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Centralized Disaster Management Collaboration in Turkey

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Abstract

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Following unprecedented earthquakes in 1999, highly centralized Turkey initiated reforms that aimed to improve disaster management collaboration and to empower local authorities. In 2011, two earthquakes hit the country anew affecting the city of Van and town of Erciş in Turkey's southeast.

In attempts to reduce disaster risk, global disaster risk reduction frameworks and disaster scholars and practitioners advocate collaborative and decentralized disaster management strategies. This thesis investigates how such strategies are received in a centralized and hierarchical national political-administrative system that largely is the anti-thesis of the prescribed solutions. More specifically, this research investigates the barriers and prerequisites for disaster management collaboration between both public and civil society actors in Turkey (during preparedness, response, and recovery) as well as how Turkey's political-administrative system affects disaster management collaboration and its outcomes. The challenges to decentralization of disaster management are also investigated.

Based on forty-four interviews with actors ranging from national to village level and NGOs, the findings suggest that the political-administrative system can alter the relative importance, validity, and applicability of previously established enabling or constraining conditions for collaboration. This may in turn challenge previous theoretical assumptions regarding collaboration.

By adopting a mode of collaboration that fit the wider political-administrative system, collaborative disaster management progress was achieved in Turkey's national level activities. Although there were exceptions, collaboration spanning sectors and/or administrative levels were generally less forthcoming, partly due to the disjoint character of the political-administrative system. Political divergence between local and central actors made central-local collaboration difficult but these barriers were partly trumped by other prerequisites enabling collaboration like interdependence and pre-existing relations. The findings suggest that the specific attributes of disasters may both help and hinder disaster management collaboration. Such collaboration generally improved disaster response. The findings also indicate that the decentralization attempts may have been premature as the conditions for ensuring a functional decentralization of disaster management are presently lacking. Decentralization attempts are commonly suggested to increase local capacity and local participation but the findings of this dissertation suggest that in Turkey, these commodities may currently have better chances of being increased by refraining from decentralization.

Keywords: collaboration, disaster management, collaborative disaster management, cross-sector collaboration, trust, power balance, legitimacy, integration, local knowledge, local actors, civil society, interdependence, pre-existing relations, political affiliation, natural disaster, disaster response, damage assessment, aid distribution, search and rescue, decentralization, central-local collaboration, political-administrative system, Turkey, Van, Erciş

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In memory of loved ones lost

List of Papers

This thesis is based on the following papers, which are referred to in the text by their Roman numerals.

- I Hermansson, H. (2016) Disaster Management Collaboration in Turkey: Assessing Progress and Challenges of Hybrid Network Governance, *Public Administration*, 94(2): 333-349. (First published online 2 September 2015.)
- II Hermansson, H. (2016) Disaster Response in Turkey: Conditions Promoting Cross-Sectoral Collaboration and Implications for Effectiveness, *Administration & Society* doi:10.1177/0095399716680058 (Published online 24 November 2016.)
- III Hermansson, H. (2016) Challenges to Disaster Management Decentralization in Turkey, under review.

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Stockholm, April, 2017

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Abbreviations

AFAD	Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency
AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)
APSA	American Political Science Association
BDP	Bariş ve Demokratik Partisi (Peace and Democracy Party)
CCC	Crisis Coordination Center
EFDRR	European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction
EISA	European International Studies Association
GAO	(U.S.) Government Accountability Office
HDP	Halkların Demokratik Partisi (Peoples' Democratic Party)
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISA	International Studies Association
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MoPWS	Ministry of Public Works and Settlements
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PKK	Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (Kurdistan Workers' Party)
SAR	Search and Rescue
SNA	Social Network Analysis
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNISDR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
YÖK	Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu (Council of Higher Education)

Preface

“If countries could be vegetables, Turkey would be an onion. Every time you take off a layer of skin, hoping to get to the core, you come across yet another layer.” (Cağaptay 2014, p. 2)

Considering the developments in Turkey during the last few years, my dissertation project would have been more difficult—or maybe not even possible—to conclude had I initiated my fieldwork only a few months later. Armed confrontations between the Turkish government forces and the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê, PKK) recommenced in the south-east of Turkey after the parliamentary elections in June 2015 and intensified after the new elections in November 2015 that were held as the four major parties failed to form a coalition government. In addition, blatant infringements on academic freedoms have made life increasingly difficult for scholars in Turkey. In January 2016, after signing a petition denouncing the state’s violent policy in southeast Turkey where the majority of the population is Kurdish and calling for a peaceful resolution of the conflict, 1128 academic signatories calling themselves the *Academics of Peace* were investigated on oblique charges of insulting the state and spreading terrorist propaganda (Weaver 2016). Many lost their positions in universities around Turkey and/or received various threats. Over 350 international scholars also signed the petition. In addition, the American Political Science Association (APSA 2016), the European International Studies Association (EISA 2016), and the International Studies Association (ISA) (Boyer & Diehl 2016) released public statements in support of the scholars and expressed their concerns over circumscribed academic freedom.

The attempted *coup d’état* on July 15, 2016 and ensuing state of emergency¹ led to further infringements on academic freedom. Examples include the Higher Education Council’s (YÖK) forced resignations of 1577 university deans, the ordering of Turkish academics abroad to return to Turkey immediately, and the imposing of a foreign travel ban on those in Turkey (Cockburn 2016; Morris & Naylor 2016).

Academics were not the only target in the government’s crackdown. By September 2016, over 100 000 public officials from the military, police, and judicial system as well as public servants were suspended, and 160 media

¹ The state of emergency has been extended at least until July 2017.

outlets and publishers were closed after being accused of various anti-state activities (Tattersall 2016). The civil society has also suffered. By the end of November 2016, 1495 NGOs were banned after having similar accusations aimed against them (Çetingüleç 2016). Turkey also quickly rose to the top of the list of countries with the highest number of jailed journalists (Beiser 2016). Allegations of supporting terrorism were also made against scores of parliamentarians representing the pro-Kurdish party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi, HDP), including both its co-chairs who were subsequently detained (Lowen 2016; Shaheen 2016). Moreover, a large number of elected mayors in the southeast representing HDP, the third largest party in the Turkey, were replaced by state administrators (Tattersall 2016).

This clampdown on various actors in Turkish society would have made it exceedingly difficult to access and talk to various actors about issues concerning the state and actor collaboration, even if the subject matter is disaster management. Unfortunately, the developments in 2016 in Turkey have contributed to a seemingly ever-increasing polarization. Polarization widens the already existing gaps in Turkish society and thereby it makes both horizontal and vertical collaboration all the more unlikely. These developments at the same time make all forms of collaboration all the more important.

During my fieldwork in Turkey, I was often rewarded with encouragement and gratitude from interviewees and other people with whom I engaged in conversation, for my choice to study disaster management collaboration in their country. In Turkey, disaster management seems to be the purview of engineers, architects, sociologists, and psychologists (Aydiner & Özgür 2016; Jacoby & Özerdem 2008) and I came across very few political science scholars studying disaster management. As a foreigner, I am privileged in many ways for instance by not facing the same risks when posing critical questions. During a university visit, a political science student revealed to me that her future employment could be jeopardized if she choose my line of enquiry. Realities like these highlight the importance of conducting fieldwork away from our home countries even if they pose logistical, emotional, and ethical challenges (Kapiszewski et al. 2015). Undoubtedly, the context is more foreign to us than to the host country's citizens but native researchers may face other and more severe obstacles.

Introduction

The dust-filled air limits our vision severely. People come running towards us out of what seems like thick fire smoke or fog. A man running by us repeatedly shouts “Allahu Ekber” (Allah is the greatest) with his arms half raised towards the sky. His desperate voice mixes with screaming, car alarms, and stubbornly honking horns. Some people seem frozen in disbelief while others cover their eyes with their hands; some are only black silhouettes through the dust. Many have mobile phones pressed to their ears. For some, the sound of a loved one is a great relief. The roof of residential building lies unbelievably close to the ground and under it is the rubble of its previous six stories. Some of the building residents are now entombed in piles of concrete. Survivors’ distressed shrieks for friends and loved ones blend with the sounds of sirens. A man comes running down the road, stops a car, and opens the driver door. After talking to the driver he slams the door shut again and continues to run. The person running is the district governor of the town of Erciş, the person responsible for managing the consequences of the earthquake that has just struck. He is trying to reach his office in the district governorate’s building downtown, where he will start setting up the crisis coordination center thirteen minutes after the earthquake hit.

“How do you know it was thirteen minutes later”, I ask as he stops the video showing the first minutes of the earthquake, filmed by a journalist who coincidentally was on site that November day in 2011.

“I saw it on the surveillance footage later”, he replies. He continues, “From that moment, I did not leave my post for six months”.

Research Aim and Objectives

Traditionally, actors involved in managing earthquakes and other natural disasters were organized in a centralized and top-down command and control system with pre-established authority structures that had clear military connotations. This made sense as natural disasters were seen as external disturbances and the enemy attack analogy was pervasive (Dynes 1994). More contemporary and modern paradigms frown at such top-down solutions and render them ineffective to counter the effects of complex natural disasters (Çelik & Çorbaçioğlu 2013). Instead, international disaster policy and practitioner discourses alike laud collaborative and decentralized sys-

tems. Global disaster frameworks, like The Hyogo Framework for Action (UNISDR 2005) and its successor the Sendai Framework (UN 2015), outline the actions and efforts deemed necessary from a multitude of societal actors in order to reduce disaster risks and loss. To reduce disaster risk and mitigate the consequences of the disasters that nevertheless occur, these frameworks, along with disaster scholars and practitioners, communicate that actors across sectors and levels should cling to organizing in a networked, collaborative, and decentralized manner.

Many countries that are frequently hit by natural disasters are not organized in a fashion that coheres with the outlined decentralized and collaborative paradigm. Rather, these political and administrative systems are more fairly described as centralized and hierarchical. A fair share of these countries have however realized the necessity of reducing their disaster risks. But what will result when the internationally backed disaster risk reduction paradigm advocating collaborative, locally empowering, and participatory “all-of-society” solutions meets national political-administrative systems that to a large extent is the anti-thesis of the prescribed solutions? What form will subsequent collaboration and decentralization processes at different levels of the system take when policy actors in a highly centralized country like Turkey—unaccustomed to collaboration and local participation—try to implement these ideas? This dissertation engages with these issues by building on and contributing to the network, collaboration, and decentralization literatures.

In August and November of 1999, the most devastating earthquakes in modern Turkish history, the Marmara and Düzce earthquakes, hit Turkey’s Marmara region. Official numbers say over 17000 people lost their lives, while the unofficial estimates claim nearly double (Ganapati 2008; Jacoby & Özerdem 2008). In the decade following these two earthquakes, Turkey introduced major disaster management system reforms that emphasized collaboration and decentralization, much in line with the current collaborative and decentralized disaster risk reduction paradigm recently referred to. Turkey’s highly centralized political-administrative system may however make these reform ambitions difficult to attain in practice as actors in hierarchical and centralized systems “may find adjusting to many of the changes in contemporary management that stress participation and involvement of lower-echelon workers and clients to be inconsistent with their ideas of good management” (Painter & Peters 2010, p. 5). In 2011, two earthquakes hit Turkey again, this time in the city of Van and town of Erciş, located in the southeastern part of the country.

This dissertation revolves around how the actors within the Turkish disaster management system, prepare for and handle the consequences of disasters from a collaborative point of view. The overarching research aim is to investigate how the commonly advocated disaster risk reducing strategies of disaster management collaboration and decentralization are received when

introduced in a national political-administrative system that largely is the anti-thesis of the prescribed strategies. In addition to this overarching aim, three more specific research objectives guide this research. The first objective is to investigate the barriers to and the prerequisites for disaster management collaboration between both public and civil society actors in Turkey. Disaster management entails the organization and management of resources and responsibilities for addressing all aspects of disasters, in particular preparedness, response and initial recovery steps (UNISDR 2007). Collaboration is not easily defined, but here, collaboration means to “collaborate, to achieve common goals, often working across boundaries and in multisector and multiactor relationships” (Bingham, O’Leary, & Carlson 2008 p. 3). In addition to investigating the barriers to and the prerequisites for disaster management collaboration, the second objective of this thesis is to examine how the political-administrative system constrains and enables collaborative processes, and the outcomes of such processes. The norms and values embedded in such systems may alter the importance of previously identified barriers or prerequisites to collaboration. Or perhaps their importance remains but for different reasons given the political-administrative context. Hence, the political-administrative system is here treated like a master prerequisite that has the potential to alter our previous knowledge about what hinders or facilitates collaboration. The third research objective of this thesis is to investigate the challenges to decentralization of disaster management. The research questions founded on these three objectives are more specifically addressed in the following section “Research Questions”.

Essay I investigates whether the disaster management reforms have contributed to improve the prerequisites for collaboration during the disaster preparedness and response phases. The 2011 earthquakes enabled me to later pose research questions pertaining to actor collaboration during the response and recovery phases of disaster management and essay II zooms in on the presence of collaboration during specific disaster response activities. I also investigate how the nature and extent of this collaboration affected how well the response activities were conducted. Essay I has a more central level perspective compared to essay II that takes a more local perspective. Essay III connects the central and local perspectives by focusing on challenges to decentralization and central-local collaboration within the disaster management system. Collaboration and decentralization were emphasized in the above mentioned disaster management reforms and these are the concepts that are investigated empirically throughout the three essays, yet, to a varying extent. It is worth keeping in mind when reading this comprehensive summary of this thesis that both essay I and II have a more clear-cut focus on collaboration. In essay III, the theoretical framework is mainly based on the decentralization literature while collaboration is still a central feature. Hence, collaboration will be given comparatively more attention than decentralization in the coming discussions.

Many scholars studying collaborative endeavors share and express the belief that the political and institutional context in which collaborations are embedded plays a vital part in collaborations' fate and how they fare when dealing with the tasks laid out for them (Ansell & Gash 2008; Emerson & Nabatchi 2015). Such beliefs notwithstanding, this context is often step-motherly treated in studies of collaboration and only rarely is it clearly spelled out which features that are referred to. This dissertation aims to take steps towards specifying how a certain aspect of the political and institutional context, namely the political-administrative system, influences disaster collaboration.

Apart from being a country with an interesting political-administrative system considering the current disaster management paradigm, the focus on Turkey is also motivated as the existing research on disaster collaboration is largely biased towards either the North American or the Western European contexts, where the theories regarding collaboration are also developed. Collaboration and disaster organization has thereby been less extensively studied in political-administrative systems like the Turkish (McEntire 2007), while many of the countries that are frequently hit by disasters have political and administrative systems that more closely resemble the Turkish than Western systems. Studying issues related to disaster collaboration and decentralization in the Turkish system may thereby reveal discoveries that are relevant and useful for a wider audience, especially when considering that Turkey has received international praise for their disaster management progression lately (WHO 2011; EFDRR 2014). A more elaborate discussion regarding why Turkey was studied is provided in the case selection section.

Turning to the political-administrative context, the administrative system encompasses the "basic features of the government system, fundamental structures of national/central as well as subnational/local administration and characteristics of public service" (Kuhlmann & Wohlmann 2014, p. 7). Yet, the administrative system seldom operates in isolation from the political system, perhaps particularly so in states like Turkey where the bureaucracy is involved in political decision-making (Aydiner & Özgür 2015). It is hence more useful to talk about political-administrative systems. Political-administrative systems give rise to norms that in turn direct action and they are closely related to political and administrative cultures (Painter & Peters 2010). "Political culture consist [sic] of particular patterns of orientation towards political action" (Kalaycıoğlu 2012, p. 171) and the same could be said for administrative culture, it consists of particular patterns that guide action. The political-administrative system thus serves as a backdrop against which actors interpret reforms and various processes (Christensen, Danielsen, Læg Reid, & Rykkja 2016; Christensen & Læg Reid 2001).

In the next section I will present the three essays' research questions. After that I will shortly discuss the concept of natural disasters. I will subsequently present the theoretical fields applied in this dissertation along with

identified gaps and how the essays address them. Hereafter, I will describe the context of the essays to provide a better understanding of the methodological and data collection approaches that I reflect upon next. I will then provide short essay summaries before I conclude the comprehensive summary of this thesis with an outline of the theoretical and practical implications of my research findings.

Research Questions

The dissertation's overarching aim is to investigate how disaster risk reducing strategies of disaster management collaboration and decentralization are received when introduced in a national political-administrative system that largely is the anti-thesis of the prescribed strategies. The more specific research objectives –investigating the barriers to and the prerequisites for disaster management collaboration; investigating how the political-administrative system constrains and enables collaborative processes, and the outcomes of such processes; and investigating the challenges to decentralization of disaster management– manifest themselves in more precise research puzzles and questions that are addressed in the three essays.

The puzzle that inspired essay I was that despite being organized in a far from ideal fashion for achieving fruitful collaboration, according to the network governance literature, the disaster management actors interviewed conveyed progress in collaborative activities and outcomes (albeit mainly limited to the national level). A new national response plan was collaboratively drafted and a wider inclusion of actors and perspectives were noted. This essay examines how the actors within the Turkish disaster management system managed to overcome, at least partially, certain barriers to inter-organizational collaboration in making this progress. In so doing, the essay assessed the applicability of prior theoretical assumptions regarding actors' inter-organizational collaboration in a political-administrative context different from that in which they were originally developed.

Essay II investigates cross-sectoral collaboration between state authorities and local and civil society actors during disaster response. This study found that the extent of cross-sectoral collaboration varied among disaster response activities (search and rescue, damage assessment, and aid distribution), despite the sharing of context. This warranted a closer investigation of the presence, in each activity, of a number of conditions that the collaborative governance literature suggests enable and facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration. Finally, it was also explored how cross-sectoral collaboration influenced the actors' ability to conduct the three investigated disaster response activities. In so doing, the essay underlined the importance of the political-administrative system in shaping the conditions for collaboration while also indicating that disasters may change the relative importance of previously identified system context conditions.

