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Collective action in floods: Comparative analysis of British and Russian experience

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Introduction

Despite the fact that in the last thirty years disaster management has become one of the prioritized parts of political agenda of the majority of nation states and has experienced radical shifts in approaches in some of these states, natural disasters are still recognized as a substantial threat to the wellbeing of citizens and a cause of massive material and emotional loss. Among these, flood is considered to be the most frequent and destructive natural hazard that the majority of the countries across the globe are exposed to.

As is argued by environmental scientists, the number of flood incidents is expected to increase as a consequence of the changing rainfall patterns and sea levels, resulting from climate change (Nye et al., 2011). For example, currently one in six properties in England and Wales are threatened by coastal or fluvial flooding. In total, this constitutes almost 5.2 million properties and the number is expected to increase (Leinster, 2009). In Russia, flooding constitutes 50% of the total number of natural disasters occurring throughout the year, where nearly 300 cities and 7 million hectares of farmland experience annual floods (Росгидромет, 2005).

Although recent vulnerability research highlights the importance of analyzing the social aspects of disasters (Tapsell, 2009; Walker & Burningham, 2011), relatively little is yet known about the responses and impacts within local communities subject to permanent risk of flooding. Additionally, such research is overwhelmingly devoted to the Third World and developing countries, as they are believed to be more sensitive to environmental risks due to the lack of financial resources, efficient governance, infrastructure, information, and other reasons (Millner & Dietz, 2011). Although Russia is officially considered a developing country, it is rarely chosen as focus of disaster mitigation studies. Meanwhile, Russian communities, especially those located in rural areas, are annually exposed to a great number of natural hazards, including floods, and very little is known about their potential and strategies of coping with permanent natural threats.

The topic of collective action is widely addressed in relation to this domain of scientific inquiry, yet the articulation of the concept itself is rather controversial. In this field of investigation, classical economic interpretations of collective actions are complemented by more sociological categories such as social capital (Nakagawa & Shaw, 2004), sense of community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986), local participation (Godschalk et al., 2003) and others. However, in the majority of cases, the field is preoccupied by the discussion of collective action, regarded as already established and organized, usually in a form of group work, exposed to a number of contextual variables. Thus, the research is very often built on the examination of various social dilemmas (such as the "free rider" problem, the problem of zero contribution, the impact of the size and internal heterogeneity of the group) considered as detrimental to collective action. There is much less discussion of the issues that may prevent the

emergence of collective action and hinder its potential to develop into a formalized, organized and recognized group action. The present investigation seeks to demonstrate that, in fact, collective action may strongly vary in its form and degree of organization, yet remaining a purposive action aimed at the production of a common good.

In the present research, the working term of "collective action" is used, which is understood as an action that provides a collective good (Olson, 2009) and that occurs when more than one individual is required to contribute to an effort in order to achieve an outcome (Ostrom, 1990). In the empirical research, this concept is applied for the analysis of local collective responses to flood risks in Russia and the UK.

Thus, my major research question is formulated as follows: What are the forms, aims and mechanisms of collective action performed in Russian and British rural communities during and after a flood?

In order to address the question, the following tasks have been fulfilled:

1. to reveal the conditions that influence the initiation of collective action in floods in British and Russian communities under study;

2. to examine how collective action is manifested in communities under study;

3. to identify the internal properties (inherent to the communities) and situational factors which influence the performance and development of collective action;

4. to determine the objectives pursued by local communities by means of collective action;

5. to analyze the factors that cause differences in collective action forms and manifestations in Russia and the UK.

Comparative perspective

Apparently, Russian and British cases have substantial differences ranging from the traditions of civic participation and approaches to flood-risk management to the interpretation of the role of local communities in flood mitigation and the possibilities of their interaction with authorities. At the same time, the two cases have significant similarities. Their resemblance originates from the common threat that local communities, especially those in rural areas, are subject to: flooding is one of the most frequent and financially detrimental disasters both in Russia and the UK. Additionally, the so called 'devolution of responsibilities' to the communities can be observed in both countries, though it has country-specific origins and leads to different outcomes. With respect to the British case, devolution of responsibilities constitutes a significant

