

Enablers and Barriers of Inter-organisational Collaboration in Disaster Management



Khiam Lee @ ISCRAM
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Defining inter-organisational collaboration

Inter-organisational collaborations happen when two or more organisations work together **voluntarily** and **constructively engaged** towards **mutual goals** that neither could achieve individually.



Understanding disaster management cycles

Higher form of collaboration

Characterised by:

- Mutual decision-making
- Objective-driven
- Planned iterative engagement
- Shared structure and rules
- Common working culture



Lower form of collaboration

Characterised by:

- Information sharing
- Task-oriented
- Unplanned piecemeal interactions
- Temporary rules
- Relationship-driven

Collaboration in natural disaster management



Indian Ocean tsunami, December 2004



Typhoon Haiyan, November 2013

Research Objective:

To understand how organisations collaborate during disaster.

Research Questions:

What promotes collaboration in disaster and what hinders collaboration in disaster?

Research Methodology



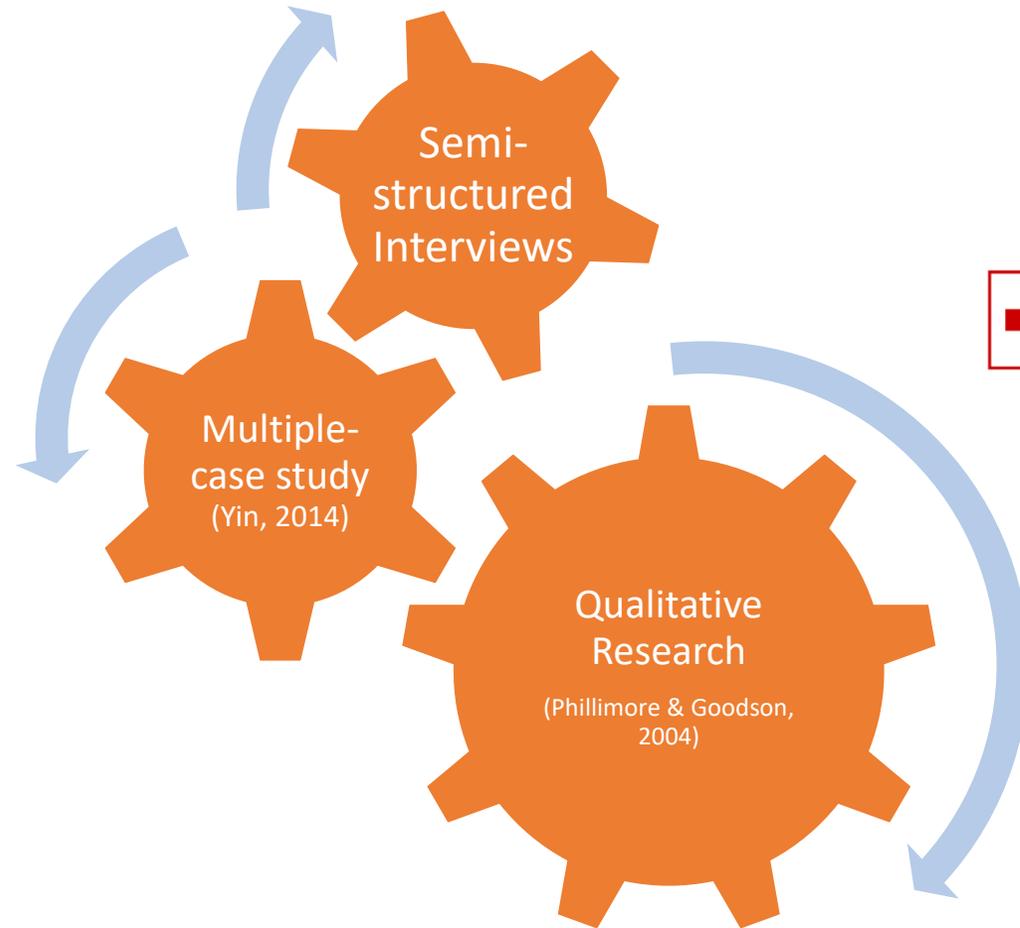
To gain insiders' perspective as they see the world



In-depth interviews with 30 participants



Focus on two major floods (Dec 2014 and Jan 2017)



