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Supporting governance for climate resilience

Working with political institutions

Arabella Fraser and Amy Kirbyshire

Key messages

- Underlying and context-dependent political relationships inform how different approaches to governance for improved resilience to climate shocks and stressors play out in practice.
- The practice of improving governance for resilience may be less about the application of recommendations for particular approaches (such as decentralisation) than an incremental and long-term process of convening willing actors and creating new spaces for engagement between different stakeholders. For international partners to resilience efforts, this approach often challenges conventional modes of operation and this will need to be addressed.
- In this process, there will be trade-offs that need to be acknowledged, and the approach to such trade-offs agreed, between the parties involved.
- The role of different forms of political institution in shaping governance for resilience merits more investigation, and particularly analysis of the role of political parties and voting systems, executive–legislative relations, constitutional forms, trade unions, bureaucracies and the role of the press.
- There are entry points for engaging with informal political institutions to ensure they work to distribute long-term benefits for all – which also involves recognising how formal and informal institutions interrelate.

As the 'resilience revolution' in international development continues, researchers at ODI are capturing the new directions and reviewing the latest thinking in this field through The Rockefeller Foundation-supported Resilience Scan initiative. This paper forms part of the initiative's 'deep-dive' series on key emerging resilience-related topics. These 'deep-dives' complement a quarterly analytical review of resilience literature, social media activity and key resilience-related events, with a particular focus on developing countries.

odi.org/resilience-scan

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Executive summary

Political institutions, formal or informal, embody the underlying rules and norms within which organisations such as governments, NGOs or companies, operate (North, 1990) and play a defining role in how people and organisations respond to climate-related shocks and stresses. These shocks and stresses may be acute, intensive, sudden events, or extensive, chronic or cyclical challenges. Democratic relations between national and local government, for example, influence capacities for quick response in an emergency, and these responses can in turn affect economic prosperity, competitiveness, livelihoods and well-being.

Governance provides us with a broad term for understanding the institutions working across the state, market and civil society. This working paper focuses on national and sub-national political institutions as a critical context in which risk governance takes place and its impacts are felt. An explicit focus on the role of national and sub-national political institutions, often neglected in climate risk and resilience research and policy debates, entails a specific focus on the institutions that structure the exercise of power and authority in society. These range from the formal organs of the state and the institutional processes for law-making to the informal practices of planning or the informal authority exercised by chiefs or traditional councils. Working with, rather than against, political institutions is vital to reducing risks and building resilience effectively, equitably and sustainably.

Academic and policy thinking across the fields of disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and resilience has certainly, and increasingly, analysed the forms of governance that might best support risk reduction and resilience building. The uncertainty of future climate change impacts, the multi-sectoral and multi-jurisdictional nature of the issues, and the need for inclusive and equitable responses, require that proposed solutions stress the need for the participation of diverse stakeholders. This involves learning and innovation, self-regulation, accountability and shared knowledge and decision-making by all parties. This has been embodied in practical recommendations for decentralisation by national governments, greater power sharing across local, national and regional levels of government, multi-stakeholder initiatives incorporating the private sector and civil society and greater citizen participation and community-driven processes.

However, such recommendations for governance systems are rarely reflected in reality. This is shown through comparative studies of reforms undertaken

across countries, such as decentralisation, that have had different outcomes for risk reduction and resilience building because of differences in the underlying political context. This working paper examines the role of formal and informal political institutions across different political contexts in shaping different institutional forms of resilience intervention to climate-related shocks and stresses (such as decentralisation processes or state–community partnership building). The aim is to generate insights for practice, in particular for the international community of donors, funders and partners who support resilience building processes.

The analysis of the role of formal political institutions – or the officially sanctioned rules, norms and processes governing political life – shows how formal structures that allow for accountability, autonomy and flexibility can improve resilience, when coupled with strong multi-level and multi-actor networks. However, there is no ‘one size fits all’ model for institutional reform. In Japan, for example, effective disaster response was possible because there was the flexibility and finance from national government to enable multi-stakeholder involvement, underpinned by a system of shared responsibility. In Korea, overlapping and unclear responsibilities between national and local government hindered disaster response, undermining communication and leading to a lack of accountability in the aftermath.

Trade-offs emerge between upward accountability and execution, and downward accountability affected by fragmented jurisdictions. In Kampala, for example, the presidential takeover of the city authority has led to a professional, well networked initiative for adaptation planning, but to the detriment of civil society relations. This is in contrast to Dar es Salaam, where a stronger democratic ethos nevertheless leaves the city without the ability to plan for citywide interventions, and authority is divided across municipalities. Divisions between political parties can contribute to relations of divided authority across government levels, which can weaken the autonomy of local government.

The possibilities for participatory and community-driven approaches to resilience, and multi-stakeholder engagement involving citizens’ groups, is in turn influenced by underlying political relationships between state and society. While evidence indicates the importance of genuine participation and partnership between state and community for the realisation of resilience, this can be undermined by a political relationship in which responsibility is off-loaded

from state to community rather than shared, and by the existence of a history of mutual distrust.

Informal political institutions also influence, and are influenced by, interventions to improve resilience. Political networks based on corruption, clientelism and patronage are not necessarily detrimental if benefits are distributed equally and with a view to long-term progress. But, in practice, they often create social exclusion, particularly of the poorest or most marginalised. Their exact effects depend on the type of policy or initiative being implemented – corruption has different effects on disaster risk management outcomes in different phases of the disaster cycle, for example. Analysis has shown how the introduction of multi-stakeholder initiatives or decentralisation reforms may have positive or negative impacts on clientelism and corruption. Informal political actors – such as traditional or customary authorities – can improve community-level participation and act as important intermediaries, but can also skew access to democratic systems and perpetuate social discrimination.

How do we create governance that can support human resilience to multiple shocks and stresses? This is an ongoing process of engaging both with politics and with complexity: finding ‘best fit’ for context as well as taking advantage of a plurality of solutions, operating flexibly and working at multiple levels simultaneously. Trade-offs are inherent and need to be acknowledged: the involvement of multiple actors can decrease workability, flexible organisations can scale up quickly, but at the expense of accountability. Finding entry points and scaling up and out from them can be key, but may mean applying a different logic to that intended. Where local governments are weak, for example, it may be necessary to engage at a higher level with greater capacity first. It is important, and possible, to work with informal institutions. This requires changing the incentives for political networks to operate, or working with ‘blended’ formal and informal political institutions, such as providing a legal framework for the empowerment of customary bodies to negotiate access rights to grazing land and water.

For external actors, such as donors and international agencies supporting resilience initiatives, the working paper distils five principles for action:

1. understand political economy and power in the national and local context
2. broker and facilitate coalitions for change across formal and informal actors
3. acknowledge trade-offs
4. focus on process
5. invest in long-term efforts to build trust and engagement.

There is a large overlap, if development is sensitive to present and future risks, between what is required for national and local development and what is required for risk reduction and adaptation. Thinking and working through such principles in the context of climate resilience also means involving knowledge actors and bridging science and policy, as well as a special focus on particular trade-offs, both between social groups (where risk mitigation for one group may mean the exacerbation of risk for another) and between short-term and long-term futures. As with broader support for development, however, too often principles such as these are undermined by the emphasis of international partners on short-term technical inputs and short project cycles, as well as stronger accountability upwards to donor institutions than downwards to national and sub-national actors. While there is emerging, informal and anecdotal evidence that climate change can provide a useful entry point for rethinking institutional mandates, creating new spaces for engagement that can break with existing political dynamics, this has yet to be fully substantiated.

In conclusion, the working paper identifies an agenda for research and practice in this area. This includes more systematic research on the role of a wider range of formal and informal political institutions, as well as the influence of different political regime types on resilience. This needs to be complemented by stronger review of what we can learn in practice over the long-term about improving governance for resilience. This entails paying particular attention to conflict-affected environments and those where formal institutions are weak, as well as to the role of different forms of external actor – from city-to-city networks to donor agencies – in influencing governance conditions.

Introduction: why governance and politics matters to resilience

Weak governance at the national and sub-national level is a critical constraint to effective and equitable resilience and adaptation planning. Lack of capacity and will among local governments in the Global South to respond to urban resilience leads to huge deficits in service and infrastructure provision, which drives up risk (Satterthwaite, 2011). Institutional inertia in political organisations and a historic tendency to top-down, centralised approaches to risk management also impede the ability to respond to a changing climate and devise contextually appropriate solutions. While progress may be made on producing citywide adaptation plans, for example, implementation becomes constrained by institutional deadlocks – as early progress on adaptation planning in Cape Town showed (Taylor, 2016). In Alaska, a top-down disaster risk reduction (DRR) policy, which ignores traditional rural Inupiat coping strategies, undermines the resilience of this vulnerable group to climate shocks and stresses (Marino, 2012). In addition, we need to ask how knowledge and information critical to climate change preparedness, as well as financial and human resources, are distributed to protect against risks, who they are distributed by (and whether this reflects primarily the interests of more politically powerful groups in state and society) and who for (Lebel et al., 2006). In some cases, when adaptation planning does occur, it can be co-opted by politically and economically powerful interest groups, resulting in either partial solutions or solutions that simply exacerbate the risks faced by more marginalised groups (Marino and Ribot, 2012). In Bangladesh, one of the world's most vulnerable nations, projects being implemented under the National Adaptation Plan of Action have enabled elites to capture land, and have also reinforced class and ethnic hierarchies (Sovacool and Linnér, 2016).

