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Connecting Crises: Young People in Nepal Reflecting on Life Course Transitions and Trajectories during Times of Uncertainty

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Abstract: During certain crises, displacement of populations seeking safe refuge elsewhere can occur without the certainty of a return, if at all. Children and young people in such contexts often face the additional challenge of restrictions or disregard towards engaging their agency in migration decision-making processes. Through 60 in-depth interviews with 30 trans-Himalayan participants (ages of 16–23) and multi-sited ethnography throughout Nepal, this paper investigates multiple experiences of crises experienced by young people and the effects on their life course trajectories. From focusing on the Civil War in 1996–2006, the 2015 earthquake, and most recently the COVID-19 pandemic, this paper proposes that initial displacements from the Civil War, when connected with other crises later on in a participant’s life course, better prepared them to deal with crises and enabled them to create a landscape of resilience. Furthermore, a landscape of resilience that connects past and present life course experiences during crises prepared some participants for helping their larger communities alleviate certain crises-related tension. Overall, this paper extends analysis on an under-researched group of young migrants by connecting crises that shaped their (im)mobility and life trajectories, rather than approaching crises as singular, isolated experiences.



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1. Introduction

Crises caused by war and natural disasters can result in the forced movement of populations seeking safe refuge elsewhere, with the uncertainty of return. Rebuilding/reintegration back, if at all, into living accommodations, schools, neighbourhoods, heritage sites, government buildings, or in some instances even a rebuilding of a national identity itself during, or after crises, are complicated by conflicting factors that can further delay return movements of displaced populations. Some conflicts include inadequate coordination efforts among local, national, and international development projects (Kovács and Spens 2009); lack of transparency between public–private partnerships (Keers and Fenema 2018); uneven government assistance among those in dire need of services (van Barneveld et al. 2020); and inadequate access to land rights for (displaced) migrants (Obeng-Odoom 2017). Similarly, there is often little to no public engagement from those affected, sometimes due to a lack of awareness of how they can become involved in sustainable rebuilding initiatives for change across their affected communities (Khan and Chakraborty, forthcoming; Rahman et al. 2018; Sadiqi et al. 2017). For children and young people in displacement contexts due to crises, the additional challenge with limitation towards engaging their agency in migration decision making is often magnified since “when family migration decision-making specifically is theorised, the possibility that children might have agency within their families and input into processes of migration decision-making is often overlooked” (Bushin 2009, p. 429). Furthermore, mobility-related uncertainties for displaced populations is often captured as a singular experience rather than considering how a (young) displaced migrant may experience multiple moments of

crises and (im)mobilities throughout their life, and how lived experiences from one crisis can shape—in some instances more positively than negatively—other moments of their lived experience during other crises.

From connecting crises, this paper analyzes ways young people are affected by the Civil War, the 2015 earthquake, the COVID-19 pandemic in Nepal, and the drastic emotional effects on transitions throughout their life trajectories, such as transitions into adulthood. More specifically, this research draws from in-depth interviews with 30 young participants from the trans-Himalayan regions of Nepal (18 self-identifying male/12 self-identifying female participants between 16 and 23 years old), multi-sited ethnography throughout Nepal during 14 months of fieldwork in 2018–2019, and follow up online interviews with some participants in 2020.¹

This paper begins with briefly exploring literature on how the social variables of age and emotions intersect with Life Course Theory (LCT) to better explore how LCT and emotions enabled the creation of landscape(s) of resilience for participants who experienced multiple moments of crises while growing up. By ‘landscapes of resilience’, I mean focusing on the geographical conditions of where participants experienced earlier crises and developed their resilience towards later ones. The paper then considers each of the three crises individually, to further engage with articulations of young participants’ emotions in displacement contexts, starting with initial experiences of multi-year separation from their birth trans-Himalayan villages due to Nepal’s Civil War, also referred to as the Maoist insurgency/revolution or ‘People’s War’ of 1996–2006. From tracing participants’ narratives, their emotional articulations are documented throughout regarding how initial forced displacements by being placed in a boarding school in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, to avoid recruitment occurring in remote trans-Himalayan villages during the Civil War, impacted their life course transitions and trajectories from being away from their birth villages. This is further complicated when connected to educational/work disruptions and challenges with return visits to villages due to the deadly earthquake in 2015 (Hall et al. 2017; Shrestha and Pathranarakul 2018) and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (Poudel and Subedi 2020). From these multiple and intersecting lived experiences of crises, participants stress the role that memory and emotions play in displacement and (im)mobility narratives, long-term family separation, and family reunification, which all contribute towards the shaping of life course transitions of young participants. Young participants’ narratives reveal what emotions are produced through practices of remembering their past, and what happens as they move across time and space and how experiences of violence, mourning, grief, and loss can reveal inherent interconnections among and through (im)mobility and displacement-related contexts in Nepal.

Through these interlocking emotions and memories that young people faced from multiple crises experiences across geographical regions of Nepal, this paper engages with the question of how participants in this study created a landscape of resilience by using emotions and memories from one crisis to mediate their responses to other crises, and focuses on how doing so affects participants life course transitions and trajectories while growing up. Overall, a landscape of resilience allows for a qualifying of how young people engage with their emotions during crises at different moments of their life, but more so, this paper promotes and ends on an encouraging standpoint with how young people mobilize their landscape(s) of resilience from youth-led disaster management initiatives. This is exemplified by a group of young participants who are doctors/training medical workers and social workers by practice, who were initially displaced during the Civil War and later by the earthquake. However, during the pandemic, the group of young practitioners have been returning to their Himalayan villages to teach COVID-19 related health messages to remotes communities and promote sustainable health and social-related justice changes, and encourage others in remote villages to develop their own landscapes of resilience during times of uncertainty during crises.

Holistically, this paper argues that despite crises often leading to restrictions on migration and a wide range of livelihood uncertainties, young people found ways towards

engaging with moments of mobility within their immobility during their times of displacement(s). By doing so, young people mobilize their micro-political lived realities to ensure ways they can facilitate smooth as possible transitions into adulthood and/or higher education and work opportunities while trying to simultaneously alleviate or provide some solutions during times of crises for their larger trans-Himalayan communities. Thus, through a focus on connecting crises at different moments of young trans-Himalayan life courses, this paper illuminates how young people created a landscape of resilience to emotionally strengthen their restricted transmigration networks and life course transitions and trajectories during other moments of crises from the context of participants from some of the most geographically remote regions of the world.

2. Life Course Theory (LCT) and Life Trajectories of Young People in Crises Contexts in Nepal

Despite no universal definition of 'child', let alone agreement about what it means to be a child, there is increased anxiety around the production and structuring of political-economic, geopolitical, social, and environmental factors needed to secure children's futures that resultantly produce particular, and often Eurocentric, conceptualizations of 'ideal childhoods' (Ansell 2017; Evans 2008; Khan 2021b). However, focusing on Life Course Theory (LCT) can complicate 'ideal childhoods' from increased attention on how, "processes of setting, ordering, and managing the period of childhood often involves a complex interplay of ideas, values, and beliefs of multiple actors from various levels ranging from the family, local community, state, [and] transnational entities" (Onta-Bhatta 2001, p. 234). Doing so in the context of this paper helps us to better understand variations in transitioning stages between childhood and adulthood by evoking geographic literature that prioritizes the experiences of young people, and where applicable, encourages their understanding of how their agency is recuperated through their testimonies regarding crises related concerns and disasters.