Many global disaster frameworks promote decentralization as a prerequisite of good disaster governance. Decentralization is advocated as it is believed to strengthen disaster management activities by making local levels stronger. Essay III pointed to the fact that despite the de jure decentralization of disaster management responsibilities in 2004, 2005, and 2009, the de facto development of the disaster management system towards decentralization has halted and has rather taken a centralizing turn in the wake of the 2011 Van and Erciř earthquakes. This essay aimed to contribute to a better understanding of how such recentralization came about by investigating three essential mechanisms that presumably challenge decentralization processes. The essay suggested that the political-administrative system and disaster induced processes enable these mechanisms.

A Note on "Natural" Disasters

A disaster is defined as "a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources" (UNISDR 2007). A natural disaster is a disaster emanating from natural hazards that, in turn, originate in hydrometeorological or geophysical processes. Claiming that disasters are only caused by natural hazards is however overly simplistic, as will be discussed below.

Comparing the 2010 earthquakes of Chile (8.8 Mw) and Haiti (7.0 Mw) it seems clear that the consequences following a disaster does not mirror the size of the natural hazard. The Chilean earthquake's magnitude was bigger than the Haitian one, but while less than 500 people lost their lives in Chile it is estimated that more than 200,000 died in the comparatively smaller Haitian earthquake. What becomes a disaster in one country may not become a disaster in another due to the variability of various societal, rather than natural, factors. Comparing the Human Development Index and the Corruption Index of Chile and Haiti, there are further indications that earthquake consequences are not merely decided by their magnitude. Chile's ranking in the Human Development Index and the Corruption Index is 44th and 25th respectively to be compared with Haiti's 149th and 168th (statistics from 2009, the lower ranking the more developed and less corrupt). Considering that the single highest cause of death in earthquakes is substandard housing, these numbers are informative; substandard housing and construction are for example commonly approved through irregular administrative practices like accepting or offering various types of bribes. The human development index provides a glimpse of how countries are governed (via equity, equality, participation in political and economic processes etc.) and also relates to how damaging disasters will be. Many countries that are frequently hit by disasters are characterized by political and administrative structures, processes,

and norms that reflect poor governance, which is a key underlying disaster risk driver (GAR 2009).

The characteristics of societies and communities like their vulnerability and cohesion also matter for how societies prepare for, respond to, and rebuild after disasters, which in turn affects how bad the consequences of the next disaster will be. To lessen the negative impacts of disasters, such underlying structural issues that have built up over many many years need to be tackled. Yet, this is a long-term undertaking and, in the meantime, disasters continue to plague societies. This motivates this dissertation's focus on a country's ability to deal with disasters. This discussion lies close to the concept of resilience. Resilient societies harbor a social capacity to cope and recover and are better at limiting the negative effects of disasters compared to less resilient societies (Boin, Comfort, & Demchak 2010). Resilience is often seen as a process rather than an achieved end state. While there are many ways to strive towards resilience, Lemyre and Sullivan (2013) point to how coordination, cooperation, and collaboration "shape and color" the potential for resilience. Similarly, Aldrich (2012) states that part of what constitutes resilience are the coordinated efforts and the collaborative activities of actors linked together in networks. The research aim and objectives of this dissertation thus contribute to the discussion on how more disaster resilient societies may be achieved.

The Nexus of Collaboration, Decentralization, and Natural Disasters

When disasters hit, it is rarely only one isolated sector or jurisdiction that becomes affected. Preparing for, responding to, and rebuilding after disasters therefore ideally involves actors from many different areas with expertise in relevant areas like waste management, city planning, finance, security, shelter, aid distribution, and building standards. In addition to involving many sectors, all levels of government must also work together to achieve a "full recovery for the community" (LaFeber & Lind 2008, p. 554). Here, decentralization of disaster responsibilities is advocated as a means to increase local actors' participation and capacity (Scott & Tarazona 2011). Simply put, natural disasters are too complex for any one agency or jurisdiction to handle alone and this reality constitutes the rationale for actors involved in managing disasters to engage in collaboration (Agranoff & McGuire 2001; Bryson, Crosby, & Stone 2015; O'Toole 1997; Weber & Khademian 2008). A quote provided by an interviewee who was involved in managing the Van and Erciş earthquakes in 2011 captures some of the complexity of the response and recovery phase and illustrates the need for a multi-sectoral and collaborative approach:

To manage a disaster is difficult. You don't have a magic wand in your hand to just make it happen. People are expecting this from you, but in reality it is difficult to do. [...] Every solution brings a new problem with it. You want to solve something but everywhere I see that every solution brings new problems. You cannot say 'I solved this, it is finished'. We set up tent cities, but there was no heating, so we brought heaters, but the heaters created a fire risk in the tents, so we brought sprinklers, then the sprinklers were freezing because antifreeze had not been put in, so then we brought electric, and of course it costs and you must pay this... Then we got the container cities up, then there was no water, we brought water, but the water wasn't enough, so we drilled for water but arsenic came out. It is like Russian dolls, when you open it something else appears, and then again something else (interview 6).

Some of the complexity and uncertainty surrounding disasters can potentially be harnessed by forming collaborative networks, which are believed to be "flexible, adaptable, and capable of mobilizing diverse resources" (Tierney 2012, p. 343). Such "flat" structures are believed to be better equipped to handle disasters than more rigid hierarchies with top-down command and control strategies (Bingham 2008). The latter is believed to be better at dealing with routine emergencies like fires and accidents (Span et al. 2012). Provided the hypothesized necessity and advantages of collaborative disaster management, a lot of resources, both economic and human, are being spent on promoting and implementing various collaborative arrangements.

Post-hoc studies of disaster response however show that the ability of actors involved in disaster management to collaborate across sectors and levels of government is not as high as desired (GAO 2009; Twigg 2004). In 2005, the White House launched a report containing lessons learnt from responding to Hurricane Katrina. Out of sixteen lessons, thirteen contained at least one of the following: collaborate, coordination, joint, and integration (White House 2005). Apart from conveying that collaboration and coordination are not easily accomplished, this also attests to the strong belief that if actors can find improved ways of working together, this will have a positive impact on disaster response and recovery.

It is not only international disaster frameworks and practitioners that laud collaboration as a means to achieve better outcomes; collaboration is à la mode in academic circles too. Yet academic research on disaster management collaboration lags behind both the wider scholarly interest in collaboration and the international disaster frameworks' advocacy for it. While "collaboration has become all the rage in public administration and public policy research" (Robinson & Gaddis 2012, p. 256), collaboration is "still an emergent field of scholarship" within disaster and emergency management studies (Gazley 2013, p. 89). It has, however, been suggested that the context of disasters and emergencies provides many opportunities for understanding the complexities of collaborative public management in general as they show-case or illustrate general phenomena (Gazley 2013; McGuire, Brudney, &

Gazley 2010). “Collaborative public management is a concept that describes the process of facilitating and operating in multiorganizational arrangements to solve problems that cannot be solved or easily solved by single organizations (Bingham et al. 2008, p. 3). It has even been claimed that

The organization and delivery of an effective public response in emergencies and disasters constitute one of the most important public policy and management topics of the twenty-first century. As the scope of disasters grows, public officials find they must rely on a wider and more inclusive set of public and private partners, encompassing federal, state, and local levels of government, as well as businesses and voluntary organizations (McGuire et al. 2010, p. 117).

As has been mentioned above, the importance of collaboration however extends beyond the disaster response phase as fruitful pre- and post-disaster activities alike largely hinge on the extent to which various actors are involved in collaboration even before disasters hit (McEntire 2007). Boin and ‘t Hart (2010, p. 365) elaborate upon this argument saying that “the breadth and depth of interorganisational relations” to a “very considerable extent” determine societies’ response capacity.

The lay of the land is quite similar for decentralized disaster management solutions; they are strongly advocated by international disaster frameworks and practitioners as a means to improve disaster management, but the academic research on decentralization and disaster management is in its infancy (White 2011). At the same time, it has been suggested that the disaster context “may be an excellent ecosystem in which to study the relationship between central and subnational units” (White 2011, p. 7).

As disasters are complex phenomena, our counter measures must be similar in nature. There is also a lot of complexity involved in the study of not only disasters, but also in the study of collaborative and decentralized arrangements and what they achieve. For collaboration there is a general but “considerable discrepancy between the acclamation and attention networks receive” and the knowledge we have regarding why “certain network conditions lead to various network-level outcomes” (Provan & Kenis 2008, p. 229). For disaster collaboration specifically, Robinson and Gaddis (2012, p. 258) further state that “it is not at all clear what collaboration looks like (or should look like) in disaster situations”. The following sections outline what research has managed to establish so far, where we need to go next, and how the three essays in this dissertation take steps in this direction and support those efforts.

Theoretical Fields and Gaps in Past Research

This dissertation builds on and contributes to a number of partly related literatures as it applies strands of the network governance collaborative public management, collaborative governance, and cross-sector collaboration. All fields are used to achieve the first two more specific research objectives – investigating the barriers to and the prerequisites for disaster management collaboration and investigating how the political-administrative system constrains and enables collaborative processes. While acknowledging the literatures’ different origins and thereby slightly different areas of focus, they have concertedly pushed the frontiers of the research describing and investigating the matters at hand in this dissertation. In addition, the third essay, which addresses the third more specific research objective (the challenges to decentralization of disaster management) also contributes to the decentralization literature that to some extent overlaps with the collaboration literature. Investigating states’ central-local relations is recommended when wishing to understand the consequences of decentralization processes (Hutchcroft 2001). The three sections here discuss one essay each and the accompanying literature it builds upon. In addition to the challenges involved in studying decentralization and collaboration, research design issues for each essay will also be discussed here.

Network Governance and Collaborative Public Management

The first research puzzle in this dissertation concerns how the actors within the Turkish disaster management system managed to, at least partially, overcome certain general barriers to inter-organizational collaboration despite being organized in a fashion or structure hypothesized to hamper such collaboration.

Networks are structures that “enable participants to accomplish something collectively” that could not have been achieved by the participants individually (Weber & Khademian 2008, p. 334). These structures are interesting as they may constrain or facilitate certain behaviors (Ward, Stovel, & Sacks 2011), like hindering or facilitating inter-organizational collaboration. Network is further often regarded as the third governance alternative besides hierarchies and markets (Ranade & Hudson 2003). The collaborative public management literature, that overlaps considerably with the network governance literature, tends to treat networks as distinct from hierarchies (McGuire 2006). This treatment may have contributed to the shortage of empirical work examining collaborative processes within hybrid networks (McGuire & Agranoff 2011). A clear separation of hierarchies and networks is, however, superficial as government often resides within public networks. Thus, various hybrid networks are created where the network mode of organization coexists with and is surrounded by hierarchy (Ranade & Hudson 2003; Torf-

ing & Triantafillou 2013). Such hybrids are particularly prevalent in disaster contexts, where the structure of inter-organizational relationships naturally becomes a blend of hierarchical characteristics and network response (Moynihan 2008). Managing disasters, almost by definition, necessitates the involvement of public authorities and “when public authority is involved, the [network] coordination mode always operates in the shadow of hierarchy” (Hovik & Hanssen 2015, p. 3). Following Ranade and Hudson’s (2003) reasoning, the question is not so much whether these diverse modes of network and hierarchy can co-exist (because they clearly do), the question rather concerns whether, and if so how, they can co-exist effectively. Here, essay I makes a contribution to the network and collaborative public management literature by studying how the actors dealt with common challenges to collaboration in a hybrid network in a centralized political-administrative system.

The question of whether and how the diverse modes of network and hierarchy can co-exist effectively turns our attention to what “effectiveness” implies in this dissertation. Effectiveness and performance are sometimes used interchangeably yet effectiveness is but one of many ways to assess performance (others include efficacy, and equity). Adopting Emerson and Nabatchi’s (2015, p. 201) “common and straightforward” meaning of effectiveness, the term implies “the extent to which collaborative outputs produce their intended outcomes”. That is, to what extent do collaborating actors’ actions actually result in what they set out to achieve. This is sometimes referred to as *productive performance* (outcome). This discussion on productive performance will be continued under the next section concerning essay II, where it has a more central role. For now, it could however be said that since Provan and Milward’s (1995) foundational studies of mental health networks, researchers interested in network and/or collaborative effectiveness seem united in a belief that effectiveness must be evaluated from different perspectives rather than merely measuring performance through the ability to deliver services, which has been the traditional emphasis (Mandell & Keast 2007; Provan & Milward 2001). Collaborations’ effectiveness should thus not only be judged by how well the collaborating actors deliver services (in this case manage disasters), but also by how well they collaborate and how good their collaborative processes are. Are actors able to overcome known obstacles to collaborative processes, like building trusting relations? This focus, sometimes referred to as *process performance* (output), lies close to the aim of essay I. Essay I and II both investigate collaborative process performance and productive performance, although essay I has a stronger focus on process.

The network literature has further mainly focused on the structural aspects of networks’ functioning (Bryson et al. 2015; Turrini, Cristifoli, Frosini, & Nasi 2010). Examples of such structural determinants believed to strengthen effectiveness are ‘network integration’, which can be achieved by having a

core central agency, a lead agency (Turrini et al. 2010), and an ‘external centralized budget control’ (Provan & Milward 1995). Another structural determinant concerns networks’ organizational design. Kenis and Provan (2009) put forward three forms of network governance: shared governance, network administration, and lead organization with varying degrees of centralization (see also Provan & Kenis 2008). Shared governance networks are the least centralized and lead organization networks the most centralized. Lead organization networks are believed to be less suited to foster collaboration, for example due to lead organizations’ dominance that may cause resentment and resistance among the other members. Span et al. (2012) advance this research by suggesting that the context in which the network is embedded also affects how the forms of organizing influence performance. They also see this context as being formed by a set of contingencies. One contingency concerns which type of issue the network is engaged in. Are they meant to deliver complex or simple services and is the demand for these services stable or dynamic? Span et al. (2012, p. 190) state that “the literature is not conclusive about the variables that predict network effectiveness” but they suggest that the context “may help explain these inconsistent results”. Another contingency is whether the network is of a voluntary or a mandated nature. Voluntary networks are created by the network participants (bottom-up) whereas mandated networks are “created by policy dictate, typically by a government agency” (top-down) (Kenis & Provan 2009, p. 449). The research on mandated networks is scarce, particularly when it comes to empirical studies that investigate the theoretical arguments and indirect evidence produced (Kenis & Provan 2009; Span et al. 2012), although the attention devoted to mandated networks has increased lately (Bryson et al. 2015). Here, essay I makes a second contribution to the network and collaborative public management literature network by empirically investigating a mandated network and one aspect of its context, the political-administrative system.

Empirically, much of the general network research has focused on health and social services, and more research is needed on other government functions (Moynihan 2008). Yet important contributions have been made studying the issue of collaborative performance of actors involved in disaster management. Nolte and Boenigk (2011) evaluated the performance of public-nonprofit collaboration during the 2010 Haiti earthquake. Vasavada (2013) made another important contribution when studying disaster management networks in Gujarat, India, and suggesting that the network studied evolved as a lead organization network due to reasons connected to the dynamics of disasters (like the conditions of international aid arrangements). Vasavada’s (2013) findings partially diverged from previous theoretical propositions, which Vasavada (2013) considers may be attributable to resource dependence dynamics in the developing country setting (see also conceptual papers by Boin, Busuioac, & Groenleer, 2014; Lai 2012.)

Social network analysis (SNA) is a common approach, if not the most common, for describing and analyzing the specifics of network structures and how the actors in them are connected to each other (cf. Bodin, Crona & Ernstson 2006; Kapucu 2009; Kapucu, Augustin, & Garayev 2009; Kapucu, Arslan, & Collins 2010; Newig, Günther & Pahl-Wostl 2010), and it has been used to assess network effectiveness, relationship patterns, levels of coordination and communication (see for example Kapucu et al. 2010). However, the results produced, typically along the lines of various density and centrality measures (degree, betweenness, and closeness), do not capture the actors' motivations for collaborating or relationship quality that I argue have a large impact on what collaborations can achieve. Moreover, questions concerning how the environment in which the actors are embedded enable or constrain collaboration is difficult to answer using SNA. In my case, it is also problematic that the sociograms produced in these analyzes represent a snapshot in time as the questions posed in this dissertation rather call for an understanding of collaborative processes extended in time and for what prompts the sociograms' features. Perhaps this is part of the reason why studies of more long-term collaborative processes in networks are underrepresented compared to descriptions of collaborations at one given point in time. For example, one study investigated inter-organizational coordination during the 2011 Van earthquake using SNA and found that the response system "lack[s] sufficient intermediary actors that connect organizations to each other and create more inclusive networks" (Çelik & Çorbaçioğlu 2013, p. 329). That study, however, did not provide an explanation for the circumstances or reasons for this scarcity of connecting actors. To be able to identify the quality and nature of actors' relationships and the complex interaction of political-administrative context and social dynamics, a more in-depth and fine-grained analysis is needed. The three essays in this dissertation make an important contribution to the network literature as they capture collaborative processes rather than the extent (or patterns) of collaboration at one given time.

In short, more empirical research examining collaborative processes within hybrid and mandated networks is needed as well as research investigating how collaborations are affected by being embedded in existing hierarchies (Bryson et al. 2015). To advance the network and collaborative public management literature and simultaneously address the first research puzzle delineated above, essay I investigated how the actors in a hybrid and mandated network dealt with four commonly cited challenges believed to affect collaborative processes and outcomes: building trust, balancing power, creating legitimacy, and integration. In so doing, it was investigated whether or not the theoretical propositions regarding structure and effectiveness hold up to empirical scrutiny, particularly outside of Western political-administrative systems.