The need for alternative approaches to improve governance for resilience has long been recognised. The core distinction of thinking about the governance of climate change-related shocks and stresses beyond thinking about governance for economic development or poverty alleviation, for example, is the emphasis on governing for long-term, uncertain futures. Resilience thinking, as applied to the governance of climate- and weather-related shocks

and stressors, also highlights how risks emerge in the complex interactions of socioeconomic systems, requiring a different approach to conventional risk management. Academic and policy thinking across the fields of DRR and climate change adaptation, and the application of resilience thinking to these fields, has increasingly debated the forms of governance that best support risk reduction and resilience building. It has advocated, among other things, the engagement of multiple actors who can speak to the multi-sectoral and multi-jurisdictional nature of resilience challenges. It has also called for new, flexible forms of governance that can take into account the uncertainty and abruptness of climatic changes relative to top-down, purely state-based forms of governance (Boyd and Juhola, 2015; Lebel et al., 2006), which are rarely able to adapt to local complexity and rapid rates of change (Chaffin et al., 2014).

Too often, however, these are normative ideals that are out of step with the resilience building in practice (Bahadur and Tanner, 2014; Birkmann et al., 2010; Djalante et al., 2011). In order to make sense of this disjuncture we need to understand how the institutional mechanics and internal politics of adaptation and disaster risk projects support or undermine resilience, and also how the wider 'political economy of resource use' influences interventions to build resilience (Sovacool and Linnér, 2016). This political economy arises across the economic, political, social and cultural domains within which governance actors – or governmental and non-governmental institutions – of state, market and civil society operate. A seminal study from Vietnam shows how the transition from state- to market-based institutions affected government–community partnerships for disaster response (Adger, 2000). However, specific knowledge is lacking about the influence of different national and sub-national political institutions on different resilience interventions. These institutions, the arbiters of the 'rules of the game' for the exercise of power and authority within society, involve the formal organisations of state – executive, legislature, judiciary and bureaucracy – as well as those of the media, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other non-state bodies, alongside the informal institutions that govern the realities of politics, such as

personal ties or corruption. Institutional set-ups vary across national contexts between democratic and authoritarian systems, with many hybrid types (Geddes, 1999).

This working paper examines how international actors, in particular, can support governance for resilience building that works with the realities of how political institutions function in different contexts. Chapter 1 asks what resilience thinking tells us about what governance structures and processes might be needed to better respond to climate and weather-related shocks and stresses. Chapter 2 examines how such approaches might be influenced by both formal and informal political institutions. The focus

is on a subset of political institutions, discussed in the existing DRR and climate change adaptation literature. This is further supported by the broader literature looking at access to resources and services – also critical to developing capacities for resilience. The core message of the working paper is that underlying and context-dependent political relationships inform how different approaches to governance that support climate resilience play out in practice. The third chapter discusses what this analysis means for action on resilience. The conclusion reviews existing research and policy gaps in this area.

1. What governance is needed for resilience?

The features of governance considered to support resilience are based on how resilience is understood, and therefore what governance for resilience is aiming to achieve. For the purposes of this working paper, resilience is the ability of a system to anticipate, absorb and adapt to climate-related shocks and stresses (Bahadur et al., 2015), and to respond in ways that preserve, restore or improve its essential functions, structures and identity (IPCC, 2014; IOM, 2016).

Various ideas have emerged about the forms of governance that best enable the management of complex, inter-related, uncertain shocks and stresses, including from the fields of DRR, climate change adaptation and resilience. The ideas encompass the practical and the theoretical, and many are promoted for better governance more generally. Acknowledging that there are relationships and overlaps between these approaches, the table below sets out a core subset of approaches.

Table 1. Governance approaches to resilience building

Governance approaches	Characteristics
Decentralised governance	<p>Decentralised governance refers to the transfer of political power and fiscal and/or administrative functions from central government to lower or local levels. This allows autonomous governance of local constituencies and a better response to local conditions and needs (Miller and Douglas, 2016). Decentralisation of political, fiscal and administrative functions does not always occur at the same time or in equal measure. This leads to different forms of decentralisation. Political decentralisation gives citizens and their local elected representatives more power in decision-making, while administrative decentralisation refers to the redistribution of authority, responsibility and financial resources to local levels (the transfer of financial resources is also known as fiscal decentralisation). Administrative decentralisation may involve redistribution from central government to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – different levels or regional offices of central government, which remain under the supervision of central government ministries ('deconcentration') – semi-autonomous organisations not controlled by the central government, but ultimately accountable to it, such as housing authorities, transport authorities or regional development authorities ('delegation') – sub-national or local government units with clear and legally recognised geographical boundaries, which elect their own mayors and councils ('devolution'). <p>By bringing decision-makers closer to citizens, decentralisation is considered to enhance accountability and create stronger personal incentives for those decision-makers to address local issues, including resilience. It is also better suited than a centralised system to accommodating diversity, such as differences in environmental conditions and citizens' priorities (Hooghe and Marks, 2003).</p>
Multi-stakeholder governance	<p>The involvement of diverse stakeholders across sectors, scales and stakeholder groups in decision-making is a central tenet of governance for resilience, and this can take different forms. Multi-stakeholder governance refers to a governance structure that brings together different partners across scales and/or sectors in dialogue, decision-making and implementation of solutions in a coordinated and integrated manner (Djalante et al., 2011). It typically includes a mix of both state and non-state actors, and often includes greater participation by groups affected by decisions. It should help to ensure that decisions are responsive to local concerns and to changing circumstances, which is important for addressing unpredictable, evolving and locally experienced shocks and stresses.</p>
Multi-level governance	<p>Multi-level governance is often used interchangeably with multi-stakeholder governance. However, multi-level governance describes structures involving multiple stakeholders (often state authorities) at different scales or tiers of government, from the global to the local, including those between neighbouring authorities (Leck and Simon, 2013). It specifically involves cross-level interaction and cooperation. It is considered a beneficial form of governance for resilience because it allows decisions to be taken at the most appropriate level to reflect diversity and heterogeneity, it provides space for innovation, and it is more adaptive to changing preferences, among other advantages (Hooghe and Marks, 2003).</p>

Governance approaches	Characteristics
Polycentric governance	Both multi-stakeholder and multi-level governance are about the reallocation of authority and decision-making upward, downward and sideways from central states to a range of state and non-state actors (Hooghe and Marks, 2003). This can take place within a monocentric, hierarchical governance structure, but a polycentric governance structure is considered by many to be better suited to addressing complex problems. The advantages of polycentric governance include more opportunities for experimentation and learning, which help to improve policy, and increased interaction between parties, which helps build trust needed for cooperation (Cole, 2015). Polycentric governance describes a system where multiple stakeholders across multiple levels and sectors organise to form many coexisting centres of decision-making that are formally independent of each other (Biggs et al., 2015; Ostrom, 2010). While polycentric governance arrangements are nested within their broader governance context, polycentric governance thinking rejects the hierarchical notion that smaller jurisdictions should necessarily be neatly contained within the borders of larger ones (Hooghe and Marks, 2003; Andersson and Ostrom, 2008). These arrangements often arise organically, without central government leadership; for instance, they may emerge out of interest-based networks, or around a common problem or opportunity (Cole, 2015).
Participatory governance	Participatory governance is a people-centred approach to governance that includes citizens, or representatives of a particular group of citizens, in decision-making which affects them, enabling decisions to take into account the specifics of a given context (Collins, 2009). Through participatory processes, such as discussion groups and workshops, people collaborate in determining the objectives and processes by which resilience policy will be delivered in their local area (Forsyth, 2013).
Community-based governance	Empowering communities to participate in the governance of their own risk reduction has become a mainstay of DRR efforts, reflecting the trend toward participatory and community-based approaches in development (Jones et al., 2013). Community-based governance is a form of participatory governance that often focuses on building resilience for the most vulnerable and lowest-income groups in society, in recognition of the fact that they are disproportionately affected by disaster and climate change. It has gained traction as it has become increasingly clear that top-down institutional approaches to resilience building have fallen short, particularly in failing to adequately take into account the specifics of local contexts (Collins, 2009).
Adaptive governance	Adaptive governance describes the governance conditions necessary to implement adaptive management. This is a structured, iterative process of continual innovation, testing, learning and adjustment (Allen et al., 2011; Chaffin et al., 2014). It is championed as an approach for facilitating robust, flexible decision-making in the face of uncertainty and complexity, and is also useful for addressing disagreement among stakeholders as to how a resource, or a problem, should be managed (Allen and Gunderson, 2010; Allen et al., 2011).

