Women Representation in Disaster Risk Reduction
A Critical Discourse Analysis of the UNDRR Frameworks

Juliette Gerbais

International Migration and Ethnic Relations
Bachelor Thesis: 15 credits
Spring 2020: IM245L
Supervisor: Jason Tucker
Word count: 11433
Abstract
While early relocation is not makeable, disaster risk reduction seems to be the most effective tool to decrease the impact of a disaster. This case study focuses on three UNDRR frameworks as they appear to be the greatest instance of international documents referring to disaster risk reduction (DRR). Especially, this research examines the representation of women within these frameworks and how their portrayal in DRR has changed over the last two decades. To do so, a critical discourse analysis of the three UNDRR frameworks is conducted. This study benefits from a social vulnerability approach and further engages with the Feminist Political Ecology theory. The analysis finds that even though women are increasingly represented in the frameworks, their roles as active participants remain negligible. Their knowledge and interest are still not recognised as valuable in DRR. Rather, women seem to be employed as tools to include more gender-sensitive programmes. This study recommends a greater and more complex emphasis on women in future DRR policies.

Keywords: gender mainstreaming, women participation, social vulnerability, disaster risk reduction, Sendai framework.
Table of Content

1. **Introduction** ........................................................................................................ 5
   1.1 **Relevance of the Research** ........................................................................ 5
   1.2 **Background of the UNDRR** ..................................................................... 5
   1.3 **Research Problem and Aim** ..................................................................... 7
   1.4 **Content Structure** ................................................................................... 7

2. **Literature review on disaster and gender** ............................................................. 9
   2.1 **Gender and Vulnerability** ........................................................................ 9
   2.2 **Women as Active Participants of Disaster** ............................................. 10
   2.3 **The Call for Gender Sensitive Disaster Management** ............................... 11
   2.4 **Own Position and Contribution** ............................................................. 11

3. **Theoretical framework** ......................................................................................... 12
   3.1 **Critiques of Gender Mainstreaming** .......................................................... 12
   3.2 **Feminist Political Ecology Theory** ............................................................ 14
   3.3 **Social Vulnerability** ................................................................................ 15

4. **Methodological approach** .................................................................................... 18
   4.1 **Method** ..................................................................................................... 18
   4.2 **Data Selection** .......................................................................................... 19
   4.3 **Data Analysis** ........................................................................................... 19

5. **Analysis** .................................................................................................................. 23
   5.1 **Social Vulnerability** .................................................................................. 23
      5.1.1. Social vulnerability understanding of disaster .................................... 23
      5.1.2. Disaster risk reduction implementations ............................................. 25
   5.2 **Gender Understanding** ............................................................................. 27
      5.2.1 Gender mainstreaming .......................................................................... 27
      5.2.2 Women role and participation in DRR ................................................. 29

6. **Conclusions** .......................................................................................................... 33
   6.1 **Answer to the Research Questions** ........................................................... 33
   6.2 **Limitations of the Research** ...................................................................... 34
   6.3 **Implications for Future Research** .............................................................. 35

7. **References** ............................................................................................................ 36
List of Abbreviations

**DRR** – Disaster Risk Reduction

**FPET** – Feminist Political Ecology Theory


**Sendai Framework** – Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

**UNDRR** – United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

**Yokohama Strategy** – Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action
1. Introduction

1.1 Relevance of the research
As climate change will intensify natural hazards in many regions, international cooperation is more than ever needed to address the impact of disaster (UNISDR, 2015). While the main focus has been put in disaster relief after disaster, focusing on prevention before the occurrence of it is of great relevance. According to the UNDRR (2020: 1): “every US$1 invested in risk reduction and prevention can save up to US$15 in post-disaster recover”. As such, disaster risk reduction (DRR) is viewed as a valuable solution to lower the intensity of disaster impacts. The occurrence of highly visible disaster events such as the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, or the 2010 Haiti Earthquake has helped to raise awareness and to focus even more on risk reduction (Briceno, 2015: 4). The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) is the most cited instance of international corporation regarding disaster risk reduction. Accordingly, the UNDRR has created and implemented several frameworks to reduce risk to disaster since 1994. Those frameworks will be the focus of this study.

It is worthwhile noting that disasters not only have an impact on the location but also on the characteristics of individuals. Namely, certain groups of people are more susceptible to be harmed only exacerbating minorities’ disadvantage and vulnerability (Thomas et al., 2013). It is especially the case for women as gender discrimination accentuates their precariousness during disasters. Because gender is a powerful maker of inequalities, women are disproportionately affected in all phases of disasters (Enarson, 1998). To prevent women from being even more harmed in the process, policies about disaster cannot be gender blind. For this reason, their needs and interests need to be addressed in all phases of disaster. This is applicable for policies ranging from relief systems to disaster risk reduction. However, since women are not only victims of disaster, this research is interested in women’s active roles in disaster. Especially how their participation is represented in policies of disaster risk reduction (DRR).

1.2 Background of the UNDRR
Before the emphasis on disaster risk reduction, the United Nations (UN) originally put its focus on relief systems and assistance in cases of natural disasters. The first manifestation of this emphasis was made in 1971 with the creation of the United Nations Disaster Relief Office (UNDRR, 2020).
Due to the global increase of disasters in the 1970s and 1980s, greater attention was put on efforts to reduce the effects of such catastrophes. Yet, it is only in 1988 that the General Assembly officially acknowledged the need to minimise the impact of disasters before their occurrences (ibid.). To raise awareness of disasters, the coming decade was therefore dedicated to be the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR). From 1990 on, the international community could then meet under the auspice of the UN to discuss natural disaster reduction and prevention. In 1994, the First World Conference of Disaster Reduction was launched to review the discussion taking place during the IDNDR. Held at Yokohama, in Japan, the conference resulted in the adoption of the *Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action* which will be used in the analysis of this research. This document was originally created as a call for action.

The Yokohama Strategy was reviewed very regularly to better evaluate its implementation. To finalise this review, the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction was introduced in 2005 (UNDRR, 2020). Taking place in Kobe, Hyogo in Japan, it aimed at sharing practices to further implement disaster risk reduction strategies. Risk reduction became the main objective and was meant to be introduced into development policies and processes. This conference resulted in the adoption of the *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters*. It was the first global framework for DRR and was designed as a guiding document for international cooperation and development agendas. The Hyogo Framework popularised the notion of DRR (De la Poterie and Baudoin, 2015).

Each new framework was written based on the lesson learned from the implementation of the previous document. The newly written framework aims to be more relevant and up to date. Accordingly, 10 years after the implementation of the Hyogo Framework, the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction took place in 2015 Sendai, Japan. By gathering more than 6,000 delegates, this conference resulted in the creation of the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* (UNDRR, 2020). Still the most recent framework to this date, it acknowledges the responsibility of States and other stakeholders to reduce disaster risk. As well as its successor, this framework is a non-binding agreement.

In 1999, by the end of the IDNDR, natural disasters are rather identified as a threat that needs to be prevented through disaster prevention. Accordingly, the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction was launched in 1999 to ensure the implementation of a global
strategy for disaster reduction (UNDRR, 2020). Yet, it is only in 2019 that this instance became part of the United Nations Secretariat. Retitled the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), it aims at implementing the last framework by monitoring and supporting countries prone to disaster. Mizutori, the special representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of UNDRR asserts: "we believe that risk can be reduced. We believe that disaster don't have to devastate" (UNDRR, 2020: 1).