Collaborative Governance and Cross-sectoral Collaboration

The collaboration literature indicates that collaborative structures and processes closely interact in creating effective inter-organizational or cross-sectoral collaboration (Bryson et al. 2015). Cross-sector collaboration implies “the linking or sharing of information, resources, activities, and capabilities by organizations in two or more sectors to achieve jointly an outcome that could not be achieved by organizations in one sector separately” (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone 2006, p. 44). Examples of sectors include the government sector, the private sector, and the civil society (or third) sector. This close interaction between structures and processes may also be the motivation behind the observed rapprochement of the collaborative governance literature and parts of the network governance literature. What is called mandated networks in the network literature is for example similar to what is referred to as externally directed collaborative governance systems in the collaborative governance framework used in essay II. The network literature does take an interest in process conditions but the collaborative governance literature has engaged more thoroughly with these internal conditions, or process variables and collaborative dynamics, as they are also referred to here (Ansell & Gash 2008; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh 2011; Emerson & Nabatchi 2015). The concept of collaborative governance entails

The processes and structures of public policy decision making and management that engage people across the boundaries of public agencies, levels of government, and/or the public, private, and civic spheres to carry out a public purpose that could not otherwise be accomplished (Emerson & Nabatchi 2015, p. 18).

This brings us to the second research puzzle in this dissertation, inspired by the observation that the extent of cross-sectoral collaboration, between the Turkish state authorities and the local and civil society actors during the response to the Van and Erciş earthquakes, varied among disaster response activities (search and rescue, damage assessment, and aid distribution) despite operating in the same context. A variation was also noted in the how effectively the activities were conducted, which warranted a closer investigation of the conditions enabling cross-sectoral collaboration in each activity, and how the extent of such collaboration related to disaster response performance. The activities admittedly differ somewhat in nature, which may account for some of the variation found, but at the same time these activities also bring similar challenges (e.g. matching needs to resources and actor coordination) and all were conducted in an environment characterized by uncertainty, complexity, and urgency. Choosing other response activities to investigate may admittedly have altered the findings. Had, for example, the health and hospital activities been investigated the results would potentially have been different, partly because these actors had a largescale earthquake

scenario exercise two weeks prior to the actual earthquakes. Also, the health staff's day-to-day activities do not vastly differ from those conducted during a disaster, although the scale is undoubtedly different.

The civil society sector (also referred to as nonprofits or the third sector) is crucial to involve in cross-sectoral disaster management collaboration. "Although the research on collaborative public management and cross-sector collaboration is flourishing the literature on nonprofit involvement is less well developed" (Simo & Bies 2007, p. 126). Hence, studies of public-nonprofit partnerships are also vague on how such collaborative processes relate to collaborations' achievements, "Few studies focus on the relevant results of public-nonprofit partnerships or link partnership inputs to its outputs and outcomes" (Nolte & Boenigk 2011, p. 1386). Essay II investigates the extent of collaboration between the public sector and the civil sector and relates this to disaster response performance, and contributes to the literature on cross-sector collaborations.

Disaster management studies time and again suggest that effective disaster management is more likely where civil societies are vibrant and local levels are strong. Local actors and civil society actors contribute to disaster response by providing valuable local knowledge and access to various social networks that distant disaster manager and government officials typically lack. This knowledge and access, in turn, contribute to more effective disaster response operations (Bae, Joo, & Won 2015; Bernier & Meinzen-Dick 2014; Miller & Douglass 2015; Jalali 2002; Simo & Bies 2007). Examining the performance of intergovernmental and interorganizational networks responding to catastrophic disasters, Kapucu et al. (2010) for example found that local agencies were faster and more effective in responding to disasters while also coordinating their response activities more effectively. Yet for this local potential to be realized, local and civil society actors often need support, or at least acceptance, from government actors (Bernier & Meinzen-Dick 2014). The integration of disaster management authorities and local and civil society actors is however a collaborative challenge (Boin & Bynander 2015). While the disaster literature is ripe with valuable descriptions of communities' and civil society's roles in disaster response, few studies investigate these actors from a collaboration and/or performance perspective (Gazley 2013; Nolte & Boenigk 2011). Furthermore, the disaster management literature is unclear regarding the conditions that enable state authorities, local actors, and civil society actors to collaborate. In this vein, MacManus & Caruson (2011) encourage the examination of how local actors' interaction with the public sector may vary in promoting local emergency management collaboration. By investigating collaboration between central

state authorities, local actors, and civil society actors in three different activities, essay II takes a step in this direction.

The literatures on collaborative governance and cross-sector collaborations also point to the importance of appreciating how actors' sectoral differences affect collaboration. These differences are at times underemphasized in the network literatures and it is assumed that actors behave similarly within a network regardless of whether they represent the state or civil society (Heranz 2008). Thereby, these actors' "differential strengths and weaknesses" are underestimated (Bryson et al. 2015, p. 20). Network scholars Huang and Provan (2009, p. 436), however, state that there is "general acceptance" that there are different types of ties or relationships in networks and that these different types of relationships hold the network together (or dissolve it) in different ways.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the popularity of collaboration and its normative appeal, there is a lack of critical scrutiny of collaborative initiatives and arrangements (Koontz & Thomas 2006; Provan & Kenis 2008). Indeed, "the literature on collaboration is often celebratory and only rarely cautious" (O'Leary, Gazley, McGuire, & Bingham 2009, p. 6). The elusive link between the conditions influencing the collaborative processes (and process performance) and collaborations' outcomes (productive performance) has yet to be established, and this is generally deemed to be one of the most central issues in the collaboration literature (Bingham et al. 2008; Dickinson & Sullivan 2013; Emerson & Nabatchi 2015; McGuire & Agranoff 2011; Mitchell, O'Leary, & Gerard 2015; Thomson, Perry, & Miller 2008; Provan & Milward 2001). The studies that do exist frequently suffer from conceptual conflation of process and productive performance, which in turn impedes a further progression of the field (Emerson & Nabatchi 2015; Ulibarri 2015). To come to terms with how the collaborative process relates to what collaborations actually achieve, some researchers have suggested comparing cross-sectoral collaborations focused on different problems in similar contexts (or similar problems but in different contexts) (Bryson et al. 2015; Kapucu et al. 2010; Span et al. 2012). The within-case approach in essay II is employed as an attempt to shed some light on this central issue of what collaborations really achieve.

Studying collaborations' performance is however fraught with difficulties other than establishing the relation between collaborative processes and outcomes. Firstly (and luckily), disasters are rare and extreme events that "defy the logic of repeated measurement" (Gerber & Robinson 2009, p. 349). As we only have one take on reality, we can never observe disaster response performance under more or less collaboration and the rare occurrence of disasters makes counterfactual observation even more burdensome (Gerber

² In essay II, muhtars (village and neighborhood leaders), municipalities, and NGOs (both national and local) are included in the local and civil society actors.

& Robinson 2009). It is therefore hard to state with steadfast conviction that fruitful collaborative processes always produce similarly fruitful outcomes. Indeed, one of essay II's takeaway messages is that in some instances, actors' avoiding collaboration actually contributed to improving the disaster response.

Another thorny issue that disaster contexts bring for assessments of collaborative performance is having the 'right' expectations on collaborating actors. Poor management of a disaster (i. e. a situation that leaves tens of thousands individuals homeless without food or water, and others buried under six-story buildings) may not only be attributed to low quality collaboration but also to the fact that consequences of earthquakes, hurricanes, and floods are inherently extremely difficult to manage. When assessing (disaster response) performance one must therefore consider what collaborating actors realistically can be expected to achieve (Kenis & Provan 2009).

Yet another issue when assessing collaborative (productive) performance, is the (self-evidently) inter-organizational character of collaborative disaster management. A flawed disaster response can be attributed to either an individual actor's failed operation, or it can be attributed to an absence of collaboration (which is often claimed in post-disaster evaluations) where the responsibility falls on all parts (but rarely on anyone in particular). Taking all these issues into account, we should perhaps not be surprised by Kenis and Provan's (2009, p. 442) observation that studies addressing performance "either avoid, do not take seriously, or are rather careless when it comes to specifying performance criteria". They continue to say that this observation is hardly surprising since it is "such a difficult issue that scholars would rather avoid it" (ibid). Gerber and Robinson (2009) even claim that the above mentioned difficulties have led scholars within the emergency management literature to study preparedness *instead* of response. (There are, however, a number of scholars that study emergency management response, see for example Kapucu 2008; MacManus & Caruson 2011; Nolte & Boenigk 2011).

Rather than ignoring or ducking difficult research problems we must find ways, although potentially imperfect ways, that enable us to say something about the phenomena of interest. Deciding on criteria for disaster response performance in essay II, McConnell's (2011) approach and concept of crisis management success was chosen as it fit the disaster management context. According to McConnell (2011, p. 68), disaster response is successful if it "follows pre-anticipated and/or relevant processes and involves the taking of decisions which have the effect of minimizing loss of life/damage, and restoring order". As essay II borrowed concepts and assumptions from Emerson and Nabatchi's (2015) collaborative governance framework, I considered using their "target goal" outcome measures. However, their approach is not adapted to the disaster context and it also assumes that all activities are conducted collaboratively, which I did not take for granted. The extent to

which activities were collaboratively conducted was rather an empirical question. Utilizing a within-case design was another effort to address performance assessment seriously. This “natural experiment” was also employed to tackle the counterfactual observation problem described above (Ansell & Gash 2008; Ulibarri 2015). Using a within-case design is a partly novel approach to studying disaster response performance and it hence constitutes a methodological contribution to the disaster management literature.

In sum, to further our knowledge regarding collaboration in general, more efforts need to be spent on tracing the link between collaborative processes and outcomes. Furthermore, research comparing cross-sector collaborations focused on different problems in similar contexts, research investigating various sectors’ strengths and weaknesses, and contributions to collaborative arrangements are called for. To further advance the frontiers of the disaster management collaboration literature, essay II investigated cross-sectoral collaboration between state authorities and local and civil society actors in three different activities. Six conditions believed to further cross-sectoral collaboration and their interaction with the political-administrative system factors were investigated. In addition, how this cross-sectoral collaboration was related to how well the three disaster-related activities were carried out was also explored.

The Decentralization Literature

Decentralization implies “authority being spread out from a smaller to a larger number of actors” as well as from a central authority to a less central authority (Pollitt 2005, p. 373). Essay III was inspired by the observation that despite a *de jure* decentralization of disaster management responsibilities in 2004, 2005, and 2009, the *de facto* development of the Turkish disaster management system towards decentralization was halted and rather took a centralizing turn in the wake of two earthquakes in 2011. Few would perhaps be surprised that a centralized state like Turkey recentralizes after decentralization attempts; indeed, this is neither surprising nor new (Haase & Antoun 2015; Jesse, Agrawal, & Larson 2006). Yet, essay III aims to enhance the understanding of how such recentralization comes about. Part of essay III’s contribution, mainly to the research located in the nexus of disaster management and decentralization but also to the wider decentralization research, is the unpacking of mechanisms that challenge decentralization processes within the disaster management area and the discussion on how these mechanisms are enabled by the political-administrative system.

The lion’s share of past decentralization research pertains to decentralization reforms’ potential effects. Do they for example lead to healthier populations, better education programs, or more effective management of disasters? Using the same concepts that were used in the discussion on collaboration above, such research is occupied by the outcome of decentralization reforms

and their productive performance. Such outcomes are however tied together with the betterment of various governance processes. Fauget (2014) claims that decentralization mainly aims to improve these processes; decentralization reforms aim to reduce power abuse by transferring government functions and resources to local levels and improving collaboration and participation. Investigating if a particular decentralization reform has led to that end lies closer to investigating process performance than productive performance, if once again borrowing concepts from the collaborative performance literature. Investigations of whether decentralization reforms lead to enhanced process performance is, however, under-researched. Commenting on the gap between what motivates decentralization reforms and what is most often studied, Fauget (2014, p. 2) puts forward that the “the divergence between the concerns that are most researched and the principal issues that motivate decentralization—both as a theoretical proposition and in real world reforms—is striking”. The task of connecting process to outcomes thus seems equally present in the decentralization literature as in the collaboration literature. Here, essay III makes a contribution to the decentralization literature by focusing on processes. The decentralization research communicates that decentralization, much like collaborative processes, concerns the nature and quality of relationships between different tiers of government (White 2011). Hutchcroft (2001) also asserts that central-local relations should be studied if we want to understand the impact of decentralization reforms. This motivated the exploration of the nature of collaboration between central and local actors as one mechanism challenging decentralization in essay III.

The scarcity of studies focusing on processes within the decentralization literature is related to the less commonly available data on the quality of participation and accountability (Fauget 2014). De Vries (2000, p. 148) similarly claims that an “empirical base”, partly constituted by the opinions of the actors that the decentralization reforms concern is missing in large parts of decentralization research. By interviewing the actors inhabiting the disaster management system from the central to local level, essay III contains such less available data and thereby makes a contribution to the decentralization literature. Communicating the local perspectives is further of paramount importance as these actors’ opinions rarely get heard (de Vries 2000), particularly in highly centralized systems like the Turkish.

Many general arguments favoring decentralization are assumed to be valid also for the disaster management area. On the upside, decentralization is believed to enhance participation, capacity, communication, and coordination between sectors and levels of government. These features are also believed to have a bearing on central-local collaboration (see for example Ansell & Gash 2008; Emerson & Nabatchi 2015). For disaster management specifically, increased local capacity is key as several localized services (including fire services, the police, critical infrastructure investment, and

building code enforcement) are critical in reducing casualties (Toya & Skidmore 2013). Decentralization may also increase local disaster governance capacity (Rumbach 2015), facilitate preparedness activities, and increase public participation in disaster planning by utilizing local knowledge and local control over resource spending (Escaleras & Register 2012; Garschagen 2015). Decentralizing disaster responsibilities is also believed to encourage context-specific risk management solutions that are custom-tailored to the specific needs, wants, and capabilities of local communities (Garschagen 2015).

These beckoning prospects provide the motivation and foundation for the contemporary mainstream disaster risk reduction paradigm, advocated in global disaster frameworks like the Hyogo Framework for Action³ (UNISDR 2005) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (UN 2015). This paradigm maintains that pre-established top-down hierarchies are ill-suited to manage complex disasters and, instead, a bottom-up approach without central guidance, based on already existing social structures is more likely to get the job done (Boin, Ansell, & Keller 2010; Boin & Bynander 2014; Dynes 1994). This advocacy however needs to be based on more detailed knowledge of decentralization reform initiatives' trajectories over time. Here, essay III contributes to the international disaster practitioner and policy community by enhancing the understanding of how decentralization reforms within the disaster management area play out in practice.

In light of the attention given to decentralization and its hypothesized benefits in disaster contexts, it is noteworthy that the academic research examining this nexus is "in its infancy" (White 2011, p. 7; see also Scott & Tarazona 2011). To be able to handle disasters more effectively there is also a perceived "need for greater understanding of the linkages between national and local governance systems" (Miller & Douglass 2015, p. 2). The research that does exist in the nexus of decentralization and disaster management is to the author's knowledge mainly quantitative; a few studies investigate countries' fiscal decentralization in relation to the number of people killed or affected by disasters but the results seem inconclusive (Iqbal & Ahmed 2009; Escaleras & Register 2012; Toya & Skidmore 2013). Qualitative studies that investigate various community-based disaster programs are more common but these initiatives are often developed or supported by NGOs (Jones, Manyena, & Walsh 2015), while essay III engages with the decentralization of disaster responsibilities within the state. In so doing, essay III made a contribution to the disaster management literature. Essay III further found that not only the political-administrative system, but also the attributes of disasters and the response and recovery processes that disasters set in motion may enable the mechanisms that challenge decentralization.

³ The framework outlines the necessary actions from a multitude of actors to reduce disaster-related loss.

The potential of decentralization reforms is generally hypothesized to depend on the institutional context (Bardhan 2002; Knill 1999; Pollitt 2005) and the overall political culture and circumstances in which they are embedded (Garschagen 2015; Haase & Antoun 2015; Jesse et al. 2006; Scott & Tarazona 2011). Also, decentralization is expected to increase local capacity but scholars have also found that sufficient local capacity must be present from the outset if decentralization attempts are to succeed (Haase & Antoun 2015). Perhaps counterintuitive, Hutchcroft (2001) communicates that centralization may be one way of ensuring that local capacity is developed. Other critical aspects to ponder before initiating decentralization attempts are whether the local financial resources are sufficient and if local levels are prepared to assume the tasks and responsibilities delegated to them (Haase & Antoun 2015; Jesse et al. 2006). If these conditions are absent, decentralization may lead to problems occurring locally which may cause a centralization “backlash” as central governments undertake measures against these problems (Haase & Antoun 2015). As stated above, essay III aims to facilitate a better understanding of how such backlashes come about in the Turkish disaster management system.

In sum, more decentralization research that generates qualitative data and engages with the actors inhabiting the systems where decentralization takes place is needed, particularly so in the nexus of disaster management and decentralization where research lags behind international advocacy. To enhance our understanding of the recent recentralization of the Turkish disaster management system, despite previous *de jure* decentralization reforms, essay III used 44 semi-structured interviews to investigate three essential mechanisms that presumably challenge decentralization processes: the central government’s introduction of new oversight systems, the central government’s failure to match local authorities’ increased disaster responsibilities with increased funds, and central-local collaboration.

Context of the Essays

This elaboration on context links the theoretical part of the dissertation with the methodological and empirical parts by demonstrating how well the case is suited for studying the role of the political-administrative system in processes of collaboration and decentralization in Turkey. These processes do not occur in a vacuum, but rather in a multifaceted political-administrative system context. This context is crucial to be aware of as it may both enable and constrain collaboration as well as the conditions for collaboration (Emerson & Nabatchi 2015). The political-administrative system plays a similar enabling or constraining role in decentralization processes (Knill 1999; Hutchcroft 2001). The following section provides a better understanding of the actors, Turkey’s political-administrative system, the disaster manage-

ment system, and the particularities of Van and Ericeş, where the 2011 earthquakes occurred.