While each of these approaches is directly applicable in practice (e.g. every country falls somewhere on the scale of decentralised governance), some are more conceptual (e.g. adaptive governance). Decentralisation, polycentricity and multi-stakeholder and multi-level governance are concerned with the interaction of institutions, while adaptive governance is about processes to facilitate learning. There are relationships between them. For example, decentralisation leads to multi-level governance. Multi-level, polycentric and participatory governance can all be seen as subsets of multi-stakeholder governance, whereas adaptive governance and decentralised governance typically involve multiple stakeholders in polycentric institutional arrangements (Garmestani and Benson, 2011; Folke et al., 2005). Several recognise the need for local-level devolution, particularly decentralisation, polycentricity and community-based governance. Indeed, community-based governance could be seen as an extension of decentralisation, as it specifically shifts decision-making down to the community level and to local institutions. Various frameworks aiming to operationalise resilience impute desirable characteristics of governance to deal with shocks and stresses. The specific characteristics highlighted vary across different frameworks, and these different frameworks address different shocks or stresses, particular

populations or particular systems, or aspects of a system, though there are many overlapping areas. For example, the Rockefeller Foundation (2015) identifies five broad governance characteristics for resilient systems: awareness, diversity, self-regulation, integration and adaptiveness. Meanwhile, the City Resilience Framework (Arup International Development, 2015) focuses on resilient urban systems, which it characterises as flexible, robust, resourceful, reflective, inclusive, integrated across sectors and levels, systems and institutions, and as maintaining a degree of redundancy. Different frameworks do not necessarily mean the same thing when they use the same terms. Redundancy, for example, is sometimes taken to refer to institutional redundancy, or overlaps, (Dietz et al., 2003), and elsewhere refers to infrastructure redundancy (Tyler and Moench, 2012).

Nevertheless, a review across these frameworks reveals commonalities in the characteristics of resilience considered important to improving governance for climate resilience. These include, in particular, the need for the involvement of a **diverse range** of actors in decision-making, with the **participation** of ‘beneficiary’ groups or communities. This facilitates tailored responses to shocks and stresses that address local needs, integrate multiple forms and sources of knowledge,

power and resources, and foster a feeling of ownership, trust and shared understanding (Lebel et al., 2006; Adger et al., 2005; Carabine et al., 2016). They promote a **flexible** governance environment conducive to continual **experimentation, innovation and learning**, which allows a system to evolve more rapidly and effectively in line with a complex and changing context, and to respond to new information (Cole, 2015). They stress the need for (particularly local) **autonomy and self-regulation**, and

for **accountability** to accompany it. Finally, they promote mechanisms that enable **communication and knowledge sharing**, and **integration, collaboration and shared decision-making** across institutions, including across scales (vertical) and across sectors or agencies (horizontal), which is valuable for addressing complex problems.

Many of these governance characteristics intersect, and while they are normative ideals, they manifest in the governance approaches as broadly outlined in table 2.

Table 2. Characteristics of governance for improving resilience to climate risks

	Diversity and participation	Flexibility, experimentation, innovation and learning	Autonomy and self-regulation	Accountability	Communication and knowledge sharing	Collaboration, integration and shared decision-making
Decentralised governance			✓	✓		
Multi-stakeholder governance	✓	✓			✓	✓
Multi-level governance	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Polycentric governance	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Participatory governance	✓			✓	✓	✓
Community-based governance	✓		✓		✓	✓
Adaptive governance	✓	✓			✓	

2. The influence of political institutions on resilience building

Realising the resilience benefits of the governance concepts and approaches outlined above is often challenging in the real world. This is due to a complex mix of influences stemming from wider national and local governance conditions. This includes influences from political institutions, actors and processes, in addition to legal, economic, social and cultural influences (Blackburn, 2014). These conditions and influences rarely change quickly, and therefore efforts to adapt governance processes to enhance resilience – whether led by states, donors or other actors – must work with these realities, or work to improve these realities, if they are to be successful. There is, therefore, a need for a more critical analysis, particularly at the interaction of institutions (and political institutions as a subset of institutions) and resilience (Bahadur and Thornton, 2015), including the influence of both formal and informal political institutions. This is the central focus of this working paper.

This chapter examines how formal and informal national and sub-national political institutions, including the relationships between different political actors, influence different forms of resilience initiatives and interventions, and their impacts. Such initiatives occur at different scales of governance (from community-level to national-level planning) as well as across different sets of governance actors – from the state, the market or civil society. Our analysis distinguishes formal political institutions – the official systems of rules and norms that organise social, political and economic relations – from informal political institutions, or the unofficial rules and norms of the game. Informal institutions may influence the power of government authorities, interfere with the effect of electoral rules or influence judicial behaviour (Helmke and Levitsky, 2004). There are many different types of formal and informal political institution. Depending on the type of overarching political regime – from democratic regimes to forms of totalitarian regime – formal political institutions may include government agencies from national to local levels. These include political parties, recognised non-governmental bodies such as registered businesses, NGOs and the media, and the constitution,

laws, policies, rights and regulations enforced by official authorities. Informal political institutions may include legislative norms (e.g. seniority), patterns of clientelism and informal modes of dispute settlement. They may also involve both formal and informal actors (such as gangs or mafias who move into the area of political authority).

Our review of the disaster risk and climate change adaptation governance literature revealed that many types of institution have yet to be explicitly discussed in the field. However, the chapter that follows discusses three aspects of formal political institution (national–local government relationships, political parties and state–civil society relationships) as well as two types of informal political institution (the role of clientelism, patronage and corruption, and of customary or traditional political institutions) where there is either direct literature drawing links to DRR or climate change adaptation interventions, or where the available literature has clear implications for the types of intervention to build climate resilience outlined in Chapter 1. While the analysis is not exhaustive, we draw on illustrative examples to show the influence of wider political context on resilience interventions and draw conclusions for the practice of governance for improved resilience (Chapter 3).

2.1. The influence of formal political institutions on resilience interventions

Many types and aspects of formal political institutions can impede or catalyse the realisation of governance characteristics and approaches highlighted above. More is known about some of these aspects than others. Here, we outline three principal aspects of formal institutional relations: national–local government relations, political parties and state–civil society relations.

2.1.1. National–local government relations

Decentralised, multi-level and polycentric governance, especially, is influenced by national–local government relations. Decentralisation is an inherently political issue that alters the relationship between national and local

government. Every country sits somewhere on the scale of decentralised, multi-level governance, but the extent and form of decentralisation differ widely. In some countries, the form of decentralisation and strength of national–local government relationships can lead to positive resilience outcomes, as seen in the Japanese example (see Box 1).

However, decentralisation often involves devolution of responsibilities without the transfer of power, resources and/or autonomy necessary to meet those responsibilities. This is variously known as ‘unfunded mandates’, ‘fractured’ decentralisation or ‘incomplete’ decentralisation, and has clear implications for self-regulation (Basdeo, 2012; Marks and Lebel, 2016; Bahadur and Thornton, 2015). The wider political context determines which functions a central government can and will transfer to lower levels of government, which functions will be retained at the national level, the autonomy of local actors, and the bureaucratic and cultural incentives for any agency to engage with resilience issues (UNDP, 2015; Blackburn, 2014). Decentralisation processes can also splinter related functions of governance across institutions at diverse scales without establishing appropriate coordination mechanisms, creating confusion and inefficiencies (Hooghe and Marks, 2003). The structure of decentralised, multi-level governance therefore has significant implications for the potential to meet resilience objectives.

Strong rules and mechanisms for cross-government and national–local collaboration are vital for effective collaboration, and for any degree and form of decentralised,

multi-level governance to be successful. But in practice they are too often insufficient. South Africa, for example, is one of the best examples of a decentralised governance system in Africa. However, while many South African laws and regulations refer to collaborative governance, a regulatory framework for vertical and horizontal networking and shared decision-making between government agencies is lacking (Scott and Tarazona, 2011). As a result, the implementation of collaborative decentralised governance is a problem. Local government agencies are often not consulted about national-level decisions which affect them; local government innovative policies and programmes are rarely learnt from and replicated elsewhere, and implementation of policy, including adaptation and resilience plans, is constrained by poor communication between departments (Leck and Simon, 2013; Taylor, 2016). These issues also translate to city level. In Cape Town, while considerable progress has been made on developing a citywide climate adaptation plan, its implementation is constrained by a lack of oversight and impetus from national government authorities in addition to poor monitoring and communication with and between departments (Taylor, 2016). A weak or flawed regulatory framework for cross-government working can also blur lines of accountability, as is again seen in South Africa. Municipal governments are not accountable to provincial or national levels, and there is a lack of oversight from central government, which again undermines implementation of legislation, including that related to resilience building

Box 1. Multi-level, polycentric governance in post-tsunami reconstruction in Japan

Japan operates a semi-decentralised, multi-level disaster governance system, in which responsibility is shared between national government, prefectural governments and municipalities (cities, towns and villages). The 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami affected 227 of the 1,718 municipalities. Many municipal and NGO staff lost their lives in the tsunami. The town of Otsuchi, for example, lost 24% of its employees, including its mayor. Considerable manpower support was needed to help affected communities function, not just during response, but also during reconstruction – a process which is expected to take a decade (Reconstruction Agency, 2011). While over a million people volunteered to help with immediate response efforts, assisting municipal government offices as civil servants was beyond their brief. The resulting municipal government manpower shortages could have had a paralysing effect on governance during the recovery and reconstruction period.