More specifically, LCT is a "theory that seeks to understand the multiple factors that shape people's lives from conception to death, placing individual and family development in cultural and historical contexts" (Hutchison 2017, p. 2). Furthermore, LCT and the "study of the life course crosses... disciplinary boundaries (e.g., sociology, psychology, history), fields (e.g., aging, human development, family demography), and cultural borders (e.g., North America, Europe, Asia)" (Elder et al. 2003, p. 4). From a scalar approach, LCT considers, "both macro-level factors (the socio-economic settings and historical circumstances that structure collective opportunities and experiences), and micro-level factors (the individual preferences and resources that shape behaviours)" which shape transitions of children to adulthood, differently throughout various global spatio-temporal contexts (Severson and Collins 2020 drawing on the work of Mandic 2008 and Vogel 2002).

Likewise, LCT helps to draw attention to the fact that age itself is not a universally applied concept, thus stressing the need for young people in various global/social contexts to have increased agency for engaged participation and/or meaningful inclusion within and outside of research spaces of knowledge engagement (Khan 2021b). This is important for children and young people who may not know their age due to factors such as identity documents being destroyed, lost, or never applied for during crises, as was the case for many of the participants in this study. For example, refer to Khan (2021b) for a discussion on how life course theory can better inform transitions of young people in global minority contexts when the social variable of age is problematized and approached from an interdisciplinary perspective and see (Khan 2021a; Khan and Chakraborty, forthcoming; Khan and Hyndman 2015) for examples of participants in displaced migration contexts without identity documents in Nepal. Furthermore, what the paper will elaborate on is, how LCT assists with navigating life course transitions and trajectories through young people's emotions, memories, and experiences with multiple crises, which allow them to create a landscape of resilience, which is explored in-depth by prioritizing the articulations of young Nepalese participants themselves in this study.

By centering the voice of young people in social science research is particularly valuable towards connecting various crises throughout Nepal with different young populations of focus. For example, [Adhikari and Turton \(2020\)](#) present the complex social phenomenon of sex trafficking involving children in Nepal with regard to social variables of gender, ethnicity, and caste, and, structural factors of work, migration, education, and rights related to the protection of young people. Overall, they call for a reimagining of the problem of trafficking by focusing on research that works “directly with children empowering them with skills and knowledge, only then will children be better able to assess risk. A child protection approach should also recognise a child’s ability to participate in decisions about themselves” ([Adhikari and Turton 2020](#), p. 394). From recognizing the involvement and/or articulations of children and young people in Nepal extends to other contexts such as navigating challenges children face with livelihood transitions when living on the street ([Van Beers 1996](#); [Sharma 2020](#)); precarious and hazardous child and youth labour situations ([Daly et al. 2020a](#); [Kamei 2018](#)); past challenges with avoiding being recruited as child soldiers and/or navigating life course(s) after being recruited as child soldiers during the Civil War ([Khan and Hyndman 2015](#); [Medeiros et al. 2020](#)); managing post-traumatic stress after the earthquake ([Acharya et al. 2018](#); [Sharma et al. 2021](#)) and more recently, life course transitions and trajectories uncertainties caused due to the COVID-19 crisis ([Chalise 2020](#); [Daly et al. 2021](#); [Khatri and Bhatta 2020](#)).

Nevertheless, often crises of (displaced) young people are usually documented in isolation of each other rather than presenting connections across crises. There is some developing research that has been starting to make links between crises in Nepal such as [Punaks and Lama \(2021\)](#) who explore child protection in orphanage contexts by comparing the 2015 earthquake and 2020 pandemic; a focus on how the earthquake further affected existing fuel and power outages crises and a strained healthcare system especially in rural areas ([Adhikari et al. 2017](#)); and exploring connections between displacement concerns during COVID-19 with child and youth labour concerns ([Larmar et al. 2021](#)). Furthermore, despite social science research often documenting effects on the lives of children and young people in times of crises, more contribution(s) is needed from a focus on how life course transitions are spread out across different moments of one’s life in different geographical settings. In addition to this, more is also needed to inform ways in which a prior crisis can be used to mediate subsequent experiences, and how connecting multiple crises enables young people to create a landscape of resilience through their memories and emotions within and across crises-related lived experiences.

Young People’s Emotions and Participation in Crises Related Research

Addressing complexities of how young people deal with crises in diverse societies and geographical contexts, within and outside of Nepal, is better informed through articulations of children and young people’s engagement with their emotions in life course transitions and trajectories. Some global examples of research starting a dialogue between crises and the role of emotions in life course contexts extends to the work of [McAlister et al. \(2019\)](#) contributing, “to the limited literature examining the impact of borders on asylum seeker children and their emotional geographies” (p. 75). In their research, they center a discussion on a connection between asylum and emotional geographies through children’s perspective of their indefinite internment when detained in Nauru, Australia. Likewise, research by [Im et al. \(2017\)](#) investigates that when working with Somali refugees displaced in Kenya, Westernized approaches to mental health limits emphasis on refugees’ own experiences and articulations. Thus, they propose that to effectively assess community mental health needs, which affects smooth life course transitions, is from increased provisions of cultural translations through the use of idioms/Cultural Idioms of Distress (CIDs) to present and better understand displaced populations experiences with trauma. Similarly, [Jiménez \(2021\)](#) calls for a need to decolonize Eurocentric notions of participation and voice when working with children and young people in crises, such as when working with displaced Palestinian youth, by shifting focus on how young people and groups who work with young people construct their own understandings of human rights, participation, and protection. More

recently, when focusing on the COVID-19 crisis a wide range of developing research is starting to investigate emotional challenges concerning LCT both within and outside of Nepal with regard to drastic livelihood changes on work opportunities, births, child health development, birthdays, graduations, engagements, marriages, new jobs, retirements, deaths, restricted migration, and displacement, caused by the pandemic (Benner and Mistry 2020; Bhandari et al. 2021; Raju et al. 2021; Settersten et al. 2020; Subedi et al. 2020; Ulak 2020).

When focusing closer on researching with young people, Cahill (2007) emphasizes the importance of reflexivity by investigating the role of the facilitator and the processes of collective data analysis through the creation of a safe space in which emotional expressions of children/youth are incorporated in a way that can be reworked into agentic expressions within the research itself. Overall, the findings of this paper expand on how the articulations of participants regarding their life course transitions during the time of crises promote a meaningful space for young trans-Himalayan participants to reflect on their displacement experiences during other moments of crises faced at different points in their life course. The agency of young people to engage in dialogue regarding their displacement spaces can be strengthened if research involving young people and children's geographers "could and should contribute understandings of (young) learners' own concerns and lifeworlds" (Horton et al. 2008, p. 343). Doing so positions young people as competent social actors who can actively participate and/or meaningfully express within, across, and outside various spaces, such as for those in displacement-related crises. Holistically, the articulations of young people in this paper assist with understanding how connecting crises enabled them to better understand their (emotional) experiences and in turn, facilitated the creation of their respective landscape of resilience, as the paper will now turn to, starting with a research overview guiding this study.

3. Methodology

Research in this study derives from 14 months of fieldwork in Nepal in 2018–2019. After ethical approval was granted from my academic institution, it was updated annually as needed, and before conducting interviews in Nepal, informed consent was secured from participants. All participants had research-related knowledge from a prior research project I led in 2014/2015 that began to explore young participants' migration experience for education in Nepal in relation to the Civil War. Prior experiences gave participants familiarity with involvement with research; nevertheless, in addition to being provided with a letter of information about what the research entailed, a follow-up briefing when securing signatures for informed consent forms were obtained, provided participants with the opportunity to ask any questions they had regarding their participation. Additionally, on multiple occasions, participants were made aware of the informed consent process to maintain a transparent and respectful research environment, "the ethical principle of voluntary participation, including the right to withdraw at any point, must underpin our commitment to respect children's decisions" (Dockett et al. 2012, p. 252).

