STUDYING UP REPRESENTATIONS OF DISASTERS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

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INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND PUBLICATION STATEMENTS

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is their own, except where work which has formed part of jointly authored publications has been included. The contribution of the candidate and the other authors to this work has been explicitly indicated below. The candidate confirms that appropriate credit has been given within the thesis where reference has been made to the work of others.

Chapters three, four and five of this thesis comprise publications. Chapters four and five are joint publications. Authors are listed in order of contribution:

Chapter Three: Mosurska, A., 2022. The reflective research diary: a tool for more ethical and engaged disaster research. *Disaster Prevention and Management: An International Journal*, *31*(1), pp.51-59.

    All work for this chapter was conducted by AM.

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    Project development by AM, SS and JF. Data collection by AM. Tables and first draft produced by AM. Subsequent drafts by AM, ACG and SS. All authors edited and approved the manuscript.

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The candidate is the lead author of all the above articles. They designed the research/conceptual approach and methodologies, and undertook the data collection and analysis. The articles were co-authored with supervisors and other researchers within the academic community; their contributions to each article are listed individually within each chapter.

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Maton to be identified as Author of this work has been asserted in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Rationale for thesis by alternative format

This thesis is submitted in the alternative publication-based format for the following reasons:

1. In this thesis, I have applied a range of methods to study disasters in Indigenous contexts. Although they complement each other, these separate methods (autoethnography, discourse analysis and narrative analysis) necessitate individual articles, which allow for an in-depth discussion of each methodology and approach. In chapter 6, I then bring these separate methodologies (and insights they have produced) together.

2. The separate stated objectives of this PhD lend themselves to the production of discrete articles that, although interrelated, can be targeted to address the specific research gaps identified.

3. As a rapidly emerging field of knowledge that is especially important and relevant to the period of time during which this PhD was undertaken (i.e., during the COVID-19 pandemic), it was important to ensure research findings could be published so that they could be utilised by other researchers and policymakers.

Thesis structure

This thesis is divided into six chapters. The introduction (Chapter 1) outlines the research rationale and academic justification for this work, concluding with the specific research aims and objectives. The literature review (Chapter 2) covers research gaps in the work of disaster anthropology, specifically in Indigenous contexts. It specifically focuses on colonialism in knowledge production, representations and studying up. This chapter concludes with the approach to this thesis, as well as a COVID-19 impact statement.

The three chapters following the literature review comprise the published works of this thesis.

Chapter 3 brings together emerging debates in disaster studies with long-standing literature around ethics and politics of research in Indigenous contexts. I take an autoethnographic approach, detailing the process of planning (and re-planning) proposed fieldwork in Utqiaġvik, Alaska, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ultimately, in this chapter I document the process of 'breaking up with fieldwork', negotiating politics, ethics, and British academia to try and find ways to continue research as an early career researcher. This chapter sets the scene for the approach for chapters four and five, which are both desk-based and study up two institutions: the expert news media and the international humanitarian community.

Chapter 4 is a critical discourse analysis of expert news media reports on disasters in Indigenous contexts. It reveals the ideologies behind how experts in the field of disaster risk reduction represent both disasters, Indigenous peoples and ultimately how disasters in these contexts should be governed. I find that the expert news media continues to frame disasters as natural, and Indigenous peoples as needing help from external actors, such as governments and/or humanitarians. A group of less dominant discourses do emerge that politicise disasters, recognise Indigenous peoples as knowledgeable about their circumstances, and call for political change (such as self-determination). The chapter concludes by calling for a closer analysis of care in disaster research, particularly as those who construct themselves as caring for/about Indigenous peoples oftentimes justified intervening in Indigenous contexts in this way. Yet, less dominant representations proposed alternative ways of caring, specifically drawing on care ethics.

Chapter 5 is a narrative analysis of communications of the international humanitarian community – a group of actors that are extremely visible and powerful in the humanitarian sphere. By examining the stories told by these actors about disasters in Indigenous contexts, I again find there to be subtle nods to how these actors believe disasters should be governed. By and large, these actors highlight the need for intervention, but in a depoliticised way. By this, I mean that the environment was constructed as being the cause of disaster. A minority of articles assigned culpability to governments and corporations, calling for the responsibilisation of these actors. Few articles, relative to paper two,

highlighted community-based approaches and self-determination. Interestingly, the very question of what is considered to be a disaster (and to whom) is drawn out here. I find that only certain processes are defined as disasters here, and that these are co-constructed between humanitarian organisations and their audiences.

Chapter 6 discusses the key findings and implications of these three manuscripts. I start by outlining the key finding and placing these in context of debates in disaster studies, particularly around how disasters should be governed. I highlight particularly the specific ways that neoliberalism is constructed as normal, by emphasising market-based approaches to DRR and uncritical decentralisation and localisation of DRR. I also draw out perspectives that are missing from earlier analysis, in particular Global South-based actors, intersectional approaches and Global East voices, all of which may contest neoliberalism. I suggest that one way to push back on this is to include these voices, and draw on concepts such as slow violence, necropolitics, and disaster colonialism. I conclude this section by outlining future research directions, alongside theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions to scholarship.

Chapter 7 concludes this thesis. I emphasise my key findings, before outlining three emerging questions around disasters in Indigenous contexts, pushing the field of disaster studies to more pluralistic and decolonial understandings.

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Abstract

STUDYING UP REPRESENTATIONS OF DISASTERS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Disasters – the combination of hazard and vulnerability – are complex, social problems. Yet, these complexities and nuances are often missed in representations of disasters, meaning that many representations of disasters omit political and social framings. Multiple actors are involved in disaster risk reduction (DRR), including powerful and visible sectors that engage with diverse peoples. Indigenous peoples, who have their own unique politics, are often neglected in DRR and misrepresented by powerful actors. Limited research has focused on how disasters in Indigenous contexts are represented. This is an important research area because Indigenous contexts reveal unique power dynamics that create disasters, but which have long been obfuscated from representations. In this PhD, I 'study up' three powerful and visible actors – academia, the news media and the international humanitarian community – and use a combination of autoethnography, discourse analysis and narrative analysis to reveal how these institutions shape knowledge and representations of disasters and their governance in Indigenous contexts. I find that within these institutions there are subtle ways of communicating how disasters should be governed in Indigenous contexts. Overall, hegemonic ideologies of neoliberalism are dominant, which depoliticise disasters (in particular, through masking colonialism), evade questions of Indigenous people's self-determination, and hinder ethical and engaged disaster research. I also find pockets of less dominant ideologies where alternatives to neoliberalism (such as Indigenous peoples self-determination and feminist care ethics) are proposed. I discuss these findings through an examination of how disasters are defined, by whom and what futures and histories are imagined and acknowledged as a result. I conclude dominant and hegemonic representations depoliticise disasters by emphasising their naturalness and upholding neoliberal forms of disaster governance. However, less dominant representations do seep through that show that disasters are rooted in colonialism. These representations centre power inequalities and propose greater Indigenous self-determination as a part of any DRR.

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Acronyms

DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
PhD	Doctorate of Philosophy
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
UN	United Nations
IK	Indigenous Knowledge
CANZUS	Canada, Australia, New Zealand, United States
UK	United Kingdom
ANWR	Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
ECR	Early Career Researcher
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
UKRI	United Kingdom Research and Innovation
EMO	Emergency Management Office
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
QSR	Qualitative Social Research
US	United States
StPCC	Shifting the Power Coalition
WITTT	Women I Tok Tok Tugeta
WWW	Woman Wetem Weta
USA	United States of America
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
EU	European Union
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontièrs
CFSI	Community and Family Services International
WFP	World Food Programme
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
CDKN	Climate and Development Knowledge Network
UNVMC	United Nations Verification Mission Colombia
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
MRG	Minority Rights Group
UNAIDS	United Nations Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
GPEI	Global Polio Eradication Initiative
WHO	World Health Organisation
CAP	Climate Adaptation Platform
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, Asexual plus

Chapter I

1.1 Introduction

Disasters – the combination of hazard and vulnerability – are complex social phenomena that require multiple perspectives to understand them and their impacts (Perry 2018; Quarantelli 1992). This includes scientific research aimed at understanding specific hazards (e.g., earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and droughts), as well as social, arts and humanities research to better understand social processes that contribute to disasters. Alternative worldviews – those that do not necessarily adhere to Western science (e.g., local knowledge, Indigenous knowledge, Traditional Ecological Knowledge) – should also be included and taken seriously to fully understand disasters, their causes, and the multitude of options for their management and governance (Balay-As et al., 2018; Lambert 2022; Wisner et al., 1977).

Representations of disasters and crises are increasingly commonplace (Andersen and Silva 2017), yet these representations are fairly uniform in that they rarely include alternative worldviews to understand them (McKinzie 2017; Orgad 2014). Instead, disasters are often framed as sudden, unpredictable events that require technical measures and expert knowledge to return to a state of 'normality' – a condition that in itself is decided by powerful actors, such as governments (Anderson et al. 2020). Such understandings are contested and critiqued as depoliticising in fields such as political ecology and disaster anthropology (Holmes et al. 2021; García-Acosta 2019b; 2019a; Oliver-Smith 2016; Oliver-Smith and Hoffman 1999; Pulwarty and Riebsame 1997; Sun and Faas 2018). Here, disasters are understood to be created through social processes that make some populations more vulnerable than others (e.g., colonisation, inequality, racism, amongst others). Oftentimes, such understandings of disaster are obfuscated in research (Chmutina and von Meding 2019) and the media (Moore and Lanthorn 2017; Mourão and Sturm 2018). Resultant action to address disasters therefore ignores these social processes, often perpetuating them (Ajibade 2022; Carey, French, and O'Brien 2012; Islam et al. 2014), whilst those who consume representations of disaster (e.g., students, policymakers, news media audiences, potential donors to humanitarian organisations) are only exposed to certain (dominant) ways of understanding disasters. So, what are alternative ways of understanding disasters (and their governance), how do we come to know these, and what happens when we embrace multiple (and perhaps conflicting) understandings together?

These questions are especially important in Indigenous contexts, where colonisation has dispossessed Indigenous peoples of their land, broken down and erased Indigenous understandings of the world (including disasters) and created significant vulnerability to disasters as a result (Bonilla 2020; Clark-

Ginsberg et al. 2021; Lambert 2022; Lambert and Mark-Shadbolt 2021; Lewis 2012). Yet, Indigenous peoples are also represented as being uniquely knowledgeable about and resilient to disasters, particularly climate change and those that are constructed as environmental in origin (Amo-Agyemang 2022; Wilkes et al. 2010). This is not without critique, as many Indigenous researchers decry the focus on environmental issues only when it comes to Indigenous peoples politics (Wilkes, et al. 2010). Ultimately, Indigenous peoples are not homogenous, and their experiences, beliefs and views cannot be essentialised or constructed into a uniform and clear-cut monolith. Thus, both disasters and Indigenous peoples are frequently (mis)represented in ways that mask political understandings of how disasters happen in Indigenous contexts.

Many actors are involved in dealing with disasters in Indigenous contexts, including humanitarians, media, researchers, and of course affected peoples themselves. These actors may influence how disasters and Indigenous peoples are represented in multiple ways. Researchers – and associated universities and funders – create and communicate what is (largely) considered to be legitimate knowledge, but they can also have negative impacts on communities through unethical, extractive and paternalistic research practices, as well as through misrepresenting peoples (Gaillard and Gomez 2015; Gaillard and Peek 2019; Smith 2012). The news media and humanitarian communications often represent disasters to broad audiences, defining what can be considered a disaster, what should be done to achieve disaster risk reduction (DRR), and whose voices are important to include. Whilst limited research has looked at elements of these questions (Barrios 2017; McKinnon 2017), none of these have specifically looked to Indigenous contexts. This omission is concerning because Indigenous Peoples experience disasters differently: they exist in spaces with particular and ongoing colonial histories that structure what a disaster is and how it manifests (Hilhorst et al. 2015). Without consideration or representation of Indigenous contexts, there is a gap around what disasters look like here, how these should be governed, and also whether Indigenous Peoples themselves are involved in representing and putting forth their knowledge around disasters in these representations. Lack of knowledge about this has the potential to hinder policy implementation, particularly those policies that call for decentralisation and localisation of DRR and humanitarian action (e.g., The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and The Grand Bargain, respectively).

Thus, in this PhD, I focus on how powerful institutions – the university, the news media, and international humanitarian communications – shape knowledge and representations of disasters and their governance in Indigenous contexts. This is important because most disaster research has focused on marginalised communities themselves, rather than 'studying up' the processes (often taken for granted) that create and perpetuate vulnerability (Marino and Faas 2020). Moreover, disasters are the outcome of unequal power dynamics, and so addressing these is an important part of DRR. In all these institutions, Indigenous peoples are often marginalised (Comberti, Thornton, and Korodimou 2016; Desportes 2019; McCallum, Waller, and Meadows 2012; Sahoo 2017; Walker et al. 2019).

Understanding the power dynamics and how this leads to marginalisation is a first step towards undoing these, and working towards decolonisation, for which there are calls for across these institutions (Aloudat and Khan 2022; Datta 2018; Fountaine et al. 2022). In this PhD, I take the anthropological approach of "studying up" (Faas and Marino 2020; Nader 1972). This means focusing on powerful actors – those that create the conditions for marginalisation – instead of Indigenous peoples and their communities. Adopting such an approach is valuable for several reasons. By focusing on powerful actors, studying up reveals how decisions are made and how hierarchies are maintained (Nader 1972) making visible power inequalities that may otherwise go unnoticed. In doing so, studying up is a way in which researchers can critique social inequalities (Faas and Marino 2020), and hold those powerful to account (as opposed to much prior research, which has overemphasised the community scale) (George et al., 2020). In taking such an approach, I question the taken-for-granted ways in which these institutions work. I do this by drawing on Indigenous researchers' critiques of these institutions and with consideration of the (diverse) worldviews that contribute to understanding disasters in Indigenous contexts.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The overall aim of this thesis is to evaluate how powerful institutions – the university, the news media, and international humanitarian communications – shape knowledge and representations of disasters and their governance in Indigenous contexts. This is important as a part of the agenda to 'research back' and 'study up' powerful institutions and cultures (Nader 1972; Marino and Faas 2020; Smith 2012). This is also especially important in the context of disasters, in which many actors are involved in disaster management and governance, yet the legitimacy of many of these actors is contested in Indigenous contexts (Siddiqi and Canuday 2018). I achieve this in this PhD by addressing the following research gaps and objectives (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1.: Research gaps identified in this thesis, alongside corresponding objectives, academic justifications and how this research addresses research gaps.

Research gap	Objective	Academic justification	How I fill this gap	Chapter
There is a wealth of research about researching with Indigenous peoples in countries such as Canada and Australia, but very little in a UK context. In addition to this, disaster research includes very particular ethical concerns, but little research has documented the process of negotiating these ethical concerns.	Evaluate how British universities facilitate and/or inhibit ethical and engaged research in Indigenous context during a disaster.	Recently there has been scrutiny around the ethics of conducting disaster research (Gaillard and Gomez 2015; Gaillard and Peek 2019). This is especially true in the context of research with Indigenous peoples, where previously harmful research practices have perpetuated colonialism. Although there is a growing body of research about these issues in large settler colonies (e.g., Canada and Australia), there is little research about these dynamics from a British perspective. This is important to understand if such research is to continue in British universities.	Through analysis of my research diary, I highlight how my university, funders, and the overall research culture in the UK inhibited ethical and engaged disaster research in an Indigenous context, as well as strategies individual researchers can take to push back against these structures.	3
There is limited research on disaster discourses of Indigenous peoples that have focused on the media. Where this research does exist, the focus tends to be on populist media. Analysis of the expert news media would help to elucidate how	Identify and analyse discourses in the expert news media about disasters and Indigenous peoples' roles within disasters.	Identifying how the expert news media construct disasters helps reveal the ideologies present amongst those who hold power within the DRR system. Indigenous peoples have been marginalised and misrepresented by media and other institutions, with very real negative outcomes for them and their communities (Lucchesi 2020). There is limited academic research on disaster discourses of	Through conducting a critical discourse analysis of the expert news media, I reveal the ideologies around disasters in Indigenous contexts, particularly around different views about governance.	4

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those who shape DRR view disasters in Indigenous contexts.		Indigenous peoples that have focused on the media, so this objective aims to fill this gap.		
There is limited research about how Indigenous peoples and disasters are represented in humanitarian communications, despite Indigenous peoples increasingly being the focus of humanitarian interventions.	Identify and analyse narratives in the international humanitarian community about disasters, crises and Indigeneity	When powerful and visible actors (such as the international humanitarian community) tell stories, their interpretations, meanings and values are communicated to vast audiences. Increasingly, Indigenous peoples are the focus of humanitarian communications, although humanitarian action has previously perpetuated colonialism in these contexts (Ristroph 2019; Saini 2018). Despite drives to ensure cultural appropriateness in these contexts (Yumagulova *et al.*, 2020), little is known about whether this filters into representations in humanitarian communications. Yet, this is important to understand because humanitarian communications are highly visible and communicate meaning across contexts.	Through conducting a narrative analysis, the narratives that the humanitarian community uses to communicate meaning about what is a disaster and/or crisis, and how they should be governed in Indigenous contexts is revealed.	5

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Disasters in Indigenous contexts: contested processes in contested spaces

In this chapter, I outline pertinent literature and research gaps relevant to this thesis. I begin by outlining a social constructive approach to disasters – stemming from the fields of political ecology and disaster anthropology – which forms the bedrock of this work. Following this, I describe the humanitarian community and its role in disaster risk reduction (DRR), before giving an overview of Indigeneity in the context of disasters and humanitarian action. I then bring these topics together through an overview of colonialism in knowledge production, and the ramifications this has had in these areas. I conclude this chapter by detailing the approach and story of this research, which includes an exploration of my positionality – an important element of any cross-cultural and qualitative research (Ali 2015; Mason-Bish 2019; Mukherjee 2017) – alongside an overview of why representations matter. A COVID-19 impact statement, which highlights how this research was affected by the pandemic, is included here too, alongside clarifications of some key terms, owing to the interdisciplinary nature of this research.

For clarity, the gaps that I specifically draw out are as follows:

- There is a wealth of research around how disasters are understood and represented in the news media broadly, but little research about how expert news media and the humanitarian community represent disasters (sections 2.1, 2.2).
- There is limited research around how disasters in Indigenous contexts are represented, despite there being unique processes and worldviews that structure disasters here (sections 2.2, 2.3).
- There is limited research around how Indigenous peoples in disasters are represented, despite them increasingly being the focus of humanitarian communications (section 2.3).
- There is a lack of research that adopts the approach of 'studying up' in academic settings, and particularly in research that is conducted within British institutions and is focused on Indigenous peoples (section 2.5).

2.1. Disasters: a social constructivist approach

Broadly, disasters are the interaction between hazards (e.g., volcanic eruption, infectious diseases, drought) and vulnerability (e.g., socioeconomic status, disability, poor risk perception) that interact to create negative consequences. For example, the interaction between storm surges in Shishmaref, Alaska (USA), and decisions to scale back investment in infrastructure creates a disaster as peoples' homes and utilities are damaged by waves and erosion, thus creating a disaster (Maldonado et al. 2014).

There exist two main paradigms within disaster studies[1]. The dominant hazard paradigm contends that disasters are natural, unpredictable events that require certain measures to return to normalcy (Hewitt 1983). Such thinking is the product of the Enlightenment era and is characterised by rationality, positivism, and separation of people from nature (Williams 2008). The Enlightenment period saw staggering changes in how societies globally function, and was philosophised to lead to emancipation through achieving liberty, progress, equality, dignity and reason for all of humankind (Clement 2019; Saffari 2016). However, it has been harmful and limiting, for example, by externalising the 'natural', and thereby rendering 'natural' disasters as inevitable, with little to be done politically to address them (Kelman 2020; Welsh 2014). Such understandings have filtered into public understandings: news media in high income countries represents stories in the Global South as significant and sudden events, rather than highlighting how these are processes (Imison 2014). The Haiti earthquake is a good example: news reports here were ahistorical and did not highlight the political root causes of the disaster, preferring to focus on the earthquake itself, racialised caricatures, and (apolitical and ahistorical) displays of poverty (Lundy 2011; Pyles and Svistova 2015). This extends beyond disaster research, and has been critiqued in humanitarian action, policing, housing, amongst others areas (Williams 2008). With recent events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, some attention has been directed towards the political roots of disaster, although rarely do these focus on deep history, instead looking towards present-day inequality to explain why disasters happen (Redbird et al., 2022). This obfuscates how and why such marginalisation exists (Ribot 2014). Although this process has been documented in the populist news media (Bainbridge and Galloway 2010; Durham 2018; McKinnon et al., 2017), limited research has addressed whether this is the case in the specialist and expert media (including humanitarian communications).

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[1] I recognise here that there do exist additional paradigms within disaster studies, such as adaptation and resilience, which are mentioned at various points throughout this thesis. However, the hazard and vulnerability paradigms are those that have received the most research attention and have been fundamental to structuring understandings of disasters in Indigenous contexts (Cutter 2010).

Conversely, research conducted since the 1970s has stipulated that disasters are the product of and embedded within social, political, economic and cultural structures, such as inequality and marginalisation, at global and local scales (Lewis 1976; O'Keefe, Westgate, and Wisner 1976; Oliver-Smith and Hoffman 1999). This paradigm, the vulnerability paradigm, encourages addressing unequal power dynamics to prevent disasters. By addressing vulnerability, hazards are theorised to not lead to disasters. Here, disasters are viewed as political, meaning that dealing with disasters is political too. For example, the role of inequality has been especially important in understanding disasters (Smiley et al. 2022; Tierney 2007). In particular, the impacts of Hurricane Katrina spurred research on the racialised aspects of disasters (Bolin 2007; Smiley et al. 2022), for example in how the media reified racialised stereotypes in reporting, which influenced response as those most impacted were framed as criminals, leading to an authoritarian disaster response and recovery (McKinzie 2017; Sonnett et al. 2015). More recently, reporting around COVID-19 has had a similar impact: anti-Asian rhetoric proliferated in many contexts (Yang et al., 2022), whilst Islamophobic, antisemitic and anti-Black sentiment was evident across some media in the UK (Shahid and Dogra 2022; Vieten 2020). Because of these political elements of disaster (which are often obfuscated by those in power), the 'no natural disasters' discourse has been popularised by academics and practitioners to try to raise awareness of the mass depoliticisation of disasters (Belser 2015; Cretney 2019; Desportes 2020; 2020; Desportes and Moyo-Nyoni 2022; Siddiqi 2018). Despite the ubiquity of the vulnerability paradigm (and aligned approaches), the hazard paradigm remains dominant (Blaikie et al. 2014), which leads to technoscientific approaches to managing disaster risk, whilst dismissing the perspectives of marginalised peoples (Barrios 2017).

More recently, anthropological approaches to disasters have blurred the Enlightenment era nature/culture binary to show that people are a part of the environment, engendering respect for the agency and power of non-human nature (Williams 2008). This is especially pertinent when considering disasters in non-Western cultures that have different worldviews and cosmologies. For example, Faas (2022) questions the appropriateness of the "no natural disasters" discourse to Indigenous cosmologies in Ecuador, which do not see a distinction between humans and environment. Thus, although the vulnerability paradigm avoids depoliticising disasters and sheds light on unequal power structures, it is important not to quash other understandings, particularly of those who live with disasters and whose understandings have been marginalised historically. The degree to which alternative worldviews filter into the expert and specialist disaster/humanitarian media is unknown, but important to understand the complexities of disasters and their options for governance.

There exists an orthodoxy in disaster studies wherein the validity of social constructivist approaches is questioned, despite the necessity of diverse perspectives to tackle complex problems like disasters (Pelling et al. 2020; Williams 2008). Hewitt (2012: 85) notes that "it is widely assumed that disaster-related work is, or should be, simply driven by the 'sovereign facts': as close as possible to an exact

mirror of environmental and social realities", whilst Blaikie et al. (2014: 19) argue that "strong social constructivist approaches... do not lead, in any direct way, to an improvement in practice—either in disaster prevention or in post-disaster management", indicating a preference for a more positivist approach. However, vulnerability to hazards are social processes (Lavell and Maskrey 2014; Arora 2022; Hewitt 1983) so disasters are a social phenomena (Chipangura, et al. 2016; Quarantelli 1998). Moreover, they are also socially constructed: it is difficult to place boundaries around a disaster and a non-disaster, as 'disaster' is a label that is created to signify a departure from what is 'normal' (Ahmad 2018; Hilhorst 2018). What constitutes a disaster, emergency, crisis, and even 'normality' is contested then (Anderson et al. 2020). The role of the media is important here as it represents and defines public opinion about disasters (Barnes et al. 2008), and it is powerful in that it dictates what people view as a disaster by focusing on some situations and not others (Dynes, 1998). As such, I embrace a constructivist approach to disaster studies. It is important, however, not to reify the social as a uniformly acting entity (Steinberg 2006), but rather to consider the roles of class, capitalism, the state, race and coloniality (amongst others), which means examining how disparities in power (e.g., hierarchies, structures and inequalities) shape disasters and their management (Huber et al. 2017).

Although multiple perspectives are required to understand disasters and how they can be governed (Balay-As et al., 2018; Lambert 2022; Wisner et al., 1977), little research has looked at how expert and specialist media (e.g., the expert news media and international humanitarian communications) represent disasters. It is important to know how disasters are represented in these spheres (including whose knowledge is included and what governance solutions are proposed as a result) because these spheres have tangible impacts and influence over DRR.

2.2. Humanitarian action as a branch of disaster risk reduction

DRR involves various actors, such as the State, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the private sector, as well as local people who are affected by disaster. The humanitarian sector is one that is often involved in DRR, and links it with longer term international development (Sloman and Margaretha 2018). In this section, I discuss the relationship between DRR and humanitarian action, before outlining the importance of how this set of actors use representations of peoples and disasters.

The relationship between humanitarianism and disaster research is not clearcut. Humanitarianism as a subject evolved from moral philosophy and ethics, whilst disaster research emerged from disciplines such as environmental sciences, anthropology and political sciences, amongst others (Barnett 2011; Hewitt 1983). Both broadly deal with the same topics: DRR, climate change adaptation, delivery of aid, peacebuilding, community-driven responses, humanitarian governance, amongst many others (Hilhorst 2018). Alongside this, both DRR and humanitarian action have shifted away from immediate disaster response, towards integrating initiatives with longer term development plans (known as resilience humanitarianism or the new humanitarianism within the humanitarian sphere) (Hilhorst 2018). It is also important to distinguish humanitarianism from humanitarian action. Humanitarianism is an ethos, a cluster of sentiments and a moral imperative to intervene in order to 'do good' and improve the human condition (Ticktin 2014). Humanitarian action is a concrete human activity, as well as an idea rooted in relationships between people (Otegui 2021). For the purposes of this research, it is humanitarian action that I am interested in, as it is through humanitarian action that actors contribute to DRR.

The diversity of actors involved in DRR and humanitarian action is often masked in representations of humanitarian response (Gómez 2021; Graham 2014). The international humanitarian community – a powerful group of normative and northern-led actors – is one of the most dominant and visible communities of response, often including United Nations (UN) agencies and various international NGOs (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2019). They are critiqued as unwilling to share power (Barnett and Walker 2015; Gómez 2021), as well as for driving the corporatisation and marketisation of aid (Andersen and Silva 2017; Chouliaraki 2013). This includes focusing on metrics and indicators, cost effectiveness, and operating firmly within the bounds of liberalism. Often the representations these agencies produce are in tension with local experiences, yet they often facilitate the top-down approaches to managing crisis locally (Lees et al. 2023).

Because it is so visible, through media and communications, it is an important actor in agenda setting internationally (Saffari 2016). This is important because representations are fundamental in humanitarian action: they shape how and why intervention happens and are leveraged by diverse

actors such as nation states, NGOs, celebrities, amongst others (Hasian 2016; Hutchins and Wilson 2010). With regards to disasters, this includes elements such as those outlined in Table 2.

Table 2.1: Examples of how disasters, their management and those involved have been represented in humanitarian communications, and the associated impacts of doing so.

Element	Explanation	Example
Framing of the problem (i.e., the disaster)	Over-representation of some elements of disaster (e.g., environmental drivers), whilst masking others (e.g., social and political drivers) can depoliticise disaster.	Reporting around the Ethiopian Famine (1983) emphasised the role of drought and resultant crop failure, but did not report on conflict, much of which intentionally targeted crop producers (Franks 2014).
Framing of the solutions (i.e., DRR)	How a problem is framed suggests what solutions are appropriate, closing off alternatives (Chipangura et al. 2017).	Framing disasters as environmental leads to policy responses that seek to control the environment. For example, in the context of wildfires, news media has framed the problem as being around lack of equipment for firefighting, leading to solutions focused on improving response rather than looking at other elements, such as land management (Crow et al. 2017).
Framing of impacted peoples	Impacted people can be framed with different level of 'deservingness' of aid, which can structure response and recovery (Barreto 2019). Impacted people may also be portrayed as 'distant sufferers' – people without agency who are dehumanised and infantilised (Ong 2014).	Reports following Hurricane Katrina framed affected people as looters and criminals, leading to a heavy-handed and authoritarian approach. Much of this reporting was premised on racist representations of Black people, revealing racist ideology within the US media space (Barnes et al. 2008; Davis and French 2008).

Humanitarian action by the international humanitarian community rests upon the ability to represent distant places and peoples– a powerful way through which these actors leverage power in the form of funds and public outcry (Norton 2011). In doing so, much of the Global South has been carefully curated through illusions and allusions advanced by humanitarian organisations and news media (Ademolu 2021). Here, suffering is a commodity within the humanitarian media space, in which peoples' sympathy is a scarce resource that humanitarian organisations compete for (Orgad and Seu

2014). Such representations are ways through which humanitarian organisations market themselves, their mission and imbue audiences with philanthropic agency (Ademolu 2021). In this way, the international humanitarian community is itself a culture steeped in its own traditions and which has its own language and norms (Ticktin 2014). Because these actors are so visible and powerful in agenda setting and influencing global publics' perceptions (Andersen and Silva 2017) it is important to interrogate these sectors. Yet little work has looked specifically at how Indigenous peoples have been represented in the humanitarian sphere.

2.3.   Indigeneity

In this PhD, I focus on the processes that render Indigenous peoples differentially vulnerable to disasters. It is important to note here that I am not researching Indigenous peoples *per se*, but rather how the case of Indigenous peoples reveals unequal power structures and taken-for-granted assumptions in DRR. I start this section by outlining my approach to Indigeneity, before outlining Indigenous peoples roles in DRR, and ending with representations of Indigeneity. As a non-Indigenous researcher, I do not seek to define who is or is not Indigenous, similar to Almeida and Kumalo (2018). As with the label 'disaster', I instead deem it an interesting point of analysis who is included in this definition. However, it is noteworthy that it is generally accepted that self-identification is the accepted legal practice for claiming Indigenous status (Corntassel 2003; UNDRIP 2007).

Despite international treaties and conventions that aim to guarantee the rights for ethnic, religious and cultural minorities, the status of Indigenous peoples globally varies (Howitt et al., 2012). Political manipulation can make the implementation of commitments problematic (International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2001), and across the globe, colonial violence against Indigenous peoples persists (Penados et al., 2022). Some of this violence may be overt, but oftentimes it is slow and hidden. Dominant development discourse focuses on improving livelihoods of citizens, yet Indigenous peoples are often excluded from these visions (Howitt *et al.*, 2012). For example, in attempts to mainstream DRR with development, Indigenous peoples and their interests are often framed as a source of the problem or irrelevant to concerns of, for instance, climate change, desertification, urbanisation and national development (Davis 2005; Lambert and Scott 2019). In doing so, Indigenous peoples, their priorities and concerns are excluded from the design and refinement of state response, including DRR, emergency management, and the myriad of factors that affect such efforts. As such, these projects replicate colonial patterns (Cameron 2012). Yet, the invisibility of Indigenous peoples in these discourses, and their marginalisation from instruments and institutions of power and policy mean that colonisation – a root cause of disasters in Indigenous contexts – is also rendered invisible (Howitt et al., 2012). Overall, despite growing acknowledgement of Indigenous peoples and their politics, colonial worldviews remain durable and pervasive within these spheres (Penados et al., 2022). These require unpacking to highlight their abnormality.