component of the new approach to Flood Risk Management which replaced a more defensive approach in the beginning of 2000s. The new approach claims the need to involve local communities as permanent stakeholders in the processes of flood management and mitigation and also to transfer some responsibilities for local preparedness and resilience building to the community level. With respect to the Russian case, 'devolution of responsibilities' is reflected in a figurative sense. The fact that the strong governmental paternalism remains the core element of the Russian approach to Flood Risk Management is unlikely to be challenged. Being unrecognized as competent actors and partners in flood mitigation, communities, thus, are lacking the knowledge and culture of self-protection. Devolution of responsibilities, here, comes from the fact that communities are not supported in terms of building the expertise in self-protection measures - meaning that they are forced to wait inactively for the external help from emergency responders. However, it is often the case that any official response can be delayed or not provided at all, due to some circumstances, thus obliging unprepared communities to cope with the threat on their own.

Case description

The research investigates British and Russian rural communities exposed to the risk of flooding. Rural areas were chosen for the following reasons: first, even though economic impacts of flood at the community level are scarcely examined, it is rather apparent that rural areas and small communities experience substantial economic pressures when their limited or even deficient resources and facilities (e.g. housing, gardens or infrastructure) are damaged. Second, rural areas are very rarely protected by means of hard-engineering, thus, in order to minimize risks and anticipated consequences of flood, the residents have to search for alternative ways and forms of coping with this threat. Third, rural areas and small communities, especially those located in the immediate vicinity of large towns and cities subject to the flood risk, are rarely endowed with substantial financial support for resilience building and insurance coverage, as the main funds go to the protection of large urban areas.

Thesis structure

Independent of the foundations of assistance, providing aid is not an easy This paper consists of a theoretical chapter, the outline of research design and methodology, description and analysis of empirical findings accompanied by a comparative section, a conclusion containing some ideas for further research, and several appendices. The first chapter represents the theoretical framework my research is built on. The framework is organized around two central concepts: collective action and local knowledge. The analysis of the collective action concept begins with the review of the classical approach by M. Olson, which represents a strictly-utilitarian cost-benefit model of collective action. Despite the fact that this approach is then criticized for its incomprehensive

explanatory power, it is still suggested for collective action theorization, as it provides a micro-perspective for collective action analysis. In comparison to this interpretation of the concept, other approaches are considered such as resource mobilization theory (McCarthy & Zald, 1977) or political process theory (McAdam et al., 2003; Gamson, 1975) , which interpret collective action using such meso- or even macro-categories as "mass", "crowd", "trend" or "social movement" and which therefore do not provide any clear understanding of the factors that influence individual decisions participating in collective action, the extent of personal engagement and level of contribution. Further in the chapter, the economic model of collective action is supplemented with the ideas of the scholars who provide a more sociological perspective on collective action, by considering different social factors (such as social pressure, emotional and social bonding) that affect the initiation and development of collective action (e.g. Granovetter, Oliver). Additionally, this theoretical overview is supplemented by the theories of group dynamics that elucidate on the different forms and degrees of organization that collective action may take and trajectories of its development. The theoretical framework described above is also complemented by the analysis of the concept of local knowledge. This analysis begins with the consideration of the classical anthropological perspective that stresses the opposition between the local and the expert knowledge, and operationalizes local knowledge as practical, collective and strongly rooted in place (Geertz, 1983). However, this approach is then challenged for the substitution of the term "local" by "indigenous" and scarce attention to the interplay of local and scientific knowledge. The concept of "community of practice" (Wenger, 2011) is then regarded as a supportive argument for the claim that local knowledge is not necessarily produced by non-western communities, but it can be a product of any spatially concentrated community organized around, and sharing, the same practices and experiences. The operationalization of the term is thus derived not from the anthropological perspective, but rather from the studies of organizations and working practices.

The theoretical chapter is followed by the outline of the research design. The reasoning lying behind the choice of methodology is provided here and the procedures of sampling, data collecting, recording, transcription, coding and analysis are subsequently described. Additionally, the problems of gaining access to the field are discussed.