Ultimately, no participant withdrew from the study; nevertheless, a second phase of fieldwork that was approved to occur in the summer of 2020 was altered. The year 2020 was scheduled as Tourism Year 2020 in Nepal, with the high hopes of attracting two million tourists, and would encourage one million new jobs throughout the country (Badal 2019). However, the plans were unfortunately cancelled due to the pandemic (Bastola 2020; Neupane 2021). Methodologically, this research stems from 60 semi-structured interviews with 30 young Himalayan participants (18 self-identifying male/12 self-identifying female participants) between 16 and 23 years old, and multi-sited ethnography throughout Nepal. Of the total interviews, one in-person interview was conducted with each participant in 2018–2019. A total of 11 participants also completed their second follow-up interviews in 2018–2019. A total of 19 follow-up interviews with 19 participants were scheduled to occur during the summer of 2020. However, when global lockdowns were implemented and thus in-person research was prevented from being conducted, online interviews

were ethically approved to accommodate the 19 participants in 2020. Geographically, the regions where participants were born, known as the trans-Himalayas, consist of regions (Humla, Jumla, Mugu, Dolpa, Mustang, and Manang) that border and/or are near to Tibet in which Khan (2018) and Khan (2021a) can be referred to for more details on the geographical conditions factoring into displacement and/or other forms of migration marking the trans-Himalayas. For this study, participants were recruited through purposive sampling in which all the participants were known to the researcher since 2010 when I became introduced to displacement-related concerns of trans-Himalayan participants and communities when volunteering in a boarding school for trans-Himalayan students in the capital city of Nepal, Kathmandu. All participants had attended the same boarding school that their family knew through trans-Himalayan social networks. The charity-run boarding school provided an enriching environment for students and through national and international sponsors provided free education for students until the completion of lower secondary studies (grade 10) before they transitioned across Nepal to complete higher studies and/or to find work opportunities. All the participants in the study initially ended up migrating to the boarding school during the time of the civil war between 1996 and 2006, where they remained for multiple years—for some, over a decade—before returning with their families, which will later be outlined more in detail. Revisiting the importance of interviews conducted for this study, O’Kane (2008) strongly states that a research’s methodology, “concerns more than the tools selected! Attention to personal style and facilitation skills are essential, for while the activities provide a source of data in themselves the dialogue around the activities provides the richer source of interpretation and meaning” (p. 151). Creating dialogical spaces is crucial with and/or for young people since it can act as a tool towards mediating geographical spaces of participation by prioritizing articulations of young people themselves. Semi-structured interviews were particularly beneficial for this study as they allowed for articulations of young people from complicated contexts of crises from some of the world’s most remote regions to be reached and expressed.

Furthermore, the strength of using interviewing as a research method as acknowledged in McDowell (2010) is, the ability to “probe an issue in-depth: the purpose is to explore and understand actions within specific settings, to examine human relationships and discover as much as possible about why people feel or act in the ways they do” (p. 158). Thus, using interviewing as a method in this study enabled me to delve into ideas around migration, education, and life course transitions with my participants. However, one potential drawback to interviewing as McDowell (2010) considers is:

rather than being a transparent, straightforward exchange of information, the interview is a complex and contested social encounter riven with power relations. To a large degree, the social researcher is a supplicant, dependent upon the cooperation of interviewees, who must both agree to participate and feel willing and able to share with the interviewer the sorts of information on which the success of the work will depend (p. 161).

On occasion, participants did present socially desirable answers by trying to engage in a completely fixed/structured discussion in which they wanted me to ask a series of questions followed by a series of answers they thought I wanted to hear. However, a continuous reminder that the research space was one for respectable and confidential conversations, did not have to take on only a formal tone, and they could also withdraw at any given moment, created a space that participants ultimately enjoyed. Doing so also created fluidity in thoughts and allowed for participants to feel comfortable when sharing their ideas. I also went over transcriptions of the interviews with participants who chose to do so, allowing them to verify, omit, or expand on anything needed. Each participant was interviewed twice between 2018 and 2020 and the interviews themselves ranged between 1 and 5 h.

Some of the topics covered related to conversations pertaining to life course transitions, emotions, and positive and negative reactions to crises. As the boarding school participants attended was an English-medium boarding school, participants had excellent proficiency

in English; however, having extensive training in Nepali, participants were encouraged to speak in either language to better express the emotional articulations of their crises-related memories and experiences throughout their life. Thus, the semi-structured interviews were conducted in both English and Nepali, and then the Nepali interviews were translated into English and transcribed by me. After transcriptions were complete, NVivo software was used for an initial phase of coding, and codes were verified with participants to further validate ideas related to crises. By the end of the interviews, many participants expressed, and critically recognized, that they were not often provided with such spaces for engaged participation that allowed for their articulations to be expressed meaningfully throughout their lives. As Tenzin stated after an interview:

Having these interviews was beyond helpful. The process of getting to collaborate with you boosted my confidence with speaking and formulating my ideas while making useful connections in my life from when I was a child to when I became an adult. . . I also got to think and rethink deep challenges like the Civil War and earthquake in Nepal and my birth regions in the Himalayas. . . Thank you very much for giving me such an opportunity to speak and learn, and thank you for having research that lets us speak and express so deeply. . . (Female, age 19).

Tenzin uses the interview space as a place to interact and connect crisis-related memories that shaped her life, while simultaneously critically reflecting on how engaging in research provided empowering feelings with regard to her gaining confidence with articulation skills. To comprehend the lived experience of participants further, I chose to engage in multi-sited ethnography that allowed for connections to be made between participants' articulations and seeing how crises such as the Civil War and the Earthquake weaved into the landscapes of various regions across Nepal. [Watson and Till \(2010\)](#) acknowledge that multi-sited ethnographic projects within the field of geography "analyze the forms and effects of globalization through networks and locales; the multiple space-times of consumption and production; tourism and whiteness; nature-society relations; transnational citizenship; and movements of peoples, including refugees and expatriates, across territories" (p. 124). All of these different facets of multi-sited ethnography interlock with this research throughout Nepal. However, emphasizing the last point that draws attention to the movement of people across territories, from visits to three regions of the trans-Himalayas, Mugu, Mustang, and Jumla, and various parts of Kathmandu where participants were residing for higher studies or work opportunities, enabled a further investigation regarding the outcomes of the Civil War on the residing communities. Multi-sited ethnography further revealed complicated layers of (im)mobility due to connections with the Civil War to other crises such as the earthquake and the COVID-19 pandemic that greatly affected the life course trajectories of young people. The specific effects, both negative and positive, on young people's life course transitions and trajectories are better conceptualized through their respective landscape(s) of resilience of children and young people in this study from emphasizing how they navigate their emotions to better cope with crises.

4. Findings: Connecting Crises through Landscape(s) of Resilience

In an excerpt from a follow-up online interview with Karma who, at the time of the interview, was completing a medicine-related Bachelor's degree in Kathmandu speaks to his experiences with multiple moments of displacements and restrictions to his mobility due to intersecting crises that greatly complicated his life course transitions and trajectories while growing up. Karma recounts:

I was sent to Kathmandu by my parents during the civil war. My sister, two cousins, and a few neighbours were recruited by force into the insurgency. In fear that I would be recruited, they sent me away to a boarding school in Kathmandu. I didn't want to go as I was afraid too, but I had no choice. . . I came when I was about seven years old. It was 11 years before I got a chance to reunite with my family. Actually, I reunited with

them because of the earthquake. I was sleeping and suddenly I felt the walls, floors, and everything start to shake. Everyone in the neighbourhood started screaming. I was scared but what I learned from the Civil War was to remain calm. I knew my parents needed assistance and recognizing that I was transitioning into a young adult I wanted to return to help them. After there was a delay with resuming classes I did end up going to my village. . . I did not feel another disruption like that until now during the pandemic. I want to apply for work abroad, but visas were greatly affected. . . And even our final exams were postponed. . . I don't know when I will get to go abroad but what I learned from the earthquake was to do something in the meantime, so while I wait, I have become an online mentor for students. . . And an ambassador for a local organization that is helping provide daily needs such as food to those that need it. . . (Male, age 23).

