaster situations. But when Mrs Gurung told the girls at HAG about her plans, they directly said that they wanted to help out, describing how the Red Cross and the other big organisations had not yet arrived to most places. Since the girls in HAG had family in some of the worst affected villages and planned to go there anyway, they argued that they could as well bring relief material themselves, something Mrs Gurung thought made sense.

After this everything went quick according to Mrs Gurung which, together with her friend, had started to use their vast social network, contacting tourism companies in Nepal and Sweden as well as all newspapers they could think of in order to spread awareness and raise money. While they took care of the collection of money, the girls in HAG did their best in using them wisely. Two of the girls come from the village Sindhupalchowk which was badly affected and had to that point not received any help. This led Mrs Gurung to start the Facebook group “Help Sindhupalchowk” in order to organise their disaster response activities.

The networking activities paid off, and to date (2015-05-11) the fundraising “Help the Adventure Girls in Nepal” have collected €29,635. Mrs Gurung states that this money is too much to be spent on disaster response alone and that they are starting to plan how to use them for valuable recovery work as well.

### **4.3 Other respondents**

#### *4.3.1 Different families and people in Jyamrung and nearby villages*

We came in contact with many families and other people while walking around to the five villages in the Jyamrung area. Almost none of the interviewed people had any savings and concluded that the earthquake had affected everyone almost as badly, meaning that they could not get the same amount of help from family members and neighbours that could be used in other times of hardships.

Basically no one that we met during the four days in the Jyamrung area after the earthquake had any faith in the government. When being asked, their reactions varied a bit from not expecting any help at all to tiredly stating that it will probably arrive but “*too little and too late*”. Most of our respondents in the villages shared a suspicion that the government actually would see the money received from abroad as an opportunity to fill their own pockets, rather than a way to help the ones in need. The people in Jyamrung village showed great trust in Mountain Delights, Tukee Nepal and Mr Ram personally, expecting them to rebuild public property such as the school and the hospital. In the two other villages we visited, Kahari and Sakaura, where no such NGO was present, expectations were low that any outside organisations would help out.

In order to get on their feet again, building a monsoon shelter and later on a new house, almost all respondents told us how dependent they were on relatives working either abroad or in Kathmandu. In almost every family there was at least one member working somewhere else, sending money regularly to the household to pay for school fees and food. After the earthquake, this inflow of cash was of even greater importance. During our time in Jyamrung we also met countless of young men returning from Kathmandu and Pokhara to help their families build shelters, and a few returning from abroad, such as Australia and the United States. When talking to them they stated that if they did not return to help, both financially and with rebuilding, no one else would. They felt it was their responsibility as sons and brothers to help out. There were some families that did not have friends or family working elsewhere, this exception proved to be the low caste families, the *dalits*, living in small separate communities. For this reason, the dalits were much less hopeful about the future, showing great worry for how they would survive the year, the greatest fear being the lack of food security. In the communities with members of higher castes, they instead seemed to worry most about housing, school fees and buying new animals.

#### *4.3.2 Sanish Maharjan*

We came in contact with Mr Maharjan through two Swedish friends in Nepal. He is a student of development studies at the university in Kathmandu and is involved in a Christian organisation in Nepal.

Mr Maharjan states that after the earthquake he used all his savings and even took a loan at the bank in order to help as much as he possibly could. After the earthquake he started cooperating with other organisations as well and posting pictures on social media, mainly Facebook, of his work. He was mainly providing relief material to areas in need in cooperation with different local organisations. The focus was to provide food and shelter. After posting about their work on social media he got contacted by friends abroad, which he had met through Christian organisations that wanted to help, so he started receiving donations from abroad as well. When we met with him, on the 11th of May, he said that they would focus on disaster relief (providing food and shelter) for just a few more days, then they would switch to focus on longer term projects, such as helping to rebuild schools, houses and toilets. His engagement, and the engagement of the organisations he was working with, was mostly centered in areas in which they had worked before or had some type of connection to. At first he focused on helping the village and area that he was from, but he soon noticed the tremendous need for help in other affected areas too. He stated that they had a fairly good contact with the local government, but also that he thought they were a bit slow and bureaucratic which impeded their work. For example, they needed to acquire permits beforehand for the things they wanted to bring to the villages, which he thought added unnecessary work.

Mr Maharjan stated, like other respondents, that there were many problems in Nepal and in the disaster response. He stated that he was very critical of the government as they had not provided almost any help, were quite corrupt and could not manage any proper disaster response. He also stated that help had come too slow and that he was disappointed with the larger organisations as well.

#### *4.3.4 Björn Söderberg*

Björn is a Swedish social entrepreneur living in Kathmandu since 15 years back. He is active in Tukee Nepal and used his contacts and resources after the earthquake in order to help. He stated that he was very disappointed with the work of the UN and the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB). For example, he had been in meetings with the UN and seen how much of the resources they had did not get distributed. He also describes the daily meetings arranged by the UN as being highly inefficient. He had also been cooperating with the Swedish aid team MSB but was disappointed since they, according to him, did not manage to arrive in time to aid in the disaster response, as they first had gotten stuck at the airport in Kathmandu.