Instead, local and national administrators became national innovators in developing polycentric governance and enabling adaptive governance to support these disaster-hit municipalities. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), in collaboration with the Japan Association of City Mayors, the National Association of Towns and Villages, and the disaster-affected prefectural and municipal governments, launched a manpower support initiative to send municipal officers from across Japan. Municipal governments across the country organically formed semi-autonomous collaborative partnerships at multiple levels, with each other and with national authorities, private companies, NGOs and civil society organisations (CSOs), to provide emergency supplies, manpower and public services – financed by the central government. As such, they entered into polycentric arrangements, and had the flexibility and lesson-learning processes in place for adaptive management of an evolving manpower shortage challenge. When the need for and undersupply of technical experts became clear, for example, the MIC had the flexibility to adapt recruitment processes within the national governance system to fill the gap rapidly.

This Japanese case demonstrates that – by providing sub-national governments with devolved political and administrative authority, autonomy and financial support – national governments can arm municipalities with the tools to adapt governance approaches in response to changing needs and circumstances.

Aoki (2016)

(Scott and Tarazona, 2011). The South Korean case (Bae et al., 2016; see Box 2) also exemplifies this problem.

Low capacity at local level is both a symptom and a cause of incomplete decentralisation, and a common challenge for governance approaches promoting local autonomy and self-regulation. Local governments typically have weaker technical and management capacity than national-level counterparts, and secondary cities and rural municipalities, especially, often struggle to attract and retain staff with the necessary technical and management skills and institutional knowledge (Leck and Simon, 2013; Bahadur and Thornton, 2015). The transfer of civil servants in and out of cities also makes retaining institutional knowledge and connections difficult (Bahadur and Thornton, 2015). These realities have negative implications for lesson learning, knowledge sharing and collaboration. Even in relatively decentralised countries with strong national–local government relations and strong local capacity, national realities can limit the degree to which the resilience benefits of decentralised, multi-level governance arrangements can be realised. For example, weak policy enforcement and tax bases in many developing countries limit local government’s ability to raise funds at the local level, leading to dependence on central government subsidies and restricting the ability to self-regulate (Scott and Tarazona, 2011).

As the following example from Kampala and Dar es Salaam shows (see Box 3), the underlying political context, along with the administrative structure of local government, influences the ability to address shocks and stresses. In both cities, the character of local–national relations presents trade-offs in adaptation planning and

resilience building between downward and upward accountability and effectiveness. Reforms driven by the wider political context heavily influence adaptation planning and resilience building, while institutional reform to achieve more integrated adaptation planning has its own political fall-out.

Analysis of multi-country data from 1950 to 2006 has shown that decentralisation does help to reduce hazard impacts on the population (Tselios and Tompkins, 2017). However, while decentralisation can have benefits for meeting resilience goals, this is heavily dependent on context, and decentralisation to the lowest possible level is not always the most advantageous option. Evidence from Vietnam, for example, suggests that highly centralised planning systems can be more effective at risk reduction than the ‘fractured’ decentralised systems thanks to more direct lines of command and communication (Bahadur and Thornton, 2015), though there are other challenges. The example of Mozambique illustrates one way of working within these constraints, a point discussed further in Chapter 3. Mozambique runs a deconcentrated governance system in which authority, responsibility and financial resources are shifted from central government offices in the capital city to central government offices in regions – rather than to local governments. This has created stronger field administration while maintaining the supervisory role of central government ministries, with clear reporting lines and accountability, ultimately contributing to higher prioritisation of risk reduction (Scott and Tarazona, 2011).

The nature of national–local government relations influences not only national and sub-national resilience policies and programmes, but also cross-border, regional

Box 2. National-local government relationships in disaster response in South Korea

In South Korea, a recent shock in the form of a massive hydrofluoric acid and gas leak in the industrial city of Gumi has highlighted problems of coordination and blurred lines of accountability. South Korea developed under a highly centralised government, but since the first local elections were held in 1995, successive presidents have prioritised decentralisation (Bae and Kim, 2013). Against this backdrop, South Korea has taken positive steps to reform and integrate its national disaster management system, strengthening centralised leadership while decentralising certain responsibilities and roles to local governments. However, overlapping spheres of authority have produced both vertical and horizontal jurisdictional disputes in governance for resilience to disaster shocks.

When the acid and gas leak occurred, weak capacity at the local level, coupled with weak communication and collaboration, turned what could have been a minor incident into a costly citywide disaster. Safety failures led to an eruption of high-pressure hydrogen fluoride, instantly killing five people, but it was eight hours until a national response team finally shut off the leak; over 12,000 residents required a medical examination and treatment, farmland and livestock were damaged, 78 companies suspended their operations, and the reported damage totalled about 17.7 billion South Korean won. The slow and ineffective response was caused by a lack of awareness and information on the part of first responders (the fire department), a lack of clarity regarding responsibilities of various agencies, coupled with poor communication and collaboration between local and national government agencies. Furthermore, unclear accountability allowed local and national governments to play a ‘blame game’ in the aftermath.

In order for decentralised, multi-level governance to be effective in addressing unpredictable shocks and stresses, devolved responsibilities must be set out clearly, and must be coupled with a clear framework for vertical and horizontal communication.

Bae et al., (2016)

Box 3. Contrasting upward and downward accountability in adaptation planning in Kampala and Dar es Salaam

The contrasting political and administrative structures of the cities of Kampala (Uganda) and Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) demonstrate how national–local government relations and vertically divided authority can influence policy action on climate-related issues. In Kampala, the transfer of authority for the city upward to the Kampala Capital City Authority within the national government in 2010 moved governing authority from the city council and mayor to an Executive Director appointed by the President (Resnick, 2014b). While this was justified as a means of improving service delivery, the timing had clear political links (Resnick, 2014b). Nevertheless, this has led to a more professionalised government with more technical capacity under the overall remit of the President. The city appears to be engaged in a process of upward collaboration with national government and international actors to build the resources and relations needed for adaptation, but the legacy of political takeover leaves a breach in relationships with civil society organisations for building resilience, while raising questions about the role of authoritarian interventions that nevertheless lead to positive leadership.

In Dar es Salaam, the fragmented nature of city government following decentralisation impedes the capacity of the government to address resilience. There are three independent municipalities with elected representatives, a city mayor and coordinating council that lacks legislative authority to implement planning measures, and a nationally appointed regional commissioner. The city mayor has no authority to implement a citywide agenda without the support of the three other mayors. At the lowest levels of authority there are strong relationships between citizens and street- and district-level committees. However, while rooted in an ethos of democratic decentralisation, there are structural complexities to a citywide, rapid, institutionalised response to climate change and any restructuring of the council would have significant political fall-out.

Gore (2015)

or global risks. Where local governments have devolved responsibilities, autonomy and the decision-making powers for self-regulation, local state and non-state actors across borders can, and do, form multi-stakeholder and polycentric arrangements to tackle shared problems. For example, in the Upper Rhine Valley, a range of transnational governance jurisdictions, arrangements and platforms have emerged across Swiss, French and German bordering regions to address common challenges. These include boards of regional planners, a conference of the regions' mayors, a regional council of parliamentary representatives, agricultural associations, chambers of commerce and joint research projects on regional issues, among other partnerships (Perkmann, 1999). At a global scale, polycentric governance has helped to speed up progress toward climate change mitigation goals, which is arguably among the grandest resilience challenges in the long term (Cole, 2015).

However, national-level political differences can also undermine the formation of effective cross-border governance systems. This is the case with the management of transboundary water resources in the Hindu Kush Himalaya region, which extends over all or part of eight countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan) and contains the source of 10 major Asian rivers. Here, transboundary, regionwide and river basin-level water governance arrangements are lacking, with national-level political agendas instead preferring bilateral or multi-lateral agreements which differ greatly depending on the historical relationships between countries, underpinned by centralised national water management systems rather than management by basin-level authorities or decentralised multi-stakeholder governance (Shrestha and Ghate, 2016). For example,

Bhutan and India have a long history of successful 'win-win' cooperation over their shared water resources, and India and Pakistan, with support from the World Bank, have recently entered a treaty regulating the use of three shared rivers, despite a long-standing and bitter rivalry. However, deep-seated mistrust and attitudinal differences have prevented Bangladesh, India and Nepal from reaching a similar collaborative arrangement (Biswas, 2011; Tir and Ackerman, 2016). This has significant governance implications for resilience to water-related shocks and stresses in the region.