Karma begins his narration with his displacement from his village caused by the Civil War due to his family's deep feeling of fear regarding potential recruitment, which also resulted in him having little agency in the decision to initially migrate, granted that he was approximately the age seven when initially displaced in 2004. However, when the earthquake occurred in 2015 when he was around 18, he referred to how he learned to 'stay calm' from his memories tied to the Civil War that got him through the fear of the uncertainties of the earthquake. Furthermore, from recognizing his own life course transition into adulthood he felt a duty to assist his family during the earthquake which exemplified more agency towards his migration decision to return to his birth village to assist while learning how to manage his emotions in the process. Thus, when the COVID-19 crisis affected his plans for transitioning into work abroad, he thought back to the times of uncertainty during the earthquake which informed his decision towards making use of his time, and ultimately guided the proactive decision towards helping his local community through educational assistance of tutoring and organizational related activities of providing basic needs to community members. Karma's assistance with local organizations during the pandemic encouraged other participants in this study to form a project called 'Project Remote', as will be explored further in the last section of this paper, to encompass how young people mobilized their landscape(s) of resilience towards encouraging their remote communities to do the same.

Theorizing how a landscape of resilience shapes young trans-Himalayan participants' life course transitions and trajectories from enabling them to navigate uncertainties and strengthen emotional responses during a crisis by connecting their lived experience to a previous crisis, draws on ideas from various interdisciplinary fields and scholars. The idea of landscape(s) focuses on geographical conditions of where participants experienced conditions of displacement and/or (im)mobility from one place to another during crises, but also reflects an internalized landscape created from a range of emotions experienced when coping with crises. The idea of resilience slants towards more positive outcomes of young people managing their emotions in and/or from crises (Masten and Obradovic 2008). Masten and Barnes (2018) note that resilience research aims "to understand positive developmental trajectories among children who managed to hold their own or even flourish despite adversity and, ultimately, to learn how to promote healthy development among children threatened by adverse childhood experiences" (p. 2). Using such approaches to resilience, when connecting different moments on a life course together such as childhood to older adulthood McEniry et al. (2019) consider that even in the displacement of children due to armed conflict and violence in Colombia, they propose that if "childhood adversity builds resilience, we expect that interactions between childhood conditions and displacement will reduce the negative impact of displacement on adult health" (p. 3). Thus, positive outcomes during crises are connected to a sense of resilience from engaging with children and young people's complex transitions across life stages such as childhood into adulthood, but also from connecting multiple people's life stages to strengthen resilient responses to disaster management.

Such introspection of an individual's own life course transitions, as well as extrospection of how their life course connects different people's life stages in crises contexts together,

is deeply reliant on the navigation of emotions. Focusing on emotions can provide a lens for better understanding the lived experiences of children and young people in crises in which some emerging literature has been actively engaging across global contexts. However, concerning the relationship between geographic research and emotions, “the discipline of geography has tended to ‘deny, avoid, suppress or downplay its emotional entanglements.’ Yet clearly, emotions affect the ways in which we perceive and react to people and places” (Longhurst et al. 2008, p. 215; Bondi 2005, p. 1). One way of further achieving increased dialogue with trans-Himalayan young people, emotions, and life course transitions and trajectories in crises, is by focusing on a micro-scalar approach to migration experiences that emphasize the (re)conceptualization of mobility within migration from an individual level. Veale and Donà (2014) use the term mobility-in-migration to emphasize particular scales of movement that can capture complex mobility-in-migration within an individual’s migratory lifespan trajectory. An example of an emerging form of mobility-in-migration that will be examined more in depth is from the participants in this study mobilizing social changes in remote trans-Himalayan villages during the COVID-19 crisis through a youth-led initiative called ‘project remote.’ This paper now begins to expand on how participants created their respective landscape of resilience across different geographical configurations of space and time while growing up from delineating the three intersecting crises of focus starting with an engagement with participants’ first lived experiences with displacement, the Civil War.

4.1. The Civil War: Prioritizing Young Voices in Initial Displacement Contexts

The Civil War in Nepal occurred between “the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (CPN-M, ‘the Maoists’) and the Nepalese government, [and] lasted for a decade, from 1996–2006” (Rushton and Devkota 2020, p. 214). From an educational perspective, the intention behind the Civil War was to address the social inequities that were already rooted in the national education system throughout Nepal that excluded minorities’ cultures, religions, and traditions (Daly et al. 2020b). However, increasing political disenfranchisement and with more hopes towards shifting the magnitude of discontent towards inequalities, poverty, marginalization, and the caste system in educational and other societal spaces, fuelled the emergence of a people’s movement inspired by Maoist ideologies (Daly et al. 2020b). Nevertheless, from the start of the Civil War, there was, “plenty of violence in the form of mass strikes, riots, kidnappings, blockades, and terrorist bombings. Gradually, the Maoist insurgents dominated the rural regions of Nepal,” (Pivovarova and Swee 2015, p. 209) in which a prime location for recruitment by the Maoist was the trans-Himalayan regions as they were geographically far away from centralized regions such as Kathmandu (Khan 2021a; Khan and Hyndman 2015).

In this study, all 30 participants noted that the Maoist Insurgency was an initial reason for their displacement to Kathmandu. Even though being quite young during the insurgency, some participants recalled vivid memories of lived experiences in their remote trans-Himalayan villages which contributed to their displacement. As Zopa who was displaced to Kathmandu when he was about six years old revealed, “I was a small kid, but I remember. Sometimes the Maoists came to the village and acted as they ruled it... Also, I remember the day some of my friends went missing, that was very scary and sad” (Male, age 22). He also acknowledged that something he shared in common with his father was emotionally relating to his father’s challenging experience of some of his friends also being kidnapped, which Zopa was always emotionally moved by when listening to his father narrating some of his accounts during the Civil War. For other participants, the potential of being kidnapped was also articulated within their emotional landscapes, with particularly strong expressions tied to fear. As Tsering, a recent graduate with a master’s in social work reveals, when connecting her memories of when she was about six or seven in relation to when transitioning into adulthood narrates:

... my mother said I had no choice, that I had to go to boarding school in Kathmandu, or else the soldiers would take me far away and I would never get to see my family ever

again. . . In my early years, it was emotionally hard. I resented being sent to boarding school, but once I became an adult, I would like to thank my family for not only giving me the opportunity to study and pursue higher education but for also keeping me safe during the Civil War (Female, age 22).