## **4.4 The UN and the Red Cross**

### *4.4.1 UN (&MSB) – Christian Di Schiena*

Mr Schiena is the vice head of unit for MSB's task force and is also a "stand-by resource" for the UN in their emergency force, employed since five years back to be able to help when additional expertise is needed and has been sent to several war and disaster zones before. He went to Nepal four days after the earthquake and remained there for about three weeks, working on the behalf of the UN.

#### *4.4.1.2 Interview - How did you help?*

Mr Schiena states that after the earthquake, the UN did an evaluation of the situation and thereafter called for the help they concluded to be needed. First there was an urge for Search- and Rescue teams, to which Sweden answered by offering their help. Due to administrative hold-ups regarding what kind of help that was needed the most as well as practical problems, such as the bad capacity of the Kathmandu airport, the plane was delayed. When the plane finally got green light, the UN declared the Search and Rescue-team to be redundant.

Instead, Mr Schiena and some of his colleagues went with UN, as a team specialised in making the work of help organisations possible and more coordinated in times of disaster. They started off by making observational trips in rural areas in order to decide where to establish the third UN Aid Organisations Hub (after Kathmandu and Gorkha). This was done by driving around in areas they have heard to be badly affected, the sources being officials as well as civilians they met on the road. However rudimentary this approach is, Mr Schiena described it to be the only way possible. There were not sufficient data, nor time to make a perfect decision, and after driving around parts of the Gorkha and Dhading district, they settled for the city Chatara in the region Sindhupalchowk. In this camp, situated on a football field, Di Schiena helped the UN organs UNHCR & IOM organising the logistics in order to get the camp running. His work was to deal mainly with factors such as office tents, internet access and hygiene facilities.

When arriving in Kathmandu, Mr Schiena says to have been positively surprised by the state of the city. In contrast to what media was showing, Kathmandu did not appear apocalyptic to Mr Schiena. While most of the buildings in Kathmandu seemed ok, the condition of the houses in the rural areas he visited was shocking. He saw plenty of villages with houses now being so flat on the ground that they were barely noticeable, as well as many roads being badly damaged by landslides. He was surprised by the extremely poor infrastructure, and claims it to be the biggest obstacle to a fast recovery in Nepal. Although the physical damage was big, he said that the general state of mind appeared better than expected, claiming that he could see people slowly adapting during the weeks he stayed, creating some sort of every-day life.

Besides providing disaster relief material Di Schiena describes the UN's most important task in disasters to be the one of coordination. The disaster management is handled by OCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) and they have divided the disaster

response management into 11 clusters, examples of these clusters being Food, Shelter, Health and Logistics. In all countries OSHA has appointed one responsible organisation per cluster, who in case of disaster is supposed to act as a sort of chairman. All organisations interested in contributing to the aid efforts can thereafter register to the cluster suiting their niche. In the case of the Nepal Earthquake, every cluster arranged daily meetings in Kathmandu, discussing the challenges and trying to coordinate the aid efforts.

Mr Schiena claims this approach to be a good way of trying to deal with an incredibly tough situation, aiming to minimise the problem of all aid ending up in the same area or of money being spent where it is not most needed. These clusters are also supposed to work in close collaboration with official organisations, in Nepal primarily being the VDC's.

When discussing the different actors engaged in the aid efforts, Mr Schiena is critical to some of the smaller international organisations that arrived in Nepal after the earthquake and not registering in any of the clusters. He saw examples of these organisations buying big amounts of food from local markets, possibly risking the food security of the locals. Mr Schiena states that however good the intentions of these organisations are, they could do more harm than good if not properly coordinated. However he stresses the importance of smaller local actors, since they, in difference to the international actors, possess the local knowledge and the agility the bigger players such as the UN lacks.

#### *4.4.2 Red Cross - Mrs Ylva Jonsson Strömberg*

Mrs Ylva Jonsson Strömberg is the head of the disaster management and policy unit, and currently also head of program unit at the Swedish Red Cross. She went to Nepal, as a manager, after the earthquake to attend meetings with managers from other countries. The goal of these meetings was to improve the internal coordination within the organisation in Nepal, between the Red Cross organisations as well as the coordination and communication to and from other organisations and the government in Nepal.

##### *4.4.2.1 Interview - How did you help?*

According to Mrs Jonsson Strömberg, the Red Cross has a strong local presence with already set up local fractions of the organisation in Nepal, with presence in all of the districts in contrast to most other organisations. Further, this helped the Red Cross and the international Red Cross movement in getting there and aiding in the disaster response quicker than what otherwise would have been possible. She states that, for example, the Swedish Red Cross had arrived to Nepal within two to three days.

Mrs Jonsson Strömberg states that the initial response was to supply medical knowledge and services to the search and rescue teams as well as to supply disaster relief such as food, clean water and shelter. The Red Cross utilised their local presence relatively quickly and in an effort to get information about the status of different districts and areas they sent out local volunteers to

do observations and report back. Mrs Jonsson Strömberg says that initially the Red Cross concluded that 14 of the districts in the country were very badly affected and that they would focus their aid efforts there. When the authors asked about how the contact had worked with local governments, Mrs Jonsson Strömberg stated that they had not experienced any greater problems in the contacts with them and that the local branches of the Red Cross had had a long relationship with the local governments, but concluding that there is always room for organisational and managerial improvements in order to enhance efficiency.