When humanitarians and disaster responders are unfamiliar with Indigenous worldviews, they may fundamentally change Indigenous communities based on outsider values (Calandra 2023; Saini 2018; Singh, Fischer-Kowalski, and Haas 2018; Rodriguez Castro 2021). Often, such engagements are frustrated by positivist, technical and managerial approaches to disaster that assume the universal relevance and appropriateness of dominant cultural values, responses and understandings, and that do not recognise the role of settler colonialism in the production of risk and vulnerability (Thomassin

et al., 2019; Howitt et al., 2012). Thus, DRR has been considered a form of colonialism in some Indigenous contexts (Ali et al. 2021; Pyles 2017; Sripaoraya 2017; Watson 2017). As a part of this Indigenous expertise and Knowledge is often not taken seriously (Thomassin et al., 2019), despite Indigenous Knowledge being valuable in DRR (Ali et al. 2021; Balay-As et al. 2018; Bwambale et al. 2023; Cuaton and Su 2020; Ratuva 2007). Much research has advocated for greater integration of Indigenous Knowledge in DRR, meaning there needs to be space for Indigenous peoples to bring their own worldviews to these practices (Lyons et al. 2020). Doing so ensures Indigenous Knowledge and culturally appropriate, Indigenous institutions are drawn upon in DRR (Yumagulova et al. 2021; Cuaton and Su 2020), which is important to ensure DRR is successful (Kontar et al. 2015; Marino 2012; Mercer et al. 2010; Ristroph 2019a; Ristroph 2019b).

Colonial violence – such as that perpetuated against Indigenous peoples – and oppositional intersectional and decolonial movements are uniquely mediated (Chakravartty et al. 2018), and there are calls for research to pay more attention to how racial and ethnic minorities are persistently marginalised in today's media landscape (Dávila and Rivero 2014; Said 2008). Representations of Indigenous peoples (or lack thereof), have focused on narratives and discourses about their inevitable disappearance, which has aided and abetted genocidal processes (Wakeham 2022). However, this landscape is disrupted by the emergence of Indigenous self-representations of themselves. For example, in response to anti-sealing campaigns across Canada, Inuit affected by the loss of livelihoods took to social media with the #sealfie campaign, in which they educated people about the importance of seals and sealing to their communities, building on a long history of Indigenous resistance (Rodgers and Scobie 2015). In doing so, Inuit pushed back against the ways non-Indigenous organisations had framed them and their cultural practices. In her famous essay, "Can the subaltern speak?" Spivak (1994) contends that there is no discursive space for those 'removed from lines of social mobility', such as Indigenous peoples. Yet, examples such as the #sealfie has provoked discussion and contention with this statement (Eimer 2020), with researchers and activists arguing that marginalised and oppressed groups merge into social movements to defend their worldviews and interests (Escobar, 2008).

Whilst some research has looked at representations of Indigenous peoples (including self-representation), little research has specifically looked at this within a disaster context. This is important to understand because there are very specific processes (namely, settler colonialism) that structure disasters in Indigenous contexts.

2.4. Colonialism and knowledge production

The themes covered thus far– disasters, humanitarian action and Indigeneity – can be brought together and contextualised through an examination of colonialism, with particular focus on knowledge production. Here, I describe the process of colonisation and how it has influenced these spheres. Although this section does not present a research gap *per se*, I do highlight a historic academic blind spot, which has led to IK and other knowledge forms to be marginalised in academia. It is this history that forms the bedrock to my research approach (section 2.5).

Prior to colonisation, Indigenous peoples had their own knowledge systems, complete with their own cosmologies that hold explanatory power. These are sophisticated knowledge systems – much like current Western science, they are vetted by community members (similar to peer review) and tested (e.g., through survival in harsh conditions) (Bwambale et al. 2023). Today, Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is often dismissed as anecdotal – something complementary to scientific knowledge that needs to be validated by it to be viewed as legitimate, reflected by the surge in research seeking to 'integrate' science and IK (Alessa et al. 2016; Bronen et al. 2020; Jones et al. 2015; Mercer et al. 2010). Following Indigenous and decolonial researchers (Akena 2012; Smith 2012), I push back against this. Like the scientific method, IK is evidence-based (based on observation) and tested (through the survival of Indigenous peoples in harsh landscapes, as well as through a vetting process within some communities) (Bwambale et al. 2023)). It is dynamic, modified in response to community change (Keane, et al., 2016). Yet, the inclusion of IK in mainstream institutions is conditional on its incorporation into onto-epistemological norms and values of liberal pluralism (Ahenakew 2016). That is, although there is increased recognition of the importance of IK, it continues to be presented through frames of Western epistemologies rather than on its own terms, often in ways that result in it being co-opted (Fernandez-Gimenez et al. 2006; Goloviznina 2022). Yet, there are limits to how IK can be comprehended from a Eurocentric point of view because there are tensions between these worldviews. For example, much IK places 'animals and plants in the active role as the teacher' (Marker 2004: 106), contrary to much Western research.

Through Enlightenment – an intellectual and philosophical movement that dominated Europe during the 1800s and 1900s – Europeans imposed their 'positional superiority' (often through invasion and colonisation) in the production and diffusion of knowledge, denigrating other knowledge types (Said 2016). Enlightenment philosophy embraced ideologies that justified colonisation and assimilation, in the name of scientific progress and 'developing' 'uncivilised' peoples. For example, colonisation was viewed as right and just as it brought primitive people into a superior civilisation (Dudgeon and Fielder 2006; Escobar 2011). Two key concepts facilitated this process: *Anima Nullius* (empty souls) and *Terra Nullius* (empty land). Through these concepts, Indigenous peoples were viewed as not

having souls (i.e., less than human) and thus Indigenous lands were not viewed as actually being inhabited (*Terra Nullius*). These two concepts were used together for the expropriation, enslavement, and elimination of Indigenous peoples (Santos 2015), as it was not viewed as evil to dispossess the 'barbaric Other' with an 'empty soul' (Penados et al., 2022) of land and resources. In this way, settler-colonisers extracted land and resources and viewed Indigenous peoples as obstacles in the way of colonisation. To solve this 'problem' settler colonialism is driven by a logic of elimination – a feature that continues to this day (Wolfe, 2006). These developments formalised the othering process, enshrining and institutionalising it through science, philosophy and Imperialism into 'regimes of truth' (Clement 2019). By claiming superiority of 'enlightened reason' philosophers created the conditions for the rejection of other ways of knowing (Clement 2019; Kovach 2021; Smith 2012). This extended well beyond research, and founded the bedrock of policy. It is important to remember that although the philosophies, logics and beliefs that drove and justified colonisation and settler colonialism predominantly originated in European Enlightenment, the manifestations, impacts and timings of these processes varied globally, and thus Indigenous experiences cannot be essentialised here.

An important part of this focused on representation – the process by which members of a culture use systems or signs to produce meanings (Hasian 2016). Representations of Indigenous 'others' have circulated in white Anglo discourse since the late 1700s (Moreton-Robinson 2004), and Western cultures came to 'know' Indigenous peoples from the gaze of many: diaries of explorers, photographs of philanthropists, testimony of white state officials, ethnographies of anthropologists, amongst others, but rarely (if ever) from Indigenous peoples themselves (Andreucci and Zografos 2022; Moreton-Robinson 2021). Oftentimes, when Indigenous peoples have been represented by non-Indigenous peoples they have been stereotyped. Stereotypes have included romanticisations as 'ecologically noble', as well framings as ruthless and violent warriors (Nadasdy 2005), obese and sickly drunks, childish, cunning and untrustworthy, lazy, amongst others (Moreton-Robinson 2004).

A number of theories have pushed back against such depictions. Feminist research – which emphasises the importance of lived experience, positionality, situatedness and lived experience (Haraway 1988) – pushes back against tenets of the Enlightenment era, including positivity and objectivism. Standpoint theory, for example, posits that women occupy a social location that affords us privileged access to social phenomena (Longino 1993). In line with this thinking, Indigenous and feminist researchers assert their way of knowing is connected to their positioning as subjects/knowers of inquiry who are socially situated and related to others (Moreton-Robinson 2013; Nakata 2007). They acknowledge that not all knowledge is chosen or actively acquired, but lived and felt (Million 2009; Moreton-Robinson 2004).

Said's (2016) Orientalism reveals how the West made sense of the 'Orient': in producing knowledge and constructing representations (which are signifiers of reality, but not objective reality itself) shows how implicitly Whiteness (an epistemology that provides a way of knowing and being that is predicated on the superiority of White people) was viewed as universal and the norm, ultimately an element that was pervasive yet taken-for-granted (Moreton-Robinson 2004; Said 2016). In response, the field of Whiteness studies aims to unpack Whiteness and treat it as abnormal in an effort to divest its power (Dyer 1997; Sharma and Sharma 2003). Similarly, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) discusses researching back.—that is, analysing and questioning the taken-for-granted objectivity of Western research. In a similar vein, Chakrabarty's (1992) essay *Provincializing Europe* challenges the construction of European centres as unique, privileged places of knowledge (Clement 2019). What both these theories do, amongst others (e.g., Santos 2016) is reframe expertise (they show how it is not the Global North but the Global South that are experts on their own communities) and de-normalise dominant cultures. Despite these shifts, Indigenous Knowledge remains viewed as largely illegitimate within academia, as it does not conform with pre-existing forms of inquiry (Hunt 2014). Scientific knowledge continues to claim universality which, combined with the persistent exclusion of Indigenous scholars from academia, constitutes epistemic violence (Hunt 2014; Louis 2007; Manathunga 2020; Santos 2015; Spivak 1985). With all these theories, it is important to consider that production and reproduction of representations of Indigenous Peoples moves beyond how Western powers represent Indigenous Peoples (and the ideologies that structure representations), and also include power inequalities and histories operating at regional and local scales (e.g., Bacaron 2010; Moreno and Oropesa 2012).

2.5.   Approach to (and story of) this research

In this section, I outline core elements of my approach to this research. I cover representations, narratives and discourses before outlining how this research evolved, with a specific focus on studying up in disaster research. I conclude by outlining some of the differences between common terms used in this research, and with a COVID-19 impact statement.

2.5.1.   Positionality

Distancing of the researcher from research is inappropriate in Indigenous contexts (Smith 1999), as who we are influences the research we do (Ali 2015; Caretta and Jokinen 2017; Chacko 2004; Haraway 1988; Louis and Barton 2002). Because of our situatedness, researchers are a part of the research process, and acknowledging this enhances the credibility of the research process (Keane et al., 2016; Barber and Haney 2016). As researchers, we should begin without our own stories to understand how we approach the stories of others (Carter et al. 2014). Therefore, before outlining my research approach, I expand on my positionality, in particular the parts that I feel are relevant to how I have approached and developed my research.

I am a white, university-educated woman residing in the UK, and of Polish, Irish and Welsh descent. I grew up between Oxford, UK, and Kraków, Poland. I draw here on Yang's (2017) concept of a produced colonialist: someone who desires against the assemblages that made them. By this I mean that have benefited from structures such as whiteness, but seek to undo and unpack these as far as possible. I live with my Mum and brother in Oxford, and spend a lot of time with my pets, particularly when working from home during COVID-19 (i.e., through the duration of most of this research), and found particular comfort in Donna Haraway's (2003) work on companion species (which soon led me to look to Indigenous ways of conceptualising the relationship between people and the environment). Complementing this, my dad was a practicing Buddhist and often would comfort me (when inevitably a baby bird I had found on the ground died) with Buddhist understandings of life and death. I completed my undergraduate studies in Cornwall, where I became very interested in identity. Cornwall, located in Southwest England, has its own nationalist and separatist movement, with its own language, that has seen a resurgence over the past decade or so (Willett and Tredinnick-Rowe 2016). I spend a lot of time thinking about how and why I came to be researching disasters in Indigenous contexts. Until recently, I felt it was something that I aimlessly walked into but, on reflection, I do not think that is the case: living in Cornwall and being introduced to non-Western ideas about life, death and the environment likely shaped my interests.

As a non-Indigenous white person, I can never fully comprehend Indigenous issues or issues around race and racism. However, Black scholars Tillman (2002) and Milner (2007) state that researchers do

not have to be from the same racial or cultural background to conduct research with, in, or about a community. Instead, they should be thoughtful, actively engaged and forthright regarding tensions that may surface when conducting such research. Researchers should possess or pursue deeper cultural knowledge about themselves and the community under study. Milner (2007) further advocates for the colouring of epistemologies. That is, the research community needs to be exposed to theories, perspectives, views, positions, and discourses that emerge from the experiences and points of views of people of colour. In other words, the research process should not be a colour-blind endeavour. As a part of this work, and particularly during the Black Lives Matter protests following the murder of George Floyd, I worked hard to challenge myself and unpack and unlearn any racist assumptions I may have. Integral to this process was working through Layla F. Saad's (2020) 'Me and White Supremacy'. I also tried to complement my learnings with action through voluntary roles at the University of Leeds. This included incorporating debates about the #sealfie in my teaching at the University of Leeds.

I found through this research process that I had to tread very carefully around subjects I could (and could not) relate and speak to. In 2018, just before I moved to Leeds to complete the Masters portion of this work (Mosurska and Ford 2020), my father died by suicide. As a part of this grieving process, I delved into the sociological work around suicide, reading Durkheim's (2002) work, for instance and also Stevenson's (2014) Foucauldian approach to suicide in Inuit Nunangat (the Canadian portion of Inuit land). At this point, I had already conducted one scoping trip to Utqiaġvik, Alaska, and had been told that epidemics of suicide were a disaster (see table 2.2). In this moment, I found it tempting to redefine my entire PhD to be about suicide. It took some time and introspection for me to realise that this was a terrible idea. At the time, I felt I had insider/laypersons knowledge about suicide. Although that is true to some extent, it took time and careful interrogation to understand that my experience, even with intergenerational trauma, was very different to that of suicide in Indigenous contexts, where entire communities carry intergenerational trauma, experience suicide regularly, and also have very different conceptualisations around life and death. Although this was not an area of research I pursued (for the best), I did remain open to the inclusion of suicide as a disaster.

It is important to note that this research was initially planned to be a community-based study about disasters in Utqiaġvik, Alaska – a place where I had previously worked (Garland et al. 2022; Mosurska and Ford 2020; Mosurska and Garland 2019) and had conducted scoping trips to check the framing of my research and better understand the local context. I sought for my approach to be aligned with participatory approaches as far as possible, knowing that this would be difficult given that I was not part of a wider research group working here. When the COVID-19 pandemic started (see section 7), I had to rapidly change my PhD, which was a difficult process (chapter 3). Ultimately, this PhD is completely different in its approach and methodology to the one I had planned to do. Rather than being community-based and using primary data, the focus of this work is global and desk-based.

Initially, I had reservations about this as I felt it important to include the voices of Indigenous peoples directly. However, these dissipated after I started to look into the value of studying up (see section 5.2), alongside the critiques of community-based work, in which communities are often romanticised and responsibilised for conditions beyond their control (Mosurska and Ford 2020; Titz et al., 2018). I also did not know how to start with doing a global study on Indigeneity, particularly as Indigenous peoples have long been essentialised in research and other spheres. Conducting a global study, I was well-aware that this was something I could unknowingly do. To address this, I broadened my reading significantly: initially, almost all my reading had been around the perspectives of Iñupiat, Arctic Indigenous peoples and CANZUS countries (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the USA). However, this is only a small proportion of Indigenous peoples. As such, I started to broaden my reading to include Indigenous peoples writing from beyond these contexts. Importantly, I sought sources that were not just academic. The result of this is that this research is foregrounded by diverse Indigenous perspectives from different global perspectives. Importantly, I have not tried to minimise where there is tension between different Indigenous perspectives, thus aiming to maintain nuance without essentialising. As far as possible in this research, I have tried to draw primarily on Indigenous peoples work.

Prior to starting this research, my understanding of disasters was that they included climate change (and as such I viewed climate change adaptation as a component of disaster risk reduction) (Mercer 2010; Kelman 2010a; Kelman et al. 2015), that they were not 'natural' but political owing to vulnerability (Hewitt 1983; Lewis 1999; O'Keefe et al. 1976; Blaikie et al. 2014), and that the disasters literature had generally moved away from seeking to categorise disasters neatly into boxes such as 'technological', 'environmental', 'health', and similar categories (Remes and Horowitz 2021). I approached this research, then, with an understanding that hazards only became disasters once they interacted with vulnerability, and as such what could be considered a disaster was fluid and context dependent. As I approached studying disasters in Indigenous contexts, I was wary of imposing my own ideas of what a disaster is, particularly as many Arctic communities are consistently framed as vulnerable to climate change specifically, often at the expense of other hazards and social processes that contribute to disasters (Marino 2012; Shearer 2012a; 2012b; Herrmann 2017). In line with qualitative approaches to research, it is neither possible nor desirable to separate the researcher from the research (Caretta 2015; Cumming-Potvin 2013; Haraway 1988). Instead, then, I remained open to alternative perspectives about disasters, and asked people what they considered to be a disaster during my scoping trips to Utqiaġvik, Alaska. Although I was not able to use these in my research directly, the responses I received prompted me to be more 'epistemologically free' in deciding what is and what is not a disaster. This is important because in chapters four and five I had an inclusion and exclusion criteria for which media to sample. Had I been stricter on my definitions of disaster, I may have excluded media that revealed particular ways of thinking through what a disaster is. The answers I received in Utqiaġvik are illustrated in table 3.

Table 2.2: Informal responses to questions around what was considered a disaster in Utqiaġvik. Source: author's research diary (July 2018 – pre-PhD).

Disaster	Context
Loss of whales	Whales are central to Iñupiaq culture. There are two hunting seasons in Northern Alaska: one in April and a later one in March. Changes in migration of whale or in whale population, alongside changes in sea ice formation impacts ability for whaling. This would have ramification for food security, especially given the high prices in the North Slope and the lack of access to healthy and nutritious store-bought food in the region. There would also be huge cultural ramifications, given that whaling seasons are important and include celebrations, sharing of food, and generally gathering as a community (Sakakibara 2017).
Suicide epidemics	Suicide epidemics are an ongoing phenomenon in Utqiaġvik and surrounding villages, and youth are often affected. Adults and Elders in particular worry about youth as a results (Wexler 2009).
Alcohol and drug use	Although Utqiaġvik is a damp community, bootlegging is a challenge. Alcohol and drug use and abuse is relatively high in Utqiaġvik, and much of this is rooted in histories of residential schooling and intergenerational trauma (Wexler 2006; Wexler et al. 2015)
Withdrawal of oil and gas industry	Alaska Native land rights were settled in such a way that meant that the regional and local native corporations could tax oil and gas exploration and drilling. This has been used to fund public services, making the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation the richest of all Native corporations created. This means that public services are dependent on the continuation of oil and gas in the region. Whilst I was in Utqiaġvik, the future of oil and gas in the region was especially uncertain, and people were extremely worried about how services would be funded.
Permafrost thaw	Permafrost thaw threatened infrastructure, such as the *utilidor* – an overground utilities corridor. It also meant that ice cellars, used to store frozen meats (especially whale) could not be used.
Pollution	Its remoteness meant that proper waste disposal in Utqiaġvik is important. There is a landfill site a little out of town where most waste goes. Pollution from industries, such as the extractive industry, has impacts on the health of many species.

With the exception of permafrost thaw, these were not answers I was expecting to receive, even where I was aware of some of these issues. Although I could not continue my research formally here, I felt that going into my desk-based alternative it was important to embrace the messiness of what a disaster is and not be too prescriptive. Instead, the phenomena that were included by the expert news media and international humanitarian community as disasters and/or humanitarian crises became an interesting point of analysis.

2.5.2.   Studying Up

As I shifted this research away from being participatory, I faced an ethical dilemma: how would I ensure that this work pushes back against unequal power structures if I could not include Indigenous perspectives directly? Although this is covered in Chapter 3, I outline here the approach that guided all parts of this research: Studying up.

First proposed by Laura Nader (1972), studying up refers to researching the culture of the powerful, rather than focusing on 'distant' and 'exotic' cultures and communities. This is important because historically research has tended to unduly focus on these contexts (George et al., 2020). Whilst these do provide some valuable insights, only focusing on this scale fails to fully communicate how power operates. Nader (1972) argues that studying up remedies this by encouraging us to question common sense assumptions, especially as they pertain to the culture of the powerful. This is important because "the quality of life and our lives themselves may depend upon the extent to which citizens understand those who shape attitudes and actually control institutional structures" (Nader 1972: 284). By studying up, then, researchers can contribute to how power and responsibility operate at home.

Across various disciplines (anthropology, sociology, political science, history, and many others), there has been a steadily rising focus on studying those with power and wealth, rather than those on the peripheries of Imperialism, capitalism and colonialism (Souleles 2018). Yet, within educational settings (such as universities), there has been a lack of studying up (Priyadharshini 2003). Focusing on educational settings (and research in particular), is important in Indigenous contexts as it aligns with Smith's (1999) call to 'research back' – that is, adopting a critical approach to the Western concept of research. Whilst all three papers in this PhD study up, Chapter 3 in particular focuses on this in the context of British universities to address this gap.

What does studying up look like in the context of disaster and humanitarian research? Marino and Faas (2020) suggest that turning focus away from those who are vulnerable and looking at the processes and institutions that create and perpetuate this vulnerability is important. Such an approach brings unequal power relations to the fore – integral to disaster sociology and anthropology – without burdening communities. This second point is important, given that many Indigenous peoples state

that they are over-researched, and have critiqued how extractive, paternalistic, and colonising research is (Ahenakew 2016; Bessarab and Ng'andu 2010; Louis 2007). Therefore, chapter 3-5 all seek to do this by analysing how three powerful institutions – British universities, the expert news media and international humanitarian communities – perpetuate (or push back against) unequal power dynamics in Indigenous contexts. To do this, it is important to understand the importance and power of representations, narratives and discourses.

2.5.3.   Representations, narratives and discourses

Representation refers to the process by which members of a culture (e.g., researchers, the news media and the international humanitarian community) use systems and/or signals to produce meanings (Hasian 2016). Narratives and discourses play a fundamental role in representations – they are the ways through which representations are created (Ryan 2007). Representations are moulded by dominant cultural values and norms, which can be revealed through analysis of discourses and narratives (Cocq and Ljuslinder 2020; Hartley 2012). Where media producers cannot relate to the subjects of their stories, or are ignorant to their realities, this is reflected in stories (McKinzie 2017). Discourses are particular ways of representing aspects of social life, and control over discourse is a powerful mechanism for sustaining power (Fairclough 2013). Narratives are a discourse that conveys a story (Ryan 2007). Both narratives and discourses are powerful tools for representing peoples, places and events and for communicating meaning. Actors, such as news media organisations. In Table 2.3, I expand on some key narratives and discourses that are helpful in contextualising disasters, crises and Indigeneity.

Table 2.3: A (non-exhaustive) selection of narratives and discourses pertinent to understanding disasters, humanitarianism and Indigeneity. Most of these are dominant and hegemonic.

Discourse/Narrative	Explanation	Impact
Scientific discourse in DRR	A dominant discourse that focuses on scientific understandings of hazards and promotes technocratic means of managing the environment.	Leads to either the silencing of disaster-affected peoples (e.g., ignoring their perspectives in favour of 'expert' opinion) or their misrepresentation (Kelman 2010; Lambert and Scott 2019; Tusasiirwe et al. 2022).
Stereotypes such as: ecologically noble 'Indians', primitive and lazy Indigenous peoples, rebellious and savage Indigenous peoples	Indigenous peoples are often romanticised as being 'ecologically noble'. They are used to highlight the urgency of environmental degradation, without consideration of their politics (Roosvall and Tegelberg 2013; 2015; Willow 2009). More overtly negative stereotypes also exist that are imbued with racism.	Romanticising Indigenous peoples' relationship to the environment depoliticise environmental degradation, masking political causes such as capitalism (Herrmann 2017). Overtly negative stereotypes (e.g., rebellious or lazy and primitive) undermine Indigenous peoples perspectives (Wambrauw 2017).
Deficit discourse	A discourse that focuses on the problems of a group of people (e.g., Indigenous peoples) (Bamblett 2011). Capacity building is an example of deficit discourse, which describes agentive infrastructure that gets built from the outside. It is a pervasive and accepted discourse (Hilhorst 2018).	Used to frame people in terms of what they are missing, rather than recognising their specific strengths, reinforcing existing power relations (Hilhorst 2018; Sripaoraya 2017)
Post-girl-power	A representation of 'third world' women and girls as 'self-made', 'can-do' neoliberal subjects, which masks structural forms of oppression (particularly those perpetuated by neoliberalism) (de Finney 2015).	Minimises and masks structures of oppression that impact 'third world' women and girls (Abraham 2015; de Finney 2015).

Concepts and vocabularies used to represent objects and processes are socially constructed by people and vary between cultures (Andharia 2020). In line with studying up, I focus my attention in this thesis on the cultures of British higher education (Chapter 3), the expert news media (Chapter 4), and the international humanitarian community (Chapter 5). By treating these as specific cultures, I question taken-for-granted assumptions within these (Barnett 2013).

2.6.2. A note on terminology

This thesis is interdisciplinary and draws on various topics, and as such includes some discipline-specific language. Whilst I have tried to remain clear in the language used here, I clarify some of the commonly used terminology here. I begin by looking at postcolonialism and decolonisation, before outlining different strategic essentialisations of the world (e.g., Global South) that are also drawn on in this thesis.

Postcolonialism as a theory emerged in response to global problems such as increasing economic inequalities, resource scarcity, climate change and US-led wars (Carrigan 2015). It is not a single, unified theory but rather a family of theories (Racine and Perron 2012) that focuses on culture within its broader historical and social context and seeks to 'unearth, disrupt, and transform existing ideologies' that are dominant, such as whiteness (Fine 1994: 17). Generally, postcolonial approaches interrogate the colonial past to reject sweeping, essentialising and exclusionary narratives in favour of pluralistic and decentralised viewpoints (Browne et al. 2005). In doing so, postcolonial research reveals how colonial norms at perpetuated in the present day (Coombes et al. 2013). Postcolonial research contributes to disaster research through an analysis of unequal power relations that are the result of Imperialim and colonisation. However, postcoloniality has been critiqued for locating all the world in the traumatic but ultimately progressive trajectory of the West (Nash 2002; Sidaway 2000), as well as for suggesting that settler colonialism is firmly in the past (Radcliffe 2018).

As with postcolonialism, decolonialisation refers to a range of positions that argue that colonial power structures remain present, despite formal independence being achieved in former colonial (Andreotti et al. 2015). Fanon (2001) asserts decolonisation is a historical process that results in changes to the social order. Importantly, former colonial powers also fall within the bounds of decolonisation, as these powers need to critically examine their own cultural beliefs, norms and practices, including how these cultures have been structures by inequalities between classes, genders, sexualities and other forms of identity (Manathunga 2020). How decolonisation can be achieved depends on how colonisation itself manifests. In Indigenous context, Tuck and Yang (2012) emphasise that decolonisation cannot be separated from the Land, and decolonisation must at its heart involve returning Land to Indigenous peoples.

The Global South, Global North, Global East, and The West are all politically constructed concepts that are referred to in this research. All of these terms are problematic and associated with distinct and often overlapping ontologies and temporalities. Inevitably all these terms obscure heterogeneity (An 2019; Müller 2020; Solioz and Stubbs 2012). Following Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Fiori (2020), I use these terms conceptually without presenting them as fixed unities. Where possible, I try to avoid using these terms in favour of being specific. However, following others, they are useful forms of strategic essentialism and epistemological projects that are conducive to some form of systemic analysis (Müller, 2017; Spivak, 1988).

Defining the Global South is not an easy task, and geographically it has often been used to refer to Africa, Asia and Latin America – regions that share histories of being colonised (Yamin Vázquez 2020). The Brandt line, alongside indicators such as income level have been used too, but these are not theoretically driven and thus are arbitrary ways of delineating groups (Ponce 2016). Research, and in particular fieldwork, has constructed the Global South as a distanciated object of study, something that researchers from the Global South contest (Bhakta et al. 2015; Ouma and Dimaras 2013). Instead, theorists from the Global South highlight the Global South as a space which shows the unselfishness of countries, and alternative to futures to those structural by neoliberalism, capitalism and colonialism (Mataruse 2022).

Across much research, the Global North is often framed more positively than (and in opposition to) the Global South: it is generally viewed to be richer, with 'better' governance, and few health concerns (Lee-Koo 2011; Müller 2020), although exceptions do exist (e.g., Öniş 2015; Mataruse 2022). However, some do point to critiques of the Global North, particularly in terms of research. For example, knowledge produced here portrays itself to be universally-relevant (in contrast to research from the Global South, which is often viewed to be specific), even though it is not (Baber 2003; Collyer 2018; Cox and Webb 2015; Parves Rana 2009; Vazquez 2012). Other research critiques how readily actors from the Global North identify and intervene in 'problems' in the Global South (particularly humanitarian crises), whilst ignoring and masking that the very same problems exist in the Global North too (Lee-Koo 2011). In this way, the Global North represents the Global South as poverty-stricken and in need of help (Ademolu 2021). Overall, representations by the Global North of the Global South tend to highlight irreconcilable differences between the two, framing the Global North as the Norm and the Global South as the 'ethnic other' (Lee-Koo 2011: 732).

East/West conflicts have generally been replaced by North/South tensions around issues such as power of the UN, international NGOs, and international finance institutions, amongst others (Sheppard and Nagar 2004). Nevertheless, I outline current usage of the terms 'The West' and the 'Global East'. The West is generally used in reference to the US (Sheppard and Nagar 2004), particularly in terms of critiquing how the West has exacerbated inequalities and resources scarcity,

alongside the rise in US-led led wars (Carrigan 2015). It is often viewed to be synonymous with capitalist expansion (and in opposition to Soviet socialism) (Andreotti 2018; Bockman 2007).

The definition of the so-called Global East is contested, but it broadly refers to former Soviet Union countries. Indigenous peoples do reside in these places, and DRR and humanitarian action take place within the region, including from UN bodies, the EU and USAID, amongst others. Beyond this, Global East states and non-governmental organisations do undertake humanitarian action beyond the Global East (Carmody and Owusu 2007). Relative to the 'Global North' and 'Global South', the 'Global East' has been conceptualised to be stuck in an in-between space, spurring transitology literature that in seeking to grasp the monumentous shifts towards democracy and market economies has constantly framed the 'problems' of the region in a way that creates an image of a region as perpetually 'stuck in transition towards an elusive modernity' (Müller 2020: 4). Similar to the Global South, certain narratives and discourses have been used to describe and undermine the Global East. In particular, the label 'post-socialist' has been critiqued as orientalising, as it is a concept through which Western anthropological research has constructed post-communist Europe (Cervinkova 2012).

2.7.   COVID-19 impact statement

My initial research plan was to conduct community-based participatory research in Utqiaġvik, Alaska, a place that I had research experience in (Mosurska 2021; Mosurska and Ford 2020; Mosurska and Garland 2019). Prior to commencing my PhD, I dedicated a lot of time to framing my research appropriately and in ways that would be useful for people in Utqiaġvik. For example, I considered looking into oil and gas exploration and extraction in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). This is a contentious issue, and in much global discourse around Indigenous peoples they are framed as romanticised and against the development of oil and gas (Shadian 2013).

