



UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN
Department of Administration and Organization Theory

Master's thesis

**The Cluster Approach for Organizing
Emergency Response:**

A case study of Myanmar and Haiti (2008)

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It always seems impossible until it's done.

Nelson Mandela (1918-2013)

Acronyms and abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of Southern Asian Nations
CAP	Common Appeal Process
CC	Cluster Coordinator
CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management
CT	Comité technique de la communauté internationale
CERF	Central Emergency Relief Fund
COU	Cendre d'Opération d'Urgence
DHA	Department of Humanitarian Affairs
DPC	Direction de la Protection Civile
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GACI	Groupe d'Appui del la Coopération Internationale
HAP	Humanitarian Accountability Project
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
IA RTE	Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluation
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICC	Inter-Cluster Coordinator
ICCG	Inter-Cluster Coordination Group
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MERLIN	Medical relief lasting health care
MINUSTAH	UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti
NDPCC	Natural Disaster Preparedness Central Committee
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OCHA	United Nations Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

RC	Resident Coordinator
SCHR	Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response
SNGRD	Systeme National de Gestion des Risques et des Désastres
ToR	Terms of Reference
TCG	Tripartite Core Group
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment & Coordination
UNDRO	United Nations Disaster Relief Organization
UNFP	United Nations Population Fund
UNHABITAT	United Nations Settlements Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USG	Under Secretary General
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
3Ws	Who does What Where

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1. Introduction

The world is experiencing an uptrend in the frequency and intensity of reported natural disasters; over the past three decades, the numbers have dramatically increased with devastating consequences for affected populations and their livelihoods (EMDAT 20.09.2013). Just in the last decade, we have seen examples of extreme weather-related events responsible for destructive natural disasters: 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, 2010 Pakistan floods, 2010 Haiti earthquake, 2013 Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, and more relevant to this research, Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar and the Atlantic hurricane season's impact on Haiti – both in 2008. While the increase in natural disasters may be attributable to improvements in information access and better reporting mechanisms, the scale and intensity of these recent natural disasters is difficult to deny. And while worldwide death tolls from natural disasters appear to be decreasing, a larger share of the world's population is still affected by natural disasters due to rising global populations. Thus, natural disasters can be seen upon as a global problem and of contemporary interest to the well-being of human security.

The sudden onset nature of disasters pose considerable challenges to local and national coordination during the initial emergency response; relief work is often hindered by resource constraints and enormous damages to existing infrastructure, while affected governments face pressure from the international community to receive aid from an immediate flood of NGO's and international agencies. In such cases where natural disasters overwhelm affected governments' response capacities to properly address immediate needs, they may request international humanitarian assistance - whereby the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) serves as the focal UN agency on complex emergencies and natural disasters. The OCHA's "Cluster Approach" groups humanitarian actors (UN and non-UN) to work multilaterally between their respective sectors to organize a coordinated emergency response that mitigates gaps and duplications in the aftermath of disasters. The major structural aspect of the cluster approach entails strengthening coordination through 11 specialized sectors that address humanitarian-related action, in addition to enhancing predictability, accountability and partnerships (HR 1 10.09.2012). Since its first implementation in 2005, the cluster approach has been activated in over 30 countries.

While the cluster approach attempts to standardize international emergency response, there is expected variation in its formal organization and operationalization due to the varying contexts it operates under: contrasting organizational perspectives of members within the cluster system and fluctuations in disaster-response management that accounts for locale and intensity of disaster. This thesis will focus specifically on two cases where the cluster approach has been applied: Myanmar, where Cyclone Nargis struck in 2008, and in Haiti of 2008, which faced the detrimental effects of the Atlantic hurricane and storm season. The empirical focus of this study on the cluster approach will be on specialization, coordination, leadership and accountability. Taking into account the contrasting physical disaster-response challenges between Myanmar and Haiti - in addition to their distinct historical backgrounds - it can be of subsequent interest to study the cluster approach between both crisis contexts in terms of its operationalization and potential impact on the formal organization of the cluster approach itself.

The focus on the cluster approach takes on added value and interest due to the minimal attention found in literature on how to analyze the system structures of emergency response and how to understand them as organizational networks in emergency response operations (Moore & Daniel 2005, Lund 2011). Existing evaluations and reports can indicate that the cluster approach may vary in formal and practice during emergency response (Steets et al. 2010). Lack of strong governance and coordination in a country where disaster occurs can lead to situations where vulnerable people do not receive the basic humanitarian assistance they require. This is exhibited by the broad number of humanitarian-related organizations and actors working in the field of humanitarian assistance in the aftermath of disaster; said parties maintain varying levels of diverse resources (financial and human), specializations, and organizational mandates. As a result, humanitarian relief in a disaster setting may vary from crisis to crisis. Using an organizational theoretical framework, therefore, will help to describe the cluster approach and explain possible variations in specialization, coordination, leadership and accountability in the formal organization and operation of the cluster approach in Myanmar and Haiti.

1.1 Research Question

Based on the theme of this thesis, the research question poses the following:

1) How is the formal cluster approach organized and how does it work in practice after natural disasters in Myanmar and Haiti, with a focus on specialization, coordination, leadership and accountability? 2) How can possible variations in the formal organization of the cluster approach and how it works in practice be explained?

The research question is two-fold and consists of 1) a descriptive part, which will describe how the literature illustrates the cluster approach both in theory and practice, and 2) an explanatory part, which will explain possible variations between theory and practice with respect to cluster coordination in the aftermath of natural disasters in Myanmar and Haiti. The descriptive part of the research question is rested on governance and multi-level governance literature in order to describe the formal organization of the cluster approach with an empirical focus on specialization, coordination, leadership and accountability. Additionally to describe how the cluster approach was realized in Haiti 2008 and Myanmar in 2008.

The explanatory portion of the research question attempts to identify and explain any variations -if they exist- between the formal organization of the cluster approach and its actual implementation in Haiti and Myanmar. Such an observation will attempt to discover if the organizational structure has adapted any features from the crisis context it is operating under. It is expected that variations do exist between how the formal organization of the cluster approach is compared to how it is implemented and realized in practice. Myanmar and Haiti will be used as empirical examples of cluster approach realization and will not be systematically compared. In order to operationalize the research question, the empirical focus is on specialization, coordination, leadership and accountability; given that these are the main elements in the cluster approach.

To answer the explanatory part of the research question, two aspects of organizational theory are applied: instrumental and institutional perspectives. From an instrumental perspective, the cluster approach members are viewed as rational actors - the cluster approach is a means to reach the goals, and change is possible through rational adaption (Christensen et al. 2004). The instrumental perspective may lead to the reasoning that there is a tight coupling between the formal organization of the cluster approach and how it works in practice. On the other

hand, in terms of institutional perspective, three elements prove crucial: the logic of appropriateness, focus on discovering goals, and change is challenging due to historical inefficiency (ibid). In contrast, the institutional perspective may lead to the reasoning that there is a loose coupling of the formal organization and how it is in practice. These aspects of organizational theory will be further discussed in the theoretical framework of chapter 4.

According to King, Keohane and Verba (1994) all research projects in social sciences should answer on two meaningful criteria: “A research project should pose a question that is “important” in the real world...[and] should make a specific contribution to an identifiable scholarly literature by increasing our collective ability to construct verified scientific explanations of some aspect of the world” (:15). There is a research gap on understanding the cluster approach as a network system,”[n]etworks clearly have wide-ranging applications in the humanitarian sector, yet surprisingly little has been written on the strategic development and management of networks with the humanitarian sector in mind” (Ramalingam et al. 2008:1). As it is plausible to believe that organization theory on coordination, specialization, leadership and accountability have not been properly used in order to understand the challenges of managing networks in the humanitarian sector, these variables may help to ensure a better understanding of the challenges facing humanitarian response efforts.

Qualitative case study as a methodological research design with data triangulation is utilized as an appropriate tool in order to answer the research question. In this case, as no organizational theoretical research exists, in order to understand the cluster approach as a network system, data for the qualitative study is based on relevant academic articles and journals, case studies of best practices, cluster approach evaluations, operational guidelines and handbooks, and terms of references, supplemented with interviews of relevant actors and observation at OCHA. It is apparent more research on this field is needed in order to contribute to a better understanding of the cluster approach – an approach based on organizational theory and the core elements in the network relationships of specialization, coordination, leadership and accountability in an international emergency setting. This thesis will, therefore, strive to provide an improved understanding of the cluster approach as a network with a special focus on specialization, coordination, leadership and accountability. The contribution to existing literature may consequently be to offer new casual explanations on possible variations with organizing the cluster approach after a natural disaster using both the instrumental and institutional perspectives in the organizational literature.

1.2 Cluster Approach in Disasters

As clusters in the cluster coordination system are activated in response to a sudden onset emergency or disaster, a central element to this approach is in the nature of the crisis or disaster. What happens to be perceived or defined as a crisis may vary, but examining the diverse meanings of the term ‘crisis,’ there appears to be a common understanding that it includes some form of system failure in organizations, social structures or communities’ norms as a whole (Perry 2007). Boin et al. (2005:2) defines crisis as “a serious threat to the basic structures or the fundamental values and norms of a system, which under time pressure and highly uncertain circumstances necessitates making vital decisions.” Therefore, a crisis poses serious threats to fundamental societal structures and human security. Moreover, large-scale crisis are often trans-boundary, spreading across local organizations and borders. As a result, there are actors from multi-level organizations and sectors coordinating to minimize crisis; we will observe the cluster approach give grounds for coordination across levels – both horizontal and vertical – in the empirical chapter of this thesis.

In this thesis, the attention to crisis is shifted towards situations where crisis has had a deeper societal meaning, and developed into that of a disaster, which will have subsequent immediate impact on governance and coordination. According to Boin et al (2005b:163), simply put, a “disaster is a crisis with a bad ending.” A disaster concerns the outcome of an accident, often involving that of a negative outcome (Boin 2006). Smith (2006) sees a disaster as an outcome of one single factor, often as a process by nature - for example a natural disaster. It is, therefore, not the threat which is the determining factor of a disaster, but the actual outcome of the crisis itself. OCHA’s definition of disaster which usually requires international assistance and coordination of emergency response is “[a] serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society causing widespread , material, economic or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources” (OCHA 1 2006:54). The cluster approach can be implemented in disasters which require large-scale international emergency relief to natural disasters and/or complex emergencies. Complex emergencies are human generated disasters and can be political, internal conflicts or wars; however, as complex emergencies are not of subject to this thesis, it will therefore not be further discussed. Instead, this research will focus attention on natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, droughts, hurricanes, cyclones and landslides.

1.3 Thesis Structure

The remaining structure of this thesis is outlined as follows:

Chapter 2 presents the thematic and empirical context of the cluster approach. The chapter will introduce the background of the cluster approach, role and responsibility of the affected state after a disaster, criteria for activation of the cluster approach and give an empirical introduction of the case studies involving Myanmar and Haiti.

Chapter 3 describes and discusses the methodological design applied for this research paper. The chapter focuses on the use of case study as research design, and will thereupon describe the selection of data elements, in addition to criteria for collecting and analyze data. The chapter will conclude with a discussion on data quality and the possibility of generalization.

Chapter 4 introduces the theoretical framework that will be used in order to describe and analyze the formal organization of the cluster approach and how it works in practice. The focus is on multi-level governance theory with respect to specialization, coordination, leadership and accountability. In order to explain possible variations of variables the instrumental and institutional perspectives are introduced.

Chapter 5 describes the empirical data on the formal organization of the cluster approach, based on the variables specialization, coordination, leadership and accountability.

Chapter 6 presents the empirical data on the cluster approach applied in practice during the aftermath of cyclone Nargis in Myanmar and the hurricane and tropical storm season in Haiti - both occurring in 2008. The chapter will also include a section on common findings of the cluster approach in practice.

Chapter 7 sums up the main findings in the empirical data and theoretical framework. Additionally, the empirical findings will be discussed in the instrumental and institutional perspectives in order to try to explain possible variations.

Chapter 8 firstly discusses the main findings in the thesis and gives an answer to the research question. Secondly, places the findings in the literature on the field. Thirdly, discusses possible theoretical and empirical implications and introduces suggestions for future studies.

2. Context

In order to understand the cluster approach one needs to look at how some of the dimensions may affect how it is organized. In this section, the background of the cluster approach, the role of the affected state, the activation of the clusters, and the case studies of Myanmar and Haiti, will be examined. The first part will describe the background of why the cluster approach was developed. The second part will describe the minimum criteria for emergency response, which may describe the responsibilities of the cluster approach based on a Human Rights perspective in natural disasters. The third part will define the role of the affected state. Defining the role, will also define the role the cluster approach does not take. The fourth part will define what activates the clusters. The fifth and last part will introduce the case studies, Myanmar and Haiti. Since the instrumental and institutional perspectives are the explanatory theoretical frameworks in this thesis, the institutional structures for emergency response in Myanmar and Haiti may have an effect on how the cluster approach was organized.

2.1 Background of the Cluster Approach

Examining the background of the cluster approach is useful to know because we learn how the formal organization came to form based on previous experiences. In the early 1990s efforts were made for the UN agencies to be more cohesive and integrated in emergencies. General Assembly resolution 46/182 (A/RES/46/182) has been called the founding instrument of the UN's humanitarian role – “which tasked the UN system to provide leadership and coordinate efforts to support disaster- and emergency-affected countries” (Kent 2004:219). Four reforms were introduced; the first reform was the creation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), led by an under-secretariat general in New York (A/RES/46/182). The second of these reforms gives ECOSOC an oversight over the policy, budget and management of the large funds and programs. The third reform was to encourage a greater degree of information sharing, joint policy and strategy development, and overall management among the under-secretary generals in charge of political, military and humanitarian functions during complex emergencies.

The fourth and perhaps most interesting innovation in these reforms was the creation of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in 1992. IASC is a coordinating mechanism and is chaired by the UN under-secretary-general for Humanitarian Affairs (Natsios 1995:414-415).

As a part of the 1997 reform of Secretary-General Annan, the DHA was replaced with the Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which had a more streamlined mandate focusing on coordination, advocacy and policy development (Reindorp & Wiles 2001). The UN General Assembly reaffirmed and reinforced the importance of the inter-agency coordination mechanism with the passing of Resolution 48/57, which strengthened the coordination of humanitarian assistance in emergencies (A/RES/48/57). IASC's main objectives are humanitarian dialogue, policy development by giving system-wide policies and humanitarian guidelines for humanitarian operations, advocacy through a platform for the humanitarian community to advocate collectively for common principles and values and lastly, operational discussions and decision-making by articulating crisis-specific strategies (IASC 9 2011).

The IASC is divided into the IASC Principals, the IASC Working Group, IASC Subsidiary Bodies and the IASC Secretariat. The IASC Principals are the heads of the organizations that form the IASC; the IASC Principals are the executive level and the meetings are chaired by the ERC. They meet twice per year, along with ad hoc meetings. The members consist of representatives at the Secretary-level and the Presidential level of the IASC members of humanitarian organizations. The IASC working group consists of emergency directors, directors or senior representatives of the humanitarian organizations and is chaired by the director of OCHA Geneva. The working group meets 3 times per year, and if necessary, has ad-hoc meetings. Essentially, their role is to discuss and identify emerging issues in emergency operations, discuss field mechanisms and tools, and also provide policy support to the Principals on field needs and realities (IASC 9 2011). The subsidiary bodies, such as sub-working groups, address ongoing priority issues depending on the critical needs in the humanitarian community. There was an IASC task team working specifically on the cluster approach up to the end of year 2011. This team was upgraded to an IASC sub-working group in 2011. The sub-working group on the cluster approach provides a forum for the global cluster coordinators to meet and to discuss critical and vital operational issues.

According to Stephenson (2005), there is a lack in the number of institutions that are responsible for humanitarian coordination. Previous emergency relief response can be characterized as a loose juncture, with no leading agency (Stephenson 2005). Organizations were working on different mandates and governance structures, which made it difficult to attain correct facts of the disaster and mistakes easily occurred. This can also be illustrated in

a quote from Evaluation of Humanitarian Coordination by Reindop and Wiles (2001:i): “The United Nations did not respond as a system but rather as a series of separate and largely autonomous agencies. Each had its own institutional dynamics, formulated its own priorities, and moved according to a timetable of its own devising.” In order to improve humanitarian assistance and answer to these challenges, the Humanitarian Reform was introduced in 2005 by key organizations¹. The Humanitarian Reform seeks to improve the effectiveness of emergency response by ensuring predictability, accountability and partnership (One Response 1 22.02.2011). The reform was an ambitious effort by the international humanitarian community to reach more beneficiaries with more comprehensive needs-based relief and protection in a more effective and timely manner (One Response 1 22.02.2011). However, the Humanitarian Reform has been critiqued by NGOs for lacking accountability mechanisms towards affected populations. It has also been criticized for focusing too much on international humanitarian actors and not enough on national and local actors (HRP 2009).

The Humanitarian Reform consists of four pillars: 1) to strengthen coordination and predictable leadership, which has been known as the cluster approach. The cluster approach has been said to be a major innovation, and the most far-reaching article in the reform, though it is not so radical as to create a new UN agency. The cluster approach is intended to improve sectorial coordination at the country level, as well as increasing the effectiveness of emergency response (Holmes 2007:5); 2) to prepare the Emergency Managers of the future by strengthening the Humanitarian Coordinator System. OCHA emphasized the role of the Humanitarian Coordinator for successful emergency response operations (OCHA 7 2006:2). The Humanitarian Reform focuses on the skills and understanding required for the Humanitarian Coordinators through education. To better prepare for future disasters the Humanitarian Coordinators (either they are from the UN or another NGO) are better educated; 3) is an adequate, flexible and predictable humanitarian financing system. One of the most important tools for the Humanitarian Coordinator is the Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF). CERF gives the opportunity for a flexible and predictable financing system, which can be used for a sudden disaster or when an existing crisis is rapidly exacerbated; 4) this element was introduced in 2007. The fourth element was on building partnerships, and on more effective partnership among humanitarian actors. This pillar aims to gather the right

¹ Such as UN agencies, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the NGO community, along with the IASC.

people around the table to discuss and to make vital decisions critical to humanitarian response (OCHA 7 2006).

2.2 Rights and Responsibilities

The rights of the affected population may explain the cluster approach's role and the duty bearer's role. It is the affected government's main responsibility of ensuring the rights of its population, as we will see next in chapter 2.3. The minimum rights of the affected population are founded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The citizens of a state that has signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are entitled to protection as stated in the Declaration in times of natural disaster. It is mainly the affected government and its administration that are the main duty bearers because they are responsible for the protection of the rights of its population (IASC 3 2006:10). Challenges for people affected by natural disasters may include unequal assistance, discrimination in aid, loss of documentation, unsafe or involuntary return or resettlement and issues of property restitution. "Protection is not limited to securing the survival and physical security of those affected by natural disasters" (ibid), therefore the affected government's role is to ensure; a) physical security and integrity rights (e.g protection from assaults), b) necessities of life rights (e.g food, water), c) economic, social and cultural rights (e.g education), and d) civil and political rights (e.g freedom of discrimination) (IASC 3 2006:10-11).

In addition to the humanitarian community perspective, a few standardized initiatives were created in order to draw agreement on some common rules and guidelines in emergency response. One of them is the Code of Conduct; this is a voluntary code that states the standards of behavior (James 2008). Another is the Sphere Project, which is a "multi-organizational effort that developed the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in which organizations commit to qualify and accountability" (James 2008:16). The minimum standards are in five key sectors: water supply and sanitation, nutrition, food aid, shelter and health services. The basic principles in the humanitarian charter are the right to life with dignity, right to receive humanitarian assistance, and protection and security. To ensure that the minimum requirement, such as provision of adequate food, water and sanitation, shelter, clothing and essential health services is given to the people in need, it is pointed out in the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards for the organizations to cooperate (James 2008). Also, a relevant initiative is the Humanitarian Accountability Project (HAP). HAP's

initiative strengthens accountability of organizations to the affected population. Its framework is based on the questions, who is accountable, to whom, for what, how and for which outcome (HAP 2010).

2.3 The Role of the Affected State in Disaster Response

When a disaster strikes, it is each state's responsibility to take care of the victims involved in its territory. In a typical emergency, the affected government and voluntary sector would respond first, and they would be followed by international assistance that had been agreed upon prior (James 2008). The role of the affected state is clearly recognized in international law and key statements. The UN Humanitarian Resolution 46/182 of 1991 states clearly that the affected state has the "primary role in the initiation, organization, coordination, and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory" (A/RES/46/182). The role of the state is also reaffirmed and acknowledged by the Sphere guidelines (The Sphere Project 2011). The affected state is responsible for "calling a crisis and inviting international aid; they provide assistance and protection themselves; they are responsible for monitoring and coordinating external assistance; and they set the regulatory and legal frameworks governing assistance" (Harvey 2009:2). These responsibilities are crucial in initiating and coordinating emergency response. As we will see in the case of Myanmar, the importance of the government's consent to international humanitarian response is vital.

However, when a disaster strikes, a range of international organizations and stakeholders seek to help the affected state. These include governments, the United Nations system, international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement. They also include specialists in the different aspects of humanitarian response, such as search-and-rescue operations. In the aftermath of a disaster, it is the state that calls upon to facilitate the work of the UN and NGOs in implementing humanitarian assistance to the population in need (OCHA 3 2008). It is expected that the international emergency relief workers will respect the sovereignty of the national authority, and that they have a good relationship (Cahill 1999:3). The role of the NGOs is to support the already existing structures in the different phases of response (James 2008).

2.4 Activation of the Clusters

In order to activate the cluster approach, the IASC Principals has listed broad criteria. It was agreed by the IASC Principals that the cluster approach should be implemented in countries where the emergency relief is insufficient or where there are gaps to be filled. There are three criteria, or possible elements that can activate the cluster approach, these are:

- 1) In response to dramatic events or disasters;
- 2) To fill major gaps in humanitarian needs, identified by the agencies and by the hosting Government; and
- 3) By initiative and guidance of the concerned Humanitarian Coordinators/Resident Coordinators (HC/RCs) in consultation with the Country Team members (OCHA 2 2006:6).

In principle, the cluster approach can be activated at the request of any IASC agency (UN as well as non UN) in the field or in the Headquarters of the United Nations.

The decision is made between the local level and the headquarters level and normally a configuration will be proposed at the local level by the RC, it would be unusual that there would be a humanitarian coordinator in place before you have a cluster system in place (Informant 2).

The cluster approach is being implemented in “humanitarian crises which are beyond the scope of any one agency’s mandate and where the needs are of sufficient scale and complexity to justify a multi-sectoral response with the engagement of a wide range of humanitarian actors” (IASC 4 2006:2). The clusters are to work together for a common objective through designated leadership; “[a] cluster is a group of agencies that gather to work together towards common objectives within a particular sector of emergency response” (WHO 2013). The cluster system is complex and includes various sectors of emergency relief, service provisions to peer clusters and crosscutting issues. Also, the cluster approach is bi-level (global and country) which makes it an even more comprehensive and complex structure. However, this will be further described in chapters 5 and 6.

2.5 Presenting the Two Case Studies

Myanmar

Myanmar is the largest country on the mainland of South East Asia². Its population is estimated 51,5 million people (TCG 2008). Historically, Myanmar has been prone to various hazards such as urban fires, floods, storms and others (Recovery Status Report 2008). Prior to the Cyclone Nargis, there was the 2003 earthquake, the 2004 tsunami, and the 2005 and 2006 landslides (Recovery Status Report 2008:1). Myanmar is considered to be among the world's poorest, mostly due to its political and military history of conflict. Also, the government's violations of human rights are regarded by human rights organizations to be the most severe in the world (SNL Myanmar 18.03.2013). Haiti performs particularly poorly, ranking twelfth out of 177 countries in the Failed States Index (Fund for Peace 2008 18.09.2013). Starting from 1962 Myanmar was under military rule, and Myanmar was led to a period that has been characterized by isolation and socialist politics. Myanmar's constitution came into force in 1974 and was suspended following a military coup in 1988. "The country was subsequently ruled by a military junta between 1997 and 2011, as the State Peace and Development Council" (Britannica 2 11.3.2013). National League for Democracy was elected in 1990, but was never acknowledged by the military government (SNL Myanmar 18.03.2013). The country is divided into seven states based on ethnicity. Each of the states mentioned above are subdivided into townships, urban wards and village tracts (Britannica 2 11.3.2013).

The Natural Disaster Preparedness Central Committee (NDPCC), constituted in 2005, is "the main body at the national level responsible for the formulation off policy and the provision on disaster preparedness in the country. The Central Committee is further sub-divided into ten Sub-committees, headed by Senior Ministers and reporting directly to the Central Committee" (Recovery Status Report 2008:4). At the ministerial and departmental levels the extent of involvement will vary depending on each department. "The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is the principal agency that oversees relief operations during an emergency, in particular are its Department of Fire Services and Department of Relief and Resettlement" (Recovery Status Report 2008:5). Also there are institutional arrangements on the sub-national and township levels.

² See Appendix II for a map of Myanmar.

Under the circumstance that a hazardous event occurs, the above mentioned agencies will be responsible for relief and recovery with very little or no external assistance. In the Nargis relief and recovery phase, they have been actively participating in collaboration with their international counterparts (Recovery Status Report 2008:5).

The worst natural disaster Myanmar has experienced was tropical cyclone Nargis that struck on May 2nd and 3rd in 2008. Nargis had a wind speed up to 200 km/h and was accompanied by heavy rain and storm surge in certain areas of Myanmar (Recovery Status Report 2008). The disaster affected five states/regions (Britannica 2 11.3.2013). The tropical cyclone was first formed in the Bay of Bengal and grew to be a category 3 storm (TCG 2008). Nargis made landfall and affected people living in the Ayeyarwady (delta region) and Yangoon (Rangoon) areas, and a total of 50 townships in Myanmar was significantly affected (TCG 2008). The most devastated region was the delta region; an estimated 95% of all the housings were destroyed (OCHA 3 2008). It was projected that 2,4 million people were affected by Nargis, the official number of dead and missing were 130.000 (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010:16). The massive devastation included the destruction of houses, critical infrastructure, water systems, fuel systems and electricity; it also included damages on food stocks (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010:20). “Eleven clusters were activated by the end of June 2009, when they merged into a new coordination mechanism, namely Delta Recovery Groups” (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010:8).

Haiti

Haiti is an island state in the Caribbean³. Haiti received its independence from French rule in the early 19th century. “The country has been checkered by decades of political instability, foreign intervention, dictatorship and exposure to natural disasters” (Binder & Grünewald 2010:13). Over the centuries, economic, political and social difficulties, as well as a history of natural disasters have plagued Haiti with chronic poverty (Britannica 1 11.3.2013). Haiti suffers from weak governance structure, organized crime, and environmental degradation (Binder & Grünewald 2010:7). “According to several indexes measuring states’ fragility, Haiti performs particularly poorly, ranking fourteenth out of 177 countries in the Failed States Index (Fund for Peace 2008 18.09.2013) and 129th of 141 countries according to the Index of State Weakness in the Developing World” (ALNAP 2010:8). The climate is warm and humid

³ See Appendix III for a map of Haiti.

tropical climate⁴, which makes it prone to natural hazards. The southern part of the peninsula is more vulnerable to hurricanes (tropical cyclones), however all parts of the country may be hit. A normal season in the Atlantic sector can include 7-14 tropical storms in the area per year and 4-8 hurricanes per year (NWSCP 20.09.2013).

More than two thirds of Haiti's population lives in the rural areas. "The administration of local governance is carried out in three main divisions. The largest of these are *départements*, which are divided into *arrondissements* and, further, into *communes*. The effectiveness of an *arrondissement*'s administration varies considerably with its location; the closer it is to the *département* capital and the more urban it is, the more likely it is to function effectively as an administrative entity" (Britannica 1 11.3.2013).

The Haitian government is the main actor responsible for coordinating emergency relief efforts. Since 1999 the disaster coordination preparedness and response has been coordinated through a national system for risk and disaster management: Systeme National de Gestion des Risques et des Désastres (SNGRD), which is a permanent secretariat (Binder & Grünewald 2010). This national system consists of 26 both governmental and NGOs and institutions. However, the Ministry of Interior, through the Direction Générale and the Direction de la Protection Civile (DPC) has the final say in policy development, decision-making responsibility, and operational coordination for risk and disaster management (ibid). The centre d'Opération d'Urgence (COU) is responsible for bringing together both members of SNGRD's secretariat and the DPC in a disaster response (Binder & Grünewald 2010:16). However, the national system has weaknesses.

National coordination is often hampered by weak capacities and capabilities as well as conflicting political loyalties, particularly at the municipal level. While some members of the administration are loyal to the national structures, others are loyal to the mayor and his networks (Binder & Grünewald 2010:16).