The first goal of the Red Cross was to reach 20,000 families within the initial two weeks, then extending this goal to reach 40,000 families within the first month. Mrs Jonsson Strömberg states that there have been many problems in the disaster management and response. The biggest problem has been the airport and the inadequate infrastructure in Nepal. According to her the largest transport aircraft could not land in Kathmandu as the runway was too small, which meant that they had to land in India and then transport the goods from there. This meant great difficulties in getting the needed goods into Nepal and then transported to the areas in need. Besides the airport, she states that other logistical problems were the general conditions of the roads. This was especially the case in rural areas after the earthquake as landslides had ravaged parts of the roads, which meant that it was very hard to reach some of the remote villages. Another issue was the scarcity of helicopters, which could have been used to a greater extent in transportation. Furthermore, the second biggest problem according to Mrs Jonsson Strömberg is the coordination with other organisations, stating that regardless of the UN cluster-coordination, they experience great difficulties. According to her some of the local aid initiatives can be a bit problematic, giving the example that the Red Cross sometimes have arrived to an area only to notice that some local help initiative had been there the day before. She concludes that with better coordination they could have spent their resources more wisely.

## 5. Analysis

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The aim in this study is to shed empirical light on what difference social capital can make after a disaster, and in what way it could be useful to consider in disaster management. The research question is “*How did the trekking and adventure companies participate in the disaster response, and what role did social capital play in this process?*”. To answer the research question, an analysis will be presented below. In order to make a structured analysis and facilitate the comprehensibility, the analysis will be split into the following four parts where the theoretical framework and empirical framework will be cross-examined.

The object of study will be the emergent aid efforts performed by trekking and adventure companies in Nepal after the 2015 Earthquake. The purpose is to (a) explore how the trekking and adventure companies participated in the disaster response, and (b) thereby extend the understanding of if and how social capital can be mobilised in order to mitigate a disaster. The purpose is to shed empirical light on what difference social capital can make after a disaster, and in what way it could be useful to consider in disaster management.

1. The first part of the analysis will focus on disaster management and whether or not our findings here are in line with the literature on the subject. This is important because it lays the foundation for the rest of the analysis. It is also important in fulfilling the purpose of shedding empirical light on, in what way social capital could be useful to consider in disaster management.
2. The aim of the second part of the analysis is to fulfil the first part of the purpose of this study, namely to explore how the trekking and adventure companies participated in the disaster response. It will therefore focus on the exploratory part of the research question, i.e.: *How did the trekking and adventure companies participate in the disaster response*. This will be done by thoroughly outlining the process of the disaster response activities by the key respondents as well as by collocating and contrasting the empirical data.
3. The third part of the analysis aims to fulfil the second part of the purpose of this study, namely to extend the understanding of if and how social capital can be mobilised in order to mitigate a disaster. It will therefore target the explanatory part of the research question, i.e.: *what role did social capital play in this process?*, by again examining the process of disaster response activities by the key respondents, however, this time through the lens of the social capital framework.
4. In the fourth part of the analysis, other factors (important to the disaster response efforts of the key respondents) and rival explanations will be assessed and closely examined in order to strengthen the analysis.

Lastly an analysis of the whole case will be presented as well as a conclusion to the analysis.

## **5.1 Part 1 - Disaster Management**

From the interviews with the key respondents, it can be seen that the efforts of the trekking and adventure companies in this case were mostly centered on the disaster response. This is consistent with the findings from prior research, which states that private sector engagement in disasters to date has mostly been focused on the disaster response and relief efforts (Roeth 2009; Izumi & Shaw, 2015; UNISDR, 2009). However, three of the key respondents expressed that they would also engage in the long-term recovery. One of them, Mr Ram from Mountain Delights, stated that most of the collected contributions would actually be used for long-term recovery, such as repairing the school and health centre. The other two, Nepal Trekking Team and Far Away Adventures, also stated that they would do long-term recovery work. Furthermore, Mountain Delights, Nepal Trekking Team and Far Away Adventures all three had prior cooperation with NGO's that have worked in the affected areas since quite a long time back. This cooperation with a NGO stands in contrast to the report by UNOCHA (2006) which states that the majority of private sector engagement in disaster response and relief takes place independently. Furthermore, Zyck and Kent (2014) state that small and medium sized businesses play an important role as providers of credit which supports the local livelihoods to resume after disasters. Mr Ram at Mountain Delights stated that, besides the focus on long-term recovery, attention will also be given to help the most affected and vulnerable in the village.

As noted by Quarantelli (1988) there are management problems in disaster management, especially concerning the communication and coordination efforts as well as the division of authority and responsibilities. In line with the findings of Quarantelli (1988), Mrs Jonsson Strömberg at the Red Cross and Mr Di Schiena at the UN stresses the problem of coordination. As stated in the empirical findings chapter, Mrs Jonsson Strömberg attest that sometimes they have arrived to areas, thought to be in great need, just to see that some other help initiative had already been there. Mr Schiena at the UN confirms the problems of coordination and is critical towards some actors in the disaster response efforts which do not participate in the coordination system. The statements of Mr Di Schiena and Mrs Jonsson Strömberg also confirm what is previously stated in the theoretical framework, by Kovács and Spens (2007), such as the importance of efficient logistics, adequate information and communication. The statements of Mr Di Schiena and Mrs Jonsson Strömberg also confirm the problems of inadequate infrastructure, with examples such as the clogged airport in Kathmandu and the countless damaged and inferior roads in Nepal. Literature on disaster management, such as Kovács and Spens (2007), states that the information and knowledge of the situation in disasters is very limited, something which all of the respondents in this study confirm is a major problem.