Focusing on Zopa's and Tsering's emotional landscapes, Zopa's articulations with regard to how emotions rooted in memories related to the Civil War crisis factored into his life course trajectory as memories "in all its forms, physical, psychological, cultural, and familial, plays a crucial role within the contexts of migration, immigration, re-settlement, and diasporas, for memory provides continuity to the dis-locations of individual and social identity. . ." (Creet 2020, p. 3). Zopa's memories connected to his father's memories also reveal the intergenerational nature of life trajectories from the passing down of memories from parents/caregivers to children and a sharing of similar emotions felt by child and parent alike from coming into contact with the same crisis. Furthermore, Tsering's narrative reveals the creation of a landscape of resilience from expressing a connection between geographical space and time by engaging with how despite it being emotionally difficult to endure family separation during her initial displacement experience, when transitioning into adulthood she emotionally strengthened herself. She does this by shifting her feelings of resentment towards feelings of gratitude from recognizing that despite being displaced as a child, while growing up she experienced mobility-in-migration since, in addition to remaining safe during the uncertainties of the Civil War, she was able to attend multiple institutions in Kathmandu to pursue and complete higher education.

Nevertheless, for some participants, it was even more direct, persistent, and severe contact with the Civil War which led to forced migration to Kathmandu. Some participants portrayed an emotionally suffocating militaristic presence while residing in the Himalayas. As Yama reveals, "during the election time the Maoist came our homes to collect money, food, and clothes . . . they said it was for redistribution later on, which I am not sure they did" (Male, age 18). Similarly, Diki recounted how "every time insurgency members came by to their village in the Himalayas, there was a scramble to hide the pressure cookers as there was the fear that they would be used in bomb-making" (Female, age 18). Additionally, in some instances, Maoist presence was more geographically centralized. As Sangye explained:

. . . They took over the space [referring to his village in Mugu] and if you want to complain about them to the police, then it was like complaining to them because they were like the government in the area now. They wanted to overthrow the government in power, and they wanted to make it originally for the people to be more inclusive, but they actually didn't. Some villagers didn't see the danger as the insurgency members were feeding them lots of thoughts and rhetoric's to gain their trust and sometimes allegiance. . . Later on, lots of youth from my village was convinced by their political visions and ended up joining the Insurgency as they were promised better livelihoods for the future if they participated. . . (Male, age 19).

From emotional turbulence expressed by Yama and Diki, and the memories of unwanted militaristic presence in his community by Sangye illuminates how the use of non-violent intervention was tactically used in recruitment as, "the idea of transforming the consciousness of people (*chetana pariwartan*) was key to Maoist wartime policies in the areas under their control" (Zharkevich 2019, p. 152). The transforming of the consciousness of people was done through the promise for 'better' life trajectories which was used as a method to convince some youth to join the insurgency voluntarily.

Nonetheless, it was forced experiences with recruitment that factored the strongest in young participants' displacement to Kathmandu. Regarding recruitment Dawa, a current medical student in Kathmandu at the time of interviews in 2018/2019 narrates:

My elder brother was taken as a member of the Insurgency. . . In fear that I would too, one day my parents waited for me to fall asleep and then started the journey to Kathmandu to enroll me in boarding school. It was about a two-month trek. I was about five years old at

the time. I was confused about what was going on. . . . When I got to boarding school, my mom said to wait here and a few days they will come back to get me. Days passed, then months, then years. I went through my adolescent phase, then became a teenager and it was not until 10 years later, on the brink of becoming an adult, that I got to reunite with them for the first time. . . . I finally got to share feelings of sadness, happiness, fear, and gratitude for keeping me safe. . . . (Female, age 23).

Again, as seen in previous narratives, memories of fear and confusion were major emotions and feelings that marked Dawa's initial displacement experiences around 2003. The displacement journey itself in Dawa's situation spanned two months of trekking across various landscapes of Nepal, to ultimately reach the boarding school in Kathmandu. The emotional landscape experienced by Dawa slowly changed from fear, confusion, and sadness towards feelings of gratitude. Similarly, to Tsering's experience above, a gradual shifting of negative emotions to more positive ones during Dawa's life transitions of adolescence to adulthood during her time in Kathmandu gradually strengthened her landscape of resilience from feeling happiness and thankfulness for the opportunity to pursue higher education opportunities. Furthermore, through the creation of a landscape of resilience, Dawa was able to also encourage other students who attended the boarding school, (also participants of this study) to do the same. For example, Dawa spent lots of time with Rinzin by providing emotional support during his displacement to Kathmandu and while transitioning into adulthood away from his village. Rinzin recalls that his sister and his friends were enlisted and they were thinking of taking him as well as they mentioned to his family on a few occasions. Upon neighbours hearing that there were rumours of a mass recruitment, Rinzin's parents immediately sent him to Kathmandu with a group of children facing the same crisis (Male, age 18). Interestingly Bikash, another participant of this study who was one of the children who travelled with Rinzin states, "actually, we were really small so there was not a big risk at that time, but not sure how long the war would last our parents sent us a precaution. . . ." (Male, age 17). Thus, Bikash shows how parents analyzed the life trajectories of their children when making migration decisions on their behalf. Parents and caregivers knew that infants and small children were usually not at risk of recruitment, but due to the uncertainty of the length of the war sent away some younger children such as Rinzin and Bikash as a safety mechanism, which did result in multi-year separation for all participants in this study.

From the narratives presented thus far, we have seen that despite being displaced to Kathmandu and having negative feelings while growing up, many participants when transitioning into adulthood did realize how being sent away by parents and caregivers was done with the intent of providing protection from Civil War uncertainties such as recruitment in rural villages. Additionally, being in the same boarding school during the Civil War, provided the advantage of allowing participants to create a shared landscape of resilience among participants from sharing their narratives regarding their crisis's experiences. Ultimately a major contributing factor of shifting negative emotions and feelings while being away from rural villages such as feelings of abandonment was from later realizing as they grew up, they had the opportunity to pursue an education/higher education. Through their lived experiences and interviews they acknowledge that they eventually felt grateful for the opportunity to study since during moments of forced migration like "when individuals are displaced during the war, they may relocate to unfamiliar destinations which would make them less likely to attend school" (Pivovarova and Swee pp. 309–310). Furthermore, "even if these parents wish to send their children to school, their lack of knowledge about school location and enrollment procedure will probably pose as a significant barrier to entry" (Pivovarova and Swee pp. 309–310). For some participants, recognizing that they had the opportunity to study during their displacement, as they completed lower secondary school (grade 10) and began transitioning closer to adulthood they wanted to find ways of further mobilizing some forms of mobility during their displacement context to better strengthen their landscape of resilience. A conversation

with 17-year-old Tashi illuminates how he tried to engage mobility within the backdrop of displacement caused by the Civil War proceeded as follows:

Tashi: You know sometimes when I think about what happened during the Insurgency it makes me feel so frustrated. . .

Me: Why so?

Tashi: Because they killed people in order to be in politics during the 10-year war. Lots of the leaders came into power during the killing of people or choosing violent ways of being in politics, which killed so many innocent Nepalese. . .

Me: Nice point with considering intersections of violence and political power. . .

Tashi: Yes, and unfortunately, I was sent here [Kathmandu] to avoid being recruited. The hard thing is I didn't get to grow and become an adult in my village. No participating in the cultural celebrations, no religious holidays, and actually, I can't even speak my local Tibetan dialect. Not getting to see siblings being born or burying those that passed, yes, we get an education here, but we need to sacrifice quite a bit. . . I have been trying to help some younger ones here who are in the same situation as me.

Me: In what ways? As in those also displaced from the Civil War?

Tashi: Yes. I have been working with a local NGO. They provide housing and educational fees for some students from the Himalayan regions due to the Civil War. I mentored some of the students and showed them how to get around Kathmandu. Even though we may not get to travel back to our villages as often as we want, we can have some movement here in Kathmandu which can increase our chances for a better life in the future. . .