Coordination among between the national and international actors is by the Groupe d'Appui del la Coopération Internationale (GACI), which is a group within SNGRD. They bring together UN agencies, MINUSTAH, international development agencies, embassies, donors and NGOs (Binder & Grünewald 2010:16). Their mandate is to "coordinate international actors involved in disaster preparedness and response activities, mobilize funds and ensure

⁴ Temperature and climate is different depending on elevation.

technical cooperation” (Binder & Grünewald 2010:16). They also share information, assessments, integrate action plan⁵, and provide reports. The cluster approach was formally introduced in Haiti in 2006-2007, however the clusters were not activated and neither OCHA nor IASC were present until after the sudden onset of the natural disaster.

Haiti is affected by hurricanes and tropical storms year after year, but the combined impact of the tropical storm Fay (15 August. 2008), hurricane Gustav (25 August. 2008), hurricane Hanna (28 August. 2008) and hurricane Ike (4 September. 2008) were enormous. It has been stated that the hurricane season of 2008 was probably the most serious catastrophe in Haiti since the beginning of the 20th century⁶. The disasters impacted nine out of ten regions of Haiti. The tropical storms and hurricanes produced heavy rainfall and winds. The hurricane season of 2008 left hundreds of people dead and tens of thousands homeless. The hardest hit areas were the departments of Sud, Sud-Est, Artibonite (Gonaïves) and the northern coast (Reliefweb 14.09.2009). The city of Gonaïves was isolated for days before the humanitarian organizations managed to get through (IFRC 2008). Numbers from evaluation phase II, Haiti, states “the extreme weather caused over 800 deaths, injuring 548 people and affecting a total of about 800,000 Haitians” (Binder & Grünewald 2010:13). The storms and hurricanes destroyed houses and parts of the country’s infrastructure were either destroyed or damaged.

2.6 Summary of Chapter 2

In this chapter the empirical context of the cluster approach has been presented. The background of the cluster approach gives a deeper understanding of how and why the formal cluster approach was organized. The affected country plays a crucial role in order for the cluster approach to be implemented and is also the main entity responsible in the aftermath of a disaster. The different responsibilities of the affected state, gives a framework for the cluster approach in its organizing. Additionally, the two case studies were introduced by their empirical context. The institutional and cultural context may have an impact on how the cluster approach is working in practice, and may contribute to explain variations in cluster approach implementation.

⁵ Made by the Haitian government in coordination with the UN.

⁶ This excludes the Haiti 2010 earthquake.

3. Methodological Design

A qualitative case study research design with data triangulation has been seen as most appropriate in order to answer this research question. Since the cluster approach has not yet been subject to much research in the academic field, an in-depth knowledge using different data might highlight the features of its organization. This chapter will introduce the methodological design and discuss the opportunities and challenges the methodological design might face. It will also report how the data was collected and processed, the validity, reliability and possibility of generalization will be discussed later in the chapter. First, it will start with case study as a research design.

3.1 Case Study as a Research Design

Gerrings (2004:342) argues that the case study research method is best defined as “an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) unit”, in other words, to generalize across a larger set of units. Yin’s definition from 1989 depicts the explanation and its use, and helps us to understand case studies, but it also distinguishes case study research strategies from other research strategies and might therefore be a more correct definition to use while designing a method for collecting and processing data on the cluster approach.

A case study is an empirical inquiry that; investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple of sources of evidence are used (Yin 1989:23).

This method is relevant since the research question requires an “in-depth” description of the cluster approach and also tries to explain possible variations. This leads to one of the strengths by using case study research methods because it is more useful for forming descriptive inferences⁷ (Gerrings 2004:346). Some advantages are the case studies’ accessibility, the possibility to see through the researcher’s eyes, and lastly it will decrease the defensiveness and resistance to learning (Donmoyer 2004:61-65). It allows the researcher to deal with a full variety of evidence – documents, artifacts, interviews and observations. This openness of data triangulation allows going in depth and answering the descriptive and explanatory factor of

⁷ Descriptive inference is defined by King, Keohane and Verba (1994) as “the process of understanding an unobserved phenomenon on the basis of a set of observation” (:55).

the research question. The descriptive factor is -how- how to describe the formal cluster approach organization and how it works in practice in the aftermath of natural disasters. The research question will then satisfy Yin's explanation dimension. In order to answer the research question, it's been decided to examine two natural disasters in depth where the cluster approach was implemented, Myanmar and Haiti. Both were struck by a natural disaster in 2008. The cluster approach's functionality is dependent on how it operates in the context of a disaster, therefore it is necessary to study the cluster approach in its context because we then get context-dependent knowledge. Flyvbjerg (2006:223) argues that case study research is especially well suited to produce this type of context-dependent knowledge.

3.2 Selection Process: Case

In order to see how the cluster approach is in practice, more than a single case must be studied and to make the study more robust. The research question is answered by using two cases in order to draw some kind of conclusion about how the cluster approach is used in practice during times of natural disaster. The two cases allow the researcher to go into depth in each case, but also allow the researcher to say something general about the cluster approach and how it is functions. If something works similar in both cases it might be applicable to all natural disaster response. Additionally, choosing two case studies allow looking for possible variations and seeing what is unique in the cluster approach.

Choosing two case studies opens up a possibility of comparative case study research. In comparative case study research designs where there are few country units, the focus tends to be on similarities and differences among the countries in order to uncover what is common to each country (Landmann 2003:29). There are two system designs: most similar system designs (MSSD) and most different system designs (MDSD) (ibid). MSSD identifies "key features that are different among similar countries and which account for the observed political outcome" (Landmann 2003:29). On the other hand, MDSD identifies similar key explanatory factors among countries that do not share the same features (ibid). Such a categorizing comparative case study design is useful when the comparison is being done systematically. This thesis' research design may be seen as a hybrid between the MSSD and the MDSD as will be shown in the selection of the two case study countries.

The selection strategy for the two cases were based on 7 criteria, which were 1) implementation of the cluster approach due to a natural disaster; 2) availability of information, extensive evaluations and reports; 3) both are the same type of disaster – both are natural disasters, which makes it easier to draw similarities in both cases; 4) same year, which means the cluster approach is in the same “stage of development”; 5) different institutional and historical context; 6) geographical spread – the disasters are in two different countries; 7) are not a part of a pilot-project of the cluster approach. When the cluster approach was implemented in 2005 there were few guides or handbooks on the cluster approach; this led to challenges in the implementation of the cluster approach in some countries. Therefore, choosing a pilot country could thus created challenges for any comparisons and generalizations.

There were multiple natural disasters to choose from. Based on the cluster evaluation phase II⁸, the criteria lead to two natural disasters: Haiti and Myanmar. Both cases meet all the criteria above. The availability of information has been extensive with evaluations, reports and articles, which can either verify or falsify data. Both Myanmar and Haiti have had the cluster approach implemented due to a massive natural disaster, which can highlight the various features of the organization of emergency relief in a hard hit disaster area. The natural disasters also happened the same year, therefore the criteria for being in the same development stage has been met. The countries have different institutional and historical context, they are spread over two different continents and they were not a part of a pilot program for the cluster approach. As we see from the selection of Myanmar and Haiti, they both have similar features of being a developing country that was faced with an enormous sudden natural disaster where the cluster approach was implemented. This meets the criteria for MSSD. On the other hand they have different cultural and institutional compounds and are coming from different geographical region of the world, which meet the criteria for MDSD. The selection of case studies may therefore be a hybrid between the MSSD and the MDSD.

However, even though the case study selection is a hybrid of MSSD and MDSD, in analyzing the cluster approach in practice in Myanmar and Haiti, a systematical comparison is not intended. The intention is to highlight the specific features of the different countries and to

⁸ Cluster approach evaluation phase II (2010) focuses on the outcomes that is generated by the cluster approach in five countries: Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Myanmar, occupied Palestinian territory and Uganda. Additionally there is a synthesis report.

highlight the scope of the cluster approach in a specific disaster context under scrutiny. Myanmar and Haiti will therefore be used as examples in the variables for how the cluster approach is working in practice, rather than a strict systematic comparison of the two countries.

3.3 Multiple Sources of Evidence

Data triangulation may increase the validity and reliability since it can address a broader range of issues in order to answer the research question, which could be both historical and behavioral. Data triangulation may also allow the researcher in either contributing new data or verifying or falsifying already existing data. The collected data is complementing and strengthening each other, however all data may have weaknesses. All data that has been collected will be presented: documentation, interviews and observation.

3.3.1 Documents

The main documents that have been used are evaluations, reports, handbooks, administrative documents and guidelines. In addition web sites such as un.org, unocha.org, reliefweb.org, have been extensively used in order to extract general information about the cluster approach. The documents will be complemented with interviews and observation. Some strengths for using documents as a source of evidence are stability and they cover a broad range of topics. These characteristics speak in favor of using document analysis and qualitative methods. The documents in this thesis can be frequently reviewed. They contain a lot of detailed information and references and they can allow the reader to see through the “eyes” of the researcher. The guidelines and handbooks are official UN documents and give exact and official description of the cluster approach, what the rules, expectations and goals are. Using documents as a main source also include risks such as the need to be read with a critical point of view, e.g retrievability, biased selectivity (if collection is incomplete), reporting bias (unknown bias), and access to documents (Yin 2009:102). What’s important while reviewing any document is that the researcher understands the document and its purpose. All the documents that have been used in this thesis have been written with another purpose than the research question in this thesis. Most of the guidelines and handbooks that are used describing the formal organizations of the cluster approach are dating from 2005 and 2006, however there are a few handbooks dated from 2010, this is in the cases where the content did not have

any direct consequence for how the cluster approach is in practice, rather give a general description of the cluster organization. There is also a risk that the documents that have been selected are not the best documents to represent the cluster approach, or that the information in the given documents are incorrect. However, data triangulation will help minimize risks since it can either disprove or verify information. In addition to documents, reports and evaluations both from the UN and non-UN actors have been used in order to support or not support the main empirical data.

Selection and Analytic Process: Documents

In order to systematize the data collection, it was set some criteria for the collection. The criteria were; (1) description of the cluster approach; (2) its purpose, function and implementation; (3) specialization, coordination, leadership and accountability in the cluster approach; (4) emergency relief operations in Myanmar and Haiti 2008; (5) institutional background for emergency response in both Myanmar and Haiti (2008).

Prior to field observation, documents were collected by using internet; the documents were collected mainly through un.org, reliefweb.org, unocha.org, google scholar, google search, the affected state's official websites and using main humanitarian actors' web sites, such as The international Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent website: ifrc.org. There are risks in using the internet as a research source. The internet may give invaluable data, but if the researcher is aware of this, the internet can provide information to be conducted as convenient. The main meta data search words were: cluster approach, emergency relief operations cyclone Nargis 2008, emergency relief operations Haiti tropical storm 2008, Haiti hurricane 2008, UNOCHA Haiti, UNOCHA Myanmar, and cluster approach guidelines. These searches gave mixed result; searching for the cluster approach led mostly to UN web sites, while searching for Cyclone Nargis gave a varied list of results with different NGO's reports, UN websites, articles, news, etc. The UN has a web page for minute meetings, proposals and reports from meetings. Internal records were not available to the public it is therefore not used as information in this thesis. Additional data that has been collected includes archival records that are official documents from the UN web pages: this includes survey data, public use files, organizational records, maps and charts of the geographical place. All the data has been collected and is available on the UN web pages. The five criteria

that were set were helpful in systematizing, categorizing and minimizing the search on the Internet.

Documents were, in addition to the internet, collected at the UN headquarter New York in 2012. As an intern for OCHA in New York, the researcher had access to internal reports, evaluations, guidelines, reference guides, and manuals, in addition to access to summaries of meetings, meeting documents of principals and working group. These helped for a greater understanding of the cluster approach, however, only official documents have been used in this thesis. Also, being an intern for the OCHA, the researcher had access to the UN library, IASC library, UN bookshop, UN and OCHA internal web sites and intranet and e-mail correspondence on UN.org's e-mail. These documents would be harder to obtain standing outside of the UN system. In total there was a massive amount of collected data, which needed to be categorized and systematized in order to answer the research question. The data was categorized and systematized according to the theoretical framework in chapter 4, and the empirical data will be presented in two chapters. The first chapter will present the formal organization of the cluster approach and the second chapter will discuss how the cluster approach operated in practice in Myanmar and Haiti.

Evaluation as Data Material

Cluster approach evaluation phase II, which took place in 2010, was based on the cluster evaluation in 2007. To understand the evaluations in 2010, it is necessary to know some facts about the evaluation in 2007. When IASC initiated the cluster approach in 2005, an evaluation was commissioned after two years to see if the cluster approach had led to “any measurable improvements in the capacity, coverage and predictability of humanitarian response” (Stoddard et al 2007:1). The evaluation was based on field research in countries where the cluster approach was implemented: Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and Uganda. The progress of the clusters was uneven across the countries, but data showed that the clusters did in some cases improve the coordination of humanitarian response. In most of the cases the clusters did improve in the field with little or no support from the global clusters. The main findings on leadership and accountability were that the cluster approach did help to foster a stronger and more predictable leadership over sectors. The lead agencies were attentive to the needs of the entire sector. But there was no observable increase in ultimate accountability over sectors. When a cluster performed poorly or failed to add value, this was generally due to weak leadership. The engagement of the host states was

mixed “and overall has suffered from insufficient emphasis and strategic focus” (Stoddard et al 2007:2).

By using evaluations as the data for case study research, it is important to acknowledge evaluations as an ideological tool. Giving the attention to discuss the political dimensions of the policy analysis may improve the external validity and reliability. According to Palumbo (1987), politics and evaluation are closely related to each other. Evaluators have a great impact on the analysis being made. Evaluation is defined by a four-part definition by Lincoln and Guba (1986:8, see in Palumbo 1987:15). The evaluations are used to determine congruence between performance and objectives, to obtain information on decision alternatives, to compare effects with needs, and lastly, “critically describing and appraising an evaluation through connoisseurship” (Palumbo 1987:15).

The evaluators are to understand how to improve the program that is being evaluated. At the same time they are to find facts and knowledge about the program, even if they are negative. “...value-neutral research is not possible nor desirable. Values inevitably are a part of any evaluation” (Palumbo 1987:32). This means that the evaluators will bring with them values, while it is the decision makers who decide the goal, which dimensions to evaluate in the program and what indicators they want to find out. Evaluation is an important tool and a routine function for OCHA, both in learning and in key management. The main functions of evaluation are to evaluate efficiency, appropriateness, relevance, value-added, effectiveness, impact of OCHA’s services in humanitarian intervention, as well as to document lessons learned in the humanitarian coordination. This may, according to OCHA, lead to a greater institutional learning and knowledge sharing, and be used as a tool to provide accountability in humanitarian coordination to enhance the effectiveness in the future. In addition to using evaluation as a tool for assessing its own coordination activities, it also functions as a “direct support to the international humanitarian community through the application of a system-wide and joint evaluation processes at the request of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) or the United Nations General Assembly (OCHA 8 2010).

OCHA’s Evaluation and Studies Section usually manages the evaluations at OCHA, but are also conducted by external consultants (OCHA 5 10.09.2012). The consultants that are evaluating should not have taken part or been involved in the designing or the implementation

process of the activity being evaluated. In this way the evaluations must be credible, transparent, fair, independent, and public. The evaluations for the cluster approach were an externally mandated evaluation. Evaluations of the cluster approach prior to 2010 have been the Inter-agency real-time evaluation of the cluster approach in the Pakistan Earthquake in 2006 and the cluster approach evaluation 2007, which was been the foundation of the second phase evaluation. Two publications were published prior to the phase II evaluation: Indicators and Inception Report in 2009.

3.3.2 Interview

Interviews have been used as a supplement to documents. Interviews are great as a strategy for collecting case study evidence because it shows the world from the interviewees' perspectives (Kvale & Brinkman 2009:21). For this thesis the 4 interviewees set the cluster approach in a context seen in the view of people working with the cluster approach in the field, OCHA headquarter and Global Public Policy Institute⁹. Well-informed interviewees can provide important insights into specific affairs or events, such as history and identify other sources. The informal interviews are seen here as guided conversations between researcher and interviewee, rather than a structured questionnaire. Two essential tasks during the qualitative interview are to (a) "follow your own line of inquiry, as reflected by your case study protocol, and (b) to ask your actual (conversational) questions in an unbiased manner that also serves the needs of you line of inquiry" (Yin 2009:106).

When using interviews as a source of evidence, there is the risk that the amount of interviews conducted is either too many or not enough both of which would challenge the researcher. Not having enough interviews might make it harder to generalize and to test hypothesis between groups. On the other hand, if there are too many interviews, this might make it harder to conduct an in-depth analysis (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009:129). Standard critic against qualitative interviews is that they are not; "1) scientific; 2) quantitative, they are only qualitative; 3) objective; 4) scientific hypothesis testing; 5) a scientific method; 6) credible; 7) reliable; 8) intersubjective meanings; 9) valid, since interviews are based on subjective impressions; and finally 10) generalizable, there are few people being interviewed" (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009:179). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009:181) answer this critique by the quality

⁹Global Public Policy Institute was together with Urgence réhabilitation développement the evaluation team of the cluster approach evaluation phase II.

and skills of the researcher. Validity of the research will then be based on the researcher's skills to control, problematize and interpret the results theoretically. Also, it is not about the amount of people being interviewed, but the purpose of the study. It is possible to apply some knowledge from one situation to another with the focus on the social science's context and heterogeneity instead of focusing on the universal generalization.

Selection, Interviewing and Analytic Processes

The interviewees were chosen based on their knowledge about the cluster approach, Haiti and Myanmar, and how the cluster approach had been implemented in the different countries. The interviewees were recommended from the IASC and OCHA Secretariat while having informal conversations with people working there. The interviewees were either contacted by e-mail or in person. In total there were 4 scheduled interviews. The interviewees were persons working with Myanmar and Haiti at the desk office in headquarter of OCHA, New York, OCHA field personnel and a person working for Global Public Policy Institute. All interviewees were asked in the beginning of the interview if a recorder could be used during the interview, and they were told that the recording would be deleted after the thesis was finished. All interviewees agreed to be recorded. Recordings from interviews using videoconference on Skype caused some delays in the interview, which might have affected the interview process and the interviewee.

Prior to the interview it was written an interview guide¹⁰ which highlighted the empirical focus. The interviews were held as informal conversations between the interviewer and the interviewee, although the interview guide allowed a structure for the interview process. The questions were open-ended and it was up to the interviewee in how they wanted to respond. Follow up questions were asked when needed. The interview process included risks, such as whether the interviewer had poorly articulated questions (Yin 2009) or whether the follow up questions were unclear. A challenge during the interview process was that the interviews were conducted in English; English is not the first language for the interviewer, nor is it for the interviewees. This might lead to misunderstandings. It was therefore important that the questions that were asked were clear and accurate. Having an interview guide allowed the researcher to write down and prepare the questions prior to the interview, which minimized the risk of inaccurate and irrelevant questions. Another risk is that the interviewee will give

¹⁰ Interview guides are available in; appendix VI for Global Public Policy Institute, appendix VII for OCHA personnel in Myanmar, and appendix VIII for OCHA personnel in Haiti.

answers the interviewer wants to hear (Yin 2009:102) or that the reply does not reflect the real event. A challenge in this study was that the natural disasters in Myanmar and Haiti occurred in 2008, which means that the interviews were conducted 4 years after the disaster occurred and insights were therefore, reflected in time and might have been influenced by events during that period. Also, some of the interviewees in OCHA were not working in OCHA during the disaster, but after, and may therefore not have the specific knowledge, but an overall general knowledge.

One of the interviews took place at the offices in OCHA, New York. The rest of the interviews were held on Skype, either by telephone or videoconference. The program allows the researcher to see the other person on a webcam and allows the researcher to register body language. Skype creates a distance between the interviewer and the interviewee, since they are not able to be in the same room. The interviewees spoke openly and directly. They also responded freely to the questions that were asked. It varied to the extent how deep they would go into some of the issues either because they did not have sufficient knowledge or because they felt that they had already answered the question. The length of the interview varied between 40 minutes and 1 hour and 15 minutes. The length of the interviews had been agreed upon previously. The interviews were done over a period of 2 months and all interviews had been scheduled for the same week, but due to Hurricane Sandy, which struck Haiti in October 2012, the interviews on Haiti needed to be rescheduled. The interviewees were given the chance to ask questions during the interview if there was anything that was unclear with the question or if it was something they wanted to ask. The interviewees were also asked in the end if there was anything they wanted to add that was not asked about during the interview. However, only one responded adding an element regarding the issue between humanitarian aid and development.

After the interviews, the recordings were transcribed; the transcriptions were word by word. The transcription of the interviews minimized the risk of any misinterpretations. The quotes were sent to the interviewees in order for the quotes to either be corrected or proof read before being published. The interviewees had 14 days to comment. All of the quotes were approved for being published with only minor grammatical changes.

3.3.3 Observation

Using observation as a research method provides both opportunities and threats. Observation in OCHA as an intern gave access to an “inside view” and information about closed groups, meetings and organizations. It gave an in-depth understanding of OCHA, the IASC Secretariat, an overview of the cluster approach and how it functions in real life. On the other hand, being a part of the subject you want to study may also include some risks. One relevant risk argued by Yin (2009:102) is “selectivity – broad coverage difficult without a team of observers”. OCHA and IASC Secretariat is divided in two, there is one Secretariat in New York and one in Geneva. Doing observations only in one place might lead to one-sided data, where not all perspectives are being accounted for. Another risk is that the researcher was taking part in what is being studied, which may challenge the “researcher role”. However, the field notes have been written in the “eyes of the researcher” and not as a representative of an organization. Also, the notes have been thoroughly examined in the aftermath of the internship with a critical eye to what has been written and it was selected only relevant and neutral information.

Process Observation

Being an intern from June 2012-December 2012 in the IASC Secretariat in New York gave useful insights on how the OCHA and IASC Secretariat is organized, functions, and insights about how the cluster approach functions. The research question and selection criteria for cases and data collection were formed prior to the internship. The internship has therefore, not affected the choice of research question or criteria for data selection.

The researcher was allowed to observe relevant IASC meetings on global levels, such as Principal meeting (November 2012), Working Group meeting (June 2012) and Sub Working Group meeting on gender (October 2012). The high-level global meetings gave important insights that would be difficult to interpret in any documents. High-level meetings are usually only referred to by action points, and not discussions. It was therefore useful to follow discussions on for example, activation and de-activation of clusters, level of catastrophe, and the concept of accountability. These high-level discussions have been essential in order to fully understand the cluster approach, how it is operating and how it is being discussed and lead on the global level. Along with weekly OCHA and IASC meetings, it was attended Crisis Response Division meetings, Policy Development and Studies Branch meetings and IASC Weekly meetings. By attending these meetings and having informal conversations with the

people working in OCHA, IASC and the IASC humanitarian organizations, the researcher got a good overview, in-depth understanding and useful overall insights on the coordination of emergency relief work. In all meetings there were written field notes. All field notes are raw data have been re-written in order to use them as data in this thesis.

3.4 Data Quality

King, Keohane and Verba (1994:23-27) present five guidelines in improving data quality. The five guidelines will cover both the data validity and data reliability in qualitative data research methods. These guidelines have been used in order to report the data quality in this research. No research methods are without limitations. Addressing the limitations and sharing the process of the research may make future studies on the cluster approach easier.

The first guideline is to “report the process by which the data are generated” (King, Keohane and Verba 1994:23). This chapter has documented all the steps in the collection of data, stated the criteria, interpreted and analyzed the data. This will give the reader an understanding of all the choices that have been made during the research and will increase the chances that if the research is to be duplicated by another researcher, the same results will show. By documenting every step and by presenting the risks and strengths, allows the reader to consider whether any of the information collected was biased in any way.

The second guideline is “in order to better evaluate a theory, collect data on as many of its observative implications as possible” (:24). To improve the data validity, is has been used several different collecting methods such as a variety of documents, conducting interviews and direct observation at the Secretariat of OCHA and IASC in New York. Because the documents that are being collected are secondary data, it is important that the information comes from different sources and that the sources are reliable. This may give the attempt to investigate if major rival statements have been made. The methods that have been used were complementary, also the multiple source of evidence have either validated or disproved collected data. Field observations in Haiti and Myanmar were desirable, but due to resource restraints this could not be carried out. On any future research on the topic, field observations are highly recommended. The evaluations of 2010 are based on numerous field visits to both Haiti and Myanmar where thorough interviews and observations had been executed; the evaluations can therefore be compensation for field observations and field interviews in this

research. In other words, collecting data from many contexts and sources of evidence help improve the certainty of inferences to some degree in this thesis.

The third guideline is to “maximize the validity of our measurements” (King, Keohane & Verba 1994:25:25). Validity refers to measuring what we think we are measuring (ibid). This study has been problem driven, it has employed methods that seemed best for a given problem in order to best answer the research questions at hand. It has tried to a high degree to produce the results or inferences that are valid to the research question in the study, and have tried to not allow unobserved or immeasurable concepts to get in the way during the time of data collection and the analytical process.

The fourth guideline is to “ensure that data-collection methods are reliable” (King, Keohane & Verba 1994:25). This means that if this research was done in the same procedure and using the same methods, the same results would occur. The goal of this study is not to produce a standardized set of results, rather it is to “produce a coherent and illuminating description of and perspective on a situation that is based on and consistent with detailed study of that situation” (Schofield 2004:71). Using the same theory and empirical data would then produce the same results. However, one must take into account that the cluster approach might have changed if there is a long pause in research, if the interviewees’ perceptions change even although the question guide remains the same and if different field data is provided from observing at the UNOCHA and IASC Secretariat.

The last guideline from King, Keohane and Verba (1994) is that “all data and analyses should, insofar as possible, be replicable” (:26). As mentioned earlier, by reporting the study in sufficient detail, it is possible to evaluate all the steps, procedures and methods that have been used. Since replications of a research project assumes that the same data is being used, but in a different time period, the replication may not be perfect. One way to test it is for another researcher to read and interpret the available transcripts and field notes in order to see if the same results are concluded.

To sum up, the validity and reliability of this study has been verified by documenting all the steps in the research process, from thematize to the interpretation of data and verifications and analyzing process. By using multiple sources of evidence, the data can be verified or disproven and the validity may therefore, be increased. Methods have been described,

documented and discussed. The limitations of the study have also been presented. The same results may therefore, be highly likely to be produced again if another researcher at another time conducts the same research. It may therefore, be argued that this study has a high level of validity and reliability.

3.5 Case Study and Generalization

Instead of using case studies as a method of generalization, one can use case studies for stating examples. In this research the relevant question is not whether one can generalize based on a statistical generalization, rather, the purpose is to increase the understanding of a complex structure as the cluster approach, and to understand how it operates in natural disasters and to see how one may explain possible variations. Therefore, one may argue that there will always be a variation in context and situations, and it will change over time. This research is based on an inductive research model, meaning that we are building up a theoretical understanding from the empirical analysis that is being executed (Andersen 1997). Andersen (1997:22) argues that inductive case studies aim to extract a point of the complex coherences without necessarily verifying one case with a similar case. In other words, the cluster approach is not working in a vacuum. For example, it may operate differently depending on the effect of disasters and the institutional environment that the cluster approach works in. There are varieties in empirical observation even though the organizational system and disaster is the same. This will therefore, make it difficult to generalize about all the natural disasters that have utilized the cluster approach. Instead of generalizing about multiple cases, the goal in this study is to use the theory in the field to explain the concepts and the complex relationships and coherences in the cluster approach.

3.6 Summary of Chapter 3

In this chapter the methodology has been presented. The methodological design is a qualitative case study research design. The data consists of official documents, interviews from relevant actors, and observations at the UN headquarter level. The validity and reliability in this methodological design has been found to be of high quality in order to best answer the research question and present elements that the researcher finds relevant to the research question.

4. Theoretical framework

The intention of this chapter is to present a theoretical framework, in order to be able to describe and explain the variation of the phenomenon and the empirical relations. Roness (1997:11-13) defines a theory as a relatively systematic set of notions on the relations between various phenomenon. This chapter will be divided in two: first is the classifying theoretical frame, for which a multi-level governance approach and network governance literature will be utilized. This first-half section of the chapter will also present the four dimensions operating in network governance: specialization, coordination, accountability and leadership. The second part of the chapter will present the explanatory perspectives, consisting of the instrumental and institutional perspectives with following empirical expectations.

4.1 Multi-level Governance

Due to the lack of consensus regarding governance-theory, governance is deemed to imply to a broad context - ranging from the economy, social geography, to politics (Kjær 2004). Rhodes (1997:15) states that governance refers to “self-organizing, inter-organizational networks characterized by interdependence, resource exchange, rules of the game, and significant autonomy from the state.” These networks can be inter-state or inter-organizational (Kjær 2004:3). Further, Sørensen and Torfing (2005), in accordance with Rhodes’ definition (2000:22), defines governance as a designation for a polity, which will increase its fragmentation and differentiation, and therefore will transform into a diversity of public, half-public and private participants and authorities, cooperating across borders.