As stated before, Busch and Givens (2013) states that both businesses and governments can benefit from cooperating in public-private partnerships in which they, by sharing information and resources, can improve the disaster management and disaster response efforts. The findings

of this study corroborate that there are potential improvements to be made within disaster management and disaster response from doing so. The key respondents had resources that could have been shared and, for example, improved the work of the international aid agencies. An example of a resource that could have been shared is the use of existing networks of employees the key respondents used to get information. The UN on the other hand, as stated in the interview with Mr Di Schiena, drove around, somewhat randomly in order to research the conditions of different areas. This approach surely was sub-optimal and if there was a way to better make use of these hidden resources, then the disaster response efforts could be improved. As stated by Parakrama (2007), the way the aid sector is funded encourages an over-emphasis of the own organisations work and an understatement of the local aid efforts. This suggests that, on a general level, the efforts of small local businesses are understated. However, to which degree their efforts can be integrated into the other disaster response efforts is something which needs to be further explored.

## **5.2 Part 2 - How did the trekking and adventure companies (key respondents) participate in the disaster response?**

### *5.2.1 The Awareness/collection & Distribution approach*

In order to present a structured answer to the question of how the trekking and adventure companies participated in the disaster response, the following categorisation of their activities have been chosen (1) Awareness/collection and (2) distribution. The rationale behind this categorisation is that these two categories, which are derived from the empirical findings, points to two different parts of the disaster response by the key respondents.

The Awareness/collection category aims to capture the first activities performed by the key respondents companies in order to collect funds. The distribution category, on the other hand, is aimed to capture the second phase of the key respondents participation in the disaster response, namely how the collected funds were transformed into disaster relief material and distributed to people in need. Though the key respondents did not perform these activities identically they followed the same pattern, making this division come naturally. The researchers observed that the Distribution phase was causally related to the Awareness/Collection phase, which meant that the collected amount of money almost directly translated into the amount of aid material that could be distributed.

Table 3 shows the activities performed by the respective company of each key respondent. In the end of this chapter a small summary of the findings from our interviews with the UN and Red Cross will also be presented. The aim is to facilitate the comparability of the findings made from the key respondents to the findings from the UN and Red Cross.

### 5.2.2 The Key Respondents

**Table 3 – Disaster Response Activities**

<b>Key Respondents/ Activities</b>	Mountain Delights	Nepal Earthquake appeal	L&N Treks and expeditions	Nepal Trekking Team	Far Away Adventures
Distributed disaster relief material.	x	x	x	x	x
Used accounts on social media to spread awareness	x	x	x	x	x
Used existing physical capital; cars, transfer accounts etc.	x	x	x	x	x
Used local knowledge and employee network	x	x	x	x	x
Received contributions and/or help from abroad	x	x		x	x
Reached out to old customers online	x	x		x	x
Had an earlier cooperation with a NGO	x	x			x
Planning to continue with long term aid	x	x			x
Collected contributions and relief material, from tourists “on the spot”			x	x	

### 5.2.3 Awareness/collection

The reasons behind engaging in the disaster response varied slightly between the key respondents. However, what they all shared was the realisation that they *could* help. Four out of five key respondents had actively reached out to their social networks online in order to collect funds for the disaster response efforts. For these four respondents most of the collected funds came from former customers. In order to collect this capital they mainly used the email addresses from former customers, once used to send booking confirmations. In the emails they simply described the situation, their efforts and the need for further help and support. Mr Ram and Mr Sapkota both describe how they were a bit surprised of the sheer amount of messages they received from former customers, asking how they could help and how to transfer money.

All of the key respondents used accounts on social media, mainly Facebook, in order to raise awareness about the situation. Mrs Gurung with her Far Away Adventures who started a crowdsourcing fund, collected almost 30,000€ in only a couple of weeks. She started off by promoting it solely on her Facebook page, from which it later spread to friends abroad and, to her surprise, even local and regional newspapers. L.N. treks & Expedition, being the only company not actively reaching out to old customers, instead reached out to their colleagues in TAAN, as well as to the tourists in Pokhara. Nepal Earthquake Appeal had created a type headquarter in Pokhara for their operations, where tourists could come and leave contributions in the form of money as well as disaster relief material. However, Mrs Lama at Nepal Earthquake Appeal state that most of the contributions they received came through them reaching out on social media and to old customers, receiving in total approximately \$10,000-15,000 per day.

So what was the rationale not to ask the customers to contribute to the efforts of the larger organisations such as the Red Cross or UN instead? Both Mrs Lama and Mrs Gurung explain that their first reaction was to recommend their friends abroad to give to these “big players”, however they soon realised that it took much longer time for these organisations to reach the damaged areas. When assessing their own capabilities with their respective company, they both came to the conclusion that they could make a quicker and possibly better contribution on the spot. The biggest rationale being that they and their company could act faster and with greater agility than the large organisations, especially in this first phase after the earthquake. Mountain Delights and Nepal Trekking Team on the other hand both had long relations with organisations in Sweden, therefore recommending the tourists to contribute to these organisations came naturally. For Mr Ram and Mr Sapkota, these Swedish organisations are either mainly or partly focused on their home villages, why one can assume that promoting these organisations also connected with them on a personal level.