1.3 Research problem and aim

The central aim of this thesis is to investigate how women are represented in disaster risk reduction. By focusing on the evolution of gender understanding in three UNDRR frameworks, this research seeks to discover women’s roles as participants in disaster risk reduction and if such representations have changed over time. Besides, this thesis aims at investigating the understanding of vulnerability in disaster in the three frameworks. That is, analysing the change of discourses on disaster risk reduction over the decades by comparing three UNDRR frameworks. Namely: the 1994 First World Conference on Disaster Reduction and the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

In order to fully answer the previously stated research aim, two main research questions have been created:

1) How the representation of women as participants in disaster risk reduction has changed over the last two decades in the three UNDRR frameworks?

2) To which extent disaster risk reduction is addressed from a social vulnerability perspective in the three UNDRR frameworks?

1.4 Content structure

Built upon each other, this study is presenting five additional chapters. It begins by outlining the link between disaster and gender found in previous research. The literature review identifies women’s roles as well as their vulnerability in disaster. Furthermore, the theory and concepts used to frame the analysis are presented. It thereby demonstrates the relevance of engaging with gender mainstreaming, social vulnerability, and Feminist Political Ecology theory. Once the theoretical framework is established, the methodology chapter underlines the method used to
answer the research question. By presenting the critical discourse analysis, it also explains why this method is pertinent. At the heart of this research, the fifth chapter presents the findings of the analysis grounded in the theoretical approach. Divided into two parts, it examines both the understanding of social vulnerability to disaster and the gender perspective found in the selected data. Finally, the last chapter draws the conclusion of the analysis. It further discusses the limitations of the findings and their contributions to future research.


2. Literature review on disaster and gender

To understand why a gendered approach of disaster is of relevance, it is first important to provide an understanding of the link that exists between gender and disaster. The differences in women’s and men’s behaviours during disasters were revealed in the field of disaster study highlighting how women were facing greater vulnerabilities. However, gender was understood as a mere demographic variable or characteristic and not as a socially constructed concept. By incompletely analysing gender, these findings failed to consider women’s experiences and perspectives. Disasters were already gendered in discourse, theory, and study research but Fothergill (1996) emphasised the need to take gender as the main focus of investigation.

2.1 Gender and vulnerability

Pioneering in this field, Enarson and Morrow (1998) focus entirely on gender in disaster using a feminist approach. They find that due to the traditional roles attributed to women in society, they are facing a greater risk during disaster than men (Enarson and Morrow, 1998). Many studies analysing gendered vulnerability conclude that women are disadvantaged and suffer disproportionately in all phases of a disaster. It has also been observed that disaster is having psycho-physical effects on women making them more vulnerable (Sohrabizadeh et al., 2016). Women are additionally facing an increase in domestic violence post-disaster (Enarson, 1998; Villareal and Meyer, 2019). Gender-based violence, sexual abuse, and exploitation in the aftermath of disasters are generally well documented by humanitarian organisations. In contrast to gender roles, some argue that women’s reproductive characteristics put them at greater risk (Callaghan et al.: 2007). This emphasis will however be disregard in this research paper.

Many studies indicate that women are more vulnerable to disaster because of how gender power and privilege are shaping everyday life (Enarson and Morrow, 1998). Through a social vulnerability approach, it indicates that women are more disadvantaged during and after a disaster because they already faced inequalities before the disaster occurred. For example, those most vulnerable to the effects of disaster are the poorest populations. Due to the feminization of poverty, women are more affected by disasters than men and become even more impoverished after their impact (Enarson and Morrow, 1998).

The concept of gender is widely used as a synonym for women. Yet, a case study of firefighters in mountain wildfires shows that men are also negatively affected by gender roles and stereotypes of masculinities in the aftermath of a disaster (Pacholok, 2013). To this extend, some scholars point out the need to include men in their analysis. Some research also considers
the way gender intersects with class, ethnicity, and race and how it affects their disaster experiences (Enarson and Morrow, 1998). Since this focus remains little, Enarson et al. (2007) urged for a broader understanding of gender.

2.2 Women as active participants of disaster

If a lot has been written about the effects and the roots of women’s vulnerabilities, less is found about the way women deal with disasters. Nevertheless, some studies are specifically focusing on women’s active role during disaster. By including women’s perspective, it has revealed that women are taking initiatives both during and after disaster. Women are not only victims which need to be rescued but they play increasing roles in disaster responses (Fordham, 2004).

For instance, Enarson and Morrow (1998) observe that women are the ones who take responsibility for securing water during and after disaster. Since such tasks are taking place in the private sphere, these activities are very often devalued or not validated. It has also been shown that women are more likely to perceive damage and show concerns emphasising their roles in disaster (Enarson and Morrow, 1998). Most studies focus on how women are organising themselves during disaster relief and recovery while little is found about their roles in risk management.

The concept of social change in crisis or disaster is debated within the field of gender and disaster (Pacholok, 2013; Enarson and Morrow, 1998). Nevertheless, there are contradictory conclusions about whether disaster is a tool for progressive change in gender roles and power relations. Some research finds that gender roles are strengthened in the aftermath of disaster, while others show how disaster has enabled women to take on more responsibilities and move away from gender stereotypes. Pacholok (2013: 28) argues that it is difficult to see if disaster "fosters progressive change or under what conditions".

Women are neither victims nor active agents. Consequently, Fordham (2004) cautions against a more complex and nuanced approach to gendered vulnerability. Women can both be exposed and play an active role in disaster responses. In a similar way, Cupples (2007) analyses the notion of identity and how women are experiencing different identities in terms of disaster. Women experience various states of resilience, adaptation, vulnerability, and strength (ibid.).
2.3 The call for gender sensitive disaster management

By linking how women are made more vulnerable by disaster and how they can be resilient, it is relevant to consider a gender dimension in disaster management. To this end, Ariyabandu and Wickramasinghe (2005) have highlighted the need to sensitise policy makers and practitioners to gender issues. For example, by including the specific needs of women in disaster relief systems (Callaghan et al., 2007). While these calls for gender-sensitive disaster management are important, they focus primarily on relief and recovery programmes. Few studies mention the relevance of risk reduction.

Nevertheless, the strategy to include women in reduction and resilience building is found in international aid reports. In fact, humanitarian aid and the UN specifically refer to mitigation or risk reduction and urging for a gender perspective (Fordham, 2001). This strategy is underlined by the concept of gender mainstreaming which is developed in more detail in the following chapter. It is recommended that decision-makers include women in all phases of the disaster, from planning to response and management. On the other hand, Fordham (2004) asks for gendered warning and mitigation to be context specific. Different case studies reveal different conclusions showing that women are not universally or equally affected by disasters. Enarson summarises it well: “what women have in common in disasters may, in fact, be less important than the differences” (2012: 196).

2.4 Own position and contribution

Used as a popular approach in the field of gender and disaster, the concept of social vulnerability gives priority to vulnerability reduction. Still, only a few studies are analysing disaster risk reduction through a feminist lens. While the UNDRR frameworks offer an interesting insight into DRR, only Enarson (2009; 2012) examines the content of the Hyogo framework and its implementation in the United States from a feminist perspective. Despite the need to address the representation of women in DRR, gender and disaster risk reduction within the UNDRR frameworks has not received considerable academic attention. By comparing the three frameworks with a Feminist Political Ecology theory, this paper adds value to the existing literature.
3. Theoretical framework

To answer the research question of this study, three theoretical notions are presented. This chapter begins by introducing the concept of gender mainstreaming and its main criticisms. To be able to analyse gender from a feminist perspective, the theory of Feminist Political Ecology is thus presented. This theory is particularly relevant for addressing policy of DRR. Finally, the chapter concludes with the paradigm of social vulnerability. This is a valuable concept in this research as it provides insight for a full understanding of the relationship between individuals and disaster in DRR.