2.1.2. The role and influence of political parties

Competition for power between multiple political parties is, of course, a vital part of democratic governance. However, the way this competition plays out in practice can influence national–local government relations, with implications for service delivery and resilience outcomes.

In democracies, it is not uncommon for opposition parties (to the central government) to enter office at mayoral or municipal level, a phenomenon known as vertically divided authority. This has occurred in many countries across the Global North and Global South and is increasingly common, for example, in sub-Saharan African countries undergoing rapid urbanisation, decentralisation and increasingly competitive multi-party systems (Resnick, 2014a). This can complicate national–local relations. Indeed, central governments may see this as a threat, particularly as opposition parties in some countries have garnered national support by first gaining footholds at municipal or city level (Myers, 2002; Resnick, 2014b). In such cases, central governments are inclined to employ 'strategies of subversion', undermining the

power and authority of municipalities represented by the opposition (Resnick, 2014a). This can be used as a tactic to shift blame and credit for certain actions from or to the central party in power (Boone, 2003; Resnick, 2014a). Essentially, this means that central government deliberately ‘fractures’ the decentralisation structure, giving opposition municipalities responsibility they cannot fulfil with the resources and capacity provided, or reducing municipal autonomy when opposition municipalities prove particularly successful (Resnick, 2014a).

This happened in Senegal, for example, which otherwise has a relatively strong history of decentralisation. The central government deliberately undermined fiscal decentralisation, increased administrative ambiguity, and reduced the autonomy of local government where it could be credited with good service delivery while increasing autonomy where the local government could be criticised for poor performance (Resnick, 2014a). Vertical divided authority has also had implications for city governance in Kampala (see Box 3). Conversely, strong and well-managed fiscal protections have helped limit the impact of vertically divided authority in South Africa (Cameron, 2014). Service delivery in Cape Town appears to be comparable to that of Johannesburg despite the former being controlled by the opposition party, and despite attempts to undermine the authority of its officials (Cameron, 2014).

2.1.3. State–society relations

A government’s relationship with civil society, and the rules, norms and history that govern that relationship, play a critical role in determining the potential for the various forms of participatory, multi-stakeholder governance considered beneficial for resilience building to operate. In open democracies, where conditions are in place for civil society to thrive, governance arrangements involving non-state actors can be effective components of the wider governance system which enable improved resilience (as seen in Chapter 1). In these countries, multi-stakeholder governance structures are common, and indeed are central to many local governance entities, such as New York City’s Community Boards. Similarly, governance structures that promote trust and strong ties between state and non-state actors, such as the relationship between small municipalities and their communities (see Box 4 for an example from Mexico), and initiatives that build partnerships between state, private sector and communities (see Box 5 for an example from Mozambique), can have beneficial resilience outcomes. The case from Maputo in Mozambique, however, also points to the need for time and resources to sustain partnership building (discussed further in Chapter 3).

The media and a vocal civil society play important roles in raising awareness of, and political interest in, risk reduction and resilience issues. This is necessary to incentivise the participation of a diverse range of stakeholders in resilience governance (Scott and Tarazona, 2011). Pressure from the electorate, ‘watchdog’ organisations and a free press

encourage local officials to address local concerns, including risk, and to promote accountability. These are considered to be important, and related, components of democracy and effective governance (Bae et al., 2016; Norris, 2008).

Non-state actors, such as local and international NGOs, are often among the voices calling for forms of multi-stakeholder and participatory governance. However, echoing concerns about unfunded mandates in national–local government relations, in some cases responsibilities can be passed to non-state actors, as part of new multi-stakeholder or community-based approaches, without the authority and revenue transfer necessary for their fulfilment, as has happened for example in some community-based disaster preparedness projects in the Philippines (Allen, 2006; Coombes, 2007). This can be a political issue. For example, responsibilities including risk reduction and resilience building may be implicitly or explicitly transferred to civil society actors when state expenditure is inadequate or reduced, passing accountability away from government agencies (Allen, 2006; Coombes, 2007). This misuse of multi-stakeholder governance structures undermines the potential for either state- or civil society-led resilience building.

Box 4. The importance of state–society relations in disaster preparedness and response in Mexico

In Mexico, decentralisation, coupled with local government reform, has been of critical importance for building resilience to hurricanes, and evidence suggests that smaller or more concentrated municipalities have some governance advantages over larger ones. A review of DRR practices in five hurricane-exposed municipalities in the Yucatán peninsula found that two smaller municipalities, with fewer financial resources, outperformed larger municipalities facing similar risks. They outperformed in terms of their effective use of risk maps, enforcement of regulations, design and application of risk communication systems, coordination of preparedness measures and evacuations, as well as shelter management.

One reason for this is that governments in smaller municipalities enjoy greater opportunities to build trust with and obtain the participation of citizens and civil society. These governments may be more visible, as they are better able to visit and communicate directly with residents. As a result, strategies to raise awareness of how to prepare for hurricanes are likely to be better received by at risk communities. Smaller municipalities in South Africa have similarly benefited from their relatively close and tight-knit social network, both within the municipality and with civil society, aiding, for instance, the flow and quality of local information (Pasquini et al., 2015).

Wilkinson (2012)

Historical events and policies that undermine people's trust in government can have a negative impact on civil society participation and community engagement for years. In Colombia, for example, a history of conflict means that people in affected regions are often unwilling to participate in any form of political engagement or activity (Scott and Tarazona, 2011). Meanwhile, decades of hostile policies toward slum communities in Jakarta, including threatened evictions, have left a legacy of deep distrust of political authority among communities at risk of flooding, resulting in the failure of efforts to strengthen state–citizen partnerships and community participation in aid of better flood management (van Voorst, 2016). Some governments maintain tight control over the media, and take measures to suppress critical civil society voices, which undermines trust and the potential for meaningful multi-stakeholder and participatory governance. Depending on the context, therefore, the building of trust, the provision of incentives for engagement, along with clear benefits for citizens, are needed alongside structures that facilitate the participation of multiple non-state actors.

Box 5. Partnership building for adaptive urban governance in Maputo, Mozambique

In the city of Maputo, peri-urban communities threatened by increasing risk of flooding participated in a pilot 'public-private-people partnership' process to design and implement Local Climate Change and Development Plans. At the time of implementation, relocation of several communities had been raised as an unpopular possibility, and the National Fund for the Environment of Mozambique (FUNAB) was seeking ways to incorporate the views of citizens in decision-making processes for managing urban climate risk in the city. This pilot was conceived as an experiment in addressing the practical realities of partnership development for participatory planning.

The participatory planning process created opportunities for dialogue between government agencies, businesses and communities, both informally and in public forums. The incorporation of local experience and knowledge sped up the municipality's climate policy development, and FUNAB have altered their practices to work more closely with local associations. The pilot demonstrated the potential for business, governments and communities to work together to address challenges through partnerships. It also showed the capacity of local residents to take a leading role in participatory planning, provided there is a good degree of trust between local institutions and communities, and sufficient time and resources to allow their engagement. However, it is not clear whether this will be sustained following the completion of the pilot initiative.

Castán Broto et al. (2015) and Boyd et al. (2014)

At local level, community-based governance, as a form of participatory governance where responsibility rests more firmly with community organisations, can face a problem of scale if not supported by the state. While community-based initiatives and strategies can deliver significant benefits for the specific participating communities, it has been argued that they are no substitute for the broader progressive policies that are needed to deliver sustainable reductions in poverty, inequality and social exclusion. These undermine resilience, and larger state investments are often needed for community-based initiatives to thrive (Wiseman, 2006). They typically function at a scale smaller than the systems that they rely on, and are therefore vulnerable to changes beyond their sphere of influence (Cash et al., 2006; Cosens et al., 2014).

On the whole, community-based governance is likely to be more successful if it works within existing structures, rather than creating parallel or new structures (Tadele and Manyena, 2009). This can be seen, for example, in Nepal, where community-based governance approaches for building resilience have been more successful when institutionally embedded in local government structures. This has heightened access to resources, as well as accountability and transparency in service delivery (Jones et al., 2013). It is not always easy, however. Where community-based pilot projects are led by civil society organisations, they often have difficulty with linking with local governance processes and with scaling up, to the detriment of resilience outcomes (UNDP, 2015). Furthermore, without effective state support, community-based governance often suffers from a lack of governing authority, legitimacy, funding and sustained leadership (Brosius et al., 2005; Brunner et al., 2005; Chaffin et al., 2014). There are significant unanswered questions about where accountability lies in community-based governance, and what counts as 'community' and sources of authority in communities (Black and Watson, 2006; Jones et al., 2013). In practice, the potential for community-based, participatory approaches to deliver results often rests on the level of support provided by external facilitators, including the state, and how those facilitating institutions are perceived by local people (Jones et al., 2013).