Due to Turkey's historical dependence on foreign loans, key international financial organizations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have had a lot of influence on policies and administrative reforms in Turkey (Sozen & Shaw 2002). Also the European Union (EU) has had a large influence on reforms in Turkey. After becoming a candidate country for EU membership in 1999⁴, Turkey launched constitutional reforms and harmonization packages to get its legislation more in line with EU's expectations (Göymen 2006). Coupled with a steadily increasing GDP in the first decade of the new millennium, the reforms launched earned Turkey the status of "one of most, if not the most, democratic, secular, and modernist country among the Muslim World" (Gül & Kiriş 2015, p. 26). Turkey has even been considered as a role-model country for the Middle East, despite its problematic human rights record and internal tensions between Turks and Kurds, Islamists and secularists, and statists and liberals. Turkey's (majoritarian) democracy is moreover "handicapped by a strong state tradition, which fosters paternalism and constrains civil society, pluralism, and independent voices" (Gül & Kiriş 2015, p. 26). Along with the Justice and Development Party's (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) increased dominance over the past decade, political and ethnical polarization in society has clearly become stronger, which in turn implies a challenging environment for collaboration.

The Turkish political-administrative system can be characterized as hierarchical, centralized, and paternalistic (Ganapati 2008; Kapucu 2012; Karancı 2013). The central government consists of the central administration in Ankara and its branches in the provinces and districts. The provincial administrations (governorates) are divided into districts, and the provinces and the districts are headed by provincial governors (Valis) and district governors (Kaymakams) respectively who take and implement decisions on behalf of the central government (Kapucu & Palabıyık 2008). Each ministry have a provincial director for its provincial field organizations, and it falls on the Vali to supervise all field organizations (Gül & Kiriş 2015). Valis are appointed by the "proposal of the Ministry of Interior, the decision of the Council of Ministers and approval of the President" (Kapucu & Palabıyık 2008, p. 121). Kaymakams are appointed by a joint decree of the Ministry of Interior, the Prime Minister, and the President (ibid). Valis and kaymakams are thus central authorities positioned locally.

Turkey also has a layer of various types of municipalities, from smaller town and district municipalities to metropolitan municipalities that cover larger areas. The representatives of the municipalities are elected by popular vote and municipalities are autonomous decentralized actors, at least on pa-

⁴ Full membership negotiations started in 2005.

per; the municipalities are under close scrutiny of the central government which exercises heavy administrative tutelage (Keleş 2007). At the most local level, there are also village and neighborhood leaders (muhtars) that head the most local administrations, and these leaders are also elected by their constituencies.

Turning to the relations between the political decision-makers and the bureaucrats in Turkey, Aydiner and Özgür (2016, p. 53) claim Turkey has a strong transcendental state tradition. A “transcendentalist state is a type of government where the state is institutionalized around certain norms, where these norms direct the political life, where bureaucrats are in the position of decision makers, and where political parties can work as state apparatus”. Özen (1993, p. 23f) investigated the administrative attitudes of Turkish bureaucrats and found that:

Bureaucrats have centralizing tendencies by not delegating authority to subordinates; although they consult to some extent, they are basically against the participation of subordinates in the decision-making process; they are reluctant to take initiative and to innovate, nor do they motivate their employees to perform their jobs more effectively. Instead they are fond at seeking compliance with their superiors and the letter of the law and regulations; and finally the superior-subordinate relationships are rather paternalistic; superiors show mainly paternalistic attitudes towards subordinates, while subordinates show high levels of respect, loyalty, and dependence towards their superiors.

Citing Özen (1993), Sozen and Shaw (2002) state that new public management reforms, emphasizing effectivity and performance, will be difficult to implement in Turkey due to the abovementioned attitudes. Despite being slightly dated, the quotation above provides an understanding of how the political-administrative system also affects the reforms related to collaboration and decentralization.

The state’s dominant role vis-à-vis civil society is a long-standing feature of Turkey’s political-administrative system (Kapucu & Palabıyık 2008, p. 110) and the same can be said for the disaster management system. The Turkish state is known by Turks as *devlet baba*, “father state”, and the state and its central administration are expected to “serve not only as a regulator but also as a producer and provider of goods and services” (Kalaycıoğlu 2012, p. 174). Civil society is often described as vibrant and active in Turkey (Freedom House 2016; Kapucu 2015), but its polarized and disparate nature and intermittent connections to power means that civil society neither has the capacity nor will to put pressure on the government (Kubicek 2002; Sozen & Shaw 2002; Özerdem & Jacoby 2006). This “calls into questions [sic] the third sector’s capacity to fulfil the classic Tocquevillean functions of representing the masses and restraining the state” (Jacoby & Özerdem 2008, p. 306). Added to this is also a “deep-seated respect for authority and state”, which vacates demands for accountability (Sozen & Shaw 2002, p. 480).

The low levels of interpersonal trust between actors further foster a tendency to focus on scapegoats, which in turn undermines the relationship between and among government and non-government actors (Kalaycıoğlu 2012). These gaps between actors have become particularly visible in disaster management, where the state refrains from distributing responsibilities since there is a fear that doing so will lead to reduced autonomy, incomplete tasks, or tasks being performed in an incoherent manner (Yavaş 2005).

The public sector is generally ineffective in Turkey and areas pointed out as particularly weak are inter-agency cooperation, policy formulation processes, implementation capacity, strategic planning, and evaluation of performance (Freedom House 2008). “Turkish media and press are replete with stories documenting the limited regulatory, extraction, and distribution capacities of the state” (Kalaycıoğlu 2012, p. 173). Provincial and municipal levels have since long needed increased authority and capacities (Freedom House, 2008; Gül & Kiriş 2015; Kapucu & Palabıyık 2008). An issue related to capacity concerns the impartial appointment of people in the public administration who are underqualified but close to the political party in power (Çaha 2009; Gül & Kiriş 2015).

A wave of reforms aiming to democratize, deregulate, and decentralize the administrative system was initiated by the AKP’s one party government that came to power in 2002. The comprehensive framework law was however vetoed by President Sezer on constitutional grounds in 2004 (Freedom House 2008; Göymen 2006). The issue of delegating authority and decentralization is controversial and politically sensitive in Turkey, as it is perceived to threaten the country’s unity (Gül & Kiriş 2015; Göymen 2006). Such fears are particularly present in Turkey’s southeast, where Van and Erciş are located, due to the longstanding conflict between the Turkish government and the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê, PKK). It is also here that the deficits of the public sector are most severe and local administration participation is also very low (Freedom House, 2008). A significant lack of trust between the state and the people in Turkey’s southeast is also apparent due to former and current human rights abuses against Kurds (Gül & Kiriş 2015). Even though the draft decentralization law failed in Parliament, then Prime Minister Erdoğan still “insisted on putting some of the main principles of the draft reform law into practice” (Gül & Kiriş 2015, p. 46).

Gül & Kiriş (2015) claim that these local administration reforms have contributed to decentralizing and improving democracy in the system via increasing participation in decision and policy making and paving the way for local governance. They also believe that the reforms have the potential to enhance the public administration’s collaborative capacity. The new law on metropolitan municipalities did generate some progress in devolving power to local administrations (EU 2013). It is worth mentioning however, that this law (6306), passed in 2012, increased the number of metropolitan municipal-

ities (the largest municipal entity) by lowering the threshold to reach metropolitan municipality status. By 2014, this development had resulted in that 16561 village administrations and 1358 first-tier municipalities were abolished (Çetin 2015). In this “top-down municipalization” (Çiner 2014, p. 454), some decision-making authority was moved further away from people, the possibilities for citizens’ democratic participation was decreased, and the governorates’ control and intervening power into municipal matters was increased (ibid).

While being cautiously positive to the decentralization reforms Gül & Kiriş (2015, p. 51) also see that there are gaps when it comes to implementation due to “the continuing habits of centralized and local bureaucracy” and “a lack or low levels of civic democratic culture and participation by the NGOs”. They further state that a more successful implementation would require a governance structure formed by prerequisites like the recognition of interdependency between actors, the importance of each actor, and participation and negotiations among related actors. Due to the nature of disasters, the disaster management domain is one area where there is potential to create such a governance structure that involves actors across sectors and administrative levels. Disasters demand large financial and material resources that state authorities naturally must provide for, but disasters also call for large temporary human resources as well as time and location specific information. Here local and civil society actors and NGOs have important functions to fill.

Now, we turn our attention to the roles these various actors have during disasters. The Valis and Kaymakams are responsible for disaster management and they also lead the Crisis Coordination Centers (CCC), which are constituted by their deputies, provincial ministries, security/law enforcement agencies, and NGOs. The municipalities do not assume any particular responsibilities during disasters (but come under the authority of the governors) but they are responsible for disaster relevant areas like the fire brigade, police, and infrastructure (Kapucu & Palabıyık 2008). The municipalities however have disaster responsibilities in the preparedness and prevention stages related to planning (Balamir 2013). The provincial governorates have no power to intervene in municipal disaster planning, yet they hold all responsibility after a disaster, which causes an “incongruous relationship” between the two (Gülkan 2009). For example, at the time of the 2011 earthquakes in Van and Erciş, Van municipality was represented by the pro-Kurdish “Peace and Democracy Party” (BDP), whereas the provincial and district governors were appointed by the ruling AKP party.

The muhtars (the village and neighborhood leaders) have no formal role in disaster management but they have related duties that are relevant for disaster management including facilitating social welfare, population registration, maintaining order and security, and strengthening social relations (Akay 2007). In disaster situations, the Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay), a

semi-NGO in Turkey due to its semi-autonomous relation with the state, is responsible for nutrition. Kızılay also has a big part to play in sheltering even though the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) created in 2009 holds the main responsibility. More independent NGOs do not have any formal responsibilities in the disaster management systems and Jalali (2002) claims that “unless the political system changes in major ways, the state is unlikely to give public space to NGOs even in disaster-relief activities because it fears their criticism and popularity”. Yet more recent accounts, at least on paper, suggest that a shift may be on the rise. AFAD sees NGOs as one of their main solution partners (AFAD 2012a) and Oktay (who was the president of AFAD up until 2016), Tetik, and Gökçe (2013) point out that the 2009 disaster legislation demands that actors on all levels collaborate throughout all phases of disaster management.

Development of the Turkish Disaster Management System

“This earthquake created a fault line in the Turkish political system. Everyone saw how inept the whole system is – the bureaucracy, the state mechanism. What collapsed is the whole system. In the long run, the ramifications will be very drastic” (Smith 1999).

The quotation above refers to the 1999 earthquakes in the Marmara region, the most severe earthquakes in modern Turkey. These earthquakes not only shook the earth’s crust, they also stirred the mindsets of public officials and citizens alike. The Turkish state’s inability to respond to the 1999 earthquakes sparked public outcry and led to a questioning of the state and its institutions (Gülkan 2009, Jalali 2002; Kubicek 2002; Özerdem & Jacoby 2006). But before elaborating on the institutional changes that followed in the wake of the 1999 earthquakes, a brief historical outline of the development of the Turkish disaster management systems follows.

Turkey’s location, situated between the North- and Eastern Anatolian fault line and the Hellenic arc, makes it the most seismically active part of Europe (Ganas & Parsons 2009) and one of the most earthquake-prone countries in the world. The combination of fault lines crisscrossing the country and rapid urbanization to areas classified as high earthquake risk entails that a large percentage of the population is under seismic threat (estimations vary but all supersede 70 percent and some are as high as 98 percent) (Çelik & Çorbaçioğlu 2013; Ganapati 2008; Karanci 2013; Platt & Durmaz Drinkwater 2016; UNDP-WMO 2011).

In Turkey, most disaster regulations and legislation have been adopted in the wake of disasters. Case in point is the law on flood prevention adopted in

⁵ To some extent, the state favors and co-opts NGOs and this consequently calls the independence of NGOs into question (see for example Jacoby & Özerdem 2008).

1943 (law 4373) after a series of floods (Ganapati 2008). Similarly, the first proactive law, called “Measures to be put into effect before and after earthquakes” (law 4623) was adopted after a series of earthquakes. This law demanded that response and relief programs were developed in advance, that seismic risk was identified, and that geophysical examinations were made for new developing areas (Kapucu 2012). Between 1958 and 1999, Turkey further developed its disaster management institutions and laid the structural foundations of today’s system, albeit in a different form. An important legal umbrella, covering all natural disasters, was passed in 1959 (law 7269⁶) and it led to the creation of the Ministry of Reconstruction and Resettlement, charged with implementing the law and providing state assistance to the population after disasters (Karanci 2013). Although civil defence and civil protection have been unpopular with instable countries that fear coups d’état (Alexander 2015), the Civil Defence Law was enacted in 1958 to improve the disaster management system (Kapucu 2012). After an earthquake in Erzincan in 1992, a specific law was passed for this region but after another earthquake in Dinar a few years later, this law was superseded by a nationwide law (JICA 2004). Up until the 1999 earthquakes the Turkish disaster management system was mainly reactive and paternalistic, the central government had a “free hand” in disaster recovery, and the potential roles of NGOs were not acknowledged (Ganapati 2008).

The Marmara earthquakes of 1999 are often talked about in terms of “wakeup calls” or “milestones” as they became the turning point that prompted a lot of changes in Turkish disaster policies. Historically, the Turkish disaster management system has been plagued by a lack of collaboration and coordination due to its fragmented nature and the many agencies and organizations involved (Ganapati 2008). The top-down structure has further been criticized for discouraging grass root initiatives, leaving the system nearly void of NGOs (Ganapati 2008; MoPWS 2009). The reforms taking place in the years following the 1999 earthquakes aimed to remedy this previously observed insufficient coordination and collaboration among organizations (Basbuğ Erkan et al. 2013; Çelik & Çorbaçioğlu 2013; MoPWS 2009; Karanci 2013). “Since 1999, issues of prevention and mitigation have come to the fore. The role of civil society and popular participation in areas of disaster management has also come onto the agenda” (Gülkan 2009, p. 28), and NGOs are now seen as ‘indispensable’ and as ‘main solution partners’ alongside various ministries and the military (AFAD 2012a).

This altered focus has led to a lot of organizational and judicial reforms serving to enhance coordination and collaboration between relevant actors. To fill the perceived top-level coordination gap experienced during the 1999

⁶ This law is still in effect but has been modified several times.

⁷ Turkey has experienced four coups d’état in the republic’s history (1960, 1971, 1980, 1997) in addition to the attempted one in 2016.

earthquakes, the General Directorate of Turkish Emergency Management (under the Prime Minister's Office) was established in 2000 (AFAD 2012a) but as this agency's coordination responsibility partly overlapped with other agencies', this rather worsened than improved the situation (Ganapati 2008). In 2009, this agency and two other core organizations previously responsible for disaster management (the General Directorate of Civil Defence under the Ministry of Interior, and the General Directorate of Disaster Affairs under the Ministry of Public Works and Settlement) were unified under one single independent authority, the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD). Such measures have, however, been criticized by crisis management scholars: "Yes, troublesome information sharing and poor coordination lie at the heart of many crisis response pathologies. But these do not go away when organisations are chopped and changed, for instance by forcibly merging them into superagencies..." (Boin and 't Hart 2010, p. 367).

The reforms following the 1999 earthquakes also aimed to create a more decentralized system with more powerful local disaster management authorities (Kuterdem 2010), as they were considered weak (Unlu, Kapucu, & Şahin 2010; Kapucu 2012; Ganapati 2008).

In light of the lessons learnt especially from management and coordination problems of [the] 1999 earthquakes and various disasters following, pre-disaster damage mitigation activities and risk management from [the] local to center approach was [sic] adopted in exchange of center to local pro-disaster crisis management (AFAD 2012a, p. 6).

The reform initiatives were not only pushed by the lessons of the 1999 earthquakes. The EU accession process and international organizations also had a role in the restructuring of Turkey's disaster management system. AFAD is now the sole authority for disaster issues (AFAD 2016; Platt & Durmaz Drinkwater 2016) and in addition to their headquarters in Ankara, there are also provincial AFAD offices in all 81 provinces as well as 11 regional search and rescue (SAR) offices (AFAD 2016).

The decentralization of disaster management responsibilities was initiated already before AFAD was created. Three out of four types of local authorities existing at the time of the Van and Erciş earthquakes (special provincial administrations⁸, municipalities, and metropolitan municipalities) received increased disaster responsibilities during 2004 and 2005. The municipalities and the special provincial administrations were charged with providing locally adapted disaster and emergency plans that aim to protect or reduce losses in fires, industrial accidents, earthquakes, and other natural disasters (Balamir 2013; Keleş 2013). Moreover, the power, duties, and responsibili-

⁸ Special provincial administrations "complement[ed] the municipalities' mandates" by providing certain services at the local level (Freedom House, 2008, p. 19) but were removed after regulations put in effect in 2012 (SPO, 2014).

ties of metropolitan municipalities increased (Gül & Kiriş 2015, p. 48) and they were made responsible for preparing metropolitan level plans and other measures related to natural disasters and for vacating and demolishing risky buildings according to the province plan (Balamir 2013).

Despite the changes made to the Turkish disaster management system, it is still highly centralized and hierarchical and the policies that promote the participation of communities at risk in mitigation and preparedness are lacking (Karanci 2013). The state authorities did, however, share some duties with NGOs and private firms after the Marmara earthquakes in 1999 (Comfort & Sungu 2001). Yet, the reforms notwithstanding, the disaster management system has also received criticism for lacking a single coordinating mechanism during response operations and for lacking a national preparedness plan outlining ‘the structure of coordination between different levels of government, NGOs, and the private sector’ in times of disaster (Ganapati 2008, p. 282; Unlu et al. 2010).