The second chapter presents the results of the empirical research and provides the comparative analysis of the findings. The empirical chapter is built around the examination of collective action as a collective response to flooding performed in British and Russian rural communities at risk. The analysis covers the main elements of the research question: the forms, aims and mechanisms of collective action – and discusses the conditions and factors that may influence the investigated properties of collective action. Particular attention is also paid to the examination of the elements of local knowledge and strategies for its implementation as an instrument of individual or community protection and resilience against floods. The empirical findings for both cases are then compared and some explanations of the discovered similarities and differences are proposed.

The paper concludes with the final chapter where the empirical findings are summarized and connected to the theoretical concepts discussed in the first chapter. This section also includes discussion on limitations of this research and provides ideas for further investigation.

The paper also includes several appendixes: the table describing my informants, guides of in-depth interviews designed for two cases under study and two examples of interview transcripts.

Chapter 1. Theorizing collective action: Organization, development and the role of local knowledge

This chapter describes the theoretical framework used in my research. The chapter begins with discussion of the classical economic model of collective action. In the section, the main elements of collective action are outlined along with the factors that may influence its emergence and development. The approach is then criticized on the grounds that it reduces the reasons for engagement in collective action to purely economic calculi of its agents. This argument is supplemented by broader sociological interpretations of the concept of collective action. Collective action theory is then complemented by group dynamics theory which elaborates on the main attributes of groups and demonstrates that collective action, although always performed by groups, can vary substantially in the level of organization. The last section of the framework that I offer is devoted to the discussion of the concept of local knowledge. This concept was not initially considered as relevant for my research purposes but it claimed its importance during the empirical investigation. The theorization on local knowledge starts with the analysis of the classical anthropological approach to the definition of local knowledge. The dichotomy of local and expert (formal) knowledge is then questioned, and a new perspective for interpreting local knowledge is offered.

1.1. The basics of collective action

1.1.1. Definition of the term

Recent work on collective action generally begins with M. Olson's "The logic of collective action" (Olson, 2009). His influential contribution to the discussion on collective action is built around the premise that the initiation of collective action in the pursuit of a collective good is significantly difficult (Olson, 2009). "Common good" here is characterized as one that "has to be provided to all group members if it is provided at least to one" (Olson, 2009, p. 34), or, as Stieglitz (Stieglitz, 1999) puts it more clearly, one that possess two critical properties: "non-rivalrous consumption – the consumption of one individual does not detract from that of another, and non-excludability which means that it is difficult if not impossible to exclude an individual from enjoying the good". In his theorizing, Olson focuses mostly on organized collective action, thus equalizing collective action with that of the groups and stronger formalized organizations, claiming that almost "all types of actions performed by or on behalf of groups are taken through organizations" (Olson, 2009, p.5). Even though this point of view appears rather controversial, and will be contested further in the chapter, I propose firstly to take Olson's standpoint in order to understand the basic concepts of collective action theory.

Due to the fact that organizations vary substantially in their types, shapes and sizes it, is difficult, if not impossible, to find a universal purpose of organization formation. However, Olson builds his reasoning on distinguishing one characteristic which is common for most organizations: their very function to strive for (or promote) the interests of their members. Different types of organizations or associations are supposed to work not for the individual, but for the common interests of group members. This can be explained by the fact that individual interests can be met sufficiently by using individual resources and individual unorganized actions, which means that collective action is not required. On the contrary, common interests which are shared by a number of group members can hardly be comprehensively satisfied by individual efforts and thus require organized collective work. The common purpose or interest of the group is a common good – one requiring that "nobody can be excluded from the benefit or satisfaction brought about by its satisfaction" (Olson, 2009, p.15). Thus, to paraphrase Aristotle, "general advantages" distributed among all group members serve as the basis for the emergence and maintenance of the group's organization.

1.1.2. Group size

The issue of the striving for a common good within a group provides the core of Olson's discussion of collective action. One of his central statements is that "unless the number of individuals in a group is quite small, or unless there is coercion or some other special device to make individuals act in their common interest, rational, self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common or group interests" (Olson, 2009, p.2). From this statement, we can derive two important points regarding collective action. The first point is based on the idea that the size of the group has a dramatic effect on its performance, namely on the level of contribution made by the group members to the achievement of the common good and hence the amounts of common good that will be provided by the group. The second point refers to the assumption that the individuals' willingness to engage in collective action is affected, if not driven, by certain incentives, either economic or social, which will be discussed further.