According to Sørensen and Torfing (2005:15), governance usually has organizations as members; however the borderline between those respective organizations are often dynamic and fluid. Governance may fluctuate depending on the actors involved and the networks’ objectives within their resource constraints. The aforementioned definition of governance by Sørensen and Torfing is exemplified in the description of the cluster approach - both in their formal organization and examination of its actual practice in the cases of Myanmar and Haiti. There are five principle characteristics of governance that can be applied to describe the cluster approach:

First, the heterogeneous networks within governance require stronger coordination mechanisms (Sørensen & Torfing 2005:16). This can either be on a commission or junction which sets the standard for participation and interaction (Strand 2007:305). Second, actors play influential roles through negotiations; such negotiations are characterized by either open or closed power struggles, which will seldom lead to a full agreement, but instead to a “rough consensus” (Sørensen & Torfing 2005:16). Third, the negotiations are taking place within the framework of institutionalized community, whereby regulative, normative, cognitive and imaginary aspects exist (ibid). The regulative aspects can be rules, roles and procedures. The normative aspects include norms, values and normalizing standards. Cognitive aspects can involve social codes and concepts, while imaginary aspects evolve around common identity, visions and narratives. Fourth, the institutionalized governance is believed to be self-regulating - the network will not be steered by a hierarchical structure or by the market (ibid). This degree of centralization within institutional governance is perceived to be a central element in all social systems, indicating that the network has a decision-making centre that provides stability to uphold the network amidst members’ transitions. Fifth, it is decisive that governance will, in the broadest meaning, contribute to guidance in public policy steering (Sørensen & Torfing 2005:17). This is not necessarily on implementing regulations, but contributing to the understanding of problems, values, visions, institutions through concrete suggestions for problem-solving. Networks which are not contributing to the public steering, is according to Sørensen and Torfing (2005:17), not to be seen as governance.

The characteristic of governance theory is that the steering is horizontal; the network actors negotiate through contracts without a clear hierarchical division. While according to Røyseland and Vabo (2008), there is a form of hierarchy in traditional political institutions, that of horizontal governance – through mutual dependency of actors – minimizes the impact of political institutional instruments. In effect, this represent a shifting away from traditional “governing” which typically includes a form of top-down steering and control, and towards “new governance” which involves steering through horizontal networks (Peters 2000). The hierarchical structures have not necessarily disappeared, but rather shifted, in governance practices (Kjær 2004:108). Governance has transferred national steering to a situation where many actors are involved in order to reach a common public goal (Kjær 2004:109). The networks consist of independent actors who are often in horizontal relations with each other. Thereby, it is a broad understanding of a network with stable patterns of social relations between mutually dependent actors, evolving their efforts around a policy problems or/and

policy programs (Kickert, Klijn & Koppenjan 1999:6). Rhodes (1996:658) argues that “[g]overnance as self-organizing networks is as distinct a governing structure as markets and hierarchies. A key challenge for government is to enable these networks and to seek out new forms of co-operations” (Rhodes 1996:666). Rhodes places the concept of governance on equal terms as network steering. Network and hierarchy can therefore co-exist, side-by-side, even overlapping (Kjær 2004).

Multi-level governance is a model where the competences of decision-makers are fragmented and take upon a multilateral approach (Kjær 2004). Peters and Pierre (2005) emphasize that multi-level governance needs to be seen as a supplement to the traditional form of steering, requesting an examination of the possibility for these two to work together. Governance can be a useful instrument to study the interaction between the different levels of organizations, both horizontal and vertical. A focus on the dynamic features of actors horizontally can be useful in the studies of crisis, where rapid organization of multiple parties is required under intense time pressures. Studying multi-level governance includes the relationship between sub-national, national and supranational actors, without the presumption that states are the dominant actors (Kjær 2004:109).

The aforementioned view on multi-level governance includes the relationship between the public and NGOs on the same level – NGO’s operate as lobbying and advocacy groups at the local, as well as the international level, while also operating as contractors and independent service organizations (Belgrad & Nachmias 1997). This is all the more relevant as the number and scale of operations by NGO’s working in disaster areas has continued to increase (Hilhorst 1993). The diversity of NGO’s involved in humanitarian activities is reflective in their broad range of operations – specializations in activities such as food distribution, shelter, water, sanitation, and medical care – from “pure humanitarian” NGOs to development organizations (ibid). How these NGOs are then governed obviously affects their work in the field (Natsios 1995). Most NGO’s are governed by boards and directors from the affected country, which may account for the local culture, history and mandate of the organization – such an approach is believed to better account for needs of the affected population (Ebrahim 2003).

There are numerous advantages of governance in humanitarian-related activities. First, is the ability to identify problems at an early stage and find solutions. Second, to advance political

decisions, since actors in the network can provide important first-hand information and data from the field with direct assessments. Third, to provide a frame for consensus or conflict management. Fourth, governance can contribute to reducing the resistance to implementation by creating a common responsibility for new political measures. Fifth, it can be inclusive of relevant and affected parties, contributing to increasing legitimacy (Sørensen & Torfing 2005 29-30). The main disadvantage, however, is that all the above-mentioned factors need to be present for governance to be well-functioning. While conflict of interest remains a challenge to effective governance, a good and flexible network leadership can reduce these risks (Sørensen & Torfing 2005:30). In order to operationalize governance theory, four operational variables have been selected: specialization, coordination, accountability and leadership. These variables will provide descriptives on how multi-level governance is operating within the cluster approach.

4.2 The Dependent Variables

4.2.1 Specialization

As the organization grows in scale and scope, there will be increasing need for division of responsibilities based on specialization of different tasks. Depending on the specialized areas, the organization may be divided into departments, professions or jurisdictions. Specialization may form the foundation for competence and efficiency in organizations. Absent sectoral specializations in emergency response, operations would be characterized with chaos and inefficiency; additionally, it would prove more difficult to identify gaps and duplications since the coordination process would remain informal and unstructured. The crisis is often in a context where multiple actors are cooperating with various specializations on different levels and where accidents happen within a compressed timeline. Thus, building up a special competence in each field is, according to Hatch (2001), a more efficient way of utilizing resources. In the case of the cluster approach, the representative central actors are UN agencies, governmental organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Horizontal specialization describes how different tasks are divided at one level with the use of organizational structure (Christensen et al 2004: 35). Gulick (1937) states that specialization can be divided into four different principles: task, process, client and place/location. The first principle is task, whereby the division of work will depend on the case and tasks of the issue

at hand. This principle of task may be of particular interest describing cluster specializations, as those specializations are divided based on professions such as health. The second principle is process, where the division of work will depend on the methods or types of process the organization decides upon to achieve the goal. Third is client, involving the gathering of specific groups of the population into one organizational unit in order to obtain a holistic perspective of the organization. Fourth is place/location, where the organizational structure mirrors the territorial divisions of society.

Different forms of specialization and coordination may impact the performance of organizations (Christensen et al. 2004). Specializations lead to the requirement of balanced coordination: too much specialization may hinder effective coordination, while too much coordination may limit productive specializations. The two principles are partly contradictory, and together they form a tension (Christensen & Lægreid 2008). The relation between specialization and coordination may, therefore, lead to a stimulus-response reaction (Bouchhaert, Peters & Verhoest 2010). Thus, different types of specializations require distinct forms of coordination. Effective coordination and good communication are critical elements to evade the danger of specialized units working independently of their own interests, instead of towards that of macro-level common goals. Specialized competency clusters have been one of the key points of the cluster approach. However, the idea of a single purposed cluster, with non –overlapping roles and functions, narrow focus, and self-centered authority, may cause more fragmentation than integration, hindering effective inter-cluster coordination (Christensen, Fimreite & Lægreid 2013) ; such an outcome is also known as the “silo effect,” where entities have adopted an overly narrow approach based on individual goals, lacking attention on cross-cutting issues.

4.2.2 Coordination

Coordination has many synonyms such as cooperation, integration and collaboration (Lægreid et al. 2013). However, a broad definition of coordination implies the process of different units working together towards a common goal. Different units may here refer to persons, organizations or activities, such as cluster meetings discussing common plans and cluster activity implementation. In the humanitarian context - in accordance with the definition above - coordination entails a synchronization of “people or organizations working together towards a common objective” (James 2008:351); moreover, it entails minimizing the duplication of

humanitarian services - whether by filling gaps or preventing overlap - and thereby enabling a more coherent, effective, and efficient response (James 2008: 351-2).

Coordination in the organization theory can be seen as both as a process, such as specific coordination practices, and coordination as a result (Bouchareert, Peters & Verhoest 2010). As crisis may be sudden and on-set, those situations may cause challenges to coordination due to time pressures and required cooperation amongst units that may lack practice in cooperation under normal circumstances. The scale of the crisis will define the number and types of organizations that will eventually contribute. Kettl (2003) argues that during a crisis there will be particular coordinating issues, which requires “contingent coordination” (Kettl 2003). Problems rarely appear in a routine fashion (Kettl 2003:256). Therefore, each incident requires a special tailored response befetting the special needs of the affected population it presents (Kettl 2003:256). One response is through the organizational structure, another is to form an efficient learning system and using those experiences from previous crises for improvements in current response.

There are different components in coordination; the definition implies an interaction between actors/organizations. A way of describing coordination in the cluster approach is to see if it is vertical or horizontal. Inter-organizational coordination “can be achieved by using hierarchical mechanisms, market incentives, contracts, network-like bargaining mechanisms and multi-level governance approaches” (Lægneid et al. 2013:6, Bouchaert, Peters & Verhoest 2010). Vertical coordination is managing units on different administrative levels (Fimreite & Lægneid 2005) and will be based on a hierarchical structure (Christensen & Lægneid 2007); the goals being established in a top-down process. Here, the cluster approach may be seen as centralized, hierarchical and a unified system which is dominated by influential organizations and agencies. Horizontal coordination, on the other hand, is managing different units on the same level (Fimreite & Lægneid 2005); this type of coordination is founded on a governance structure (Christensen & Lægneid 2007). Horizontal coordination often requires a participatory process in order to reach a mutual understanding of the overall common goal.

Both horizontal and vertical coordination can relate to multi-level governance (Fimreite & Lægneid 2005). Multi-level governance may create challenges for coordination, especially in crisis where coordination is crucial. Organizations work under high uncertainty and fast decision-making, where mistakes can lead to worsening of the crisis-at-hand. The

coordination may also vary in intensity, being tight coupled within intense coordination structures, or loosely coupled within less intense coordination structures (Boston & Gill 2011).

There are various mechanisms for coordination such as rules, orders and instructions. Mintzberg (1979) claims that there are five coordinating mechanisms which “seem to explain the fundamental ways in which organizations coordinate their work: mutual adjustment, direct supervision, standardization of work processes, standardization of work outputs, and standardization of worker skills. These should be considered the most basic elements of structure - the glue that holds organizations together” (:3). The key element of Mintzbergs (1979) five coordinating mechanisms is standardization. Here, standardization is applied to examples such as those of goals, results, skills and competence. Bouckaert, Peters and Verhoest (2010) refer to positive and negative coordination. In negative coordination, actors are only concerned with the contract that has been agreed upon. Scharpf (1994) defines negative coordination as minimum steering, or in other words, minimization of conflict. In contrast, positive coordination relates with correlations, rather than minimizing conflicts. Positive coordination is harder to achieve than negative coordination, as actors may have to give up some of their policy goals in order to attain the joint goal (Bouckaert, Peters & Verhoest 2010:20). Coordination is an important element in the cluster approach. Coordination of the humanitarian relief organizations is crucial to optimize the float of resources between the organizations, increase accountability, the effects, and the accountability to the population (Rey 1999, More, Eng & Daniel 2003:305). Challenges among the organizations will mainly be the difference in organizational goals, profession, hierarchy, and in which level the organizations wishes to maximize the self-autonomy in the network (Tierney 1985). In fact, Peters (1998) refers to coordination as “the holy grail” of organizations, as efficient coordination of specialized units has for long been a recurring topic for public organizations.

4.2.3 Leadership

Leadership during a crisis will vary depending on the threat and type of crisis or disaster. Regardless, leadership during such difficulties entails proper disaster response, political guidance and societal management. During a crisis, the population will look upon its leaders, as it's expected of these leaders to lead the population out of the crisis. Good crisis

management, according to Quarantelli (1988,) is that the leaders make tactical decision, which is particularly relevant to the insecurity of the crisis. The biggest problem of a catastrophe is not necessary the victims, but the organizations that face the catastrophe (Quarantelli 1988:46). Dealing with complex issues, such as major disasters, demands multilateral coordination with some type of formal organization in place for networks.

Provan and Kenis (2007:234-236) identifies three “ideal” forms of network governance and management of networks: 1) participant-governed networks, 2) lead organization and 3) network administrative networks. Participant networks is highly decentralized and can also be known as shared participant networks. In such a network, there is interaction and accessibility between every organization within the network; further, this network is self-governed by its network members. The governance can be through formal structures such as regular meetings, designated organizations, or it can even be informally uncoordinated efforts. The governance depends on the commitment and involvement of all members, of which there are typically few participants. The decision making process is collective and the power balance is symmetrical - there is a shared responsibility and accountability in the network.

While participant-governed networks is highly decentralized, the lead organization network is more centralized. Lead organization networks often occurs in vertical relationships, especially when “there is a single powerful, often large, buyer/supplier/funder and several weaker and smaller supplier/buyer/resource recipients firms” (Provan & Kenis 2007:235). However, these lead organization can also occur in horizontal multilateral networks, most often “when one organization has sufficient resources and legitimacy to play a lead role” (:235). In lead organization networks, major activities and key decisions are coordinated by a single participant member. The lead organization is also usually responsible in providing sufficient administration and facilitation of activities in order to reach the network goals. A potential conflict of interest in said networks is that lead organizations may have their own agenda to promote and can unduly influence other members. The role of the lead organization comes from the members themselves, but often there is an asymmetrical power balance in the network. The lead agency network model is also introduced by Boin, Busuioc and Groenleer (2013), which identifies the lead agency network model as one out of two administrative network models in managing trans-boundary crises. This model is often thought to “facilitate a decisive response to large scale disasters as it limits the numbers of actors that have a final say over the use of capacities” (:6).

The third and final governance model of Provan and Kenis (2007) is the network administrative organization (NAO). In this type of governance there is a separate administrative entity to govern, coordinate and sustain the network and its activities. The NAO administrative entity is external; it can be a person or an organization. The network members interact amongst each other and the model is perceived to be highly centralized.

4.2.4 Accountability

Demand for a more efficient and transparent emergency operation is necessary due to increasing frequency and scale of catastrophes, scarce resources, donor competitions and the need for accountability (Beamon & Balzic 2008). Accountability may have many synonyms, and it “often serves as a conceptual umbrella that covers various other distinct concepts, such as transparency, equity, democracy, efficiency, responsiveness, responsibility and integrity” (Bovens 2007:449). Managing network forms of governance encounters problems on clarifying the lines of accountability (Pollitt 2003:72). A dimension that is relevant to the research question is vertical (hierarchical) and horizontal accountability. Vertical accountability refers to where a person or an organization is directly to be held accountable to a superior person/organization for the performance of an activity. Horizontal accountability refers to shared authority in the network, but where one person/organization holds another person/organization accountable for their actions. Horizontal accountability, according to Boston and Gill (2011), can arise in two ways: sole or joint. “Joint working can either be governed by a lead organization that assumes sole accountability for the activity and its results, or governance and accountability can be jointly shared by the participants” (:220).

Accountability in the humanitarian context is “the means through which power is used responsibly. It is a process of taking into account the views of, and being held accountable by, different stakeholders, and primarily the people affected by authority or power” (HAP 2010:1). Additionally, the accountability is three-fold “accountability to the donor (upward accountability), accountability to cluster members (lateral accountability), and accountability to the affected population (downward accountability) (Humphries 2013). The lateral accountability may bear a resemblance to what Boston and Gill (2011) presents as “shared accountabilities” which may cause many problems in joint working arrangements and inter-agency collaborations. There, “the lines of accountability may be unclear. The opportunities

for blame-shifting are increased. Sanctions for poor performance may be difficult to apply” (:213). Confusion of who is responsible may cause challenges, and this may lead to failure in understanding the nature of responsibilities, to distinguish responsibility and blame, and eventually locating blame and applying sanctions (Boston & Gill 2011:222).

Bovens (2007:447) defines accountability as “a relationship between an actor and a forum, in which the actor has an obligation to explain and to justify his or her conduct, the forum, can pose questions and pass judgments, and the actor may face consequences”. Accountability is then a person or organization rendering account to someone else, for his or hers actions. The questions to be asked according to this definition then is who will be held to account to whom, for what and how will they be held accountable, to what standards and with what effect (Boston & Gill 2011).

Bovens (2007:454-5) presents four different questions in similarity with Boston and Gill (2011) which are important to answer when it comes to accountability. The first question is, to *whom* is account to be rendered? This can also relate to the expression, *many eyes*, to account for transparency to many stakeholders. In the first question, Bovens divides into different types of accountabilities, these are: political accountability (elected representatives, political parties, voters, media), legal accountability (courts), administrative accountability (auditors, inspectors and controllers), professional accountability (professional peers) and social accountability (interest groups, charities and other stakeholders). The second question is, *who* should render account? In other words, who are the actors? This can relate to the expression, *many hands*, (Thompson 1980) as there are a broad range of actors in the process. Again, Bovens divides this into different types of accountabilities: corporative accountability (the organization as actor), hierarchical accountability (one for all), collective accountability (all for one) and individual accountability (each for himself). “[T]he problem of many hands often turns the quest for responsibility into a quest for the Holy Grail” (Bovens 1998:4). The third question Bovens asks is, about *what* is account to be rendered? Here, this is the action the actor is responsible for - certain aspects of the actions, financial, procedural, results to name a few.. The fourth and last question is, *why* the actor feels compelled to render account? (Bovens 2007: 454-460).

According to Bovens (2007:451) accountability is a social relation between an actor and a forum. The relationships usually consists of three elements or stages (Bovens 2007:451). The

first stage is that the “actor is obliged to inform the forum about his or her conduct, by providing various sorts of data about the performance of tasks, about outcomes or about procedures” (Bovens 2007:451). The second stage is that “there needs to be a possibility for the forum to interrogate the actor and to question the adequacy of the information or the legitimacy of the conduct (ibid). Lastly, the forum “may pass judgment on the conduct of the actor. It may approve of an annual account, denounce a policy, or publicly condemn the behavior of an official or an agency” (ibid). The possibility of sanctions is embedded as a constitutive element in Bovens’ (2007) definition of accountability. Sanctions or consequences may be formalized such as penalties, fines or disciplinary measures, but also based on unwritten rules (Bovens 2007:452).

Further on, the cluster approach defines not only accountabilities, but also responsibilities. “Accountability is typically external imposed; hence, it usually involves other parties. By contrast, responsibility can be (and often is) internally imposed; it involves a *felt* obligation or duty – generally, but not always, to others” (Boston & Gill 2011:221). Also, responsibility does not imply that a person/organization is answerable for their actions, in other words “... a person can be responsible *for* something, without necessary being responsible *to* anyone for it” (Boston & Gill 2011:221).

4.3 Theoretical Perspectives and Expectations

In order to analyze and explain possible variations between the formal organization of the cluster approach and how it works in practice two theoretical perspectives have been chosen; instrumental and institutional perspective. These theories are not meant to be competitive theories, rather they are meant to give the researcher different “goggles” to view the organization from varying perspectives. This is in order to get a deeper insight and understanding of how the cluster approach is working. Since Myanmar and Haiti will be used as example of the dependent variables on how the cluster approach works in practice, the countries will not be systematically compared. The different theories will capture multiple observations and together they will increase the understanding, rather than if they were used alone (Roness 1997). The instrumental perspective will increase our understanding on the structural use of the cluster approach in emergency response, while the institutional perspective will help us understand how the contextual culture and environment shape and

influence how the cluster approach works in practice. These perspectives will be presented, followed by expectations on what is anticipated to be found in the empirical data.

4.3.1 Instrumental Perspective

Three elements are important in order to describe the instrumental perspective: 1) decisions and actions based upon consequences and results, 2) the view of the organization as a means in order to reach goals, and 3) as possibilities for change through rational adaption (Christensen et al. 2004). The instrumental perspective also includes two variations: hierarchical and negotiations. Goals, means and rationality are central elements in both variations.

In the hierarchical orientation there is a unified structural-instrumental approach on organizations, where the organizations are used as instruments in order to reach certain goals. It is also the organization that promotes members' self-interest by setting behaviors through establishing norms and values (Christensen et al. 2004). Power and authority are centered on leadership with clearly defined structures and roles in place (Christensen et al. 2004). Rationality of the members limits the ability of individuals actions in the organization; the ideal concept of rationality denoting that decisions are being made by the knowing of all factual information, all alternative solutions and subsequent consequences (Christensen et al. 2004, Scott 1998).

In the negotiation orientation, the organization is compiled of different units and positions, whereby those members or organizations have divergent goals and interests. This may lead to negotiations, power struggles and compromises among those actors. As those organizations are heterogeneous, pluralism is a central element. While negotiations may be based on setting goals, this is also dependent on the resources of the organization. The negotiation orientation may be of most interest to analyze the cluster approach. Due to the expectation on describing the cluster approach as a governance structure with respect to negotiations, it may also explain the cluster approach consisting of loose coupled units (the specialized clusters and various organizations) who will negotiate and compromise in order to reach their respective goals.

General Empirical Implications

A general empirical implication of using the hierarchical orientation may be to expect that the formal cluster approach organization and how it operates in practice is tightly coupled. One may anticipate minimal or non-existing variations in how the structure of the cluster approach has been intended to be implemented and how it is actually realized in both Myanmar and Haiti. In social control, it is expected that the cluster leadership is in control of the cluster participants through the formal structures. Thus, there is an expectancy to find insignificant variations between Myanmar and Haiti due to the fact that the context is of less significance.

From a negotiation orientation, it is probable a stronger network coupling exists between the formal organization and how it works in practice. One may expect few variations due to the participants in the networks; however, those variations depend on the relative strengths of the participants where the units will negotiate and compromise in order to reach their goals. The lead agency or the organization with the most resources are likely to be in positions of power.

Specialization

According to Scott (1998), rationality can be created through formalization of the organization. It can be expected that the cluster specializations in the formal organization of the cluster approach is based on rationality - according to the most likely potential needs of the affected population. Even though the formal organizational structure lacks input on how the actual behavior of the members is within an organization, it can still lead us to understand how the tasks are being performed (Christensen et al. 2004:41-42). From this perspective, the goals are set by the leaders of the organization; therefore, it can be anticipated that the cluster approach in practice will be organized by the rationale of the formal organizational structure, in order to best help those in need.

In the negotiation it is anticipated that the formal organization of the cluster approach remains flexible from crisis-to-crisis. From this negotiation perspective, it may also be expected that the specialization in practice will be more fragmented and heterogenic, rather than similar to the formal organization. In that regard, cluster specializations will be based on the coalitions that take place in the cluster approach, grounded on common interests and goals. The specialized clusters will, therefore, be a collective of all organizations that work within a common interest and field topic. This is especially important to bear in mind when it comes to

selecting principles of specialization, as the selection decision will duly impact how the organization operates and impacts their outcome.

Coordination

Coordination in the hierarchical orientation is understood as the various structures, routines and rules within the organization, which can both open and limit decision-making in the organization. Thus, participation in this network will be defined by hierarchy or other formal rules for participations, being highly regulated. Using coordination by hierarchy, one may expect that coordination in the formal organization of the cluster approach will be used as an instrument to reach the organization's goal as a steering mechanism.

From a negotiation orientation, coordination will be dominated by conflict between the cluster members. It will, then be expected to find coalitions among cluster members based on goals and interests, thereby attempting to gain leverage through influencing other members. In order to handle these tensions, there may exist a dominated coalition, compromises or a sequential attention towards goals (Christensen et al. 2004). Therefore, in the formal cluster organizations, it's probable to find decision-making forums to address such tensions or conflicts.

Leadership

The hierarchical orientation focus is on power, authority, and leadership through clear structures and roles (Christensen et al. 2004). This process of decision-making is expected in the formal organization of the cluster approach to be agreed upon, since decisions are based on the organization's goals and by rationality. The leaders in practice are expected to make rational calculations where the cluster members and leaders are aware of the goals with the cluster approach. In cases where there are no plans, routine or rule for any given problem, it is expected that members will have bounded rationality to handle the unpredicted problems.

The negotiation orientation focuses on compromises, coalitions and negotiations between members (Christensen et al. 2004). It can be expected that the process of decision making in the formal organization is fragmented, since self-interest, compromises, and negotiations may be different that the overall goals. The negotiations are, therefore, anticipated to be based on pluralism and heterogeneity, while decisions rely on goals and means. In practice, the relative

strength of the cluster lead in the network will depend on the resources of the cluster members; the lead agency will likely have strong influence in decision-making.

Accountability

The administrative understanding of responsibility is that it is more formalized and controllable, including reporting systematically on how responsibilities are being managed (Christensen et al. 2004:134). From a hierarchical orientation, it can be expected in the formal organization of the cluster approach that accountability is formalized through hierarchy (Bovens 2007) based on routines, rules, and administrative accountability (ibid). Political accountability (Bovens 2007) and the chain of principal-agent relationship might also be of interest; delegation of authority may be utilized as instruments to influence the organizations through rewards or sanctions (Christensen et al. 2004:156), Mitnick 1992). This accountability structure is expected to be tightly coupled to the cluster approach in practice.

As clusters work jointly, it's expected there will be a small degree of control with regard to the negotiating orientation. Where there is an equal in authority and responsibility, it is probable that the formal organization will be formalized on horizontal accountability. In a governance-based organizational structure, a pulverization of accountability (Boston & Gill 2011) may be a challenge since there are many leaders that are involved at the same level, which makes it harder to place responsibility (Christensen et al. 2004). There is expectation that the cluster approach in practice will be tightly coupled to the formal organization of the cluster approach.

4.3.2 Institutional Perspective

There are many variations under the institutionalism perspective; however, they are based on the same notion on the importance of norms, values and rules that makeup the actions of the organization (Christensen et al. 2004). The focus in this study is on the cultural approach rather than on the myth perspective (ibid). In the cultural approach, the concepts of informal norms, values and path-dependency are central (Christensen et al. 2004).

In respect to the instrumental and institutional perspectives, they are distinguished by three main elements: 1) the logic of appropriateness in the decision making process, 2) the focus for the organization on the process of discovering goals, and 3) the challenge to adapt due to

historical inefficiency, being that the institution is non-robust and slow (Christensen et al. 2004). Organizational actions are based on a long process of history, institutional memory and trust that their actions are correct (March & Olsen 2006b); those actions are, therefore, a part of a stable institutional frame where expected behavior and outcome are the “rules of the game.” The norms of previous organizations may have formed a mindset and established a set of expectations for cluster organization.

Nevertheless, institutions do not remain static, they will eventually evolve and reflect to local adaption (March & Olsen 2006a). By using an institutional perspective, the researcher portrays the institutional structures as main components of social and political life (Krasner 1988:67), signifying that the structures of processes have intrinsic value. As the contextual features of a given situation will have a significant effect on institutions, understanding the context will offer new angles to understand continuities and variation when doing cross-country studies: “placing the structuring factors at the center of the analysis, an institutional approach allows the theorists to capture the complexity of real political situation, but not at the expense of theoretical clarity” (Thelen & Steinmo 1992:13).

General Empirical Expectations

A general empirical implication of using the institutional perspective is to expect that the formal cluster approach organization and its realization in practice is loosely coupled. This decoupling between the organization and practice of cluster approach in Myanmar and Haiti by the institutional perspective diverges due to crisis-contextualization. In order to understand how the cluster approach operates in different large-scale disasters, the object of explanation cannot be isolated. Instead, it needs to be looked upon in a holistic context, with much of its complexities intact. Being that the informal processes are significant, the cluster approach constitutes a sum of its members and their experiences, culture, and norms, all of which affects cluster approach operationalization. The historical contexts - especially the emergency relief organizational structures in the Myanmar and Haiti case studies - may then have an impact on the implementation of the cluster approach. “Response to emergencies and humanitarian aid cannot be separated from the historical, economic, ethical, social and political forces that shape society” (James 2008:xxii).

Specialization

In the institutional perspective, the institutions will try to adapt to their existing environment; however, these will not automatically lead to efficiency (March & Olsen 2006a). Depending on the characteristics of institutions, adaptation to the local environment may evolve slowly. In this case, it is expected in the formal organization that cluster specializations are flexible and not overly restricted on the cluster implementation in practice. The members acting in the organization are expected to follow what is the logic of appropriateness (March & Olsen 2006b). Compatibility testing (Brunsson & Olsen 1990) would be anticipated if new cluster specializations are introduced; such testing regards compatibility for organizational culture and identity, in addition to component risks, for relevancy amongst cluster members. In either case, the cluster specializations in practice are expected to vary depending on the crisis context.