Van and Erciş and the 2011 Earthquakes

Turkey’s first high-impact earthquakes since the disaster management system reforms occurred in 2011 hit the city of Van and the town of Erciş, both of which are located in Turkey’s mountainous southeastern province Van. Both Van and Erciş were severely affected, as were the villages nearby. In 2011, the official population in the city of Van was around 530,000 and 160,000 in Erciş (Platt & Durmaz Drinkwater 2016). The province of Van borders Iran to the east. In terms of development, only six out of Turkey’s 81 provinces rank lower (Erkan et al. 2013). Van and Erciş sit about 100 kilometers apart on the southeastern and the northern shore of Lake Van respectively. The first earthquake (7.2 on the Richter scale) occurred on October 23 at 13:41 and affected Erciş more than Van in terms of deaths even though Van had many more buildings damaged. Van, however, suffered more from the second earthquake (5.6 on the Richter scale) that occurred on November 9 at 19:23. Combined, the earthquakes resulted in 644 deaths and more than 4000 injuries (WHO 2012).

After the first earthquake hit, the government declared that all disaster and emergency units of the relevant ministries and agencies would work around the clock to carry out relief activities (Oktay, et al. 2013). The deputy prime minister responsible for disaster and emergency management and a team from AFAD’s earthquake department in Ankara arrived in Van four hours after the first earthquake (Oktay et al. 2013). That same night, then Prime Minister Erdoğan and several ministers came to Van to oversee the situation. Search and rescue teams were also on site the first evening, and more teams poured into the area over the next few days. Provincial and district Crisis Coordination Centers (CCC) were activated in Van and Erciş respectively, headed by the province and district governors. CCC meetings were held

every night where the responsible actors for different tasks (such as search and rescue, aid distribution, damage assessment, shelter, health etc.) discussed the needs, available staff and resources, actions taken, and what to do next. The composition of the CCCs varied over time, but representatives of AFAD, the relevant ministries (both district and provincial), and the Red Crescent were among the core actors. Officials worked for weeks and even months on end without rest. One interviewee mentioned that the provincial governor slept in his chair in the CCC and many fulfilled their duties despite suffering from personal bereavement.

Historically, the relation between the Turkish state and the Kurds has been tense to put it diplomatically. Over 40,000 people from both sides of the conflict have been killed in an off-and-on war since fighting broke out in 1984 between the PKK and the Turkish government forces. The most recent clashes that re-erupted following the national elections in June 2015 definitely marked the end of a stalled negotiation process that was initiated in 2013. About 70 percent of the population in Van province is Kurdish (Jacoby 2005). The mountainsides display “state slogans” alluding to the long-lasting conflict between the Turkish government and the PKK fighting for autonomy: “Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyene” (How happy is he who can call himself a Turk) and “Vatan Bölünmez” (The homeland is indivisible).

This legacy was present during the Van and Erciş earthquakes and their aftermath. Many people I talked to conveyed that the earthquakes helped in building bridges between people, “turning everyone into brothers, Turks, Kurds, Arabs” and genuine surprise and gratefulness was expressed over the vast amounts of aid that flooded into the province from all over Turkey. Less positive experiences however also emerged during conversations with residents. Aid packages filled with Turkish flags and stones were mentioned. A news anchor also expressed the animosity that non-negligible parts of the Turkish population share towards the Kurds, saying that the earthquakes were sad events, “even if [they] happened in Van” (İdiz 2011). These tensions make both collaboration and decentralization particularly vexing in the southeastern regions compared to other parts of Turkey.

Case Selection and Data Collection Approach

The following sections provides an explanation to why Turkey was chosen as the focal point of this dissertation. Subsequently, some of the challenges involved in studying decentralization and collaboration in Turkey will be discussed. I will also elaborate on certain parts of my fieldwork and data collection approach. To attain transparency, I also expand upon the interview situation and upon how interviewees were accessed, and how both may have affected the results.

Choosing Turkey

Most research on collaboration take place in either North American or the Western European contexts, where the theories were also developed. Collaboration and disaster organization has thereby been less extensively studied in political-administrative environments like the Turkish (McEntire 2007). Yet, many countries that are frequently hit by disasters have political and administrative systems that more closely resemble the Turkish system than Western European or North American ones. There is thus an added value in studying this type of system as the findings may be relevant and useful for a wider audience.

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the barriers to and the prerequisites for disaster management collaboration between both public and civil society actors in Turkey. How the political and administrative context surrounding the collaborating actors influences processes and results related to collaboration is also investigated. Many scholars studying collaboration and networks share and express the belief that the political and institutional context in which collaborations are embedded needs to be taken into consideration to understand collaboration (Ansell & Gash 2008). Scholars investigating disaster management also find this important as the ways in which actors manage disasters are “shaped by pre-existing institutional power arrangements” (Jalali 2002, p. 121). Analyzing the context enables us to “develop a fuller understanding of the practicality, viability, and sustainability” of collaborations (Emerson & Nabatchi 2015, p. 40). Indeed, the environment that surrounds collaborations should be taken seriously and “not as noise that is incidental to the purposes of the network, but as everyday sources of meaning that guide and define the actions of the participants” (Berry et al. 2004, p. 549). This is sometimes referred to as collaborations’ institutional environment. Investigating this environment is particularly salient for collaborations that are focused on public problem solving, like managing disasters, as collaborative disaster management involves many interconnected actors across various jurisdictions (Bryson et al. 2015). The political-administrative system also encompasses many features that are believed to have an impact on collaborations’ performance, including policy and legal frameworks, socioeconomic and cultural characteristics, political dynamics and power relations, network characteristics, and history of conflict (Emerson & Nabatchi 2015). Yet, the institutional environment is often underspecified and step-motherly treated in studies of collaboration.

This dissertation aims to take steps towards specifying how the political-administrative system influences disaster management collaboration and decentralization as “the form that a nation-state takes will have considerable impact on its arrangements for dealing with emergencies, crises, and disasters” (Alexander 2015, p. 219). Turkey has a highly centralized political-administrative system and according to previous findings, highly centralized

and hierarchical systems challenge collaboration and the integration of actors.

Over the past 25 years, Turkey has experienced eleven major earthquakes (Platt & Durmaz Drinkwater 2016). The most devastating ones (the Marmara and Düzce earthquakes occurring in 1999) are often perceived as milestones in the Turkish disaster management system (Çelik & Çorbaçioğlu 2013). Unprecedented criticism was aimed against the state authorities for their poor handling of the disasters, but it was also the first time that the civil society in more systemic manner entered the disaster arena (Jalali 2002; Kubicek 2002; Özerdem & Jacoby 2006). Following these earthquakes, Turkey drafted and implemented reforms to remedy the previously observed shortcomings in disaster coordination and collaboration and to provide local levels with more disaster related powers (AFAD 2012a; Çelik & Çorbaçioğlu 2013; Ganapati 2008; Kapucu 2008). A large reorganization of the disaster management system was also launched in 2009 where a new disaster agency, AFAD, was created. These changes can be understood as an “attempt to formalize a network approach to disaster management in Turkey” (Brown 2013, p. 229). The launching of the disaster management reforms triggered a number of intriguing research questions and the unfortunate earthquakes in Van and Erciş in 2011 generated additional questions concerning disaster management collaboration during response and recovery.

The changes initiated in the Turkish disaster management system also mirror the codifications of international disaster risk reduction frameworks which advocate collaborative and decentralized solutions to reduce disaster risk. But what happens when this internationally backed paradigm advocating collaborative, locally empowering, and participatory “all-of-society” solutions meets centralized and hierarchical national political-administrative systems that to a large extent is the anti-thesis of the prescribed solutions? These tensions between collaborative and decentralized solutions, on the one hand, and Turkey’s centralized political-administrative system, on the other, are at the core of this dissertation.

It is moreover noteworthy that following the disaster reforms, Turkey has received international praise for its disaster management progression; Turkey “has made quite a dramatic improvement in its management and coordination structure [...] and [has a] proven capacity to respond to national and international disasters” (WHO 2011, p. 54). Moreover, one can read on UNISDR’s (2015) homepage that “the creation of AFAD five years ago was a bold, visionary move. It recognized the simple truth that the policies required for effective prevention need strong institutions to ensure their implementation”. While acknowledging that there still is work to be done, it is stated in a UN report that “the reorganisation in 2009 greatly improved the efficiency of each phase of the disaster management cycle” (UNDP-WMO 2011, p. 9). The European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction (EFDRR 2014) has seen Turkey as an exemplar in subsidiarity. Subsidiarity has a

bearing on the nature of central-local relations. All in all, this infers that Turkey has made some improvements, which begs the question of how these improvements came about, especially provided the challenging institutional environment.

Lastly, Turkey is also relevant to study on its own merit: Turkey's political-administrative system is not extensively studied (Keleş 2007). This is also confirmed by Çiner (2014), who states that the difficulties encountered when conducting field research on Turkey's administrative system are part of the reasons for this unfortunate state of affairs.

Choosing Interview Methodology

This dissertation is mainly based on interviews for a number of reasons. First, documentation regarding disaster management in Turkey is neither rich nor readily available. For example, I once received a municipality report that outlined its "sister cities" and recent activities conducted within these exchange projects. In the email sent to me, to which the report was attached, the sender wrote: "Normally we don't share (even) this kind of reports but [I] get a special 'Visa' for you from our manager..." (personal communication 2013-04-01). This illustrates the secrecy that pervades not only the state apparatus but also the municipalities and this effectively discouraged me from basing a larger part of my essays on document analysis.

On occasions when I managed to overcome these obstacles and actually got hold of documentation in English, they mainly contained post-event quantitative facts on the number of mobile kitchens, blankets, or staff sent to the disaster area. In addition, documents are almost exclusively produced on the national level, this provided a too limited view for my research considering the fact that I also aimed to capture the perspectives of actors at the provincial, municipal, district, and village levels. In sum, the reasons mentioned above steered me towards collecting data through interviews.

Still, where appropriate documentation was available, I used primary and secondary documentation, websites, and social media sources to triangulate, contrast, and compare the interview data. Primary documentation was retrieved from AFAD's website such as AFAD strategic plan 2013-2017 (AFAD 2012a) and AFAD's National Earthquake Strategy Action Plan 2012-2023 (AFAD 2012b). Primary documentation was also accessed from various disaster databases such as "Prevention web". Among the secondary sources consulted were research and assessment reports⁹ and news articles, mainly from the online archives of English language dailies such as Today's Zaman and Hürriyet Daily News. The Turkish government raided and took over Today's Zaman in March 2016, and all articles prior to March 2016

⁹ These reports were often written in Turkish and therefore had to be translated.

were taken offline. Luckily, I had saved my search results in full-text articles.

As with every data collection method, there are inherent benefits and problems with interviews too. Common criticisms include that interviewee accounts are subjective and imprecise, and therefore prone to multiple interpretations (Rathbun 2008). Yet when striving to obtain information about interviewees' subjective experiences and thoughts related to a topic like decentralization or collaboration, it is precisely these self-perceptions that are of interest and this makes interviewing a good tool (Rathbun 2008; Emerson & Nabatchi 2015). The nature of actors' relationships and interactions were central in the study of both collaboration and decentralization. White (2011, p. 3) mentions that the quality of relationships between different tiers of government is "difficult to examine over time, particularly when observing state institutions from the 'outside'". Interviews and interviewees can on the contrary provide the inside accounts through which we may "observe" these relationships.

When it comes to assessing collaborative process performance, Emerson and Nabatchi (2015) point out that the individual level is one of two units of analysis that stands out as the most relevant. They argue that it would be useful to learn from the individuals involved in collaboration about their collaborative behaviors, attitudes towards the collaboration, and views of and relationships with others (Emerson & Nabatchi 2015). Moreover, they claim that it would be particularly useful if this information was coupled with additional information about the individuals, like which sector they come from. Interviewing collaborating actors about their relationships with other actors is further believed to go "a long way toward uncovering and understanding the roles of individuals in helping or hindering collaboration" (Emerson & Nabatchi 2015, p. 197f). These were the main motivations for primarily collecting data through interviews and for paying close attention to actors from various sectors.

Yet, asking respondents about various outcomes, like how effective their response activities were, makes interviewing methods more vulnerable to criticism. Koontz and Thomas (2006, p. 116) recommend that more "direct and objective measures" should supplement "subjective measures of participant perceptions" due to various built-in biases in interviewees' answers such as the halo-effect (recent success influences reported perceptions), recall effect (the accuracy of interviewee accounts on past events diminish over time), self-serving biases, and social desirability (interviewees may be reluctant to report on underperformance) (Emerson & Nabatchi 2015; Gerber & Robinson 2009; Koontz & Thomas 2006). It is however difficult to find "direct and objective" measures that are also qualitatively interesting, as opposed to quantitative facts regarding the number of meetings held or the number of policies produced. This goes for both process and response effectiveness, which is of interest for this dissertation. Interviews were also com-

menced within two years of the earthquakes' occurrence which should make recall effects relatively small. Moreover, the earthquakes and the related processes were of great significance to the interviewees which facilitates recollection. On a number of occasions, I was also able to use focus group interviews, where the other participants served as checks to overly self-serving accounts.

Despite the vulnerabilities associated with asking interviewees about outcomes, member perceptions seem to be an acceptable way of assessing collaborative results: "Evaluators will need to become more comfortable with the legitimacy of evaluations done by the participants themselves" (Mandell & Keast 2008, p. 729). Researchers examining network governance outputs also emphasize the need to consider network actors' subjective judgments of benefits and drawbacks (McGuire & Agranoff 2011). Moreover, Hasnain-Wynia et al. (2003) argue that as members possess both tacit and explicit information, member perceptions of network effectiveness are the best measures of assessing networked outcomes (see also Varda & Retrum 2015).

Fieldwork

Fieldwork - leaving one's home institution in order to acquire data, information, or insights that significantly inform one's research (Kapiszewski et al. 2015).

"Fieldwork must certainly rank with the more disagreeable activities that humanity has fashioned for itself. It is usually inconvenient, to say the least, sometimes physically uncomfortable, frequently embarrassing, and to a degree, always tense" (Shaffir & Stebbins 1991, p. 1). Indeed, it was rather inconvenient to be awoken by an earthquake in the middle of the night in the same city where the 2011 earthquakes, the reasons for my stay in the first place, had occurred. Nor was it pleasant to realize that I just had told an interviewee that "Allah doesn't have to bother", *Allah rahat olsun*, when I meant to say "may Allah bless you", *Allah razı olsun*. Despite the inconveniences and embarrassing moments, I side with other researchers in believing that "fieldwork continues to be both the most productive and exciting part of what we do" (Philippe Schmitter, interviewed in Munck & Snyder 2007, p. 337).

I had never set foot in Turkey before embarking on my dissertation project. In total, I spent 15 months on site between March 2013 and November 2015. Most interviews were conducted during two interview periods (October-November 2013 and March-June 2015). A third interview tour was planned for Van/Erciş during late 2015 to early 2016, but was cancelled due to the unrest following the general elections in June and November 2015.

Rather than resulting in concrete data points, fieldwork helped me understand how to access interviewees and how to interpret the collected material in a relevant way, or at least in a way less colored by my initial preconceptions that increasingly eroded the longer I stayed in Turkey. Fieldwork thus also helped with contextual and conceptual insights that strengthened my research. For example, collaboration is central in this dissertation and it became clear that the concept of collaboration concept was in no way self-evident. For some, mainly actors outside the formal or public disaster management system, collaboration had a negative ring that was associated to control. For others, it was clear that powerful actors could not distinguish between collaboration and direction. Yet others had clearly rehearsed (although not fully internalized) the global disaster policy frameworks' siren song of collaboration. Missing out on these nuances implies a risk of talking past each other, jeopardizing the validity of the research.

During one interview, an interviewee said that collaboration would never be difficult as long as clear roles are assigned and there is a plan. In explaining the situation in Van, he said: "we had a plan and sent the requested staff". I then asked more specifically about trust, pre-existing relations, and common values between the involved actors, but the interviewee kept talking about role descriptions and allocated resources and staff. The in-house interpreter was struggling and finally looked at me and said that he didn't think the interviewee understood the question. As this was one of my last interviews, I understood enough Turkish to hear the interviewee say: "Look, explain to her, that it is like in football. If you have eleven players and everybody knows who the goal keeper is and which ones are forwards, playing will be easy." Not waiting for the translation, I asked about the interviewee's favorite football team. He said that it was "*Fenerbahçe tabii ki!*" (Fenerbahçe of course!) I then painted a picture of an imaginary upcoming match between two of Istanbul's well-known football teams, Fenerbahçe and Galatasaray, and provided two scenarios. The first implied that the players in Fenerbahçe had never met or played together before, but all knew their positions. The second scenario entailed that the Fenerbahçe players had been playing together for years, had been at training camps together, and knew each other well. I asked the interviewee which scenario he would prefer for Fenerbahçe before playing a match against Galatasaray. He chose the second and after having discussed the importance of being able to read the game and your team members, and having well-rehearsed patterns for various situations like corners and free kicks, we could progress towards discussing the difficulties related to collaboration.

Such conceptual difficulties are perhaps also part of the explanation to why my first round of interviews did not generate a lot of material related to the concept of trust. In essay I, I wrote that "Interviewees' elaborations on trust were sparse". This was also part of the reason why I chose to include it

again in the second round of interviews. This time, the interviewees' thoughts and reflections on trust were more elaborate.

Locating Interviewees

For reasons of transparency, the strategic choices made along the way that influenced my approach to locating and conducting interviews will be presented in the coming sections. A total of 44 interviews are included in the research presented in this thesis. Interviewees were primarily selected on the basis of their involvement in handling the Van and Erciş earthquakes in 2011 and their knowledge of and/or experience from working in the Turkish disaster management system. I interviewed central actors (like ministry representatives and AFAD officials) and local actors (municipality and village- and neighborhood leaders). I also interviewed actors that took part in work at the provincial and district Crisis Coordination Centers, including national state officials from ministries and representatives from various ministries' "field offices" in the provinces and districts. Furthermore, I interviewed NGOs, both those operating locally and those operating across the country (and occasionally internationally). I also talked with representatives from the Turkish Red Crescent, which has a semi-autonomous relation to the state.