This correspondence with Tashi firstly reveals his competency to express the downside of a political crisis by pointing to the injustices caused during the Civil War. This undoubtedly indicates prioritizing children and young people's views as a way to better construct knowledge about children, childhood, and young people's issues that directly affect their lived realities while promoting a strong belief in young people's rights and competency to do so (Formosinho and Araújo 2006). Secondly, Tashi emotionally reflects on the effect of the crisis on his life course from having to endure long-term family separation, however, he also exemplifies mobility within his moments of immobility by assisting young people to learn ways of how to navigate their (im)mobility contexts while in Kathmandu. Nevertheless, many participants planning to return to their villages after completing their studies, or during the summer holiday in Kathmandu, were further complicated by the environmental crisis of the earthquake in 2015.

4.2. The 2015 Earthquake: Young People Assisting with Communication Efforts

The earthquake in Nepal that occurred on Saturday, 25 April 2015 at 11:56 local time (Shrestha and Pathranarakul 2018) was 7.6 in magnitude. It resulted in, "over 8790 casualties and 22,300 injuries. It is estimated that the lives of 8 million people, almost one-third of the population of Nepal, have been impacted by this earthquake (Joshi and Joshi 2018, p. 196). The devastation of the natural disaster resulted in a host of crisis-related situations such as, but not limited to, geographically leaving affected areas susceptible to landslides (Regmi et al. 2016); historical loss from the damage of cultural heritage structures and buildings (Bhagat et al. 2018); financial challenges with loans pledged by the international community increasing Nepal's debt rather than helping those who are affected by the disaster (Regmi et al. 2016); post-traumatic stress and challenges with depression of adolescents (Sharma and Kar 2019); and educational disruptions due to damages to schools across the country and/or uncertainty around reopening plans for classes due to the chaos of the disaster (Westoby et al. 2021).

With an emphasis on crises related to forced migration resulting from the earthquake, and more specifically when considering the conditions of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nepal, [Titz \(2021\)](#) outlines and questions that:

still, years after the earthquake disaster, many of the displaced population have not been able to overcome their displacement situation—or are they prevented from doing so? It is fair to say that the situation of IDPs is characterized by an ambiguity of fields of practice: Fields of practice of the government that are reflected in a particular reconstruction process as well as the established field of practice of certain groups within the Nepalese society, which is represented by an exclusionary social and political system, may stand in rivalry to the IDPs fields of practice (p. 15).

Through multi-sited ethnography across Nepal in 2018–2019 that allowed me to investigate some of the lingering effects of the 2015 earthquake, I would also add that in addition to a ‘field of practice’ based on governmental exclusions and ambiguities, a pressing concern is how young people, especially those who have been displaced by the earthquakes and who have prior lived experiences with crises management, can influence social changes in crisis-affected communities. In the case of participants in this study, they were able to mediate some uncertainties of the earthquake by drawing on what they experienced and/or learnt from their lived experiences during the Civil War to further create and perpetuate a landscape of resiliency that extended outwards to larger communities as well.

Connecting various landscapes in Nepal affected by the earthquake to the notion of resilience has been explored in research such as [Ray \(2017\)](#) who focuses on a sense of community resilience through some local communities’ initiatives. [Ray \(2017\)](#) acknowledges how even with the large extent of destruction and overwhelming challenges from the earthquake, some grief-stricken communities exemplified immense patience and proactive decision-making in the hours after the crisis. Immediately after the earthquake occurred, some communities practiced a deep sense of social cohesion, and national integrity by pooling their resources together and organizing plans for addressing dire needs cooperatively and thus were able to return to some routine activities within forty-eight hours after the earthquake struck. Similarly, [Thorne-Lyman et al. \(2018\)](#) explore nutritional resilience by focusing on how some communities greatly affected by the earthquake found ways to mitigate the impacts of the shock on their food security and nutrition, which resulted in the findings of households in their studies one year after the earthquake to remain comparably the same or improving, despite evidence of structural and other damage. The earthquake also opened up spaces for dialogues about the need for more gender representation and representation from hard to reach populations such as those from remote regions during disasters since, as [Thapa and Pathranarakul \(2019\)](#) suggest, for more resilient disaster management spaces to develop “adequate consideration is missing in women and socially excluded groups’ needs and responsibilities while designing and planning the disaster response and recovery” (p. 209).

Nevertheless, as previously mentioned, children and young people are also often not included enough in disaster response, which, in this study, can be better examined by firstly looking at how participants built a landscape of resistance by connecting their displacement from the earthquake with initial reactions and feelings from forced displacements during the Civil War, and secondly, seeing how they used their landscape of resilience in restricted mobility contexts to contribute to some changes in the larger communities around them. To elaborate, similar to the Civil War, a striking emotion many participants expressed with regard to their initial experiences with the earthquake was fear and confusion. As Kunchen, who was pursuing a Bachelor of Social Work at the time of interviews in 2018/2019 narrates:

The earthquake was scary. Like the civil war was too, but I was small when it occurred, this time I was a teenager, so the memories are very fresh. . . Now even as an adult every time I hear a rumble for a big truck passing, I think it is the earthquake. . . (Male, age 20).

Dolma, who was a few months away from completing her lower secondary education (grade 10), and was in the process of searching for higher secondary studies (grade 11 and 12) in the field of business, on the night of the earthquake while residing at the boarding school exclaims:

That night was like no other! I saw part of my room collapse as we ran outside. But it was also a little thrilling, like, in the boarding school I saw so many of the little children shaking and some were crying, and some were laughing. It was like an action movie! I had the same experiences when I was their age coming to Kathmandu during the Civil War. I know that being an elder student I had to take on a sense of responsibility and take care of the little ones. I felt like I was becoming an adult. It was a cold night sleeping in the field but when I looked up and saw millions of stars, I had hope for a brighter future for me and more importantly for the little ones. . . I felt happy doing for them like what my elders at the school did for me when I was younger after coming during the Civil War. . . (Female, age 17).

Kunchen and Dolma both express multiple intersections between life course transitions and the time of crises. Kunchen acknowledges that his memories when he was a young child during the Civil War were very faint, but as he transitioned into being a teenager gave him a stronger sense towards understanding his emotions. Furthermore, when transitioning into adulthood, Kunchen reveals how the sound of trucks caused moments of panic when recalling his lived experiences of emotions of panic during the earthquake. Similarly, Dolma's emotional landscape makes connections between her early life stages during the Civil War comparatively to observing the emotional landscapes of the children in her presence during the earthquake. Yet, from recognizing that she was transitioning into adulthood, and from her prior lived experiences of support from her elders at the boarding school during the Civil War crisis, she assisted with taking care of the younger students as well, to reciprocate the help once received.

Through Dolma's assistance towards the young students at the boarding school during the time of the earthquake, she was hopeful in assisting with some smooth life course transitions for both her and the younger students after the chaos of the crisis reduced. Yet, for some students, their life course trajectories were more uncertain. Concerning Jigme's uncertainties regarding life course transitions and trajectories during the earthquake states:

I was about to graduate and become one step closer towards becoming a registered accountant. I was also in the process of looking for a part-time job to pay the cost of my program. Some of my peers also suggested seeking a short internship abroad to gain some life skills, but the earthquake changed all of that as my classes were cancelled and I was unable to fund the remainder of my program. Now I teach in an elementary school until I plan what to do next and how. . . (Male, age 20).

The experience of Jigme reflects how crises can cause disruptions to intended life course trajectories, in his case becoming an accountant. Delays, cancellations for school/work opportunities, and potential trips back to their remote village were a shared sentiment across all participants' lived experiences during the earthquake.