Ultimately, through my local connections and time spent in the community, I felt I had developed a strong sense of what I could and could not do. I was still tailoring my project when the COVID-19 pandemic started. With this, my plans quickly changed. I looked into alternative approaches to research to replace my fieldwork component but, as I had selected an Indigenous community, I knew online methods were unlikely to be appropriate. I also knew that taking on any form of netnography would be inappropriate for me to carry out as a non-Indigenous researcher (Carlson and Frazer 2021). Additionally, I was hesitant to choose a different community, as I had spent so much time building my own relationships with people in Utqiaġvik, and I felt that researching with a different community would undoubtedly be rushed, tokenistic and extractive without the genuine relationships and trust already in place. As much as I wanted my research to be academically rigorous, I was extremely concerned with the ethics and politics of my work. This included not placing unnecessary burden or risk on Indigenous communities, as well as contesting powerful institutions that create and perpetuate inequality. Thus, I started the journey of trying to negotiate my methods, values, and institutional requirements during a period of uncertainty. This was when I read Marino and Faas (2020) who very succinctly outlined something that I had been already shifting towards: studying up in disaster research.

It was around this time that I listened to Elizabeth Marino and Joyce Rivera Gonzalez speak to these issues at the Society for Applied Anthropology. For the first time, I heard my convoluted thoughts about researching during a pandemic moulded into an academic argument of a process of 'breaking up with fieldwork' and a discussion on the ethics of taking a step back from research. Taking a step back did not mean abandoning research, but rather understanding that there were more important and immediate things happening in the world. It is my PhD that needs to be adapted to the world, not the other way round. Confident that I now had my academic arguments in line for moving away from fieldwork, I decided to press on with my research. In order to not silence Indigenous peoples in my research, I have been careful to read and cite Indigenous conceptualisations of the topics I was researching, and be clear about what I am researching (i.e., not Indigenous peoples but rather disaster and humanitarian governance by powerful actors).

2.8.   References

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The Reflective Research Diary: A Tool for More Ethical and Engaged Disaster Research

Abstract

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to highlight how keeping a reflective research journal can help disaster researchers to work in a more ethical and engaged way.

Design/methodology/approach

The author analyses the reflective research diary to illustrate how keeping it has helped the author, a white, non-Indigenous researcher, navigate British academia whilst trying to plan a collaborative project with Indigenous peoples during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Findings

The author draws out some of the ways that academic institutions can undermine ethical research practice through opaque structures and by incentivising pressuring early-career researchers (ECRs) to conduct fieldwork in dangerous times. The author demonstrates ways peers and the author have tried to push against these structures, noting that this is not always possible and that their efforts are always limited without institutional support or change.

Originality/value

Many ECRs and PhD students have written reflective accounts about the ethical challenges they have faced during fieldwork. In this article, the author adds to this by building on literature in disaster studies and positing how ethical and engaged research can be conducted within British (colonial) institutions.

3.1. Introduction

Who we are impacts the research we do. That is, knowledge is partial, situated and political (Haraway, 1988). Awareness of the standpoint from which we conduct research is therefore important in order for insightful analysis to reach rigorous conclusions (Harding, 1987). One strategy for assisting with this process is to keep a research diary for "wading into the embodied messiness" of research (Sharma *et al.*, 2009: 1649). Here, researchers can record thoughts, emotions, decisions, and discussions between the self and others (Li, 2018). In doing so, critical analysis of thinking and feelings concerning all aspects of research is facilitated (Brear and Gordon, 2020). There are no rules to keeping a research diary, but for those unsure of how to start, there are numerous guides with prompts and ideas (e.g., Taylor, 2020). Research diaries are also a means for practicing self-reflexivity (Li, 2018), so interrogating how background, personal involvement, and sympathies, prejudices, fears, emotional and physical reactions influence research (Kuehner *et al.*, 2016). Thus, research diaries play an role in social research in cross-cultural contexts.

Researchers are often touched by research encounters. This can be especially so in disaster studies, where participants and/or researchers live with the effects of disaster (Barber and Haney, 2016). Whether speaking with disaster survivors or discussing potential future events, researching disaster is often emotional and can lead to vicarious trauma for researchers (Dominey-Howes, 2015). It is also riddled with ethical complexities, which fall outside of Institutional Review Boards (Gaillard and Gomez, 2015). This means that researchers often take responsibility for deciding what is ethical, sometimes in real-time, which can in itself be an emotional process (Browne and Peek, 2013). Research diaries can be useful in analysing and dealing with emotions that arise, with some regarding reflective writing as a form of self-care (Rager, 2005). Here, I illustrate how I, a white, British PhD student, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) – a part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) –used my research diary during the COVID-19 pandemic to re-orientate my research about disasters in Indigenous settings. Specifically, I highlight the challenges of doing so within British academia and the ways I, together with my peers, sought to overcome these challenges.

3.2. Methodology

The data for this paper comprises my reflective research diary (fig. 3.1). I focus on the period from March 2020 to October 2020, when a disruption to my research, led me to rapidly adjust my plans in the face of uncertainty. This prompted reflection on how I was embedded within my work revealing political and ethical challenges that I tried to overcome.
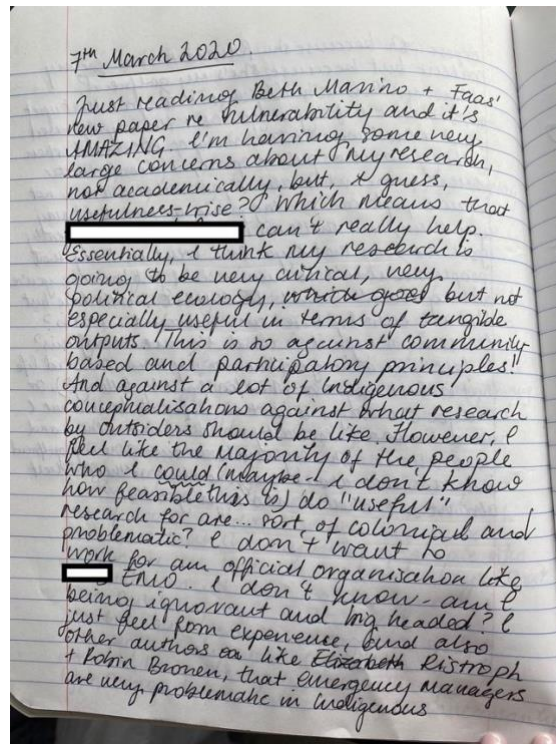
Figure 3.1: An example of a reflective research diary

When writing my diary, I initially had no intention to analyse it. Therefore, accounts are honest and not self-censored. However, the COVID-19 pandemic meant that I (and other PhD students) had to shift to desk-based research with no extension of funding from. This prompted reflection in my diary about how funders, such as UKRI, undermined ethical and engaged research. To analyse my diary, I paid attention to critical moments of reflexivity and emotional reactions (Li, 2018). Alongside this, I followed suggestions by Emerson *et al.,* (2011), Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater (2011) and Saldaña (2015) by considering what surprised me (to track assumptions), what intrigued me (to track positionality) and what disturbed me (to track tensions with my values, attitudes, and belief systems), facilitated by the qualitative data analysis software program, NVivo.

3.3. Results and Discussion

3.3.1. What surprised me (assumptions)

Having been to Utqiaġvik, Alaska, twice before I commenced my PhD in 2019, I planned to conduct some of my work here. As the COVID-19 pandemic spread, my supervisors suggested I employ a co-researcher to conduct data collection. In preparation for this, I emailed my funders to ask to use my fieldwork funding to pay a co-researcher. In their response:

"They said that the funding was only for my travel and if I did not use it, they would take it away. I don't understand the logic behind this decision. Surely, it's safer for everyone for me to employ a co- researcher? With or without COVID-19, employing a co-researcher can transfer power to the researched and make for more rigorous research." (personal diary entry, 24/05/2020)

The response of my funders surprised me, as much of my postgraduate application had centred ethical and political elements of my proposed work, for instance by drawing on Alaska Native scholars who endorsed participatory approaches to research (e.g., Erickson, 2020). As such, I assumed this had been an element that funders valued, particularly as collaboration with disaster-affected people is needed for ethical disaster research (Gaillard and Peek, 2019). This experience challenged that assumption and highlighted that rigorous research and ethics are not always at the centre of funding decisions amongst British funding bodies. Here, despite attempting to include Indigenous peoples more closely with my research, opaque structures within UKRI prevented such engagement. Structures such as these have been critiqued by Esson (2018) and Noxolo (2017), who argue they should be dismantled to uphold ethical and socially just research practice.

3.3.2. What disturbed me (tensions with attitudes, values and belief systems)

With most UK funders not extending PhD funding, I felt pressured to make decisions about how to engage with potential collaborators. In doing so, I felt I had crossed the line of what I believed was respectful, as I knew the community was dealing with their own COVID-19 response, and likely did not have the time to offer research assistance. When I did not receive a response from potential collaborators, I wrote that I was "*relieved*" as,

"I don't have the time or the funds. The reality is that everyone who I know who has a co-researcher is part of larger, long-term project with wider networks." (personal diary entry, 27/09/2020)

Gaillard and Peek (2019) argue that ethical concerns should have the same primacy as research questions in disaster research. Yet I did not have the resources required (e.g., funds to pay or at least reimburse research participants and coordinators) to conduct research to the ethical standard I believed in. Whilst I had personal ties to people living in Utqiaġvik, being a co-researcher was neither

useful nor interesting to them, so I was eager to employ someone who would find involvement valuable. To a degree, this revealed how underprepared I was during my initial visits to Utqiaġvik: I had built strong friendships, but I had completely neglected the importance of gatekeepers, professional relationships, and more formal processes that I should have been engaging with (Erickson, 2020). These challenges, in the context of the pandemic, combined with my knowledge that Utqiaġvik was dealing with a lot of research requests, led me to decide not to continue with my search for a co-researcher. This decision meant that it was unlikely I would conduct fieldwork.

Other early career researchers (ECRs) and I continued to feel pressured to conduct international fieldwork. Some staff (e.g., those who oversaw PhD students' study, supervisors, and others) encouraged students to demonstrate in risk assessments and to ethics committees that it was crucial to conduct research *at this time*. This disturbed me: in a time where many of us were separated from our families and were taking every precaution to prevent the spread of COVID-19, individuals within our institutions were pressing us to conduct international fieldwork in places that could be more vulnerable due to unequal access to health insurance and medical supplies. While Marino *et al.*, (2020) argue for fieldwork conducted during COVID-19 to be necessary and beneficial to those we work with (alongside the deprioritisation of professional needs where research may be inappropriate), our institutions encouraged (and, without providing paid extensions to our PhDs, pressured) us to conduct fieldwork in situations where it was unnecessary and inappropriate. This meant shifting my unit analysis to be emergency management in Alaska, rather than Indigenous peoples who experience disaster.

3.3.3.   What intrigued me (positionality)

Studying up involves looking at the culture of the powerful, rather than the culture of the 'powerless' (Nader, 1972) and, after reading Marino and Faas's (2020) article about studying up in disaster research, I was intrigued to explore the possibility of doing this, especially as colleagues had advised forming academic arguments to convince directors of postgraduate study that fieldwork was unnecessary. In the context of my research, studying up could be an important means of addressing disaster management in Alaska, as my experiences showed root causes of vulnerability (e.g., colonisation) and issues such as racism were not usually acknowledged. Therefore, I shifted my focus from community-based work and decided to look at emergency management systems at the State level. In doing so, I let go of my long-held expectation of doing fieldwork in one community and felt freer to interrogate whether I really should have been doing such work in the first place:

"My fear is that my research will be co-opted. I don't think that risk can be eliminated, it's just what happens when you put something out into the world. But I think that my previous idea was quite susceptible to this in ways that I may not even know. When reporting our work, whether that is in a conference, to the press, or as a manuscript, we can stress and stress that we are not experts, but the fact is that, whether we like it or not, we are

viewed as such. Therefore, how we represent peoples and places has big consequences. Researching disaster in Utqiaġvik in the very constructivist way that I wanted (e.g., having people decide what a disaster was) could have had unintended and unforeseen consequences, especially with Utqiaġvik proximity to the [Arctic National Wildlife Refuge]. At least if I am not studying at the community level, I do not open up the community to this unnecessary risk." (Personal diary entry, 12/10/2020)

Studying in cross-cultural contexts, I was apprehensive about working in a culture that was not my own, and potentially opening up the community to risk. Again, despite being aware of the colonial underpinnings of fieldwork, when I raised these concerns with senior colleagues in the UK, I felt dismissed and that abandoning fieldwork would make my work not enough for a PhD. These worries are in conflict with numerous Indigenous scholars' work about fieldwork (e.g., Smith, 1999), yet were very real for some of my peers and me. This was not because we did not take seriously the work of those writing about such issues, but rather because of the views of more senior individuals who repeatedly dismissed our concerns. Reflecting, taking on the call to study up by Marino and Faas (2020), and leveraging this work aided in pushing back against some of the pressure to do fieldwork. Here, my research diary aided in unpacking the anxiety around what I initially felt uncomfortable with, and helped to provide a way to continue working in a way that was more appropriate. This meant focusing on how emergency management and disaster risk reduction practices perpetuated (or pushed back against) structures of oppression, rather than relying on Indigenous peoples to recount their experiences.

3.4. **Conclusions**

In this short piece, I have used my research diary to illustrate some of the ways I tried to push back against processes that prevented ethical, cross-cultural disaster research during the COVID-19 pandemic within British institutions. Many of us genuinely tried to engage with international partners in ways that did not compromise safety while producing research. However, without institutional support, this proved to be difficult. This echoes Radcliffe's (2017) work, also in the context of British academia, who encourages collaborative forms of research but recognises that doing so as an ECR is taxing within the neoliberal academy. Thus, they argue that it is imperative to look within institutions and challenge practices here, rather than within 'field sites.' This includes not only dismantling structures that prevent ethical engagement with collaborators (e.g., opaque funding decisions) (Noxolo, 2017) but also ensuring that ECRs (especially those who are Indigenous and/or racialised) are not tasked with the continuous and exhausting work of addressing colonial praxis within academia (e.g., Todd, 2016; Mahtani, 2014, in the context of British anthropology and geography, respectively).

My research diary helped me to navigate some of the ethical dilemmas I came up against, for instance through carefully thinking through and leveraging academic literature to support my decision not to do fieldwork. However, it also illuminated some key areas that prevented ethical engagement in disaster research in the UK. In particular, the limited time available to do research created a sense of urgency amongst PhD students to either press on with fieldwork or to re-hash projects quickly, sometimes without the support required to fully consider the ethics, politics or repercussions of and for our work. Reflecting on such issues in a research diary can be important for sense-making and record-taking purposes, but also requires time – a limited resource.

So, how can ECRs situated in British institutions founded on colonial practices, conduct ethical and engaged disaster research? The problem is deep-rooted, and pushing back against institutionalised and unethical practices, some of which I have described here, should be the responsibility of everyone, regardless of career stage. However, as an ECR, I have found the following strategies useful in mitigating against potentially unethical research:

- Finding individuals and groups of people who are committed to ethical, engaged, and socially just research approaches meant that when I were pressured to do fieldwork or engage in ethically dubious practices, I had peers and senior academics to discuss these issues with. In particular, having connections with trusted and more senior researchers outside of the UK laid bare the institutional conditions (e.g., lack of engagement with Indigenous scholars and shorter PhD timelines) that undermined ethical research.
- Where more senior colleagues (e.g., those overseeing postgraduate research, and in some cases, supervisors) are not receptive to ethical concerns in research, build on heavily cited academic arguments to counteract this. These do not have to pertain to a specific discipline.

Whilst Todd's (2016) article detailing the colonial and racist nature of British anthropology was a great starting point, reading the works of Black British scholars (e.g., Esson, 2017; Noxolo, 2017) helped us to develop arguments to senior academic who may not otherwise be convinced of the problems within British academia. When doing so, however, it is important to engage deeply with these works and keep their arguments front and centre.

- Who we cite matters (Smith and Garrett-Scott, 2021). This is not new, but as we shift how we do research in response to COVID-19, we can expand the types of sources we cite to better include the perspectives of those in places we would otherwise be conducting fieldwork (e.g., through media and art as well as narrative).

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ANNEX

Comment by ECR peer

I found the paper very interesting and quite consistent with my interest as an ethnographer. I particularly liked the way the arguments are grouped within three analytical categories: 'what surprised me', 'what disturbed me' and 'what intrigued me'. While diary-writing is not uncommon in qualitative and interpretative research, I understand it is often deployed as a mere data collection technique, involving research participants, and less as a reflexive tool by researchers. It is also commonly used as a way of giving research participants more control and freedom over what they want to say or record. But it is rare to read discussions about diaries from the perspective of researchers themselves. Hence, it was very heartening to see this coming from a researcher, and to read some concrete ways of operationalising diaries.

I had few immediate thoughts though:

First, diary-writing, as we know, is a private affair. It involves 'honest' disclosure of one's feelings and discomforts, as the author also concedes. I suppose this can get ethically tricky when diary becomes a public disclosure document. For example, in the paper the author discloses the role of the funder/UKRI in subverting the possibility for an engaged research, despite the rhetoric for partnership etc. I guess in this particular case this disclosure does not pose major ethical challenge as the author is talking about a powerful agency, and hence consistent with the author's aim at 'looking up'. But, in general, with diaries is there a risk of over-disclosure that can lead to potential harm (e.g. reputational harm, risk of discrimination etc) to our research participants, stakeholders, gatekeepers, whose trust and privacy researchers are expected to respect? In general, potentially there are limitations to using diary as an interpretive tool and it would have been interesting to read some of those dilemmas.

Second, although the author talks about the duration of diary-writing that culminated in this paper, it would have been interesting to read how frequently the diaries was maintained, what was the typical length etc. I think that would have also provided more backing to the interpretation that is being made. Did the evidence that 'disturbed' the author, for example, came from one diary entry or was there a pattern to it? Further information on that would have also given the readers more clues about the practicalities as well as scientific relevance of diary writing.

Third, I thought the last three recommendations were interesting, but I found them to be slightly generic and somewhat removed from the core topic of research diary as a tool for ethical and engaged research. Perhaps there is a room to think about more specific recommendations/tips about the potentials and pitfalls of using diary, under what conditions they are useful, and particularly their relevance in disaster research.

3.6.2. **Response by author**

Thank you so much for your thoughtful comments and reflections. I found the process of writing this manuscript really difficult and riddled with anxiety around what I really had to offer by laying bear some of these quite personal experiences, so I am relieved to hear that you found it heartening. I have made the following notes in response to your reflections:

I completely agree that the appropriateness of when to publish reflections is very context dependent, and a crucial part of that context is the relative power of institutions and other actors mentioned in a diary. After all, as a form of autoethnography, the research diary only elevates my voice and not those of research participants, for example. When it came to deciding whether to write this article, I had to really question for what purpose I was analysing and publishing parts of my research diary. For me, it was important to shed light on the frustrations many of my peers and I were experiencing in trying to ensure our research was ethical and engaged but feeling constrained by institutions to do so. In this context I feel like publishing could be a form of activism, but I also do not think it would be appropriate to always publish reflections from research diaries.

How often I recorded reflections and the length of those reflections really varied. Generally, I tended to write whenever there were major changes to my research or if I felt especially emotional at stages of the research, reflecting what others have said about journaling as therapeutic. From the start of the pandemic, then, my entries were especially frequent (roughly three times a week) and because of this I found numerous examples of instances where I had been surprised, intrigued, and disturbed. That said, I did also attend a reflective journaling club, organised by PhD students. Here, we spent a few minutes at the beginning of a session to just have a "brain dumping" session, writing whatever came naturally. After this, we took prompts from Jessica Taylor's "The Reflective Research Diary for Researchers and Academics" and spent more time working through these individually before feeding back to the group.

I agree that the recommendations are fairly generic, but I also think the ways we can use research diaries in research are so varied that it is difficult to make any specific recommendations. I think you raised one of the key pitfalls around publishing parts of research diaries in your first point though, and I think that is very pertinent for anyone wanting to use their research diary as a form of data collection. like publishing could be a form of activism, but I also do not think it would be appropriate to always publish reflections from research diaries. How often I recorded reflections and the length of those reflections really varied. Generally, I tended to write whenever there were major changes to my research or if I felt especially emotional at stages of the research, reflecting what others have said about journaling as therapeutic. From the start of the pandemic, then, my entries were especially

frequent (roughly three times a week) and because of this I found numerous examples of instances where I had been surprised, intrigued, and disturbed. That said, I did also attend a reflective journaling club, organised by PhD students. Here, we spent a few minutes at the beginning of a session to just have a "brain dumping" session, writing whatever came naturally. After this, we took prompts from Jessica Taylor's "The Reflective Research Diary for Researchers and Academics" and spent more time working through these individually before feeding back to the group.

Chapter IV

Disasters and Indigenous peoples: A critical discourse analysis

Abstract

Attempts to shift the ways disasters have traditionally been managed away from authoritarian, top-down approaches toward more bottom-up and inclusive processes often involve incorporating viewpoints from marginalised and vulnerable groups. Recently as part of this process, there have been calls for greater inclusion of Indigenous peoples in disaster management. In theory, this also suggests a shift in power structures, towards recognising Indigenous peoples as experts in disaster management. However, in popular imagination and policy Indigenous peoples often appear to be caricatured and misrepresented, for instance through tropes of Indigenous peoples as custodians of the environment or especially vulnerable to environmental change. These framings matter because they can result in disaster management policies and practices that do not capture Indigenous peoples' complex realities. However, these framings have not been analysed in the context of disasters. In this article, we aim to better understand these framings through a critical discourse analysis of how Indigenous peoples in disasters are represented in the expert news media. We identify five discourses, including a dominant one of disasters as natural phenomena to be addressed through humanitarianism and technocratic interventions. Such discourses render Indigenous peoples helpless, depoliticize disasters and are justified by framing governments and NGOs as caring for Indigenous peoples. However, we also identify competing discourses that focus on systems of oppression and self-determination in disaster management. These discourses recognise disasters as political and include discussion of the role of colonialism in disaster creation. As care emerged as a means through which intervention was justified, we conclude by asking questions of who is cared for/about in disasters and how that care is performed.

- Discourses of disasters and the place of Indigenous peoples in disasters are explored in the expert news media.
- Fives discourses are identified: natural disasters, systems of oppression, humanitarianism, technocracy, and self-determination.
- Dominant discourses depoliticize disasters and vulnerability.
- Governments and non-governmental organisations are constructed as caring for Indigenous peoples, thereby justifying outside action.

- Less dominant discourses politicise disasters and suggest that governments are sometimes performative in their actions.

- Paternalistic, humanitarian care emerged as a form of governance in a way that is in contention with other forms of care, such as care-ethics.

4.1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic, like other disasters before it, has revealed the power of news media representations of events and people in producing diverse impacts across public perception, policy, and practice (Feindt and Oels, 2005; Marks, 2015). Several significant discourses – "particular ways of representing particular aspects of social life" Fairclough (2001: 2) – have become prominent, including world leaders being framed as wartime presidents, fighting an invisible enemy which has allowed for draconian measures of control (De Rosa and Mannarini, 2020). Others have constructed the pandemic as nature seeking revenge on humanity (Gatti, 2020), used to justify greater focus on environment, sometimes in ways that negatively impact people. Deep-rooted racism and anti-Asian rhetoric in Western democracies has been exacerbated as world leaders looked to assign blame for the emergence of the virus (Wang et al., 2021).

Discourses represent a complex network of power that shape how disasters are managed. Meaning is derived from a multitude of discourses but, most fundamentally, from a dominant discourse (Joye, 2010). This makes discourses the sites of power struggles (Wodak, 2002), and control over discourse a powerful mechanism for sustaining power (Fairclough, 2001). For instance, where a disaster such as a famine is articulated as an environmental issue (e.g. result of drought), responses will likely focus on improving the quality of land. However, should the disaster be framed as a political one (e.g. the result of conflict), solutions will likely focus on ways to address these challenges (e.g. peacebuilding). The environmental frame, then, has the potential to mask political causes of disaster and keep in place oppressive sociopolitical processes, whilst political framings suggest political solutions. Depending on how some populations are constructed, they may be viewed as less deserving of assistance than others based on race, economic status, the type of disaster experienced, and numerous other conditions (Barreto, 2019; Méndez et al., 2020; Ticktin, 2017).

Discourse analyses of the news media have been particularly fruitful in uncovering social relations and ideological positions of those in power (e.g. Chouliaraki, 2008). This is partly because the news media is a powerful means of representing peoples, places and events to broad audiences. However, mediated representations can serve certain agendas that are not typically obvious (Knudsen and Stage, 2014): nuanced language and labels, which both facilitate and limit knowledge about social phenomena to structure public perception and cultivate a specific response, are often used (Davis and French, 2008). Thus, political agendas within the news media operate in very subtle ways and require close analysis (Pyles et al., 2017).

In this paper we examine how the expert news media discursively construct Indigenous peoples in relation to disasters. To do so we examine articles from two UN-maintained knowledge sharing platforms, PreventionWeb and ReliefWeb. Identifying how the expert news media construct disasters helps reveal the ideologies present amongst those who hold power. Indigenous peoples have

historically been marginalised and misrepresented by media and other institutions, with very real negative outcomes for them and their communities (Lucchesi, 2019), but there is limited academic research on disaster discourses of Indigenous peoples that have focused on the media. This has policy implications: international policy frameworks and discussions (e.g. 2015 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction), promote the decentralisation and localisation of humanitarianism and aid, as well as the increased participation of Indigenous peoples in disaster management (Hendriks and Boersma, 2019). These policy shifts theoretically correspond with a shift in power from those traditionally considered experts (Hilhorst et al., 2020). Untangling how the expert news media represent disasters and Indigenous peoples, and how discourses change and grow, in the context of policy shifts can help to understand whether these shifts occur in practice.

In what follows, we continue the literature review before detailing our methodology. We then present our results, including five discourses that emerged from news media reports. We discuss these discourses within the context of the disaster and humanitarian literature, before concluding.

4.2. Literature review

4.2.1. Discourses of disaster

Disaster discourses have traditionally been categorised into two areas: the (dominant) hazard paradigm and the vulnerability paradigm (Hewitt, 1983). The hazard paradigm holds that disasters are abnormal, environmental events, that require particular measures to return to 'normalcy' (Bankoff and Hilhorst, 2009). This implies returning to a set of social, economic, and political relations present before the event (Bankoff and Hilhorst, 2009). In viewing disasters this way, the existing social and political structures that render populations vulnerable are masked, while the role of natural processes, such as climate change, are overstated (Verchick, 2018). Conversely, the vulnerability paradigm views disasters as political and socially constructed (Hewitt, 1983). Thus, disaster management under this paradigm focuses on how vulnerability can be reduced through political actions, be that through poverty reduction (Nadiruzzaman and Wrathall, 2015), governance (Hilhorst et al., 2020), or changes in institutional arrangements (Das and Luthfi, 2017). Thus, hazard-centric environmental framings of disaster are generally concerned with preserving current political systems, whilst a focus on vulnerability centres social justice and change (Douglass and Miller, 2018; Raju et al., 2022).

These discourses, and others like them (see Bankoff, 2019), have implications for how different stakeholders might govern and manage disasters. Viewing disaster through the vulnerability paradigm promotes a shift toward disasters as 'everyone's responsibility', a multi-stakeholder endeavour involving a distended network of actors in the management of risk through cross-societal interventions (Clark-Ginsberg, 2020; Tierney, 2012). Who is specifically involved in this set of interventions is blurry and shifting (Meriläinen et al., 2020), but a common theme is the decentralisation of government responsibilities to local agencies (Curato, 2018a; Wisner et al., 2001) – a stark contrast to traditional, top-down and authoritarian disaster management practices of the hazard paradigm. While this can elevate the voices of local communities and other actors in disaster management (Curato, 2018a; Hilhorst et al., 2020), it can also create problems for those communities if implemented incorrectly. Relinquishing state responsibilities to others is one, in that responsibility is placed on individuals for their socioeconomic conditions, rendering conditions such as poverty and vulnerability a choice (Chandler and Reid, 2018). In doing so, those marginalised are responsibilised for the situations they are in: a hallmark of neoliberalism that has been critiqued in disaster and development research (Bankoff, 2019; Cheek and Chmutina, 2021). Another is accountability: NGOs also have a growing degree of power in disaster governance, but they are not accountable to a democratic governance structure and their goals can be driven by their donors (Reid-Henry, 2014). This has been used to critique international western NGOs working in non-Western contexts as a form of neocolonial interference with the norms and values of non-Western societies (Sripaoraya, 2017), oftentimes masked behind sentiments of care and compassion (Fassin, 2012). A third is often a failure to relinquish control. While the vulnerability paradigm pushes primacy of local stakeholders as bastions of knowledge, humanitarians may maintain paternalistic forms of intervention under a

rhetoric of 'care' which exacerbates inequality, inhibits collective change, and serves colonising agendas (Murphy, 2015; Tronto, 2010, 2013).

4.2.2.   Discourses around Indigenous peoples

Discourses of Indigenous peoples vary globally. 'Indigenous' is a self-identified identity category broadly understood to be "the assembly of those who have witnessed, been excluded from, and have survived modernity and imperialism" as well as other forms of colonialism (Smith, 2007: 114). At national scales, dominant state discourses typically focuses on improving livelihoods of citizens, although Indigenous peoples are often excluded from these visions (Howitt et al., 2012), in part because of their positions as minorities in states where they were once sovereign (Smith, 2007). Thus, national development projects account for dominant society interests, but not Indigenous society interests, leading national projects to replicate colonial patterns that do not address structural inequality (Cameron, 2012; Young, 2020). The invisibility of Indigenous peoples in these discourses, and their marginalisation from instruments and institutions of power and policy mean that colonisation is also masked (Howitt et al., 2012).

Disaster management discourses often assume the universal relevance and appropriateness of dominant cultural values, responses and understandings (Veland et al., 2010). For instance, disaster management may not consider the importance of protecting equipment critical for subsistence (e.g. Kontar et al., 2015), the significance of certain sites or building types in recovery (Huang, 2018), and policies and planning may include high levels of bureaucracy that places a burden on Indigenous communities with small workforces (Ristroph, 2018). Thus, these discourses reinforce dominant political and cultural landscapes, which justify paternalistic and colonial actions that create vulnerability for Indigenous peoples (Howitt et al., 2012). In this way, standard procedures can cause long-term damage to Indigenous peoples and their institutions, through erosion of their capacity to deliver governance, support, meaning and recovery to affected communities (Howitt et al., 2012; Hsu et al., 2015). When crisis hits, dominant society may use disaster management mechanisms as a means of alienating Indigenous peoples' property rights for private gain (e.g. Alvarez and Cardenas, 2019). Over the long term, Indigenous peoples and their interests are often framed as irrelevant to concerns of, for instance, national development (Lambert and Scott, 2019). Therefore, Indigenous peoples, their priorities, concerns and knowledge are excluded from disaster-related decision-making processes.

Understanding how Indigenous peoples themselves discursively construct disasters is necessary to avoid replicating colonial research practices that silence their perspectives. We note that Indigenous peoples and their beliefs are incredibly diverse (Watts, 2013), and have thus sought literature from various Indigenous scholars. While research by Indigenous scholars about disaster discourses specifically is limited, there is a significant body of literature by Indigenous researchers that highlights the separation of the natural and the social as a Western dualism, with many Indigenous groups

viewing the social and the natural as intertwined (Ultramari and Rezende, 2007). Similarly, other Indigenous researchers point out that Land – alongside other-than-humans and more-than-humans – is sentient and has agency (Bawaka Country et al., 2013; Museka and Madondo, 2012; Todd, 2018; Viaene, 2021; Watts, 2013; Yazzie and Baldy, 2018). This fits with neither of the two disaster paradigms mentioned earlier, both of which separate the natural and social.