Evidence suggests that the interface between national–local relationships and state–society relationships is important in the creation of governance conditions for resilience (as in the examples from Kampala and Dar es Salaam, as well as the case of decentralisation in Mexico). As theories of polycentricity suggest, dense networks across different levels and different actors provide the foundations for accumulated resilience. The Chilean case (Box 6) provides an example of how such networks – alongside particular forms of institutional structure that foster flexibility, autonomy and accountability – can build local-level resilience, even in the context of a highly centralised regime.

Box 6. Local-level adaptation outcomes in Chile

Chile is a highly centralised country, with political and economic power concentrated in the capital. Regional and local interests are often not considered in decision-making, and policy implementation is similarly centralised (Klein et al., 2015). All sub-national governments are part of the same national governance regime, meaning that they have access to the same public programmes and are subject to the same public policies. It could be expected, therefore, that this uniform national context would lead to relatively uniform resilience outcomes, but this is not the case in Chile.

Performance differs across different municipalities. The best performing municipalities are not those that have had the most historical experience of disasters, those with most staff for disaster risk management, or those with strongest networking relationships as singular primary factors, as might be expected. Instead, differences are better explained by the combined impact of specific institutional arrangements, such as their operational rules and organisational structures, internal regulations that strengthen the level of autonomy, flexibility and accountability, the size and diversity of networks, and levels of community participation. Furthermore, polycentric relationships between the municipal councils and other institutional actors across governance levels, including ministries, regional governments, NGOs and local society, have also contributed to better resilience outcomes. These relationships helped to mediate collective local government decisions, generate positive incentives for decision-makers and compensate for a lack of municipal support.

Valdivieso and Andersson (2017)

2.2. The influence of informal political institutions on resilience interventions

Alongside formal institutions and actors, a range of informal institutions and actors, or ‘shadow’ systems, also play a critical role in governing resilience. The role of these informal systems has been neglected in the literature about how to improve governance for climate-related resilience, but in many countries they play important, and often invisible, roles in enabling or hindering resilience outcomes (Leck and Roberts, 2015).

Where the goals of formal and informal institutions are compatible, formal and informal rules systems can complement each other, leading to increased efficiency and effectiveness of governance processes (Pahl-Wostl, 2009). There is significant interplay and overlap between formal and informal systems. As a result, the boundaries between them may be blurred; many local governments rely on informal systems for information exchange and to introduce new ideas (Leck and Roberts, 2015).

However, problems arise when the goals of informal and formal institutions are conflicting, particularly where formal institutions are ineffective (Pahl-Wostl, 2009). In such cases, these systems compete with and undermine each other. While the lower monitoring and accountability present in informal political institutions can, positively, lead to bolder action and innovation, typically this situation leads to governance regimes characterised by high levels of corruption, lack of transparency in decision-making processes, and the dominance of established, and often inequitable, power structures (Pahl-Wostl, 2009; Pelling and High, 2005; High et al., 2006). These characteristics can be detrimental to resilience outcomes, but as informal political systems are embedded within socio-cultural institutions, norms and standards, they can be very difficult to tackle. The result is that, even where strong resilience

building policy and regulation exists on paper, it is not implemented in practice (Pahl-Wostl, 2009).

Box 7 uses case studies from Greece, Italy and the Dutch Caribbean to illustrate the influence of different localised manifestations of informal political institutions on different aspects of disaster risk management.

The following two sections focus on a particular subset of informal institutions. The first looks at clientelism, political patronage and corruption, which are commonly held to distort formally sanctioned policies and projects, and the second assesses traditional political institutions and actors.

2.2.1. Clientelism, political patronage and corruption

Clientelism is an informal system for the exchange of benefits or advantage, whereby a person in a position of power and influence (a ‘patron’) gives favours or rewards, such as public office, jobs, contracts, subsidies, prestige or other benefits in return for goods or services for political support. While clientelism describes the broad phenomenon, political patronage generally refers to a specific type or instance of clientelistic exchange (Hicken, 2011; Robinson and Verdier, 2013). Some practices of clientelism are illegal and constitute forms of corruption (defined as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain (Transparency International, 2009)), but others are permitted by law. There are many forms of corruption, including bribery, extortion, fraud, favouritism (including nepotism), patronage, rent-seeking, wage/asset stripping and procurement irregularities (Mahmud and Prowse, 2012). Clientelism, patronage and corruption may reduce competence levels (if jobs are filled by unqualified individuals), weaken morale and divert public funds away from public service provision. This can undermine the ability of formal institutions to govern fairly and effectively for all citizens. As a result, they may also undermine

Box 7. The importance of informal political institutions to disaster risk governance

A study of the local governance of small-scale but high local-impact flood risks in Greece, Italy and the Dutch Caribbean illustrates the influence of local political institutions on disaster risk management and the different manifestation of this influence in different contexts. In the municipality of Rethymno in Crete, a tradition of clientelism and a social sphere dominated by political parties inhibited joint state and civil society partnerships from developing local risk management strategies, particularly with regard to public awareness campaigns. Social change coupled with austerity measures, however, has ruptured such relationships and led to the re-emergence of independent NGOs (Mavrogenis, 2016). In Genoa, by contrast, anti-corruption campaigns have stymied the construction of structural mitigation works, due to hold ups in the approval of construction tenders. Delays have also been attributed to other aspects of the informal political culture such as over-regulation and a high bureaucratic turnover of personnel (Scolobig, 2016). In St Maarten, in the Dutch Caribbean, personal and political interests in land development have prevented the enforcement of land-use regulation, including risk zoning, despite the development of much improved hurricane warning and awareness campaigns, which are perceived as apolitical and championed by political elites (Fraser, 2016).

Fraser (2016); Mavrogenis (2016); Scolobig (2016)

governance needed to improve resilience and equitable resilience outcomes. However, clientelism and corruption are not necessarily detrimental to development, provided there are institutional systems in place for centralising and distributing benefits with a view to long-term progress, among other conditions (Kelsall, 2011).

Research from Bangladesh has shown that corruption, and associated unequal power relations, undermines efforts to build resilience to cyclones, as well as relief efforts (Mahmud and Prowse, 2012; Ashiqur, forthcoming). The forms of corruption seen in pre- and post-disaster contexts differ; in pre-disaster, resilience building interventions, nepotism and the failure or refusal to provide services are most prevalent, while bribery, the misuse of resources and wage/asset stripping are more common in relief situations (Mahmud and Prowse, 2012).

A core problem with clientelism, patronage and corruption, and one which is directly at odds with the principles of governance for climate-related resilience (and indeed, governance more generally), is that it leads to the exclusion and marginalisation of certain groups from power and decision-making. While governance approaches for improved resilience promote participation and diversity, local-level clientelism, corruption and social structures more broadly can reduce participation of the poorest and marginalised groups in governance. This can perpetuate inequalities and the causes of vulnerability, due to favouritism of friends and allies (Jones et al., 2013). Indeed, it tends to be local elites who are most able to form local associations, including for resilience building. Community institutions involved in community-based governance may not be strong enough to bend powerful members of a community toward the needs of the most vulnerable (Véron et al., 2006; Allen, 2006; Pelling, 2007). In rural western Uttar Pradesh in India, for example, clientelism and corruption are politicised along caste and class lines, and low-level, everyday forms of corruption

allow wealthier farmers to obtain privileged access to lucrative marketing opportunities (Jeffrey, 2002).

While several of the governance characteristics for resilience building are also promoted as ways to reduce these problems, for example by increasing transparency and accountability, evidence suggests that this is not always the case. Multi-stakeholder governance can play a role in fighting corruption, for instance by enhancing transparency and thereby making corruption more expensive, but the potential to do so may be restricted by vested interests and misaligned incentives for the multiple stakeholders in question (Søreide and Truex, 2013). Those with vested interests can have strong incentives to protect existing institutions when faced with reforms which might threaten them. Consequently, their involvement in multi-stakeholder governance can make them powerful forces that resist change, constrain the content and direction of change, and/or restrict the durability and effectiveness of change (Moe, 2015). Multi-stakeholder governance initiatives can also make the problem worse, by providing a legitimate screen for collusion, and therefore may not be appropriate in some highly corrupt countries (Søreide and Truex, 2013). Similarly, while clientelism is often associated with the centralisation of power, there is little evidence that decentralisation necessarily removes problems of clientelism and corruption (D'Arcy and Cornell, 2016; Fan et al., 2009).