3.1 Critiques of gender mainstreaming

Since its official introduction at the World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, gender mainstreaming has been widely embraced by governments, the European Union, and the United Nations to cite a few (Stratigaki, 2005). As this research study focuses on the evolution of three UNDRR frameworks from 1994 to 2015, it is relevant to examine whether a gender mainstreaming approach is considered.

Emerged in the early 90s’, gender mainstreaming aims at promoting gender equality in public policies in all areas and at all levels (True, 2003). It often refers to the overall strategy to make organisations and States gender aware. Gender mainstreaming is then defined as the action to bring gender matters into the mainstream of society. Accordingly, it bears the potential to tackle gender-biased policies (Stratigaki, 2005). The assumption is that adopting a gender perspective in policymaking will lead to gender equality (Davids et al., 2014). Despite its potential, gender mainstreaming is strongly criticised by feminist scholars. The main argument of criticisms is the focal point of this sub-chapter.

To begin with, several critiques have emerged regarding gender mainstreaming and its ability to be transformative. For instance, Stratigaki (2005) argues that gender mainstreaming in European Union policies symbolises a deterioration of women’s rights and opportunities. Cornwall et al. (2004: 1) further note: “the more gender is mainstreamed, the less we find effective gender equality policies within key policy spaces and documents”. Also contested is the pretension of gender mainstreaming to be “universally applicable” (Davids et al., 2014: 399). It implies that women are facing universal oppression and that it is affecting every woman to the same magnitude (Mohanty, 2005). By viewing women as a homogenous group, it fails to take into account the diversity of women’s positions (Lombardo et al., 2010). Moreover, post-colonial feminists warn of the negative consequences of this misconception. By stressing
the importance of considering the intersectionality of women, they share a common argument raised by the Feminist Political Ecology theory discussed in the following section (Jacobs, 2019).

Aside from criticism of ineffective results along with poor implementation, gender mainstreaming is criticised for depoliticising the concept of gender. While gender mainstreaming is a result of feminist influence, it may also be applied from a non-feminist perspective. As a result, the feminist approach to gender is rarely employed in politics (Lombardo et al., 2010). It means that structural and relational change are hardly ever considered. Davids et al. find that gender mainstreaming tends to view women as “the best change agents to fight gender inequality” omitting power relation barriers (2014: 402). Gender inequalities and differences are not comprehended as resulting from power dynamics (Lombardo et al., 2010). This depoliticisation of gender neutralises the dimension of conflict which is a key element of feminist argumentation.

Moreover, gender mainstreaming has also resulted in concentrating merely on gender rather than on women. By doing improperly so, this shift has consequences as women no longer seem to be at the centre of the discussion (Baden and Goetz, 1997: 6). It appears that governments and agencies employ ‘women’ or ‘gender’ in a simple effort to include more diversity in their programmes (ibid.). Neutralised of political intent, it is somewhat presented as a tool or mechanism (Cornwall et al., 2004). Marchand (2009) further observes that women are becoming a means to reach development objectives. Overall, the revolutionary potential of gender matters in public policy has somehow been lost in mainstreaming gender (Davids et al., 2014: 403). Cornwall et al. (2004: 1) sum up: “diluted, denatured, depoliticised, included everywhere as an afterthought, gender has become something everyone knows that they are supposed to do something about”.

According to Rönnblom (2009), a re-politicisation of gender that recognises existing power relations in society is of significance in the context of gender mainstreaming. Only this, will create “opportunities for change” (ibid.: 108). To do so, this research make use of the Feminist Political Ecology theory as a lens to examine whether the UNDRR frameworks apply a feminist reading of gender mainstreaming.
3.2 Feminist Political Ecology Theory

To explore the role of gender in society and the environment, this research study refers to the Feminist Political Ecology Theory (FPET). As Hewitt (in Enarson, 2012: 27) claims, feminist theory brings the “missing voice” of women to the social theory about disaster. This sub-chapter discusses key theoretical concepts of FPET to show how this approach differentiates itself from other gender theory. It further demonstrates how it can contribute to re-politicise gender in the context of DRR. This theory was chosen because it combines key concepts of this research together i.e. gender, the environment, and political discourse.

Introduced by Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter, and Rocheleau in 1996, Feminist Political Ecology theory engages both with gender and power relations in natural and social systems (Rocheleau, et al. 1996). Specifically, this theory examines relations between gender, the environment, culture, and society and how it shapes and constructs power dynamics (Gonda, 2019). Drawing on various existing approaches namely feminist cultural ecology, political ecology, feminist geography, and feminist political economy, this theory provides the basis for a wider gender analysis (Rocheleau et al., 1996).

Several scholars have shown how women are bearing a great share of responsibilities for resources while having limited formal rights to control their environment (Rocheleau et al., 1996). By viewing gender as a variable shaping resource control and access, the FPET takes those findings into account. In fact, FPET considers the gendered “division of rights, responsibilities, and environmental risk in everyday life” as well as the gender division of power to change and take care of the environment (Rocheleau et al., 1996: 6). While some theory believes gender differences are rooted in biology, FPET recognises that these differences are socially constructed and understands that they “vary by culture, class, race, and place and are subject to individual and social change” (Rocheleau et al., 1996: 3). FPET is intersectional in its sense (Gonda, 2019). That is, focusing on a variety of social factors that intersect with each other. Together with gender, age, class, race: “all come into play in defining who dominates how, where, when and why” (Shrestha et al., 2019: 137). This view permits a wider perspective of gender by acknowledging that some women are not only facing sexism but also racism for instance. All those social factors should all be taking into account when analysing gender and the environment. FPET explicitly views these processes as playing a role in the social vulnerability of people before, during, and after disaster. Gender inequalities, environmental degradation, and disaster vulnerability are then interlinked. Indeed, Wichterich (2015) finds that gender and power relations are especially of interest in crisis and transformative situations.
This argument highlights the need for an FPET approach in disaster. Gonda (2019) further argues that the FPET allows scholars to engage with the concept of transformation and emancipation during environmental change.

In addition, because women have limited political influence and economic means, their political marginality must be tackled (Rocheleau et al., 1996). Theory about disaster should include women’s knowledge and resources but also their vulnerabilities (Enarson, 2012). The theory of FPE pleads, in fact, for a wider inclusion of women in partnership, networking, and grassroots women’s organisations. It also highlights the need to integrate women’s interests, experiences, and knowledge into politics (Enarson, 2012).

Given that environmental policies are not politically neutral, engaging with politics and inequality is of main interest for the FPET approach (Harris, 2015: 171). Harris (2015: 164) shows how FPET can be applied as a tool to challenge hegemonic discourse that “maintains power hierarchies”. Through a gender lens, FPET analyses nature interactions, agency, and power dynamics shaping knowledge and politics in relation to the environment (Harcourt, 2015). Thanks to its methodological focus, Wichterich (2015) finds that women are depicted as the ‘other’ by politics related to the environment. He further notes: “‘othering’ and exclusion are the other side of inclusion” (ibid.: 79). Gonda (2019) looks at the concept of vulnerability and social reproduction and shows that discourses that construct people as vulnerable can also diminish their agency.

Problems about gender and the environment are shared both on a global and local context, highlighting the importance of using the FPET (Rocheleau et al., 1996: 7). Its high focus on sustainability shows how this theory could especially apply to policies of DRR. Gender and development theory are also having such focus but since most organisations and agencies are rooted in its theoretical context, it does not seem relevant to answer this research question under the same approach (Enarson, 2012). Overall, by connecting gender, science, and the environment in political discourse, the FPE theory is of great relevance to answering the aims of this study.