4.2.3.   Disasters and Indigenous peoples in the expert news media

Dominant discourses of disaster often frame disasters from a hazard paradigm as spectacular, natural, isolated events (Gotham, 2017), rather than from a vulnerability paradigm that recognises their sociopolitical origins. This feeds a discourse that rationalises Indigenous peoples' vulnerability as an ordinary component of a global economic, political and social order (Howitt et al., 2012). For instance, Howitt et al. (2012) critique the dominant, racialized discourses of superiority and power that dominate disaster management, which overlooks colonisation in the creation of vulnerability. In a similar vein, dominant discourses of disasters have drawn on or reinforced a hierarchy of credibility, in which social issues and local voices are marginalised in favour of legal and scientific discourses, which possess strong legitimising potential and can lead to further marginalisation of those already most marginalised (Kelman, 2010).

The news media appears to be a powerful stakeholder that can shape discourses of Indigenous peoples, often in ways that negatively impact Indigenous peoples. The news media frequently reduces the complexity of Indigenous histories to 'problems', depoliticizing deep discussions about power to bureaucratic concerns of policy and procedure (Campbell, 2016). Indigenous peoples are also subject to silencing and misrepresentation in the media through caricatures (Guernsey, 2021; Said, 1978). The news media can be a space to resist dominant discourses (Myers et al., 2021), but this is rarely the case. Instead, the news media has often been to normalise dominant cultural assumptions, and to grant or deny framing power to some actors over others, rendering it a powerful means of controlling how certain groups and events are represented (Carvalho, 2010; Entman, 2007; Fairclough, 2003; van Dijk, 2011).

Limited research suggests that this representation extends to reporting of disasters, which shapes and attributes responsibility, fault, culpability, blame, guilt, victimage, and liability (Seeger and Ulmer, 2002). For instance, through emphasising their victim status and connection to the environment, Indigenous peoples have been used to highlight the urgency of climate change in ways that do not consider their political perspectives (Willow, 2009). How suffering is reported also has ramifications for the representation of certain groups. On the one hand, mediation of vulnerability and suffering can mobilise awareness and political action around issues that would otherwise go unnoticed by global audiences (Durham, 2018). However, such reports can be voyeuristic – something that disaster journalism has been critiqued for (Ong, 2015; Sontag, 2003). In particular, 'bodily vulnerability'

(usually mediated through imagery of women of colour) is used as a soft power vehicle that circulates rapidly in global media (Butler, 2004). It is also a means of addressing contested histories, through defining what is the proper past and future of a society (e.g. who is innocent), whilst affectively charging news stories (Knudsen and Stage, 2014).

4.3. Methodology

To analyse the expert news media, we adopted critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA is a social constructivist analysis technique that recognises that language is not neutral (Joye, 2009) and is centrally concerned with power (Fairclough, 2003). CDA has been described as the "single most authoritative line of research" in analysing news media (Carvalho, 2008: 162). Specifically, it highlights "patterns of domination whereby one group is dominated by another" (Philips, 2007: 288). It moves beyond textual analysis, to include wider systematic analysis of relations between discourse and other elements of social processes (Fairclough, 1989), as well as intertextuality, whereby the blended environment in which different kind of texts (and speakers) influence each other to legitimise a certain worldview (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). Ultimately, CDA facilitates the uncovering of political, economic and cultural hegemonies that perpetuate injustice (Pyles, 2011). Whilst there are critiques around the limits of social constructivist analyses of disasters, specifically they do not contribute to improving disaster practice (Wisner et al., 2001), we instead follow numerous authors (e.g. Chipangura et al., 2016; Tierney, 2007) who highlight the importance of constructivist approaches for understanding how disasters interact with social processes such as poverty and inequality. For these authors, language can shape what is possible and structure policy options that have a very real impact on disaster management.

We define the expert news media in disasters as news media that is created by and for disaster management practitioners. We recognise that the term 'expert' is a loaded one. In the context of this research, we adopt a normative definition of experts and expertise (Boyce, 2006), as our aim was to untangle discourses amongst those who hold power in global disaster management. As such, it was not our intention (nor our place as settler/coloniser researchers) to target our analysis at Indigenous sources. To identify relevant articles, we take a similar approach to Chmutina et al. (2019) in their study of language and disasters. Like them, we used PreventionWeb and additionally ReliefWeb to source articles. These are both collaborative knowledge sharing platforms targeting disaster policymakers, practitioners, and researchers (Murray et al., 2015). They cross the disaster spectrum: PreventionWeb focuses on issues of disaster risk reduction, including mitigation and prevention, and ReliefWeb mainly focuses on issues of emergency and humanitarian response. Both are managed by UN agencies, PreventionWeb the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), and ReliefWeb the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, but the sites reflect a variety of voices as content is provided by disaster stakeholders themselves. Therefore, there can be room for counter-hegemonic stances to be represented (Djalante, 2012). These sites mostly publish in English, although some articles are in Spanish. We did not limit our search by language.

These two databases have thousands of articles. After conducting numerous test searches to ensure we were not excluding key populations or types of disaster, we decided to use the key word search terms 'Indigenous', 'Tribe', 'Aboriginal' and 'First Nation' in the news media section of

PreventionWeb. These terms ensured that contexts in which the term 'Indigenous' is inappropriate was also included in analyses (Carlson et al., 2014). We found 485 articles using these search terms. On ReliefWeb, we used the same search terms with the addition of 'disaster', which returned 945 articles. We added 'disaster' to the ReliefWeb search to ensure that articles were specifically covering disasters rather than broader development initiatives. Since we aim to examine some of the growing discourses of Indigenous peoples, we focused on the time period from 2015–2020 as the start of the Sendai Framework for Risk and Disaster Reduction was in 2015. This framework is one of the ways the UNDRR has supported Indigenous peoples' participation in disaster management through calls for increased decentralisation of knowledge and resources, and a recognition of the need for tailored approaches in Indigenous contexts (Lambert and Scott, 2019). To meet the inclusion criteria, each article had to provide a narrative of a disaster (e.g. conflict, earthquake, climate change) and include at minimum one paragraph focused on Indigenous peoples. We did not prescribe what type of disaster was to be included, nor who was or was not Indigenous. 31 articles were retained for CDA following this inclusion criteria, which is standard given that sample sizes for CDA vary, with some studies adopting a sample of only one or two (Sengul, 2019; Van Dijk, 1993).

4.3.1. Analysis

To conduct the CDA, a framework was created, informed by previous CDAs (e.g. Cox et al., 2008; Davis and French, 2008). This included typical CDA concerns: the use (and meaning behind the use) of construction of in- and out- groups (Cox et al., 2008; Joye, 2010; Wodak, 2001), modalities, presuppositions, passive voice, vagueness, overcompletedness, intertextuality, amongst others (Olaniyan and Adeniji, 2015). We included analysis of embedded forms of media, such as photography, given it is a powerful means of communicating bodily vulnerability (Durham, 2018). We additionally coded articles based on countries of focus, nationality of author(s), and the location of the headquarters of news agencies. We included codes for authors who self-identified as Indigenous.

Articles were read several times for familiarity (Cox et al., 2008). Analysis was initially conducted in qualitative research software (QSR) NVivo, before moving to manual analysis, a technique for lessening distance between the researcher and the data (Paulus and Lester, 2016). Once initial codes and themes were established, text was reread to tie emerging findings to ongoing socio-political processes, such as neoliberalism and settler colonialism (Carvalho, 2013). This was an iterative process that combined deductive and inductive approaches to coding, both of which are important for CDAs. Deductive coding made use of typical approaches used within CDAs, while inductive coding allowed findings to emerge, which was important given the nascency of this research (Willey-Sthapit et al., 2020), as well as the imperativeness to include diverse constructions of disaster. Recognising these diverse constructions of disaster is useful because their inclusion or exclusion within the expert news media is an indication of the level of hegemony of Western disaster paradigms.

4.4. Results

Fifteen countries were the focus of news articles, with Australia garnering the most focus (23%), followed by Brazil (13%). Most authors self-identified as non-Indigenous Australians (23%), followed by non-Indigenous US citizens (13%). The only self-identified Indigenous authors were First Nations people from Canada (3%), and Aboriginal people from Australia (6%), all of whom were writing about their own contexts. The headquarters for each news agency were mostly based in the UK (29%), followed by Australia (26%). The majority of articles were sourced from The Conversation (41%), followed by Thomson Reuters Foundation (22%). All articles were written in English. The types of disaster included were broad and ranged from slow-onset disasters such as famine and sea level rise, to sudden-onset hazards such as floods, pandemics and forced migration.

We found five discourses: two dominant discourses of natural disasters and humanitarian intervention, and less dominant discourses of systems of oppression, technocracy and self-determination. Below we describe the core features of each discourse and illustrate these with verbatim extracts. Table 4.1 provides an overview of the features and strategies used in each discourse.

Table 4.1. Overview of the features used in each of the five discourses we identified.

Discourse	Features
Natural disasters	- Focus on environmental phenomena - Disasters are depoliticised - Vulnerability is rationalised - Sense of urgency around the state of the environment
Systems of oppression	- Assigns blame to systems of oppression rather than individuals - Highlights the normalcy of disasters - Highlights colonialism as a root cause of disaster - Sense of urgency around political situation
Humanitarian intervention	- NGOs framed as knowledgeable, competent and caring - Indigenous peoples framed as suffering and/or passive - Government is incompetent and/or oppressive - Depoliticisation of humanitarianism - Emphasis on participation, empowerment and capacity building - Sense of urgency around disaster
Technocracy	- Government deals with disaster and cares for Indigenous peoples - Indigenous peoples are innocent - Calls for increased governance of people - Attempts to remain neutral

Discourse	Features
	- Highlights terror of disaster
	- Indigenous peoples face the same difficulties as everyone else
	- Separates Indigenous knowledge from Indigenous peoples
Self-determination	- Indigenous peoples are knowledgeable, capable and aware of their political situation
	- Indigenous peoples care about their communities
	- Avoids voyeuristic portrayals of suffering
	- Current emergency management is inadequate
	- Government is inadequate and/or performative

In the next section we describe each of these five discourses in more detail. We note that no article fitted neatly under any one discourse, and instead each article engaged with a variety of discourses.

4.4.1.   Natural disasters

The natural disasters discourse viewed disasters as primarily environmental phenomena, and was the dominant way through which disasters were discursively constructed. The naturalness of disasters was evidenced through focus on environmental processes. For instance, in the context of the Australian wildfires, Barlow and Lees (23/08/2019) write the following,

"[T]he intensity of a fire does not necessarily predict its severity. The lack of natural adaptation to deal with wildfires make rainforest species incredibly sensitive. Even a low intensity wildfire can kill half the trees. While small trees are initially most susceptible, larger ones often die in subsequent years leading to an eventual loss of more than half of the forest's carbon stocks. These large trees hold the most carbon, and subsequent regrowth of pioneer species is no compensation – once-burned, forests hold 25% less carbon than unburned forests even after three decades of regrowth."

Focus on environmental processes depoliticised disasters, emphasised by textual silences about disasters' social and political origins. Smith et al., (14/05/2020), writing on the COVID-19 pandemic is an example here, when they state that, "COVID-19 is the first global pandemic caused by a coronavirus." This statement focuses on the hazard (i.e. the biomedical aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic), not the broader systems shaping vulnerability and access to healthcare.

Vulnerability was sometimes mentioned under this discourse, but when it was it was rationalised. For example, Godoy (27/09/2017), writing about earthquakes in Mexico claims that, "[t]hese are families who, because of *their condition*, have long occupied spaces in deplorable conditions (emphasis added)." Thus, vulnerability was mentioned, but the processes behind it were masked. Other articles also mentioned vulnerability, but reduced it to factors such as geographic location, age, and ability, treating

these factors as inherently vulnerable rather than vulnerable because of how institutional structures marginalise these factors. In some instances, text was complemented with aerial imagery of small settlements surrounded by greenery or large bodies of water, as well as buildings on the edge of cliffs. Such imagery elevates the importance of the environment and reduces vulnerability to elements such as remoteness, proximity to potential hazards, and poor building structures, without recognising broader processes.

Authors engaging with the natural disasters discourse proposed solutions that were environmental in nature. In the context of wildfires in Australia, Alexandra and Bowman (06/01/2020) propose the following,

> *"One model we could look to is Landcare, which has enjoyed 30 years of bipartisan support. Funded and supported by governments, local, semi-autonomous, self-directed groups aim to take a sustainable approach to land management through on-ground projects such as habitat restoration and improving biodiversity."*

Proposing environmental solutions was additionally coupled with the creation of a sense of urgency around environmental change. McDonnell (21/06/2015) highlights this in the context of Vanuatu: "While the science on increasingly intense tropical cyclones around the world is complex, as these experts have warned: the future doesn't look good for locations that are prone to natural disasters."

4.4.2. Humanitarian intervention

The humanitarian discourse was also a dominant discourse that justified humanitarian intervention. Here, (mainly external) NGOs were framed as knowledgeable and competent. Godoy's (27/09/2017) article on earthquakes in Mexico, is an example of this dynamic, describing how "Fernández, a member of the non-governmental "Hadi" […] Otomí Indigenous Community, told inter press service (IPS) that humanitarian aid received so far came from non-governmental organisations and individual citizens." In tandem with NGOs as saviours, Indigenous peoples were framed as suffering, helpless, and lacking agency. In their article on Namibians and drought-related migration Harrisberg (09/03/2020) exemplifies this:

> *"As rural Namibians move to cities to escape the worst drought in nearly a century, many find themselves navigating a no-man's land between over-saturated slums and the parched farmland they hope to one day return to."*

This statement shows the lack of agency Indigenous peoples have, as they are controlled by external factors and cannot live in the places they want to. Text describing the suffering of Indigenous peoples was often complemented with portrait photographs of them, especially of Indigenous mothers and children, usually with serious expressions. Many authors engaging with this discourse additionally

framed the government as incompetent and/or oppressive, thus justifying NGO action. Fraser's (02/06/2020) writing on the COVID-19 response in Peru serves as an example:

"In Iquitos and other places where government aid has been sluggish because of red tape or corruption, church groups have stepped in to provide crucial medical supplies, as well as food and other essential items for people whose scant incomes vanished when the government imposed a strict quarantine and curfew."

In this quote the government's curfew, red tape, and corruption a damaging process to Indigenous peoples that NGOs must overcome. Emphasis on the extent of partnerships and collaborations was coupled with vagueness about their actions. For instance, the following excerpt by Bhandari (20/04/2020) in an article on climate change in Vanuatu, demonstrates the numerous collaborators involved in disaster risk reduction but remains vague about the nature of involvement:

"Global women's rights organisation, ActionAid is collaborating with Shifting the Power Coalition (StPC), a regional alliance of 13 women-led civil society organisations from six Pacific Forum member countries, WWW, Women I Tok Tok Tugeta (WITTT), a coalition of women leader groups, and the National Disaster Management System in supporting local women through training, network building and research to ensure women's rights and needs are addressed in climate change and humanitarian disaster response."

There were silences around the politics of humanitarianism within this discourse, which was also coupled with the creation of a sense of urgency around the disaster (as an event, rather than a process), Fraser's (02/06/2020) writing about Peru, exemplifies this: "[t]his is a disaster, and it will be a massacre, not only because of the virus, but because of official incompetence." These two components – silences and urgency – worked together to eliminate the need to consider political elements of disaster management by masking the negative political aspects of humanitarian intervention, while emphasising the need for immediate action.

4.4.3. Systems of oppression

Another way disasters were discursively constructed was through a less-dominant systems of oppression discourse, which highlighted the interlocking systems of oppression that created vulnerability to disasters. For example, in an article on the COVID-19 pandemic, Seymour (22/04/2020) highlights that, *"Canada's unequal health system may make remote Indigenous communities more vulnerable to the coronavirus"*. Also in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic but focused on Brazil, Angelo (21/04/2020) writes that *"[t]he Guarani Kaiowa are regularly displaced by agribusiness, loggers and drug traffickers, and violent clashes are common, leaving them with barely enough land to survive."* Although both authors are writing about the COVID-19 pandemic, they highlight processes that contribute to Indigenous peoples' vulnerability, such as inequality and dispossession of land. In

doing so, other actors (e.g. government, private companies) were constructed as powerful. Importantly, across the concourse, this was the only way the private sector was framed.

Other authors engaging with this discourse highlighted the normalcy of disasters. Writing about COVID-19 in Australia, Smith et al., (14/05/2020) state the following:

"The COVID-19 crisis adds to existing pressures on remote communities. Families already live with regular loss of life, frequent funerals and an overhanging grief that contributes to intergenerational trauma".

This normalisation highlights the already precarious situation many live in that contributes to vulnerability to the COVID-19 pandemic. The past was often referred to, highlighting the role of history, and colonisation in particular:

"Aboriginal peoples live with a sense of perpetual grief. It stems from the as-yet-unresolved matter of the invasion and subsequent colonisation of our homelands. […] While there are many instances of colonial trauma inflicted upon Aboriginal peoples – including the removal of children and the suppression of culture, ceremony and language – dispossession of Country remains paramount. […] Since colonisation, many Indigenous people have been removed from their land, and their cultural fire management practices have been constrained by authorities, informed by Western views of fire and land management. In this way, settler-colonialism is not historical, but a lived experience. And the growing reality of climate change adds to these anxieties." (Williamson et al., 09/01/2020).

While the natural disasters discourse led to proposed solutions that were environmental in nature, solutions under this discourse were primarily political. A sense of urgency was created around the political situation of Indigenous peoples, combined with the use of modalities to highlight the consequences of a lack of political change, as Baldo (07/01/2020) writes,

"Without a radical reversal of the destructive policies that Bashir's regime used to manipulate tribal allegiances, this type of deadly inter-communal conflict will continue to erupt throughout Sudan."

4.4.4. Technocracy

The technocracy discourse constructed the government and its agencies as experts that are competent in dealing with disasters. An example of this is Smith et al., (14/05/2020), an article on the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia:

"People are appreciative of the efforts made by local police to keep them safe and connected. The mail is taken 50 kilometres to the Central Arnhem Highway turn-off. It is handed over to police and taken to Maranboy

police station, 10 kilometres from Barunga. A community representative comes to the police station to collect it."

Here, detailed and positive accounts of police action justify disaster management as an activity to be carried out by government and its agencies, while framing Indigenous peoples as passive. Where conflict was involved, it was reduced to *"tribal clashes"* (Sudan Tribune, 09/01/2020). In contrast to vulnerability perspectives that identify the significance of local knowledge and expertise, the technocracy discourse frames people as lacking in capacity and/or understanding around disaster management, with external 'experts' and authorities as responsible and capable. Together, this justifies government action.

Authors engaging in technocracy discourses attempted to remain neutral by remaining vague about the roles of various actors, as highlighted by the Sudan Tribune (09/01/2020), who used the passive voice to avoid assigning blame or responsibility in conflict in Darfur, stating, *"the problem that occurred in El Geneina has two dimensions: the first is the politicization of tribes in Darfur states, and the second is the proliferation of weapons in the region."*

Indigenous peoples were constructed as facing the same challenges as everyone as highlighted here by Kanngieser (21/10/2018) in her article on Nauru and climate change: *"Everyone on Nauru – Indigenous Nauruans and refugees alike – is experiencing the impacts of one the greatest social, economic and political threats faced by the world today: global environmental change."* Despite the unification of Indigenous peoples with non-Indigenous peoples under this discourse, the importance of Indigenous knowledge was still recognised. However, it was discussed in isolation of Indigenous peoples, and used for non-Indigenous priorities. This was especially evident in Farrell's (29/12/2019) article in the context of Australian wildfires:

"There are two significant advantages of traditional burning that make it a good fit for property protection. Firstly, it can be implemented safely close to assets with minimal equipment. The second advantage is that it has an ecological end-state as an objective, often aiming to create an open, park-like vegetation structure that has much less potential for damaging crown fires."

In this case, rather than being directed towards the benefits of Indigenous peoples, Indigenous practices of traditional burning is operationalised as a cheaper and more ecologically friendly practice for supporting Australian property owners.

For solutions, narratives around overpopulation, migration and urbanisation with frames of civil society as incompetent led to calls for the increased governance of people. Writing in the context of landslides in Bangladesh, Amas (25/06/2019) demonstrates this sentiment, stating: *"Disaster risk*

experts and local groups say the dangers are exacerbated by communities themselves, through rapid and unplanned urbanisation."

4.4.5.   Self-determination

The self-determination discourse centred Indigenous peoples' experiences. One way this was done was by opening articles with describing Indigenous peoples' experiences. Indigenous authors Williamson et al., (09/01/2020) writing on, bushfires in Australia, demonstrates this:

"How do you support people forever attached to a landscape after an inferno tears through their homelands: decimating native food sources, burning through ancient scarred trees and destroying ancestral and totemic plants and animals? The fact is, the experience of Aboriginal peoples in the fire crisis engulfing much of Australia is vastly different to non-Indigenous peoples."

This excerpt and others like it highlight the unique experiences of Indigenous peoples, which worked in tandem with frames of current disaster management as inappropriate to the context. Elbein's (01/07/2019) article on storms in the USA shows this:

"[W]hen aid does become available, records can be a problem. "Our Native American producers aren't as accustomed to the detailed recordkeeping that non-Indian producers do on a regular basis," Ducheneaux said, "because we don't have the access to capital in the same way, which would require reporting your livestock." Because Indians are less able to get loans, Ducheneaux explained, they are also less likely to carry through on the sort of recordkeeping that becomes vital once disaster strikes".

In contrast to the technocracy discourse, this discourse framed government as performative, as noted by Goering (04/06/2019) in the context of drought in the USA:

""As we looked at the future and where we were going to get water reliably, sustainably, we were really looking within," said Harasick at [Los Angeles Department of Water and Power]'s high-rise headquarters, where pebble gardens filled with succulents border a reflective pool."

This is similar to the ways the humanitarian intervention discourse framed government as incompetent but is more nuanced in that authors include quotes from government officials, which they undermine through parody.

Authors engaging in this discourse did highlight unique circumstances that made Indigenous peoples more vulnerable to some disasters. However, in doing so they managed to avoid voyeuristic accounts of suffering. Seymour's (22/04/2020) article on the COVID-19 pandemic is an example. In it, Indigenous peoples' suffering is not described in detail, and individuals are not mentioned. Instead,

Seymour (22/04/2020) highlights their knowledge and expertise as a mental health first aid First Nations co-facilitator:

"As a mental health first aid First Nations co-facilitator, I have witnessed first-hand many tragedies within remote First Nations communities like Eabametoong (Fort Hope), Eagle Lake and Lac Seul. Homes can be unsafe, overcrowding is a huge concern, there is no clean running water, young girls are vulnerable to trafficking and there is a lack of timely access to health-care."

Many authors engaging with the self-determination discourse were Indigenous, but some were not. These non-Indigenous authors typically adopted an approach of 'learning with the reader'. An example of this is Goering (04/06/2019), writing about drought in the USA, where they extensively quoted and credited Indigenous peoples, elevating the importance of listening to Indigenous peoples' experiences. This shift in expertise reflects a recognition of Indigenous peoples as knowledgeable, capable and aware of their political situations. As Stacey (23/06/2019) writes in the context of wildfires,

"Nearly five years after the Tsilhqot'in Nation's landmark Supreme Court of Canada judgment, the Nation has laid out a detailed path for partnership with BC and Canada to ensure that Indigenous jurisdiction is recognized and supported in emergency management."

Solutions under this discourse were not explicitly stated but, as disasters were framed as political, it follows that solutions were also political and therefore similar to those under the systems of oppression discourse. Authors also alluded to the complexity of finding solutions, as exemplified by Bond and Whop (02/04/2020) in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia: *"[I]n a nation that steadfastly refuses to meaningfully recognise Indigenous sovereignty, this clearly is a bigger problem than public health and one likely to linger far longer than the coronavirus crisis"*

4.5. Discussion

4.5.1. Discourses interlink to create two meta-discourses: The dominance of the environment and politicizing disaster

The five media discourses of Indigenous peoples and disaster – natural disasters, humanitarian intervention, systems of oppression, technocracy, and self-determination – appear to be entangled. The natural disasters discourse worked with the humanitarian intervention and technocratic discourses to create a depoliticized discourse on dominance of the environment. A second stream of discourses, self-determination and systems of oppression, work together to create a discourse that politicizes disaster. Further, some articles blended both the natural disasters and systems of oppression discourses as a part of their narrative structure, using environmental phenomena as a means to discuss political struggles.

Environmental discourse gave focus to the physical processes that create hazards (particularly global climate change), whilst minimising political and historical processes that create vulnerability. The mention of carbon storage is an example. Carbon storage is an example of climate change mitigation aimed at reducing the occurrence of future hazards that are driven by climate change. This emphasizes the importance of hazards, particularly climate change, over vulnerability in shaping risk. The mention of carbon stores being destroyed by wildfires also constructs disaster-affected places as crucial to all humanity, rather than merely to Indigenous peoples affected by wildfires; a discursive framing that could justify outside action that may or may not support Indigenous populations. As Erickson (2020) argues, discourses that portray environmental change as the defining problem of all humanity legitimise approaches that dispossess Indigenous peoples of their land. Here, the natural disasters and technocracy discourse complement each other, as the technocracy discourse unites Indigenous peoples and settlers in the face of environmental change. Overall, by bringing in global risks and climate mitigation, authors sideline Indigenous peoples' experience, potentially pathing a justification for greater management of Indigenous lands in the interest of the global community. In this way, Indigenous lands are constructed as a global commons.

These discourses aligned with other studies on how the environment is treated as the cause for disasters. Significantly, the ways climate change discourse justified focusing on natural processes (Kelman et al., 2016), the naturalisation of conflict (Branch, 2018), and focusing on who is vulnerable rather than why (Carraro et al., 2021; Ribot, 2014). Therefore, the 'natural disasters' discourse does not exclude vulnerability, but rather adopts a narrow definition of it, perhaps one that would be termed 'exposure', 'physical vulnerability' or 'environmental vulnerability' in other contexts (e.g. Boruff and Cutter, 2007; Ford et al., 2006).

However, in contrast to previous studies, we find less dominant discourses of systems of oppression and self-determination were used together to highlight the political causes of disasters. In assigning

responsibility to systems, the deep-rooted and systematic nature of Indigenous peoples' oppression was evident. By doing this, reporters avoided becoming entangled within the blame rhetoric that some critique as hindering addressing structural inequalities (Young, 2006). Both discourses created strong links between present day conditions and historical processes by being specific. In this regard, Baldo's (07/01/2020) piece about conflict in Sudan was particularly significant as it was the only one that tied conflict to historical and political processes, thus implying that civil society was not responsible. These discourses did not deny environmental change as contributing to disaster, but rather positioned it as one of many factors that interact with ongoing settler colonialism (Guernsey, 2021). This is contrary to dominant discourses of disaster in the media, which favour portrayal of dramatic hazards, rather than slower, long-lasting processes of vulnerability (Curato, 2018b). It is also different to much mainstream media, which does not focus on colonialism in Indigenous contexts (Walker et al., 2019). Therefore, a minority of expert news media – most of these were authored by Indigenous peoples and focused on Australia and Canada – appear to challenge dominant discourses about both disasters and Indigenous peoples. These less dominant discourses differ to findings of others, such as Wilkes et al. (2010) and Roosvall and Tegelberg (2015) who critique media for omitting the political perspectives of Indigenous peoples in environmental issues. They align, instead, with discourses in fields such as disaster anthropology and political ecology, that view disasters as socially constructed.

4.5.2.   The limited role of the private sector

Across all discourses there was no real acknowledgement of the complex role of the private sector in disasters. The systems of oppression and self-determination discourses painted a simplistic view of the private sector, portraying the sector as unregulated and free to do what it likes, often as part of extractive industries and agribusiness. There were textual silences in the other discourses about the role of the private sector, giving limited attention to its role. As others (e.g. Meriläinen et al., 2020) note, this lack of attention to the private sector may be a problem because it fails to account for the potentially transformative role the private sector can have in risk management, and the role that the government can have in enabling risk reduction and limiting risk creation. For example, while Angelo (21/04/2020) highlights the role of agribusiness, loggers and drug traffickers in Brazil in displacing Indigenous peoples, the reporter details how they are enabled to do so by what is in essence a complicit government (Ioris, 2020). Our findings of the limited and unidimensional view of private sector aligns with broader research on the private sector in disaster management, which shows that it is only superficially engaged in it (Blackburn and Pelling, 2018). We therefore call for deeper examination to reveal how governments work with the private sector, whether this acts to prioritise economic growth or, as Parthasarathy (2018), suggests delve into how current neoliberal global political economy prioritises economic growth by working with private for-profit companies and leaves non-profit NGOs and civil society to fill in the gaps.

4.5.3.   Conflicting roles of the government

These media framings have important implications for the role of the state. The humanitarian and technocracy discourse aligned with the 'natural disasters' discourse and portrayed Indigenous peoples as vulnerable and helpless. The difference between these discourses hinged on how the government was portrayed. In the humanitarian discourse, the government was constructed as oppressive and/or incompetent, necessitating humanitarian intervention knowledgeable and competent from NGOs. Overall, the humanitarian discourse constructed humanitarian intervention as both necessary and benevolent, depoliticising it.

These implications are consistent with those of others focused on the shift from government to governance in disaster, including the hollowing out of the national level in disaster management (Hendriks and Boersma, 2019), and shifts in focus from the state to the individual in humanitarianism (Reid-Henry, 2014). The shrinking role of the state is a hallmark of neoliberalism, and thus its principles likely underlie much of the humanitarian discourse. We see this through the use of phrases such as 'participation', 'empowerment' and 'capacity building', which suggests that disaster management is being decentralised and localised from the state to the individual (Pyles, 2011). Some further argue that the language of participation and collaboration disguises the ways that state and/or international power is extended into the peoples and communities that are to be 'empowered' (Fache, 2014; Nadasdy, 2005), which could be the case here given the vagueness around the nature of collaboration with local NGOs. Likewise, the necessariness and benevolence of humanitarian discourses is consistent with various scholars who have long critiqued the depoliticising nature of humanitarianism (e.g. Ong, 2019), as well as those who argue that neoliberal forces are extended through populist media discourse during disaster (e.g. Pyles et al., 2017).

Conversely, the technocracy discourse constructed the government as responsible and competent, eliminating the need for humanitarian intervention. In line with the 'natural disasters' discourse, disasters were portrayed as natural, while the role of the state in disaster creation was masked; a problem when the state is actively involved in sustaining vulnerability (Huang, 2018; Lucchesi, 2019; Walch, 2018). This was especially evident where conflict was framed as premised on ethnicity, which is an oversimplification that masks processes such as militarisation, border politics, systemic marginality, amongst others (Abusharaf, 2010). Thus, the technocracy discourse lacked any interrogation of how vulnerability was produced, rendering it a technical problem to be addressed by disaster 'experts' targeting interventions in passive, local communities (Carraro et al., 2021; Mikulewicz, 2019).

Some articles within the technocracy discourse also portrayed Indigenous peoples as facing the same challenges as other groups (e.g. Kanngieser, 21/10/2018). As previously mentioned, this reinforces the importance of the environment. However, it does more than that too: by uniting people against a

threat, people are portrayed as the same, erasing their unique histories and differential vulnerability (Chaturvedi and Doyle, 2015; Davis and Todd, 2017). This potentially paves the way for responses to disaster risk that are not cognizant of differential circumstances of Indigenous peoples, separating and operationalising Indigenous disaster management knowledge from Indigenous peoples.