Table 1. *Breakdown of interviewees*

Type of actor	Number of Interviewees	Additional information
National level ministry official	2 (1 unrecorded)	Directly involved in there-sponse
Central level AFAD official ^a	6 (1 unrecorded)	Four on site during earthquakes
Senior AFAD consultant	1	Many years' experience advising and working with AFAD
State institution official	1	Disaster management department
Disaster management expert	3	Two former state officials within the disaster management system

Table 1. *Continue.*

Van CCC representative (appointed AFAD and provincial ministry officials)	7	Directly involved in managing the Van earthquake (one former)
Provincial ministry officials	2	Directly involved in managing the Van earthquake
Erciş CCC representatives (five district ministry officials ^b)	8	Directly involved in managing the Erciş earthquake
Municipal officials ^c during the earthquakes	5	Directly involved in managing the Van or Erciş earthquake
Muhtars (Van and Erciş ^b)	4 (1 unrecorded)	On site during Van and Erciş earthquakes
Turkish NGO representative	8	On site during Van and Erciş earthquakes
Semi-NGO representative	5 (1 unrecorded)	Two local and two central officials on site during the earthquakes and one Ankara-based central official
Turkey-based international NGO representative	2 (1 unrecorded)	Many years' experience working with AFAD and Turkish disaster management actors

Note. AFAD = Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency; CCC = Crisis Coordination Centers; NGO = non-governmental organization.

^a Focus group with three officials.

^b Focus group with district ministry officials and Erciş muhtars.

^c Focus group with two municipal officials.

In the beginning of my research journey, I spent a fair amount of time in Sweden fine-combing articles about the Van and Erciş earthquakes in Turkish English-language dailies and the few reports that covered the earthquakes. This was done to comprehend the narrative but also, and mainly, to find potential interviewees. Out of 40 names identified, I finally managed to locate a handful of email addresses, and out of these only one interviewee answered and agreed to an interview. Repeated emails and calls to relevant agencies in Turkey reaped equally minuscule returns. At around this time, my employer gave me the opportunity to go Turkey on an externally orga-

nized one-week study trip, focused on security issues. I stayed on in Turkey for two more weeks to gauge the feasibility of conducting research on disaster management in Turkey in general and of gaining access to interviewees in particular. This stay brought the realization that although a more strategic sampling would have been preferable, snowball sampling was perhaps the only viable alternative for me to get in contact with relevant interviewees.

Initiating Snowball Sampling

As my first field trip approached, the security situation in Turkey's southeast was deteriorating and there was talk about the PKK's remobilization in the cities. In order to keep updated and to establish future contacts and respondents, I contacted the Kurdish National Association in Stockholm. I met with a man originally from Van who provided me with useful information. His relatives, who were still in Van, assisted in putting me in contact with relevant interviewees.

Another person assisting me was a colleague in Stockholm that knew a Turkish professor involved with disaster studies in Ankara. This professor was glad to help me once I arrived in Turkey. I was also in contact with a Turkish researcher who I had previously met during a disaster management conference in Lisbon. He was acquainted with another professor at a Turkish university who in turn was connected to disaster management "profiles" as he had previously worked at the Turkish disaster and emergency management authority. The fourth helpful connection was a guest researcher at Uppsala University, who connected me with the faculty of the political science department at his university in Turkey, who in turn helped me onwards.

There is a risk that being a foreigner causes difficulties in accessing interviewees. This was also confirmed by newfound friends and acquaintances in Turkey, and a common remark was that I experienced difficulties in accessing interviewees as "The authorities suspect you are a spy or a journalist". Indeed, to be able to conduct interviews in Van and Erciş I occasionally had to spend some time reassuring interviewees that I was not a journalist. "*Gazeteci değilim*" ("I am not a journalist"), were among the first words I learned in the Turkish language. This suspicion, or caution, was at times also seen nearing the end of interviews when I commonly asked for potential future interviewees. While providing me with names or descriptions of where such could be located, respondents would at times ask me (or the interpreter) to call them back when I was together with this newly recommended interviewee. While sipping our introductory tea in the following interview situation, my interpreter would then make the call to the previous interviewee so that the current interviewee could be assured that it in fact was the person on the phone that had sent me and my interpreter his (rarely her) way. A quote by a Turkish public administration scholar illustrates the access issues and the difficulties involved when trying to enter this world:

Prefects and other territorial administrators constitute a closed system together, as different from other bureaucrats and experts. To conduct a survey among them requires permission or an enforcement of the Ministry of Interior. Moreover, they are expected to not criticize the policies of government in effect, in order to protect their future careers, which mostly depend on governmental decisions (Çiner 2014, p. 446).

This quote singles out a particular group of officials as constituting a closed system but I experienced this as a general phenomenon. Professional secrecy reigns in the Turkish administrative system (Kapucu & Palabıyık 2008) where public officials and employees often see themselves as owners, rather than servants, of the state (Çaha 2009) and “almost every kind of information is treated as confidential” (Timothy & Tosun 2001, p. 352). One of the most commonly cited characteristics of the Turkish political-administrative system is the lack of interpersonal trust (Kalaycıoğlu 2012), which may also account for some of the difficulties encountered. One interviewee that I could discuss these matters with said that:

We are worried. Anyone who comes from Europe to talk to us makes us nervous, even if it is [just] to write a thesis. How can I show myself in the best way to them and how can this record be used against me? (Interview 26)

In addition, a report from Freedom House (2008, p. 5) claims that “freedom of expression, especially when it involves criticism of public and political actors, needs to be further safeguarded and respected”. The state of freedom of expression in Turkey has significantly deteriorated since the report was written, especially during the last few years, as was commented on in the preface.

In sum, it was utterly important to make interviewees comfortable. Combined with my aspiration to enable unguarded reflection on behalf of the interviewees and the fact that some specifically asked to remain anonymous; all interviewees were anonymized to safeguard identities. Also, considering this environment, the relations I made to the people I met was of great importance in my search of interviewees. The four connections that I located early on did not lead to interviewees directly but they all provided valuable contacts, who in turn, generated the first wave of interviewees. In some cases this first wave generated a second, which sometimes generated a third, fourth, and fifth wave of interviewees over the years (see figure one below). Despite this, it still took me nearly three years of relation building and navigation in this web of contacts to access some of my interviewees.

cured a meeting with a high official also provided me with the status that often made other potential interviewees more inclined to talk to me, even when not reaching out on this higher official's recommendation.

Needless to say, the difficulty of directly approaching and/or getting access to interviewees limited my control over which respondents I could interview. My access to certain individuals largely depended on the social and political rank of my contact persons and the word *torpil* surfaced from time to time. The *torpil* system is based on personal contacts and favors. Translations include "influential contact", "backer", "fixer", "clout", all of which convey its functions. Considering this setting and the timeframe I do not see how I could have gone about securing interviews in any other way.

Of potential concern here is that the "selection" of interviewees is skewed. This would however concern me more if recommendations were solely based on, for example, political views. Most often, the recommendations were based on the future interviewee's occupation and position in the disaster management system. The individuals I was recommended to meet with had insight into the processes I was interested in. They had either worked in one of the Crisis Coordination Centers, had taken part in collaboration related to disaster management, or had otherwise central positions in the disaster management system. The initial connections are also important when trying to avoid skewed material. My initial connections provided me with a varied sample of interviewees. My local facilitator in Van for example arranged interviews with both state and municipal officials and NGOs. He owed his large web of contacts to being a swimming and diving instructor. Being able to swim is a much coveted skill in this region, signaling some status. This implies that officials from "all sides" wish to acquire this skill for themselves or for their children.

To further minimize a skewed selection of interviewees, I continuously tried to reach interviewees through several channels. A handful agreed to meet and talk with me but when it came to booking an appointment, no one was available. Others generously answered questions via email but denied requests to meet. These "interviews" were not included in the dissertation. I also made an official request to AFAD to interview some of its staff but after several bumps and U-turns in the Turkish bureaucracy, the "higher management" denied me access (personal communication 2013-09-30). The security situation in the southeast of Turkey further limited my own search of interviewees in Van and Erciş as I was not to go outside on my own, especially not after dark. For instance, during my first field trip in 2013, my mobility was greatly limited after my interpreter and facilitator suddenly had to leave town. Merely three out of the total 44 interviews materialized from email correspondence with the respondent in question without reference to a third party vowing for me (7, 30, and 44 in figure one). These three individuals all represented national or international NGOs located in Ankara or Istanbul.

I am aware of the interviewee imbalance stemming from an underrepresentation of the Van and Erciş municipalities. This perspective is included but comparatively underrepresented as it was more difficult to establish contact with the municipal officials than the state officials. Perhaps in part this was due the fact that my entry points were mainly oriented towards Ankara, Istanbul, and the state level. The interviews I made with municipal representatives rarely resulted in a second wave of interviewees. Instead, I had to access these actors via my local interpreter.

The eruption of violence between the Turkish government and the PKK in Turkey's southeast, recommencing after the national elections in June 2015 and second elections in November 2015, entailed that a field trip I was planning for late 2015/early 2016 aiming to remedy this imbalance never materialized due to security concerns. This lapse also contributed to the comparatively few municipal interviewees but not necessarily to an unrepresentative account of the municipal perspective. In view of the fact that the municipal respondents interviewed held central positions during the earthquakes and had extensive insight into the matters of interest (e.g. issues related to collaboration with other actors), the relatively few interviews with municipal representatives can be deemed to be less grave. Especially when also considering that the accounts of the municipal respondents that were interviewed overlapped considerably.

Reflections on Conducting the Interviews

To ensure the qualitative validity of the study, different interviewing techniques and different ways of building rapport had to be mastered. Why this was the case and what those techniques entailed will be illustrated below.

When conducting the interviews, I initially had an interview guide that contained the themes that I was trying to capture. In peer review processes, I have occasionally been asked to state which questions I posed to interviewees. Yet this is hard to do for a number of reasons. Interviewees did not always directly answer the interview questions, but they served as cues or memory triggers, causing the conversation to flow back and forth. In this flow, I often got answers to my questions without even having to pose them, and I also got answers to questions I had not even thought of asking and these were sometimes included in future interviews. Similarly, my follow-up questions varied depending on what issues the interviewees raised in our discussions. I also asked actor specific questions, for example, to NGO representatives that would not be relevant to ask state officials.

It was mentioned above that being a foreigner was in some ways challenging. This status as an outsider could however also bring advantages (Sanderson, Kumar, & Serrant-Green 2013). After talking to two Turkish PhD students in a similar line of inquiry at a conference in Van, I realized that being a foreigner potentially also generated interest from some inter-

viewees. The researchers were denied access to some interviewees that I had informative encounters with. As a foreigner, I could also elicit information regarding certain practices and norms that an insider would be expected to be familiar with and that therefore would have remained unspoken. My questions could also be more direct which resulted in more elaborate explanations from the respondents, which brought nuanced results. An excerpt from my field diary after an interview with a muhtar, exemplifies this:

I said “if I ask weird questions it is because we do not have any resemblance to muhtars in Sweden and I therefore lack deeper knowledge regarding your role”. I had an idea, but this gave me some leeway to ask the somewhat difficult questions more easily. Interviewees often become more comfortable when “realizing” I’m not a threat as such an “ignorant” person can’t possibly be connected to any dignitaries (field note June 2015).

This approach is far from recommended in all interview situations. Beth Leech (2002) advises against it during elite interviews, as this risks procuring shallow answers (see also Rathbun 2008). Indeed, during my interviews with higher officials, that had more of an elite character to them, I instead at times had to put my knowledge on display to “deserve” informative answers. This knowledge did not necessarily have to be related to disaster issues but could concern the Turkish language, expressions, and culture. Using information gained from previous interviews (without disclosing identities) was also useful to make some interviewees more positively inclined to share valuable information. Even though every interview is unique, there are common features of for example elite interviews. As opposed to research focusing on one category of respondents, my interviewees traversed many levels in the bureaucracy and sectors, from ministry representatives to village leaders (muhtars), which implied having to master different interviewing techniques and ways of building rapport.

Not all interviewees felt comfortable with me recording the interview. Most often, I could then take notes instead but occasionally, the conversation flowed more easily when I put the pen away. One such encounter was documented as a field note:

As he denied the use of recorder, I balanced my note pad on my lap. Our interview was awkward and trying at first. After a while, I noticed that he talked more freely when I took my tea glass and let go of my pen. I experimented with this realization and finally decide to put the pen down. His careful trickle of words turned into streams and then rivers, also returning to earlier questions and then he elaborated on his answers to them. When I grabbed the pen again, as I now reckoned that he felt more comfortable as the conversation was more relaxed, he started weighing his words carefully again and used formulations like “that is not for me to have an opinion about”(field note June 2015).

In situations like this, my interpreter and I sat down in the car afterwards and I wrote down what had been said. Here my basic knowledge of Turkish helped as I could ask for certain things that the respondent had said which triggered a new round of recollections. When conducting interviews like these on my own, I used the recorder to summarize the discussion. Not being able to record or take notes made me hesitant; could I use these interviews or not? Dalen (2015) acknowledges that in some contexts, for example in occupied areas, it could seem suspicious to record an interview or it would not even be allowed (author's own translation). Yet in such circumstances, "The researcher must take notes of everything that is said, and then immediately after the interview is over, supplement the notes in communication with the interpreter" (Dalen 2015, p. 39, own translation). But if the interviewee clearly becomes restricted and uncomfortable by note-taking, I believe it is more ethical to refrain from taking notes or refrain from conducting the interview. Herein lies a tradeoff between obtaining unrecorded rich information and obtaining recorded less rich information. In the end, I decided to include material from these five interviews as long as it was not in stark contrast to information received elsewhere.

Receiving Interpreters' Assistance

Due to my insufficient command of Turkish I was supported by interpreters throughout my fieldwork. As the interpreters are of great importance to the interview process, their role "should be made explicit and be the subject of critical reflection" (Edwards 1998, p. 197). I have worked with both lay and professional interpreters and with external and in-house interpreters (internal to the interviewee's organization). Depending on the interview situation, I used different interpreters; the main objective was to make interviewees comfortable. For some interviews, no interpreter was necessary as the interviewees' had sufficient command of English.

The interpreter-supported interviews were conducted in Turkish and translated to English underway; the transcripts were written in English. This is the "most commonly used interview and translation approach in cross-cultural studies" (Choi, Kushner, Mill, & Lai 2012, p. 654). I worked mainly with two lay interpreters: one with Turkish as her mother tongue, and one with Kurdish as his mother tongue but who is also fluent in Turkish. Both were familiar with the context in Van and Erciş where they mainly assisted me. I placed a high value on this awareness as an interpreter who "fully understands the participants' culture and language will reduce potential threats to the validity of the data" (Choi et al. 2012, p. 654). Furthermore, it was also valuable that the interpreters understood not only the respondents' cultural context but also mine. On occasions I heard and understood what the interviewee said, but without the additional information often provided by the interpreter I would have missed the implications of the information. I

was blind to the gaps in my understanding but the interpreters pointed them out to me. The same could be said for historical references that respondents sometimes used to illustrate a point.

As disaster management was not the lay interpreters' area of expertise, I provided them with copies of my initial interview guide (that we went through together) and a two-way (Turkish-English and English-Turkish) disaster management glossary where relevant terms were marked. The professional (Turkish) interpreter (consulted in Ankara) had previous interpreter experience from this area and was well acquainted with the disaster management lingo.

Working with lay translators resulted in some misunderstandings due to language and/or inexperience. For example, perhaps due to inexperience or issues related to culture and status, my female interpreter seemed anxious to interrupt interviewees for translations, which at times resulted in longer sequences of talk being summarized with a few sentences. As most interviews were recorded, I could ask a second interpreter to listen to them again to fill in the gaps, which remedied some of the lapses but, of course, I could not follow up on certain information after the fact. This second translation also allowed for an independent validation of earlier translations (Bujra 2006). As this validation was done by the person who was my interpreter during the second round of interviews, it also served as a good introduction to the topic.

Another difficulty was that the first interpreter occasionally seemed uneasy asking certain questions. One time I asked a follow-up question along the lines of "and why is that you think?" My interpreter smiled at me, shifted uneasily in her seat, and said: "It is so obvious actually...", indicating that she did not need to ask. Not wishing to put her in an awkward situation while also needing an answer I said, "I understand, but I need to hear him explain why. If you think it is embarrassing, just say I'm a foreigner and a bit stupid". She smiled, and told him I was a bit stupid and I got the answer.

With hindsight, these mishaps were probably smaller than those that would have arisen had I brought a professional interpreter with less knowledge of the cultural context. I second that "social researchers will find interpreters who speak the local language as their first tongue and have a firsthand knowledge of the area under study more useful than those whose English is perfect" (Bujra 2006, p. 177). This knowledge turned the interpreters into a great resource in terms of establishing the much needed and important rapport during interviews (Leech 2002). Ahead of the interviews, the interpreters would typically brief me regarding the respondent, how long he had worked at that particular organization, his background, and/or how to greet him. "Wait for him to extend his hand to greet you. If he doesn't, you don't either" (field note October 2013). In other instances, interpreters could "team up" with the interviewee, which made the interviewee more at ease, which I sensed resulted in a more honest and open communication. This teaming up between the interpreter and the interviewee was even more pro-

nounced during my second round of interviews, where I engaged a local male interpreter (we only had interviews with men). This was possibly a result of the fact that this interpreter also made the appointments with the interviewees which enabled them to connect ahead of our meeting. When I worked with the female interpreter, my male facilitator that I previously mentioned, made the appointments.

Analyzing the Interviews

Even though I had initially planned to transcribe the interviews directly, the frequency and pace of interviews at times made this impossible. In these instances, I wrote interview memos detailing: the main take aways, anything that stood out from previous accounts, any new insights or perspectives, any inconsistencies, any changes that should be made to the interview guide, my impression of the interviewee, and the general interview situation. In a few cases, where the interpreter had difficulties to relay all that was said during the interview, the transcription was done together with the interpreter.