### 3.3 Social Vulnerability

Some disaster experts tend to use the concept of vulnerability as a substitute to ‘vulnerable’ i.e. able to be easily physically, emotionally, or mentally hurt (Enarson, 2012). Leaving behind this interpretation, the concept of social vulnerability is further presented. This concept argues that individuals should be considered active participants of DRR. In addition, by taking into account
social factors such as gender and race, it is consistent with arguments put forward by the FPET. Used very often in disaster and gender research, the concept of social vulnerability is of main relevance for this thesis.

In disaster studies, two paradigms of vulnerability are observed i.e. the dominant and the social vulnerability paradigm. The dominant paradigm suggests that nature alone is leading and creating vulnerability (Thomas et al., 2013). However, such an argument offers a limited perspective of the causes and solutions to disaster. Instead, the concept of social vulnerability presents a wider and thorough understanding of disaster. If there is no consensus on the definition yet, Cutter and Finch (2008: 2301) define social vulnerability as “a measure of both the sensitivity of a population to natural hazards and its ability to respond to and recover from the impacts of hazards”. By its very nature, social vulnerability is multidimensional. The vulnerability of an individual is seen as socially constructed. That is, influenced by both internal and external factors. Namely, factors that influence "the susceptibility of various groups to harm and that also govern their ability to respond” (Cutter et al., 2012: 144). Internal factors of social vulnerability include gender, religion, age or/and race for instance. Whereas external factors comprise access to resources, political power and representation, type of housing, education, and social networks (Cutter and Finch, 2008).

How people get access to transportation, warnings, and protective measures is strongly related to their socio-economic status and whether or not they are subject to discrimination (Thomas et al., 2013). Since these factors are context-specific, social vulnerability needs to be understood as an evolving notion (Cutter and Finch, 2008). Typically, social vulnerability: “seeks to understand how social, economic, and political relations influence, create, worsen, or can potentially reduce hazards in a given geographic location” (Thomas et al., 2013: 18). Cutter et al. (2012) understand social vulnerability as the product of both social and place inequalities. Social vulnerability, thus, seeks to identify how power relations create or influence hazards. Yet, an interesting critique of the social sciences has highlighted the failure of this concept to name systemic oppression (Jacobs, 2019). While social vulnerability refers to gender and race, it has failed to mention racism and sexism (ibid.). The use of a feminist lens to understand social vulnerability is, therefore, of interest.

To tackle disaster impact through a vulnerability approach means focusing on DRR. Blaikie et al (1994), find that the lack of disaster warning is one of the main factors in maintaining the vulnerability of people. Despite social vulnerabilities being the main cause of the negative impacts of natural disasters, “very little effort and insufficient funds address [it]” (Briceño,
2015: 3). On the contrary, most focus has been put on understanding, evaluating, and acknowledging the hazard component of risk (ibid.: 5). As cited above, the dominant paradigm of vulnerability focuses on technocratic knowledge as a way to deal with the impact of disaster through the implementation of risk assessment and engineering projects (Masterson et al., 2014). By working on hazard prediction, they view science and technology as the only tool to prevent such catastrophe.

On the other hand, the concept of social vulnerability offers a radical critique of the technocratic approach. It recognises the susceptibility and capacity of individuals to respond to natural events by viewing disaster as usual processes rather than exceptional events (Thomas et al., 2013). Instead of a passive acceptance by policymakers to implement technocratic risk reduction, its objectives focus on change, development, and education of the population. Accordingly, social vulnerability acknowledges that disaster impacts can be reduced when individuals and communities are considered active participants of disaster risk prevention (ibid.: 38). Disaster mitigation or DRR is then exclusively employed to lessen vulnerability. It has often been associated by researchers with the concept of resilience, risk, and exposure.

If some argue that social vulnerability is a risk itself, this research understands vulnerability as a factor of risk triggered by hazard. Briceño (2015) urges government, political and community leaders to operate a concrete shift that concentrates on vulnerability reduction and resilience building. Since vulnerability is deeply rooted, Blaikie et al. (1994: 233) advances that “any fundamental solutions involve political change […] and the development of public policy to protect”. It is through social and behaviour change that people and communities can become stronger and more resilient (Briceño, 2015: 6). To do so, the context and the approach should be pro-active to identify both vulnerability and capabilities in local environments (Wisner, 2004). It is agreed among scholars that social vulnerability is context-dependent, emphasising the need to consider local knowledge (Cutter and Finch, 2008).

With an emphasis on both gender and disaster risk reduction, the concept of social vulnerability is suitable for this research. Indeed, the social vulnerability paradigm shows why social factors need to be considered in DRR and calls for more effective political and social solutions. International documents, such as the UNDRR frameworks, are of interest to specifically examine whether a social vulnerability perspective is considered in DRR. As well as to explore how women’s role and local knowledge are recognised.
4. Methodological approach

The research design aims to compare three UNDRR frameworks produced from 1994 to 2015. This is achieved through a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) where power relations are considered. This chapter begins by presenting the method used for this research study. It then describes the choice that led to the selection of the three UNDRR frameworks. The chapter concludes with a discussion of CDA and how this approach is used in the analysis.

4.1 Method

Given the nature of the research question of this thesis, a qualitative method appears to be the most appropriate research design. Besides, interviews, case studies, and fieldworks are the most commonly used methods in gender and disaster studies. Silverman (2006: 28) notes: "qualitative researchers study phenomena in the contexts in which they arise" through the analysis of written material for instance. The strength of this method is that it allows the researcher to conduct a rich and in-depth description of a phenomenon as well as to establish a clear link between variables (Silverman, 2006: 42). On one hand, some would argue that qualitative researchers are innovative because of the flexibility of their research. On the other hand, this flexibility might be seen as a “lack of structure” (ibid.: 29).

As the qualitative method is the most standard approach to this research topic, a case study on the UNDRR frameworks is of high relevance. Yin (in May, 2011: 223) defines a case study “[as] an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident”. It is one of the most used approaches in social-science research (Moses and Knutsen, 2012). A specific case may be chosen because the results of the analysis can be applied to a wider class of cases (May, 2011: 228). The strength of this method is that the research question is studied in a more detailed manner. In a case study, it is depth not breadth that counts. Bhattacherjee (2012: 40) mentions that it allows the researcher to discover “a wide variety of social, cultural and political factors potentially related to the phenomenon of interest that may not be known in advance”. Accordingly, this method can serve multiple purposes outside that originally intended. It can guide the way to new and subsequent research interests that can be addressed on a broader level in the future.

It can certainly be argued that simply focusing on the UNDRR frameworks limits the scope of the data introduced in the case study. A case study may be reaching its limits when it comes
to generalisation, a criticism that has been raised by Silverman (2006). Nevertheless, these frameworks appear to be the only international DRR initiative to date. The focus on these frameworks also allows the researcher to better grasp how disaster risk reduction is understood on a global level.

For this research, my ontological point of view is based on the idea that the world is constantly changing as well as our perceptions of reality. By choosing a qualitative method and focusing on a case study, I favour a constructivist approach. Constructivism recognises the role of our own reality in the way we study phenomenon (Moses and Knutsen, 2012). “Each of us sees different things, and what we see is determined by a complicated mix of social and contextual influences and/or presuppositions” (ibid.: 9). Individual or social characteristics such as gender, culture, or language influence our perception of the world. By that, constructivism views knowledge as a social construction in which social facts are made and constructed by humans (ibid. 165). That is why the context of a given phenomenon is important. Thereby, this methodology analyses and identifies socially constructed patterns and regularities of the world by focusing on human agency as well as social and contextual influences (Moses and Knutsen, 2012). Since a significant part of my research is based on the exploration of gender, a constructivist approach is relevant.