The self-determination discourse was the only discourse that acknowledged the agency and expertise of Indigenous peoples and did not render them a spectacle for the settler gaze (Daigle, et al., 2020). Here neither governments nor external NGOs were constructed as necessary. The self-determination discourse portrayed government as neglectful of Indigenous peoples. However, authors took this further to suggest performative governance (Ding, 2020) is being enacted. This is where the state theatrically deploys symbols (e.g. statements, signs) to foster an impression of good governance to its citizens (Ding, 2020). Performative governance explains the inclusion of cultural approaches to emergency management within the technocracy discourse. While the technocracy discourse constructs the government as caring and responsive to Indigenous peoples' needs, for instance through its support for Indigenous knowledge, the self-determination discourse counteracts this by recognising government action, but constructing it as performative, rather than substantive. Our finding aligns with others, e.g., Sylvander (2021), who argue that states often create policies that appear to respond to Indigenous demands but rather serve a neoliberal state agenda, thus running in opposition to meaningful autonomy for Indigenous peoples. However, many Indigenous groups do advocate for meaningful government action nationally and internationally (e.g. Whyte, 2020; Young, 2020). What appears missing from this discourse, then, is the meaningful and substantive action that governments can take with respect to Indigenous peoples' self-determination.

4.5.4. Care as a means of governance

Cutting across dominant discourses was the use of care as a form of governance. Care is a slippery concept (Bellacasa, 2017), but what emerged in our findings is humanitarian care, specifically the processes through which intervention in Indigenous settings is justified through care for Indigenous peoples, usually in terms of attention to Indigenous peoples' survival over political concerns. Time and time again, both governments and NGOs were constructed as caring for Indigenous peoples, supported though imagery of women and children, which strengthened the innocence and victim status of Indigenous peoples (Mostafanezhad, 2014). The reduction of children's bodies as apolitical subjects without agency is a common means of gendering vulnerability. As Hesford and Lewis (2016) argue, doing so acts to create a rescue narrative under the guise of humanitarianism. Sentiments of care also work to condition processes of control and structure of colonial violence, when enacted by states (Chhotray, 2014; Lindroth and Sinevaara-Niskane, 2017) and NGOs (Fassin, 2012; Kurasawa, 2013).

Here we see these processes at play: as imagery of bodily vulnerability is a powerful means of addressing contested histories and the proper future and past (Knudsen and Stage, 2014), such imagery reinforces a global order in which Indigenous peoples are suffering and need help, be it from NGOs or the state. The technocracy discourse was most frequent in articles about Australia and Canada, where international humanitarian action is less common. As such, it may be useful here to draw upon the concept of settler-humanitarianism, in which the settler state takes on a humanitarian role that is justified through care (Maxwell, 2017). This aligns with emerging literature, which highlights how the liberal state uses care as an instrument to manage disasters (Pallister-Wilkins, 2020).

Although this may seem contradictory to the ways that technocratic approaches to disaster management have sought to manage and control people traditionally, this is not the case. Instead, in constructing Indigenous peoples as suffering to the point that they cannot survive without state intervention, the state is legitimised and constructed as benevolent rather than genocidal (Lucchesi, 2019; Razack, 2015). Indeed, from this lens, humanitarian and technocracy both draw on care as a means of governance.

Such a conceptualisation of care is in stark contrast to other forms of care – such as care-ethics and radical care. These forms of care provide a way to think ethically about relationships between the self and others by focusing on interdependency, reciprocity and relationality whilst remaining attentive to inequitable dynamics and addressing these in solidarity with others (Brannelly and Boulton, 2017; Hobart and Kneese, 2020; Raghuram, 2016; Woodly et al., 2021). Applying care-ethics to disasters and humanitarian crises would frame those affected by disasters not as distant others, but rather as people connected to each other through processes such as colonisation. Addressing disasters whilst remaining attentive to these differences in power moves away from caring for the individual, and towards caring with/within the community, which challenge root causes of problems (Gilligan, 1993; Surman et al., 2021). Importantly, this caring with and within communities is implied in some articles engaging with the self-determination discourse, for example where Seymour (22/04/2020) writes from her experience of health facilitator working with her communities and others. Although these forms of care did not show up frequently, they do offer an alternative way of viewing care potentially productive for affecting systemic change.

4.5.5. Different temporalities

Time was a significant and differentiated theme across these five discourses. All discourses created a sense of urgency. For instance, our findings show that Indigenous peoples were used to elevate the urgency of a changing climate and environmental change more broadly in line with previous work (Belfer et al., 2017; Roosvall and Tegelberg, 2015). However, we also found that Indigenous peoples were used to highlight two other forms of urgency, political urgency – a need to move away from

'politics as usual' to avoid disaster – and post-disaster urgency – a need to recover and rebuild quickly. Yet while all discourses were engaged in urgency, different ones focused on different temporalities. The 'natural disasters' discourse focused on the future, portraying it as uncertain and dangerous, much as how Erickson (2020) highlights how the future is often used to justify unjust action in the present. The systems of oppression and self-determination discourses focused on the past, revealing the importance of history in shaping ongoing vulnerability and the Indigenous experience of disaster. In doing so, vulnerability was recognised as a process (Hsu et al., 2015). The humanitarian discourse focused on the present by discussing immediate needs. Combined with the sense of urgency created, this acted to eliminate the need for political concerns in disaster risk reduction and further depoliticising the humanitarian discourse.

4.5. Conclusion

We conducted a critical discourse analysis of the expert news media reporting on disasters and Indigenous peoples, finding five discourses: natural disasters and systems of oppression (which differentially framed disasters), and humanitarian intervention, technocracy, and self-determination (which differentially framed actors). We have discussed these in relation to disaster governance, principally around the contested role of the state, the varying framings of NGOs and Indigenous peoples involved in disaster management, and what this means for how disasters should be managed. Through our discussion, humanitarian care emerged as a form of governance in a way that did not align with the diverse ways care is conceptualised elsewhere (e.g. care-ethics, radical care) (Bellacasa, 2017; Hobart and Kneese, 2020). We conclude here by working through what the dominant and less dominant discourses posit about governance, alongside questions of who is cared for/about in disasters and how that care is performed in the expert news media.

Dominant discourses of natural disasters and humanitarian intervention, combined with a weaker discourse of technocracy, worked to justify outside action. These discourses were underpinned by the use of care and compassion, which carved out a role for both international NGOs and the State, driving agendas of international and settler humanitarianism. The expert news media mostly implied that governments and NGOs should care about the environment, rather than sociopolitical processes that underlie disasters. This care should be performed by experts (e.g. humanitarian agencies and/or government officials), who rapidly intervene in environmental problems to resolve them. In doing so, this surpasses important questions around politics, and especially self-determination, resulting in a colonial form of care, like that described by Ong (2019). Whilst caring about more-than-humans and other-than-humans is important for many Indigenous peoples (e.g. Bawaka Country et al., 2013; Yazzie and Baldy, 2018), the separation of people from these is not. Therefore, such a framing does not only neglect care about people (who are impacted by both environmental change but also historical and present social and political processes that lead to disasters), but it also conflicts with many Indigenous worldviews. That the majority of the expert news media continued to adhere to this dominant ideology reflects a trend visible in international politics in which Indigenous peoples are increasingly governed and controlled under the guise of care and compassion, sometimes through appearing to align with Indigenous priorities around self-determination.

Less-dominant discourses of systems of oppression and self-determination politicised disasters and suggested political change to address disasters. However, these discourses often masked the roles and/or capability of some actors, such as the private sector and government, as necessary for political change. Again, which is interesting given that academic literature does highlight the importance of government in political change (e.g. Carrigan, 2014; Young, 2020).

In terms of care, these discourses did allude to some ways in which colonial, paternalistic forms of care can be contested. The first and most frequently invoked way of doing so was through reframing and retemporalising disasters as slow, ongoing sociopolitical processes, often rooted in colonialism and neoliberalism. Here, the disaster process is not a spectacle, but a normal condition stemming from colonialism, and resulting in intergenerational trauma, marginalisation, and dispossession of land. In doing so, these discourses encouraged governments and NGOs to care about Indigenous peoples who are negatively impacted by these processes. In caring *about* people, rather than *for* people, focus is directed towards addressing processes such as colonialism and working in solidarity with Indigenous peoples, rather than imposing paternalistic, colonial and humanitarian forms of care.

The second means of contesting colonial care was through reframing governments as uncaring, genocidal, and manipulative in settler colonial contexts, for instance through referring to past invasion and ongoing conflict. This pushes back against frames of a caring and benevolent government, bringing into question the legitimacy and authority of the state, which then lays the foundations for arguments for Indigenous peoples' self-determination and sovereignty.

Finally, when mentioned the private sector, including the extractive industries and agribusiness, was responsibilised to care about Indigenous peoples, through the sociopolitical processes they were implicated in that create disasters such as climate change and public health emergencies. This sits firmly in contrast to dominant discourses presented here and elsewhere (e.g. Bankoff, 2019), where civil society and especially marginalised groups are responsibilised for the situations they are in.

As care gains traction in disaster studies and related fields, we suggest that future disaster research focuses on engaging with the politics of care, care-ethics, radical care, and other forms of care more thoroughly, particularly as care is vital yet underappreciated in navigating precarious worlds (Hobart and Kneese, 2020; Woodly et al., 2021).

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Chapter V

International humanitarian narratives of disasters, crises and Indigeneity

Abstract

Narratives are a means of making sense of disasters and crises. The humanitarian sector communicates stories widely, carrying with them representations of peoples and events. Such communications have been critiqued for misrepresenting and/or silencing the root causes of disasters and crises, depoliticising them. What has not been researched is how such communications represent disasters and crises in Indigenous settings. This is important because processes such as colonisation are often the root cause of disaster for Indigenous Peoples, but are typically masked in communications. We identify and characterise narratives in humanitarian communications involving Indigenous Peoples by conducting a narrative analysis of humanitarian communications. We identify five narratives: humanitarians act, attributing culpability, the people help the people, the nation tackles disaster, and innovating our way out of disaster. Narratives differ based upon how the humanitarians who produce them think disasters and crises should be governed. Most articles carved out a space for humanitarian action, whilst others focused on witnessing, reporting and responsibilising international audiences. We conclude that humanitarian communications reflect more about the relationship between the international humanitarian community and its audience than reality, and reflect on how narratives mask global processes that link audiences of humanitarian communications with Indigenous Peoples.

Keywords: Humanitarian action, disasters, narratives, Indigenous Peoples, communication, emergency management

5.1. Introduction

The stories we tell are ways for making sense of the world, especially when crises happen. Language serves as a legitimiser of events and ideas, so narrative analysis is an appropriate means to reveal identities, shared (and not shared) values about society, and exploratory reasoning as imagined by humanitarian actors (Vincent, 2000; Barnett, 2013). This is because narratives are a means of understanding the social world (Barkin and Gurevitch, 1987; Somers, 1994), so our ability to interpret the world increases as we master the various narratives and begin to employ them (Vincent, 2000). A narrative can be defined as an account of a series of actions and events, unfolding over time, in which characters encounter trouble and strive to resolve or survive it (Bruner, 2004). Characters act in ways that are meaningful (i.e., they have social significance), and actions are undertaken with motive (the emotionally charged desire to achieve or prevent something) (Mroz et al., 2021). When looking at how others utilise narratives, we can understand how agents represent, legitimate and contest order (Spandler, 2020). Because narratives provide understanding into "how things should be", by examining shared understandings in narratives, we reveal values of the society that humanitarian actors live in (Wong and Breheny, 2018).

When powerful and visible actors tell stories, their interpretations, meanings and values are communicated to vast audiences. In the humanitarian and disaster response sector, narratives, and the representations involved, are one of the principal tools used to leverage power in the form of money, public outcry, governmental attention, or some other social process or outcome (Norton, 2011). Therefore, narratives have a clear impact on practice. Combined with this is an increasingly competitive atmosphere among aid agencies, which need to compete for visibility and donors (Chouliaraki, 2013). As such, the humanitarian media and communication sector is rapidly growing, with focus on the role of narrative and images in provoking moral responses, cultivating care, compassion, responsibility for and action aimed at alleviating the suffering of distant strangers (Orgad and Seu, 2014; Wasif, 2020).

We identify, characterise, and examine humanitarian actors' narratives of humanitarian action during disaster involving Indigenous Peoples. We adopt a narrow and normative definition of 'humanitarians', following Fiddian-Qasmiyeh's (2019) definition of the 'international humanitarian community', which is hegemonic and comprised, inter alia, of UN agencies and international NGOs. We recognise this is as one of a plurality of international communities of response to crises, but focus on this community as it is so visible and powerful in setting the discourse and humanitarian agenda.

We focus on Indigenous Peoples for three reasons. Localisation and decentralisation of humanitarian action, disaster risk reduction and aid has been at the top of international policy agendas, such as the World Humanitarian Summit and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (Al-Abdeh

and Patel, 2019; Hendriks and Boersma, 2019; Gómez, 2021). As a part of this, Indigenous Peoples have become a key target and actor in humanitarian initiatives (Ali *et al.*, 2021). Yet, humanitarian initiatives and disaster management can be colonising in Indigenous settings because they change Indigenous communities based on outsider values and/or maintain the status quo in line with colonial agendas (Saini, 2018). In response, there have been drives to ensure such action is culturally appropriate (Yumagulova *et al.*, 2020). Little is known about whether these changes are reflected in humanitarian communications.

Secondly, the case of Indigenous Peoples matters because they exist in spaces where the legitimacy of government is contested in ways that are different to other marginalised groups (Siddiqi and Canuday, 2018). Unlike many marginalised groups who work towards equality within a nation state, Indigenous Peoples are often working towards a degree of independence from nation states (Arvin et al., 2013). Throughout this paper we pay particular attention to issues of governance, keeping the self-determination of Indigenous Peoples in mind specifically.

Thirdly, non-Indigenous audiences are often unfamiliar with Indigenous politics (e.g., self-determination) (e.g., Merino 2020). This amplifies the importance of humanitarian communications as a source of information. In these contexts, such organisations are powerful in representing disasters in Indigenous contexts, yet have not been previously analysed. In our discussion we argue that these narratives mediate the relationship between audiences and those affected by disaster in ways that mask how audiences may be complicit in unequal power relationships. Drawing on care-ethics – a relational and feminist approach to care – we argue that audiences do not view themselves as helping 'distant strangers', but rather as embedded within unequal power relations that place different groups of people at risk. In doing so, inequalities across global scales are brought to the fore.

5.2. The context: disasters, humanitarian response, and Indigenous Peoples

5.2.1. Disaster and Humanitarian Narratives

What constitutes a disaster, crisis or emergency is contested as these constructs are not objective but categories that signify a problem defined by someone, usually an organisation with some form of power (Anderson *et al.*, 2020; Bandopadhyay, 2022). There has been a steady reframing of disasters from abnormal, natural, unpredictable events, to socially constructed processes that build up over time (Hewitt, 1983), often aligned with concepts such as slow violence – mundane, creeping and often ignored violent processes – and necropolitics – the subjugation of life to the power of death (Mbembé and Meintjes, 2003; Nixon, 2009). These concepts recognise that unequal power structures place some people at greater risk in ways that are often invisible. In this way power inequalities are recognised as root causes of disasters, rather than the environment.

Once an emergency is declared, who should act and what should be done is shaped through labels, categorisations, narratives, and other discursive constructions. For example, the ways human suffering is portrayed calls on humanitarians to be present on the ground with their staff, values and toolkits, carrying the assumption that humanitarians and their toolkits are relevant, useful, and welcome (Dijkzeul and Sandvik, 2019). Narratives about Indigenous Peoples often misrepresent them through essentialisation, sometimes constructing them as deviant to justify intervention (Tsai et al. 2020; de Leeuw et al., 2010). These categories signal the creation of fictionalised enemies, objects/subjects in danger, agents ideally placed to undertake rescue, and social and political needs (Mbembe, 2008; Dijkzeul and Sandvik, 2019; Khoja-Moolji, 2020). Thus, humanitarianism has emerged as a global discourse that relies and reproduces unequal geopolitical relationships through catastrophic images (and text) about the 'other', who are constantly suffering (Tascón, 2017).

Narrativising— the process of depicting a setting, characters and a meaningful sequence of events and actions unfolding over time – helps people deal with disasters, for instance through understanding crisis and galvanising collective action (Bendix, 1990; Chamlee-Wright, 2018; Mroz et al., 2021). Yet, narratives about disaster may constrain understandings of disasters and those involved in them. Narratives are never neutral but told from certain perspectives and social locations. They are intertwined with processes of meaning-making that reinforce particular social, political and theological frameworks (Belser, 2015). For example, in both disaster and humanitarian research harm is linked to broad structural issues and power inequalities that unevenly distribute risk and harm, such as oppression (Lewis, 1976; Mbembé and Meintjes, 2003; Ong, 2019), although many humanitarian actors use framings of disasters as unpredictable to justify short-lived emergency relief efforts that do

not consider the political economy of places (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2019). With this, the role of certain actors (e.g., the State) in vulnerability creation is obscured (Carrigan, 2010). Additionally, activities viewed as deeply political are reduced to matters of techniques, bureaucracy, and left to 'experts' (Ferguson, 1990; Howitt et al., 2012).

5.2.2.   The Humanitarian sector

We focus our analysis on the most visible and powerful part of the humanitarian sector: the normative, Northern-led 'international humanitarian community' (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2019). These actors have been criticised for driving the corporatization of humanitarianism (Chouliaraki, 2010, 2013), while their collaboration with local NGOs have been critiqued as symbolic, bolstering the legitimacy of the international humanitarian community without political nor economic commitment (Wright, 2018). This group of actors have also been criticised for their structural racism, including the monopoly, misuse and abuse of power, alongside resistance to decolonization (Aloudat and Khan, 2022; Majumdar and Mukerjee, 2022). However, the humanitarian sector is incredibly diverse (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2019). Some choose to work within existing power structures (e.g., working with national governments), whilst others work outside of these (e.g., in the form of advocacy) (Stoddard, 2003; Akbarzadeh et al., 2021). Religious actors often seek to bridge secular and religious worlds by focusing on social issues (Wilkinson, 2018), whilst others are more operations-focused (Stoddard, 2003). There is also increased regionalisation of humanitarian assistance (e.g., South-South collaboration) (Fernando and Hilhorst, 2006; Ong, 2019), recognition of informal and local disaster response (Lewis 2019; Duda et al., 2020), North-South collaboration (Charles et al., 2010; Vukojević, 2013), and responsibilisation of the private sector (Atal and Richey, 2021). These shifts in governance (Tierney, 2012) are complemented by paradigm shifts within humanitarianism, such as shifts away from traditional humanitarianism (focused on immediate response and addressing basic needs) towards 'resilience' humanitarianism, that seeks to address underlying, structural causes of harm (Hilhorst, 2018). Despite the rise in this approach, enacting the type of change required to resolve root causes of vulnerability is challenging. Generally, humanitarian action addresses the capacities of people in the face of structural vulnerabilities, which may or may not also be addressed (e.g., Abdelnour and Saeed, 2014).

5.2.3.   Narratives in humanitarian communications

Humanitarian communications do not necessarily reflect the practices of humanitarians. Instead, they are constructed by humanitarians based on ways they believe will bolster their credibility in the eyes of audiences (Gourevitch and Lake, 2011). This matters because, through the use of carefully-constructed narratives, humanitarian communications call upon their audiences to care for and act in solidarity with distant others (Abraham, 2015; Gill, 2020), whilst constructing themselves in relation

to events in ways that justify their intervention on moral grounds (Givoni, 2011). They also may position corporations and consumers as actors who can solve problems, distracting from inequality, and repositioning them as heroes, rather than agents implicated in unequal power relations (Richey, 2018).

Humanitarian communications have been critiqued for depoliticising disasters, often by masking root causes of disaster and structural inequalities by focusing on suffering and on basic needs (Gill, 2020). Thus, humanitarian communications have been critiqued for inhibiting complex debates about the root causes of disasters, and radical solutions for these, which include addressing neoliberalism and forms of North-South dependence (Lugo-Ocando, 2014). Such simplification and misrepresentation of crises is reflective of the market logics imbued in humanitarian communication: emotions of potential donors are a scarce resource that humanitarians compete for (Gill, 2020). As a practice that is under constant scrutiny (Orgad, 2017), and which is used to leverage power and funds, it is necessary to carefully analyse and critique humanitarian communication, as well as think about other ways of communicating. For example, in an effort to bring power relations to the fore, Gill (2020) and Houbeish (2021) argue for care-ethics in humanitarian communications, where mutual concern and trust is built. They argue that doing so challenges colonial stereotypes, lessening the viewing of people as distant sufferers and rather people connected to each other through complex power relations. This matters because it refocuses attention to the causes of disasters and crisis, rather than focusing solely on suffering.

5.2.4. Indigenous Peoples in disasters and humanitarian response

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) states that 'Indigenous' should be understood in reference to a community of peoples sharing intergenerational ancestry and cultural aspects with original (pre-colonial) occupants of ancestral lands in a specific region of the world (UN, 2007). There are some fundamental differences between Indigenous worldviews and non-Indigenous ones that can shape narratives. We outline some of these as they pertain to the fields of disasters and humanitarianism. Fundamentally, communitarianism, collectivism and relationality are critical to many Indigenous groups (Chávez Ixcaquic, 2014; Banerjee, 2016; Karides, 2016). These relations extend beyond humans, as non-humans and more-than-humans are viewed as sentient (Lozano, 2016; Yazzie and Baldy, 2018; Richardson-Ngwenya, 2021). Drawing on the work of Lorena Cabnal (2015) – an Indigenous communitarian Maya-Xinka feminist – on *Cuerpo-territorio* (body-territory) – community and territory are a single subject of political agency that resists and identifies violations against women's bodies and territories as a part of the same process (Zaragocin, 2018; Mollett, 2021). In many contexts, Indigenous women organise against neoliberal processes, particularly extractivism (Kuokkanen, 2019; Santamaria *et al.*, 2019). Indigenous women play an important role in Indigenous communities, nodding to how many

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Indigenous groups had very different theories around gender pre-colonisation, and that heteropatriarchy was imported through colonialism (Kim 2020). In Chuukeee ontology, for example, all beings are connected through maternal creation. Women embody the environment, making visible in human domains its broader role in giving birth to all living things, human and nonhuman, spirits and non-spirits. With this, then, many Indigenous Peoples have different views of time and death, with intergenerational responsibilities spanning to descendants and ancestors (Ratuva, 2007; Matiure, 2011).

When humanitarians (especially powerful actors of the international humanitarian community) are unfamiliar with Indigenous worldviews, they may fundamentally change Indigenous communities based on outsider values (Saini, 2018). Often, such engagements are frustrated by positivist, technical and managerial approaches to disaster that do not recognise the role of settler colonialism in the production of risk and vulnerability (Thomassin et al., 2019). Thus, humanitarian action has been considered a form of colonialism in some Indigenous contexts (Watson, 2017). Ongoing impacts of colonialism, such as this, impacts Indigenous Peoples' ability to deal with disasters, often eroding Indigenous institutions (Saini, 2018). The state often fails to take Indigenous expertise seriously (Thomassin et al., 2019) and there is discrimination against Indigenous Peoples in many contexts (Wambrauw, 2017). Stereotypes can filter into disaster management, so there needs to be space for Indigenous Peoples to bring their own worldviews and knowledge (Lyons *et al.*, 2020). Aside from protecting against harmful stereotypes and ensuring Indigenous Knowledge and culturally appropriate Indigenous institutions are drawn upon in disaster management (Cuaton and Su, 2020; Yumagulova *et al.*, 2021; Quinn et al., 2022), doing so moves towards self-determination of Indigenous Peoples: a foundational right and principle that ensures Indigenous Peoples choose how they are governed (Napoleon, 2005).

5.3. Methodology

To identify articles, we searched four databases: PreventionWeb (similar to Chmutina et al., (2019) study on language in disaster risk reduction), ReliefWeb, UNDP, and the UN's permanent forum on Indigenous Peoples. We chose this approach as these sites included communications of many international NGOs (INGOs) and agencies that are reflective of the international humanitarian community. This approach facilitates interrogation of the most powerful and visible organisations.

Although the term 'Indigenous' is widely used and accepted by the UN, it is not universally accepted, with some groups preferring to use language such as 'tribes' (Banerjee, 2016). Therefore, whilst the term "Indigenous" retrieved the most results, we also searched synonyms such as "tribe". This was an iterative process that involved conducting test searches to determine how to generate the highest number of relevant articles. We conducted searches in all UN languages. Inclusion criteria were that the author organisation had to be discussing their own initiatives in the context of a disaster, and included at least one paragraph that focuses on Indigenous Peoples. Following Ahmad (2018), we view the disaster/non-disaster binary as unhelpful. As such, we move away from viewing disasters as discrete events and include processes such as climate change, structural violence, and conflict, amongst others, in our inclusion criteria. We embrace the messiness of such an approach, and consider the disaster/problem identified in the article an element of our analysis.

There is no definitive approach to conducting a narrative analysis, and researchers have conducted narrative analysis heterogeneously and flexibly to fit their needs (Polkinghorne, 1995; Wong and Breheny, 2018). Narrative researchers interpret meaning through analysis of plotlines, thematic structures and social and cultural referents (Kim 2016). Given our aim to identify themes that are common, and those that diverge, across different texts as well as patterns, narrative threads, tensions and themes (Kim 2016), we follow Polkinghorne's (1995) paradigmatic analysis of narrative data, rather than narrative analysis per se (which seeks to consolidate various narratives into one, but not necessarily to analyse them further). Following Labov (1972) the following were coded deductively:

- Abstract (the summary of the story)
- Orientation (when and where the events occur and which characters are involved. We included more-than-humans and non-humans as actors if they were framed that way, as many Indigenous ontologies view elements of the environment as sentient).
- Complicating action (sequences of action that move the plot forward); evaluation (narrator's comments and interpretations of the story); resolution (the outcome of the story).
- Coda (the ending clauses of the narrative)

We combined this deductive approach with grounded thematic coding (Chien, 2019) through first cycle coding methods (e.g., initial coding) (Saldaña, 2013). Following this, we grouped codes into categories and eventually themes. Overall, we retained 95 articles for analysis, 94 of which were in English and one of which was in Spanish.

5.4.   Results

Of the 95 articles, most focused on South and Central America, Southeast Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa, although a minority also included Small Island Developing States, the Middle East, North Africa and North America.

We identified five main narratives: humanitarians act (78% of articles), the nation tackles disaster (2% of articles), the people help the people (7% of articles), attributing culpability (14% of articles), and innovating our way out of disaster (4% of articles). These which were exclusive (i.e., each article aligned with one narrative only). We further identified four sub-narratives in the 'humanitarians act' narrative: humanitarians save Indigenous Peoples (37% of all articles), humanitarians save Indigenous women (8% of all articles), humanitarians help Indigenous Peoples help themselves (8% of all articles), humanitarians help Indigenous women help themselves (14% of all articles), and humanitarians support governments (5% of all articles). We also identified two sub-narratives within the attributing culpability narrative: Governments create disaster (12% of all articles) and corporations create disaster (2% of all articles) (fig.1).
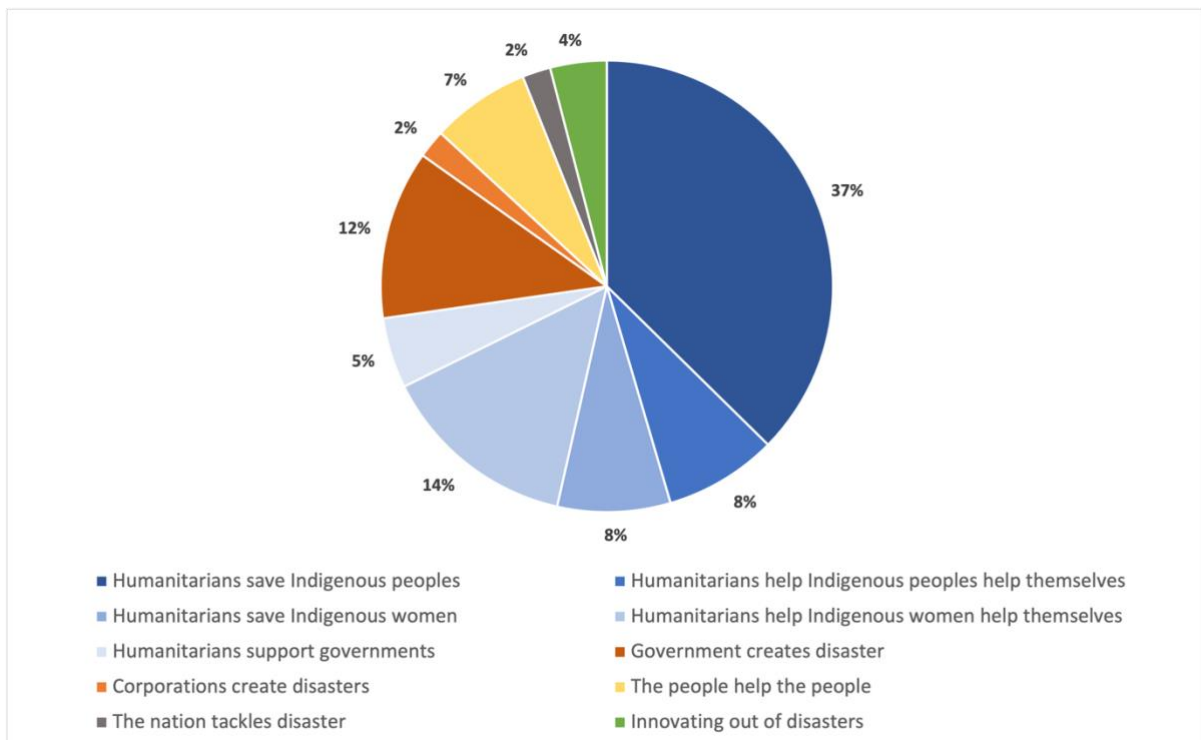
Figure 5.1: Percentage of each narrative in the sample.

A breakdown of narratives by organisation, country, and disaster summarised in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Narratives identified and the organisations, countries/regions of focus and disasters involved.

Narrative	Sub-narrative	Description	Organisations	Country/region	Disasters
Humanitarians act	Humanitarians save Indigenous Peoples	Set amidst crisis, humanitarians act to rescue Indigenous Peoples from disaster, mostly focusing on basic needs.	European NGOs International faith-based NGOs International NGOs Asian NGOs Intergovernmental agencies	Middle East North Africa Sub-Saharan Africa South Asia Southeast Asia Central America South America	Armed conflict[2] Environmental disasters including climate change Pandemics and epidemics Political disasters (e.g., statelessness) Unsafe living conditions (e.g., lack of clean water)
	Humanitarians save Indigenous women	Set amidst crisis, humanitarians act to rescue Indigenous women from disaster, mostly focusing on gendered aspects of disasters.	International faith-based NGOs Intergovernmental agencies International NGOs	North Africa Southeast Asia Central America	Armed conflict Environmental disasters (e.g., flooding) Pandemics and epidemics Unsafe living conditions (e.g., risks of childbirth) Violence (e.g., gender-based violence)
	Humanitarians help Indigenous Peoples help themselves	Set amidst crisis, humanitarians act to empower Indigenous Peoples to help themselves.	International faith-based NGOs International NGOs Intergovernmental agencies	South America Central America Sub-Saharan Africa South Asia	Armed conflict Environmental disasters (e.g., typhoons) Pandemics and epidemics Political disasters (e.g., illegal mining)

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[2] We recognise there is debate around defining disasters, and some may not view armed conflict as a disaster. As we did not limit our search by categories of disaster or crisis, it would not have made sense to exclude communications because they were about conflict. Although we acknowledge that armed conflict includes its own specificities (e.g., Mena and Hilhorst, 2022), we follow numerous disaster researchers (Peters and Kelman, 2020; Hewitt, 2021) in arguing for greater integration of conflict within disaster research.