In addition to the interpreters' translations, they included explanations of special words or Turkish proverbs that interviewees used. After transcribing the interviews, the transcripts were read repeatedly, and text segments were categorized thematically. Upon the first reading of transcripts, keywords were scribbled in the margin. During subsequent readings, these keywords could later be assembled under more general categories relating to the specific research questions in each essay; for example, local knowledge, politicization, political-administrative system. As the interviews were semi-structured, categories and themes partly overlapped with interview themes (e.g. pre-existing relations, interdependence, power balance, integration), while new categories also emerged (e. g. norms against critique, the disjoint nature of the disaster management system). While reading the transcripts, existing notes in my field diary pertaining to the particular interview were also taken into account to remind myself of the circumstances surrounding the interview and the interview situation. Depending on the research question, my categorizations varied. For essay II, I also categorized the material into activities, such as information sharing, search and rescue, aid distribution, and damage assessment.

As I went through the transcripts it was clear that the second round of interviews were conducted with a deeper insight regarding the context and various perspectives as the first round of fieldwork, interviewing, and transcribing brought me further from my preconceptions and closer to the local dynamics. For example, I am a former volunteer within the Swedish emergency management system. My experience was that we volunteers often tried to get the attention of and collaborate with various government agencies; we repeatedly emphasized the resources we could contribute and how they could be used to help the public. This interest was seldom reciprocal

however. So when, during one of my very first interviews with an NGO involved in managing the earthquakes in Van and Erciş, I was told that they had experienced “big problems” regarding collaboration with the government, I nodded my head in what I thought was recognition. When I asked for an elaboration of the problems experienced, I was told that their biggest problem was that “The government wanted to collaborate with us!” Listening to the recording, my hesitation is first heard as silence and then as a follow-up question “and... *How* was that problematic for you?” His explanation, of course, made perfect sense and was totally understandable and included state officials directing where they could conduct their activities. Needless to say, not all steps in the process of becoming increasingly acquainted with the local context are as easily identified as this one; some became clear with hindsight.

As the second round of interviewing took place after the first round of transcription and analysis, there is an admitted bias in interview quality over time. Being aware of this tendency from previous interview projects, I tried to conduct the more crucial interviews later on in the research process. I also had the chance to re-interview two interviewees as they had changed positions since our first interview, which enabled me to fill in some gaps.

Essay Summaries

Essay I, entitled “Disaster Management Collaboration in Turkey: Assessing Progress and Challenges of Hybrid Network Governance”, uses twenty-four semi-structured interviews to investigate the applicability of prior theoretical assumptions regarding inter-organizational collaboration in different political-administrative context than they were originally developed in. Managing disasters generally demands multi-organizational collaboration and Turkey recently reorganized its disaster management system due to previously observed weaknesses in coordination and collaboration. In the wake of this reorganization, a centralized hybrid network emerged (employing a lead organization). When it comes to the question of how to organize actors to attain collaboration, past research suggests that common challenges to collaboration may be mitigated in shared governance networks, while in contrast more centralized networks have been portrayed as comparatively less fruitful for collaboration. As these theoretical assumptions have rarely been supported by rigorous empirical investigation, this essay set out to answer whether these distinctions seem to hold up to empirical scrutiny, particularly outside of Western governmental and political systems. The findings of this study are not fully consistent with prior research, and further suggest that adjusting the collaborative disaster management structure to the wider governance and political-administrative system can be beneficial for collaborative disaster management; despite being organized in a suboptimal manner

(according to past research), collaborative progress and initiatives were seen. Room for improvement remains, yet, considering the attributes of the Turkish political-administrative system, it is less likely that the progress observed would have been achieved if organizing in a mode more close to shared network governance. In the Turkish setting, a centralized structure may be able to foster prerequisites for collaboration (like legitimacy) that in other settings are believed to be fostered in flatter structures.

Essay II, entitled “Disaster Response in Turkey: Conditions Promoting Cross-Sectoral Collaboration and Implications for Effectiveness”, draws upon forty-four semi-structured interviews and a within-case design to answer under what conditions governmental, local, and civil society actors are able to engage in cross-sectoral collaboration during disaster response. The results show that given the state’s dominating role in Turkey, cross-sectoral collaboration during disaster response to a large extent depends on state authorities’ initiatives or invites to collaboration. A perceived dependence on local actors’ knowledge and networks was one reason for such initiatives. Yet, the study suggests that the time it took to acknowledge this dependence varied with the actor; the state authorities’ relationship with one municipality was for example more forthcoming than with another. The essay largely suggests that, political considerations were behind the observed differences. State authorities that collaborate or build collaborative capacity with politically incompatible actors run the risk of ceding potential credit for disaster operations to them and also risk losing some of their credibility and trust with their main support base. Political divergence was less problematic, however, if relations between such actors had been established ahead of the disaster. It was also explored how cross-sectoral collaboration influences the ability of actors to conduct response activities. The results suggest that when state authorities collaborated with local and civil actors and made use of these actors’ local knowledge and resources, activities were conducted more successfully and vice versa. Yet, there were also instances where abstaining from collaboration with state authorities contributed to more effective disaster response operations.

Essay III, entitled “Challenges to Decentralization of Disaster Management in Turkey”, observes that decentralization has become the siren song in battling the consequences of natural disasters worldwide. Decentralization is believed to contribute to good disaster governance by increasing local capacity and participation. Yet, to be able to reap the benefits of decentralization, multi-level collaboration is needed. Using forty-four semi-structured interviews, this essay investigates three essential mechanisms that presumably challenge decentralization processes: the central government’s introduction of new oversight systems, the central government’s failure to match local authorities’ increased disaster responsibilities with increased funds, and central-local collaboration. These mechanisms were investigated as the de facto development of the disaster management system towards decentralization

(decentralization took place in 2004, 2005, and 2009) has halted and rather taken a centralizing turn in the wake of two earthquakes in 2011. The changing of appointment and budget procedures within the disaster management system challenged decentralization. Moreover, the local actors had insufficient resources and capacity, and many were unwilling to assume delegated disaster responsibilities. Exploring central-local collaboration uncovered that the prerequisites for disaster management collaboration and decentralization processes are coupled; the identified respect for rank and the norms against criticism and local participation in the political-administrative system challenge central-local collaboration. This, in turn, presents obstacles to reaping the benefits of decentralization. The special attributes of disaster events may further amplify the central-local gaps, as central actors dominate response and recovery processes, the evaluations of them, and the proposed solutions to address their shortcomings. In these processes, the perspectives of critical thinkers and local actors are seldom heard. The essay concludes that fostering a fertile ground for central-local collaboration would not only advance disaster management in general but it would probably also help pave the way for reaping the benefits of potential future decentralization attempts.

Contributions and Implications

This section revisits the research aim and the research objectives of this dissertation and shortly presents the general overarching findings. These findings and how they contribute to the scholarship on collaboration and decentralization will be discussed in more detail in the coming sections. Some policy relevant reflections that follow from this study will also be presented.

The overarching aim was to investigate how the commonly advocated disaster risk reducing strategies of disaster management collaboration and decentralization were received when introduced in a political-administrative system that largely is the anti-thesis of the prescribed strategies. This aim was disaggregated into three more specific research objectives that guided this thesis. These research objectives were to investigate: 1) the barriers to and the prerequisites for disaster management collaboration between both public and civil society actors in Turkey, 2) how the political-administrative system constrains and enables collaborative processes, and the outcomes of such processes, and 3) the challenges to the decentralization of disaster management.

This dissertation suggests that adjusting the disaster management system to the wider political-administrative system can be beneficial for collaborative disaster management. Collaboration was to some extent integrated into the Turkish disaster management system. By adopting a collaborative style that fit the wider political-administrative system, collaborative disaster management progress was achieved in national level activities both between

governmental actors and between governmental actors and NGOs. Even though there were exceptions, collaboration spanning sectors and/or administrative levels were generally less forthcoming due to the disjointed character of the political-administrative system and the disaster management system. Political divergence between local and central actors made central-local collaboration difficult, but this thesis also indicated that political divergence does not have to be a deal-breaker for collaboration as actors partly managed to overcome such barriers. The barrier of political divergence for disaster management collaboration was partly overcome by interdependence and pre-existing relations that enabled collaboration.

The specific attributes of disasters were further found to alter the impact of barriers and prerequisites in ways that may both help and hinder collaboration. The findings also suggest that collaborative disaster management generally improved disaster response operations. The response activities that displayed comparatively more collaboration were also the response activities that were carried out more effectively and vice versa.

The findings also indicate that the decentralization attempts undertaken in the Turkish disaster management system may have been premature as the conditions for ensuring a functional decentralization of disaster management (e.g., local capacity, adequate resources, and participation) are currently lacking. Decentralization attempts are commonly suggested to increase local capacity and participation but the combined findings of this dissertation rather suggest that in the Turkish disaster management system, these commodities may at present have better chances of increasing without decentralization. The most recent decentralization attempts were also revoked following the 2011 Van and Erciş earthquakes.

Next, I will elaborate on these condensed findings. As this thesis confirms that the barriers to and prerequisites for collaborative disaster management are intertwined with the characteristics of the political-administrative system, the first and second research objectives will be discussed jointly.

Barriers, Prerequisites, and the Political-Administrative System

This section starts off by discussing the investigated barriers to and the prerequisites for disaster management collaboration in Turkey and how the political-administrative system constrains and enables collaborative processes, and the outcomes of such processes.

Essay I found some collaborative progress in national level activities. More actors and thereby perspectives were included in disaster management planning activities (in the joint drafting of a new response plan) and authority overlaps and decision paralysis were mitigated. The prerequisites for disaster management collaboration investigated in essay I were legitimacy, power balance, integration, and trust. Trust was also investigated in essay II

and therefore the findings regarding trust in essay I and II will be discussed together.

Internal legitimacy (operationally defined as perceived meaningfulness of interaction) is one prerequisite for collaboration that is expected to be lower in top-down centralized structures as actors' autonomy is reduced which, in turn, is expected to affect participants' attitudes to collaboration negatively. Yet essay I suggested that in a political-administrative system where public officials take strength and protection from laws (Yavaş 2005), have a deep-seated respect for authority and state (Sozen & Shaw 2002), and are unaccustomed to autonomy, a mandated centralized structure headed by a lead organization affiliated with the prime minister's office may be better at providing internal legitimacy than a decentralized counterpart. Indeed, interviewees conveyed many examples portraying that interaction felt more meaningful after the creation of AFAD, compared to when the system was more decentralized, in the sense that three agencies residing in different ministries dealt with disaster issues.

Another prerequisite investigated was power imbalance that is believed to impact collaboration negatively as it may feed distrust, resentment, and lack of commitment among the collaborating actors. Power is to a large extent concentrated to AFAD HQ but due to Turkey's political-administrative system traits, a lot of power is also invested in provincial governors and this evens the playing field somewhat. Still, power imbalances undoubtedly exist, but it is generally rare that partaking actors in collaborations have equal powers. It is not the case for mandated networks and power even varies in flat self-governed networks, where actors' expertise, charisma, or connections can serve as informal power bases.

This thesis indicates that the power of various actors also varies with the disaster management phase. Local actors were largely neglected during preparedness and recovery while their location specific knowledge and resources earned them some clout during disaster response (in the sense that central actors depended on them to be able to fulfill their tasks). The rotation of provincial and district governors every couple of years further hinders them from creating close relations of their own, which is the part of the system's purpose. This system, however, also effectively hinders the building and maintaining of trust and relations between provincial and municipal officials, and this is detrimental to collaboration, especially in regions of conflict like Van. This rotation present in the political-administrative system may increase state actors' dependence on local actors' knowledge.

I recently mentioned that three former disaster agencies located at the same hierarchical level were merged into one (AFAD) and it became the lead organization in the formalized disaster management network. Political-administrative system traits contributed to the fact that the previous balance of power caused decision paralysis, which was detrimental for disaster management as the ability to act, and act fast if necessary, was absent. This order

also constrained collaboration. The power imbalances increased with the creation of AFAD, but in spite of this, collaborative progress was seen, and in the context studied it appears as if power imbalances were not a decisive barrier to collaboration.

The findings of this study also suggested that the integration of actors (i.e., to decrease fragmentation, overlap of mandates, and decrease complexity) helped foster collaboration. Essay I for example found that the integration of NGOs into the disaster management system increased after AFAD's creation. Increased integration also has a bearing on the previously discussed legitimacy via actor inclusion, and this rather unsurprisingly illustrates that some of the prerequisites for and barriers to disaster management collaboration overlap to some extent. Such overlaps were also present in essay II investigating how trust, pre-existing relations, interdependence, knowledge and resources affected disaster management collaboration.

Trust was mainly found to be important for disaster management collaboration in Turkey. Even though most interviewees conveyed that trust was key, impressions of trust fluctuated between two general views: that everything about collaboration depended on trust, and that there was no time to think about the existence of trust as the collaborating actors had to work together to resolve the problems at hand as fast as possible (during response). This may indicate that the importance of trust differs during the various phases of disaster management.

Combining the mandated nature of the network and the norms of dependence and rule and regulation abundance in the Turkish political-administrative system, it could also be argued that here, trust may be less foundational for disaster management collaboration than in less centralized systems, at least among state actors. Although there were exceptions, a general pattern of trust was that as interviewees' distance to central power or the government grew smaller, the less they lingered on trust issues. Village and neighborhood leaders (muhtars) as well as representatives of municipalities and NGOs elaborated more on issues related to trust than AFAD HQ officials.

It was mentioned across interviewees that repeated interaction between actors fosters trust. Trust was also higher among the same type of actors at the same administrative level (horizontally located). Trust was for example more prevalent between state officials within the provincial or district governorate than between actors from different (vertical) system levels. This is hardly surprising given these actors' regular interaction in provincial or district matters. To some extent, trust also existed between actors located in the same geographical area, like between the provincial AFAD and certain local NGOs. Yet, being horizontally located did not entail greater trust among actors universally. Actors' political affiliation also needs to be taken into consideration, as was seen in the callous relationship between municipal and provincial officials in Van. Such differences were an effective barrier to relation building and trust and thereby to disaster management collaboration.

Political differences are perhaps particularly constraining in this conflict-affected region but as will be seen, there were however examples where relations were initiated in spite of political divergence.

As partly indicated already, pre-existing relations between collaborating actors were decisive in bringing about disaster management collaboration. The initiation of such relations however involved a timing aspect. The politicization of the earthquakes and the managing of their consequences further polarized an already polarized environment. Initiating relations with politically divergent actors in a disaster situation may therefore be highly challenging. Initiating relations ahead of the earthquakes was hence an important prerequisite for collaborative disaster management during the response. That said, disasters generally also create urgency and information and resource deficits on behalf of central and local actors respectively, and this paves the way for another key prerequisite to collaboration: interdependence.

Combined, the essays in this thesis show that interdependence was a decisive prerequisite for disaster management collaboration. Where state actors perceived dependence on other actors during disaster response, they invited actors to collaborate. (The initiatives to collaborate chiefly came from state authorities due to their dominant role.) Interdependence between collaborating actors also exists during non-acute times (and for issues other than disaster management), but it seemed as if interdependence had better potential to create collaboration between actors in the same geographical area rather than between national and local actors during these times. The relations initiated across political divisions between the district governorate and the village muhtars ahead of the earthquakes occurred due to the former's conviction that maintaining relations with local leaders enabled the district governorate to administer their part of the region effectively. During the response to the earthquakes, political divergence between actors often caused distrustful relations but in the cases where politically divergent actors had initiated relations ahead of the earthquakes, these relationships proved to be valuable to disaster management collaboration and to disaster response. Interdependence during non-acute times may hence promote the establishing of relations that were seen to trump the barrier of political divergence in bringing about disaster response collaboration.

The time it took state authorities to acknowledge their dependence on civil or local actors' resources and knowledge during disaster response, varied with the actor upon which they had to rely. Dependence was acknowledged faster towards actors that the state authorities had pre-existing relations with (for example the search and rescue NGOs, the village muhtars, and Erciş municipality). Where such relations were lacking, the disaster managing authorities first had to make clear which resources they needed and then had to identify where such resources could be located. Local actors' access to population and cadaster information for example prompted collaboration in the form of joint damage assessment teams consisting of muhtars and state

officials. Yet, in the case of Van municipality, the Van governorate decided against letting their dependence on the municipality's resources become a basis for their collaboration¹⁰. Here, political divergence became a barrier to disaster management collaboration.

The potential of interdependence to foster disaster management collaboration also seemed to vary with the task at hand and more precisely with the extent to which the state authorities considered themselves to depend on others to solve their task. State actors' perceived dependence on local actors seemed less pronounced during the recovery processes (rebuilding and evaluation) following the 2011 earthquakes than during the response processes. At least in my data, I did not come across any examples of collaboration between local and central actors during the recovery phase.

Avoiding snap-shot images of collaboration and rather following it over time, the findings of this dissertation illuminate that the impact of the political-administrative system on collaborative disaster management, and on the barriers to and prerequisites for such collaboration, is neither static nor deterministic. The findings of essay II, for example, suggest that during disaster response, the relational differences between collaborating actors did not vary between different sectors, as hypothesized by the collaborative governance and cross-sector collaboration literature, but rather within sectors. The state authorities' relations varied among municipalities and among muhtars involved in managing the disasters. The variation could often be traced to actors' political affiliation. Continued investigation of how the political-administrative system impacts collaborative disaster management over longer time periods holds the potential to further uncover which prerequisites are most important to foster collaboration during certain points in time.

The findings of this thesis also underline the importance of not settling for analyzing barriers and prerequisites for collaboration in just one part of the disaster management system, as this may mask collaborative realities elsewhere. As referred to in essay I, the collaborative progress, seen thus far, was mainly concentrated to planning and preparedness activities between actors at the national level. Essay II zoomed in on the collaboration between actors from different sectors (municipal, governmental, civil society) during response operations and put the spotlight on a reality where the extent of disaster management collaboration varied across disaster response activities (and the actors that took part in them). Essay II generally, and importantly, indicated that where cross-sectoral collaboration was present and state authorities thereby had access to either civil society's (NGOs) or local actors' knowledge and resources, the response activities were carried out more successfully. Here, the importance of pre-existing relations and trust was clear; where actors had initiated collaboration ahead of the earthquakes, such collaboration was more forthcoming. One example was the search and rescue

¹⁰ In fairness, the municipality was not overly eager to collaborate with the governorate either.