#### *5.2.4 Distribution*

When having collected the capital and disaster relief material the second part of the key respondents participation in the disaster response began, namely the phase of distribution. For all key respondents but Mountain Delights, who started distributing before being granted any funds, these two parts of the aid efforts were linked in a causal relationship. These activities then continued alongside each other. When asked how they decided where to distribute the goods, the answers from the key respondents were similar. Using a combination of local connections, employees and official sources, the key respondents tried to get a grasp on where the help was needed the most. The most important source of information, according to the key respondents, was the contact with employees, where many of them had gone home to their villages after the earthquake in order to help. These networks of employees, spread over a vast geographical area, provided the key respondents with crucial information about the conditions of different areas and villages. This proved to be very important as information of the condition of different areas in the aftermath of the earthquake was really scarce. With this information the key respondents could more easily assess the situation and where the needs were the greatest, where to go first as well as the condition of the roads. For all our key respondents it took just a few days before the distribution of disaster relief material had started. Using the information at hand, they purchased much of the most needed goods, such as tarps, rice, cooking oil and lentils. However, as Nepal's infrastructure was badly damaged, the state of the roads ruled out some of the more remote villages who might have needed the help the most.

After the earthquake the demand for these products, especially tarps, skyrocketed and soon became scarce. Mr Ram explains how he tried to "pull every string" in order to come across both tarps and tools, using all his contacts in Kathmandu. In Pokhara the supply was not as strained and Mrs Lama and Mr Adhikari realised that they had an important role in providing material the organisations based in Kathmandu could not.

The actual distribution of goods required vehicles that could handle the bad roads. All our key respondents had company vehicles, normally used to transport the tourists that could be used for this purpose. They also needed people with knowledge of the area, preferably both geographically and personally, in order to secure that the goods would be delivered to the right place.

In order to distribute disaster relief material all of our key respondents registered at the local VDC, a requirement from the local government with the purpose of coordinating and spreading the aid more evenly. Three out of five key respondents were planning on continuing with long term disaster recovery. Mrs Gurung attested to doing so since they had received a surprisingly large amount of contributions and Mr Ram and Mr Sapkota since they had a long-term commitment to their areas in collaboration with the Swedish NGOs. Both Mr Ram's and Mr Sapkota's biggest concerns were that of rebuilding the houses and schools. However, they both also regarded this as an opportunity to "build better" and both of them had had contact with

engineers both in Sweden and Nepal. Mr Ram stated that they had already brought a team of Nepalese construction workers to the village in order to assist in building temporary monsoon proof shelters. Their plan was to use most of the money remaining for building material, tools and construction support. Mrs Lama and Mr Adhikari, on the contrary, looked upon their role as filling the gap before the larger organisation arrived and had started working and helping properly.

### **5.3 Part 3 - What role did social capital play in this process?**

In this third part of the analysis the same process, described in part one will be scrutinized, but this time through the lens of Social Capital. The two categories of activities, “Collection/awareness”, and “Distribution”, will be analysed respectively through the framework of Linking/Bridging and Bonding Capital in accordance to the framework by Szreter & Woolcock (2000). The framework is used to classify different kinds of social capital, where bonding captures close horizontal relations and bridging and linking applies to vertical relations, connecting people with heterogeneous backgrounds and different levels of power. We have chosen to combine Linking and Bridging Capital in our analysis as they share the factor of capturing networks outside of the individual’s immediate proximity, an approach which we share with Aldrich (2015) in his book *Social Capital in Post Disaster Recovery*. The majority of research on social capital have focused on the access to social capital (Lin, 2008), while this analysis will look upon the mobilisation and use of it.

The activities by the key respondents will be further categorised into:

1. Linking/bridging social capital
2. Bonding social capital

In accordance to the theoretical framework presented earlier, social capital is of great importance in times of disaster (Aldrich, 2015). We know that communities with greater social capital, especially bridging and linking social capital, will recover faster than others (ibid.), but what role can social capital play for an actor engaged in the disaster response?

Below the same activities described in the second part of the analysis are presented. This time they are presented according to whether they made the key respondents use their linking/bridging or their bonding social capital. This is followed by an analysis where the role of social capital will be closely examined.

**Table 4 – Categorisation of disaster response activities**

Category of social capital/ Activities	Linking/Bridging social capital	Bonding social capital
Distributed disaster relief material.		x
Used accounts on social media to spread awareness	x	
Used existing physical capital; cars, transfer accounts etc.	N/A	N/A
Used local knowledge and employee network		x
Received contributions and/or help from abroad	x	
Reached out to old customers online	x	
Had an earlier cooperation with a NGO	x	
Planning to continue with long term aid	N/A	N/A
Collected contributions and disaster relief material, from tourists “on the spot”	x	x

### *5.3.1 The Key Respondents*

#### *5.3.1.1 Linking/ Bridging Capital*

All our respondents relatively quickly started using their Linking and Bridging social capital in order to collect funds for the disaster response after the earthquake. In this study the people that were reached out to consisted of both old customers (mainly from western countries) as well as business owners around Nepal, NGO-representatives and governmental officials.