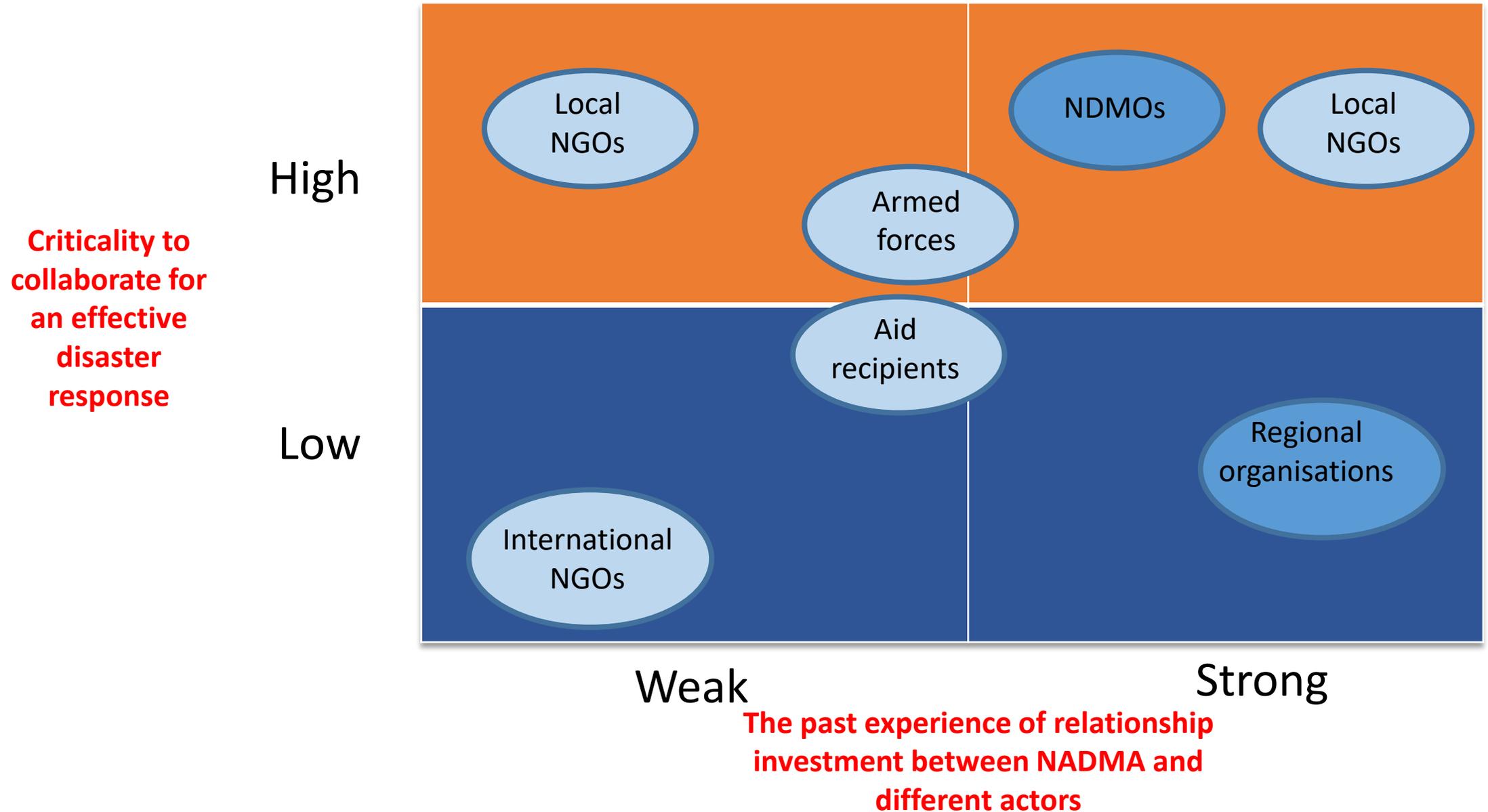
Malaysia National Disaster Management Agency (NADMA)