2.2.2. Customary or traditional political institutions

In many countries, people are governed by dual political systems – that is, the formal system led by the state, and the informal system of traditional rules and customs. A total of 103 countries constitutionally identify the existence of distinct ethnic groups, of which 61 explicitly recognise forms of traditional governance and customary law. The latter group, therefore, blend traditional political institutions with the formal system. While in some countries the influence of traditional governance is limited

to minority ethnic groups (e.g., the US and Australia), elsewhere large swaths of the population live under dual governance systems (as in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and South Asia) (Holzinger et al., 2016). They can complement each other, for instance where traditional leaders act as accessible intermediaries between the state and a community. In Zambia, for example, chiefs act as gate-keepers for local decision-making, and strong relationships between state representatives and traditional chiefs have led to better public service provision (Baldwin, 2013). However, they can also undermine the formal system with negative consequences for democracy, conflict and development (Holzinger et al., 2016). While dual governance is widespread, its functions and implications are not well understood (Holzinger et al., 2016).

Traditional or customary governance includes, for example, procedures for the selection of chiefs or elders as leaders, for dispute settlement, land allocation, inheritance and other aspects of local decision-making. It can refer to a wide range of systems, from indigenous rights (South America), to parliamentary Houses of Chiefs (Ghana and Namibia) (Holzinger et al., 2016). The impact of these

traditional institutions on the viability of the governance approaches and characteristics promoted for resilience building is mixed. On the one hand, they can promote some characteristics of governance considered beneficial for resilience building, particularly community-level participation and shared decision-making, due to their relatively close relationships with, and interest in, the well-being of local people (Holzinger et al., 2016; Baldwin, 2013). Conversely, by disregarding democratic procedural standards they can skew access to participation in decision-making and can undermine human rights (Ntsebeza, 2005).

Chiefs can wield considerable power in the formal political system, as they often enjoy high levels of trust, and because they can mobilise local constituencies to vote for their chief's preferred candidate (Logan, 2009; Baldwin, 2013). However, as with clientelism, they can perpetuate discrimination and exclude groups from decision-making according to traditional rules around gender, caste, race or other factors, often involving marginalised groups most vulnerable to shocks and stresses (Véron et al., 2006; Allen, 2006).

3. From theory to action: trade-offs, entry points and resilience outcomes

How do we create governance that can support human resilience to multiple shocks and stresses? As discussed in Chapter 1, theoretical and applied literature in the fields of disaster risk management, adaptation and resilience demonstrates the importance of relatively complex and diverse governance arrangements, where principles of accountability and representation govern the exchange of knowledge and resources.

As the examples in Chapter 2 also indicate, institutional approaches to governance for improved climate resilience do not occur in a vacuum, but are strongly influenced by the national political and governance contexts in which they operate. Formal political and governance regimes may differ, however, in their levels of openness, accountability and representativeness, or be more or less statist, while informal political institutions vary in their form and influence. No systematic body of literature has embraced resilience outcomes, the institutional form of resilience interventions and the broader political and governance context. Single or comparative case studies can only give us a window on the implications for risk reduction and resilience building.

In terms of understanding institutional change, it is necessary to understand that political institutions have long histories, along with established cultures and political relationships (Chaffin et al., 2014). Resistance to change in formal political institutions stems from the presence of groups or people with vested interests in the status quo and institutional path dependency, whereby existing institutional structures are costlier to change than to retain (Moe, 2015). Institutional path dependency can be linked to vested interests, dominant paradigms and past investment decisions, among other factors, and similarly creates a ‘lock-in’ effect. This can lead to policies and governance structures, once established, being difficult to reform (Kay, 2005). In the Netherlands, for example, path dependency and policy ‘stickiness’, associated with past emphasis on, and investments in, structural flood defence infrastructure, have been restraining factors in shifting national flood risk management policy toward a resilience oriented ‘Room for the River’ approach. This would incorporate nature-based solutions and land-use planning, and is gradually gaining momentum (van

Buuren et al., 2016). Some of these governance characteristics also go against the grain of conditions necessary for adaptive management, such as experimentation and flexibility (Brunner et al., 2005; Allen and Gunderson, 2010).

Where governance arrangements do emerge to support resilience, they often do so organically over a long time. As Lebel et al. (2006) show for resource governance, the creation of a trusted public authority for the management of a water reserve in Kristianstad, Sweden, has resulted from a bottom-up process of public participation and deliberation that has taken 10 to 20 years to institutionalise. Building resilience is not just an outcome, but an ongoing process (Djalante et al. 2011). It requires not just supply-side institutional capacity building, but support that improves actors’ capacities to learn and their power and ability to influence decision-making processes (Mercy Corps, n.d.).

The importance of political and governance context also challenges international initiatives to move beyond replicating context-specific interventions as universal ‘best practice’, and designing institutional blueprints. Instead, it means finding interventions that are ‘best fit’ for context, or adapting to the political context, as well as taking advantage of a plurality of solutions, operating flexibly and working at multiple levels simultaneously to tackle complex problems (Ramalingam et al., 2013). While this is challenging to operationalise, one implication for aid donor-led programmes is that they incorporate contextual factors, such as the governance context in design, rather than seeing them as a barrier to delivery (Ramalingam et al., 2013). In the case of corruption, for example, the systemic nature of corruption means it is hard to draw boundaries around it and identify simple causal linkages. Instead, understanding the underlying incentives for corrupt behaviour, such as institutional cultures, and deploying programme design that can be adapted to continuously test the logic of an intervention and its assumptions allows for a ‘wide-angle’ approach to the problem (Ramalingam et al., 2013). In general, flexible regulations that leave space for context-specific implementation can be designed (Pahl-Wostl, 2009).

It is also important to acknowledge the trade-offs inherent in institutional and governance reforms. A study

of adaptation governance in 18 river basins in Brazil finds that the development of integrated governance mechanisms supported the capacity to adapt to water resource variability. The change in governance structure led to increased representation of societal interests, more participation, more use of knowledge by councils and better networks between relevant organisations (Engle and Lemos, 2010). Nevertheless, river basin councils exhibiting higher scores across such variables exhibited lower scores related to the equality of decision-making (in terms of the power distribution between stakeholders and the ability to express oneself freely) and the availability of knowledge (Engle and Lemos, 2010).

Other studies point out trade-offs between the involvement of multiple actors and the workability and efficiency of governance processes (Lebel et al., 2006). Having multiple centres of decision-making can increase transaction costs (Djalante et al., 2011). Sustaining participation is resource intensive, with time and monetary costs for participants, especially for marginalised groups (Djalante et al., 2011). Instigating governance arrangements that ‘fit’ with the ecological barriers of water basins, for example, may make for complex institutional inter-relationships between new institutional authorities and traditional ones (Pahl-Wostl, 2009). Operationalising resilience management principles, such as flexibility and redundancy, may also have institutional costs. While flexible organisations can scale up their operations quickly in response to events, it can be

difficult to determine and measure accountability under loose and flexible arrangements (Djalante et al., 2011). Institutionalisation may also bring important benefits that flexible networks do not have (Lebel et al., 2006). Greater redundancy may increase adaptive capacity, but decrease institutional efficiency (Pahl-Wostl, 2009).

These findings do not mean that action to build governance for resilience is impossible or should not be attempted. The example of the Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network (ACCCRN) in Box 8, below, shows how a ‘governance’ approach, which can be replicated across contexts, can foster the creation of new actor networks and multi-stakeholder learning processes, although the underlying issues of power and representation are always present.

Many examples of practice in the literature imply the need to find ‘entry points’ for improvement that work with, rather than against, existing governance contexts. This may mean finding piecemeal, practical solutions to specific problems which are then ‘scaled up’ (Root et al., 2015). There are several examples from natural resource management, as well as disaster risk management, of what this could mean in practice. The challenge of supporting lower-level jurisdictions to participate in effective governance may mean an interim strategy of deconcentrating power to a higher level of government (Scott and Tarzona, 2011; UNDP, 2015), or working with national governments to provide legal, economic and technical incentives to lower-level governments to genuinely engage in joint governance processes (Djalante

Box 8. Applying a governance approach in the Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network

Since 2009, the ACCCRN initiative has applied a shared learning approach in 10 cities across four Asian countries, in which stakeholders across governance scales were engaged in developing new knowledge, fostering experimentation and deepening political engagement with issues of climate change and urban governance. Process and dialogue are valued above quantifiable technical inputs. Stakeholder engagements took place at different levels and varied in size and format, but encouraged a stakeholder-driven process of developing vulnerability assessments, as well as pilots, projects and strategies. Divergent outcomes across the cities reflected their different political systems and cultures and the working practices of different participating institutions, as well as the critical role of facilitators and local leaders. Attributing outcomes to the shared learning process alone risks its promotion as a template to be applied uncritically across contexts, and neglects deliberate efforts in the ACCCRN initiative to foster a values-driven process emphasising equity.