Speaking about group size, Olson distinguishes between three types of groups: small groups in which some group members can be apparently more interested in common good achievement and are capable of obtaining it by their own means; middle-sized groups in which no group member is capable of providing a sufficient proportion of the common good, yet some of the members have greater potential and resources to influence the outcome; and large groups where each member's actions have no sufficient and even noticeable outcome for the provision of the common good (Olson, 2009). Thus, Olson argues that there is a direct correlation between the number of group members and the capacities of the group to gain some common good without any external stimulus. In this stance, Olson's main conclusion is that "large groups will fail; small groups may succeed" (Olson, 2009, p.38). Following this reasoning, it can be assumed that three factors hinder large groups' potential to be as productive

as smaller ones. First, the larger the group, the smaller the proportion of common good each group member will receive (Olson, 2009), which, in turn, lessens the individuals' benefit from contributing to collective action. Second, due to the fact that the proportion of common good received is rather small, the costs of achieving good are not compensated. Large groups where individual contributions make almost no difference for the outcomes of the group work make their members contribute less, as people understand that they will get a certain proportion of common good regardless of their personal efforts. Third, a large number of members in a group requires a certain degree of organization, which apparently means that the bigger the group is, the higher the costs for its maintenance become. On the contrary, small groups where individual actions may be sufficient for common good achievement (or are, at least, noticeable to any other individual in the group) are able to act without any formal organization and stimulus. Additionally, as the theory argues, the fact that the proportion of the common good that each member of the smaller group receives is much bigger than in large groups, makes voluntary participation in collective action possible. Summarizing these arguments, Olson concludes that the size of the group is directly connected with its capacity to fulfill the main function – to promote the interests of its members – claiming that small groups demonstrate greater effectiveness than larger ones.

Even though Olson's postulates seem rather plausible at the level of theorization, they can hardly find confirmation in empirical research. For instance, Hardin characterizes Olson's "group size" statement as "the most controversial issue in the contemporary literature on collective action" (Hardin, 1982, p.4). Apparently, Olson was not the only one who saw the size of the group as the powerful predictor of the form and efficiency of collective action; however, his assumptions about the inability of large groups to act voluntarily without any external inducements have been widely criticized. For example, Marwell has acquired empirical findings demonstrating that large associations are more likely to initiate collective action, since big groups have more resources and more manpower to contribute to collective good production (P. E. Oliver & Marwell, 1988). Moreover, Marwell and Oliver suppose that the number of group members is not a decisive factor in the emergence of collective action. Instead, the scholars emphasize that economic and social resources (e.g. education and social capital) and interests play the major role in collective action initiation (Oliver et al., 1985).

1.1.3. Reasons for affiliation with collective action

Speaking about the probability of collective action in different kinds of groups, Olson does not reduce his explanatory model exclusively to the number of group members. For him, the initiation and maintenance of collective action is also highly dependent on the incentives and inducements that drive people's decisions to affiliate with the group. Even though Olson's theory of collective action is dominated by the economic perspective, he acknowledges that pure economic incentives are not the only ones that drive people's willingness to act

collectively. It appears that sometimes people do not have economic reasons for contributing to the achievement of common good, but are de facto engaged in collective action. This can be explained by the fact that, along with economic incentives, individual decisions are affected by social ones embodied in the form of social sanctions (e.g. exclusion from the social group, pressure from peers, mockery, etc.) and social rewards (e.g. prestige, friendship, recognition) which positively influence the social status of individuals. Both economic and social incentives are selective ones, meaning that they are aimed at distinguishing between those ready to contribute to the group goal and those who are not. However, as Olson and later other scholars (Oliver, 1980) put it, the effectiveness of incentives depends on the size of the group in which they are implemented. Thus, if economic incentives are rather universal, social incentives only have regulatory power in small groups built upon face-to-face interaction, where the actions of each member affect the outcome of the group's work.