The network the key respondents turned to first was their former customers (i.e. people from other countries with financial capital). By posting on their Facebook pages and emailing old customers they received funds (economic capital) at a surprisingly fast pace according to themselves. Mr Ram and Mr Sapkota told us about customers that had went on a treks with their respective company over ten years ago, now contacting them worrying for "their" specific guide or homestay family, wanting to help and send money. By following the updates on the key respondents respective Facebook pages, or receiving a newsletter every year, the memory of that trip to Nepal never seem to have really faded. This could be seen as an example of social capital that had been maintained, or even appreciated over the years (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Once the disaster hit, this social capital that had been maintained throughout these years, could be mobilised and quickly converted into economic capital.

Social Capital has been described as a "sticky" form of capital, in contradiction to the completely liquid Economic Capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Jones, 2005). Though this might be true for most of the time, this example proved the contrary. Former customers in which most of the key respondents had not invested almost any time or money in years, now gave generous amounts of money to them in order to assist their disaster response efforts. There is a possibility that these contributions would have been given anyway, however to other organisations. Even so, these people chose not to, proving a level of trust for the key respondents and their companies. Mrs Gurung with her crowdfunding collecting 30,000€, Mrs Lama and the Nepal Earthquake Appeal being able to spend 10-15 000\$ per day and Mr Ram with Tuki Nepal generating \$70,000 in only a few weeks are hard empirical data, indicating that social capital may not be as "sticky" as research implies (Bourdieu, 1986; Jones, 2005).

Through their work in the tourism industry the key respondents had made plenty of contacts in and around Nepal, both official and business contacts. Mr Adhikari, being the vice president of TAAN (The Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal), had plenty of contacts in the trekking tourism industry, a bridging capital asset he made sure to use. This social capital, in the form of a social network consisting mainly of other business owners and guides in different parts of the country, provided Mr Adhikari and his disaster response efforts both with economic capital as well as important information. All the key respondents were also used to work closely with the authorities, handling trekking permits and so forth. This facilitated the process of working with the authorities and the VDC's for the disaster related issues, being an example of the key respondents linking social capital being an asset after the earthquake.

### 5.3.1.2. Bonding Capital

The reason to why the key respondents and their companies got involved in the disaster response is explained to be because they felt they could. This capability can refer to the fact that they had many of the assets required in order to help, but it also implies that because they could, they also *should*. As explained by Szreter & Woolcock (2004), this sense of responsibility is a cornerstone of bonding capital, fostered through close relations. All our key respondents knew the country and the rural areas thoroughly, having worked long time in the Nepalese tourism business. In addition three of them were native Nepali people, and the other two married to Nepalis, creating an even closer relationship with the country and with the relatives and their villages. This sense of moral obligation driving the trekker and adventure companies' disaster response is also in line with the findings of Zyck and Kent (2014), claiming this to be the most important factor to why local and regional companies engage in the aid efforts.

From our interviews with the people in the Jyamrung area it became clear how dependent these people were on their relatives and friends, which is in line with the reasoning of Narayan & Woolcock (2000), saying that poor people generally often lack bridging and linking capital instead having to rely on their bonding capital. In times of disaster, when the formal support organisations often fails, these close relationships becomes even more important (Aldrich, 2015). In the case of Jyamrung, Mr Ram and Mountain Delights were looked upon as lifelines, friends who grew up in the village, now capable to help. Mr Ram explains how he was merely expected to help, receiving telephone calls very shortly after the earthquake. Even though he finds this responsibility heavy to carry, he also finds it fair. The reason being that he could and therefore should help.

The same reasoning seems to apply to many of the former tourists now sending money to Nepal. Mr Ram believes that through their treks and adventure trips they now feel personally connected to the people they met and the places they went. This creates a sense of responsibility and reciprocity, resulting in the tourists wanting to give back to the country and people that once accepted them and gave them a good experience. By giving directly to the key respondents, for whom they feel this connection with, their contribution becomes acknowledged and they will also know that the money goes to the people and places where they have been. According to this reasoning, the bonding capital may have resulted in more money being donated to Nepal than if the work of our key respondents had not existed, the option being donating to the bigger organisations. Whether or not the activities of the key respondents increased the total sum of contributions collected for the disaster response and aid efforts could therefore be seen as probable, however, confirming this is beyond the reach of this study.

Furthermore, the bonding capital played an important role by through their social network of employees and local contacts, providing our key respondents with the information needed on where to distribute the disaster relief material.

In summary:

- All the key respondents used their linking and bridging social capital in order to collect funds for the disaster response.
- Many former customers got in contact with our key respondents and donated generous sums, indicating that Social Capital might not be as “sticky” as research implicate.
- The bonding capital with the local communities gave the key respondents a sense of moral obligation to help.
- The bonding capital with the employees was important in order to collect information on the state of different areas.

#### **5.4 Part 4 - Other important factors:**

The analysis presented so far has been aimed to fulfil the research purpose of this study, however, in an attempt to strengthen the findings, the coming part of the analysis will focus on assessing rival explanations. In accordance with the findings from the key respondents, social capital has been important throughout the process of the key respondent’s efforts in the disaster response. However, there might be other factors that have been critical to their efforts. Following this paragraph, two of those possible factors will be examined, namely physical assets and agency/organisation. These factors were chosen as possible important factors on the basis of the key respondent’s answers as well as the findings of Zyck & Kent (2014), Aldrich (2015) and Quarantelli (1988).