Coordination

Cluster coordination in practice is expected to be formed by the institutional environment in which it operates under - namely the existing governments' structure and their emergency response coordination structures. Here, trust and common identities are crucial in coordination from an institutional perspective; this process of coordination is also based on previous experiences, indicating that institutions are path-dependent. Being that members in the organization have different institutional backgrounds, mutual adjustment is expected to be the anticipated reaction (Christensen et al. 2004). The coordination in these formal organization are expected to be loosely coupled units with less intense coordination structures in place, representative more of informal-like information sharing forums (Boston & Gill 2011)

Leadership

On one perspective, the institutional leader is an "expert in the promotion and protection of values" (Selznick 1957:28), taking into account existing traditions and norms. On the other hand, high-level leaders may wield power to influentially shape the organization's cultures and traditions (Selznick 1957). According to Selznick (1957:143) "responsible leadership is a blend of commitment, understanding and determination". It may be expected in formal organization that the leadership is process driven and "infused by values" (Selznick 1957). The cluster approach in practice is expected to have leaders who are committed and fully competent in understanding the cluster approach. These leaders are also expected to represent,

promote and defend internal cluster interests and lead cooperation with other clusters in order to minimize conflicts.

Accountability

An essential element for accountability is trust in leaders; the main institutional and cultural responsibility within the organization rests with leaders (Christensen et al. 2004). This trust is built around the notion that leaders will govern in the most appropriate way, establishing and maintaining relationships with a broad range of constituents. Moreover, leaders are expected to operate with high integrity, resisting undue political pressure in decision-making and avoiding abuse of power or authority. The proper type of leadership should model a culture that promotes and supports a sense of individual responsibility in the cluster approach. In the formal organization of the cluster approach, it is accepted that Bovens' (2007) social and professional accountability will be of subject. Multiple accountabilities (Pollitt 2003:93) may indeed be found in the formal cluster approach organization.

In inter-agency cooperation, "the 'soft factors' are crucial for building trust and performance within the group, as well as for outside legitimacy" (Boston & Gill 2011:239). These soft factors include: framing, initial conditions, power, leadership, path-dependency, and understanding of how key roles are enacted. There is an expectation from an institutional perspective that these factors will be prominent mechanisms for the cluster approach in regards to accountability in practice.

4.4 Summary of Chapter 4

In this chapter, the descriptive and classifying concepts and theories have been indicated. The focus has been on governance and multi-level governance theory. Additionally, the analytical theoretical framework involving instrumental and institutional perspectives has been represented. As the empirical focus is on specialization, coordination, leadership and accountability in the cluster approach - both in the classifying and analytical theoretical framework - it is therefore important to present and discuss these variables within a multi-level governance framework. The empirical data of the cluster approach will be presented in chapter 5 and 6.

5. Formal Organization of the Cluster Approach

The collected elements in this chapter are data that will classify the cluster approach's formal organization. This description will answer the first part of the research question regarding how the formal organization is arranged. Providing this foundation will help to explain how the cluster approach is functioning in places like Myanmar and Haiti. As mentioned in the introduction, the research on cluster approach as a governance structure has been lacking. Describing it thusly may help us understand how the cluster approach will work in practice.

Once the standardized model is established, it will be easier to compare it to the possible variations. The variables of specialization, coordination, leadership and accountability were defined under the theoretical framework in chapter 4. These variables will now be presented as originally intended by the UN in the formal organization of the cluster approach.

5.1 Cluster Specialization

The cluster approach, according to the UN, is intended to substantially strengthen the 'collaborative response' with a predictable response in 11 specific key sectors/areas, in the aftermath of a disaster (OCHA 2 2006). The main factor in strengthening the collaborative response is improving effectiveness and predictability in establishing specialized clusters for key areas in humanitarian response, such as water and sanitation, nutrition, health and emergency shelter (IASC 2 2005). Viewing the cluster specialization in a theoretical framework, the cluster specializations are organized horizontally at each level (global, national and local) (Christensen et al. 2004). This means that the tasks are being divided at one level with the use of organizational structure of the cluster approach. The aim is that the organizations come together and try to make sure that their programs and agendas are complementary and fit well together. When organizations have similar activities, the aim is to make sure that these activities don't duplicate each other's work. Adversely, when gaps are identified, the most likely cluster is appointed to cover it.

The clusters have been divided based on basic human needs, for example food (nutrition cluster) and clean water (water, sanitation and hygiene or WASH cluster). They also consist of service provisions necessary to successfully implement programming, such as emergency

telecommunications and logistics. According to IASC Principal Outcome (2005) the cluster approach will only be implemented when there is a gap in the humanitarian response (IASC 2 2005). Since these gaps vary from crisis to crisis, the cluster approach is intentionally flexible to better meet the identified needs and capacities of the affected population. It's also intended to adjust to already existing coordination structures in the affected country by providing various types of specialization depending on the existing capacity, resources, and needs of the affected country.

The clusters in action can be visualized by the following UN model.

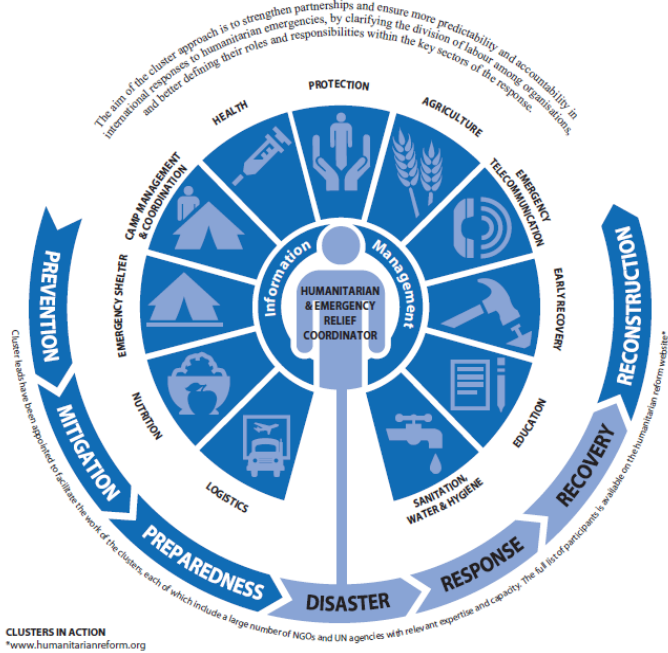


Table 5.1

This model also shows the steps ahead of a disaster: prevention, mitigation and preparedness. However, the cluster approach is implemented only after a disaster has been declared. They are then deactivated when the emergency phase is over and the disaster enters a recovery and reconstruction phase. These steps will therefore not be discussed in this thesis. The steps of greater importance for the research question are disaster and response. This model also highlights the importance of the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) and the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) as the cluster approach initiators and coordinators of all the cluster specializations. The model emphasizes the central role that the HC and ERC play in managing information across all the specializations.

In total there are 11 clusters that can be implemented: logistics, nutrition, emergency shelter, camp management and coordination, health, protection, agriculture, emergency telecommunication, early recovery, education and WASH. The two service clusters, emergency telecommunications and logistics, differ from the other clusters in the sense that they only provide services to the agencies and organizations in the “peer” clusters and do not provide service to the affected population; neither do they act as “provider of last resort” (Steets et al. 2010). The concept of “provider of last resort” will be further explained in section 5.4. Each cluster specialization consists of a network of relevant specialized organizations. These organizations may be UN or non-UN, humanitarian organizations, global, local or international NGOs or governmental organizations which are specialized in the specific specialization. These may be for example The Red Cross, FAO, UNHCR, IASC members and the national government. It will vary how many organizations that are involved in the cluster specialization.

5.2 Cluster Coordination

The UN stresses that in a sudden onset emergency, the needs of the affected population are overwhelming. With infrastructure and communication often destroyed, many organizations want to help the affected local governmental institutions. With all these players getting involved, giving the right humanitarian assistance at the right time can be difficult to ensure. Coordination is emphasized as one of the most crucial elements in emergency response, as seen in the way in which it is defined by the United Nations Disaster Assessment Coordination (UNDAC) Handbook. Coordination may be defined as

intentional actions to harmonize individual responses to maximize impact and achieve synergy – a situation where the overall effect is greater than the sum of the parts. There can be a little coordination or a lot of coordination and, for the most part, the more coordination – the better (UNDAC 2006:1).

This definition also gives an implication on what the UN proposes to be poor coordination, namely gaps and duplications in the emergency response, inappropriate assistance and ineffective use of resources among others (UNDAC 2006:2). The definition highlights working relationships and sharing of information as good coordination mechanisms. OCHA also has a set of what they call principles to be followed in the coordination. The coordination process according to OCHA needs to be: participatory, impartial, transparent and useful. In

the cluster approach there are many stakeholders. These stakeholders range from the Emergency Relief Coordinator, OCHA, IASC, Humanitarian and Regional Coordinator, Humanitarian Country team and more.

In order to understand the complexity and the comprehensiveness of the cluster approach system, the main stakeholders will be briefly introduced. First, the coordination architecture in the cluster approach will be visualized with a model made by the UN, humanitarian response web page (HR 2 4.9.2013).

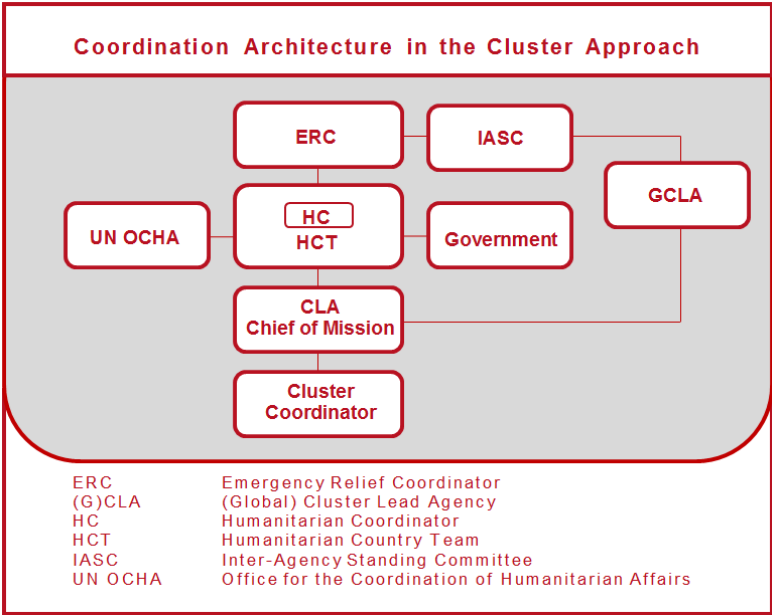


Table 5.2

The model represents the global and country level of the cluster approach. The 11 cluster specializations will be organized on local and national levels under the cluster lead agencies and cluster coordinator. This model does not show the inter-cluster coordination, which is formally led by the Humanitarian Coordinator and the Humanitarian Country Team. The inter-cluster coordination is managed on the same level (horizontal). The horizontal and vertical levels of cluster coordination, including the cluster specializations, may be seen in Appendix I. The organizational chart of the cluster approach at country level (made by the researcher) shows how the cluster specializations are connected to each other horizontally, and how the cluster specializations are connected vertically with the cluster leadership through the HC/RC.

5.2.1 The Emergency Relief Coordinator

The Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) is responsible for the overall humanitarian assistance that is required by the UN in a disaster through his/her role as the Under Secretary General of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and chair of the IASC principals (UN Department of Public Information 2008). He/she plays a vital role in the decision of the activation of the cluster approach. Also, the ERC may appoint a Humanitarian Coordinator in a new disaster which will be further discussed in section 5.2.4. The ERC is the primary interface between the larger humanitarian community and the principle organs of the UN, such as the General Assembly and the Security Council. Likewise, the ERC is also the interface between the UN and non-UN humanitarian community members through the IASC (ibid). The ERC processes Member states' requests for emergency assistance and mobilizes emergency relief capacities (ibid). They can even initiate the cluster approach in disasters that fit the criteria. Finally the ERC conducts pooling and analysis of early-warning information and joint inter-agency needs assessments to facilitate negotiations on access for aid delivery (ibid).

5.2.2 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

OCHA acts as a secretariat headed by the ERC that provides expert advice on emergency response. OCHA's role is to ensure that "there is a coherent framework within which everyone can contribute promptly and effectively to the overall effort" (UN Department of Public Information 2008:267). OCHA staff in the field supports the RC, or HC in some cases, in the affected country—not the individual clusters. OCHA can deploy response and coordination specialists hours after a devastating natural disaster. The mandate of OCHA in natural disasters is to mobilize, direct and coordinate the international assistance and it operates through a network of regional and field offices, the HC, and the Humanitarian Country Team (ibid). To support the HC/RC in a disaster setting, OCHA establishes an OCHA field or regional office. The support is mainly in four key areas: "coordination, information management, advocacy and resource mobilization, and policy development" (FAO 2010:16). OCHA provides coordination of activities in the affected country and undertakes consultations with member states and members of the IASC, linking the field and the UN headquarter while determining the priorities for action (ibid). OCHA's dual headquarters are based in New York and Geneva; however, OCHA is also represented with 35 different offices around the world.

	OCHA in Field
Number of Members	300 organizations
Open or Closed Membership	Closed, by invitation only
Mission Focus	Preparedness, information management
Degree of Autonomy	Low
Organizational Level	Field (operational)
Governance Model	Consensus

Table 5.3 from Saab et al (2008:479)

Saab et al.'s research shows that in 2008 the humanitarian community consists of 300 organizations in the field. However, reports and evaluations confirm that the number of international and national humanitarian organizations working in the field is increasing. It is also stated that this is a closed membership, meaning that the agencies wishing to work in the clusters consists of invited organizations only. Although, reports and interviews conflict with this study's conclusion that the local humanitarian community has been invited to decision making and information sharing platform forums. Still, this opposing evidence is on the operational level. At the strategic global level, the members of the decision making forums regarding humanitarian affairs are selected/invited by the IASC.

5.2.3 Inter-Agency Standing Committee

On the global level the IASC is the only decision making forum that includes UN agencies, the World Bank, IOM, ICRC, IFRC and NGOs. The humanitarian community in the field usually consists of IASC members, and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) is often referred to as IASC Humanitarian Country Team. In other words, "IASC includes many of the largest humanitarian organizations that account for the majority of humanitarian assistance distributed". The UN resolution, which created the IASC, states that all members must be organizations that operate in disaster affected areas (A/RES/46/182). Members are divided between "Full Members¹¹" and "Standing Invitees¹²" status. "The IASC's overall objective is

¹¹ The full members are as follow: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFP), United Nations Settlements Programme (UNHABITAT), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP) and World Health Organization (WHO).

¹² The Standing Invitees include the follow: International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), InterAction, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Office of the High Commissioner for

inclusive coordination, while maintaining a relatively limited number of "members" to ensure functionality and focus" (OOM IASC 2011:1). This is being done by coordinating activities, sharing resources and sharing best practices. Members of the IASC "use the forum to agree on system-wide policies to achieve a better overall response while respecting organizations' individual mandates" (OOM IASC 2011:1). They also "develop humanitarian policies, agree on a clear division of responsibility for the various aspects of humanitarian assistance, identify and address gaps in response, and advocates for effective application of humanitarian principles" (UN Department of Public Information 2008:268).

At the field level the IASC members are represented in Humanitarian Country Teams, which will be introduced in the next paragraph. In the field the IASC plays a key role in:

[P]reventing gaps and duplications in humanitarian response, with real-time evaluations and feedback mechanisms to improve the quality of assistance. Important decisions made by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, such as the designation of Humanitarian Coordinators or the activation of clusters, are made in consultation with the IASC. Trust between IASC organizations is key to the success of the humanitarian enterprise (OOM IASC 2011:2).

5.2.4 HC /RC and Humanitarian Country Team

The Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) /Resident Coordinator (RC) is designated as a representative of the Secretary General and the ERC (IASC 6 2009). The functions and responsibilities of the RC and HC are different, but they are often carried out by one office or person. The RC/HC is appointed when a country has been affected by a disaster or a conflict (IASC 6 2009). The RC/HC is usually the most senior United Nations official present in the country. In most of the cases the RC is a representative of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). His/hers responsibilities are to: coordinate the humanitarian effort of all the UN agencies, facilitate communication and cooperation between the UN and other humanitarian agencies, and, coordinate the overall international humanitarian assistance. The RC is also representing the UN system to the high level government and other liaisons and facilitating inter-agency/political agreements (UNDAC 2006). The RC is therefore accountable to the ERC and gives the ERC the report of state.

It is the HC who is responsible for inter-cluster coordination and the inter-sectoral coherence. In short, the HC ensures that the humanitarian response efforts are well organized in accordance with the affected government. The national authorities are primarily responsible for the national coordination of humanitarian assistance, but the importance of the HC/RCs in assisting with this coordination are stressed by the humanitarian community (OCHA 6 20.09.2013). “If an emergency becomes significant in size and/or complexity, the ERC, in consultation with the UN agencies, may appoint a UN Humanitarian Coordinator (HC)” (UNDAC 2006:9). The RC will be appointed as the HC if he/she has the necessary skills to do so as determined by the ERC. If not, there will either be a new RC appointed to serve both functions, or a separate HC will be appointed to serve alongside the existing RC.

However, when the HC role is combined with that of the Resident Coordinator (double hatting), or in some instances also the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (triple hatting), one individual can have up to three reporting and accountability lines, and hence three jobs (Graves, Wheeler & Martin 2007:2).

The cluster approach can be used also in countries where there is no HC but an RC is coordinating the international response. The HC position will phase out as the emergency or disaster moderates (UNDAC 2006). The HC/RC is additionally responsible for designating cluster leads together with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and the ERC. “HCs lead the HCT in deciding the most appropriate coordination solutions for their country, taking into account the local situation. Agreement must be reached on which Clusters to establish, and which organizations are to lead them” (HR 2 4.9.2013).

The HCT¹³ is chaired and initiated by the HC/RC, and the HCT is meant to be an efficient application of the cluster approach. The HCT is, according to the IASC handbook of RCs and HCs, an “operational decision-making forum composed of operationally relevant humanitarian organizations (both UN and non-UN) and focus[es] on common strategic and policy issues related to humanitarian action in country” (IASC 8 2010:2). Also, designated cluster leads are expected to represent the clusters and their organizations in the HCT. Field coordination has different key functions. The different status and mandates are designated through key representatives. At all levels in the cluster approach the cluster leads are obliged to interact with each other. Together the cluster members are to: “(i) gather and analyze

¹³ The HCT differs from the UN Country Team (UNCT), the UNCT only includes UN members and focus only on development issues.

information on the situation; (ii) agree on the priority problems and risks, objectives, an overall response strategy, standards for assistance, and who will do what where; and (iii) monitor overall progress” (FAO 2010:10). At policy level the cluster lead agency country representatives meet together. The meetings are chaired by the HC, and they have meetings when needed.

5.2.5 Cluster Coordinator

The cluster coordinator (CC) at the country level has been designated by the cluster lead agency at the country level. He/she is responsible for the day to day coordination of the clusters, in addition to, facilitate the work. (One Response 2 20.09.2013, IASC 7 2010) The CC also ensures coordination with other clusters when needed and is in contact with the HCT regarding cluster specific issues, as stated by the following informant:

OCHA should do an inter cluster mechanism regularly. That is basically to identify any gaps that may occur between clusters, any particular challenge or issue that is being faced by old clusters. To be looking at the global level strategies of the ICC would be the bulk of strategic planning, and off course it has to be approved at a higher level. The ICC is normally, sort of, cluster coordinator so that would not be the head of agencies. The cluster lead agencies would be working for a cluster rather more than for an agency. Normally it would be turned by the OCHA head of office so that if anything any comment, any strategic proposal, anything, it still has to go through the Humanitarian Country Team at the highest level of representation in the international community on the humanitarian side of the operation (Informant 2).

The managing and facilitation is not of a technical function, but consists of planning and management out of knowledge of the country and experience from previous emergencies in addition to planning and monitoring inter-agency responses. The CC is expected to ensure that cluster agencies work more effectively together to identify gaps in the humanitarian response, and individually maximize the benefit of the affected population. He/she is also to provide leadership and facilitate cluster activities along the strategic vision. They are to address the priority needs and risks to make sure that the appropriate standards are incorporated in the humanitarian assistance. The CC is accountable to the Cluster Leading Agency (FAO 2010). He/she is also responsible for the inter-cluster activities and cross cutting issues¹⁴, according to the *Principles of Partnership* (OCHA 6 20.09.2013). The cluster coordinators are to meet in order to discuss at the strategic and operational inter-cluster coordination level. These meetings are usually led by the OCHA team leader and it is

¹⁴ Cross cutting issues in the cluster approach are e.g camp coordination, early recovery and protection.

generally in context of regular meetings of an Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) (FAO 2010:12).

5.3 Cluster Leadership

The cluster approach is a system under which UN agencies are designated as “lead agencies” for all major areas of humanitarian response, meaning in each cluster there is a lead agency to be responsible for the cluster activities at global, country and local level. The cluster leads are IASC designated humanitarian organizations and can be both UN and non-UN organizations. According to the Terms of Reference, the cluster leads are:

accountable for ensuring preparedness and response that is both adequate and predictable. It will work with relevant actors and agencies with expertise and capacities in that area. – At the field level, the clusters provide support to the Humanitarian Coordinator who [is] able to call upon clusters for support as requires. –The cluster lead will not carry out all of the activities itself, but will be responsible for ensuring that these activities are carried out and will act as the provider of last resort (UNDAC 2006:13).

Cluster leads at the country level have, as mentioned, been designated by the RC/HC as cluster leads for a particular sector following consultations with the HCT (One Response 2 20.09.2013). The establishment and designation should be based on an assessment of needs, gaps and response capacities. The affected state, local authorities, local civil society, international humanitarian organizations and other appropriate actors are to be included in this assessment. The cluster leads are to report to the HC and the HCT on issues such as the clusters’ functioning and their activities in addition to issues that the cluster leads cannot work out by themselves. A cluster lead at the country level is responsible for the day to day operation of the cluster such as making sure activities are carried out effectively and organizing meetings. In a crisis the cluster leads meet regularly at country and local level; the frequency of the meetings depends on the intensity of the emergency. These meetings are designed to “share information and provide mutual feedback among members, create cluster strategies and work plans, contribute to the preparation of major funding appeals, such as the Common Appeals Process (CAP), or organize joint activities” (Steets et al. 2010:24-25). As mentioned, the cluster leads are responsible for joining the national and local authorities, institutions, and the humanitarian actors with local capacities to establish appropriate coordination mechanisms, emergency preparedness, and training (One Response 2 20.09.2013).

Cluster lead agencies at the country level do not necessarily replicate the agency at the global cluster lead level. Global cluster leads are, according to the IASC principals, to be established in nine sectors of humanitarian activity¹⁵. The global cluster lead agency is accountable to the ERC and reports back on coordination matters and specialized clusters. In addition, the global cluster leads are accountable to the ERC on ensuring a system-wide preparedness and technical capacity for them to respond to the crises (OCHA 2 2006). For example, in the early recovery cluster, the global cluster leads do not encourage the country level to establish a cluster, but rather integrate a recovery plan in all sectors of activity. When the country level cluster leads do not replicate the global cluster lead the IASC has stated that it's essential for the country level cluster lead to consult and maintain a good communication with the global cluster lead. This is to ensure that there is a commonly agreed upon global standard and procedure that is applied. The clusters are to address the norms, policies and standards that are agreed upon at the global level. The global lead is to give advice on "best practices" and policies to the country level; this includes operational support, general guidance and trainings.

At the country level NGOs are engaged in cluster leadership and management. This includes co-leading, coordination, co-facilitating and co-participating in strategic advisory groups. In some cases, e.g where regional levels have been established, such as Myanmar, some NGOs may act as a cluster focal point in parts of the country where they gave a comparative advantage or where the cluster lead has no presence. At the country level, cluster leads ensure that activities of humanitarian organizations are coordinated, serve as a first point of call for the Government and the RC or HC, and as a provider of last resort in their respective sector (IASC 8 2010).

5.4 Cluster Accountability

Actors in the humanitarian community are to respond to people in need in affected communities, and they are to be accounted for both decisions and actions to those they seek to assist. There are many actors involved when it comes to accountability in humanitarian response. First and foremost, all humanitarian agencies are accountable to the affected populations. However, they are also accountable to governing boards, members, donors and

¹⁵ Paragraph 16, 12 September Outcome statement of IASC Principals.

governments in the countries they are operating in (HAP 2010). Each cluster or sector of the emergency relief has a minimum standard; these are described in the annual updated Sphere Handbook (The Sphere Project 2011). The minimum standards are qualitative in nature and describe in detail the specific minimum levels to be attained in each sector within the humanitarian response and come with suggested key actions. Minimum standards are also based on the humanitarian charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which were described in the context chapter. There is also a standard for minimum commitments for participation in clusters which all cluster stakeholders need to sustain. These standards are not conventional but they are to be adapted to the local context and needs. These minimum standards include:

- i. A commitment to the humanitarian principles and the principles of partnership;
- ii. Participation in efforts that specifically improve accountability to affected populations;
- iii. Participation in the work to enhance the clusters collective work and contribution;
- iv. A commitment of utilization of resources and information sharing;
- v. The will to take on leadership responsibilities when needed; and
- vi. Developing and disseminating advocacy to relevant stakeholders (The Sphere Project 2011).

One of the main differences to previous emergency relief coordination is that the cluster approach includes a system of global lead organizations to act as “providers of last resort” (IASC 5 2006). The IASC explains the concept of ‘provider of last resort’ in its Guidance Note from November 2006 that explains the cluster leads responsibilities and accountabilities as follows:

Where there are critical gaps in humanitarian response, it is the responsibility of cluster leads to call on all relevant humanitarian partners to address these. If this fails, then depending on the urgency, the cluster lead as ‘provider of last resort’ may need to commit itself to filling the gap. If, however, funds are not forthcoming for these activities, the cluster lead cannot be expected to implement these activities, but should continue to work with the Humanitarian Coordinator and donors to mobilize the necessary resources. Likewise, where the efforts of the cluster lead, the Humanitarian Country Team as a whole, and the Humanitarian Coordinator as the leader of that team are unsuccessful in gaining access to a particular location, or where security constraints limit the activities of humanitarian actors, the provider of last resort will still be expected to continue advocacy efforts and to explain the constraints to stakeholders (*IASC 5 2006:1*).

According to the IASC guidelines, accountability to affected populations includes transparency and information sharing to the affected population. It also includes the

possibility for the affected population to participate in the humanitarian response efforts, and allows for the affected population to take part in monitoring and evaluations by coming up with complaints and providing feedback. There are designs, monitoring tools and mechanisms for the accountability to the affected populations in the field which may be used by the clusters to the affected populations. The Outcome Statement of IASC Principals (September 2005) identified that “the cluster leads have mutual obligations, and are accountable to humanitarian coordinators (at country level), and globally to the ERC - in his or her capacity as chair of the IASC” (paragraph 16, 12 September Outcome Statement of IASC Principals). Also it was identified that the global clusters, in consultation with the HC, are held accountable for the assurance that there is adequate field-based arrangements in place at the country level. In addition to identifying cluster obligations, the Outcome Statement of the IASC Principals (2005) outlines the cluster leads accountabilities:

Globally, cluster leads are accountable to the ERC for ensuring predictable capacity is established and maintained. At the field level, cluster leads – in addition to normal agency responsibilities – are accountable to HCs for ensuring effective assessments and responses in their respective clusters, and for acting as providers of last resort. HCs – with the support of OCHA – are responsible for ensuring effectiveness of humanitarian response and are accountable to the ERC (OCHA 2 2006:5).

The HC assisted by OCHA plays a crucial role in monitoring the overall emergency response. The HC is also responsible for ensuring “predictable, efficient, complementary and effective action by all clusters. Progress in implementing the work of individual clusters remains a responsibility of the cluster leads that are accountable to the Humanitarian Coordinator. The HCs are in turn, accountable to the ERC” (ibid).

5.5 Summary of Chapter 5

From the empirical data the cluster approach may be seen as a generic model which can be adapted to different contexts and situations depending on the needs and gaps in the affected population. The formal organization of the cluster approach may seem to have key features of multi-level governance. The cluster specializations seem to be independent self-organizing units which negotiate in an institutionalized community through the HCT. The cluster specializations may be described by Gulick’s (1937) principle of task. The specializations are intended to be based on specific sectors of major humanitarian response. The coordination architecture of the cluster approach includes numerous stakeholders (UN, non-UN,

governmental, non-governmental) both vertically (global, national, local) and horizontally (inter-cluster and HCT). The empirical data indicates that the vertical coordination is based on a hierarchical structure, while the horizontal coordination appear to be participatory processes. The specialized clusters are coordinated through cluster lead agencies, and the coordination intensity may seem to be tight, coupled and intense coordination structures. The steering seems to be accordant with Provan and Kenis (2007) “lead organizations”. The steering in the cluster approach is horizontal, by the system of cluster leads, along with a hierarchy. There is one organization that has sufficient resources and legitimacy to play a lead role. The cluster lead responsibility is voluntarily and in addition to the organization’s own program activity.

It may also seem from empirical data on the formal organization of the cluster approach that the accountability are both vertically (hierarchical) (Bovens 2007) and horizontal (joint working) (Boston & Gill 2011). Additionally the accountability seems to be both professional (lateral accountability) and social (downward). The HC plays a crucial role in monitoring and controlling the emergency response and cluster lead agencies in order to make sure that the cluster leads are following up on their responsibilities. The formal organization of the cluster approach has been presented in this chapter. Chapter six looks at the cluster approach in practice by focusing on Myanmar and Haiti.