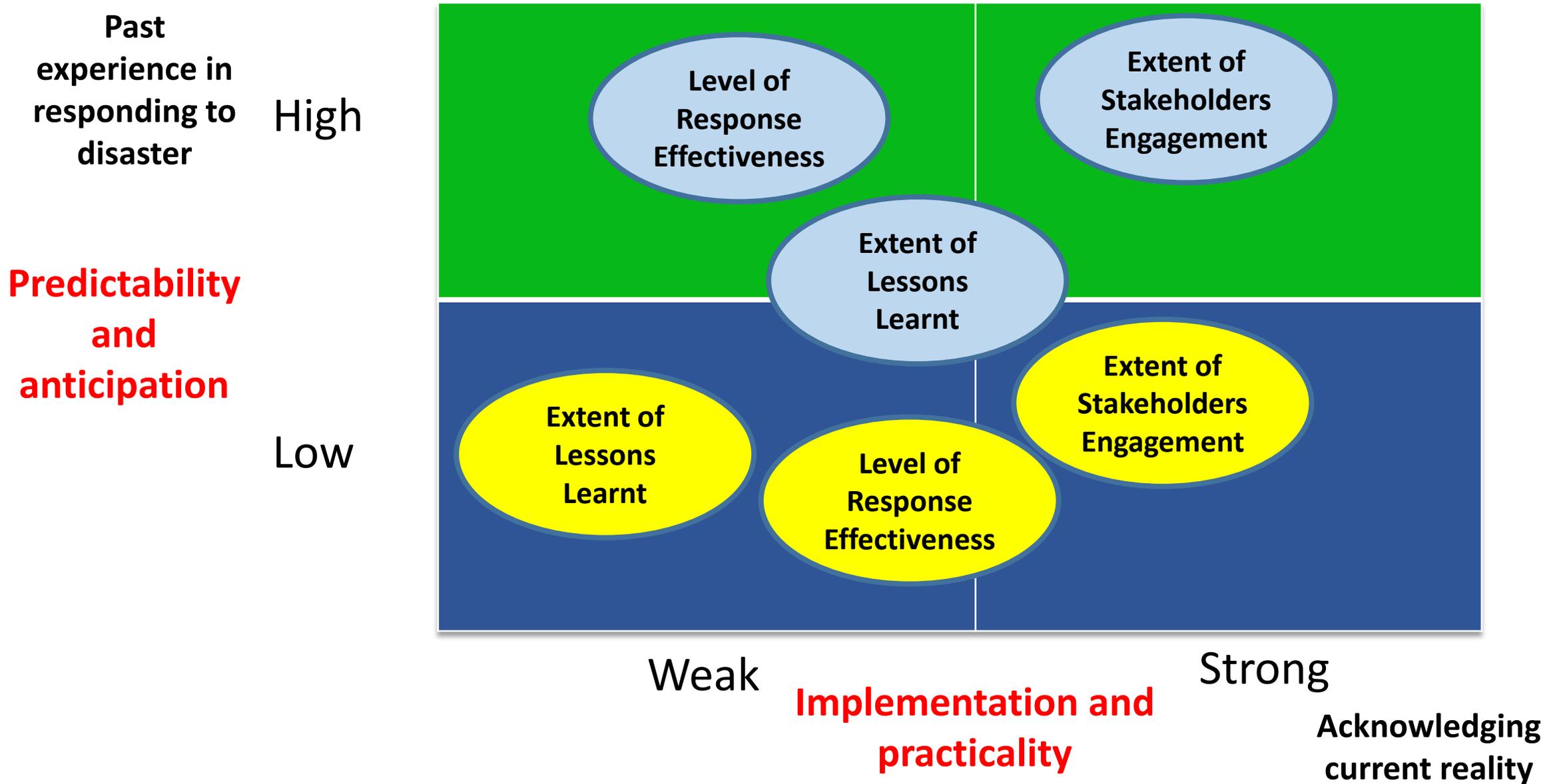
Prevalent findings to date: Major barriers

- 1) Varying perception on the **criticality of collaboration for disaster response**;
- 2) Gaps between **experience** and **reality**;
- 3) Lack of a **separate and tested structure** and mechanism to manage emergency collaboration that takes place during disaster;
- 4) Different **attitude towards risk** of collaboration; and
- 5) Lack of structure and process to **learn from previous** disaster responses experience

Criticality of Collaboration vs. Relationship Investment



Past Responding Experience vs. Current Reality



Enablers of Collaboration in Disaster

Closing gaps of experience and reality

Who are really on the driver seat?

Balancing investment of stakeholders relationship

Don't ignore potential partners

Seeking common understanding on collaborative practices

Individual organisational or collective goal that is to pursue?

Attitude to public agencies

Varied levels of trust building

Contextual applications of leadership

Recommendations

- Driving common understanding that collaboration is a **continuum of engagement**;
- Investing and **building stakeholders relationships** beyond regulatory boundaries; and
- Building a **culture of emergency collaboration** by addressing potential collaborative opportunities and risks



Contributions

Scholarly contribution:

Highlighting and focusing on both *relationship importance* vs *relationship investment* and *closing gaps between experience and reality* are critical for collaboration effectiveness in disaster settings.

Practical contribution:

- What should disaster management organisations do before and after disaster strikes?
- Making post-disaster collaboration more anticipated and effective
- Understanding the relative importance of various stakeholders in disaster management



Thank you!



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