				Small Island Developing States	
	Humanitarians help Indigenous women help themselves	Set amidst crisis, humanitarians act to empower Indigenous women to help themselves. Often focused on the unique characteristics of Indigenous women that places them as ideal recipients of aid and agents of change.	Climate-focused international NGO Intergovernmental agencies International faith-based NGO	South America Central America Sub-Saharan Africa Small Island Developing States	Environmental disasters including climate change Pandemics and epidemics Unsafe living conditions (e.g. female genital mutilation, hunger) Violence (e.g., gender-based violence)
	Humanitarians support government	Set amidst crisis, humanitarians support the (non-Indigenous) government who then support Indigenous Peoples.	Intergovernmental agencies	Small Island Developing States South America Central America	Armed conflict Environmental disasters including climate change
Attributing culpability	Oppressive states create disaster	Nation states create a crisis and/or make an existing crisis worse. They break international law and so humanitarians draw attention to this.	International advocacy group International faith-based NGO Intergovernmental agencies	South America Sub-Saharan Africa North Africa South Asia Southeast Asia South America	Armed conflict Environmental disasters Pandemics and epidemics (e.g., COVID-19) Political disasters (e.g., police raid on schools) Unsafe living conditions (e.g., hunger)
	Corporations create disaster	Corporations create a crisis and/or make an existing crisis worse, sometimes with the help	Intergovernmental agencies	Central America South America	Pandemics and epidemics Political disasters (e.g., mining)

		of national governments. They break international law and so humanitarians draw attention to this.			
The people help the people	n/a	There is a crisis where the global community is ignoring Indigenous Peoples. The only people who will help are those on the ground. Grassroots action is needed.	International NGOs Intergovernmental agencies	Middle East South Asia Central America South America Small Island Developing States	Environmental disasters (e.g., hurricane) Pandemics and epidemics (e.g., AIDS) Unsafe living conditions (e.g., lack of rights)
Nation lead disaster management	n/a	There is a crisis but the government steps in. Due to government action, the crisis is over.	Intergovernmental agencies	North Africa South America	Pandemics and epidemics (e.g., COVID-19) Unsafe living conditions (e.g., discrimination)
Innovating our way out of disasters	n/a	Disasters are on the rise. By combining Indigenous knowledge with Western science, technological innovation prevent disasters	Intergovernmental agencies Climate-focused NGO	Small Island Developing States South America North America	Environmental disasters including climate change

5.4.1. Humanitarians act

'Humanitarians act' was the most dominant narrative, and was comprised of articles that primarily focused on the ways that humanitarian actors assisted Indigenous Peoples. It included five separate sub-narratives which we outline below.

Humanitarians save Indigenous Peoples

In this narrative, Indigenous people suffer (especially Indigenous women and children) as their basic needs are not met. As colonised people (EU, 23/09/2020), they live in harsh environments, and are forgotten about. Indigenous Peoples are vulnerable and do not have the capacity to deal with a disaster. They pay tribute to Mother Earth (Benrey 16/08/2021), but the disaster has killed the environment upon which they rely (EU 02/12/2020). In some instances, God is angry at the pollution of Indigenous lands by non-Indigenous Peoples (Macheka 16/10/2021). God has sent warnings in the form of drought and has encouraged Indigenous Peoples to move to the mountains. The mountains, where humanitarian projects are cleaning the water, protect Indigenous Peoples (Macheka 16/10/2021). Humanitarians work hard (MSF 17/06/2020) to respond and stabilise the situation. They teach Indigenous Peoples and bring "the light of education" (Jahan 19/05/2021). Indigenous Peoples are happy and thankful for humanitarian action, and there is a strong community spirit around humanitarian action (Act Alliance 28/02/2019; CFSI 02/02/2021) with many viewing aid as a gift (WFP 16/08/2021). However, more is needed so humanitarian projects should be expanded (Caritas 16/08/2019; Salesians 02/03/2021).

Humanitarians save Indigenous women

As a subset of the humanitarians act narrative, this sub-narrative depicts Indigenous women in crisis: There is gender inequality, Indigenous women suffer, are vulnerable, are burdened and work in the precarious domestic sector (EU 02/12/2020). The environment, which keeps people alive, is polluted (Tadesse 2021). Tribal disagreements make matters worse (ICRC 24/06/2021; 12/08/2021). Indigenous women are unaware of their rights and lack knowledge on topics such as mental health. They lack social support, and humanitarians work to fill this gap. They address Indigenous women's basic needs (ICRC, 14/06/2021) and reduce their exposure to violence by working with Indigenous women and governments (ICRC 12/08/2021). Indigenous women are grateful for humanitarians. Now, they have more time to look after their children (ICRC 24/06/2021).

Humanitarians help Indigenous Peoples help themselves

In this sub-narrative, Indigenous Peoples live in a harsh environment with precarious local infrastructure. Although they are in danger, they have Indigenous knowledge and capacities (MSF 04/08/2020), but do not know how to use these. Humanitarians collaborate with local NGOs and Indigenous leaders. Governments and local authorities fail to manage disasters (MSF 04/08/2020). INGOs finance efforts and, by working together (CDKN 24/08/2020; Sackitey 10/02/2020),

humanitarians teach Indigenous Peoples to unlock their potential. Outcomes include reconciliation and reforms (UNVMC, 10/06/2021), securing Indigenous land rights, Indigenous stewardship of land (Arozena 16/04/2018), and protecting Indigenous Knowledge (MSF 04/08/2020). Eventually, INGOs hand over to local NGOs (MSF 04/08/2020).

Humanitarians help Indigenous women help themselves

Here, Indigenous women are agents of change, but they lack opportunities, especially given the Indigenous women's crisis (UN Women 31/10/2020; CECI 06/07/2020). They are trapped in unpaid work due to patriarchal systems and machismo culture (UN Women 09/08/2016), where men traditionally make decisions. However, Indigenous men are not always effective leaders (UNFPA 09/02/2017). Humanitarians catalyse change by working with Indigenous women to challenge discrimination, enabling them to organise and lead disaster management. Indigenous women look out for those most vulnerable, although some do contest their framing as caregivers (UN Women 23/08/2018). Indigenous women are proud of their efforts but more needs to be done to include and centre Indigenous women. Humanitarians advocate for women's empowerment, which is also supported by some Indigenous leaders (CECI 06/07/2020). Solutions include expanded social welfare (CECI 06/07/2020) and supporting Indigenous-led businesses (UN Women 09/08/2016) for instance through financial risk management and insurance (WFP, 16/08/2021). Sometimes it is necessary to ban cultural practices, such as female genital mutilation (UNFPA 09/02/2017).

Humanitarians support government

The final sub-narrative of the humanitarians act narrative portrayed the environment Indigenous Peoples live in as protecting them (del Carmen Sacada 13/04/2020), and a fundamental part of their culture (UNDP 16/02/2021). Inequalities exist between Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous Peoples, and Indigenous women particularly suffer as a result. Where they can, Indigenous Peoples exercise their self-determination, especially when non-Indigenous Peoples put Indigenous Peoples at risk. Governments are concerned and respond in ways that are culturally appropriate, for example by ensuring communications are in Indigenous languages (del Carmen Sacada 13/04/2020), allowing for Indigenous burial practices, and including them in community-based fisheries management (UNDP 16/02/2021). They work with Indigenous Peoples to design and implement these, and they invite humanitarians to support them in this.

5.4.2. Attributing culpability

Articles following narratives around culpability attributed to fault for creating disasters, either to governments or corporations. There was some overlap between these narratives, as sometimes corporate action was encouraged by complicit governments.

5.4.3.   *Government creates disaster*

Here, Indigenous Peoples are disproportionately affected by disasters, many of which the state allows to happen. Governments abuse their power by intimidating and displacing Indigenous Peoples violently, often using the military, police and paramilitary to do so. Politically motivated killings feature (Amnesty International 30/07/2021; Conde 17/02/2021) and some states target Indigenous children (Conde 17/02/2021). They destroy the environment upon which Indigenous people rely (Survival International 11/03/2015). The international community ignores this. Indigenous women in particular are activists and make sacrifices for their community (Pappier 21/03/2019). Humanitarians stand in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples and raise awareness of their situations. Some governments deny allegations or say that they are working in the interest of Indigenous Peoples, but this is false (Amnesty International 30/07/2021). Instead, humanitarians show that governments are breaking international law (Amnesty International 11/03/2021; HRW 06/03/2021). Humanitarians state that the international community has a responsibility to challenge discrimination and structural racism, especially where Indigenous Peoples are considered less human (Caux 11/11/2021) and where there is a global order of profits before people that all are complicit in (MRG 23/08/2019). This could be achieved through more rigorous legal systems (Amnesty International 11/03/2021) and through protecting the environment, which protects Indigenous Peoples (Christian Aid 25/08/2019). Reform of the humanitarian sector is needed to ensure humanitarians are not complicit (Survival International 11/03/2015).

5.4.4.   *Corporations create disasters*

In this narrative, The Earth, which usually protects people, is sick (UNDP 19/03/2021). It can no longer provide a safe home for Indigenous Peoples, who are experiencing rare diseases (Amnesty International 18/05/2021). Indigenous Peoples and their land are experiencing high levels of pollution from industries, which are enabled by governments. Big industries threaten Indigenous Peoples, exploiting them and their resources. For them disasters, like pollution, are opportunities. Humanitarians document Indigenous Peoples' suffering and call out corporations and the state for their actions and collusion. They put pressure on governments to do something. They show that nature-based solutions and granting Indigenous land rights would help solve the problem as Indigenous Peoples look after the land and care about future generations (UNDP 19/03/2021). Including Indigenous worldviews into REDD+, for example, could be a solution (UNDP 05/05/2017).

5.4.5.   **The people help the people**

In this narrative, Indigenous Peoples have long been discriminated against (UNAIDS 21/12/2015; UN Women 18/04/2017). Indigenous women face violence (UN Women 18/04/2017) and Indigenous youth face barriers, for instance in accessing information around sexual health (UNAIDS 21/12/2015), and ableism is a problem (UN Women 18/04/2017; UNDRR 26/02/2021). Governments abuse their power, often through police and paramilitary (Schiavoni 20/11/2020). Yet,

Indigenous Peoples are activists and Indigenous women in particular are knowledgeable. Some individuals have created change in their communities (GPEI 06/03/2018; UN Women 18/04/2017). People help each other to shift power and dismantle oppressive systems. These social movements fill the gaps of government failure. Solutions are those that shift power and include food sovereignty (Schiavoni 20/11/2020), human rights (UNAIDS 21/12/2015;972), Indigenous feminism (UN Women 18/04/2017) and intersectionality (UNDRR 26/02/2021). Humanitarians stand in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples.

5.4.6.   The Nation tackles disaster

Here, Indigenous Peoples live in remote areas, which presents a challenge when disaster strikes. Nevertheless, the nation provides healthcare to those who need it, especially Indigenous women and children. Often Indigenous nurses are enlisted to help with these efforts (WHO 19/04/2017). The government is receptive to the concerns of Indigenous women and, where necessary, intervenes with traditions of Indigenous Peoples at the request of Indigenous women (UN Women 29/04/2018). By working together, the nation overcomes disaster.

5.4.7.   Innovating out of disasters

In the final narrative, Indigenous Peoples work hard but they live in insufficient buildings. The way the land is currently being used is unsustainable too (CAF 11/10/2021). Some are considering leaving their homelands as a result (CAF 11/10/2021). A research centre steps in to re-design homes to threats such as climate change (CAF 30/04/2021). These architectural solutions combine Indigenous knowledge with Western technology, which makes them culturally appropriate and sustainable.

5.5. Discussion

The narratives and sub-narratives we identified had certain similarities. Across all narratives, disasters and crises were defined broadly: they ranged from natural hazards, to conflict, to political conditions (e.g., statelessness, exclusion), reflecting inclusion of slow violence and necropolitics as forms of disaster. This aligns with other calls to focus attention on various forms of violence, especially those that are slow and invisible (Aijazi, 2016; Baird, 2021).

Contrary to previous research, the environment was a critical character in these narratives: sometimes it cared for Indigenous Peoples, sometimes Indigenous Peoples cared for it, sometimes it was the source of disaster, and sometimes it protected people from disaster. Many Indigenous cosmologies view the environment and its elements as sentient, and to some degree these narratives nod to these cosmologies. For example, in Macheka (16/10/2021) Indigenous Peoples in Zimbabwe view droughts as punishment of those who have polluted water, as well as warnings for Indigenous Peoples to move to the mountains, where there is clean water as well as humanitarian assistance. However, such a view goes against the view that disasters are socially constructed and frames them instead as 'acts of God'. Here there is a complex interweaving of Indigenous cosmologies with paradigms in disasters that have long been viewed as depoliticised (see Goodall et al., 2021). We approached this analysis with an interpretation of suspicion as well as faith (Josselson, 2004), and remain wary that Indigenous cosmologies may be co-opted and used to legitimise humanitarian intervention in ways that depoliticise, especially as those communications that do engage some of these cosmologies do not come close to communicating the rich cosmologies of many Indigenous Peoples. Echoing previous research about Indigenous knowledge (Lambert and Mark-Shadbolt, 2021), this is a complex interweaving of worldviews and motivations, where the line between silencing, co-opting, misappropriating and respecting Indigenous knowledge is blurred.

5.5.1.   How do narratives differ from each other?

The narratives and sub-narratives we identified also had some key differences. The dominant humanitarians act narrative framed Indigenous Peoples (especially Indigenous women) as needing help, justifying humanitarian presence and aligning with previous work that shows how humanitarians construct themselves as alleviating suffering of helpless civilians (Boltanski, 2000; Franks, 2017). Whether this was through humanitarian intervention that provided for basic needs, or through humanitarians 'empowering' Indigenous Peoples, the plot is fundamentally centred around the importance of humanitarian action. Across most articles under the 'humanitarians act' narrative, there were no fictionalised enemies: disasters were predominantly constructed as natural and unpredictable. The exception to this was the 'humanitarians help Indigenous women help themselves'

sub-narrative, where Indigenous men were sometimes framed as enemies, especially where the disaster discussed was gendered (e.g., gender-based violence).

In stark contrast to this set of narratives are the 'attributing culpability' narratives, which were premised on constructing a fictionalised enemy: the state and/or corporations. These entities either create disasters such as statelessness and pollution, or poorly manage disasters such as pandemics. Instead of undertaking direct action, humanitarians witness and report crisis, responsibilising the international community to act based on violations of human rights. Relative to other narratives, most humanitarians engaging with this narrative tended to only write following this narrative and not engage with others, indicating that they likely view themselves as having a specific role in the international humanitarian community: that of witnessing, reporting and, advocating, through legal channels.

The sub-narrative, 'corporations create disaster' exclusively focused on the extractive industry in Central and South America. Given that corporations create disasters across other contexts in sectors beyond the extractive industry (Klein, 2007) it is interesting that only these are reported. This could be that the extractive industry has very visible impacts on the environment and health, whereas other industries do not and are thus not used to galvanise action. In doing so, humanitarian communications limit understanding of how corporations create disaster by masking processes like capitalism. The absence of humanitarian narratives about North America, where Indigenous movements contest extractive industries (Kuokkanen, 2019) is also striking, suggesting humanitarian crises and disasters are still by and large viewed as something that happen in the distant, different and separate "Global South" (Atuhura, 2021).

The people help the people narrative is the only narrative where Indigenous Peoples are not passive but active: they are the main characters and the only ones who can and will help each other by sharing in each other's struggles and standing in solidarity. Like the 'attributing culpability' narrative, governments and the international community are complacent at best and discriminatory at worst. Unlike the 'attributing culpability' narrative humanitarians solely witness and report on the situation, but do not engage in advocacy or lobbying of governments. This narrative is very much focused on grassroots action which is usually obscured by international humanitarian actors (Lewis 2019), and follows others (Bebbington et al., 2013; Pearce 2010) who state that building alliances with grassroots organisations (and viewing themselves as a part of these social movements) is how NGOs should operate.

The nation leads disaster is another narrative where humanitarians witness disaster. Unlike the previous narratives, which focus primarily on suffering, this narrative is one of nations' triumph against an external threat. The government is framed as heroic, and Indigenous Peoples are being

helped by the government. Whilst previous narratives allude to the continuation of dealing with disaster, this narrative reaches an end point where the disaster is over. SIDS such as Samoa and Kiribati are the setting for some of these articles, possibly reflecting views of good governance in these states that mean the international humanitarian community is more likely to support governments here (Weiler et al., 2018).

The final narrative, 'innovating our way out of disaster', also reaches a successful end point: a disaster happens and Indigenous Peoples partner with researchers to combine their knowledge with technology to build back better. The focus here is on collaboration with researchers, specifically in the form of improving technology. Characters that featured in previous narratives, such as the government, corporations, humanitarians, and the international community are absent. Instead, the role of technology is emphasised. This was the only narrative that included Indigenous Peoples in North America. Shying away from questions of governance here distracts from political questions about Indigenous-State relations in North America, suggesting technology as the solution. Doing so not only ignores that technology can erode Indigenous Knowledge (Young, 2019), but aligns with previous technocratic views of why disasters happen (e.g., as a result of environmental hazards) and how we deal with them (e.g., through managing the environment). The absence of 'humanitarians' contrasted with the presence of technology and research suggests normative notions of progress in North America relative to other regions reported on. Although the framing of the so-called "Global South" as underprivileged relative to regions such as North America is nothing new (Mohanty, 2003), it is nonetheless striking that Indigenous Peoples in North America are only mentioned under narratives that demonstrate the progress of research and technology.

5.5.2. Narratives reflect different perspectives about governance

The differences between narratives reflect differences in views on the governance of humanitarian crises and disasters. Broadly, this highlights the power of narratives in communicating the ideal worlds of humanitarians, as well as ideas around governance.

Tensions between the 'humanitarians act' narrative and the 'attributing culpability' narrative align with literature about whether NGOs should work with the system (e.g., the State) or against it (Ishkanian and Shutes, 2021), with the attributing culpability' narratives working against governments in a 'naming and shaming' manner (Hendrix and Wong, 2014). To some degree, this is also reflected in the types of disaster reported too: the 'attributing culpability' narrative largely focuses on political disasters, created by the State and/or corporations. Here, the ways disasters and crises are not objective categories was especially clear in our results: pollution and police violence were framed as disasters, yet some actors (e.g., corporations and governments) viewed these as opportunities. International humanitarian communications here do not seek to be perceived as neutral, but rather as advocating for Indigenous Peoples in the face of powerful governments and corporations. Conversely

most articles adopting the 'humanitarians act' narrative have likely opted to work with the State: they do not explicitly attribute the causes of disaster to be the result of the State.

Differing views of governance are also reflected in differences within the 'humanitarians act' narrative. Here, there is a tension between two sets of sub-narratives: those that 'save' Indigenous Peoples, and those that 'empower' them. The 'saving' sub-narratives were focused on addressing immediate needs and were relatively short-term, whilst the 'empowering' sub-narratives focused on addressing inequality, reflecting shifts to viewing disasters as unnatural as well as resilience humanitarianism (Hilhorst, 2018). Although the 'humanitarians save Indigenous Peoples' narrative was the most frequent within the 'humanitarians act' narrative, the 'humanitarians help Indigenous women help themselves' sub-narrative was more prominent than saviour narratives around Indigenous women. Such shifts in narrative towards the empowerment of *third world* women and girls is a hallmark of neoliberalism in that it responsibilises individual women and proposes market-based solutions, distracting from power structures (Roberts and Mir Zulfiqar, 2019; Rosamond and Gregoratti, 2020). Within these narratives women were often framed as activists and protectors of their communities, consistent with Indigenous feminist epistemology (Dulfano, 2015, 2017). Their activism was mostly centred on patriarchy, gender inequality and machismo, but these were not contextualised to show how intertwined these are with colonialism (Patil, 2013; Wilson, 2019) nor with how gender and gender relations used are Western constructs that silence others (Momsen, 2002; Medwinter and Rozario, 2020).

What is not mentioned with regards to Indigenous women's activism is resisting neoliberalism (e.g., in the form of extractive industries or liberal feminism). By not doing so, most humanitarian communications do not adequately convey the role of neoliberal policies to their audiences whilst also silencing elements of Indigenous women's activism (Dulfano, 2017). Instead, communications focus on power structures that may be seen as internal to Indigenous communities. This inhibits audiences from seeing themselves as part of a network implicated in these power relations. Similarly, SIDS were not represented in saviour narratives but were in the empowerment narratives reflecting the presence of empowerment and resilience discourses about these contexts, but not ones around saviourism. This could be because dominant narratives around SIDS have unduly focused on vulnerability, which led to push back and counter narratives from SIDS' peoples (Kelman, 2018; Teng, 2019). These shifts from 'saviourism' to 'empowerment' narratives are well-documented (e.g., Hilhorst 2018), yet there are a surprising number of communications that still use saviour narratives over empowerment ones.

The infrequent emergence of the 'innovating our way out of disaster' narrative aligns with neoliberal ideas around building back better (Cheek and Chmutina, 2021), where communities are responsibilised to deal with the risks they face, as well as with technoutopianism – the belief that we can innovate our way out of global problems. Both these concepts have capitalist and/or neoliberal foundations

(Sandvik *et al.*, 2014; Bankoff, 2019) that fundamentally ignore questions around inequality. There is a considerable amount of optimism about the possibilities of technologies in the humanitarian sphere, including around the use of biometric identification, e-transfers and drones (Madianou, 2019), although there are also concerns around surveillance (Lambert and Henry, 2020). Optimism about innovation in the context of our research centred on novel ways to construct buildings by combining Indigenous Knowledge with Western science and technology, rather than the former. This could be due to controversy over the use of some humanitarian technologies, as well as the public-private partnerships involved (e.g., Madianou 2019), meaning that although the plotline communicating the importance of innovation and technology is present, it is separated from more controversial debates. This aligns with the growing recognition of Indigenous Knowledge within international DRR policies (Lambert and Scott, 2019). However, as argued by Shaw et al., (2009) and Lambert and Scott (2019), DRR requires more than scientific and technological advances. Nevertheless, as illustrated by Abdelnour and Saeed (2014) in the context of using stoves to address rape in Darfur, reducing complex issues to 'manageable problems' to be solved through technology does not address root causes, even where Indigenous Knowledge has been incorporated.

5.5.3.   The silent influence of audiences

Humanitarian communications do not necessarily reflect the practices of humanitarians. Instead, they are constructed by humanitarians based on ways they believe will bolster their credibility in the eyes of audiences (Gourevitch and Lake, 2011). Narrative analysis, then, reveals values that are shared by both humanitarian organisations and their audiences. This places some of the above discussion around disasters, gender and the environment into context.

As alluded to earlier, the very question of what disasters and crises are included/excluded relies upon both humanitarians and audiences agreeing that some process or event can be described as a disaster, leading to the masking of some disasters, but we cannot claim that humanitarians do not work on these. Instead, the idea of disaster is co-constructed between humanitarians and their audiences based upon a shared understanding of a problem, and audiences themselves may not be galvanised to act in these situations, even if they are implicated in them through processes such as Imperialism.

Similarly, intersectional feminist approaches to humanitarian response are lacking and needed (Lafrenière et al., 2019; González Villamizar and Bueno-Hansen 2021), yet were mostly invisible in our analysis. Despite calls for intersectional disaster management in some articles (usually around the intersection of ableism and racism) humanitarian communications offered simplified and decontextualised accounts, often staying firmly within the bounds of liberal feminism (e.g., promoting market-based solutions) (see also Smith *et al.*, 2022). This was clearest in communications that followed the 'humanitarians help Indigenous women help themselves' narrative. However, the lack of intersectional approaches reflected in our analysis does not necessarily support that the humanitarian

organisations included are not concerned with intersectionality. Instead, it may be that humanitarian organisations know that potential donors could be discriminatory based on their own cultures. For example, it is possible that NGOs do support gender identities that do not conform to Western feminism's gender binary (e.g., transgender and two-spirit people), but do not publicise this widely due to rising discrimination of these groups in the donor landscape. As such, the lack of intersectional approaches here could reflect actual humanitarian practice, the donor landscape, or (most likely) both.

5.5.4. Future research and policy implications

Although "the people help the people" focused on grassroots action, the viewpoints of grassroots groups, volunteers, Global South-based organisations and a plethora of other crucial but less visible humanitarians are not reflected here. The actors included here are not diverse, possibly reflecting how large, international humanitarian actors often obscure the work and importance of civil society and volunteers (Lewis 2019). For example, despite the Wayúu Indigenous group being the focus of several articles, the most representative political organisation of the Wayúu people – the *Sütsüin Jieyuu Wayúu - Fuerza de Mujeres Wayúu* (The Wayúu Women Force) (Ulloa, 2020) – was not mentioned. Another absence (both in terms of humanitarians and Indigenous Peoples) is evident around the Global East, despite significant humanitarian efforts by these States and the presence of numerous Indigenous groups here (Burnasheva, 2019; see also Hadlos et al., 2022). Thus, whilst the UN and many humanitarians claim to act internationally across a range of contexts, this is clearly not the case (Amin, 2013). Future research should focus on the perspectives of other groups to see how narratives compare with those outlined here. Such work should elevate the perspectives of Indigenous Peoples, for instance by looking at the impacts of these narratives and how to subvert those that are harmful. Future work could also critically assess other influential actors that are hidden in our work, such as humanitarian action by powerful states in the Global East.

Our research illustrates the often-forgotten role of narratives in communicating ideas about governance. Thus, narratives and narrative analysis have saliency for policy and decision-making. Broadly, those engaged in policy should be careful about the narratives they construct, as well as about those that they engage with. In the context of localisation, for example, questioning what the end goal of localisation is, and who it benefits, matters. Is localisation being employed to allow powerful actors to evade responsibility? Will localisation address processes that constitute slow violence and vulnerability? Or is it used by communities themselves as a steppingstone towards self-determination? More recently, the IPCC report on Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation draws on Indigenous Knowledge more so than previous iterations (IPCC, 2022). Yet, Indigenous organisations have critiqued the superficial way that this knowledge is incorporated into the process of creating the IPCC (Carmona *et al.*, 2022). Therefore, when engaging Indigenous Peoples, it is fundamental that the sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples and their rights (both inherent and through UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and/or signed treaties) to articulate their own positions is taken

seriously. This applies not only in asserting how disasters and crises should be managed, but also to define and frame what a disaster and/or crisis is in the first place. Additionally, it is important to deeply engage with their (diverse) perspectives, worldviews and histories, for instance by taking seriously the harm colonialism and its legacies has had on Indigenous communities, and remembering that hegemonic practices (e.g., humanitarian action, disaster management, research) are also cultures that are not normal but created. Doing so calls into question the legitimacy of the state and private structures that exert power over Indigenous Peoples through processes such as DRR and humanitarian action (Lambert, 2022). We therefore call on researchers and practitioners to recognise the colonial and racist roots of disasters, humanitarian crises and their management and take action that is anti-racist and moves towards decolonization[3] (Fujita, 2020; Lambert, 2022). Thus far, the international humanitarian sector has been resistant to understanding its monopoly, abuse and misuse of power needed to begin the process of decolonization (Aloudat and Khan, 2022; Majumdar and Mukerjee, 2022).

Finally, we encourage organisations producing such communications to explore how care-ethics could inform their practice. This would be done by emphasising solidarity with people affected by disasters (similar to "the people help the people" narrative), and bringing to the fore the interconnectedness of people, for instance by highlighting shared history. This would allow audiences to see themselves as connected to audiences through processes they are implicated in. In terms of reporting in Indigenous contexts, processes of colonisation, colonialism, and Imperialism are pertinent. These would need to be contextualised within local contexts so that audiences can see how these processes are intertwined with peoples' lives. By facilitating understanding of complex situations and their histories, humanitarian communications would raise consciousness amongst their audiences about their responsibilities.

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[3] Following Tuck and Yang (2012), we recognise that decolonization will look very different across contexts due to the diversity of Indigenous Peoples and the complex histories and processes of colonisation imposed on them. For this statement to have meaning, researchers and practitioners wishing to do this would need to first attend to these histories and understand how they are implicated within them and how to push back appropriately.

5.6. Conclusions

We have examined the narratives these humanitarian communications adopt to convey meaning about disasters in Indigenous contexts. The most invoked narrative was one that focused on the importance of humanitarian action, followed by narratives that attributed culpability. Other narratives that emerged were those about grassroots action, nationalism, and innovation. A central theme that tied our analysis together was around how communications conveyed meaning about governance. The 'humanitarians act' narrative carved out a role for humanitarians, whilst also remaining either neutral or positive towards government. Conversely, the 'attributing culpability' narratives witnessed and reported on disasters created by governments and corporations, calling on the international community to act. The other three less frequent narratives conveyed meaning about the importance of grassroots action ('the people help the people'), nationalism ('the nation tackles disaster') and technoutopianism ('innovating our way out of disasters').

Another crosscutting theme was around how humanitarian communications mediated the relationship between Indigenous Peoples (as the focus of humanitarian communication) and audiences. Whilst we cannot expect humanitarian communications to fully represent the lived realities of Indigenous Peoples, we can say something about what they choose to include and/or exclude, the ramifications of this, and any possible alternatives. We found that the international humanitarian community's communications limited explicit recognition of the processes that link audiences to Indigenous Peoples. These include processes such as colonialism, neoliberalism and globalisation. Instead, communications portrayed power structures as internal to communities and/or countries. That these are the ways disasters in Indigenous contexts are represented to many audiences is important because it has the potential to diminish responsibility of Western audiences to push back against unequal power structures. It both raises awareness of Indigenous Peoples lives across the globe, whilst inhibiting crucial questions of why they experience disasters the way they do (and indeed, so differently to settlers see: Lambert, 2022).

It is well-documented within the humanitarian literature that this is how humanitarian communications portray suffering. This does not mean that we should become complacent about this though. Instead, it is imperative to think of alternative ways to communicate meaning and, where appropriate, galvanise response. Here we draw on care-ethics, which in a humanitarian context moves away from viewing people as 'distant sufferers' and towards people connected with each other through complicated histories. In doing so, audiences have a more complete understanding of how they themselves are implicated in oppressive processes and can take action to address this.

5.7. References

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Discussion

6.1.   Discussion of key findings

In this section, I discuss the key findings across this thesis. I begin by looking at how disasters are represented and how such representations fit (or do not fit) with different disaster paradigms. I then look at what different representations say about disaster governance in Indigenous contexts, drawing specific attention to how neoliberalism is constructed as 'normal', before highlighting how less-dominant counter-representations call for more radical shifts in how disasters are governed. I then discuss what is missing from representations throughout this PhD, highlighting how this too obfuscates certain modes of governance. I conclude this section by outlining some ways in which space can be created in the three institutions analysed here – British academia, the news media and the international humanitarian community's communications.

6.1.1.   Different understandings of disaster

Here, I look at different representations of disaster. I begin by looking at how dominant representations depoliticise disasters, before looking at how less-dominant representations reveal the politics in disasters. In particular, I draw on three theories that emerged as important for understanding the political elements of disaster: necropolitics, slow violence and disaster colonialism.

6.1.2.   Depoliticisation of disasters through focusing on the environment in dominant representations

In this PhD, I found that disasters – as co-constructed by the news media, the international humanitarian community and (implicitly) their audiences –were rarely represented as messy or contested concepts. Instead, they were usually viewed as sudden, 'spectacular' events, understood through environmental frames, aligning with previous research (Belser 2015; Curato 2018; Steinberg and Steinberg 2006; Holleman 2017). This reveals that despite decades of research about the political roots of disaster (O'Keefe et al. 1976; Oliver-Smith and Hoffman 1999) such understandings are often ignored and/or do not gain traction. This is important in Indigenous contexts because it masks processes such as colonialism and dispossession of land that are at the heart of disasters for Indigenous peoples (Bonilla 2020; Liboiron 2021; Marino 2012; Ocampo and Schmitz n.d.). It also adheres strongly to (and reinforces) the disaster/non-disaster binary, in which what is 'normal' and what is a disaster is defined in very stark terms (Ahmad 2018), obfuscating how disasters can be slow,

predictable and political processes, and how the neoliberal, present, mundane and everyday can constitute a disaster for Indigenous peoples under settler colonialim.