The formal organization of the cluster approach may be summed up by this model:

Formal Organization of the Cluster Approach			
Specialization	Coordination	Leadership	Accountability
1. Eleven specific key sectors at each level (global, national, local) horizontally organized at each level based on tasks and professions.	1. Tight, coupled and intense coordination structures by vertical and horizontal coordination with multiple actors (e.g UN, non UN, governmental) at each levels. 2. Formal coordination structures strategic decision making in the HCT and inter-cluster coordination.	1. Steering of the cluster network is by lead agencies of each specialized sectors. The HC is steering all emergency response. 2. The cluster lead responsibility is voluntarily and in addition to organization’s own program activity.	1. A focus on both vertical (hierarchical) and horizontal accountability (peer clusters and joint working). 2. The HC has a crucial monitoring and controlling role of the emergency response and of cluster leadership.

Table 5.4

6. The Cluster Approach in Practice

The collected data presents how the cluster approach was enrolled after natural disasters in Myanmar and Haiti. This chapter will answer the second portion of the research question; namely, how does the cluster approach work in practice. It will answer the question in three parts: By presenting the enrollment of cluster approach in Myanmar chapter 6.1, Haiti in chapter 6.2 and common findings of the cluster approach in practice in chapter 6.3.

The first part will address how the cluster approach was employed in Myanmar after Cyclone Nargis hit. The collected data from Myanmar is mainly from the cluster approach evaluation phase II, Tripartite Core Group post-Nargis joint assessment and from interviews with relevant stakeholders in the UN. The second part of this chapter will go through how the cluster approach was used in Haiti after tropical storms and hurricanes in August and September 2008. The collected data from Haiti is mainly from the cluster evaluation phase II, country reports and interview with UN desk officer for Haiti. The third and final part of this chapter will sum up some commonalities of the cluster approach in practice and present findings.

6.1 Response to Cyclone in Myanmar

Some of the main challenges for Myanmar after the cyclone that affected the immediate emergency response was the devastation of infrastructure, due to the rugged terrain which limited access to the worst hit areas. The worst hit areas were mostly small, inhabited islands. The difficulties of access made it harder to assess and identify the people in need, but also to deliver the necessary aid to the people in need (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010). It was first and foremost national NGOs that were operating in the first weeks after the disaster. These were monks, local organizations, local businesses, national celebrities, schools and groups of citizens (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010:21). They collected funds in an effort to help people in need. It soon became evident the amount of damage and help needed for the affected population exceeded the national capacity to respond to the disaster. The Myanmar government soon allowed international relief efforts and organizations into the affected areas.

The government of Myanmar was not prepared for a disaster such as Nargis and one of the key informants who worked in the field for OCHA in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis in

Myanmar stated that “I discovered a lot of gaps in plenty key areas that would play a key role in terms of disaster preparedness and response to any emergency, they were efficiency starting from zero¹⁶” (Informant 4). In addition the government of Myanmar restricted the access of humanitarian aid workers. Therefore a key collaborative mechanisms in Myanmar was the Tripartite Core Group (TCG)¹⁷ (UNIC 2 2008:4), which was essentially a collaborative mechanism between the Government of Myanmar, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the UN. The TCG was formed on 31 May 2008 and as a result of Cyclone Nargis in order to help those affected. The TCG played a crucial role in allowing humanitarian aid workers, regardless of nationality in to the affected areas. The TCG were essential in mapping the humanitarian needs in the affected areas, and conducted three crucial assessments; the Village Tract Assessment¹⁸, Damage and Loss Assessment¹⁹, these two would be a component in to the Post Nargis Joint Assessment. According to TCG report from 2008, it states that

[D]espite the initial hurdles during the first few days following the Cyclone created by the lack of collective national experience and capacity in large scale disaster relief and response and poor coordination mechanism between various agencies, the relief aids were able to reach the affected population in the most remote areas with four to five weeks under the leadership of the Tripartite Core Group (TCG) (Recovery Status Report 2008:2).

The cluster approach evaluation phase II states “the introduction of the cluster approach had a vital effect on the involvement of government authorities both at national and township level. The cluster approach added towards building response capacities for future natural disasters. ” (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010:44). The report was positive to the cluster approach implementation and the cluster approach response of Cyclone Nargis was seen as a success story in the eyes off the UN, ASEAN and the Government of Myanmar. However this was to be countered by one of the informants, “I think the reason for this was that they agreed that it was a success, it was useful for all the parts involved, maybe I am wrong, but the way I see it is that ASEAN needed a success story, the government wanted a success story, and for the

¹⁶ They did not have a warning system in place, so anything that was coming would happen without the people knowing. Secondly, they did not have enough resources to an emergency disaster response. There were systems and equipments to measure hazards, by most of them had either broken down or were too old to pick up anything (Informant 4).

¹⁷ TCG is an “ASEAN-led mechanism that seeks to cultivate the trust, confidence and understanding necessary to facilitate relief and recovery efforts in Myanmar” (Periodic Review 2 2008:4).

¹⁸ This assessment was to look at the needs for relief assistance, this was an attempt to make a standardized and comparable assessment across all key sectors.

¹⁹ This assessment was to look at longer-term recovery efforts.

UN it was useful with a success story. So there was an agreement that it was a success, so maybe it was a success” (Informant 3).

6.1.1 Cluster Specialization

The needs of the affected people varied between the communities and the extent of damage of the Cyclone. It also varied to the extent of vulnerability of members of communities. There was also a concern over water availability through the dry season, which would then have ripple effects in other sectors. “Meeting the needs of those traditionally considered most vulnerable in a sustainable way requires rehabilitating the communities in which they live” (UNIC 1 2008:2). The most severe needs after the cyclone were infrastructure, health, food and nutrition, education, shelter and sanitation.

The Government of Myanmar was hesitant handing out visas to international aid workers. In addition, the Government of Myanmar was also restrictive in giving access for aid workers to travel in to the Delta region which was one of the region that was worst hit and this created difficulties in organizing and coordinating the response to the cyclone. Also due to the restrictions there was created a parallel coordination system in Bangkok (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010). The first agreement on letting international aid workers in to Myanmar was concluded on 23. May 2008. ASEAN played a lead role in fostering cooperation among the international organizations, the UN and the Government of Myanmar (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010:21).

The cluster approach was then activated: in total 11 clusters were implemented. To support the field operations it was set up OCHA offices, however the head of office was set up first on 17. June 2008. Due to visa restrictions, OCHA was a late arrival to Myanmar and OCHA had not been present in Myanmar prior to Cyclone Nargis. Many international stakeholders were moving in to the most affected areas trying to respond to the needs of the population. In order to support the coordination of international response, two to three months after the emergency response, six additional local hub OCHA offices were set up in the worst affected townships. These were in Yangon, Bogale, Labutta, Pyapon, Mawlamyinegyun and Pathein (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010:21). Numbers presented on July 6 2008, shows that there were in all more than 270 international UN staff, and according to Kaufmann and Krüger (2010:21) there were at least as many international NGO aid workers coming in the affected areas as UN staff. To illustrate the complexity of the cluster system in Myanmar, at one time there were 11 clusters

and at least 28 technical working groups in Yangon alone. In addition there were 5-6 sub regions with a cluster system, however there was an unequal geographic coverage of the humanitarian assistance at the beginning. The eleven clusters that were activated in Myanmar were: agriculture (FAO), early recovery (UNDP), education (UNICEF/Save the Children), emergency shelter (IFRC), ETC (WFP/UNICEF), logistics (WFP), protection (UNHCR), health (WHO/MERLIN), nutrition (UNICEF/GOUM), WASH (UNICEF) and food (WFP) (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010:24). The western part of Delta was not covered as efficiently as the eastern Delta. The humanitarian assistance was also first given to the urban areas, and the accessible areas in the Delta (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010:41). The geographical disparity was mainly due to infrastructure and logistical constraints. Another reason was that there were a variety of targeting mechanisms between the aid workers (:41). However, according to the cluster approach evaluation phase II it was evidenced in Myanmar that overall duplications were eliminated and gaps were identified due to the cluster approach. The evaluation team found that due to this, it resulted in more efficiency and wider coverage, but even though the gaps were identified, it was not necessarily the cluster approach that filled the needs.

6.1.2 Cluster Coordination

The Government of Myanmar was responsible of coordinating the humanitarian response and took the lead in coordinating national efforts. It was established an Emergency Committee that was chaired by the Prime Minister in order to deal with the humanitarian response. The humanitarian response was supported by the HC and the IASC team which rolled out and implemented the cluster approach in order to strengthen emergency response. On 3 May the Myanmar Prime Minister convened a meeting of the national Natural Disaster Preparedness Central Committee and they were soon tasked to implement relief to the affected population (Myanmar Revised Appeal 2008). The Prime Minister also opened up an office in Yangon in order to coordinate the relief efforts, and had earmarked Kyat 50 billion for overall relief and recovery efforts. The Government of Myanmar was also initiating setting up relief camps, field hospitals, clearing of roads and restoring basic services (Myanmar Revised Appeal 2008:8).

Coordination of the humanitarian response after the Cyclone involved many international actors occurring at various levels. The most noteworthy stakeholders were the government of Myanmar, the TCG and the cluster approach, which will be discussed in this section. In

addition to the formal structures of coordination of humanitarian response it must be mentioned that “local faith-based organizations that ‘go humanitarian’ when a disaster strikes remain largely outside of the mainstream humanitarian response including the clusters and coordination” (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010:42). These organizations spoke the language, knew the culture, so they were also the first actors to have the immediate access and bring aid when the international humanitarian workers did not have the access. In spite of different circumstances for emergency response, the cluster approach evaluation phase II concluded that the cluster approach improved communication.

For civil society activity in Myanmar there is evidence that meetings and exchange with international organizations and staff both provided a secure platform and contributed to professionalization, although the cluster approach initially was very isolationist vis-à-vis local actors...for the humanitarian actors, the cluster approach worked as a platform for interacting with the local authorities. Thanks to clusters and the cluster leads, who played an intermediary role between government and NGOs, humanitarian actors were able to talk with the authorities not on their own but as a group, and nonetheless maintain their independence while avoiding bilateral confrontations (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010:44-45).

Informant 3, agreeing with Kauffmann and Krüger, stated that OCHA had an important role in Myanmar. OCHA was a mediator between the government and the international organizations. On the other hand, at the initial stages on the national level, it was stated that the coordination between the government and international community was challenging. In 2008 when Cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar, the government was militarized and everything went through the military ranks as we can see from the statement from Informant 3.

At the time cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar, it was complicated working with the Government of Myanmar. It was a militarized regime, it was hard getting in contact with them, hard to get feedback, hard to understand who to talk with and arrange meetings with them, ect, in between 2008-2012 we can see clear changes (Informant 3).

Informant 4 confirms that in the initial stage of cluster approach implementation it was challenging with the coordination between the international community and the government of Myanmar. The government of Myanmar showed suspicion towards the international organizations initially, which may explain the visa and access issues and created difficulties in coordinating between the government of Myanmar and the international humanitarian response as stated by the informant 4:

In the beginning it was a lot of suspicion and a lot uncertainties, the thing is, what had been done in the end, was that when the international community was coming in they were very

skeptical about them, and as much as they ended up inviting international support they were still skeptical and didn't want a lot of interference, or interference in the everyday work, but at the same time they needed the support to get out of the problem they had fallen in to (Informant 4).

At the national level the clusters worked together with the national structures (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010:45). The authorities were invited to cluster meetings. Also, special meetings were set up for cluster members/leads to meet with authorities (e.g health, education were clusters which needed strong collaboration with local authorities). The clusters and authorities were also collaborating on developing policies and guidelines. At township level the local representatives of different departments and sectors were incorporated into the clusters. The focal representatives for the different clusters, were identified and invited to cluster meetings. The local authorities had their own coordinating mechanism, parallel to the cluster approach, which also conducted a Township Coordination Committee for coordinating the humanitarian assistance. Even though there were duplication and parallel systems, the international humanitarian community and the local authorities were using each other for information and assisted one another.

The response capacity within clusters evolved over time. At the initial state of implementing the cluster approach, there was poor attendance by local NGOs and local staff involved in the cluster meetings. Another issue was that the local NGOs did not have the capacity to join all the meetings, often the clusters are viewed to have a high meeting frequency and this was viewed as a barrier for them to join in the clusters (Informant 3). Also, Kauffmann and Krüger found evidence that the cluster meetings initially failed at coming across as wishing to cooperate with locals: “[c]luster meetings were perceived as an “unfriendly and isolationist system” designed for English speakers and expatriate staff (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010:47). The national NGOs and local staff gradually became more and more involved in the clusters. And there are numbers of evidence that can prove increasing coordination, this could be seen for example in the WASH cluster in Labutta, “where UNICEF argued for water distribution and UNDP reacted through the Protection cluster, where issues of “displaced persons”- although in other wording –were increasingly taken up” (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010: 41). In addition it was proven that the affected people received a wide range of assistance to cover their basic needs after the disaster. Although, it was stated in the 2010 cluster evaluation that the inter-cluster coordination was weak which affected the ability to cover the diversity of the

needs of villagers, specifically on rebuilding proper livelihoods (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010:42).

To sum up what the Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluation (IARTE) stated in their evaluation it said that the cluster system had been relatively good and effective at Yangon/central level and the coordination mechanisms from the central level was also seen as relatively good. This is also confirmed in the cluster evaluation phase II by Kauffmann and Krüger. However, in similarity with Kauffmann and Krüger (2010), Turner et al. (2008) say it was also stated that observations by the team, document review and interviews highlighted “weaknesses in terms of linking clusters with their counterparts in the field, outreach to beneficiaries and inter-cluster planning and coordination” (:6-7). These statements were also supported by the informants in Myanmar. The IARTE further stated that “inefficiencies were observed in the fragmentation of discussions and subsequent lack of coherence (livelihood and protection/vulnerability being two examples), changes of strategic direction linked to turnover of cluster leads, and over-emphasis in some of the clusters on information-sharing.” (Turner et al. 2008:20). Some of the challenges with the multi-level governance of the cluster approach in Myanmar were that:

[T]here was widespread acknowledgement amongst both national and international key informants of weak linkages between Yangon clusters with hubs and national actors. Many staff in the hubs were only partially aware of the planning processes going on at Yangon level. This was viewed by the IARTE team as a contributory factor in limiting information flows to communities. Another example of the weak linkage was a geographic prioritization on more populated areas leaving some of the worst affected areas underserved (Turner et al. 2008:19).

One of the key issues in the inter-cluster meetings was to ensure that the 3W's: Who is doing What Where was updated. This also helped to discover overlapping issues among partners themselves. The inter-cluster coordination meetings were mainly on “information sharing and did not generate common analysis” (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010:35). There were a few challenges in the inter-cluster meetings, one of them was that few members showed up at the meetings as we may see from the statement in the cluster approach evaluation phase II “One of the reasons limiting the level of collaboration was the small number of decision-makers in cluster meetings, particularly at field level” (ibid). Another might be that all the inter-cluster meetings were taking place in Yangon. Combined with all the clusters that were supposed to meet at the sub levels, this gave a high meeting frequency. This shifted the focus to the process and less focus on outcomes (Informant 3). “One of the key things we did not want

was to actually create a cultural dependency, by just may organizations that are focusing on the same beneficiaries, and giving more than was necessary” (Informant 4).

Another challenge for Myanmar was that the HCT was more focused on development rather than disaster response (Informant 3). The people working in Myanmar in the beginning with HCT did not have a humanitarian background. Rather, their background was on long-term development, which is not always the most suitable approach in an emergency response. Since it was very hard getting access to Myanmar, the aid workers had chosen to work “under the radar” and to not raise hard questions to the government, which could lead to trouble for the aid workers. In a crisis situation hard questions must be asked, so working in an environment where there was only focus on development caused challenges (Informant 3). Prior experience shows that in countries where they have focused on development, and disasters have struck, it is hard to change the way the way people are working and their mind set (Informant 3). In addition to the personal commitment of the leadership it was mentioned from one of the informants that personal conflict was a possible hindrance to coordination:

something so banal as a personal conflict can also affect the coordination, such as for example “yesterday you did not let me sit in the car with you out in the field doing assessment, so today I will not come to the meeting you are organizing and another banal example is “last month you borrowed two mobile phones from us, you still haven’t returned these, so I will not do you the favor with something else” (Informant 3).

To sum up cluster coordination in Myanmar, the initial stages of cluster implementation saw challenges in cooperation between the international community and the government of Myanmar. However, eventually the cooperation was improved and OCHA played a vital role as mediator. At Yangon level the coordination mechanisms were seen as good, however at the township level there were weaknesses in linking clusters with the counterparts in the field.

6.1.3 Cluster Leadership

Cluster leadership varied on the different cluster levels²⁰ (national, sub and township). This depended mainly on the capability and operability of the cluster lead organizations. Many of the UN organizations that are cluster leads have indicated that they would love to coordinate but they do not have the right amount of resources to do it in terms of money and staff. This

²⁰ See Appendix IV for a list of cluster lead agencies at national level in Myanmar.

has been a challenge with the cluster approach (Informant 3). It was stated in the interviews that it was hard getting cluster leads at the sub national level, however this was not a problem at the national level,

because we had about five or six different sub national areas with different cluster approach systems running, it would mean that WHO had to be in all these five areas, which I think would be a burden for them, however, it is mainly a resource issue, and secondly in them for those that would be requested or asked to take this particular role, the cluster leadership role was coming in as an addition to their normal everyday work (Informant 4).

There was a presence of NGO co-leading that seemed to improve leadership and continuity of cluster activities. Kauffman and Krüger listed the co-leading as a success factor in Myanmar. An example was Save the Children co-leading the education cluster. “Co-chair arrangements was perceived to limit potential conflict of interest, reduce problems related to frequent cluster leads, the possibility of spending more time in the field” (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010:30). The evaluation phase II states there were a good commitment and activity by the cluster lead agencies, and that the cluster leads understood their role, but that they did not act as a provider of the last resort. Not all clusters were equally committed or active. Among the most active were “those with dedicated coordinators, such as [h]ealth, [p]rotection and [n]utrition and certain clusters such as [a]griculture, where the coordinator exercised a dual function” (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010:30). Another aspect that complicated cluster leadership was that

Cluster members were also critical to the functioning of the approach. Beyond the provision of time and resources to take part in various meetings, some organizations actually ensured the role of cluster coordinator in the areas of the Delta where there was no presence of the designated UN agency cluster lead (e.g. German Agro Action held the role of cluster coordinator for the agricultural cluster at township level), or by seconding staff to cluster coordinator functions or by co-leading some clusters (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010:28).

One of the main challenges that the cluster approach evaluation indicates was that the cluster coordinators had short-term contracts (weeks to months), which led to a high turnover of cluster coordinators. One example that is mentioned in the phase II evaluation is the WASH cluster, which had in total five different WASH cluster coordinators. “This resulted in severe gaps between two assignments, led to temporary situations and replacements of dedicated cluster coordinators with someone who assumed other tasks in parallel” (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010:31). It was also stated that the necessary technical know-how to fulfill their role was in most cases satisfactory according to the humanitarian actors. The evaluation

questioned the role of some UN agencies, such as the UNDP to lead the Early Recovery and UNICEF leading the WASH cluster, since they are directly implementing agencies and do not work through implementing partners. However one of my informants stated that “most of the cluster leads when they came in they did not know what a cluster is, so OCHA had to start give them training and take them through workshops” (Informant 4). By doing this training, OCHA may here seem to take an important role to secure good cluster leadership in Myanmar.

The personal commitment of the members in the cluster system is crucial. From the interviews it was said that the personal commitment and leadership skills of the HC/RC in Myanmar was crucial for the good coordination among the TCG and the HCT and could not be over-emphasized.

Good coordination depends on the person leading the cluster. Their personal qualities and their experience in the field are crucial [to whether] a cluster is lead in a positive or negative way. The same is true of cluster participants. For example, we can see this with Mèdecins Sans Frontiers In some cases they are very active in one cluster, but in other cases they are not active at all. This has little to do with the policy but more with the person implementing the policies (Informant 3).

However, good coordination may also depend on common goals and common policies in the cluster activity.

6.1.4 Cluster Accountability

According to the IARTE, the overall performance of clusters has been relatively good. However, interviews done with cluster leads and cluster coordinators indicated that “very few had received more than an hour’s orientation on the role they were expected to play, even though most were performing this function for the first time” (Turner et al. 2008:20). This was supported in the interview with one of my informants who stated, “most of the cluster leads did not know what a cluster was” (Informant 4). Training from OCHA was therefore, as mentioned, crucial for them to operate as expected in their role as cluster leads. The IARTE also showed that “only one of the cluster leads interviewed seemed to be familiar with his role of ‘provider of last resort’, and none of the cluster leads had led any kind of discussion to clarify roles and responsibilities either within the clusters they were leading or with their counterparts in the field” (Turner et al. 2008:20).

Among the organizations themselves it was stated that there was an increased informal accountability among peer clusters. “Accountability was enhanced through cluster work plans and action points that were agreed on during meetings which assigned responsibilities and activities to specific organizations” (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010:38). The follow-up and monitoring were not systematic, however. On the other hand, while the accountability among cluster themselves increased, the

[c]luster members generally did not feel accountable to cluster lead agencies, just as cluster lead agencies, did not regard overseeing members’ activities as their role, with the exception of cluster members who had implementing agreements with the cluster lead (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010:39).

According to the cluster evaluation phase II, it could not be stated that the cluster members felt accountable toward the HC. This might be due to the fact that the accountability mechanisms towards the HC were limited to cluster leads reporting to him during the inter-cluster meetings (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010:38). Since the clusters generally did not feel accountable to cluster lead agencies, this may have had an impact on the accountability to the HC. There were several attempts and initiatives to increase the accountability to the affected population, such as the Accountability and Learning Working Group (ALWG), which was considered an informal cluster in Myanmar. The ALWG was among others to give trainings, efforts of monitoring accountability and translate key documents into Burmese. ALWG was made parallel with the clusters so that they could fill the gaps with the downward accountability.

The evaluation team found out that the clusters did not increase the communication with the affected population, nor “[help] to promote participatory approaches in project assessment, planning or monitoring” (Kauffmann & Krüger 2010:39). There was, however, evidence contrary to this since most of the material used and information was in English and not Burmese. In addition to trainings there were also accountability committees that were set up at each location, including each region. These committees would look into the issues of accountability to the affected populations based on the reporting and feedback/complaints system in the field, as well as drop boxes that were placed strategically in the field (Informant 4). Still, the IARTE shows that there were resulting gaps in these accountability mechanisms. “Recommendations and complaints received by clusters were usually forwarded to concerned

agencies, but there were no mechanisms in place for monitoring follow-up, except in cases where agencies of the cluster leads were directly implicated” (Turner et al. 2008:20).

6.2 The Response to Hurricanes and Tropical Storms in Haiti

The emergency relief operations began immediately after the tropical storms and hurricanes hit the country in August and September of 2008, despite the challenges of access to remote areas. Nine out of ten regions in Haiti were affected by the disaster, but northwestern city Gonaïves had been particularly hard hit. Gonaïves was covered by water and mud; in some areas the water level rose up to two meters.

During the initial response phase During the initial response phase the humanitarian actors were mainly concentrating on emergency needs for water, food, sanitation and health for the victims of the hurricanes. (OCHA 9 2008) In the second phase of emergency response, were focusing on people living in temporary shelters (the majority of these being in Government or private schools), to either return to their home or resettling (OCHA 9 2008). According to the cluster evaluation phase II on Haiti, the cluster approach was introduced in a “schematic and top-down fashion, neglecting the local context” (Binder & Grünewald 2010:34). “The evaluators found instances of the cluster approach actively undermining national ownership, e.g when cluster meetings were held at the same time as government coordination meetings” (ibid). Haiti has historically been a centralized system, and the government structure can be seen as quite chaotic in terms of disaster response. The clusters were most active in Port-au-Prince at the capital level, partly because of the interaction with government. As shown in the statement from Informant 2, the cluster approach structure was reflecting the Haitian government structure.

In term of disaster response, it is kind of [a] loose structure, and I guess what people try to do is to understand more what the government part [is], and try to make it a bit more systematic and a little bit more consistent over time or when there is an emergency or . . . One of the many reasons why the system in Haiti reflected the government structure as well, was the need to kind of engage with the government actors at the Port-au-Prince level (Informant 2).

6.2.1 Cluster Specialization

Preparedness activities had been carried out months before the hurricane season, still “[t]he scale of the disaster overwhelmed the local response resources” (IFRC 2008:3). Unlike

Myanmar, some clusters in Haiti were already ahead of the hurricane season starting to prepare for the season. The cluster approach had been formally introduced in Haiti in 2006; however, they were not formally activated by the IASC until September 2008 (Binder & Grünewald 2010).

[H]umanitarian aid focused on Gonaïves to the detriment of other affected areas. It was only in later stages of the response that vulnerabilities and needs in other areas, e.g. in Jacmeel, the Plateau or Port de Paiz, were being addressed. Of course, Gonaïves was the hardest-hit area but the clusters in Port-au-Prince should have ensured a national vision to disaster response (Binder & Grünewald 2010:33).

The clusters were activated in the capital, Port-au-Prince and at the local field level in Gonaïves and in Jacmel. Gonaïves had been the hardest hit by the storms and hurricanes, and was the epicenter of humanitarian activity (Reliefweb 14.09.2009).

A significant effort from the international community is critical to responding to the continuing humanitarian and key early recovery needs of the Haitian population. Even though the loss in human lives was less than was caused by tropical storm Jeanne in 2004, the impact is much more significant due to the increased ecological and socio-economic vulnerability of the Haitian population (Reliefweb 14.09.2009).

The clusters that were activated in Haiti were: agriculture (FAO), education (UNICEF), early recovery (UNDP), food assistance (WFP), health (WHO/PAHO), logistics (WFP), nutrition (UNICEF), protection (HDCS/OHCHR), shelter and non-food items (IOM), WASH (UNICEF) (Binder & Grünewald 2010:20).

6.2.2 Cluster Coordination

As we will see in the case of Haiti following the bout of tropical storms and hurricanes which battered the country in August and September 2008, there was a major multi-level coordination challenge. As stated by Binder and Grünewald (2010), “The cluster approach in Haiti was not set up in a coordination vacuum” (:16). Existing parallel coordination structures ran parallel to the cluster approach coordination structure. This multi-level coordination caused major challenges in Haiti where there were coordination issues between national governments and international actors. In addition, the clusters were not formally related to any of these existing coordination mechanisms.

...Haiti is a country where the main coordination challenge is not necessarily a lack of coordination, but an abundance of parallel and sometimes dysfunctional coordination mechanisms (Binder & Grünewald 2010:16).

For example, the government of Haiti had one coordination structure while the international community had another coordination structure based off of the cluster approach and the “table approach” which will be introduced in the next paragraph. UN agencies, UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), international development agencies, embassies, international NGOs and donors are all part of the Haitian government’s coordination mechanism Groupe d’Appui de la Coopération Internationale (GACI). GACI’s mandate was to “coordinate international actors involved in disaster preparedness and response activities, mobilize funds, and ensure technical cooperation” (Binder & Grünewald 2010:16-17). The GACI mechanism ensured information sharing, multi-sectoral assessments, action plans in accordance with the government and write up reports of activities (ibid). It is stated in the cluster approach evaluations that the coordination challenge in Haiti during this time was mainly between the national and international actors as well as pre-existing coordination structures.

MINUSTAH, the integrated mission in Haiti following hurricane Jeanne in 2004, strengthened the coordination system with “table de concertation”, known as the “table approach”. The aim of the table approach was to increase the dialogue with a forum and exchange information to better respond to humanitarian aid by identifying problems and filling gaps in the response. The aim of the table approach is very similar to that of the cluster approach. However, while the table approach was implemented on the provincial and local level, the cluster approach was implemented on the national and local level. These two approaches were seen as complementary; however, the link between the approaches has not been spelled out. According to Binder and Grünewald, as a result of the failure to link the cluster approach with the table approach, “it has undermined the longer-term legitimacy of the clusters, a system perceived by local authorities as entirely dominated by international actors” (Binder & Grünewald 2010:35). The cluster approach was activated on the local level in Gonaïves, Haiti.

Inclusiveness and good integration with hosting government may be seen as essential for good coordination in the cluster approach. However, in Haiti, “the lack of inclusion of government and donors led to duplications and hampered greater gap filling and coverage because bilateral aid was often not reflected in the clusters” (Binder & Grünewald 2010:33). Though,

there were a few clusters that managed to have a good cooperation with the governmental counterparts in a productive manner, this was especially true for the health and nutrition clusters who cooperated with the Ministry of Health on the implementation of a national nutrition protocol (Binder & Grünewald 2010:34).

Another challenge was that the cluster approach and the main national disaster response coordination mechanism, the Haitian Civil Protection Unit (DPC), were not properly linked “(through institutionalized common meetings on the inter-cluster level), hindering national and international actors from developing a common understanding of the disaster situation” (Binder & Grünewald 2010:35). This created difficulties in strategic planning across clusters and different actors in the emergency response, in addition to difficulties in creating ownership and ensuring connectedness between the government, clusters and their lead agencies (ibid).