##### *5.4.1 Physical Assets*

In the analysis there has been an emphasis on the role of social capital as the factor that enabled the key respondents to engage in the disaster response. One of our findings is that they could not have done so, or at least not as successfully, if they did not have had access to the necessary physical assets as well. Physical assets meaning the modes of transports, i.e. cars and trucks, as well as their offices, other necessary premises for disaster response work and the collection of funds as well as storage of disaster relief materials.

According to Kovács & Spens (2007), the necessary logistics and speed with which disaster relief material can be transported is an important factor in successful disaster management. Zyck and Kent (2014) further state that besides innovative solutions, the greatest contributions of the private sector’s engagement in disaster response is by sharing their capacities, especially in logistics, telecommunications and cash transfers, capacities all the key respondents in this study shared. Besides them utilising their vehicles for transportation of the disaster relief material, they also let up their offices for aid work, made use of their computers, their access to internet and cell phones, as well as used their business accounts for transferring money.

#### 5.4.2. Agency/ an existing organisation

Having taken the physical assets into consideration all of our key respondents also had something else, namely an existing organisation of which they had access to. As stated by Quarantelli (1988), disaster management suffers from coordination and management problem, often stemming from authority issues as well as a difficulty to reach consensus and divide responsibilities. Both Mrs Jonsson Strömberg and Mr Söderberg witnessed these coordination problems when working with the UN Clusters.

The key respondents on the other hand, most often being the CEO of the company, had both the capability and habit of taking decisions and dividing responsibilities. Furthermore, all of the companies of the key respondents were rather small, presumably lessening the coordination needs as a result of their sheer size. This combination makes the local businesses very agile in the disaster response, factors also observed by Zyck and Kent (2014). The statements of Mr Schiena at the UN confirms this statement and points to the opportunity to engage local businesses in the disaster response due to their flexibility and agility.

Aside from the fact that the key respondents were in charge of an organisation and employees, they also succeeded in collecting substantial funds for the disaster response. Besides making use of their social capital to find donors as described in point 5.3.1.1, their personal qualities as “mobilisers” may have played a role. As described by Lin (2001), there is a significant difference between the access to, and the actual mobilisation of social capital. While social capital captures the relations between people, human capital, on the other hand, captures the personal qualities held by the individual (Woolcock, 2002). The key respondents might have had personal traits and qualities, i.e. human capital, making them more likely than others to successfully contact the people needed in order to collect the funds and arrange the disaster response activities. Furthermore Krishna (2001) stresses that good agency is needed in order to utilise and mobilise social capital efficiently, making capable leaders an important factor to consider. The key respondents, being used to work with tourists in an international environment, as well as in contact with local governmental instances, their respective capabilities of mobilising and organising are presumably high and well-practised.

#### 5.4.3 Conclusion to the analysis

To summarise, several factors played an important role in the trekking and adventure companies' disaster response efforts. Which factor that was the most important can be hard to establish, however there is a crucial distinction that can be made between social capital and the other factors.

Our conclusion is that the key respondents, while assessing their organisation, physical assets and social capital, first realised that they could contribute in the disaster response. Then, by combining the use of their existing organisation, their physical assets, agency/human capital as well as their social capital, they were able to actually engage in the disaster response efforts.

However, the three factors mentioned first were mainly important in enabling the key respondents to engage in the disaster response. Social capital on the other hand, in combination with agency, was the factor enabling them to grow their efforts beyond what otherwise would have been possible. This is in line with the statement by Narayan and Woolcock (2000), namely that the (trekking and adventure companies') bonding capital enabled them to *get by*, while it was the bridging and linking capital that made it possible for them to *get ahead*. Their bonding capital, consisting of local knowledge and networks, enabled them to engage, while their linking/and bridging capital, i.e. their extensive social network outside of Nepal, made it possible to collect the funds needed to make a substantial impact. Tangible empirical data from this study to support this statement is the \$10,000-15,000 Nepal Earthquake appeal received and spent every day, the 29,635€ Far Away Adventures collected with their crowd sourcing fund as well as the \$70,000 that Mountain Delights and their NGO were able to collect in the first two weeks after the earthquake.

## 6. Conclusion and discussion

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The purpose of this case study has been to (a) explore how the trekking and adventure companies participated in the disaster response, and (b) thereby extend the understanding of if and how social capital can be mobilised in order to mitigate a disaster. The study has had both an exploratory and explanatory approach, where the aim has been to answer the question: *“How did the trekking and adventure companies participate in the disaster response, and what role did social capital play in this process?”*

The short answer to the exploratory part of the research question is that the trekking and adventure companies mainly participated in the disaster response by providing relief materials to areas which they had some type of connection and which they knew were in need of help. They did so, and were able to do so, because they had access to certain important factors, namely capital through their social networks, as well as access to important factors on the spot. Factors such as local knowledge, connections, an existing organisation, personnel, necessary information and modes of transport. These factors enabled the trekking and adventure companies to engage in the disaster response. The second part of the research question, what role social capital played, had an explanatory purpose. From our findings we have drawn the conclusion that social capital played an important role in enabling the trekking and adventure companies to engage in and expand their engagement in the disaster response. All of the key respondents had actively used their social network and received most of the funding by using it. Furthermore, social capital played an important role by giving access to crucial information as well as in the relation to the local government.