4.2 Data selection
This study conducts a dense examination of three UNDRR frameworks. Namely: the 1994 First World Conference on Disaster Reduction and the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. These documents were selected as they are each the result of different UN discussions between government officials, NGOs, local governments, and other stakeholders on the topic of DRR. It then represents all the final reports written after the World Conference on Disaster Reduction. Occurring within an interval of 10 years each, the evolution of thoughts, understandings, and knowledge about DRR is of interest. Besides, the internationality of such frameworks represents best how disaster risk reduction and gender are understood at a global level.

4.3 Data analysis
To fulfil the aims of this thesis, a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is used. CDA has been often applied in both public policies and gender studies, highlighting the relevance of this
method in this research. Silverman (2006: 415) notes: “documents do not speak for themselves but must be made to speak by the analyst”. Informed by the constructivist stance previously mentioned, language is not understood as a neutral means of reflecting or describing the world. Instead, CDA acknowledges that language both shapes and is shaped by society (Lê and Lê, 2009). The main aim of this approach is to identify the power relations found within languages whilst addressing social problems. According to Van Dijk (2004), CDA is a way to study “the many forms of (the abuse of) power in relations of gender, ethnicity and class, such as sexism and racism” (in Lê and Lê, 2009: 26). Power is then acknowledged from both the perspective of those detaining power and those being impacted by it.

Accordingly, CDA emphasises on the implicit manifestation of power. Lê and Lê (2009: 12) argues that implicit manifestations can “strongly control discourse and discourse (re)production”. Furthermore, by being systematically related to socio-political context, discourse is then viewed as a part of social practice. Beliefs are influencing prejudices which are conditioning discourses and further impacting social practices (Van Dijk in Lê and Lê, 2009). It is understood that discourse can, in itself, reproduce inequality. Moreover, since power relations are discursive, they are shaping knowledge. Most scholars engaging with CDA further connect social practice with ideology. According to Lê and Lê (2009: 12), ideology is found “inherently encoded in texts, often manifested in lexical choice, cliché, presuppositions and implicatures”. This research considers ideology as a lens through which the researcher sees social issues. Interested in social injustice such as social prejudice and discrimination, CDA engages with concepts of resources, poverty, and social change (Lê and Lê, 2009). Since these concepts were also revealed in the literature review and the theoretical framework of this research, we observe a clear connection between the CDA method and this study.

The biggest limitation of CDA is that it lacks an explicit and structured approach (Rogers, 2004). As CDA is interdisciplinary, the methodology has been criticised for not being as systemic or rigorous as a narrower approach based on disciplinary understanding. With respect to the credibility of the findings, validity and reliability will be discussed. According to Silverman, reliability "refers to the stability of findings” (2006: 137). Validity, on the other hand, refers to the "truthfulness of findings” (2006: 137). To address issues of reliability and validity, the research process will be made transparent and detailed as well as including the theoretical lens of the researcher’s interpretations. The analysis will use an appropriate tabulation where patterns are drawn from the theory and concepts previously
defined. Furthermore, as this study will be made available to the public, the findings shall be open for re-interpretation.

To analyse discourse critically means to look at patterns and choices of vocabulary, cohesion, and text structure. The CDA method offers the possibility for the researcher to look for patterns of power dynamics. To do so, the analysis will have a close look at semantic contrast, association of word, and presupposition related to gender and social vulnerability. This research compares content from the three frameworks by analysing changes in language, tone, and emphasis along with how often they refer to certain words.

First, to ensure a clear understanding of every framework and its implications, each document will be analysed separately in chronological order. This will allow the researcher to have an overview of the content and examine the tone of the framework. The 1994 First World Conference on Disaster Reduction and the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World (Yokohama Strategy) will be scrutinised, followed by the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (Hyogo Framework) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (Sendai Framework).

*Fig 1. Guiding questions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender understanding</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How is gender comprehended?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are inequalities and power dynamics represented?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To which extend is the intersectionality of women considered? (age/class/race/ethnicity)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women as participant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are women’s roles in DRR portrayed? (active or passive participant)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To which extend is their knowledge, interest, needs, and experiences considered?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social vulnerability understanding</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How vulnerability is understood? (dominant or social vulnerability paradigm)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is the focus of DRR put on? (technocratic tools or individuals)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: own illustration*

Secondly, to structure the comparison of the data selected, a frame of reference will be used. It consists of a set of questions principally designed following a review of the theoretical chapter (see fig.1). The guiding questions are then the direct result of a comprehensive theoretical consideration. Using the key theoretical concepts central to this study, the analysis benefitted
from being more closely linked to the theoretical framework. Built on the questions, each framework will be carefully examined. The findings will be then put on a table that will be proved beneficial for comparative purposes. The analysis will look at how each framework corroborates, corrects, or debates with one another. Finally, the frameworks will be compared to each other and grouped based on the findings of the analysis.

Political texts, such as the UNDRR frameworks, are particularly interesting for studying power relations implicitly enacted in discourse (Fairclough, 1995). Within the CDA approach, social power and ideology also appear to be suitable notions to engage in this research. Studying ideologies of powerful institutions, such as the UN, is interesting because what seems neutral may perhaps reproduce dominance. Altogether and because gender differences are understood as a result of power dynamics, the CDA method appears particularly appropriate for this research.
5. Analysis

To answer the two research questions of this study, this chapter is divided into two sections. The analysis starts by examining the understanding of the social vulnerability of disaster. By analysing how DRR is conceptualised, it provides a valuable overview of the way people are generally considered in DRR. It is helpful to first explore how the perspective of social vulnerability is captured in all three frameworks to further address the question of women’s participation. Accordingly, the second section addresses gender and women’s representation. How their knowledge, interests, and needs are described is also outlined. To do so, the analysis discusses the findings through the concept of gender mainstreaming and the FPET.

5.1 Social vulnerability

It has been argued in the theoretical chapter that a social vulnerability understanding of disaster is the most effective way to reduce the impact of disaster. The analysis compares how vulnerability in disaster is understood by the three UNDRR frameworks and whether a social vulnerability perspective is considered. Then, by outlining the different means to reduce disaster risk, it examines the DRR implementation and how the focus has changed over the last two decades.

5.1.1. Social vulnerability understanding of disaster

Disaster and vulnerability to disaster can be understood from various positions. This section of the analysis looks at how DRR is considered in the frameworks by referring to the social vulnerability paradigm. It also examines whether internal and external factors of vulnerability are recognised in DRR.

Each framework describes vulnerability in slightly different ways. First, the Yokohama Strategy of 1994 is implicitly arguing that if there would be fewer natural disasters, there would be less vulnerability. This is joining the dominant paradigm which advances that nature alone is creating vulnerability (Thomas et al., 2013). Natural phenomena are described as being beyond human control while vulnerability is correctly understood as “a result of human activity” (IDNDR, 1994: 9). Unlike the two following frameworks, the Yokohama Strategy does not strictly define vulnerability. To avoid further confusion on the concept of vulnerability, both the Hyogo and the Sendai frameworks include its definition in a footnote. Vulnerability is thus defined as: “the conditions determined by physical, social, economic, and environmental factors or processes, which increase the susceptibility of a community to the impact of hazards” (UNISDR, 2005: 1; 2015: 10). This relates in some respects to the definition given in the
theoretical chapter of this study. Still, the ability of community to both respond to and recover from the impacts of hazards, as suggested by Cutter and Finch (2008), seems to be overlooked. Instead, individuals are depicted as passive victims of both disaster and socio-economic conditions. Vulnerability is considered from only one angle, which is the capacity of individuals to be hurt.