At the provincial level, heavy international activity overwhelmed local authorities that were often strongly affected by the disaster themselves ... this behavior created unnecessary tensions between local authorities and international humanitarian actors (Binder & Grünewald 2010:35).

The implementation of the cluster coordination was done mainly through regular meetings at the capital, weekly until January 2009, and local level, daily in the beginning of the crisis. After the end of the crisis the local level meetings became more irregular. In addition there were also inter-cluster meetings at both the capital and national level (Binder & Grünewald 2010:22). There were regular cluster meetings in both cities of Port-au-Prince and Gonaïves. In the capital the meetings were held on a weekly basis in the first months after the disaster. At the end of the disaster, January 2009, the frequency of these meetings decreased. At the local level the meetings were held daily at the start of the emergency. However, they were eventually reduced to weekly and subsequently irregularly held meetings by the end of the disaster.

In addition to cluster meetings, there were national and local level inter-cluster meetings. At the local level these inter-cluster meetings were held daily. Also, as already criticized “the clusters were not formally related to any of the existing coordination mechanism[s]” (Binder & Grünewald 2010:22). It was additionally found informal-cluster coordination mechanisms. There were also many government, cluster and table approach coordinating forums for the

international humanitarian activities. Due to the number of small size agencies present in Haiti, the same people in these forums represented their own organization as well. It was stated in the evaluation phase II, Haiti, that most of these coordination forums were without terms of references or constituencies, and were therefore prone to create inefficiency, frustration and meeting fatigue (Binder & Grünewald 2010:18). Mainly there were three different international coordination forums: the IASC, Comité technique de la Communauté International (CT), and the Humanitarian and Development Forum. IASC, chaired by the HC, met monthly with international organizations, UN agencies and NGOs to discuss humanitarian response on the strategic level. Their role was to discuss the humanitarian assistance on a strategic level (Binder & Grünewald 2010:18). Second the CT, chaired by OCHA, was composed of focal points of international organizations, UN agencies, MINUSTAH and NGOs. Their role was to discuss the humanitarian assistance in Haiti on a technical level. Finally, the Humanitarian and Development Forum was characterized as information meetings which dealt mainly with humanitarian issues (Binder & Grünewald 2010:18). As phrased best by Binder & Grünewald:

[T]he results of this country study clearly show that better coordination (in terms of both outputs and outcomes) does not automatically lead to better humanitarian assistance (effects on the quality of the response and the well-being of the affected population). Rather, better coordination is a necessary but insufficient condition for better humanitarian services and improved well-being of the affected population (Binder & Grünewald 2010:41).

Findings from cluster approach evaluation phase II from these events in Haiti found that the inter-cluster coordination in Haiti was weak. It was stated that this was due to the fact that instead of coordinating inter-cluster meetings, the meetings instead were inter-agency meetings. The participants in the meetings discussed issues and challenges specific to their agency instead of discussing inter-cluster issues, such as how the clusters interact with each other and affect each other's work. In events where the clusters did work together--shelter and education clusters--this was found to be reactive in nature and inefficient due to amount of time spent in meetings. (Binder & Grünewald 2010:26). Information management was mentioned as a value added to the cluster approach compared to earlier forms of emergency coordination. The information sharing functioned as an incentive to participate in the cluster meetings according to Binder & Grünewald (2010:29).

6.2.3 Cluster Leadership

The emergency response was under the leadership of the HC and the HCT. OCHA had two fulltime staff working for the functioning and introduction of the cluster approach in Haiti. The tasks of the two staff members were, “information management; setup of a coordination framework (purpose and constituencies of different coordination meetings; rules for activation and deactivation of clusters, ect.); inter-cluster coordination” (Binder & Grünewald 2010:25). OCHA’s presence in Gonaïves during the emergency response was especially crucial as it led to clear “allocation of roles and responsibilities between cluster lead agencies and OCHA” (Binder & Grünewald 2010:25).

Findings from cluster evaluation phase II Haiti, found that overall the cluster approach had strengthened leadership, (Binder & Grünewald 2010) “. . . [h]owever, there remains room for improvements concerning possible conflicts of interests for lead agencies²¹, leadership for cross-cutting issues and the provider of last resort role” (Binder & Grünewald 2010:27). There were found a number of challenges of cluster leadership in Haiti. Pre-knowledge on the cluster approach was weak. This was supposed to be given from the global level, and this formed a high level of confusion on what the cluster approach was and how it functioned. This led to an understanding of the role as a cluster lead as a facilitator and service provider rather than a decision maker as it initially was meant to be (Binder & Grünewald 2010:27). The confusion of cluster lead agencies not being distinguished from cluster activities, and treating cluster members only as implementers may have “blurred roles and responsibilities and led to conflicts of interest” (Binder & Grünewald 2010:27). This was particularly true in the early recovery, education and shelter cluster.

Also, the concept of “provider of last resort” was not systematically implemented among the cluster leads. It was interpreted that the lead agencies’ “responsibility to provide resources to fill gaps—if the lead agencies had the means to do so” (Binder & Grünewald 2010:27-28). Another challenge was the unclear role of MINUSTAH, which created skepticism amongst the leaders in the protection cluster (ibid). Although the global clusters did support the national cluster leads in clarifying roles and responsibilities, especially in the activation of the clusters (for example in the protection and shelter clusters). The global clusters also gave trainings to the cluster coordinators in facilitating and organizing meetings.

²¹ See Appendix V for a list of the cluster lead agencies at the national level in Haiti.

The cluster leads were committed members of the cluster system. However, there were agencies who tried to either get out of carrying cluster duties or close down the cluster altogether, even though this was evitable at that time (Informant 2).

Basically if there is going to be a cluster system, they want to be involved, they want to be in charge of it. Probably a lot of them would like to go back to the cluster lead content but only lead the cluster. Basically this is sort of, if we have to do it, we would like to be in charge please. But you know. Not that it is being said, agencies are committed and do a very good job (Informant 2).

One of the things that did work well was the fact that the clusters in Haiti had a number of strong, critical and committed members. “They contributed to the functioning of the clusters, particularly in those cases where leadership was weak such as in the protection and nutrition clusters.” (Binder & Grünewald 2010:27) OCHA established NGOs and government agencies to lead as co-facilitators for all the clusters in September in order to strengthen the cluster partnership.

[C]o-facilitation proved to be unpopular among non-UN actors. Neither NGOs nor the government (with some exemptions) wanted to co-facilitate clusters. Reasons for this reluctance included Haiti’s still shaky political landscape, fear of exposure to public scrutiny and critique, and the NGOs’ worry of decreasing their scope for advocacy vis-à-vis the United Nations (Binder & Grünewald 2010:30).

6.2.4 Cluster Accountability

The cluster approach evaluation, phase II, concludes that the cluster coordinators were well trained in order to meet their responsibilities. This led to well informed clusters on the cluster approach’s purpose and functioning, well organized meetings of the clusters, clarification of roles and responsibilities of the clusters and cluster coordinators, and a better ability to help cluster lead agencies to meet their responsibilities. At the same time there was a high turnover of staff and lack of contextual knowledge (Binder & Grünewald 2010:24). A specific challenge for Haiti was the high staff turnover, especially in the health cluster. This example indicates that cluster information could get lost along the way of the turnover, particularly if the handover took place within a time of little cluster activity (Binder & Grünewald 2010:24).

Accountability has been one of the weakest points of the cluster approach in Haiti (Binder & Grünewald 2010:31). Accountability to the HC does not include organizations outside the UN system. In Haiti, the concept of “peer” accountability was introduced. This concept introduced the idea that NGOs are co-facilitators that should be accountable to “peer” clusters. However, this type of accountability mechanism has been lacking in Haiti. Findings from the evaluation, phase II, shows that there was no direct interaction between the HC and the cluster leads. This meant that the HC was strongly dependent on the information that was provided by OCHA in Haiti in order to hold the cluster leads accountable for the clusters’ actions and performance. It was also noted that as a consequence of OCHA’s weakness during the disaster, the HC lacked the necessary information to hold the cluster leads accountable. Cluster leads could not successfully fulfill their roles as cluster leads, which negatively affected the effect of the clusters (Binder & Grünewald 2010:31). There were also no promotion of participatory approaches to the affected population; the focus was on formal mechanisms for accountability.

One reason for this disappointing performance could be the cluster approach’s focus on formal mechanisms for accountability, which are difficult to implement within a system of diverse and independent actors. Furthermore, formal accountability mechanisms often spawn hierarchical behavior that might undermine the partnerships gains achieved. At the same time, the absence of formal and informal accountability mechanisms in Haiti contributed to the difficulty of improving the quality of humanitarian response (Binder & Grünewald 2010:32).

6.3 Common Findings of the Cluster Approach

Initially, the cluster approach in 2008 was seen as something fundamentally new and very complicated. “In the aftermath they did see the cluster approach maybe as a bit more complicated [than] it really was” (Informant 3). In addition, it was stated by one of the informants that the mind-set of the members inside and outside of the cluster approach was that the cluster approach was “rocket science” in 2008.

At that time it seemed like the cluster approach was very complicated, you needed to take courses, and read hundreds of pages. For example, if you read the cluster approach evaluations they are very detailed, they give the impression that this is “rocket science”; thankfully this view of the cluster approach has [evolved] since 2008. However, in 2008 there was still a rather dogmatic approach as to how cluster coordination was intended, and according to my opinion too rigid (Informant 3).

Specialization

Since the cluster approach was introduced in 2005, the cluster approach has been the “way of doing business”. This means that in every disaster the all the clusters have been enrolled. There are a few challenges the cluster approach face in their practice, one of which is called the “silo effect”. There has been a tendency to have the clusters set up in their own sector separate from the other clusters. This is one issue that was raised by one of my informants. The silo effect is especially of concern when organizing inter-cluster coordination.

When you set up a system that very strongly relies on sector based mechanisms, how do you make sure that there is enough space for these other two dimensions? In the way it is set up there isn't [enough space]. [In] my mind, it is one of the bigger failure[s] of the system that then really manage[s] to integrate that very well (Informant 1).

Coordination

OCHA plays a vital role in inter-cluster coordination; however, in most cases it is the Humanitarian Coordinator that is responsible for it. Findings from the evaluation phase II shows that in all six countries, including Haiti and Myanmar, the inter-cluster coordination was weak. Mechanisms exist in order to strengthen the inter-cluster coordination; however, they mainly focus on information sharing “[that does] not systematically identify multidisciplinary issues, duplication or gaps, nor follow up on identified issues” (Steets et al.2010:36).

In the context of the cluster approach, OCHA's role has been poorly defined, though it and the Humanitarian Coordinators are customarily responsible for inter-cluster coordination. Effective inter-cluster coordination is necessary to ensure that multidisciplinary issues that cannot be tackled by individual clusters alone are addressed appropriately and that inter-cluster duplications and gaps are eliminated (Binder & Grünewald 2008:25).

What has been noticeable in the cluster evaluation phase II is that the coordination “links between the cluster approach and existing coordination and response mechanisms [are] weak” (Steets et al 2010:11). This we also saw in the case of Haiti and Myanmar where governmental structures were run parallel to the cluster approach system. In the case of Haiti, there was a noticeable top down approach to the governmental structure. Having parallel coordination structures might not hinder coordination, but might also be a challenge.

In all country cases, humanitarian actors say one of their primary concerns is that too many coordination meetings take too much time and are not effective enough, especially at capital level (Steets et al 2010:34).

The clusters, through the cluster meetings, were initially thought to be negotiating with each other and making important decisions, but what is seen in practice is that the meetings are now more of a mechanism for information sharing.

[T]he backbone of the clusters is that there is somebody there who calls people to a meeting, and then most of the time they sit around the table and a lot [of the meeting] is about telling each other what people are doing--of course with the hope that this information will enable people to have fewer duplication and address some gaps. And off course in some cases you also get beyond that and you do get to discussions on critical issues in the sectors, or sometimes you get to . . . draft something like a cluster strategy, but that is by no means the rule, I think, unfortunately (Informant 1).

In the synthesis report of the cluster approach evaluation phase II it was acknowledged that in all their country studies the humanitarian actors state their concern on coordination meetings. It is also supported by the informants that “too many coordination meetings takes too much time and are not effective enough, especially when cluster exists alongside other coordination meetings” (Steets et al. 2010:34).

Now, can it become too much? Yes it can, if you roll out all eleven or twelve clusters at the country level, at the regional level, at the local level, you can go absolutely bananas, and if in addition you have a gender working group, an environmental working group, and an inter-cluster meeting, ect. you can easily spend your entire week coordinating. Surely that can't be the purpose either. I think coordination is a really unthankful kind of job, because most people will recognize that yes, it is important. Nobody actually wants to spend time doing it, and so is there too much coordination just because you have the cluster approach? I don't think so. You look at an emergency where you have several hundred organizations . . . and it is a complex situation to do [coordination] in the sectors. I think already when we did the global cluster approach evaluation a couple of years ago, . . . you could see that, and the interesting thing this does is that [it] creates a platform for learning, which humanitarian assistance is otherwise really lacking and desperately needs. It has because it's specialized in a sector; people can go into technical issues and can discuss them and agree on approaches. That's very useful (Informant 1).

Leadership

According to the synthesis evaluation, phase II, the “leadership responsibilities have not been sufficiently mainstreamed in cluster lead organizations” (Steets et al. 2010:12). It continuously states that “many clusters are not managed effectively enough and cluster coordinators often have no enough time, insufficient coordination skills or are too junior”

(ibid). The cluster leads' lack of sufficient knowledge about the cluster approach was also mentioned in the earlier case of Myanmar. The evaluation also mentioned that “[m]any clusters have dedicated coordinators at national, but not at sub-national level, where the main coordination tasks arise” (Steel et al. 2010:14). Again, this is seen in the case of Myanmar as well. It was also stated that “centralized decision-making can slow the pace of response” (ibid), meaning that the decisions regarding the clusters are mainly done at the central level, which is usually synonymous with the national level. On the other hand, it was affirmed in the cluster approach evaluation that “[t]he involvement can be counterproductive when clusters are involved in allocation decisions, because it can create conflicts between cluster members, lead to “horse trading” in proposal selections and create conflicts of interest for cluster lead organizations” (Steel et al. 2010:14). “Cluster leads rarely act as real ‘provider of last resort’, yet this role would be important [to] enable clusters to fill the gaps” (Steets et al. 2010:14).

[T]here is not one single actor that provides all the leadership, but in the beginning it was absolutely crucial that OCHA push [this] because they needed to go to the countries and explain what the system was supposed to be like and who is supposed to do what. Behind that is, off course, the critical decisions of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, and I think that if you didn't have that interagency mechanism [to make] the decisions in the first place it wouldn't work at all. Because now all the cluster lead agencies realize that it is quite a lot of work to do that, and they have not been very involved actively in developing the idea and accepting it. I don't think they would play along (Informant 1).

Accountability

There are vertical accountability mechanisms within the UN system that can be used if it is found that the responsibilities are not followed up properly by the cluster leadership within particular partners at the country level. If there are any casualties, these issues can be brought up at the emergency director level (operational directors at headquarters). However, this would be done at the executive director level when dealing with agencies. Finally, it can also be brought up at the IASC principal level, chaired by the Under Secretary-General (USG²²) for OCHA. If there are any issues or challenges with the clusters, they can be brought up to the global cluster level. A challenge in the cluster system is that the lead agencies have signed up to be a cluster lead voluntarily. “They have various participation in the field, so you know, in practice the accountability depends on the exercise [and] personality involved, in particular the personality of the HC” (Informant 2). It will therefore depend on the commitment of the HC and the HCT to impose the authority.

²² Under-Secretary General for OCHA.

I've certainly seen . . . situations of very good HCs, but if they are not willing to impose the authority, things don't happen and agencies are not held accountable for things that they should have done according to their expectations of cluster lead agencies and what things they have signed up to [do]. They have signed up [for] something specific. . . . They have to provide the coordination and information management capacity, they have to be provider of last resort, they have to support their partners, etc. There is quite a lot of details they have signed up for as cluster leads for which they, you know, at least can be theoretically held accountable for. But in practice it depends on someone doing that (Informant 2).

The responses on questions on accountability to the affected people were in general centered on accountability mechanisms, especially feedback and complaints mechanisms, and the assurance that these were followed up. However, there is a general notion that this is not sufficient.

On accountability to affected people, the short answer is that we are really bad at it. It is something that OCHA is working very hard on now to roll down different ways. NGOs probably have a lot more than we have, and the actual mechanisms that we are doing in the field are more ad hoc. We do have sort of hotlines for any, like, specific complaints. But normally we are talking about five or six serious complaints that are exploitations of these. Ideally, these would also be used to issue [complaints] with actual government implementations, selection of beneficiaries or whatever it is (Informant 2).

Being a cluster lead is voluntary and comes on top of the mandate from the host organization. There are minimum standards that are expected from the cluster leads, but there are no possible sanctions if the cluster lead does not lead up to the expectations. From the cluster evaluations in 2010, it was stated that:

[a]n effective accountability relationship requires standards against which to assess behavior, information about relevant actions and the possibility to reward or sanction them. The cluster approach conceptualizes accountability predominantly as hierarchical accountability between cluster lead organizations and the Humanitarian Coordinator (Steets et al. 2010:44).

Additionally, according to the synthesis of evaluation phase II, “interaction with and accountability to Humanitarian Coordinators remain minimal in most cases” (Steets et al. 2010:12).

6.4 Summary of Chapter 6

In this chapter the cluster approach in practice in Myanmar and Haiti have been presented. The relation between the formal organization of the cluster approach and how it works in practice in Myanmar and Haiti will be discussed in the analytical chapter.

The cluster approach in practice seems to have key features of multi-level governance; there are both strong vertical and horizontal formations. The cluster specializations seem to strongly self-regulate at each level of realization. They also seem to be flexible with some of the clusters differing from global clusters. This may be shown by the example of the food cluster that was implemented in both Myanmar and Haiti. In the case of Haiti, there were some already existing clusters, however they were not activated until 2008.

The cluster specializations are implemented by tasks and professions (Gulick 1937). The empirical findings indicate that the coordination were both vertical (global, national, regional and local) and horizontal at each level. The cluster specializations may seem to be loosely coupled, and the silo effect is strongly present in both cases. The inter-cluster coordination appears to be based on information sharing (Boston & Gill 2011). The empirical findings may indicate that information sharing is one coordination response tailored to benefit the special needs of the affected population, which will be accordant with Kettl's (2003) "contingent coordination".

The coordination structures differed between Myanmar and Haiti. In Myanmar the strategic coordination was through the TCG; in Haiti there were many parallel coordination structures which created challenges for the cluster coordination. In both countries it was stated that there were multiple coordination forums which lead to high meeting frequency. These took time and resources from the organizations.

The lead agency model of Provan and Kenis (2007) seemed to describe the cluster leadership in both Myanmar and Haiti. The cluster leadership was organized by cluster lead agencies. However, in Myanmar co-leadership was introduced as a success, which was not necessarily the case in Haiti. Accountability to the cluster lead agencies and the HC was found weak in Myanmar, however the informal accountability to peer clusters had increased. In Haiti there was a focus on hierarchical accountability rather than peer accountability.

The main findings of the cluster approach in practice may be summed up by this table.

Cluster Approach in Practice				
	Specialization	Coordination	Leadership	Accountability
Myanmar	<p>1. Eleven clusters implemented at national, sub (5-6 sub regions) and township level based on tasks and professions.</p> <p>2. Strongly self-regulated and autonomous clusters which led to the “silo effect”.</p>	<p>1. Coordination loosely coupled with informal information sharing as coordination mechanism.</p> <p>2. Contingent coordination with good cooperation among the stakeholders through the TCG.</p> <p>3. High meeting frequency, weak link between Yangon and townships.</p>	<p>1. Cluster lead agencies were responsible for respective clusters. Recruitment was challenging at the township level due to lack of resources and time.</p> <p>2. Co-leadership Listed as a success factor.</p> <p>3. Personal commitment of HC leadership has been crucial for good leadership and coordination.</p>	<p>1. Cluster leads lack of knowledge of the cluster approach and their role.</p> <p>2. Lack of vertical accountability to lead agency and the HC.</p> <p>3. Increased informal horizontal accountability among peer clusters.</p>
Haiti	<p>1. Some already existing clusters that were formally activated in 2008 in preparation for the season, however, in total there were eleven clusters activated at national and local levels based on tasks and professions.</p> <p>2. Strongly self-regulated and autonomous cluster, “silo effect”.</p>	<p>1. Coordination loosely coupled with informal information sharing as coordination mechanism.</p> <p>2. Parallel and multiple structures where the cluster approach was not formally taking part to the existing structures.</p> <p>3. High meeting frequency and multiple coordination forums.</p>	<p>1. Cluster lead functioned as facilitator and service providers, rather than decision makers.</p> <p>2. Confusion of roles and responsibilities with already existing structures.</p> <p>3. Strong, critical and committed cluster members.</p>	<p>1. Focus was strongly on formal hierarchical accountability mechanisms rather than horizontal accountability mechanisms.</p> <p>2. Although focusing on formal accountability, there was an absence of formal and informal accountability mechanism.</p> <p>3. HC lacked necessary information in order to hold the cluster leads accountable.</p>

7. Analysis

In this chapter the main empirical findings will be summarized, interpreted, and possible variations will be explained according to the theoretical framework presented in chapter 4. The interpretation of the cluster approach will be discussed in the view of the instrumental and institutional perspectives. This chapter consists of mainly three parts. The first section will summarize and discuss the main findings in the formal organization of the cluster approach and how it is practiced. The second part of this chapter will discuss the cluster approach in the instrumental and institutional perspective. The last part will discuss the impact of using the instrumental and institutional perspectives.

7.1 Summary of the Main Findings of the Cluster Approach in Formal and in Practice

In the following, the findings from the empirical data presented in chapter 5 and 6 will be emphasized. In comparing the formal organization of the cluster approach and how the cluster approach was applied in the aftermath of the mentioned disasters of 2008, we found that there are variations between how the cluster approach is intended to work and how it is practiced. There are especially four findings that are interesting in order to describe and understand the formal and practical cluster organization. In the following these main findings will also be discussed from a theoretical perspective.

First, it was found that the cluster approach may be described as multi-level governance structure both in terms of the formal organization and how it is applied in practice. Sørensen and Torfing's (2005) definition on governance is also in accordance with the cluster approach organization. As shown in chapter 5 and 6, the cluster approach consist of a) horizontal couplings of mutual dependent, autonomous clusters, b) strongly self regulated clusters with a cluster lead that facilitates and coordinate activities, c) the cluster leads are set by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) community, which can be seen as the political authority and d) together with the local authority the IASC are contributing to how the emergency relief operations are going to be lead and coordinated. The empirical findings from chapter 6 show that the cluster members are emphasizing the personal commitment of the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) and the cluster leads in the cluster leadership. The personal qualities that are pointed out are felt obligation (Boston & Gill 2011) and commitment, their capacities and field experiences. It may therefore be useful to add an additional element to Sørensen and

Torfig's definition on governance -personal commitment- in order to define governance structure in the cluster approach, as we will further explore in the institutional perspective on leadership.

The management of the cluster approach both in formal and how it is practiced can best be described by using the lead agency model (Provan & Kenis 2007). The empirical data from both chapter 5 and 6 indicate that the cluster lead responsibility is voluntarily for all key sectors at each level, the cluster responsibility is additionally to their original mandate from their organization and program implementation. The cluster leads are organizations which have sufficient resources and legitimacy to play the role, and can be both UN and non-UN professionals. The activities in the cluster are being administered, coordinated and facilitated by the cluster lead and the clusters are represented by the cluster lead in the inter-cluster meetings and in the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) meetings. The cluster leads may be seen as a mean for both the clusters by stating the clusters interest and goals, and to the HC by implementing common interests and goals of the cluster approach in to the clusters.

As seen in the formal organization, the cluster approach anticipates numerous stakeholders both vertically and horizontally, the cluster approach may therefore be seen as a structure to handle tensions and opposite interests of these stakeholders at all levels. Vertically the levels range from global, regional (in specific circumstances), national and local, at each level the cluster specializations are organized horizontally. These cluster organizations are operating with each other and are influenced and affected by each other in the clusters. The empirical findings from chapter 6 show that the structure of the cluster approach consists of hundreds of independent but mutual dependent NGO/INGO and UN agencies and organizations. Each organization involved vary in size, services, the way of organizing (hierarchical or non-hierarchical) and vary in degrees of accountabilities. Challenges can be that each organization has different goals, professions and hierarchy. In practice as shown in chapter 6, the multiple meetings at different levels take too much time and resources from the small organizations (Christensen, Fimreite & Lægreid 2013, Pollitt 2003). On the basis of these findings, the loose couplings of the organizations combining both hierarchical and horizontal organizational structure, may strengthen the argument on describing the cluster approach as a multi-level governance structure.

Second, realizations of the cluster approach in Haiti and Myanmar may pose questions regarding whether the cluster approach leads to a fragmentation rather than the intended integration. The cluster specializations are intended according to the formal organization to be flexible when practiced depending on the needs of the specific disaster situation. Additionally the cluster specializations are intended to be operational autonomous and self-regulated. The cluster specialization in the formal organization may be described by using Gulick's (1937) principle of task. The specialization should be done in order to utilize resources where there are gaps in the emergency response, for example in Myanmar and Haiti there was a gap in food distribution²³, the solution both in Haiti and Myanmar was to introduce a new food cluster. This may explain why the cluster approach structure of specialized clusters might differ in each disaster, depending on the needs of the affected country and population. Given that, it can be proposed that the implementation of clusters in the intended formal organization is flexible, since their flexible in which cluster specialization to implement according to the crisis context.

However, the strong principle of task/sector may cause some challenges of coordination since the specialized sectors are focused on self-interest and activities within the sectors rather than the larger goal of the organization (Fimreite & Læg Reid 2005). Findings from Myanmar and Haiti show that that the clusters are very strong on self-regulations. These elements may give possible consequences. First, having strongly operational and self-regulated cluster specializations may increase the possibility of the "silo effect" (Christensen, Fimreite & Læg Reid 2013), which is shown in both the cases of Myanmar and Haiti. Second, the silo effect may cause more fragmentation than integration (ibid) and be a hinder for inter-cluster coordination (Fimreite & Læg Reid 2005). The cluster approach is intended to integrate the different humanitarian sectors together, thus in the cases of Haiti and Myanmar it was found that the inter-cluster coordination was rather weak, especially in Myanmar where the silo-effect was strongly present. This can be explained by Christensen and Læg Reid (2008) who claims that too much specialization may hinder coordination.

Third, the empirical findings indicate that the Humanitarian Country Teams (HCT) and inter-cluster coordination meetings are meetings regarding informal information sharing rather than intended strategic decision making. According to the formal presentation of the cluster

²³ Food is not a part of the original global clusters.

approach, the cluster leads together with the affected Government, the members in the HCT and the HC/RC should make strategic decisions on emergency response. The empirical findings show that in both cases of Haiti and Myanmar these meetings were focused on updating on what they call the 3Ws (Who does What, Where) in order to discover gaps and avoiding duplications in the emergency response. Information sharing is seen as a crucial coordination mechanism in emergency response. The information sharing updates all the organizations on who is doing what. The empirical findings may indicate that information sharing is one coordination response tailored to benefit the special needs of the affected population, which will be accordant with Kettl's (2003) "contingent coordination". The findings also show that the coordination structures in practice are functioning as loosely coupled information units, rather than tight and intense coordination of the inter-governmental work (Boston & Gill 2011). Horizontal coordination like this often requires a participatory process in order to reach a mutual understanding of the overall common goal (Fimreite & Læg Reid 2005), and this may explain why the emphasis on the HCT meetings have been information sharing. Mutual adjustments, agreements in an informal meeting (Mintzberg 1979) among the cluster members may therefore be an adequate description of the standardization of coordination in the cluster approach. The loosely coupled units may also indicate the need for negative coordination (Scharpf 1994), as to minimize conflict among the cluster members.

Horizontal coordination requires both time and resources (Christensen, Fimreite & Læg Reid 2013). The empirical findings from the cases of Myanmar and Haiti show that there is a high level of meeting frequency, and not just from the cluster approach structure. The cluster approach meetings are not the only coordinating forum. The representatives of the organizations in the clusters also attend other governmental or regional coordination forums, in addition to the cluster approach meetings. This is especially evident in the case of Haiti, where there were parallel coordination structures. The cluster approach will then be an additional forum for coordination along with national and regional structures. The same organizations go to multiple meetings discussing many of the same issues, in small organizations the same person attends all the meetings. These findings might indicate that multi-level governance coordination may hinder efficient emergency response. For example, in Haiti the members went to parallel coordination forums, which increase the chance of duplication of work. Even though the HCT meetings are being used as information sharing

arenas and not strategic decision making arenas, it's evident from the empirical data that the national organizations are increasingly being given the chance to participate.