However, one example from Mercy Corps’ work in Semarang, Indonesia, shows how the process resulted in new state–society coalitions that were more effective in demanding accountability for urban services, guidelines for local governments to mainstream climate change into spatial planning and new national government funds for local government implementation of adaptation options. In general, findings from ACCCRN point to the fact that the process helped to strengthen networks across government agencies in different sectors and across different scales, as well as across NGOs and academics. Within these networks, the approach of ‘learning by doing’ fostered greater appreciation of the complexity, uncertainty and institutional challenges of climate change adaptation. It also opened up space to improve the transparency of expert knowledge and move away from a focus on climate hazards to address underlying urban development and governance challenges. In some cases, facilitators used shared learning to build the capacity of marginalised groups to advocate on their own behalf. However, the experience also points to the limitations of addressing such issues in a short-term development project framework, with the danger that shared learning may simply reinforce existing power dynamics unless stakeholder values and interests, and issues of representation (such as the exclusion of domestic and international migrants), are acknowledged and addressed.

Reed et al. (2013); Mercy Corps (n.d.)

et al., 2011). Multi-stakeholder collaboration requires both getting relevant parties to the table and maintaining their participation. Studies from environmental management point to the role of external and institutional triggers in creating the necessary incentives for stakeholder engagement. A strong ongoing governmental role, including funding and/or in-kind assistance to offset the inevitably high transaction costs that confront volunteers engaged in day-to-day decision-making and action (particularly among marginalised populations), is vital (Djalante et al., 2011). In another example, in cases where political cycles and bureaucratic incentives cause institutional turnover, a UNDP capacity-building project included working with outgoing governments officials at the end of an electoral cycle to ensure handover (UNDP, 2015).

It is often clearer how to work with formal institutional structures than informal ones. However, there is evidence from the broader literature to suggest ways forward. Where patronage relations undermine outcomes, for example, the evidence suggests that directly targeting patronage structures may be counterproductive. There are risks to removing the entire structure, and removing individuals may cause a contest for vacant power slots (Root et al., 2015). Instead, a more productive approach might be to change the incentives for actors to depend on patronage networks, such as providing state-based protection programmes for those who would otherwise depend on patronage (often those in the ‘middle’ of the network rather than at the top) (Root et al., 2015).

Studies also suggest the need to bring informal actors into ‘blended’ governance arrangements. In Niger, for example, a legal framework grants collective grazing and water access rights to herders in their home areas, while granting the

communities authority to negotiate usage rights with other groups. This approach provides both a framework and an incentive for the empowerment of customary governing bodies, effective decentralisation and a clear path toward the equitable provision of important livelihood assets among different stakeholders (Carabine and Wilkinson, 2016).

Such principles also apply to broader efforts to improve governance and development. There is a large overlap between what is required for national and local development and what is required for risk reduction and adaptation, if development is sensitive to present and future risks. Thinking and working through such principles in the context of climate resilience also brings a particular emphasis on involving knowledge actors and bridging science and policy, as well as a unique focus on particular trade-offs, both between social groups (where risk mitigation for one group may mean the exacerbation of risk for another) and between short-term and long-term futures. As with broader support for development, however, too often principles such as these are undermined by the emphasis of international partners on short-term technical inputs and short project cycles, as well as stronger accountability upwards to donor institutions than downwards to national and sub-national actors (Root et al., 2015). While there is emerging, informal and anecdotal evidence that climate change can provide a useful entry point for rethinking institutional mandates, creating new spaces for engagement that can break with existing political dynamics, this has yet to be fully substantiated (ACCRA, 2016).

Box 9. Five principles for action to build governance for resilience

The analysis above suggests that building governance for resilience requires overarching principles for reform rather than institutional blueprints, although normative institutional analysis and recommendations guide the direction of reform efforts. Five core principles emerge:

- Understand political economy and power in the national and local context. Undertaking political economy analysis from the start of a reform programme or resilience initiative will help to ensure it is appropriate for the context and guide take-up and implementation. Network analysis, such as stakeholder mapping, can assist in understanding positive and negative influences on leadership, social structures and interactions between components of institutions. Generating knowledge about informal, as well as formal, power structures is important, although often a challenge for researchers and practitioners.
- Broker and facilitate coalitions across formal and informal actors. An effective way to foster institutional reform is to help bear the costs of convening actors and brokering new agreements, including supporting spaces for interaction and information sharing.
- Acknowledge trade-offs. Trade-offs in resilience outcomes – such as short-term vs long-term costs – from new forms of governance to new institutional arrangements all need to be acknowledged and deliberated by affected actors.
- Focus on process. The emphasis of interventions should be on processes to build effective multi-stakeholder collaboration, with the production of technical outputs a secondary concern.
- Invest in long-term efforts to build trust and engagement. History, culture and social structure all influence trust between actors and the ability to build meaningful co-working and knowledge sharing. Reworking relationships takes time, well beyond conventional project cycles.

Conclusion

Scholars and practitioners have invested heavily in articulating what governance approaches will be necessary to build resilience to climate- and weather-related shocks and stressors. Emerging work also points to the role of weak governance in undermining DRR, adaptation planning and the application of resilience thinking in certain contexts – whether through incapacity, capture by powerful groups to the detriment of other groups or institutional rigidity. However, there is a shortage of work that systematically analyses how different approaches to intervention are influenced by the political contexts of their implementation, and how to address broader political conditions that influence the possibilities for building resilience.

The most systematic research to date on the role of formal political institutions in relation to climate resilience has concentrated on the role of decentralisation processes in the context of national–local government relations, often underpinned by political party relations, as well as the potential for, and politics of, participatory and community-based governance in the context of state–society relations. The importance of informal political institutions alongside formal institutions is recognised in the resilience literature. The examples here show how informal political relationships of corruption, clientelism and related forms of patronage might influence different stages of risk response, and that customary institutions can be important in improving capacities to respond to shocks and stressors. This includes improved access to livelihoods and financial resources as well as climate information (Carabine and Wilkinson, 2016) – although attention should be paid to how they might also reinforce social and political exclusion.

The core message of the working paper is that underlying and context-dependent political relationships inform how different approaches to governance for improved resilience to climate shocks and stressors play out in practice. Reform of formal institutional rules – when context sensitive – can make a difference to negative outcomes. The problem of vertically divided political authority between national and local in a democratic system may be mitigated through regulatory protection for fiscal transfers, for example. There are entry points for engaging with informal political institutions to ensure they work to distribute long-term benefits for all – which also involves recognising how formal and informal institutions interrelate. But this approach requires flexibility and knowledge of power dynamics to find critical entry points.

The practice of improving governance for resilience may be less about the application of recommendations for particular institutional approaches (such as localising power) – although these can guide long-term visions – than an incremental process of brokering between willing actors and creating space and support for new engagements. In this process, there will be trade-offs that need to be acknowledged, and the approach to such trade-offs agreed, between the parties involved. For international partners to resilience efforts, this approach often challenges conventional modes of operation and this will need to be addressed.

In terms of knowledge gaps, it is clear that the role of other forms of political institution in shaping governance for resilience merits more investigation. This should include analysis of the role of political parties and voting systems, executive–legislative relations, constitutional forms, trade unions, bureaucracies and the role of the press. While much of the literature related to improving governance for resilience adopts an inherently pro-democratic stance, in that free flow of knowledge and accountability are held to be key to resilience interventions, there has been little systematic research into the influence of regime types and the trade-offs in more open or closed political systems for building resilience. Recent examples, such as those from China and Vietnam, indicate that local government autonomy may still be preserved even within the legacy of a one-party system, for example. The analysis undertaken here – although not exhaustive – further indicates the importance of understanding both the formal rules of the political game and how these work through informal social and political relations. These often explain variations in outcome by political context, despite the application of similar institutional changes. A stronger understanding is needed of where informal political relationships support, and where they debilitate, formal institutions in resilience building efforts. While research has begun to examine the role of traditional and customary rural leaders and collective institutions, there is little direct work on non-state urban actors in relation to resilience, including the roles of gangs and mafias.

In parallel, lessons for practice are emerging out of donor-funded resilience initiatives and community-driven movements, but not yet at a scale that can be applied to national-level resilience building efforts. More systematic learning about ‘what works’ over longer time frames is again needed. In addition, the analysis for policy practice that has emerged has tended to focus on stable institutional

regimes with an architecture of formal institutions. There needs to be more learning about the entry points to working for long-term systemic change in the context of climate uncertainty in conflict-affected and ‘fragile’ contexts, where state and publicly-accountable institutions are not present, and external actors can unwittingly become part of power struggles over resources and territories. Finally, the types of external actors intervening

in risk reduction and resilience building efforts differ, in their mandates, structures and power (city-to-city networks exert very different influence on foreign diplomatic missions, for example). The difference in their respective roles and how they interact with local governance institutions should be unpacked, and the lessons for practice unfolded.

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