This does not mean that vulnerability was not mentioned in dominant representations of disaster or Indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples were often framed as vulnerable to disaster, but instead of any in-depth discussion of how this vulnerability is created and perpetuated (e.g., through colonialism and its legacies), it is framed as either stemming from Indigenous peoples living in exposed areas (e.g., in floodplains or on mountain sides) or as an innate condition of Indigenous peoples (e.g., their 'socioeconomic condition'). This was often achieved through the conflation of Indigenous peoples with environmental issues – a common representation that places causes of disasters within the external environment, thus depoliticising disaster risk creation (Begg et al. 2015; Osborne, Howlett et al. 2019). This also responsibilises Indigenous peoples for the inequalities and increased disaster vulnerability they experience, again without analysis of how differential vulnerability is created and perpetuated. Even where Indigenous peoples were framed as empowered and resilient in the face of disaster, the challenges they overcome to become 'empowered' are not those that stem from colonialism or its legacies, but rather from within their own communities or through discussion of how they use IK with Western science, without attention to power inequalities in these processes either (Fernandez-Gimenez et al. 2006). Therefore, dominant representations of disaster that did include vulnerability again omitted any discussion of root causes of disaster in Indigenous contexts, and thus of power inequalities and how they came to be.

6.1.3.   Revealing the politics of disaster in less dominant representations

Alternative understandings of disaster were evident in some aspects of this work. Chapter 4 in particular revealed some Indigenous peoples' understandings of disasters as processes rooted in colonialism, land disposession and legacies of this, often in ways that were very detailed and specific. Chapter 5 expanded on this, by including political processes (e.g., statelessness and police violence) as disasters, amongst, others (although I note these were not representations created by Indigenous peoples). Here, the messiness and contested nature of the term 'disaster' is embraced, and there are shifts towards responsibilising powerful actors (e.g., the State and extractive industries) for disaster creation (Carrigan 2015), as well as acknowledging the importance of history in creating vulnerability (Bankoff 2004; Carey 2012). Despite this move towards a more subjective understanding of disasters, it is still important to remember that what processes can be considered disasters is mediated between the news media, international humanitarian communities and audiences within this work, and there are inevitably processes that are considered disasters by Indigenous peoples that do not feature here as a result.

Three theories emerged in this research, which I found important for revealing power inequalities and re-temporalising disasters – two elements that were important in pushing back against hegemonic representations of disasters. The first of these is necropolitics[4]: the enforcement of power in a way that structures how some are allowed to live, whilst others are made to die, usually along racialised lines (Mbembé and Meintjes 2003; Muniz et al. 2021). Necropolitics highlights the intentionality behind disasters, revealing how disasters are created by people (in power) and their choices (Bankoff and Hilhorst 2022; Kelman 2020; Rumbach and Németh 2018). In doing so, these powerful actors can be responsibilised. A recent and well-researched example (and one that emerged in Chapter 4) is the necropolitical approach of Brazil's Bolsonaro's government. Whilst Brazil has high levels of inequality and some periods in its history could be considered necropolitical, Bolsonaro's government specifically is categorised as overtly necropolitical (Muniz et al. 2021). Examples include the approval of laws that benefit land grabbing, reduced support for the Ministry of Health's Secretaria Especial de Saúde Indígena (SESAI; Special Secretariat for Indigenous Health), amongst others, ultimately increasing the precarity of Indigenous peoples, whilst allowing dominant (and elite) society to live (Rapozo 2021). This forced precarity instigated by government mechanisms meant to foster life confers upon the status of the 'living dead', living within 'deathworlds' (Chakraborty 2021; Mbembe 2019). Where the government was absent (i.e., had no strategy), this was also in itself a strategy of neglect, of allowing certain people to die, and thus a form of necropolitics (Muniz et al. 2021). In this research, the necropolitical approach of governments was particularly evident in Chapter 5, where the 'attributing culpability' narratives highlighted how police violence, pandemics and epidemics, and unsafe living conditions (e.g., hunger) were either intentionally created or mismanaged, forcing Indigenous peoples to live in precarity.

Secondly, Nixon's (2009) concept of slow violence has been useful in understanding harm that is not always visible and manifests over long timescales, and thus particularly lends itself to this research where vulnerability is created over long time periods. Originally conceptualised to reveal the gradual but deadly effects of environmental damage, warfare and pollution, "slow violence occurs gradually and out of sight [it is] a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all" (Nixon 2011: 2). It is similar to Galtung's (1969) structural violence, in that the structural causes of violence are brought to the fore, but with the addition of time (Rezwana and Pain 2021). Such an understanding of violence has been applied to disasters to reconceptualise them not as sudden onset, unpredictable events, but rather as

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[4] I recognise here that necropolitics was conceptualised from Foucault's work on biopolitics, and biopolitics and necropolitics constitute a 'dual framework'. Biopolitics can be thought of to "let die/make live", whilst necropolitics can be thought of as to "let live/make die". The distinction between the two approaches often play out across racial lines: States may use a biopolitical approach when governing White and/or settler populations, but adopt a necropolitical form of governance in racialised communities (Rouse 2021).

long processes of marginalisation and environmental degradation: "the slow disaster stretches back in time and forward across generations to indeterminate points, punctuated by moments we have traditionally conceptualised as 'disaster', but in fact claiming much more life and wealth across time than is generally calculated" (Knowles 2014: 777). It thus pushes back against the fetishized view of disasters as spectacles, refocusing attention to how they can be slow, mundane, yet still impactful and violent (Cahill and Pain 2019). Slow violence, and theories like it, align with Indigenous peoples calls to think about 'deep time', which disrupts the normalcy of colonialism and Imperialism by showing how it is but a blip in human history (Davies 2019; 2018). Slow violence particularly emerged in Chapter 4, where reporters in the expert news media retemporalised disasters (e.g., Australian bushfires and pandemics) to show how these are processes embedded in long histories of colonisation.

What the above theories, amongst others, reflect is that there is a recognition that disasters are entrenched in societal histories, can be considered processes rather than singular events, and may be used by more powerful groups against less powerful ones, through the use of specific labels and categories, highlighting the importance of social constructive approaches to disaster research (Sun and Faas 2018; Tierney 2014; Veland, Howitt, and Dominey-Howes 2010; Hsu et al. 2015; Holleman 2017; Barrios 2017). For example, disaster preparedness and response usually encourage intervention to be implemented by an 'intrinsically benevolent' state (Walch 2018) rather than recognising that the state itself constitutes a "hazard" for most vulnerable communities living in precarity (Carrigan 2015: 121; Siddiqi 2018). The final concept I draw on here combines elements of the above and is especially pertinent to Indigenous contexts.

Disaster colonialism describes how disasters perpetuate colonisation (Rivera 2020). It is similar to Klein's disaster capitalism (Klein 2008), which illustrates how disasters are co-opted as catalysts for rapid neoliberal policy development (Barrios 2017), often through the framing of "building back better" (Cheek and Chmutina 2021). However, disaster colonialism pushes for an explicitly anti-racist and decolonial approach to disasters, focusing on history and in particular deep time (Bonilla 2020). Doing so encourages an analysis of disasters that differentiate how through racial, colonial and neoliberal regimes of power racialised peoples, including Indigenous peoples, are rendered precarious and exploitable (Faria et al. 2021). It recognises how poor and exclusionary planning and racist and elitist policies contribute to vulnerability of groups of people (often those who are racialised). Ultimately, colonialism, alongside global capitalism, has in itself been a disaster for Indigenous peoples, as it is a major producer of vulnerability, suffering and death (García López 2020). As such, disasters are a continuation of settler-colonial violence rather than discrete events, and settler colonialism is conceptualised as an evolving structure that seeks allies in contemporary structures (Glenn 2015; Parsons and Fisher 2022). For example, in the context of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Wakeham (2022) details how violence against Indigenous women is the result of cumulative harms that accrue from genocidal process in settler colonial contexts, which are ultimately

the result of the long emergency of invasion. Disaster colonialism was less evident in the representations analysed here, but did emerge in some elements of chapter 4. This was mostly under discourses of 'systems of oppression' and 'self-determination,' in which present-day disaster was very explicitly tied to past colonial histories.

6.2. Governance

Overall, narratives and discourses reflected different views about governance, with all dominant discourses, narratives and framings aligning with neoliberal regimes. By this, I mean that the role of the State was rolled back, with civil society organisations and private companies filling the role of the State. In this section I outline some of the key ways through which neoliberalism was implicitly framed as normal, before outlining some of the ways through which this was contested by drawing on counter-representations that called for more radical changes in governance.

6.2.1. The pervasiveness of neoliberalism

Our reality is increasingly defined by the transfer of public goods to private sector – a process and state known as neoliberalism (Barrios 2017; Cheek and Chmutina 2021). All three institutions researched here have been profoundly affected by neoliberalism. British universities (and others) were once a public good (O'Neill and Sinden 2021) but have undergone marketisation and privatisation. The news media too was initially designed to be a public good but today resembles a profit-driven enterprise, with a ruthless logic of an economic system that demands increasing profit margins (Fenton 2011). This acts to the detriment of people by seeking out stories based on 'newsworthiness' (McKinzie 2017). The humanitarian sector, the international development sphere, and associated media and communications industry are huge businesses that has been heavily critiqued for creating an aid market based on principles of efficiency, value for money and deservedness in a way that appears apolitical but is actually imbued with power inequalities (Ademolu 2021; Field 2018). As such, all three sectors researched in this thesis are governed by and perpetuate neoliberalism. In this section, I specifically focus on how neoliberalism has been constructed as normal in these sectors.

British higher education acts firmly within the bounds of neoliberalism, and this is reflected in Chapter 3. Neoliberalism in British universities has far-reaching consequences, some of which include managerialist focus on audit, ranking and measurement (Kidman and Chu 2017), providing students with skills of competitiveness and entrepreneurialism, and producing knowledge in ways that enhance neoliberal agendas (e.g., cost efficiency, in partnership with private companies) (O'Neill and Sinden 2021). These networks of bureaucratic and administrative control over knowledge production form a tightly woven web of soft governance that work to preserve the status quo (Berg et al. 2016; Gills and Morgan 2020). In the context of global crisis (in this case, COVID-19), these structures made it difficult to conduct ethical and engaged research in Indigenous contexts through the inability to slow research down during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the course of this research (and in particular, the completion of Chapters 3 and 4), my peers and I (who had our research significantly disrupted by COVID-19) felt the pressure to change our

work rapidly, as we were told that we would not receive additional funding for our projects. Neoliberal universities, such as those in the UK, require high productivity over compressed time frames (Mountz et al. 2015), and this was heightened in the COVID-19 pandemic. However, good scholarship (particularly scholarship that seeks to be ethical – beyond that of ethics approvals – and politically engaged), requires time to think about and conduct research (Kara 2018; Mountz et al. 2015). This was not something that many researchers, in particular PhD students, could do.

Politically engaged scholars should contest unequal power relations and be complement research with action. With more time, I would have organised and engaged more deeply with feminist collaboratives that I had previously worked with. Had university and funding timelines not been so strict, I could have delayed portions of this work to see if there were ethical and feasible ways to work more closely with Indigenous peoples and bring their perspectives more directly into this work. To do so ethically, I would have required time (to build relationships) (Castleden et al. 2012; Cochran et al. 2008; Datta et al. 2015; Koster et al. 2012) and funding to be able to renumerate participants (something that was denied by my funders) (Goodman et al. 2018; Gray et al. 2017; Ortiz-Prado et al. 2020), alongside genuine positive impacts for Indigenous peoples through my work (something that I had planned with my original PhD). With a rich, in-depth sample size of one, I therefore highlight some of the ways in which neoliberal regimes prevent ethical and engaged research. This is something not easily achievable through larger and less in-depth studies that, unlike autoethnographic approaches, do not recognise the significance of affective and embodied experiences to understand social phenomena (Denzin 2006). Researching affective and embodied experiences is an important yet understudied way to understand neoliberalism and its pervasiveness: neoliberalism personalises everything through emphasising individualism, personal responsibility and self-reliance, rather than recognise the role of structural factors (Barrios 2017; Cheek and Chmutina 2021; Springer et al., 2016). In conducting an autoethnography, these embodied and affective aspects are brought to the fore.

In representations by the expert news media and international humanitarian community, neoliberalism was also pervasive. This was mostly achieved through a minimal role of the State (unless framed negatively) and a high presence of international NGOs. In line with previous work, outside actors were constructed to be necessary and relevant, often through the construction of Indigenous peoples needing help (Dijkzeul and Sandvik 2019). This was true even where Indigenous peoples were framed as resilient and empowered, as it was only through NGO action that Indigenous peoples could become empowered. Moreover, the state of being 'empowered' often adhered to neoliberal ideas based on individualism and greater integration into market economies, for instance through the formation of new business networks and creating drought-resistant crops. In many ways this is unsurprising, as the sources of articles were expert news media and the international humanitarian community – actors who strongly act within the bounds of neoliberalism. In what follows, I highlight how neoliberalism

is framed as normal through differential representations of government and through the emergence of technology as an actor.

6.2.1.1.   Differential representations of government

How government is represented is directly related to neoliberalism, because neoliberalism (broadly) describes the rolling back of the State and the growth of the private sector to fill some roles, and of civil society to fill other roles (including the responsibilisation of individuals in this process) (Atalay 2022; Meriläinen et al. 2020). As such, how state-society relationships are represented provide insight into if and how neoliberalism is portrayed as a 'normal' condition (Anderson et al. 2020; Tierney 2015).

Much disaster research has highlighted how governments are not assumed to improve social outcomes following disaster (Arora 2022; Smiley et al. 2022), and governments that were rendered visible here were largely treated with mistrust, in line with classical humanitarian and neoliberal discourse (Hilhorst 2018). In some sense, this aligns with research that focuses on how state-sanctioned actions facilitate disaster (Tierney 2012), especially in Indigenous contexts (Moulton and Machado 2019). Yet, it is important that only some governments were framed this way (e.g., Ethiopia, Brazil, Philippines), whilst others (e.g., USA, Canada, Australia) were not, despite disasters in Indigenous contexts all stemming to some degree from colonialism and thus state-sanctioned violence (Bonilla 2020; Lambert 2022).

To put it plainly: only Global South governments were framed as neglectful or discriminatory towards Indigenous peoples in dominant representations, whereas dominant representations of large settler states in the Global North (of which there were few dominant framings of) did not employ such a critical approach. Not only does this align with how much of the Global South has been constructed as in crisis and disaster-affected (Chouliaraki 2013; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Fiori 2020), but it also reflects how governments and governance in the Global South is viewed negatively compared with the Global North, despite all settler colonial contexts being genocidal (Gruffydd Jones 2013). It is useful here to look to the literature critiquing the concept of 'good governance' – a label used internationally to denote open and transparent governance that is rooted in neoliberal ideology, and which has been critiqued for exporting Eurocentric ideas about governance to the Global South in ways that are colonial (Adetula 2011; Borges 2021; Greig et al. 2011; Jones 2014). This is not to say that Global South states are not genocidal towards Indigenous Peoples (Holden 2022; Lesutis 2022), but rather that there is a lack of attention here to how Global North states are genocidal towards Indigenous Peoples (Guernsey 2021; Lambert 2022; Wakeham 2022).

Overall, then, actors in the North often 're-invent' colonialism using various tools (Kwet 2019), and this suggests that the news media and international humanitarian communications are one way

through which this is done, as it undermines Global South governments, carves a space out for international (Western) NGOs, whilst detracting from similar issues in the Global North.

6.2.1.2. Technology as an actor

The emergence of technology as an actor can be linked to neoliberalism: emerging technologies may facilitate the rollback of the State (and thus the abandonment of welfare) and extend the reach of globalisation and neoliberalism, whilst the deregulation of the private sector also spurs technological advancements (Duffield 2016; Fieldman 2011; Leichenko and O'Brien 2008). Yet, technology itself is not an actor. Instead, it is created and used by people for specific purposes, with technology as the embodiment of social and political processes (Moser 2006). That technology is framed as an actor in some representations here obfuscates social and political processes that create these technologies, and distracts from structural change that addresses the root causes of disaster (vulnerability) in Indigenous contexts (colonialism) (Welsh 2014). In this way, relying on technologies to empower people, or rather on those affected to use technologies to empower themselves, again responsibilises individuals for structures beyond their control (Duffield 2016; Rouvroy 2013).

The emergence of technology as an actor was present across both the Global South and North, although was more prevalent in reporting on the Global North. In all these contexts, technology was framed positively, and was usually merged with IK to bring novel DRR solutions. These solutions (e.g., land management practices, building techniques, engineering techniques), however, **address hazards rather** than vulnerability, and thus represent a technocratic and inadequate means of dealing with disaster (Hewitt 1983). Such a perspective is predicated on the belief that social, economic and political problems can be resolved by technology, yet this ignores power structures that both create vulnerability and induce dependency on technology companies (and thus the private sector) (Burns 2019; Jacobsen 2015; Thorat 2020).

Such depoliticisation occurs in a seemingly benevolent way in articles analysed here, which is in contrast to other technologies in DRR and humanitarian action, which include drones and biometric identification (Madianou 2021). Here, technology mostly features where it is 'integrated' with IK. However, what is missing in all discussions of IK under dominant representations was any acknowledgement of unequal power dynamics in knowledge creation and 'integration'. Often, the integration of IK with Western science is contingent on it being validated by Western science (Akena 2012), resulting in elements of IK being removed from the rich cosmologies they are embedded in (Latulippe and Klenk 2020). In doing so, the elements of IK viewed as useful and acceptable from the perspectives of Western science are used, whilst the rest is disregarded. However, Indigenous epistemologies should be interpreted through Indigenous ontologies, rather than being quickly included in Western ones as a quick-fix for ongoing colonial research (Ahenakew 2016). This is an

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extractive process that does not fully recognise Indigenous cosmologies, and which depoliticises knowledge creation under the guise of science and technology (Latulippe and Klenk 2020).

Another way through which this was done, particularly in Chapter 4, was the framing of Indigenous lands as a global commons. This was achieved through a focus on climate change mitigation and particularly the importance of ensuring lands could continue to store carbon (e.g., through the prevention of wildfires and deforestation). An impact of such a framing could pave the way for the use of Indigenous lands for more invasive technologies for climate change mitigation, such as solar farms or hydropower dams. This is already a concern in many places, such as Canada and Brazil (Macias Gimenez 2022), and decolonial scholars have critiqued this, highlighting how often Global South countries and Indigenous lands are treated as 'carbon dumps' to reduce carbon emissions generated primarily by the Global North (Andreucci and Zografos 2022; Bachram 2004). Specifically in relation to solar farms, de Souza et al. (2018) frames such a process as solar colonialism. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the politics behind projects such as these, particularly ones that might be viewed as inherently beneficial but which may mask power inequalities in the face of powerful and global discourses around climate change mitigation (see also Carey et al. 2012).

Overall, then, technology in these contexts was framed as being neutral and objective, yet this is never the case (Carey et al. 2012; Sandvik et al. 2014). Instead, technology is created and used within specific contexts, and has contributed to processes of digital colonialism (e.g., solar colonialism) (de Souza et al. 2018; Madianou 2019; Thorat 2020; Young 2019). Drawing on previous research, the widespread adoption and integration of technology in DRR does not reduce vulnerabilities, but rather provides ways to live with vulnerability under a neoliberal regime (Grove 2017).

6.2.2.   Less dominant representations destabilise neoliberal regimes

As exemplified here and elsewhere (Feola 2020), we (in the West) have been conditioned to accept neoliberal economies and institutions as natural. However, counter-narratives and framings can help to push back against this, whilst also pushing back against Eurocentric assumptions (Gilmore and Smith 2005; Mahendran 2017). Indigenous representations are especially important because previous research has found that how disaster-affected communities are portrayed is deeply racialised, with important elements such as solidarity being framed as something only affluent, white communities have (McKinzie 2017). Through discussion of counter-representations in the expert news media and humanitarian communications in this PhD, I highlight how less dominant representations push back on such assumptions, alongside the neoliberal tendency to depoliticise disaster.

Representing settler governments as performative (through 'performative governance' (Ding 2020)) and nodding to notions of settler humanitarianism, counter-representations reframe Global North

governments as genocidal rather than benevolent. This is in line with previous research that asserts that Indigenous peoples survival is testament to their own strengths and self-determination (Kauanui 2016). These two concepts are not ones that have been extensively researched in the context of disasters, yet they could be fruitful in furthering understandings, especially in Indigenous contexts.

Performative governance is where governments deploy language, symbols and gestures to foster an impression of good governance that is responsive to citizen demands, without concrete action that addresses the root causes of problems, such as disasters (Ding 2020; Lapegna 2016; Savun and Gineste 2019). It may be used to showcase the benevolence of states whilst concealing structural violence (e.g., the root causes of inequality (Ferdoush 2023). In the context of this PhD, I suggest that counter-representations (particularly in Chapter 4) frame the State to be engaging in performative governance where IK is incorporated into DRR without consideration of (a) the power inequalities involved in 'cherry picking' the parts of IK deemed relevant to DRR and (b) how DRR could be used to address disaster colonialism by contributing to structural change.

The second concept is settler humanitarianism, which describes how liberal state interventions inspire sympathy for Indigenous suffering, but are in actuality aligned with settler colonialism's ongoing goal to eliminate Indigenous peoples in order to control and exploit their territory (Maxwell 2017; Wolfe 2006). Much of this is achieved under the guise of care (see also Fassin 2011; Stevenson 2014), thus framing the state as benevolent and humane, despite it perpetrating territorial dispossession (Lester and Dussart 2014). In a Canadian context, scholars have critiqued how Indigenous approaches to trauma have been co-opted by the State to justify interventions by the State that are harmful, including the removal of Indigenous children from their communities (Giancarlo 2020; Maxwell 2017). I propose here that the inclusion of IK in some of the initiatives described in this PhD could constitute settler humanitarianism. In particular, efforts to use IK to protect private lands could be an example here.

A third, and related, finding was the emergence of care-ethics, a relational and feminist approach to care, which provides a way to think ethically about relationships between the self and others by foregrounding relationships and focusing on interdependency, reciprocity and relationality whilst remaining attentive to inequitable dynamics and addressing these in solidarity with others (Hobart and Kneese 2020; Raghuram 2016; Woodly et al. 2021). It thus calls into question neoliberal principles of individualism, egalitarianism, universalism and of society organised principles of efficiency and competition (Lawson 2007). As with settler humanitarianism and performative governance, care-ethics has much to offer disaster research, particularly in Indigenous contexts. This is because care-ethics has many similarities with Indigenous approaches to ethics (Boulton and Brannelly 2015; Brannelly et al. 2013), for example through the importance of awareness of one's place in a web connections amongst humans, non-humans and more-than-humans, alongside the importance of

relationships of interdependency and reciprocal responsibilities, amongst others (Whyte and Cuomo 2016). It may call for resisting or severing relationships that are harmful or oppressive (Card 1990; Deloria 2003; Hoagland 1988) and so can be a means of repoliticising how disasters are created: through vulnerability. This focus on unequal power dynamics moves towards caring with/within community to challenge root causes of disasters (Gilligan 1993; Surman et al. 2021). Importantly, through focusing on interdependency of all life, care-ethics also blurs the nature/culture divide, as discussed in chapter 5 (Whyte and Cuomo 2016).

How – if at all possible – can care-ethics be used by institutions, such as the news media and humanitarian communications, to move away from portraying people as 'distant sufferers?' With its emphasis on interdependence, a care ethics approach would involve framing those affected by disasters and audiences as connected to each other through processes such as globalisation and colonisation. Moreover, because care ethics focuses on how connected and interdependent lives are, everyone is viewed to be vulnerable in some way (Mbembe 2019; Robinson 2016). Emphasising this shared vulnerability reframes the 'Other' as a person with whom to build a more just world (Mbembe 2019) This, then, pushes back against the stereotyping of some places and people – namely, racialized peoples in the Global South – as perpetually vulnerable.

Elements of Indigenous feminism – which draws on core elements of Indigenous cultures (e.g., almost universal connection to Land framed as sacred responsibility predicated on reciprocity) (Clark 2016; Dei, Karanja, and Erger 2022; Dorries and Harjo 2020; Green 2020) – were evident in parts of Chapter 4's less dominant discourses. Greater engagement with Indigenous concepts like this and others like it (e.g. the Two-Spirit movement, see section 6.3.2) could further counter hegemonic representations. This could be especially helpful as dominant representations of solutions often proposed focused on individual women within their communities, rather than attention to collective agency, reflecting Western representations of Indigenous and Global South women as neoliberal subjects (Chilisa and Ntseane 2010; Hanchey 2016). Moreover, when NGOs and government agencies seek to 'save' Indigenous women through tropes of neoliberal feminism (e.g., the disempowered third world women who needs to be empowered), they are critiqued as contributing to a form of settler-humanitarianism (Maxwell 2017), wherein "culture" is used to describe the difference between Indigenous women and neoliberal feminist knowledge (Wallman 2021; 2018). Rather than embracing the complexity of different feminisms (and recognising the inadequacy of liberal feminism across contexts), doing so ignores elements of Indigenous feminism and enforces a simplified, liberal feminism into Indigenous peoples.

6.3. What is missing (and what does this tell us)?

What is missing in representations is just as important as what is mentioned. As such, I dedicate this section to analysing what was missing in this research. In looking at what is obfuscated in this research – the role of community-based organisations, intersectional approaches, and any discussion of the Global East – I put into perspective just how abnormal neoliberal regimes are for many.

6.3.1. Global South-based actors

Local people are always the first responders, and a plethora of south-south NGOs and local civil society organisations, social movements and collective action groups are involved in DRR (Clark-Ginsberg 2020; Duda et al. 2020; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2015; Marzuki and Tiola 2021; Meriläinen et al. 2020; O'Keefe et al. 2015). Community-based groups and local responders often feel ignored by international actors (Hilhorst 2018), and this is reflected in results. Drawing on previous research with such groups, I highlight some of the implications these silences have.

At the global scale, the omission of Global South NGOs masks how the Global South moulds DRR globally (Gómez 2021). For example, Indonesia was the focus of numerous articles included in this PhD. Here, Indigenous peoples were framed as vulnerable and needing help, whilst the government were framed as neglectful. What was not described was how Indonesia provides DRR and humanitarian aid internationally: Indonesia has been significantly involved in DRR efforts in both the Rohingya crisis and in Israel/Palestine (both contexts which, not uncontentiously, can and have been considered to involve Indigenous peoples (Barakat 2018; Parashar and Alam 2019)) (Marzuki and Tiola 2021). Thus, masking the role of Global South actors acts to mask their agency and entrench power inequalities in which the Global South depends on outside assistance from the Global North.

To some degree, the lack of representation of local actors reflects a broader failure within the disaster and humanitarian community: that of the failure to decentralise and localise aid in a way that leads to structural change in liberal humanitarianism (Apthorpe and Borton 2019; Gómez 2021; Roepstorff 2020). Whilst the rhetoric of both decentralising and localisation strongly features in dominant representations (e.g., through discourses of partnership and empowerment), the perspectives of community-based organisations are themselves absent. This is important because it omits these actors from articulating what a disaster or crisis is for them and what solutions are appropriate. For example, numerous Indigenous scholars highlight how social movements and community-based organisations work to resist capitalism and extractivism, as well as the North's neoliberal hegemony (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Fiori 2020; Rata 2002). Masking such resistance to global audiences acts to depoliticise DRR and humanitarian intervention in these contexts by ignoring the negative impacts outside actors have, and preventing deep, structural change (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Daley 2018). Overall, then, what

is represented here is what Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Fiori (2020) term 'Western humanitarianism,' which sustains an imaginary where the West is synonymous with the 'international' and thus authoritative. Applying this label is powerful because it recognises that other forms of humanitarianism exist.

Finally, Indigenous peoples from the Global South were represented by reporters and by humanitarian communications, but there was a lack of self-representation. This contrasts with the rare yet still present self-representation by Indigenous peoples in Canada and Australia in Chapter 4. This aligns with work that reveals how Indigenous media organisations in the Global North have developed highly professionalised, educated and trained staff, whilst in the Global South, Indigenous peoples engage in what is termed "popular alternative communication" strategically to strengthen cultures and resist threats and development projects (Morales, 2021), and thus are not visible in international-facing communications. This is a problem because Indigenous peoples emancipatory appropriation of media can work towards decolonisation (Morales, 2021), yet because Indigenous peoples are diverse and have different experiences of colonisation (Osborne et al. 2019), this silence means that Global South Indigenous peoples' views are not present here, making it difficult to fully understand how oppression operates in these contexts. Whilst there may be some similarities with Indigenous peoples in the Global North, this cannot be assumed (Kothari 2021; Openjuru et al. 2015). As such, it is not enough to just listen to Global South voices, but to also listen to Indigenous Global South voices (Kothari 2021). It is difficult to say what strategies and concepts would be included if these voices were included here, but some previous research with grassroots movements points to the following: conviviality, decommodification, redefining power, global interconnectedness, amongst others (Kothari 2021; Shizha 2016).

6.3.2. Intersectional approaches

Intersectionality is a feminist and anti-racist approach to studying oppression (Cho et al. 2013). First coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw to describe the double discrimination experienced by Black women in the US, the concept seeks to unveil and understand how multiple forms of oppression (e.g., racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, amongst others) interact to create obstacles that are often not understood or seen in conventional ways of thinking (Crenshaw 1997). These intersecting patterns of marginalisation are not additive, but rather interact with each other in complex ways (Horowitz 2017). The concept of intersectionality is not new to Indigenous communities, and ensuring coloniality is addressed alongside other forms of oppression is important here (Clark 2016; García-Del Moral 2018; Razack 2016).

Many disaster researchers have pointed out the problematic lack of intersectional approaches to DRR (Andharia 2020; Arora 2022; Kuran et al. 2020; Luft 2016; Reinhardt 2019), and this PhD adds to this:

here, intersectional approaches did feature in less dominant framings, but these usually focused solely on Indigeneity and women in the Global North (namely, Australia and Canada). This means that some forms of oppression were masked. Whilst it is not possible to identify each structure in this PhD (or for myself, as a non-Indigenous researcher, to know all the oppressive structures across different contexts that marginalise Indigenous peoples), I outline what the omission of LGBTQIA+ (including Two Spirit Indigenous peoples) means for this work.

As discussed in Chapter 5, gender in analysed articles was reduced to cis-women, reflecting Eurocentric and Western conceptions of gender that have been exported through colonisation (Momsen 2002). Conceptions of gender prior to colonisation were vastly different to the binary understanding of the West (Clark 2016; García-Del Moral 2018; Saladin d'Anglure et al. 2018), and people that do not fit within binary gender norms were considered sacred across many Indigenous contexts (Driskill 2010). Yet, despite the large focus on women, LGBTQIA+ peoples (including Two-Spirit peoples) were excluded here. This is important because LGBTQIA+ people face unique barriers in DRR that are often disregarded (Goldsmith et al., 2022). This means that the processes these groups view as disasters are excluded, relegating these to what some would term 'hidden' or 'invisible' disasters (Davies 2019; Dembélé et al. 2020; Hilhorst et al. 2020). Previous research has tended to focus on 'hidden disasters' as being obscured because they are small and localised, and thus do not garner significant attention (Cadag et al. 2017). However, in this research, I have extended this hiddenness to be the result of inequality and marginalisation of Indigenous Peoples, which render disasters that happen in these contexts to be hidden.

Following Davies (2019), I question to whom such disasters are invisible and/or hidden. It is not to Indigenous peoples themselves, as they experience these disasters and know them intimately. Instead, it is to those who consume hegemonic representations of disasters in Indigenous contexts, be that through research, news media or humanitarian communications. It is thus these sectors that can play a role in revealing these 'hidden' and 'invisible' disasters. An example of how this could be done could look to the two-spirit movement. This movement focuses on Indigenous peoples rights and the rights of LGBTQIA+ peoples, and specifically draws on Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies of gender, sexuality and being (Ansloos et al. 2021). In particular, there is a deep acknowledgement that to be both Indigenous and queer is connected with spirituality and health (Ansloos et al. 2021; Walters et al. 2006). In doing so, this movement has paid particular attention to the health of Indigenous queer, trans and two-spirit people (Ansloos et al. 2021; Greenwood et al. 2018), revealing the oppressive structures (including liberal feminism) that have been detrimental to the health of queer Indigenous peoples and constitute disasters, but instead remain invisible in the mainstream. It is insights like this that are missing in representations of disasters in Indigenous contexts here.