However, despite mobility setbacks for some participants, other participants were eager to participate in rebuilding and mobilization efforts to further some forms of mobility in their restricted environments caused by the earthquake crisis. For example, similar to Kunchen and Dolma above, who remembered their initial displacement from the Civil War, Sherab shares:

I understand what displacement feels like from the war, as there is no communication technology in my village, and it takes months to get there I didn't get to hear from and see my family much at all throughout my childhood. Therefore, I want to help those in Kathmandu who may not have any experiences with such displacement situations. . . " (Male, age 18).

With regard to the participation of affected populations in development initiatives in crises contexts, "through active participation and collaboration, such as volunteering,

people foster a sense of collectiveness and belonging, which in turn helps to build resilience in a community” (Ray 2017, p. 645 drawing on the work of Townshend et al. 2015). Furthermore, when looking at ‘resilient communities’ in the work of Ray (2017), it was the contribution of young people that had an impact on initiating some earthquake rebuilding efforts. As Ray (2017) states:

The earliest and most effective relief efforts came from the urban youth and other well-off members of local communities. They sprang into action almost immediately after the earthquake, to share information, raise funds, and use their resources to deliver critical aid to the affected persons. The middle and lower middle classes also joined the movement. Soon hundreds of self-organized Nepali groups were formed, embodying a grassroots-level self-help movement engaging volunteers and beneficiaries (p. 651).

Participants in my study in the early stages after the earthquake began to mobilize their landscapes of resilience primarily through the use of communication technology. Soon after the earthquake occurred, “several national and international volunteer groups (especially of youth and professionals like doctors and engineers) were voluntarily mobilized in treatment of injured, setting up temporary shelters, and supplying foods and non-food items” (Uprety 2018, p. 7). To assist with mobilization efforts, youth participants in this study who were medical practitioners/training practitioners first began by creating digital spaces among themselves and their extended social networks to begin assisting with coordination efforts. As Yonten a recent graduate with a medical degree at the time of interviews in 2019 reflects:

I always had a passion for community medicine. Yes, I came to Kathmandu during the Civil War, which was quite an emotionally challenging time from being away from my family, but knowing that still there is often inadequate medical services and facilities in the regions it became my passion from an early age to one day be a part of the medical field and provide medical assistance to villages in the mountains. . . I actually was planning a medical camp across the Himalayas to teach about hygiene and other medical conditions right prior to the earthquake! However, when the earthquake occurred and restricted my travels back home, I knew my efforts could be of use in Kathmandu. Shortly after the earthquake I formed an online group [on Facebook] and planned with fellow graduates from my medical college on how to assist local communities in need. Me and a few colleagues end up getting messages across Kathmandu of displaced elders needing assistance with reaching emergency services or having important medicines delivered to them, which we did. . . (Female, age 23).

Through Yonten’s landscape of resilience, she firstly exemplifies how emotions from family separation due to the Civil War gave her enough time to develop her life course trajectory towards wanting to pursue a medical field to eventually assist in remote trans-Himalayan regions of Nepal. However, the earthquake disrupted her plans of returning to assist communities in the summer of 2015, yet she was able to mobilize her efforts throughout communities in Kathmandu to assist those in spaces of limited mobility or displacement, such as the elderly. To note, Yonten with a group of practitioners (in the medical and social work field who are also fellow participants of this study) eventually did go to remote villages during the COVID-19 pandemic to assist remote communities as will be explored more in the subsequent sub-section.

However, a key factor in Yonten’s mobilization efforts, and in essence, a mobilization of her landscape of resilience during the earthquake, was the way young people used social media and digital spaces to assist in the time of crisis. Yonten and fellow participants, through the use of social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Viber, and video calling applications such as Skype, used communication technology to create resources for individuals to gain access for independent rebuilding initiatives or to facilitate larger public participation during events organized through technological mediums. Similarly, from working with 50 youth participants during the earthquake, Dahal et al. (2021) explore how through social media, young people in the capacity of youth responders, were

able to mobilize crowdsourcing coordination and organizing abilities that supported both community resiliency and their agency as young people to participate in change-making during times of crises. Dahal et al. (2021) further prioritize young people's agency through active roles as youth responders by vividly outlining that during the earthquake:

[[leaping to the forefront of immediate relief efforts, Nepali youth networks mobilized themselves in a vast number of ways to counter the destruction in their communities and fill gaps in relief work by the government and other relief-providing bodies. Signs reading "Call me if you need any help" were taped to the back of motorbikes; excel sheets documenting the need for blood were shared through #NepalQuakeRelief; and statuses about impromptu clean-ups were advertised on Facebook (p. 217).

Similarly, young participants such as Yonten in my study used communication technology to engage the public during rebuilding initiatives help to raise critical awareness around what resilience looks like from local youth perspectives and how youth can mobilize their efforts during the time of crises. When further considering how young people can facilitate cross-cultural engagement within and across Nepal during crises, young people in this study returned to remote regions during the COVID-19 crisis to encourage meaningful social change that reflected emotional lessons and or methods of engagements they learn from experiences during the Civil War and earthquakes.

4.3. COVID-19—Turning a Crisis into Learning Experiences

Concerns surrounding the COVID-19 crisis in Nepal are continuing to unfold daily. Some leading challenges extend to, but are not limited to, analyzing uncertainties of impacts on agricultural and food systems resilience throughout Nepal (Adhikari et al. 2021); raising awareness around rising suicide rates, anxiety, and depression during lockdowns (Singh et al. 2020); and calling upon national and international communities for more collaboration to develop transparent plans for rapid detection and testing of COVID-19 (Giri and Rana 2020). Some other concerns include challenges with finding economic solutions for displaced Nepalese workers in international settings who were out of work and could not return to Nepal due to international lockdowns (Barker et al. 2020); access to more intensive care resources (Paneru 2020); and shifts to digital environments for education alternatives during lockdowns, thus perpetuating discrepancies that exist in their availability and in turn widening the gaps in access and quality of education for young people across Nepal (Dawadi et al. 2020). In the context of this paper, engaging with how such pandemic effects have been affecting young people's life course transitions and trajectories, and ways they can connect past experiences with crises to the pandemic to develop ways towards contributing to the COVID-19 disaster management initiative across Nepal is a prime focus.

From learning how to manage emotional experiences during the Civil War and gaining an appreciation for educational opportunities, as well as from the communication mobilization efforts during the earthquake, some participants focused on disseminating health and social justice concerns through return migration to the trans-Himalayas. Despite studies on migrants leaving some of the world's most remote villages in the Himalayas of Nepal for study/work (Childs and Choedup 2018; Khan 2021a; Khan 2018; Prasain 2018; Zharkevich 2020), there is very little engagement on how return migrants bridge communication and other social spheres to bring about life changes for such regions. During the pandemic, some youth participants in this study have been returning to the Himalayas During COVID-19 with public health and social justice messages in areas where Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) is limited and/or non-existing. Their return visits also exemplify a reshaping of (im)mobility spaces in which some participants used their (im)mobility in the times of the earthquakes as learning lessons on how to further build their landscape of resilience during the ongoing pandemic by creating an initiative called 'Project Remote.'

When schools were starting to close to control the spread of the virus in Nepal, a group of students/practitioners who were studying in the field of medicine launched an initiative

called 'Project Remote' to teach COVID-19 related health messages across the Himalayan villages. Building on her experience with practicing a call for action/strengthening her landscape of resilience by providing emergency health assistance to elders during the earthquake, 23-year-old Yonten and five peers, who were also participants of this study (Karma, Dawa, Diki, Sangye, and Bikash), mobilized their assistance during the pandemic. During the pandemic, they returned to their remote villages of birth to instruct villagers about developing good hygiene habits, the importance of socially distancing, and thought ways and methods towards preparation safe water for consumption and cleaning where running water is uncommon. Yonten also created COVID-19 posters in the local language and engaged elders through whiteboard activities, diagrams, and storytelling to further disseminate the health-related messages.