The question of what reasons drive people to engage in collective action is probably the one most subjected to criticism in the classical collective action model. Being an economist, Olson proposes a strictly-utilitarian cost-benefit model of collective action which, in turn, does not possess a comprehensive explanatory power in relation to different types of collective action. Trying to overcome Olson's simplified understanding of collective action, scholars suggest various typologies of motives (e.g. the "instrumental-expressive" dichotomy (Gordon & Babchuk, 1959); "material-purposive-solidary" incentive typology (Clark & Wilson, 1961); or solidarity and moral principles (Fireman & Gamson, 1979) that trigger people's decision to affiliate with different kinds of collective action. However, as Knoke puts it, these typologies generally supplement the strictly utilitarian approach by recognizing the variety of the members' preferences for, and responses to, a diversity of incentives offered by collective action organizations (Knoke, 1988). As he argues, "adherence to equity norms, standards of fairness, altruism, and emotional ties to persons and groups may all play some part in individual decisions to become involved in a collective action association. Reducing such complexity to simple utilitarian calculi of net benefits minus costs distorts reality and ignores organizations' capacities to tailor their inducements to fit the diversity of members' interests" (Knoke, 1988, p.7). In an attempt to create a comprehensive model applicable for different types of associations, some scholars propose a combination of motives which influence the individuals' decisions to associate with others (Knoke & Wright-Isak, 1982). This model - embracing such factors as rational choice (aimed at maximizing profits), affective bonding (embodied in emotional attachment to other group members) and normative conformity (expressed in loyalty to the norms of behavior embedded in social values) is assumed to describe a wide spectrum of decisions about individuals' involvement in collective action such as whether to join it or not, how much to contribute, how actively to participate, etc. (Knoke, 1988). Another important argument that can be integrated in this discussion is the primacy of some incentives over the others. For instance, Olson assumes that all types of inducements, be they economic or social, are of equal concern for individuals who have to make their

decisions on whether to join the action or not. However, in fact, people's willingness to either receive or avoid certain inducements may depend on their individual interests: e.g. the benefits that they would especially like to obtain due to the involvement. These interests may also be highly influential when a person decides on the type of action he/she would like to join.

1.1.4. Heterogeneity within the group

The second most important feature of the group next to its size is probably heterogeneity. In his work, Olson briefly mentions that "heterogeneity is favorable for the collective action" (Olson, 2009, p.64). Heterogeneity is understood here not in terms of age, gender, religious affiliation, but rather in economic terms such as interest in public good, resources available to invest in its production and the costs of these contributions. Thus, even though all group members are interested in the particular common good which the group seeks to achieve, it is known that within most groups the level of interest varies among group members, which means that there are individuals who desire and, in some cases, are in need of, the common good more than the others. For instance, those residents who have their properties along the watercourse are more interested in defenses against the flood than those who live on the hill and thus are more willing to contribute to the collective goal achievement. Speaking Olson's words, we can often observe the "exploitation of the great by the small" (Olson, 2009, p.35), by which he means the difference in the level of participation among the group members in collective action in accordance with their interest in a common good. Olson argues that members with the highest interest in the common good will be the most likely to contribute to group work and provide the good themselves regardless of the level of other members' contribution (Olson, 2009). The exploitation of the "great" by the "small" is largely conditioned by the main property of a common good – its general accessibility: no people, even those who have not participated in the collective action, can be excluded from its usage once it is obtained. Hardin supplements these ideas by considering the factors that can influence the differing levels of interest in common good achievement. According to him, the interest in a common good is dependent on the characteristics of the good: namely on whether it is essential (fungible) or non-essential (not fungible) for the individual (Hardin, 1982). Moreover, Hardin reveals a rather straightforward correlation between the contribution to collective action and the presence of personal alternatives for problem resolution, where the lack of alternatives provides a trigger for engagement in collective action.