Liberal feminism, then, has a subtle yet powerful impact on constructing disasters in Indigenous contexts by quashing alternative understandings and hyperfocusing on cis-women, despite recognition that LGBTQIA+ people experience disaster differently (Camminga 2021; Goldsmith, Raditz, and Méndez 2022; Yadav et al. 2021) To counteract this, a focus on the patriarchal, heteronormative and colonial structures (alongside forms of oppression that are local) could help (Starblanket 2018), with specific attention to including and listening to diverse voices, especially where these contest conventional ways of thinking, in line with intersectional approaches (Crenshaw 1997).

6.3.3. The Global East

That the Global East was invisible in this research (except for mentions of Afghanistan in chapter 5) is unsurprising, given that researchers from the Global East contend that it has remained unknowable as Western academia has failed to engage with people and social processes here (Tichindeleanu et al. 2020). This is not because the research does not exist, but that it does not receive recognition, even when communicated in English (Мюллер 2021). In almost all the contexts in which news media and humanitarian communications were set, there was a strong presence of neoliberalism. In many post-socialist countries of the Global East, this mode of governance is not as prevalent (Carmody and Owusu 2007). Instead, States still maintain responsibility over provision of services such as humanitarian aid, with NGOs and corporations playing a smaller, supporting role (An 2019). As such, the invisibility of the Global East in media equates to the invisibility of different modes of governance.

Current research from the Global East on these topics provides some interesting insights pertinent to decolonisation within the disasters field. I outline some of these here. Stavrevska et al., (2022), discuss gender and humanitarian action from the standpoint of Latin American and Global East women. They critique how solutions (usually within the bounds of liberal feminism) are imposed from 'centres' (USA, Western Europe) onto 'peripheries' (Latin America, South Eastern Europe). This is similar to research about peacebuilding in Korea, where problem-solving approaches have been critiqued as inappropriate to the context, particularly in terms of the linear, rational thinking involved (Kester et al. 2021), calling for approaches that are context-dependent. Additionally Stavrevska et al., (2022) draw similarities between the Global East and Latin American theory, for example highlighting similarities between *Buen Vivir* and the Bosnian concept of *Rahatluk*, in that they both seek to overcome Eurocentricism by drawing on Indigenous Knowledge. In terms of Indigenous peoples in the Global East, Laptander (2017) highlights the importance of placing Tundra Nenets oral histories in the context of political processes happening in their homelands, namely collectivisation, industrialisation and relocation, whilst Romaniello (2019) advocates for the application of postcolonial and decolonial approaches when analysing Russia's treatment of Indigenous peoples in Siberia. The former is a stark contrast to the focus on processes of globalisation, neoliberalism and disaster

capitalism that tend to dominate the disasters and development literature. Yet, Romaniello's (2019) suggestion mirrors some of the research here.

In conclusion, the Global East is important as it represents an alternative to way of governing that attempts to resist neoliberalism. This does not mean that these modes of governance are perfect by any means, but rather that engaging with alternatives disrupts the normalcy of neoliberal regimes.

6.4. Pushing back and creating space

This PhD has shown how paying specific attention to colonialism, including using a lens of disaster colonialism, can push back against the normality of neoliberalism, as well as (of course) colonialism. Thus far, much of this has been theoretical. Yet, praxis is fundamental to decolonisation and aligned movements. In this section, I highlight some of the more practical elements of pushing back and creating space across research, the news media, and international humanitarian communications. I take inspiration here from the concept of a scyborg – a queer turn of phrase used to name the structural agency of people who pick up colonial technologies and use them for decolonising purposes (Yang 2017). Whilst decolonisation requires deep-rooted structural and fundamental change, I use the concept of the scyborg to guide how parts of these shifts can occur.

6.4.1. Universities

Universities, be they in the UK, USA, Canada or Australia, are colonising: they continue to be places of western cultural hegemony, within which decolonisation is an ongoing struggle (Dudgeon and Fielder 2006; Chatterjee and Maira 2014). The process of **d**ecolonisation looks different in the UK and settler colonies because of different histories of colonialism and Imperialism (Bonds and Inwood 2016). As chapter 3 – an autoethnography of British higher education – is specific to the UK, I focus here on the UK to remain within the scope of this PhD, whilst also drawing on examples from other universities and research institutions that work with Indigenous peoples.

Colonial-white supremacist thinking has historically positioned Europe as intellectually and morally superior, and such thinking underscores the citations, curricula, canons and recruitment patterns across many subjects in the UK (Elliott-Cooper 2017; Todd 2016). British geography, for example, was one of the subjects implicated in coloniality and white supremacy, with many calling for anti-racist teaching and research to address and push back against this (Esson 2020; Tolia-Kelly 2017). Whilst research exists on the relationship between British higher education and decolonisation of former colonies (e.g., Dickinson 2012; Moncrieffe 2020; Naylor 2020; Sakata et al. 2023; Uddin 2011), very little research has been conducted on the relationship between British institutions and researching in Indigenous contexts (with the exception of Todd (2016)). Lack of attention to such contexts obfuscates the role of the UK in colonisation of Indigenous lands. As such, if researchers in British institutions are going to continue to research in Indigenous contexts and with Indigenous peoples, this history needs to be brought to the fore and understood in order to be undone.

One tangible area where British universities could begin the process of decolonisation is around fieldwork, as argued in Chapter 3. Fieldwork is viewed as the norm and baseline of geographical research as well as in other fields, yet its appropriateness has been questioned as fieldwork is always

contextual, relational, and political (Guasco 2022; Sultana 2007). For instance, masculinist epistemologies of fieldwork – in which able-bodied white men from Western institutions are constructed as the prototypical fieldworker, building his expertise and authority in the field – are pervasive (Sundberg 2003). Today, there are structural barriers in who can do fieldwork (e.g., visa costs, bureaucratic hurdles), and thus fieldwork is not equally accessible to all (Guasco 2022; Sultana 2007), particularly those in the Global South and for people with caring responsibilities (Hope et al. 2020; Silva and Gandhi 2019). Because who we are influences the research we do (Haraway 1988; Barber and Haney 2016), the knowledge and expertise of these groups is excluded. Moreover, the construction of field sites as exotified and far off places are deeply colonial, and what the 'field' is to researchers is home to many (Kanngieser and Todd 2020; Liboiron 2021; Todd 2016; Tuck and McKenzie 2015).

Therefore, just as 'research' is a dirty word in Indigenous contexts (Smith 2012), so too is fieldwork (Liboiron 2021). Access to field sites has been critiqued as violent as it is exploitative, resource-driven, and colonial entitlement to accessing Indigenous lands and culture for the career development of researchers (Liboiron 2021). In the context of disasters (and particularly global pandemics), considering the potential violence of putting our bodies (that could be vectors for disease) into someone else's space and place could have devastating repercussions (Guasco 2022). This is particularly case immediately following disaster, where researchers have previously 'rushed' to obtain perishable data, often hindering disaster response and recovery and engaging in extractive research practices (Gaillard and Gomez 2015; Gaillard and Peek 2019; Mukherji et al. 2014).

This is an area that is (slowly) gaining traction amongst researchers, with many turning their focus towards field sites closer to home in an effort to 'study up' power inequalities (Mahtani 2006). Whilst these debates were already ongoing (Missbach 2011), the pandemic brought this to the fore (Lawrence and Dowey 2022). However more could and should be done within institutions to break down assumptions that fieldwork is necessary. For example, drawing on Guasco (2022) and my own experiences in Chapter 3, students choosing not to do fieldwork have to justify their choice, but those who choose to do fieldwork usually do not have to justify this decision. This matters because the refusal of fieldwork by those living in 'field sites' is an important part of any decolonial approach to research (Simpson 2007). As such, the decision around whether to do fieldwork or not should not be that of the researcher, but rather of participants. Again drawing on my own experience and Guasco (2022), it simply is not enough to be reflexive during the research process and then continue with colonial fieldwork practices. Instead, genuine and careful decision-making needs to be undertaken in which researchers are not pressured into and are open to abandoning fieldwork practices where they may not be appropriate or beneficial. In a disasters context, both the Disaster Manifesto and Disaster Accord provide a valuable way of thinking through whether fieldwork is needed and, if so, how to engage in fieldwork ethically (Gaillard and Raju 2022).

Finally, there is debate around whether universities, with their neoliberal logics and colonial roots, can truly be decolonising. After all, Indigenous academics draw inspiration and resolve from decolonising movements beyond the neoliberal university (e.g., grassroots movements and subaltern conversations). Ultimately, the decolonising potential of such work represents a threat to universities (Kidman 2020).

Such interrogation and reflection is important to ensure that initiatives aimed at decolonising are not co-opted. However, I take inspiration here from Yang (2017), who writes that 'colonial schools carry decolonial riders', meaning colonial universities do not just work towards coloniser's futures, but also to Indigenous ones, where marginalised groups create space within these institutions. Whilst the ability to create space may vary (e.g., during disaster and crisis), there are nonetheless opportunities to do so, and also to subvert neoliberal practices. Making space here can involve practices such as answering back, re-writing (e.g., of histories) and creating spaces in which Indigenous knowledge systems can flourish (Manathunga 2020). Following Radcliffe (2017), this can involve theorising from the margins and ensuring Indigenous perspectives and theories are listened to and taken seriously. In times of crisis and mounting pressure across universities, I found questioning who my intellectual labour is for and who benefits from this work to have been an important guiding question for me during this research (inspired by Kidman (2020)). In this way, thinking about everyday ethics and these can be translated through everyday practices of researchers has been important in this research (Mena and Hilhorst 2021).

6.4.2. News media

The news media is a space within which dominant discourses can be challenged/resisted (Myers et al. 2021), particularly as the rise of Indigenous cultural media supports a global decolonization movement bolstered by the fact that colonial nation states cannot regulate the flow of cultural production within and across Indigenous territories (de Finney 2015). Yet, the news media interpret distant events for their audiences in order to sustain an audience (Jamieson and Rivera 2022), and attempts at self-representation are rarely consumed by Western audiences (Graham 2014). In this section, I seek to identify concrete ways in which the news media (and in particular the expert news media, to remain within the scope of this PhD) can contribute towards decolonisation.

Drawing on previous elements of this PhD, one way in which the news media can move towards decolonisation in a disasters context is to reframe what is considered to be a disaster. As evident where Indigenous peoples reported on disasters, focusing on the process of colonisation and its legacies highlighted how the everyday can be a disaster for Indigenous peoples, owing to colonialism. In this way, using present conditions (e.g., pandemics, statelessness, police brutality, amongst others) to

revisit history and reveal inequalities can be a means to work towards decolonising news media reporting (Huygens 2011). In particular, drawing on 'deep time,' as many decolonial scholars have, is helpful as it destabilises that normalcy of colonial and neoliberal regimes whilst also elevating the ingenuity of IK (Manathunga 2020). With this in mind, thinking through who gets to speak, and with that what stories are told and which ones are silenced is an important part of decolonisation within news media (Fountaine et al. 2022). In doing so, encouraging the inclusion of decentred worldviews within the news media, including Indigenous perspectives, can help to unsettle Western ways of living and what is considered normal (Clement 2019; Habibis et al. 2016).

6.4.3. Humanitarian communications

Although calls for decolonisation of the humanitarian sector have been widespread (Barter and Sumlut n.d.; Fujita 2020; Rutazibwa 2019; Sripaoraya 2017) thus far attempts to decolonise the humanitarian sector have ignored important and complex questions of power inequalities and how to address these (Aloudat and Khan 2022). Addressing decolonisation across the entire humanitarian sector is beyond the scope of this PhD. Here, I will focus specifically on humanitarian communications of the 'international humanitarian community.'

I start here by emphasising that humanitarians, including humanitarian communication specialists, are reflexive and aware of the critiques of their sector (Nolan and Mikami 2013). Resisting motivated is important, and communication specialists should be aware of and avoid tropes when representing peoples, be that visually or through narratives (hooks 2006; Houbeish 2021). This could be achieved through a less structured interview process to allow participants to focus on the parts of their stories that they want to (Houbeish 2021). This could be similar to the approach of 'learning with the reader' as exemplified in Chapter 4, in which communication specialists and reporters allowed Indigenous peoples to tell their stories. In this way, who is considered an expert is reframed, which is important as disaster-affect peoples have previously critiqued how outside DRR and humanitarian practitioners do not fully understand local realities and implement initiatives that exert power over populations and entrench inequalities (Barnett 2013; Barrios 2016; Rajaram 2002). Allowing disaster-affected peoples to tell their own stories would allow their framings to filter into agenda setting, particularly when included in the international humanitarian community's communications. This is not a simple task by any means: as Rajaram (2002) found in the context of Oxfam's attempts to allow refugees to tell their own stories, much of the institutional and political aspects of refugee stories were removed as they conflicted with NGO aims. In Indigenous contexts, this may encourage a greater focus on settler colonialism, which would be important as this is a structure that often slides from the public view, yet is important in shaping Indigenous realities (Carlson 2017)

Humanitarian communication specialists could use care ethics as a guiding principle in their work. This would include centering concerns of care and responsibility towards those being represented, ensuring that harm is avoided (Chouliaraki 2010; Houbeish 2021). In doing so, audiences could be encouraged to re-think how they view themselves, others and power (Houbeish 2021), particularly where processes of colonisation, Imperialism and neoliberalism are brought to the fore through such representations.

Finally, I call for greater attention to the mundane and every day in the context of addressing disasters in Indigenous contexts, across all of the sectors researched here. Disasters reveal what is already there in the everyday (Mena and Hilhorst 2022). It is within the everyday that pushing back against unequal power structures can be done – for instance through thinking about everyday ethics in research, news reporting and communications, as well as taking seriously the responsibility to represent those affected by disaster (Houbeish 2021).

6.5. Contributions to scholarship

This thesis set out to evaluate how three powerful institutions – British universities, the expert news mediated and the international humanitarian community – shape representations and knowledge of Indigenous peoples in disasters. It contributes theoretically, empirically and methodologically to current scholarship around Indigeneity and disasters, as well as to broader debates in decolonising disaster studies. This section is guided by these theoretical, empirical and methodological contributions, and how they relate to my research objectives, which are:

- Keep and analyse a research diary to evaluate how British universities facilitate and/or inhibit ethical and engaged research in Indigenous context during a disaster.
- Identify discourses in the expert news media about disasters and Indigenous peoples' roles within disasters.
- Identify narratives in the international humanitarian community about disasters, crises and Indigeneity.

6.5.1. Theoretical contributions

This PhD started with outlining the value of social constructive approaches to disaster. Through the published portions of this work (chapters 3-5), I use this social constructive approach to question the very concept of disaster, encouraging a more inclusive and epistemologically 'free' approach to reveal insights about 'invisible' disasters (all the while questioning to whom invisible disasters are invisible to).

Disaster research has shifted from categorising disasters into themes such as 'technological', 'environmental' and 'health' (amongst others). In this thesis, I push the blurriness and messiness of disasters by allowing the news media, international humanitarian communications and (implicitly) their audiences to define disaster, thus embracing a social constructive approach to disasters. Here, I show how what these actors view to be a disaster reveals underlying assumptions about what is considered to a be a 'normal' or acceptable state. I also push this messiness further, in particular looking towards the breaking down of the nature/culture binary when it comes to thinking about disasters in Indigenous contexts, with particular, careful, and gentle critique of the #NoNaturalDisasters movement. Ultimately, by trying to break down rigid structures and perceptions of what is viewed as legitimate knowledge and expertise, I argue that greater listening and creating space for Indigenous peoples to bring their knowledge and theories to traditionally Western concepts (and within traditionally Western institutions) can help to reveal new insights about disasters (e.g., extending the hidden disaster concept), and new possibilities for how they should be managed and governed.

6.5.2. Empirical contributions

To my knowledge, no papers have specifically looked at the ways that British institutions facilitate and/or hinder ethical and engaged disaster research with Indigenous peoples. This is important because different nations have different histories with Indigenous peoples and different academic cultures. Relative to institutions in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand (amongst others), British academia has been criticised for being behind in that it has not made as much progress as other countries in decolonising (Todd 2016). This paper does provide important insight into the workings of British academia that would not have been possible at a larger scale. For example, the affective and embodied experiences of doing a PhD during a disaster (and how pervasively neoliberalism structures this experience) are revealed. More similar research should be conducted that could build on this to gain a more comprehensive picture of how more ethical and engaged research could be facilitated, in both disasters and Indigenous contexts, with affective and embodied elements at the core of this to fully and comprehensively understand how deeply neoliberalism permeates research.

Beyond this, this PhD has also shown that despite the tropes and stereotypes of Indigenous peoples being well-known, poor representation of them still occurs, with relatively little self-representation, particularly in the context of the Global South. Similarly, despite the concept of 'natural disasters' being widely debunked, this has not been reflected in non-academic areas (including the expert news media). This indicates that the depoliticisation of disasters is extremely pervasive and requires greater scrutiny. Future research could probe why this is the case, alongside more in-depth analysis around how more political understanding permeate hegemonic institutions.

6.5.3. Methodological contributions

The primary methodological contributions of this PhD centre around two related elements: the questioning of fieldwork as the *prima facie* way to conduct geographical/anthropological research and, with that, the value of secondary qualitative data analysis. I bring these together by bringing in questions of ethics, and arguing that in research in both a disasters and an Indigenous contexts, ethics should be one of the most important considerations when it comes to deciding methodology.

Much previous research has adopted a reflexive approach to fieldwork, questioning the positionality and power structures imbued in this process (Caretta and Jokinen 2017; Chacko 2004; Mahoney 2007; Missbach 2011). However, most research here seems to interrogate fieldwork during and after fieldwork, rather than prior to conducting it. No primary research, to my knowledge, has documented the interrogating of potential fieldwork, with the decision to ultimately pull away from fieldwork. Yet, this is an important process to understand if fieldwork is to be properly, deeply and genuinely critiqued

in a way that will influence practice. As such, I encourage more similar research that documents the process of breaking up with fieldwork.

Related to this is a contribution to shifting methodologies (spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic), particularly around the use and value of secondary qualitative data analysis. Such methods have been critiqued for 'armchair anthropology' – a form of research in which anthropologists relied on other's written accounts without interacting with those they were researching (Sera-Shriar 2014). However, in this PhD, I have shown that in 'studying up' powerful institutions, critiques of armchair anthropology are outdated: by drawing on Indigenous scholars' work and using this to critique how such institutions operate, the perspectives of Indigenous researchers can be brought into research, in a way that is less invasive (an important consideration in a disaster research and research in Indigenous contexts). This also ensured that I did not focus unduly on local contexts, many of which are over researched (Ahenakew 2016; Bessarab and Ng'andu 2010; Louis 2007). Of course, all of these concerns and debates are heightened in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, in which placing my bodies in other's space and place could have had extremely negative consequences for the community. Current and future research should, therefore, learn from the pandemic and maintain a critical eye to fieldwork, taking inspiration from sources such as the Disaster Manifesto (Gaillard and Raju 2022).

I note here that there are valid concerns around naval gazing. I (cautiously) push back on these: there is a place for autoethnography in research, but that place must be carefully navigated. Following others (Roy and Uekusa 2020), throughout the writing of Chapter 3 I was careful to use my experience as a means to analyse and push back against a powerful institutions – my university and, more broadly, British academia. Unlike section 5 in Chapter 2, where I give an in-depth account of my positionality, I was careful to consider what was appropriate and necessary to disclose for the purposes of pushing back against hegemonic practices, using my experiences to do so.

Overall, throughout this research process I found that individual researchers bear a great deal of responsibility for managing ethical dilemmas (Kara and Pickering 2017). In line with previous researchers, I argue here that questions of ethics should be on par with those of methods in disaster research, especially where Indigenous peoples are concerned (Van Brown 2020). In this vein, future research could explore ethical dimensions of conducting disaster research, for instance by working more closely with participants to ensure their perspectives on what they view to be an ethical and engaged research process looks like, as well as looking towards concepts such as care ethics to guide research.

6.6.   Future research directions

There are several potentially fruitful future research directions from this work, which I outline here.

The first of these surrounds pushing the 'studying up' agenda further by conducting interviews and/or ethnographies of universities and the news media to understand more deeply the structures that inhibit individuals from pushing back against hegemonic practices. In terms of the international humanitarian community, some ethnographies do address this sector (Armytage 2018; Billo and Mountz 2016). Here, tying findings more explicitly with whiteness and critical race theory could enrichen insights in this area. For all three of the institutions, this could also include greater engagement with necropolitics, slow violence and disaster colonialism to contribute to more explicitly anti-racist and anti-colonial disasters field. Specifically in the context of studying up, integration with critical race theory and whiteness studies could help to elucidate power structures (Kherbaoui and Aronson 2021; Moreton-Robinson et al. 2008).

What is missing from this PhD is engagement with audiences: I have revealed the ideologies operating within universities, news media and the international humanitarian community and assumed that those who consume research, news and communications about disasters in Indigenous contexts take this information in uncritically. Yet, this is not the case as audiences are reflexive and many well be aware of critiques of these areas too (Orgad and Seu 2014). Taking this further, audiences and publics are not homogenous. Instead diasporas (including Indigenous peoples) are not just subjects of representations, but also audiences (Ademolu 2021). This too could be a fruitful area of future research.

6.7. References

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Conclusion

In this PhD, I sought to evaluate how three powerful institutions – the university, the news media, and international humanitarian communications – shape knowledge and representations of disasters and their governance in Indigenous contexts. I achieved this by "studying up" each institution, finding that neoliberalism was pervasive in structuring what is considered a disaster and how disasters should be governed. However, I also found that alternative framings – those that view disasters as political and propose shifting power inequalities as the solution – do emerge. This is despite that those institutions researched here are embedded within and reproduce neoliberal forms of governance. Understanding how actors within these institutions can pick up tools within these contexts and use these for shifting power inequalities is valuable for understanding how decolonisation can begin to happen here.

In this research, I allowed the expert news media (Chapter 4) and the international humanitarian community (Chapter 5) to frame disasters, with an understanding that disasters are socially constructed (Chapters 2 and 3). As discussed, multiple frames emerged, revealing that the messiness of the concept is somewhat evident. Except for elements of Chapter 4, how Indigenous peoples view disasters is largely masked. This leads me with a final thought: What happens when we (be that in research, news media, humanitarian action, or elsewhere) embrace greater subjectivity, allowing Indigenous peoples to define disasters themselves, how they should be governed (including radical alternatives to neoliberalism), and communicate these on their own terms? What interventions and resources would be mobilised and what futures could be imagined? Taking inspiration from Lambert (2022), Indigenous experiences of colonisation trump any academic or collective understanding of what is considered a 'disaster', with colonial and oppressive regimes of wealth extraction leading to significant risk creation. Yet, this is not something that is often termed a disaster, or communicated widely across the humanitarian sphere, possibly because this state, which is a disaster for Indigenous peoples, is the mundane, every day for many non-Indigenous peoples.

In questioning the various frames through which disasters are understood, the wordlviews revealed and the power dynamics at play, this research has added to a pervasive question in disaster research: what is a disaster and who gets to decide (Anderson et al. 2020; Quarantelli 1998; Remes and Horowitz 2021)? This matters because previous research shows how powerful actors use terms such as 'disasters' and 'emergencies' to deploy mundane techniques to return to a state of non-emergency: the status quo, which in most contexts is the neoliberal every day (i.e., a state that is a disaster for

Indigenous peoples) (Anderson et al. 2020). As such, how a disaster is framed defines whose futures are being imagined (and whose futures are being closed off) (O'Neill and Sinden 2021).

An unresolved point of contention here is the lack of engagement with Indigenous worldviews in much disasters discourse. Indigenous voices included here (Chapter 4) here do talk about systems of oppression and the political roots of disaster, whilst some humanitarian communications appear to co-opt Indigenous peoples' cosmologies to mask political causes of disaster. However, recently, Faas (2022) delves into the contentions of separating nature and culture in the 'no natural disasters' discourse (whilst also acknowledging the usefulness of this discourse for holding powerful actors to account) in Indigenous contexts, as many Indigenous cosmologies do not view people as separate the other-than-humans and more-than-humans (Bwambale et al. 2023). Similarly, Bankoff (2022) provides an in-depth analysis of Mount Mayon (Philippines), revealing the multitude of ways through which the volcano (and volcanic risk) can be understood. This problematises the very strict distinction between the hazard and vulnerability paradigm, but I argue that this messiness can be embraced in three ways.

Firstly, accepting, recognising and remembering that Indigenous worldviews, peoples and perspectives are incredibly diverse is important, not only in avoiding essentialisation (Lindroth and Sinevaara-Niskanen 2013; Paradies 2016), but also because decolonial projects themselves always emerge from multiple places, and can thus are never unified (Mignolo 2010). This does not make them any less valid or true. Instead, expecting to articulate a homogenised, bounded Indigenous perspective about disasters is not just inappropriate, but also reflects a way in which Western knowledge may seek to understand Indigenous Knowledge through Western ways of understanding (e.g., through being overly rigid and prescriptive). This can be applied to Indigenous cosmologies (Ahenakew 2014; Amo-Agyemang 2021; Andreotti et al. 2015; Vazquez 2012), as well as of perspectives within Indigenous communities too (Faas and Marino 2020; Garcia-Yi 2014; Mosurska and Ford 2020; Titz et al. 2018).

Secondly, it is important to understand the value of pluralistic interpretations for complex phenomena, such as disasters, and ensure a range of perspectives are included in disaster governance and management. This is especially important as recent research finds that despite a range of perspectives and framings put forward to understand disasters, only a few are communicated widely (Cardwell and Cowan n.d.), In particular, there is a lack of pluralism and inclusion of epistemologies beyond Western scientific ones in disaster research (Gaillard and Raju 2022; Khan et al. 2021). Yet, for such complex problems, multiple understandings should be considered. Therefore, it is important to engage in multiple concepts, whilst also being critical of those that become dominant and shroud out other understandings.

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Finally, and specifically in relation to the nature/culture binary, respecting(diverse) Indigenous worldviews about disaster (e.g., recognising Indigenous cosmologies around Land having agency, for instance) does not necessarily equate to ignoring the inequalities that lead to disasters and they do not need to lead to depoliticised framings of disasters. This would be an example of forcing Indigenous peoples understandings of disaster through Western epistemologies, something that is inappropriate and acts to further dismember IK (Battiste 2013; Smith 2012). Instead, re-conceptualising disasters through Indigenous cosmologies can be radically political as power inequalities ignored in much Western research can be brought to the fore, whilst also embracing relationality and responsibility to more-than-humans and other-than-humans (Richardson-Ngwenya 2021; Bwambale et al. 2023; Country et al. 2015; Styres 2017; Todd 2016; Watts 2013; Yazzie and Baldy 2018; Ratuva 2007; Kim 2020; Lozano 2016). By this, I mean a complete breakdown of the nature/culture binary pervasive in much Western research (Dei et al. 2022; Faas 2022), to view people as a part of nature rather than dominating it. In doing so, research can move to further shifting and breaking down of the power inequalities embedded within much academic research.

By embracing the above and moving towards more epistemologically-free and messy understandings of disaster, further insights around what is considered to be a disaster, what is considered a 'normal' state, and to whom can be revealed. In doing so, these insights can shed much-needed light on how power operates in DRR in Indigenous contexts, and how these power inequalities can be broken down.

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Appendices

Supplementary material for chapter III

Table 7: Specific strategies employed in expert news media reports that fed into different discourses of Indigenous peoples and disasters.

Discourse	Feature	Strategies
Natural disasters	Focus on environmental phenomena	Overcompletedness around physical processes contributing to disaster, including climate change. Overcompletedness around carbon stores Metaphors and similes to show severity and extent of hazard Imagery that shows the extent of hazards without including people.
	Disasters are naturalised	Textual silences around political and social processes. Vagueness about causes of disaster.
	Vulnerability is naturalised	Vagueness around why people are vulnerable Presuppositions around the way vulnerability is defined, reducing it to a category such as age, (dis)ability and geographical location. Aerial imagery of small settlements amongst a vast uninhabited landscape. Imagery of buildings on the edge of cliffs, or near large bodies of water.
	Ties Indigenous peoples to the land	Presuppositions about the relationship of Indigenous people with land.
	Sense of urgency around the state of the environment	Modalities to communicate devastation that will occur without action. Modalities to communicate how protecting the environment will prevent disaster.
	Focus on the future	References to the future, particularly as 'uncertain' and 'dangerous'
Systems of oppression	Assigns blame to a system of oppression rather than individuals	Vagueness around assigning blame. Construct private companies as powerful. Construct governments as powerful and/or oppressive.

		Construct Indigenous peoples as exploited.
		Contrasting pre-exploitation landscape with post-exploitation landscape
	Highlights the normalcy of disasters	Overcompletedness about pre-disaster conditions.
		Overcompletedness about poor socioeconomic conditions being linked to processes.
	Highlights colonialism as a root cause of disaster	Overcompletedness to show the specific ways colonialism is an ongoing process that creates disaster today.
	Sense of urgency around political situation	Modalities to show the consequences of no political change.
		Presuppositions used to assign blame.
Humanitarian intervention	NGOs framed as knowledgeable and/or competent	Using Indigenous peoples and those affected by disaster to highlight success of NGO actions.
		Active language to show NGO actions
	Indigenous peoples framed as suffering and passive.	Passive language.
		Close up portrait photos of Indigenous peoples with serious expressions.
		Photos usually of women and/or children.
	Government is incompetent and/or oppressive	Presupposes government shortcomings.
	Depoliticisation of humanitarianism	Textual silences around politics of humanitarianism.
	Emphasis on collaboration	Overcompletedness about who NGO collaborates with
		Vagueness about the nature of collaboration.
		Vagueness about the outcomes of collaboration.
		Vague words such as "empowerment" and "capacity building".
	Sense of urgency around disaster	Use of modalities to convey devastating consequences of a lack of action

Technocracy	Government deals with disaster	Active voice used to describe the positive impact of emergency management and law enforcement.
	Indigenous peoples are innocent	Imagery of Indigenous women and children.
	Calls for increased governance of people	Civil society is incompetent Narratives around overpopulation, migration and urbanisation. Vague usage of the term expert. Where conflict is concerned, it was reduced to 'tribal clashes'.
	Attempts to remain neutral	Passive voice to mask government failure or silent about role of government. Passive voice to describe settler colonialism.
	Highlights terror of disaster	Personification of hazard as angry. Metaphors around war to describe disaster.
	Indigenous peoples face the same difficulties as everyone else	Unites Indigenous peoples and settlers. Presuppositions around threats Indigenous peoples need to engage in formal processes
	Separates Indigenous knowledge from Indigenous peoples	Silent about Indigenous peoples when discussing Indigenous knowledge.
Self-determination	Indigenous peoples experience disasters differently	Opens with Indigenous context Overcompletedness about the specificities of Indigenous experience. Engage with counterarguments. Citing academic sources.
	Indigenous peoples are knowledgeable, capable and	Active voice to describe Indigenous peoples. Importance of Indigenous knowledge.

	aware of their political situations.	Imagery to show Indigenous peoples carrying out DRR activities and talking at events in formal attire. Non-Indigenous authors are explicit about their own learning and credit Indigenous peoples.
	Avoids voyeuristic portrayals of suffering	Vagueness around suffering.
	Current emergency management is inadequate	Modalities to communicate hypothetical scenario. Overcompletedness about bureaucracy. Overcompletedness about difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Citing personal experience.
	Government is inadequate and/or performative	Juxtaposition of positive action government says they will do, with the lack of action they have taken. Contrast and parody to show lack of action. Vagueness around actions.