Moving beyond the mere definition of vulnerability, the CDA looks at words’ association in this matter. According to Thomas et al. (2013), vulnerability understood from a social vulnerability paradigm is often linked with words such as resilience, risk, and exposure. This association of words suggests that risk is understood as “socially produced” (ibid.: 13). From this observation, both the Hyogo and the Sendai Frameworks make use of the social vulnerability understandings. Especially the Sendai Framework which mentioned ‘resilience’ more than 63 times for instance. Besides, both the Hyogo Framework and the Sendai Framework recognise the need to reduce “the underlying risk factors” (UNISDR, 2005: 6) or “the underlying disaster risk drivers” (UNISDR, 2015: 10). Whether it is referred to as a “factor” or a “driver”, risk is understood as being a part of what makes individuals vulnerable to disaster.

As mentioned earlier in the theoretical chapter, the vulnerability of individuals involves both internal and external factors. Yet, this analysis finds that internal factors are not taken into account in any of the three frameworks. If gender and age are named through the Hyogo and the Sendai Frameworks, they are never identified as a risk factor of vulnerability. In fact, these frameworks concentrate exclusively on external factors including political power and representation, type of housing, education, resources, or unplanned urbanization (UNISDR, 2005: 1; 2015; 10). Dismissing internal factors of vulnerability can have an impact on those who are beneficiaries of DRR programmes. For instance, all three frameworks refer to poverty alleviation as a means of reducing the effect of disaster. Whilst it has been shown that women are more affected by poverty due to the feminization of poverty, there is no mention of women when discussing poverty. This may be attributed to the reluctance of UNDRR frameworks to include internal factors of vulnerability.

Generally, all three frameworks appear to understand disaster and vulnerability from a rather social vulnerability standpoint. The analysis reveals that there is only minor development in terms of understanding vulnerability among the frameworks. By placing a greater emphasis on external factors of vulnerability, gender is not interpreted as a characteristic of individuals that
plays a role in creating vulnerability. In doing so, the social vulnerability understanding of disaster is only partly addressed.

5.1.2. Disaster risk reduction implementations

The social vulnerability paradigm recommends the involvement of individuals to reduce the impact of disasters with early warning systems or educational practices, for instance. Whereas the dominant vulnerability paradigm is relying on science and technology as a tool to prevent disaster. While all three frameworks use both technocratic tools and human capacity, the degree to which they refer to one or the other practice differs greatly. To further reflect on women’s participation (see 5.2.2), it is first important to examine how the frameworks consider the capacity of humans in broader terms.

Compared to the Sendai Framework of 2015, the 1994 framework puts a higher focus on human capacity. Indeed, the Yokohama Strategy puts a clear emphasis on the role of individuals in DRR. Training, educational and information programmes are highlighted to raise public awareness about disaster management. Here, the focus is put on policymakers and “major groups” to be more effective in disaster reduction programmes (IDNDR, 1994: 15). Political commitment is accordingly recognised as lessening vulnerability of the population (ibid.: 14). This emphasis is also shared by the FPET which pleads for a wider inclusion of women in terms of political engagement. Yet, the Yokohama Strategy does not include women in this argument. Their political marginality is therefore neglected. Towards the end of the framework, technocratic tools are revealed as a means to reduce disaster impact. These include tools such as forecasting and risk assessment. Research, science, and technology are also described as important to “enhance the capacities” and to lessen vulnerability in developing countries (IDNDR, 1994: 17). As promoted by the social vulnerability paradigm, individuals still appear to be given priority in dealing with DRR vis-à-vis technology.

From the Hyogo Framework on, the frameworks refer to a culture of disaster prevention and resilience. This means that risk reduction is suggested to be viewed as part of everyday practices as recommended by Gonda (2019). The Hyogo Framework recognises that disaster can be reduced if people “are well informed and motivated toward a culture of disaster prevention and resilience” (UNISDR, 2005: 9). This idea is highlighting the responsibilities of people in DRR. Compared to the Yokohama Strategy, the Hyogo Framework broadens the DRR means available for the population. Evacuation drills, as well as activities for pupils, are presented to minimise the effect of hazard (ibid.: 10). The Hyogo Framework further argues for including
awareness-raising programmes in school curricula at all levels. The focus of DRR is also put on food security, income, and proper design of important infrastructures such as schools, clinics, and hospitals (UNISDR, 2005: 11). The emphasis of DRR is hence on external factors of vulnerability. Nonetheless, technocratic tools are more prominent than the Yokohama Strategy and seem to be considered more valuable than before. Adding to the technocratic elements of the Yokohama Strategy, the Hyogo Framework cites tools such as statistical information, space-based earth technologies, hazard modelling, and prediction to name but a few (IDNDR, 2005: 5-6-8). Overall, the Hyogo Framework tends to embrace both human capacity and technocratic tools in DRR.

The Sendai Framework operates a turn in that matter. Technocratic tools seem more persuasive and central for DRR than before. On the one hand, the Sendai Framework understands that there is a need for public awareness-raising and training initiatives in all aspects of disaster i.e. from prevention, mitigation to response, and rehabilitation (UNISDR, 2015: 15). Formal or non-formal education should be broadened to not only students but to citizens as well as to professionals (ibid.: 15). With less focus than the Hyogo Framework, building better infrastructures is also advanced. However, the emphasis is put on assessment for urban planning associated with technology. Similarly, local and individuals’ practices are relevant only to “complement scientific knowledge” (ibid.: 15). Here we observe a hierarchy, as the international and scientific community would seem more adequate to deal with DRR than individuals. This shows the clear shift of focus of the Sendai Framework towards a greater emphasis on technology and scientific knowledge.

Enarson and Morrow (1998) argue that the reliance on technology to reduce the effects of disaster can be explained by the male-centred approach in disaster management. Such reliance further underestimates the roles of humans in reducing disaster. Tools such as models to assess disaster risk, vulnerabilities, and exposure are mentioned regularly in the framework. In addition, there are several references for investing and funding more innovation and technology related to DRR (IDNDR, 2005: 24). This refers to a stronger emphasis on technology for the future of DRR. Scientific research and methodologies are also highly promoted at all levels of disaster reduction. All in all, this analysis finds that science and technology are considered more valuable than individuals’ participation in the Sendai Framework. While still acknowledging the need to include humans in DRR, technology and scientific knowledge are prioritized. Consequently, the dominant paradigm of vulnerability is more significantly valued. From an
international perspective, the focus on technology and science may seem more feasible to implement in disaster-prone areas.

The Sendai Framework offers a relatively top-down approach compared to the two previous frameworks. Governance, economy, technology, and research must work with the participation and resilience of persons. Thus, the emphasis on the capacity of individuals in DRR is progressively abandoned in favour of increased attention to technology. Since people’s capacity is gradually forgotten, women’s participation is likely to follow the very same course. These findings are then helpful in informing the next section on gender and women’s role in DRR.

5.2. Gender understanding
It became clear through this research that gender issues and women’s roles need to be address in policy. This section starts by looking at gender understanding and its evolution in the frameworks of reference. Whether a feminist lens is used in gender mainstreaming is also examined. Secondly, women’s roles in DRR and how they are portrayed by the UNDRR is scrutinised. Women’s knowledge and interests in DRR are additionally addressed.