Fourth, accountability in the cluster organization in practice may be described as the problem of “many hands” (Bovens 2007, Thompson 1980) rather than the intention on clarifying hierarchical lines of accountability. The empirical findings from Myanmar and Haiti point out the challenge regarding felt obligation and accountability for the cluster leads. Additionally, there are no minimum criteria for coordination in the formal organization of the cluster approach. This may possibly cause a challenge for the cluster coordination in practice since the coordination activity is up to the cluster leadership to decide. The accountabilities in the cluster approach may be characterized by both professional (vertical/hierarchical and lateral) and social (downward) accountability (Bovens 2007, Humphries 2013), these types of accountability mechanisms may possibly increase the felt obligation (Boston & Gill 2011) of the cluster members and the cluster leads. In the hierarchical accountability (Bovens 2007) the cluster leads will be supervised by the HC, host organization, global clusters and IASC community. Laterally they will be supervised by peer clusters. The affected population will hold the clusters accountable, which may also have the characteristics of shared accountability (Boston & Gill 2011). A poor end result will have a negative effect on the cluster approach as well as the UN and underlying organizations.

In practice, since the cluster lead is assigned voluntarily the cluster approach risks to have a lead agency that may be in a conflict between loyalty to own program implementation and cluster activities. Bovens' (2007) and Thompson's (1980) problem of many hands are here of interest in order to describe and understand the accountability in the cluster approach. The lines of accountability are unclear in the formal organization, this is by Pollitt (2003) a well-known problem for managing network forms of governance. This may cause challenges in both coordination and leadership, if the leadership of the clusters do not follow the responsibilities, which may have an impact on the peer clusters and the overall emergency response. The responsibility of the cluster approach's activities and results are jointly shared (Boston & Gill 2011) by the cluster participants. In downward accountability there were found formal mechanisms such as accountability committees in Myanmar and complaints mechanisms in the field both in Haiti and Myanmar.

According to Bovens (2007) accountability is a relation between actor and forum. This relation consists of three elements, information, interrogation and the possibility of sanctions. In the cluster approach the information goes to the HC in order to monitor and control, this means that the cluster lead person/organization that is held accountable are being reported upwards in the UN organization. The UN has no formal sanctions in circumstances where the responsibility of the person/ organizations has not been followed up. It can therefore be questioned if the cluster approach has more responsibilities than accountabilities, since the responsibilities involves a felt obligation or duty, and that the person/organization is not necessary answerable for their actions.

As a preliminary conclusion, the cluster approach can be described and defined as a multi-level governance structure. The cluster approach may also be described using Sørensen and Torfing's (2005) definition on governance by adding an additional element; personal commitment. The steering of network governance may be in accordance with the lead agency model by Provan and Kenis (2007). As can be shown in the empirical findings there are variations in the intended formal organization of the cluster approach and the organization in practice in Myanmar and Haiti. The cluster approach intended integrated cluster specializations, however in practice the organization has been characterized by the silo effect. Additionally, the intended use of the HCT coordination forums as strategic meetings were rather practiced as information sharing meetings. Furthermore, the cluster accountability is intended to be strengthened through the cluster specializations integration and clear hierarchical line of accountability. However, the responsibilities have the characteristics of being shared and may be described with Thompson's (1980) problem of "many hands". In joint-working and inter-agency cooperation the possibilities of pulverization of accountabilities are present (Boston & Gill 2011), which is confirmed in the findings. The challenges are that the accountability is shared by all cluster members, and does not belong to one specific actor. This may show the specific complexity of responsibility relations in multi-level governance of emergency response in the aftermath of a crisis. The main variation between Haiti and Myanmar are that in Myanmar there was a clear coordination structure through the TCG, which coupled the Myanmar Government, the humanitarian community and ASEAN. In Haiti, on the other hand the cluster approach operated parallel of the Haitian Government. Cooperation with host governments may impact on setting common goals, clear leadership, and map responsibilities, and may explain some of the variations on the cluster implementations.

In this thesis specialization, coordination, leadership and accountability are independently studied in the cluster approach in the aftermath of natural disaster in Myanmar and Haiti. These elements are crucial in order for the cluster approach to be realized successfully, however all these variables are connected to each other, and are dependent on each other for success. Strongly independent and self-regulated clusters may hinder coordination (Fimreite & Læg Reid 2005). Coordination is one of the main elements of the cluster approach. Being a governance and multi-level governance structure may pose specific challenges both in specialization and leadership. Strong horizontal structures also affect accountability mechanisms by a pulverization of accountability. This study has shown that accountability was one of the weak points of the cluster approach, the lack of minimum coordination criteria, along with the lack of knowledge and the view of the cluster approach as rocket science may all combined contribute to the weak point of accountability.

7.2 Main Findings and Theoretical Reflections

Two theoretical perspectives are used in this thesis in order to try to explain the variations that have been found in the empirical data, namely: instrumental and institutional perspective. The perspectives were introduced in chapter 4, along with expectations on empirical findings on each variable specialization, coordination, leadership and accountabilities. These perspectives are used complementary in order to understand and explain the cluster approach from different angles. Using different perspectives allow observation of different parts and different angles of how the cluster approach is operating.

7.2.1 The Instrumental Perspective

Three elements are important in order to explain behavior of the organization in the instrumental perspective, these are: 1) decisions and actions are based on consequences and results, 2) the organization is a mean in order to reach the goals of the organization, 3) change is possible through rational adaption (Christensen et al. 2004). The instrumental perspective includes two variations; the hierarchical and negotiations. In both orientations we view the cluster approach members as rational actors that use the cluster approach as an instrument to reach its goal. The dependent variables, specialization, coordination, leadership and

accountability will be discussed based on the expectations presented in the theoretical framework up to the empirical data that was presented in chapter 5 and 6.

Specialization

From the hierarchical orientation it was expected that the cluster specializations in the formal organization were based on rationality according to the most likely potential needs of the affected population. It was expected that the cluster approach when practiced would be organized by the rationale of the cluster approach formal organizational structure in order to best help the people in need. On the other hand, in the negotiation orientation it was anticipated that the formal organization of the cluster approach to be flexible from crisis to crisis. According to this view the specialization in practice would then be more fragmented and heterogenic rather than similar to the formal organization.

In the formal organization of the cluster approach the expectations of negotiation orientation matches the empirical findings. The cluster specialization is flexible according to the intended formal organization structure, however, the 11 cluster specializations also have characteristics of the hierarchical orientation, they are decided upon as the rationale of possible needs in the affected population.

The expectation from the negotiation orientation may be confirmed in how the cluster approach works in practice in both Myanmar and Haiti. These findings indicate that the cluster specialization is flexible relating to the intended formal organization structure. In practice not every cluster was replicated from the global clusters' formal structure. In Myanmar 11 clusters were activated and implemented. For example the camp coordination and camp management (CCCM) cluster was not activated and there was an additional cluster, namely food cluster, which is not represented at the global level. From this perspective, in Myanmar, the clusters were activated and implemented based on needs and gaps in emergency response. Also in Haiti, the cluster specialization was not a replication of clusters at the global level. In Haiti, the emergency telecommunication and CCCM clusters were not activated, however the food aid²⁴ cluster was an additional cluster implemented in Haiti.

²⁴ In Myanmar it was called food cluster, in Haiti it was called food aid cluster.

Coordination

From the hierarchical orientation it was expected that the coordination of the formal cluster approach organization was coordination by hierarchy and that coordination will be used as an instrument to reach the organization's goals and as a steering mechanism. It was also expected that this would be tightly coupled with the cluster approach in practice. In the negotiation orientation it was expected that the coordination would be dominated by conflict between the cluster members. Therefore in the formal cluster organization it was expected to find decision making forums in order to handle these tensions through the HCT. This was also expected to be found in the cluster approach in practice.

The empirical findings indicate that the negotiation orientation may explain more how the cluster approach works in the formal organization. Thus, the cluster coordination architecture may indicate that there is a coordination hierarchy in the formal cluster approach organization. However, it put a lot of emphasis in the formal organization of the HCT as a decision making-forum in order to bring the cluster lead agencies together along with the hosting government, the HC and the cluster coordinators. The strategic decisions on the national level are intended being made in the coordination meetings between the humanitarian community and the affected government who will set the overall short term and long term goals, vision and leadership. This will affect how the cluster approach operates since these meetings will set the goals for what the needs are and what needs to be covered by the humanitarian community. Also, as previously mentioned, the HCT is supposed to work as a strategic forum for the cluster approach. In the guidelines for the cluster approach it states that the goals depend on the needs in the affected population, these goals will therefore be up to the leadership to decide upon in the field. This indicates a trust in the leaders as rational actors who decide the goals, supports view of the instrumental perspective on cluster coordination and leadership. These findings might indicate that the cluster approach structure is dealing with possible tensions from the different stakeholders in the cluster approach structure.

The empirical findings regarding how the cluster approach worked in Myanmar and Haiti are contrasting. In Myanmar one may explain the empirical findings with a mix between the hierarchical and negotiation orientation. On the other hand, in Haiti the negotiation orientation might explain the complexity of the cluster approach implementation. The expectations on the emphasis on decision making forums are inconsistent with the theoretical expectation. In Myanmar, it was rather the regional coordination platform TCG that was important for

decision making rather than the HCT. The decision making forum being at top level, may indicate coordination by hierarchy, the TCG was established in order for the cluster approach (through the HC), the Government of Myanmar and the ASEAN to make strategic decisions from the top level, pointing out directions for the humanitarian emergency response to the Cyclone Nargis. They were discussing both short term and long term development goals and resilience. This resulted in that both Government of Myanmar and the cluster approach had agreed upon common grounds and goals of how the emergency response was going to be coordinated. These findings may therefore from this point of view be in accordance with the negotiation orientation. The clusters in Myanmar did meet regularly on inter-cluster meetings and HCT meetings discussing and updating information which is important for coordination. A plausible explanation for the weaker horizontal coordination may be explained by the fact that the cluster approach having strong, self-regulated, specialized sectors. Having strong specialized sectors as mentioned may give special challenges for coordination (Christensen and Lægheid 2008).

However, in the case of Haiti, the empirical findings may be consistent with the expectations on the negotiation orientation. In Haiti, several parallel coordination systems existed simultaneously. For example, the government and the international humanitarian community may be looked as two parallel worlds of coordination, and the study shows that these two communities did not communicate well with each other. In Haiti the clusters of humanitarian aid were not included in the already existing governmental coordination structures, and this in turn left the clusters outside governmental coordination. As a consequence, such duplications of coordination structures may counteract the workings of the cluster approach. To make it even more complex, MINUSTAH which was present ahead of the cluster implementation had previously introduced another coordination initiative “table approach” which had the exact same goals and coordination structures as the cluster approach. The cluster approach had to operate along with the table approach. This double coordination structure led to several coordination challenges: first, it was stated that the coordination was too labor intensive (Christensen, Fimreite & Lægheid 2013) one example was that there were too many coordination meetings the same NGO had to go to multiple coordination meetings due to the parallel coordination structures. Second, the lack of a common strategic goals from the top management, made the coordination even more complex as would be expected in the light of negotiation orientation. The different stakeholders had different interests and goals. Also, this may explain the confusion of coordinating roles both with the government and the table

approach. As a plausible consequence negative coordination (Scharpf 1994) may be needed in order to minimize conflict in the strongly individual clusters.

From the negotiation orientation a positive aspect with opening up the cluster approach is that it opens up for a more broad decision making forums (Christensen et al. 2004), which allows the humanitarian organizations to express their opinions, share information, negotiate, participate in network activities and influence the cluster approach coordination. The challenge may be combining all the structures together with the cluster approach. There are as many organizational structures, and interests as there are organizations in the humanitarian community, which may lead to conflict of emergency coordination structures.

Leadership

It was expected in the hierarchical orientation that the process of decision making in the formal organization of the cluster approach to be agreed upon, since the decisions are made on the organization goals and by rationality. The leaders in practice were expected to make rational calculations where the cluster members and leaders know the goals of the cluster approach. From the negotiation orientation it was expected that the process of decision making in the formal organization was fragmented, since self-interest, compromises and negotiations may be different than the overall goals. In practice, the relative strength of the cluster lead in the network would depend on the resources of the cluster members, it was also expected that the lead agency would strongly influence in the decision making.

In the formal organization of the cluster approach the overall goal is to improve outcomes for the affected population, which will differ in each crisis and disaster. The goals for each crisis will therefore be decided upon by the leaders in each crisis. Therefore the negotiation orientation may be better in order to understand the formal organization of the cluster approach. The cluster lead agencies are given responsibilities in addition to own program activity, such as coordination of cluster activities, support the HC, act as provider of last resort. The responsibilities give the cluster lead agency the possibility of influencing the decision making. The cluster lead agency is representing the cluster members in a cluster, there is therefore the possibility for the cluster lead to impose own self-interests and agendas in the decision making forums.

The expectations in the negotiation orientation may be contrasting with the findings in the research of the cluster approach in practice. Empirical findings show that the cluster lead agencies in Myanmar, felt they were not given the proper information needed in order to lead the cluster approach. This may challenge the leadership in the cluster approach, since in order for an organization to function optimally according to intended goals, the members of the organization needs to first, know the goal and mission of the organization (Christensen et al 2004), second, have the time and resources, horizontal coordination takes time and resources (Christensen, Fimreite & Lægreid 2013), which can also be stated from the practical perspective in the cluster approach. The expectation from the hierarchical orientation on that the cluster members and leaders know the goals of the cluster approach may therefore not be confirmed and the possibilities for more power struggles and negotiations are assumable more present. In order to make rational decisions, all possible outcomes and consequences must be calculated. Lacking knowledge on how the cluster approach is functioning and lacking of understanding in how to implement the cluster approach may therefore hinder rational decision making and also lead to possible conflicts of interests. In the case of Haiti, the lack of sufficient knowledge about the cluster approach goals and the high turn-over may explain the confusion of roles and goals of the cluster approach.

It was not found sufficient evidence in the empirical data to confirm the expectation on fragmented leadership and cluster leads influencing decision with own agendas. Since the HCT meetings were mainly used as information sharing arena's both in Myanmar and Haiti the relative strength of strategic decision making members among the cluster leadership is hard to identify. The voluntary cluster lead responsibilities may lead to a fragmented leadership, since the cluster lead agencies' priorities may be of the host organization and not on cluster coordination activities. Also, there is a possibility that the cluster lead agencies are influencing the decision making forums through the HC with own agendas; however there has not been found evidence for this in the empirical findings.

Accountability

From a hierarchical orientation, it was expected that the accountability was formalized through hierarchy based on routines and rules, the authority was expected to be delegated and administrative and political accountability were expected to be central. From the negotiation orientation it was expected that there was a small degree of control, since the clusters were expected to be joint working. It was expected that the formal organization of the cluster

approach would be formalized on horizontal accountability, where there would be equal authority and responsibility. The formal and practical structure of the cluster approach was expected to be tightly coupled.

The empirical findings from the formal organization of the cluster approach may support the expectations from the hierarchical orientation. There are formally hierarchical accountability (Bovens 2007) in the formal cluster approach organization. Such for example, the cluster members are accountable to the cluster leads and the global clusters, the cluster leads are responsible to the HC and the HCT, the HC/RC is responsible to the ERC. This vertical line of accountability seems to be clear; it states the reporting and authority line. The roles and responsibility are cleared out in Terms of References and in cluster approach guidelines. In the empirical findings in the formal organization of the cluster approach it could also indicate an administrative accountability (Bovens 2007), where it was stated that the HC assisted by OCHA plays a crucial role in monitoring the overall response. Since the instrumental perspective is also concerned with the consequences of the decisions of its members, it could also therefore be expected that there are sanction opportunities in the organization. People/organizations are held accountable if or when their responsibilities are not fulfilled. Thus the empirical findings from the formal organization of the cluster approach may indicate that the authority is delegated in horizontal accountability, having cluster lead agencies for each sector of response, which may consist with the negotiation orientation. The cluster leads are responsible for the ensuring effective assessment and responses in their respective clusters. Additionally, there is a shared accountability to the affected population, and the clusters are to collective work and contribute to enhance the cluster approach.

In the case of Haiti the focus of the cluster leadership was on formal accountability, however this failed due to the system of diverse and independent actors. From the empirical findings of the cluster approach in Myanmar, the informal accountability among peer clusters was increasing, and the cluster members did not feel accountable toward the cluster leads rather to the Humanitarian Coordinator (vertical). Also, the follow up and monitoring was not being done systematic. These findings may not consistent with the expectations from the negotiation orientation. The findings indicate that there was small degree of control and there was horizontal accountability. On the other hand, the focus of the cluster leadership was on formal accountability mechanisms. As stated from the cluster approach evaluations phase II on Haiti, the reason for a “disappointing performance could be the cluster approach’s focus on formal

mechanism for accountability, which are difficult to implement within a system of diverse and independent actors” (Binder & Grünewald 2010:32). The focus on hierarchical accountability also caused that the HC was dependent on information on the cluster leads. However, the HC lacked this information in order to hold the cluster leads accountable. Where there is mistrust or the expected responsibility is not fulfilled, the reporting line goes upwards in the UN system, there is however no formal sanction for the person or organization who is accused. Since the responsibility is voluntarily the person or organization who is responsible may decide upon themselves how much resources and time to spend on the cluster lead and coordination of the clusters in addition their own organizations program implementation.

Preliminary Conclusion

From the general empirical implications it was expected that there would be a tight coupling between how the formal organization of the cluster approach and how it is practiced. It was also expected that the negotiation orientation would be able to explain more. However, what has been shown is that there are variations in the intended formalized organization and how it has functioned in Myanmar and Haiti.

7.2.2 The Institutional Perspective

The institutional perspective opens up to understand the cluster approach integrated with its external and internal environment. Especially there are three elements to understand the institutional perspective, 1) the decision making process is based on logic of appropriateness, 2) discovering goals and the process up to discover these goals 3) change is challenging due to historical inefficiency, the institution is robust and slow (Christensen et al. 2004). The focus is on cultural orientation and opens up to understand variations in how the formal cluster approach organization will vary from how it operates in practice due to the environmental context and organizational culture. Also, it was expected that the governance is more process driven rather than result driven.

Specialization

The expectations regarding the specializations in the cluster approach according to the institutional perspective; was that the formal organization of the cluster approach would lead to a flexible specialization. The cluster specializations were expected to vary depending on the crisis context.

From the findings in the empirical data the cluster guidelines states that the cluster are meant to be flexible to the identified needs in the population. The needs then will give various types of specialization depending on the capacity, resources and needs of the affected country. These findings from the formal organization of the cluster approach may therefore be coherent with the expectation in the institutional perspective.

Findings from the cluster approach in practice, indicate that, as already mentioned the clusters that were rolled out in Haiti and Myanmar were not replicating the global clusters. In both countries there was an additional cluster specialization, in Myanmar it was named food cluster in Haiti it was called food aid. When organizations are adding elements in the organizational structure the organization members may resist, to make sure that the new element is compatible with the organizational culture and identity, one may do a compatibility testing (Brunsson & Olsen 1990). In the empirical findings there are no signs for resistance towards implementing new cluster specializations in both Myanmar and Haiti. It is therefore plausible to assume that the new food cluster had passed the compatibility test in the cluster approach. The different names of the clusters across countries may also imply the flexibility and possibility of compatibility testing of the cluster specializations in both countries.

Coordination

From the institutional perspective it was anticipated to find that the coordination in the formal organization were expected to be informal information sharing forums. The cluster coordination was expected to be formed by the institutional environment it was operating in.

The empirical findings in the formal cluster approach organization indicates that even though the formal cluster specializations are loosely coupled units, the coordination structures are through formal HCT meetings and the inter-cluster meetings. In the inter-cluster meetings the cluster coordinator are to meet and discuss the emergency response, both at the strategic and operational level. Additionally, the cluster leads are stated to be obliged to interact with each other. This may imply that informally information sharing forums are not meant to be taken place in the formal organization of the cluster approach. The expectation on the cluster approach on coordinate through informal information sharing forum may therefore not be consistent with the empirical findings in the formal organization of the cluster approach.

The empirical findings from the cluster approach in both Myanmar and Haiti, are in accordance with the expectation on that the coordination structures are used as more informal information sharing forums. Also, the cluster approach was not the only coordinating forum. Information sharing is a crucial coordination mechanism in emergency response, the information sharing updates all the organizations on who is doing what, discovering gaps and may help to hinder duplications which may improve the overall emergency response.

The empirical findings from Myanmar may be coherent with the expectation on adaption of crisis context. In Myanmar, at the time the cluster approach was implemented, there was a strict hierarchical military regime, and the military regime was skeptical letting in international humanitarian aid workers. The UN was present ahead of the disasters, however then it was a focus on developmental problems, the issues when the cluster approach was implemented then was that the path of development cooperation with the Myanmar government which continued in the cooperation of humanitarian aid. Also, in the case of Myanmar, the regional TCG was created in order for the international community and the Myanmar government to agree on the humanitarian aid. Creating a new regional coordination structure may be a symbol of cooperation among the Myanmar government and the international humanitarian aid community. This type of common agreement may have impacted how the members viewed and acted in the coordination practices. The common agreement may then have given an impression of a common vision and a common goal, create a common organizational culture, which could then lead to the expectation that the coordination of the clusters were highly integrated, even though the issue of “silo effect” was present.

Haiti is also coherent with the expectation on that cluster coordination is expected to be formed by the institutional environment it is operating in. As mentioned, already existing governmental coordination structures were in place ahead of the cluster approach was implementation. From the empirical findings the government had clear divisions on coordination of humanitarian aid, which may seem that the cluster approach was set a bit to the side. It was stated in the empirical data that the cluster approach did not participate in these coordination foras. Even though the cluster approach was left outside the government coordination mechanism, the cluster approach gave an information sharing platform for both international and national NGOs in Haiti, which may have led to an integrated coordination among the national and international organizations. The similarity of goals may have led to

confusion of the cluster approach's role and meaning in Haiti. These two approaches were seen as complementary to each other; however it can be debated if these duplication of coordinating structures may have given signals to the cluster members that the cluster approach might have been redundant.

Leadership

It was expected according to the institutional perspective that in formal organization the leadership process driven and “infused by values” (Selznick 1957). It was expected that the cluster approach had committed leaders, who understood the approach and were determined. The leaders were also expected to represent, promote and defend the internal cluster interests and to cooperate with other clusters in order to minimize conflicts.

In the formal organization of the cluster approach the leadership may be in accordance with the expectations on a process driven leadership. The processes are defined through the many statements and cluster leadership guidelines, handbooks and Terms of References. When practiced, the cluster members and cluster leads state that they feel they don't have sufficient knowledge of the cluster approach prior going to the field. The cluster leads' roles are described in very detail in various UN and IASC-guidelines, ToRs, courses and handbooks of the cluster approach, and the empirical findings in chapter 6 show that the leaders had to take multiple courses and read hundreds of pages prior going to the field. According to the empirical data, in order for the cluster leadership and coordination to function optimally the cluster leads and cluster members need to know first what the cluster approach is, what the goals are, how it is organized and how to solve the problems in emergency response. One of the informants stated that the cluster approach is portrayed and understood as “rocket science” by some cluster members. This mindset may portray the cluster approach as something more complex than it is perceived, while others understand it as “just working together towards a common goal”. The common understanding of the cluster approach as “rocket science” may have had an impact on how the leadership of the cluster approach was practiced. The cluster approach guidelines may have been abstract, and the practice of implementation of the cluster approach may therefore be explained to have varied due to the different understandings of what leadership of the cluster approach was and how to adapt to the specific disasters which may explain the variations of leadership in Myanmar and Haiti.

In both Myanmar and Haiti, the role of the HC was emphasized, and was seen as crucial for the emergency response. These findings may be consistent with the expectation on the importance of the leaders' commitment, understanding and determination. The HC role was also essential in the making of the cluster approach and it seems that their role and responsibilities have remained as it was formed in the formal organization of the cluster approach. The personal commitment of the HC was seen as critical in order for the emergency response to be coordinated and led in a satisfying manner. The HC's personal experience, background, knowledge and personality were mentioned to be of importance in the success of the cluster approach, this was especially in Myanmar. There is a strong reliance on the HC and his/hers ability to lead the emergency response. The cluster approach ToRs and guidelines for the HC gives the HC detailed instructions and gives an impression of the cluster approach as a process driven approach. However, in the empirical cases of Myanmar and Haiti, it may seem that the HC and his/hers commitment and the results may be of greater importance.

The cluster leads both in Myanmar and Haiti were according to the empirical data consisting of mainly UN agencies and organizations²⁵. The fact the cluster leads were mainly UN agencies and organizations, may have an impact on how they were led. Each cluster lead was representing their cluster members and activities in the HCT meetings and inter-cluster meetings. As can be seen in both Haiti and Myanmar, most of the cluster leads have been UN organizations, which historically come from hierarchical organizations. In Haiti 9 out of 11 clusters²⁶, and in Myanmar 10 out of 11 clusters²⁷ were led by either a UN agency/programmes/fund/organization. The organizational culture, routines and roles may be different depending on the different organization. Coming together in the cluster approach, this may have caused fragmented decision making processes.

Accountability

In the formal organization of the cluster approach it was expected that Bovens' (2007) social and professional accountability would be of subject. Multiple accountabilities (Pollitt 2003:93) were expected to be found in the formal cluster approach organization. It was also

²⁵ See Appendix IV and V for tables with cluster lead agencies in Myanmar and Haiti.

²⁶ Logistics cluster was co-led by ATLAS

²⁷ Education cluster was co-led by Save the Children, Health cluster was co-led by MERLIN and Nutrition cluster was co-led by GOUM.

expected from an institutional perspective that soft factors (Boston & Gill 2011) would be prominent mechanisms for the cluster approach in accountability in practice.

In the formal organization of the cluster approach it was found multiple accountabilities through the enactment of responsibilities to the cluster lead agencies and the HC. The responsibilities for the cluster lead agencies are voluntarily and on top of their responsibilities in host organization, in addition there were found no minimum criteria for coordination. It is put much trust in the cluster leaders to pursue the goals of coordination. In order to build trust it may be indicated from the empirical data to be used soft factors (Boston & Gill 2011) such as delegating responsibilities and authorities to the cluster leads (power), building teams in the clusters and leadership. The expectations on social and professional accountability about whom is rendered accountable (Bovens 2007) may be in accordance with the empirical findings of the formal organizations of the cluster approach. It is clearly stated that the cluster approach is a mechanism in order to improve accountability to the affected population. The downward accountability is collected accountability of all cluster leaders and member organizations of their implemented actions to the affected population. Although the accountability to affected population has been cited as one of the most critical areas for improvements in the cluster approach this has been one of the weakest part of accountability, especially in concrete accountability standardized mechanisms to the affected population.

However, these findings from the formal organizations of the cluster approach are not in accordance with the findings from the cluster approach implementation in Myanmar and Haiti, the accountability to the affected population was found weak. There were no standardized accountability mechanisms, however both in Myanmar and in Haiti, ad hoc mechanisms were taken place such as accountability committees and complaints mechanisms. The work of the cluster did not promote participatory approaches and their work did not focus on their impact of the affected population (Steet et al 2010).

The accountability mechanisms may seem to be explained due to differences in people in charge and the trust and commitment they have to their responsibilities, different interests and needs, tacit knowledge and loyalty to host lead agency programs. The leaders govern based on the trust that is given them and that they will govern in the most appropriate way, without being controlled or followed up. Time and resources have especially come up as challenges, this is visible in the case of Myanmar where the same cluster lead agencies, were expected to

coordinate as cluster leads at both national and local level. The trust in the cluster leads will and ability to perform coordination activities may make it more difficult to detect if the cluster coordination is where it is supposed to be. This may have had an impact on the host lead agencies programs to implement own activities. A loyalty to own organizations interest may cause conflict for the cluster lead responsibility, especially if the cluster leads' goals is contested with the cluster approach's coordination activities. Also, in time constraints own activities may be put as a higher priority rather than cluster lead responsibilities. It was also stated by one of the informants, that being a cluster lead was not something that was necessarily desired, but at the same time, if someone is doing the job, it might as well be them in charge. The organizational culture around responsibilities and accountabilities may therefore be suggested as essential for the cluster approach in order for the persons/organization to follow up on their responsibilities. In the light of the institutional perspective these challenges may explain why there were variations of accountability mechanisms both from the formal organization and how it is in practice. The clusters have also shown horizontal accountability through developing strategies for exchanging lessons learned and best practices (Steets et al. 2010). The Sphere Handbook helps to define horizontal accountability by defining minimum standards of relief. These standards have increasingly been adopted both in Myanmar and Haiti.

Preliminary Conclusion

In the general empirical implications it was expected that the formal organization of the cluster approach and how it works in practice would be loosely coupled. The institutional perspective opens up to understand the cluster approach integrated with its context and its organizational culture. The institutional perspective seems to especially give plausible explanations on the variations coordination and accountability, variations may be explained by the environmental context, culture, path dependency and identities.

7.3 Impact of Using the Instrumental and Institutional Perspective

The instrumental and institutional perspectives give us possible explanations based on using different “goggles” analyzing the cluster approach. In this section I will try to map out the where the perspectives are complimenting each other. Each box will contain either low, medium or high, this will say something about the strength of explanation of the perspectives.