(SAR) activities, which most observers agree were among the most successful response activities following the 2011 earthquakes. As noted in essay I, AFAD's integration and inclusion of SAR NGOs had a positive influence on their relations, and both parties expressed mutual trust both before and during the response. AFAD did not waste any time in acknowledging their dependence on these actors or in offering them transportation to the disaster sites. Collaboration had similarly been fostered between provincial AFAD and the local SAR NGO, and during the disaster response the provincial AFAD provided both local and non-local SAR NGOs with resources and logistics. The pre-existing collaborative relationships between these actors developed during joint training and activities made their collaboration smooth (AFAD for example focused on increasing the interoperability between their own and NGOs' SAR teams).

The other response activities examined (damage assessment and aid distribution) also harbored pockets of pre-existing relationships and trust between the actors engaged and this helped both in terms of collaboration and in terms of conducting the activities successfully. Yet, more often, pre-existing relations and trust were lacking between state authorities and the local and civil society actors wishing to engage. As mentioned above, it generally also took state authorities longer to acknowledge their dependence on actors that they lacked previous relationships with and in some cases, due to political divergence, this dependence went unacknowledged and was not acted upon. These realities hampered not only collaboration but also impacted negatively how the response activities were carried out. This dissertation hence lends support to the idea that collaborative disaster management provides better disaster management performance. Collaborative governance/cross-sectoral collaboration thus plays a vital role in securing more successful disaster response operations.

In sum, having a centralized lead organization (AFAD) contributed to integration and internal legitimacy and it also aided the collaborative progress seen on national level. The power imbalances that lead organizations contribute to did not seem to hinder disaster management collaboration in this political-administrative system, at least not on the national level¹¹. Yet, the collaborative progress on the national level was only partly seen between the government and the local authorities and civil society actors. Political divergence often barred this collaboration, but previously established relations and trust were able to trump this barrier. Collaboration was further found to mostly lead to more successful disaster response compared to when collaboration was less forthcoming as collaboration enabled the state authorities to

¹¹ Collaboration was also forthcoming between the central actors that came from Ankara and the centrally appointed actors located in Van province during the earthquake response, yet as these actors were all from the governmental sector, they fell outside the scope of essay II, which was to investigate cross-sectoral collaboration.

access valuable local and/or civil actors' resources and local knowledge. The state authorities' need for these resources created an (inter)dependence that aided disaster response collaboration. Without this need, collaboration between the state authorities and the local actors became sparser as was noted during the recovery phase, mainly studied in essay III. The findings of essay III and how they relate to the other findings will be elaborated on next.

Decentralization of Disaster Management and its Challenges

The section below elaborates on the third essay, which mainly addresses the third research objective.

The three mechanisms investigated in essay III (instituting new oversight systems, not matching local authorities' increased responsibility with increased resources, and lack of central-local collaboration) were all found to challenge decentralization. Yet, combining these results with those from essay I and II suggests that the mechanisms that challenge decentralization in the short run may in the longer run contribute to increased local capacity, decreased political tension, and increased local participation. Thus, in this setting, centralization may contribute to some of the outcomes that decentralization processes are usually given credit for providing.

The mainstream global disaster risk reduction paradigm fervently makes the case that decentralization can improve disaster governance via increased local capacity, increased local actor participation, and (implicitly) multi-sector and multi-level collaboration. Yet, the findings in essay III suggest that the decentralization of disaster management in Turkey that took place in 2004, 2005, and in 2009, has not yet accomplished this desired end-state. The local actors' current lack of proper funding to match their increased responsibilities has rather challenged decentralization as has the unwillingness of many local actors to assume disaster responsibilities (as they feel incapable and that it is not part of their job). Essay III suggests that this incapacity is partly related to the local actors' dependence on central actors in general (due to the traits of the political-administrative system), and in disaster management issues in particular given the overwhelming nature of disasters.

In line with these findings, past research suggests that local levels must be properly prepared before decentralizing reforms are initiated (Haase & Antoun 2015). The combined findings of this dissertation suggest that such preparation, for example consisting of raising local disaster capabilities, may have better chances of succeeding after the recent centralization in 2014, both due to financial and competence reasons. AFAD's recent centralization of budget and appointment procedures challenge decentralized ideals in the short run, but they may, in the current circumstances, simultaneously contribute to increased local capacity and participation in the long run.

Emerson and Nabatchi (2015) claim that managers of mandated or externally directed collaborative governance systems –as opposed to self-initiated ones– must work particularly hard to create procedural and institutional arrangements that will allow collaboration to work over time. At the time of the Van and Erciş earthquakes in 2011, the decentralized provincial AFAD offices were more closely affiliated with the provincial governors, who provided their financial resources, than with AFAD HQ in Ankara. AFAD HQ hence saw their initiated local disaster capacity development projects cancelled if the powerful provincial governors had other priorities (and according to interviewees they often did). After the centralization in 2014, AFAD HQ provides the budgets for their provincial offices which in turn gives them more leverage over capacity development locally. The change also stipulated that governors must spend a certain amount of their budgets on disaster management issues. Now AFAD HQ also appoints the provincial AFAD managers, which was formerly done by the governors. The procedure was not always meritocratic, provided the levels of favoritism present the political-administrative system. There is admittedly no knowing that these procedures will be improved, but in theory at least AFAD HQ can now appoint knowledgeable staff.

In time, AFAD's centralization may also decrease political tensions in Van's politically polarized environment. When the local AFAD offices were more closely affiliated with the governors, some local actors in Van mentioned that this liaison effectively blocked them from collaborating with AFAD (as political divergence caused collaboration difficulties with the governorate). These local actors expressed an aspiration that AFAD would be less related to and dependent on the governors. Although the provincial AFAD offices and the governors still need to collaborate, the change made was a nudge in the direction that the local actors hoped for. If it is enough to enable provincial AFAD to foster collaboration across political divides remains to be seen.

Even if the centralization may contribute to increasing local capacity, resources, and perhaps local participation and collaboration, the political-administrative system's constraining impact on central-local collaboration remains. The disjoint character of the political-administrative system identified in this thesis in general, and the respect for rank and norms against criticism and local participation in it specifically, present challenges for central-local collaboration. In essay III local (and national) interviewees for example painted a picture of AFAD HQ as being far from open to dialogue, at least during the recovery phase. (Few had opinions about local AFAD, perhaps as they were seen as part of the governorate.) Improving disaster management collaboration in such an environment may take a two-pronged approach that includes both centralization and the continuous promotion of a fertile ground for (central-local) collaboration. Here powerful boundary-spanners that realize the importance of disaster management collaboration and that are able to

establish relations, have important roles to play as was shown in the case of the district governorate in essay II.

While fully agreeing with disaster scholars that stress local actors' fundamental value and key roles in managing disasters, such convictions should not be translated into default pushes for decentralization. I am not making the claim that decentralization of disaster management systems is generally a bad idea, or that the centralization of disaster management systems is generally a good idea. Dimensions of context specificity, temporality, and pragmatism must be considered. Considering these dimensions, this thesis indicates that it may be fruitful to centralize (to help prepare local actors) while also promoting a fertile ground for collaborative processes, for example by highlighting interdependencies and by establishing relations between relevant actors, both vertically and horizontally. Provincial AFAD offices now have a possibility to take on a clear boundary spanning role, connecting the various actors locally. Yet provided the increasing polarization in Turkey recently, this is probably more difficult to achieve now compared to a couple of years back, but it is also more critical. Next, we turn to the practical implications of this dissertation.

Practical Implications

This section outlines the implications of this thesis that may be relevant for disaster researchers and the international disaster policy and practitioner community.

This dissertation's findings indicate that context-specific disaster management systems that combine bottom-up and top-down approaches and are tailored to the wider political-administrative system are beneficial for collaborative disaster management. The nature of disasters provides compelling arguments for centralizing certain disaster management functions but it also provides equally compelling arguments for valuing and relying on local actors' site-specific expertise and increasing their capacity. Local actors will need central assistance and resources just as central actors will need local assistance and knowledge to best be able to provide this assistance. There are no quick-fixes or easy answers regarding how to integrate the two approaches, but for all constellations, it is crucial to listen to all involved actors across sectors and administrative levels. The local actors interviewed in this dissertation, actors that are rarely heard (Birkmann et al. 2008; deVries 2000), suggested a disaster management system based on regional organization, holding the potential to cater for both sufficient resources and local knowledge. Furthermore, the interdependence of central and local actors caused by the nature of disasters entails that no matter the shape or form of disaster management systems, a lot of energy will need to be devoted to creating fertile ground for multi-level and multi-sector collaboration. It is hence of continued importance to investigate how to foster and strengthen collabo-

ration between sectors and levels within hybrid disaster management systems provided the political-administrative system in which they are embedded.

To push the frontiers of disaster research and to be of assistance to practitioners, researchers, and most of all to the people that are affected by disasters, we should similarly move away from wholesale declarations portraying top-down and centralized disaster management systems as bad in all circumstances and bottom-up designs as uniformly good. The results of this dissertation suggest that such binary assertions are too simple and conceal highly complex realities. Essay I contributed to the network and collaborative public management literature by empirically investigating a mandated, hybrid network and by investigating common challenges to collaboration in such a network. In so doing, these complex realities were partly uncovered and it alerted us to that a more careful treatment of implicit assumptions about collaborating actors in varying political-administrative systems is warranted. The political-administrative system may namely alter the relative importance, validity, and applicability of previously established enabling or constraining conditions. For good reason, given the number of studies pointing us in this direction, we for example assume that collaboration requires power balance and actor autonomy, but in Turkey these features are neither common nor expected. Collaborative designs that hinder collaborative disaster management in one political-administrative system may even enable collaboration in another. As referred to above, in a political-administrative system where public officials are dependent on superiors and are unaccustomed to autonomy, centralized structures may be *better* at providing, for example, internal legitimacy than decentralized structures. I emphasize ‘better’ as this comparative aspect is important. I do not make the claim that disaster management collaboration is working perfectly, or even satisfactorily, in Turkey. Neither do I claim that centralized structures are superior to decentralized structures in fostering collaboration. The claim I am making is that accomplishing the tangible collaborative progress seen in this particular setting would have been less likely in a decentralized self-governed structure. Before prescribing organizational designs for collaboration, it is thus crucial to understand the norms and values embedded in the political-administrative system and the actors that inhabit this system.

Theoretical Contributions and Future Research

The following paragraphs present some of the theoretical contributions of this thesis and suggests some areas for future research.

The main reason for focusing on the somewhat unchartered research terrain in Turkey was the centralized nature of Turkey’s political-administrative system, which is at odds with the international disaster community’s advocacy for decentralized and collaborative solutions for managing disasters. The

dissertation's findings suggest that investigating the enabling or constraining role of the political-administrative system is a fruitful path forward for both collaboration and decentralization research, especially when also including different types of actors in the analysis. For future research, empirical investigations are particularly needed, as large parts of the existing research on collaborative disaster management have made more theoretical than empirical contributions. Field-based case studies are also encouraged for future research into these intrinsically complex issues, perhaps particularly so when conducting research in less open systems.

By investigating cross-sectoral disaster management collaboration and how the nature and extent of such collaboration relate to performance, this dissertation inched us closer towards answering a central research question within both the network and collaboration literatures; namely that of whether collaboration matters, or more precisely, whether collaboration brings any added value or performs better when compared to separate organizations not engaging in collaboration. In the continued efforts to trace the link between disaster management collaboration processes and their outcomes, a comparative focus making use of natural experiments that in turn enable within-case comparisons is encouraged as it holds the potential to fine-tune our understanding of how collaborative processes can contribute to effective management of disasters.

Still, despite, or perhaps due to, the normative appeal of the collaboration concept, it is warranted to maintain a critical eye to it. Even though disaster management collaboration seemed to enable good disaster planning and response outcomes in most instances, this dissertation suggests that collaboration is no panacea that solves all the difficulties and complexities involved in preparing for, managing, and recovering from disasters. Essay I and II presented examples of NGOs that at times avoided collaboration with state authorities to avoid cooptation during disaster response. Refraining from collaboration meant that they could deliver aid to those in need in a faster and less biased manner.

This dissertation's investigation of disaster management collaboration between public and civil society actors and what they achieved contributed to the cross-sector collaboration literature and to the disaster literature that typically, and informatively, describes the roles of civil society actors during disasters. Only rarely are these actors investigated from a collaboration and/or performance perspective (Gazley 2013; Nolte & Boenigk 2011). Future research focusing on collaborative processes between state officials and civil society actors and what they achieve is therefore encouraged.

To push the frontiers of collaborative disaster management research (and collaboration research in general), we should further move away from seeing hierarchy and/or centralization as antithetical to collaboration and/or networks. Just as networks can be mandated, and thereby contain an element of hierarchy, so may collaborative governance structures also be mandated

and/or contain hierarchy. Collaboration does not presuppose flat or decentralized structures. Luckily, this recognition seems to have increased lately (Bryson et al. 2015). Yet, it begs the question of how much hierarchy or centralization collaborative structures can encompass before they should be defined as something else. This dissertation cannot exactly point to where this line should be drawn, but suggests that participating actors in different political-administrative systems probably would draw the line at slightly different places. The overarching definition of collaboration, “co-labour to achieve common goals working across boundaries in multi-sector and multi-actor relationships”, does not take us far in answering the question either, but we need to focus on the nature of the processes in these structures rather than on merely the structure. Leading collaborative governance researchers Emerson and Nabatchi (2015) say that the predominant mode in collaborative governance regimes or systems is one of cross-boundary collaboration between *autonomous* actors. Yet their typology of different types of collaborative governance systems makes it clear that actor autonomy will be constrained in externally directed systems (similar to mandated networks).

In the same manner, one can ask where to draw the line between collaboration and coordination. The literature on collaboration is not abundantly clear where the boundaries between collaboration, cooperation, and coordination are, and the concepts are often used uncritically or interchangeably. Even though there is some agreement that the three concepts reside on a scale of either organizational interdependence (Lemyre & Sullivan 2013), organizational sharing (Bryson & Crosby 2008), or relational connections (Mandell & Keast 2008), opinions vary on which concept entails the most of the respective commodity. Bryson and Crosby (2008) state that the least organizational sharing occurs during cooperation, where only good intention and information are shared. Yet, Lemyre and Sullivan (2013) claim that coordination harbors the least organizational interdependence where decisions are taken within organizational silos. This thesis did not consider merely being part of the same network or situations where each partaking organization makes decisions independently to constitute collaboration. Rather, joint planning, activities, and decision-making were considered to qualify as collaboration. This collaboration may take place between sectors (e.g., government and civil society) or within sectors. At the same time, given the nature of the issue at hand, disaster managing state authorities retain the formal authority to make the final call should there be disagreements. This was also the case in the crisis coordination centers where interviewees described the decision-making process as non-hierarchical where decisions often were taken jointly even though the governor had the final word. AFAD (the collaborative disaster management network’s lead organization) was meant to have a coordinating mandate but, for now at least, it has an implementing mandate, which means that it takes part in joint operative and strategic activities alongside other actors, which supersedes coordination.

Throughout the writing of this dissertation, I placed a premium on collecting data on site and on conducting interviews with as many types of actors inhabiting the disaster management system as possible. This approach proved to be far from straightforward as professional secrecy reigns in the Turkish administrative system (Kapucu & Palabıyık 2008) and as “almost every kind of information is treated as confidential” (Timothy & Tosun 2001, p. 352). The approach, however, enabled a contribution to the decentralization literature that is largely void of the perspectives of the actors being affected by decentralization (deVries 2000). The analysis of the collected interview material also enhanced our understanding not only of how the centralized political-administrative system impacted the collaboration between the actors in the Turkish disaster management system, but also of how the disaster itself affected this collaboration. On similar grounds, a contribution was also made to the decentralization literature as the interview material helped us better understand how, again, both the disaster itself but also the political-administrative system undermined decentralization processes by enabling mechanisms that upheld the centralized status quo.

The findings of this dissertation moreover suggest that future collaboration and decentralization research should pay proper attention to the attributes of the task at hand as the lessons from one policy area may not be transferable to others. Existing cross-sector collaboration and collaborative governance frameworks do not sufficiently address the fact that collaboration and its constituent parts, and the relation between these parts, may differ depending on the nature of the issue at hand (Bryson et al. 2015; Emerson & Nabatchi 2015; Span et al. 2012). Together, essay I and II in this dissertation made a contribution to these literatures by indicating that disasters’ attributes can change the relative importance, validity, and applicability of previously identified enabling conditions for collaboration. Similarly, essay III contributed to the international disaster policy community and the decentralization literature by illustrating how the attributes of disasters and the processes disasters give rise to may amplify the centralizing logic already present in the political-administrative system and thereby challenge decentralization.

Moving closer to the end of this thesis, it should be mentioned that the local actors involved in collaboration included in this thesis were located in merely one region of Turkey and at that, a historically and continuously tense region, which arguably makes it one of the most vexing regions for collaboration (and also decentralization). Nonetheless, positive examples of collaborative disaster management were found, and this makes it reasonable to assume that such collaboration could occur also in other parts of the country.

Lastly, a quote from a Turkish scholar exploring the prospects of implementing a Western-style democracy in the Turkish context: “Since political culture is harder to change in the short run, it makes more sense to consider fine-tuning the model of democracy, as well as the practice and style of

governance” (Kalaycıoğlu 2012, p. 179). Similarly, this dissertation concludes that since the political-administrative system is harder to change in the short run, it makes more sense to consider fine-tuning the model of disaster governance, as well as the practice and style of collaborative disaster management.

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