5.2.1 Gender mainstreaming
As gender mainstreaming became more and more used in global policies, this research assumed that gender is gradually included in the UNDRR frameworks. The analysis looks at how gender is understood and whether a feminist approach of gender mainstreaming is considered. Mostly, this section examines whether the critiques underlined in the theoretical framework regarding gender mainstreaming can be applied to the data selected. Analysing these frameworks from both a FPET and CDA approach further allows this analysis to look at power relationships.

The analysis observes no reference or allusion of gender in the Yokohama Strategy. Gender mainstreaming being officially promoted in 1995, it does not seem surprising that gender is absent of the 1994 framework. As gender mainstreaming has become increasingly popular in policies, gender is talked about more frequently in the two-following frameworks. While the Sendai and the Hyogo Frameworks incorporate definitions of words such as vulnerability and resilience, gender is not defined in any of these frameworks. Confusion about terminology regarding gender can have negative impacts on the potential of gender mainstreaming (Enarson and Chakrabarti, 2009).
It would have been expected that the most recent framework would mention gender more often. Rather, both the Sendai Framework and the Hyogo Framework are referring to gender 4 times each (including the footnotes). This finding is surprising as the Sendai Framework was designed in 2015 where gender mainstreaming was a commonly used strategy in policies. In addition, gender is constantly associated with words like “perspective” or “sensitive”. Gender differences are not mentioned nor is the social construction of such differences. As such, this analysis reveals that gender is not recognised as a social characteristic of individuals. This conclusion is consistent with the previous finding that internal factors of vulnerability are not considered. Instead, gender is understood from a gender mainstreaming perspective where policies, programmes, and training should be gender-sensitive.

In order for gender mainstreaming to reach its goal of gender equality, there is a need to name power relationships found in society (Rönnblom, 2009). However, the CDA finds that gender and the dimension of power within society are unmentioned in both the Yokohama Strategy and the Hyogo Framework. There is no mention whatsoever of inequality, discrimination, bias, or prejudice in those frameworks. Only “equal access” is mentioned once in the Hyogo Framework (UNISDR, 2005: 10). It means that the Hyogo Framework understands that there is unequal access to resources but fails to explicitly talk about disparities. In comparison, the Sendai Framework demonstrates more efforts to include power dynamics. Although neither defined nor further mentioned, “inequality” is explicitly mentioned once (UNISDR, 2015: 10). Here, inequality is listed as an underlying disaster risk driver among several other factors. While naming inequality is a central step, its lack of emphasis in the Sendai Framework neglects the significance and complexity of such concept. In the same way, discrimination is not talked about, but “non-discriminatory” practices are considered. As those concepts are only named and not defined, the attempt of the Sendai Framework to include power relationships remains superficial.

The Sendai Framework seeks to include several words related to social problems with no mean to further explain nor describe what it is alluding. It would have been useful to define inequality or gender when it was talked about. Since the Sendai Framework includes a lot of definitions in footnotes, such footnote could have been of relevance. Moreover, including mere references of women or gender within the framework remains insufficient to address gender inequalities. Let us take the example of one of the Sendai Framework paragraphs which encourages women to lead. Such passage is pertinent as women need to be better included in policy and leadership roles as highlighted in the literature review. However, since the
implementation of this process is not further mentioned nor developed, it remains difficult to imagine how to promote women’s leadership without tackling gender roles first. An additional paragraph could have addressed this gap by suggesting ways to empower women’s participation for instance.

Furthermore, the Sendai Framework mentions: “a gender equitable and universally accessible response, recovery, rehabilitation” (UNISDR, 2015: 21). This, itself, assume the universality of women in term of disasters which has been severely criticised by Davids et al. (2014). Women are not identically affected by disasters and assuming so is rather problematic. Presenting women as a homogeneous group prevents a detailed analysis of the diversity of women’s positions and interests (Lombardo et al. 2010). This further dismisses their individuality and particularity. Several scholars have argued for the necessity to have a broader understanding of gender by including other social factors. FPET understands gender as changeable and modifiable by culture, race, and class (Rocheleau et al., 1996). Yet, intersectionality as a concept is not talked about explicitly nor implicitly in any of the frameworks analysed. If people are put in different categories, especially in the Sendai Framework, these categories are understood as separate from each other. Age, disabilities, and gender are never linked with each other. Namely, social characteristics are assumed to be exclusive. This presupposes that an individual cannot be both disabled, indigenous, and a woman. On a related note, there is no mention of race or ethnicity in any of the frameworks. Consequently, the multidimensional approach of gender, as advanced by Enarson (2012), is ignored. These frameworks, including the most recent one, show how narrow the understanding of gender is.

Overall, the Sendai Framework, as well as the Hyogo Framework, understand gender from a non-feminist perspective. Since gender as a concept is not understood as resulting from power relations, the feminist standpoint of gender mainstreaming is abandoned. Instead, gender is used as a perspective needed in policies and decision-making processes at all levels of DRR. Built upon the criticism of gender mainstreaming by Cornwall et al. (2004), the UNDRR frameworks are a representative example of how gender can become neutralised of political intent.

5.2.2. Women role and participation in DRR
Social vulnerability is context-dependent, emphasising the need to consider local knowledge (Cutter and Finch, 2008). As such, the analysis looks at how the involvement of women is
considered within local community participation. It further examines if women’s contribution and knowledge are taken into account in the DRR.

The Yokohama Strategy stresses the participation of individuals at all levels particularly with regard to the local level (IDNDR, 1994: 8). Sometimes represented as vulnerable, the Yokohama Strategy understands that communities’ knowledge and practice need to be respected and included in development activities. Their roles are considered important to reduce the vulnerability of the community specifically “to strengthen the[ir] resilience and self-confidence” (ibid.:11). Whereas community are cited regularly, women are only mentioned once in the Yokohama Strategy. It argues that women should be more involved and empowered at all stages of disaster management programmes at the community level (IDNDR, 1994: 15). It does so by putting women under the same categories as the “socially disadvantaged group”. As such, the Yokohama Strategy represents women as having the same experience as the other groups they are homogenised with. By being only represented as disadvantaged, it accentuated their role as passive participants. The Yokohama Strategy does not acknowledge women’s interests, knowledge, or experiences. Still, the tone of this framework indicates an emphasis on collaboration with the local community. While their contribution remains small, the Yokohama Strategy explicitly recognises their “traditional coping mechanisms” which can be valuable to disaster reduction programmes (ibid.: 15). Subsequently, the Yokohama Strategy framework is the one considering traditional knowledge, practices, and values of local communities the most. At the same time, the Yokohama Strategy is the framework considering women’s participation the least. Bearing in mind that the framework was adopted in 1994, such contrast is fairly expected.

As anticipated, the Hyogo Framework mentions women more regularly than the previous framework. Yet, women are often coupled with their own exposure to disaster and their roles remain passive. For instance, and similarly to the Yokohama Strategy, women’s roles are continuously associated with other groups. Besides, their participation in DRR is mainly about being recipients of information which should consider a gender perspective. Appropriate training and educational opportunities should be designed for “women and vulnerable constituencies” (UNISDR, 2005: 10). Women’s experiences are only considered because of the need to include a gender perspective in training and educational programmes. The tone used in the Hyogo Framework also indicates that women’s knowledge is considered relevant mainly to facilitate DRR implementation in communities. Therefore, their active roles as participants of DRR are not recognised. In the same way, to be empowered to play a role in DRR, communities
and local authorities need to “be equipped with the knowledge and capacities for effective disaster management” (UNISDR, 2005: 12). This assumes that women’s and community’s knowledge is not sufficient and that knowledge of outside experts is needed. Additionally, DRR at the local level should be used “as appropriate”. By implicitly representing the local as dispensable in DRR, it lessens the role of the community as a whole. As such, the analysis observes a notable shift in tone when referring to individuals’ participation in the Hyogo Framework.