It is expected a strong coupling by the formal organization and how it works in practice in the instrumental perspective, and it's expected a louse coupling in the institutional perspective.

Variables	Explanatory Strength of the Analytical Perspectives	
	Instrumental <i>Strong Coupling</i>	Institutional <i>Loose Coupling</i>
Specialization	High	Medium
Coordination	Medium	High
Leadership	Weak	High
Accountability	Weak	High

As we can see from the table above the strength of coupling were various depending on the perspective. In the instrumental perspective the cluster specialization was strongly coupled in cluster specialization. Although, the institutional perspective could also explain the variations of cluster specializations, the guidelines intended the cluster specialization to be flexible. There was a loose coupling between how the coordination was intended and it was in practice. It varied depending on the crisis context and the governmental structures for emergency response in Haiti and Myanmar. However, it was also depending on the different organization structures that were combined. The coordination mechanism in the HCT meetings on information sharing is contrasting the intention on the HCT as decision making meetings. In cluster leadership there was a loose coupling between the formal organization and how it was in practice. The personal commitment and determination was seen as crucial for the cluster leadership. In accountability, the institutional perspective could explain the variations in how the formal cluster accountability was and how it was in practice.

In this analysis it may seem that there was loose coupling between how the formal cluster organization is and how it is in practice, which is in accordance with the institutional perspective. However, the instrumental perspective gives a complementary explanation for variations in the formal organizations and the way it has worked in Myanmar and Haiti. The two perspectives are dynamic and in a complex relation to each other. The members in an organization are rarely one dimensional (Christensen et al. 2004:200). It's therefore important to view the relation between these two perspectives, for example in the relation between instrumentality and culture, is the possibility to change informal norms and values through organizational structures, or that cultural traditions may influence on the decision making (Christensen et al. 2004). In an organization there may be complex relations between planned

strategies and path-dependency, these complex relations may reinforce interaction or opposite to counteract each other depending on the given situation. By using the perspectives complementary one may analyze these relations in the phenomenon that is studied (Christensen et al. 2004).

The strengths and weaknesses in the perspectives presented in the table are based on the empirical reasoning in the theoretical framework. This means that the reasoning that was presented in chapter 4 will influence on how much explanatory strength the different perspectives has. This is due to the fact that the perspectives offer two different reasoning's and therefore could offer different explanations of empirical findings. It could also mean that both the institutional context along with the organizational structure interact on the environment the clusters are operating in. Additionally, the different variables interacting with each other, it might be thinkable that the strong coupling on instrumental perspective on specializations, along with the medium strength on loose coupling in the institutional perspective might explain why the coupling in coordination was loose. The way an organization is specialized may have an impact on coordination.

The different perspectives influence each other and open up new windows, but they also limit the possibilities. This will be further discussed in the next chapter under theoretical implications by using these two perspectives.

8. Conclusion

8.1 Summary: Research Questions and the Answers

This study has been build around the following research questions:

1) How is the formal cluster approach organized and how does it work in practice after natural disasters in Myanmar and Haiti, with a focus on specialization, coordination, leadership and accountability? 2) How can possible variations in the formal organization of the cluster approach and how it works in practice be explained?

The research question is two-fold, first, to describe the cluster approach both in its formal organization and in practice. Second, to examine and explain variations in the formal organization and the cluster approach in practice, using Myanmar and Haiti as examples. It's evident that there are variations in how the cluster approach was intended to be implemented and how it worked in Myanmar and Haiti. There are especially four findings that are interesting in order to describe and understand the formal and practical cluster organization.

First, multi-level governance theory has shown to be reasonable to describe the complexity of the cluster approach both in its formal organization and how it has worked in practice. Sørensen and Torfing's (2005) definition on governance may seem to describe the cluster approach structure in a useful way by adding an extra element on personal commitment. The steering of the network governance, both formally and practically can also be described by using the lead agency model by Provan and Kenis (2007). Second, the empirical findings from the realizations of the cluster approach in Haiti and Myanmar may pose the question on whether the cluster approach leads to a fragmentation rather than an intended integration. Third, the empirical findings of the cluster approach in Haiti and Myanmar indicate that the Humanitarian Country Team meetings are in fact meetings on informal information sharing rather than the intended strategic decision making. This may indicate that the coordination structures are loosely coupled information units, rather than tight and intense coordination of the inter-governmental work as it was intended (Boston & Gill 2011). Fourth, accountability in the cluster organization may indicate that there is a problem of *many hands* (Bovens 2007, Thompson 1980) since there are no minimum criteria for coordination. The empirical findings from Myanmar and Haiti point out the challenges regarding felt obligation (Boston & Gill

2011) and accountability for the cluster leads. The challenge may seem to have led to a pulverization of accountability.

The instrumental and institutional perspective are used complementary to explain variations between the formal organization of the cluster approach and how it was applied in the cases of Myanmar and Haiti. When it comes to specialization, the empirical findings put forward in chapter 5 and 6 are largely in consistence with the instrumental perspective; the cluster specialization is strongly coupled between what is intended in the formal organization and how it is in practice, since the guidelines intended the specifics of the cluster specialization to be flexible. In terms of coordination, the empirical findings from Haiti and Myanmar indicate that there is a loose coupling between how the coordination was intended and how it was practiced. These findings may indicate that the coordination varies depending on the institutional context and the governmental structures for emergency response, which may also explain why the coordination structures of the emergency response in Myanmar and Haiti was significantly different.

Another point to notice was that the emergency responses in these two countries were dependant on the existing and multiple organization structures that were combined with the emerging cluster organization. The study shows that in terms of cluster leadership, there was a loose coupling between the formal organization and how it worked. The personal commitment and determination of the persons in charge of the cluster leads was seen as crucial for the cluster leadership in contrast to rules and procedures as the primary mechanisms to ensure good cluster leadership. When it comes to accountability, the institutional perspective can explain the variations in how the formal cluster accountability was intended and how the accountability worked in the two cases. The institutional perspective may seem to explain a large degree of the variations of the realization of the cluster approach in the two cases of emergency response examined in this study. However, some of the findings open up to multiple explanations, and the instrumental perspective gives a complementary explanation for several of the variations in the formal organizations and the way it has worked in Myanmar and Haiti.

8.2 Placing the Findings in the Literature

There is a limited amount of research in the field of organization theory on the cluster approach as a multi-level governance structure. This study may therefore hopefully contribute to a greater theoretical understanding of the cluster approach as a complex organization, and how to manage such complex networks in disasters. The aim for this study is also to be a contribution to the theoretical field and understanding of multi-level governance structure in disasters, including the challenges of complex and hybrid relations on specialization, coordination, leadership and accountability.

The findings in this thesis may provide relevant input to the research field where the emphasis is on governance structures operating in crises. This may especially be the case where the empirical focus is on compounded organizations (Trondal et al. 2010), with multiple stakeholders at multi-dimensional levels (supranational, national and local) and with a cooperation between hierarchical and network arrangements. The empirical findings from this thesis indicate that the specific structure and organization of the cluster approach is important in order to provide a proper response to a given disaster. The specific structure and organization may facilitate both vertical and horizontal coordination and leadership in emergency responses. Additionally, paying proper attention to the structure may facilitate the possibility for cross-national organizations, supranational agencies and national organizations working together. As mentioned, the institutional and instrumental perspectives coexist and shed light on different characteristics of the specific organization of the emergency response. The empirical findings of this thesis also indicate that when the cluster approach's organizational structure face different institutional factors it will adapt to the specific institutional context, in other words the structure will be influenced by the culture it's implemented in.

In addition, the cluster approach is a governance structure that was created by the UN in order to play a key role in responding to a humanitarian crisis, where challenges include negotiations and tensions between member states' interests and agencies with specific crisis tasks. The findings in this thesis may therefore be of interest to other cross-national governance agencies and structures that aim to play a key role in preventing and responding to crises, for example the European Union. Where the international crisis management has to negotiate tensions between crisis management requires and members states interests (Boin, Busuioac & Groenleer 2013:2). "The EU developed all of this capacity in a punctuated and

fragmentary manner: with each crisis, member states invested additional authority in the Union's budding crisis management apparatus. There is, in other words, no institutional blueprint" (Boin, Busuioc & Groenleer 2013:2). The empirical findings in this thesis are related to the lead agency model (Provan & Kenis 2007). Pulverization of accountability (Boston & Gill 2011) may be especially interesting topics for research in comparing EU crisis management and the cluster approach.

The questions that arise from this study may also be interesting to future research on the dynamic relationship between the supranational and the national levels. In order to analyze the behavior and to understand the complexity of these relations in compounded organizations, there are four complementary behavior dynamics; intergovernmental, supranational, departmental and epistemic dynamic (Trondal et al. 2010:12). There is a tension between supranational and national organizations, and to make it more complicated each of these organizations have a specific set of behavioral and role perceptions (Trondal et al. 2010:12). The tensions just mentioned may be confirmed by the findings in this thesis, where the institutional perspective to a large degree may explain the variations of the realization of the cluster approach in the cases of Haiti and Myanmar. As shown in the empirical data, there is a great heterogeneity among the organizations that make part of the cluster approach, and such heterogeneity and strong self-regulation may have caused greater institutional differentiation and thus a different organization all together.

The empirical findings in this thesis may also confirm several of the assumptions of the already existing theories put forward in chapter 4. It may therefore give a deeper theoretical understanding of for instance the relations of accountability in multi-level governance structures with supranational and national actors, especially on lateral accountability (Humphries 2013), or what Boston and Gill's (2011) defines as shared responsibility. Boston and Gill (2011) propose that shared accountabilities may cause many problems in joint working arrangements and inter-agency collaborations. The lines of accountability may be unclear and sanctions for poor performance may be difficult to apply. The empirical data of how the cluster approach is practiced gives an example of shared accountabilities and how it may have led to a pulverization of responsibilities in the organization of the emergency responses in question. This also confirms Bovens' (2007) and Thompson's (1980) problem of *many hands*, which has been a relevant theory in order to describe and understand the

accountability mechanism in the governance of complex organization, i.e. it may be a challenge to deal the accountability to one actor or organizations.

8.3 Theoretical Implications

The classifying theory that has been used in this thesis in order to describe the complexity of the cluster approach is multi-level governance theory. This study has pointed on some of the challenges that the cluster approach faces being organized as a multi-level governance structure. The cluster approach is a structure with both strong hierarchical and horizontal formations. The cluster organization is multi-dimensional and one may find in the cases of Myanmar and Haiti they are complex in practice, and as shown in chapter 6 there are variations in the application of the cluster approach in the respective countries. Compounded systems are based on the assumption of “mobilization of multiple complementary sets of institutions, actors, interests, decision-making arenas, values, norms and cleavages” (Trondal et al. 2010:11, Olsen 2010). These compounded systems are seldom one-dimensional, however they are multi-dimensional organizations which are dynamic and with constant tensions between the entities, as mentioned above (Trondal et al. 2010).

These tensions are also inflected in the empirical focus in this thesis, which in turn is analyzed in terms of specialization, coordination, leadership and accountability. These variables have been used in order to structure and classify the cluster approach. As shown in chapter 7, these variables are connected, and the interaction between these variables and how they influence each other make the cluster approach even more complex to manage. In the empirical findings from the cluster approach in Haiti and Myanmar we have seen that the variables are hard to explain in isolation, since they interact substantially. In particular, there is a difficult trade off between specialization and coordination. For example, the strong horizontal formations of the cluster specializations may have consequences on distribution of accountability and may cause challenges for horizontal coordination. Coordination of the cluster approach is also a responsibility of the cluster leadership, which makes also these two variables hard to separate. Furthermore, good coordination may have an impact on how the leadership is portrayed and vice versa. Interestingly, in practice one may find that the loosely connected cluster specializations actually created a need for information sharing as a coordination mechanism, instead of the intended strategic decision-making forum. Another factor worth mentioning is the loose organizational coordination structure, which might cause challenges with placing

specific responsibilities on one actor, which in turn may lead to a pulverization of accountabilities (Boston & Gill 2011). These consequences may be argued based on how the cluster specialized was formed and how the cluster leadership is applied as a multi-level governance structure.

Furthermore, in order to understand and explain how the formal organization of the cluster approach may differentiate from the practical realization, the instrumental and institutional perspective has been employed as a complementary strategy, (Roness 1997). Using a synthesis perspective to examine the cluster approach allow to successfully analyze both the structural organization and the cultural impact of the cluster approach, in both describing and explaining the complex multi-level challenges and seeing the cluster approach as both process and result oriented. This strategy has been useful in order to give an extensive explanation from the two perspectives, with the empirical focus on specialization, coordination, leadership and accountability. For example, from the instrumental perspective it was expected to find a strong coupling between formal organization and the actual practice and from the institutional perspective it was expected to find a loose coupling between the formal cluster organization and how it was in practice. Both perspectives ended up contributing to different observations of the cluster approach and provided different explanations on the behavior of the members in organization (Roness 1997). These perspectives also have influenced the reasoning and interpretation on specializations, coordination, leadership and accountability in the cluster approach.

An alternative analytical strategy could have been using the perspectives competitive. A competitive strategy endorse for testing the perspectives, observing the organization from one side, additionally to map out strength and weaknesses, and find out which perspective explains more (Roness 1997). Also, the instrumental and institutional perspective may not have covered all aspects of the variation in the cluster approach implementation. To strengthen the analytical framework other possible perspectives could have been introduced such as the myth and governance perspectives. A key element in the myth perspective is that the organizations are operating in institutional environments where there are norms and routines and expectations on how the institutions should behave (Christensen et al. 2004:75). The institutions adapt to the environment and try to incorporate and reflect the environments expectations, and thus becoming more and more alike on the surface (Christensen et al. 2004:75). The myths can be introduced and understood as recipes for organizational structure

with components such as concepts for “good governance” (Christensen et al. 2004:78). In the myth perspective, one may expect that the formal organization of the cluster approach and how it works are loosely coupled; the isomorphism is expected to be strong. Also, according to the myth perspective, there is a loose coupling in the way you talk and the way you act (Brunsson 1989), a phenomena also known as window-dressing; the myths can spread fast and be imitated by the organization without having instrumental effects (Christensen et al. 2004:76). This view on organizational change differs from the cultural perspective, where in the cultural perspective one can expect that organizations grow more and more apart from each other in time (Christensen et al. 2004). The many guidelines, references, detailed evaluations and reports on coordination in the empirical findings from the cluster approach, may indicate that coordination is seen as the magic bullet for good emergency response, and “the more coordination the better”. Additionally, following this line of reasoning, all the “recipes” for coordination may give strong action symbols to the cluster members. The cluster approach would thus from this perspective be seen as part of a recipe for good governance in emergency responses.

Another alternative perspective for the analysis could be governance theory. Sørensen and Torfing (2005) offer an analytical framework based on the four governance theories; interdependent, governmentality, governability and integration theory. These four theories may be classified in two; the logic of action and the view of steering. In logic of action one may distinguish between calculation and culture. The view of steering may be distinguished between coordination and handling of conflicts. The interdependence theory is classified in to calculation and handling of conflict. In the governmentality theory one may classify the theory in to culture and handling conflicts. Governability theory may be classified in calculation and coordination. Lastly, integration theory sees culture as the logic of action and coordination as the steering mechanism. These governance perspectives may offer comprehensive reasoning for empirical findings, function as tools to understand and explain the cluster approach behavior, and may possibly cover some of the missing aspects of the variation of the cluster approach, that is not discovered using the theoretical framework undertaken in this thesis.

8.4 Empirical Implications

The purpose of this thesis has not been to generalize the findings based on the two case studies of Myanmar and Haiti. However, the two case studies are used to give specific examples on how the cluster approach work in practice and how the clusters operate, seen by the lenses of what was expected using the theoretical framework on specialization, coordination, leadership and accountability.

The focus in this study has neither been on how efficient the cluster approach structure is or if the cluster approach implementation has improved the overall performance of the emergency responses. However, it may be possible to underline some general observations from the empirical findings of the formal organization and how it worked in practice in Myanmar and Haiti. In the empirical findings from the cluster approach realization in Myanmar it's stated by the Government of Myanmar, the UN and ASEAN that the emergency response was a success, this might indicate that the cluster approach in Myanmar may have improved the performance in emergency response, although one should have in mind that comparisons with the effects of other possible structures in such situations is methodologically a difficult task. As a contrast to Myanmar, in Haiti, the cluster approach was an additional coordination structure among many, even though the cluster approach allowed all international humanitarian organizations to take part in the information sharing, which might have hindered duplications and gaps. Based on the goal of the cluster approach which is hindering duplications and gaps in emergency response, the findings in cluster approach both in Myanmar and Haiti may indicate that the emergency response has enhanced especially on specialization and information sharing.

The case studies of Myanmar and Haiti are set in two different institutional systems and regimes. The examination of the cluster approach indicates that the institutional context of the cluster approach implementation matters. In Myanmar the cluster approach was implemented in a context of a militarized regime skeptical to international humanitarian aid, while in Haiti there were already existing parallel coordination structures for emergency response. These different contexts give plausible explanations for why the cluster approach was implemented in different ways in the respective countries. The characteristics of the cases may thus influence the findings. The selection criteria for the two case studies were on similarities in disaster. If the two case studies were chosen based on similarity in regimes, the empirical findings might have given different results. However, interestingly, the cluster approach is

intended to be a *universal* approach and is intended to fit to all regimes and institutional designs, and this may contest that argument.

Other factors that plausibly may influence the cluster approach realization are political issues, e.g. in the sector of protection, protection is highly sensitive. The organization of emergency response is a political question, and not just a logistical question or of technical matters. The cluster approach cannot replace political decisions. The political will and making the proper decisions are therefore crucial for the emergency response to be executed in accordance with the specific needs. The multifaceted management of the cluster approach needs to work together with the government, rather than be an isolated organization outside the government in the affected country. However, creating a coordinating platform does not automatically deliver the elements that improve humanitarian response (Steets et al. 2010:75). Scott (1998:313) uses the concept of *mētis* to explain “a wide array of practical skills and acquired intelligence in responding to a constantly changing natural and human environment” (Scott 1998:313). This means having practical, local knowledge, for addressing the problem at hand. The *mētis* (Scott 1998) is especially important in times of disaster, in order to know which rules to follow, what to be applied in which order and when to improvise. Knowing what is best, making the best out of limited resources and adapting quickly after unpredictable events such as natural disasters, are skills that are hard to standardize and formalize in to an approach, such as the specifics of the formal organization of the cluster approach. What the empirical data of the cluster approach in practice indicate is that the standardized model cannot give all possible problems optimal solutions, the cluster approach members therefore needs to be flexible and able to solve the problems at hand where they are.

8.5 Suggestions for Future Studies

This topic is becoming more increasingly relevant, such as the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in November 2013. In order to optimize the coordination of emergency response, more research on this field is needed. A suggestion for future studies is to perform a systematic comparative analysis of the cluster approach implementation across countries with similar and different characteristics. By systematically comparing the implementation of the cluster approach in a multitude of countries, one may increase the possibility of predicting and generalizing important aspect, and challenges of the cluster approach.

The empirical findings in this thesis indicate that the institutional context for the cluster approach matters significantly. Also, it is plausible to believe that which type of crisis the cluster approach is implemented in matters, e.g. if the crisis is transboundary, expected, or sudden-onset. This study focuses on the cluster approach in the aftermath of natural disasters, for a future study it may be interesting to study the cluster approach in the aftermath of complex emergencies. This may give a foundation for a systematic comparison of the cluster approach in all types of emergencies, and possibly provide useful generalizations and knowledge in order to improve the formal organization of the cluster approaches. Complex emergencies may also add an additional challenge for multi-level governance, due to the fact that the crisis often is present in both the political and social arenas.

Additionally, the typical organizations in emergency responses share the characteristics, they are; idealistic; humanitarian/development; small organizations, and where the members of the organizations are usually volunteers (local/international). How these organizations are organized may pose challenges and opportunities in multi-level governance structures and may affect the coordination, leadership and accountability in the cluster approach, which might give a more holistic understanding of the compounded organization.

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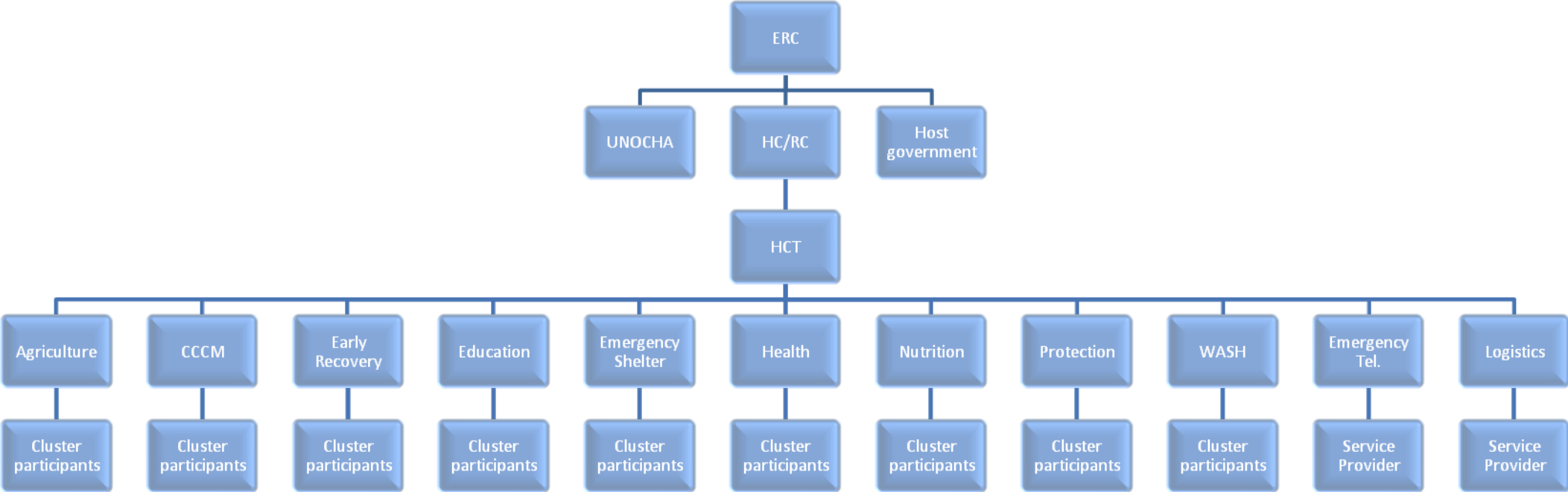
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Appendix I: Organizational Chart of the Cluster Approach, National Level



Appendix II: Map of Myanmar



Appendix III: Map of Haiti



Map No. 3855 Rev. 4 UNITED NATIONS
June 2008

Department of Field Support
Cartographic Section

Appendix IV: Cluster Lead Agencies, National Level, Myanmar.

Global level clusters	Cluster activated in Myanmar
Agriculture, FAO	Agriculture, FAO
Early Recovery, UNDP	Early Recovery, UNDP
Education, UNICEF/SAVE THE CHILDREN	Education, UNICEF/SAVE THE CHILDREN
Emergency Shelter, UNHCR/IFRC	Emergency Shelter, UNHCR/IFRC
ETC, OCHA/WFP/UNICEF	ETC, WFP/UNICEF
Logistics, WFP	Logistics, WFP
CCCM, UNHCR/IOM	
Protection, UNHCR SUB-CLUSTERS: Child Protection, UNICEF GBV, UNFPA RoL/Justice, UNDP/OHCR Housing, Land, Property, UN HABITAT Mine Action, UNMAS	Protection, UNHCR
Health, WHO	Health, WHO/MERLIN
Nutrition, UNICEF	Nutrition, UNICEF/GOUM
WASH, UNICEF	WASH, UNICEF
	Food, WFP

Table from Kaufmann & Krüger (2010:24).

Titles and responsibilities in some cases evolved and changed during the first year of response.

Appendix V: Cluster Lead Agencies, National Level, Haiti.

Global level clusters	Cluster activated in Haiti
Agriculture, FAO	Agriculture, FAO
Early Recovery, UNDP	Early Recovery, UNDP
Education, UNICEF/SAVE THE CHILDREN	Education, UNICEF
Emergency Shelter, UNHCR/IFRC	Shelter and non-food items, IFRC
ETC, OCHA/WFP/UNICEF	
Logistics, WFP	Logistics, WFP/ATLAS
CCCM, UNHCR/IOM	
Protection, UNHCR SUB-CLUSTERS: Child Protection, UNICEF GBV, UNFPA RoL/Justice, UNDP/OHCR Housing, Land, Property, UN HABITAT Mine Action, UNMAS	Protection, UNHCR/MINUSTAH HR SUB-CLUSTERS: Child Protection, UNICEF GBV, UNIFEM
Health, WHO	Health, WHO
Nutrition, UNICEF	Nutrition, UNICEF/GOUM
WASH, UNICEF	WASH, UNICEF
	Food, WFP

Table from Binder and Grünewald (2008:21).

Titles and responsibilities in some cases evolved and changed during the first year of response.

Appendix VI: Questionnaire to informant Global Public Policy Institute

- 1) Can you please elaborate on what is your position and what are your main responsibilities in this position?
- 2) How will you describe the cluster approach?
- 3) In your words, does this differ from previous organization of emergency relief? (If so-how?)
- 4) How would you describe leadership in the cluster approach? (- does the leadership vary in the different levels?)
- 5) In your own experience working with the clusters, do the clusters have a clear division of specialization?
- 6) From your background working with the clusters, do the clusters have a clear division of responsibilities? (if so - how?)
- 7) Have you seen accountability mechanisms in the cluster approach? (If so -which accountability mechanisms have you seen?)
- 8) From observing in the field, which coordination mechanisms have you seen in the cluster approach? (- How are the different levels coordinated? – are there any challenges?)
- 9) In your experience observing have you experienced any challenges implementing the cluster approach?
- 10) According to Sørensen and Torfing (2005:15) governance can be defined as a relatively stable horizontal coupling of mutual dependent, but operational autonomous actors. The actors interact and try to influence each other through negotiations, as in an institutionalized community. They are self-regulating within the frames they are operating, this frame is usually set by political authority. In the end, in a broad sense they are contributing to the public steering (Sørensen & Torfing 2005:15). According to this definition would you describe the cluster approach as a governance structure?
- 11) If so/not so, how and why do you see it like this?

Appendix VII: Questionnaire informants Myanmar

- 1) Can you please elaborate on what is your position and what are your main responsibilities in this position?
- 2) Can you please describe some of the context the UNOCHA and the clusters are operating in Myanmar?
- 3) How was Myanmar Government prepared for a disaster like this?
- 4) How will you describe in your own words the organization of the cluster approach in Myanmar?
- 5) All of the clusters were rolled out and on different levels (national, sub-level and townships). Can you please explain how these levels were functioning?
- 6) In your experience working with the clusters, do the clusters have a clear division of specialization?
- 7) From your own experience, which were the key coordination activities taking place of the clusters (at various levels)?
- 8) How would you describe leadership in the cluster approach?
- 9) Where there any accountability mechanisms taking place in the clusters? (vertical, lateral, downward)
- 10) According to Sørensen and Torfing (2005:15) governance can be defined as a relatively stable horizontal coupling of mutual dependent, but operational autonomous actors. The actors interact and try to influence each other through negotiations, as in an institutionalized community. They are self-regulating within the frames they are operating, this frame is usually set by political authority. In the end, in a broad sense they are contributing to the public steering (Sørensen & Torfing 2005:15). According to this definition would you describe the cluster approach as a governance structure?
- 11) If yes, or no, why?

Appendix VIII: Questionnaire informant Haiti

- 1) Can you please elaborate on what is your position and what are your main responsibilities in this position?
- 2) Can you please describe some of the context the UNOCHA and the clusters are operating in Haiti?
- 3) How was Haitian Government prepared for a disaster like this?
- 4) How will you describe in your own words the organization of the cluster approach in Haiti?
- 5) All of the clusters were rolled out and on different levels (national/capital and local). Can you please explain how these levels were functioning?
- 6) In your experience working with the clusters, do the clusters have a clear division of specialization?
- 7) In your own experience, which were the key coordination activities taking place of the clusters (at various levels)?
- 8) From the evaluation, phase II, it is mentioned parallel coordinating structures, do you have any experience with this? (if so -can you please explain in your own words how this was operating?)
- 9) How would you describe leadership in the cluster approach in Haiti?
- 10) Where there any accountability mechanisms taking place in the clusters? (vertical, lateral, downward)
- 11) The cluster approach was already introduced in 2006 in Haiti, do you think this may have had an effect in the way the cluster approach was organized in 2008?
- 12) According to Sørensen and Torfing (2005:15) governance can be defined as a relatively stable horizontal coupling of mutual dependent, but operational autonomous actors. The actors interact and try to influence each other through negotiations, as in an institutionalized community. They are self-regulating within the frames they are operating, this frame is usually set by political authority. In the end, in a broad sense they are contributing to the public steering (Sørensen & Torfing 2005:15). According to this definition would you describe the cluster approach as a governance structure?
- 13) If yes, or no, why?