From young people themselves leading initiatives that encourage societal changes to promoting an approach to participation in crises management initiatives that move:

beyond the relatively benign and passive, though important, act of expressing a view, to becoming active participants in decisions and actions in response to issues at hand. This shift also ensures that power and decision-making are not controlled by adults for the purposes of the adult agenda, instead, it acknowledges that young people themselves can initiate and act on decisions according to their own agenda (Percy-Smith and Burns 2013, p. 328).

Through translating and communicating content into local languages the team of youth gathered health-related concerns from the villages with the hopes of bringing the messages back to Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, to promote policy-related conversations on Himalayan healthcare concerns, which is currently in the works. Doing so illustrates a focus on knowledge engagement reaching extremely rural areas of Nepal and the world. To date, research involving children and young people despite, "rapidly growing, much of the research is still centred on children in the 'West', with less focus on those in developing countries" (Ferguson 2007, p. 46). However, there is some movement towards stressing, "an ever-growing research agenda about children to ensure that their environments are safe places, to facilitate their participatory roles in society, and to incorporate their viewpoints and needs into planning and policy", which is important for promoting inclusive space for the engaged participation and/or articulations of young people in crises (Ferguson 2007, p. 47). The project led by young people in Nepal, 'Project Remote,' also expands on incorporating the geographical engagement of young people and children/youth-related research from outside of 'the west' by drawing on (im)mobility experiences with trans-Himalayan participants themselves to better understand their (emotional) experiences when connecting crises when navigating rural landscapes.

Besides health initiatives, following up with Yonten in an online interview in the spring of 2020, Yonten acknowledged that 'Project Remote' has recently expanded its initiatives by teaming up with other participants (Tsering, Kunchen, Sherab, and Tashi) to address social justice messages from a social work perspective in rural villages. The group has been returning to their Himalayan villages to further engage locals in humanities and creative arts-based approaches to address concerns and promote social changes with regard to child marriage, addressing trauma from the Civil War and the earthquakes, infant mortality, gender inequality, and caste-based discrimination. Doing so has started to create a shared landscape of shared resilience by encouraging collaboration of young people who have through their respective landscape of resilience, been promoting ways of better facilitating life course transitions and trajectories of individuals from remote regions of Nepal during crises.

5. Discussion: (Im)Mobility, Landscapes, and Resiliency in Crises Contexts

When factoring mobility into life course transitions, "migration, whether personally experienced, part of one's life history or imagined into the future, has become a central dimension of the lived experiences of many children and young people globally" (Veale and Donà 2014, p. 1). Nevertheless, transitions and trajectories from a migration perspective are often further complicated when a crisis or crises occurs as it disrupts expected

transitions and trajectories from the unexpected event(s) such as forced displacement. Life course transitions and trajectories for displaced migrants are complicated and can entail a range of mobilities across various geographical spaces that could require movement from one place to another, to multiple places, or back and forth between places at unfixed points in time. Such complex configurations of movements often create more uncertainty in life course transitions and trajectories than initially expected by an individual.

Furthermore, in displacement contexts caused by crises, certain groups such as children and young people may not have adequate spaces within and outside of research to express how a crisis or crises affected or continues to affect, their life course transitions and trajectories. Supporting this point further, Yeh (2014) acknowledges, there has been “little research on children of migrants as mobile young people in their own right, who create their own forms of mobility and shape their own paths of movement” (p. 92). Nonetheless, for displaced young people in this study who were initially displaced from rural trans-Himalayan villages at early ages, this paper investigated ways they try to shape their own forms of mobility and paths of movement through expressing and connecting their emotions, lived experience with multiple crises, and using moments from their life course transitions to mobilize changes in societies affected by crises.

Emphasizing the relationship between emotions and life course transitions and trajectories during times of crises and, more so, investigating how young people in this study as they grew up and found ways to positively shape their transitions and trajectories, the paper ultimately takes a slightly more optimistic approach towards navigating young people’s lived experiences and response to crises. It does so by firstly emphasizing how, throughout a young participant’s life, they were affected by multiple crises, wherein they took lived experiences from one crisis to analyze the situation of another. Connecting, comparing, and contrasting their lived experiences through various crises enabled participants to better inform their decision-making during later crises experienced in their life, based on the lived experiences and memories from earlier experiences.

Additionally, connecting crises together rather than focusing on just one isolated crisis in a person’s life enabled young participants to emotionally strengthen themselves in managing their emotions in later crises. Thus, the process of reflecting on multiple crises throughout their life allowed participants to explore how they created a landscape of resilience from the connection of their past emotions and memories together, across crises in various geographical spaces and in time. Throughout the paper, participants expressed how a landscape of resilience promoted a sense of agency from navigating their (im)mobility context marked by spaces of restraint such as being sent to a boarding school during the Civil War to avoid being recruited as child soldiers between 1996 and 2006 and later not being able to return home in 2015 due to the earthquake. Yet, during such moments of immobility, when participants started transitioning into early adulthood during the time of the earthquake, they began to find ways towards mobilizing their efforts to assist with crisis management in the communities around them.

Through the mobilizing of their efforts during the earthquake by using social media to reach populations such as the elderly who were in dire need of medical assistance in Kathmandu, young people helped to inform some participants on how to further mobilize efforts during COVID-19. During COVID-19, when some participants returned to remote trans-Himalayan villages, they launched a project called ‘Project Remote’ to initially provide medical knowledge around COVID-19, and later, expanded their efforts by including more youth participants from this study. By including more youth allowed for a combining of their landscapes of resilience which was embodied in the activities that provided social assistance and promoted social changes in the trans-Himalayas, such as counselling individuals with traumas from past crises such as the Civil War and the earthquake. Thus, through such experiences that reached remote community members, encouraged a sense of community resiliency by motivating community members to create their own respective landscapes of resilience to better mitigate their life course transitions and trajectories during crises.

6. Conclusions

Overall, this paper expands on incorporating young people and children/youth-related research from a geographical location outside of 'the West' by drawing on displacement experiences with trans-Himalayan participants, while advancing a methodological framework that prioritizes the articulations of young people themselves as often as possible. Through a focus on articulations of young people, the role of emotions is better understood from young people's lived experiences of multiple crises across their life course. Through connecting crises and reflecting on times of uncertainty during crises, reveals different relationships young people shared to (im)mobility and emphasizes micro-scalar analysis of participants' lived experience and their agency in such (im)mobility context towards the process of creating their respective landscape(s) of resilience to positively influence their own life course transitions from an individual level.

Furthermore, through individual landscapes of resilience, participants then connected theirs to other young participants in this study to mobilize their efforts in contributing meaningfully to crises alleviation efforts. This is exemplified from the work of some youth using social media to provide life-saving medical services to communities during the earthquake, which taught them about effective mobilizing planning efforts that they incorporated into a youth-led initiative called 'Project Remote' that alleviated and thought about COVID-19 and a range of other concerns in remote trans-Himalayan villages. Overall, young trans-Himalayan participants' experience in this study begins to illuminate how their initiatives across Nepal, and return visits to remote home villages, can engage their (im)mobility journeys towards encouraging communication across and outside of remote regions; health and social justice initiatives; and encourage policy-related conversations about several (trans-Himalayan) concerns through a shared landscape of resilience during times of crises.

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Notes

¹ All participants have been provided with pseudonyms to ensure anonymity.

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