The participation of women in DRR seems to be more visible in the Sendai Framework. Women are first represented as victims of disaster as they are “disproportionately affected” (UNISDR, 2015: 10). The literature review of this study highlights how women are indeed facing greater risk than men. This acknowledgement is thus important as it is implicitly stating that women are unequally touched by disaster. Similar to the Hyogo Framework, women are also mostly represented as recipients of communications.

Nonetheless, the Sendai framework highlights the need to promote women’s leadership (UNISDR, 2015: 13). It does so by associating leadership with both women and youth. Women are then assumed to be similarly valuable in leadership positions as young people. With no distinction, such association seems inappropriate. Their experiences, interests, and knowledge are essentially different and putting them in the same sentence show how little women’s proficiency is recognised. This misconception is further corrected when the Sendai Framework promotes the empowerment of women “to publicly lead” and engage in the implementation of policies (UNISDR, 2015: 21). By not being associated with any other groups, it shows how women can be solely counted as active participants of DRR.

Analogously, the Sendai Framework referred to women as “stakeholder”. This tie suggests that the Sendai Framework finally considers women as having both an interest and concern in DRR. Connected to one of the FPET’s point, this framework seems to recommend a wider inclusion of women in partnership and networking. Even so stakeholders are referred very often in the Sendai Framework, it remains uncertain whether women are always considered as belonging to that category. Besides, the role, knowledge, and commitment of non-state stakeholders are recognised as relevant if they “support” the states within the limit of the law (UNISDR, 2015: 23). This patronizing formulation highlights the top-down approach of the Sendai Framework. The tone is no longer puts on the collaboration of the local community as it was the case in the Yokohama Strategy.
Contrary to the two previous frameworks, women are rarely associated with another category in the Sendai Framework. For instance, women, older persons, and indigenous people are mentioned independently in the section about the role of stakeholders. To examine whether women’s competences are considered, the choice of words used in each category was of interest. Women’s participation is described as “critical” into all phrases of DRR policies with a focus on how to empower them for preparedness. In contrast, the “years of knowledge, skills and wisdom” as “invaluable assets” of older persons are cited (UNISDR, 2015: 23). As well as the “important contribution” of indigenous people thanks to their “experience and traditional knowledge” (UNISDR, 2015: 23). This clear difference of wording when talking about women, indigenous people, or older persons highlights how women’s knowledge is simply not recognised in the Sendai Framework. In the same manner, indigenous non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are mentioned in all three frameworks. Despite the relevance of including women groups and organisations in DRR as argued by the FPET, women’s NGOs are completely disregarded in all three frameworks of reference.

In summary, women’s participation is mostly required for managing, designing, resourcing “gender-sensitive disaster risk reductions policies, plans and programmes” in all the three frameworks (UNISDR, 2015: 23). Accordingly, their experiences are valuable to tailor programmes to be gender-sensitive. Surprisingly, women’s knowledge is still not recognised in DRR. Their role remains passive and their characteristics as women seem to be reduced as a tool for gender mainstreaming.
6. Conclusions

6.1 Answer to the research questions

By analysing representations of women in international frameworks over the past 20 years, this thesis shows how women are still not fully considered as active participants of DRR. To implement effective DRR, women’s active roles must be better addressed. As highlighted in the literature review of this research, women are both victims and active participants in disasters and their roles are especially needed in DRR. Despite this observation, the analysis finds that women persist to be portrayed as oblivious.

Over the last two decades, the UNDRR has progressively integrated women and gender into the frameworks. Women are cited more often, and their roles are increasingly considered. Their contribution is also depicted as significant for DRR. Although the analysis shows this clear attempt, women’s capability in DRR is still not entirely recognised. They are frequently related to their vulnerability as well as being associated with other groups. By doing so, the frameworks dismiss their singularity and reinforce their role as passive participants of DRR. Additionally, their knowledge and interests are not yet acknowledged. The analysis further indicates that both gender and women are used as a means to meet development strategies. As such, women’s roles are placed at the level of management and gender-sensitive programme design. Women are then becoming tools for gender mainstreaming.

Too rarely cited, the CDA approach shows that gender is not understood as a social characteristic of individuals. As gender is not seen as resulting from power relations, its understanding in all three frameworks remains incomplete. Specifically, the feminist approach of gender mainstreaming is ignored. These findings, in fact, confirm the criticisms put forward by feminist scholars in regard to gender mainstreaming. Gender is depoliticised.

In addition, this research aimed to identify the vulnerability understanding of disaster. The analysis reveals that the concept of social vulnerability is very often discussed in the frameworks while not being entirely understood. By mostly addressing external factors of vulnerability, internal factors are not recognised as playing a role in the vulnerability of individuals. Namely, characteristics such as gender are not considered as affecting individuals in disaster. Based on the CDA conducted in this research, it can be concluded that disaster is only partly considered from a social vulnerability perspective.
Besides, the analysis finds that technocratic tools are gradually prioritized as a way to reduce the impacts of disasters. Individuals’ capacity in DRR is thus slowly abandoned. Moreover, when individuals’ involvement is mentioned, it does so by tackling external factors of social vulnerability. Education and housing seem to be the priority while social problems such as sexism remain unmentioned. The Yokohama Strategy truly respects and considers the involvement of the local community. In contrast, the Sendai Framework operates a shift in that matter and community are only considered from a top-down approach. Yet, it is also in this framework that the role of women as active participants is most often identified. Overall, the UNDRR frameworks went from a participatory approach in the Yokohama Strategy to a top-down tactic in the Sendai Framework.

The findings indicate that a full consideration of the concept of social vulnerability would provide an opportunity to identify internal factors of vulnerability. This could allow the recognition of gender from a broader perspective whilst addressing power relationships. The future framework of DRR would then benefit from a greater emphasis on individuals and particularly on women’s active participation to DRR.

6.2 Limitations of the research
By analysing how women are portrayed in international frameworks, this research addressed the gap in knowledge. Nonetheless, these results must be interpreted with caution and a number of limitations should be borne in mind. The CDA focuses on three frameworks of the UNDRR produced within 20 years. Thereby, the ability to generalise is limited as this study does not consider a wider range of UNDRR documents. Annual reports, UN resolutions, and UNDRR publications could have been used to better grasp how gender and vulnerability are understood by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. Due to time constraints, the design of the study is also subject to limitations. By using only one single method, the validity of the findings can be criticised. This study could have perhaps benefited from a mixed-method approach. This would have allowed the inclusion of first-hand interviews from several delegates present during the adoption of one of the frameworks. Finally, the analysis chapter was restricted to word count limitation which has affected the scope and depth of the study.
6.3 Implications for future research

Regarding the impact of this study on society, this research finds that the UN alone remains insufficient to address gender matters related to disaster. The UNDRR frameworks need to be understood as a recommendation that can be tailored to the needs of community and nation-states. Countries prone to disaster are thus encouraged to develop their own DRR programmes. This would enable a bigger recognition of local community as well as considering the roles and knowledge of women. Furthermore, this study has opened opportunities for further research. First, the patterns identified in the sample employed in this study can be tested on a larger set of UNDRR documents as well as from a post-colonial perspective where power relationships are further examined. The methodology developed in this research could also be valuable for future studies. By referring to the method used for this specific topic, the approach could be applied to examine other international frameworks. The use of the FPET can additionally be applied to national or regional policies of DRR. Especially since more attention should be put on a gender and feminist perspectives of DRR policies.
7. References