As our study is a qualitative case study, generalisation of our results is difficult. Nevertheless, we still see the opportunity for greater collaboration and integration of the private sector and other stakeholders. This is in line with the reasoning of Izumi & Shaw (2015) and Oglesby & Burke (2012), which state that to increase and improve the involvement of the private sector there is a need for greater collaboration between stakeholders. This could in turn diminish some of the coordination problems, though this is something further research will have to further look into.

By applying the concept of social capital, which has not yet infiltrated disaster research and disaster management to any significant degree, this study makes a contribution by shedding empirical light on the important role social capital played in the disaster response efforts. By analysing their efforts through the framework of Szreter and Woolcock (2000), the analysis shows that while social capital worked as an enabling factor it also worked as the enhancer, providing the key respondents with the funding needed to expand their disaster response efforts.

From the interviews in this study as well as the observations the conclusion that the researchers have made is that these trekking and adventure companies really did help in the disaster response

efforts. Therefore the researchers would like to agree on the statement by Izumi and Shaw (2015) and call for further research on how to best integrate the private sector in disaster response and disaster management.

### **6.1 Implications and suggestions for CSR**

Regardless of the growing recognition of the importance of the private sector in disasters, there is still a lack of knowledge and quantified data regarding their actual impact (Zyck & Kent, 2014). Based on this gap of knowledge, as well as the empirical findings of this study, the researchers believes that the results of this study might be in interest of another field of research as well, namely Corporate Social Responsibility. These findings and implications will be presented in the following sub-chapter.

Corporate Social Responsibility refers to the actions taken by companies in order to benefit someone or something but themselves. There are two basic features to the theoretical concept of CSR, namely that it is manifested in some sort of tangible output and that these outputs or behaviours exceeds the obligatory or regulatory standards set by law. These outputs should be measurable and related to environmental or social activities (Kitzmueller & Shimshack, 2012).

The trekking and adventure companies did not have an obligation by regulation or law to engage in the disaster response. However, they chose to engage anyway, using the assets and capabilities of their companies', which according to the features stated by Kitzmueller and Shimshack (2012) qualifies as corporate social responsibility. The key respondents contributed with so called "in-kind donations", namely goods and services (Whiteman et. al., 2005), such as their vehicles and offices, as well as using their employees as volunteers. Even though these contributions were important, and as stated by Zyck and Kent (2014), in need of further research, the authors also believe the study of their mobilisation of social capital to be a topic for further research. When the key respondents made use of the networks of their company in order to gain funds for disaster relief material, they took CSR without having to use their own economic capital. Besides the hours spent to contact their old customers and update their pages on social media, their, highly unofficial, awareness campaign cannot have been expensive. A suggestion for further research could be to look at the cost and possibilities for local companies to collect funds in times of disaster by making use of their social capital, contrasting the findings to the corresponding data for aid organisations.

In the famous article *Creating shared value* written by Porter and Kramer (2011), it is argued that the future of CSR lies within the capability of the company to leverage on their existing capabilities and resources to create both economic and societal value, concluding that gaining profit and taking CSR are not be looked upon as contradictory but as a possibility to create shared value. When the key respondents used the resource of their social capital and their capability of mobilising it, the collected funds were later used to generate societal value. Since

all the key respondents are trekking and adventure companies, whose profit relies on the tourism, the recovery of Nepal will highly benefit their businesses and in that way generate shared value. Furthermore their efforts might fill a purpose by generating a positive image of the company, serving as a sort of marketing campaign. A suggestion for further research is to look into shared value as a motivator for engaging in the disaster response, both in order to understand the underlying motivations but also as a way of distinguish the incentives needed to further engage the private sector.

Another aspect that has not been investigated in this study is that all the key respondents' companies have at least one outspoken characteristic of a "social company", either from an environmental, poverty reduction or gender aspect. Could social responsibility, already incorporated in the business idea of the companies, be a factor having impact on their reaction and response to the disaster? Furthermore, is there a difference between "social companies" and other companies in situations like this one?

## **6.2 Limitations and contributions**

The most apparent limitation of this study is the difficulty in replicating it, which stems from the specific conditions under which it was conducted. Since the study regard the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, the unique context of this disaster will influence the findings and conclusions, which implicates that applying the results of this case study on other disasters or countries should be made with caution.

In spite of this, the rare opportunity to observe the aid efforts in real-time and conduct the interviews as the disaster response activities were ongoing, leads the researchers to hope that some empirical light has been shed on a subject otherwise very hard to study. The researchers see that this study, however small the scope, can contribute and provide implications to the unexplored field of social capital in disaster response and disaster management, especially in relation to the private sector. The findings also relates to literature on sustainable tourism and CSR, showing an example of how the social capital inhered by tourism companies can be mobilised and proven important in the aftermath of disasters.

If the findings of this study in any way can contribute to the field of disaster management, ultimately aiming to decrease the vulnerability of the people of Nepal and other developing countries, the work put into this study would be worth a thousand fold.

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