Additionally, group members may differ substantially in the amount of resources they possess to contribute to the group work. Apparently, both of these manifestations of heterogeneity affect the level of collective action and, hence, the general outcome of the work. As a rule, this factor receives less attention from scholars - which can be explained, to some extent, by the fact that collective action theory is dominated by the economic point of view. Here it

reflects the economists' general assumption "that money is always available at a high enough interest rate and that time, expertise, energy, and even political influence may be bought from others with that money" (Oliver et al.,1985, p. 529). For instance, Marvell argues that heterogeneity of interests within the group favors collective action, while the heterogeneity of resources either influences collective action positively or has no effect at all (Marwell et al., 1988). However, in reality, especially in non-profit organizations, the lack of resources and various institutional constraints (e.g. complex pathways for getting financial support from the authorities) may hinder the process of acquiring the necessary resources and thus limit collective action performance dramatically. Importantly, not only the lack of financial resources limits the participation in, and the outcomes of, collective action but also the personal resources available such as skills, time, health and others which can be hardly borrowed from any institution. As becomes clear from the main points of criticism addressed to the postulates of Olson's theory, a pure economic interpretation of collective action becomes more and more contested by the theorists who are trying to enrich it with numerous social properties which individuals possess in real life.

It should be also mentioned that, while speaking about social incentives, Olson introduces the notion of individuals' payoffs as being affected by the actions of other individuals, which suggests that individual decisions are not isolated from the behavior of other people. While trying to investigate collective action, many scholars, including Olson, start with the purely economic assumption that each individual makes an isolated decision on whether to contribute to the collective work or not, and to what extent. An individual is supposed to have all the necessary information at hand and be fully aware of other members' aspirations and actions. However, from the sociological point of view, individual decisions to join or not to join, and whether to contribute or not, are interdependent. An attempt to demonstrate this interdependence was taken by M. Granovetter who develops the so-called "threshold models" of collective behavior. Threshold models question the classical approaches to collective action analysis, including those based on game theory. These models focus on two elements of collective behavior which confound earlier approaches: the substantial heterogeneity of individual preferences and the interdependence of individuals' decisions. Despite the fact that Granovetter assumes individuals to be rational and seeking to maximize their profits, he also takes into account the differences between people and, correspondingly, the differences in their preferences and subjective assessments of the situation. These different preferences (mismatching expectations of benefits, diverse needs, etc.) constitute a personal threshold for the individuals to engage in collective action or to quit. As Granovetter puts it, "a person's threshold to join is defined here as the proportion of the group he would have to see join before he would do so" (Granovetter, 1978, p. 1422). In other words, the threshold is the point where the perceived benefits of doing a certain thing exceed the anticipated costs. It is important to mention that such personal thresholds are largely conditioned by individual properties such as age, gender, educational background as well as external social influence and social pressure.

1.1.5. General critique

As becomes clear from the above discussion, collective action theory is strongly dominated by the standpoints of economic theorists who assume individuals to be rational, selfish and isolated from the actions of the others. However, even though people are often rational, and pragmatic aspects are indeed inherent to collective action, we cannot neglect the variety of social aspects, ranging from social pressure and the power of social norms to emotional and social bonding, that influence the emergence and development of collective action.

Moreover, the classical collective action theory relies on the premise that collective action equates with the action of a well-organized and often institutionalized group. However, such an approach has significant limitations. As we can observe, and as will be shown in the empirical part of my paper, it is very often the case that collective action does not possess all the properties that are inherent for the group sui generis. For instance, a sporadic collective action, which arises spontaneously as a respond to certain circumstances and aims at solving a momentary task, is apparently lacking clear structure and organization. An action so instantaneous in emergence and completion does not allow the group to establish the rules for distribution of roles, assignment of responsibilities or coordination of resources and interests among the people involved in the collective action, so it can hardly bear the name of an organized group action. The next section seeks to explain what types of groups are the producers of such a form of collective action, and what are the properties of these kinds of groups that make collective action possible.

1.2. Group dynamics: The main properties of the group and its organization

In order to substantiate the argument that not all collective actions are performed by well-organized and recognized groups, we propose to elicit the main properties of groups, which allow us to distinguish groups from mere constellations of independent individuals.

1.2.1. Definition of the term

Despite the fact that the term "group" is rather controversial (see, e.g. the debate between sociologists and social psychologists on the potential of the concept of "group" to be the subject of scientific inquiry (Allport, 1962), it has firmly claimed importance for the analysis of social processes and social structure. The term "group" is widely used in classical sociological theory serving for the explanation of social life. The very essentials of society imply that individuals within this society are, to a certain extent, linked to each other, which gives them possibility to live, develop and intersubjectively construct their shared lifeworld. The connections bringing individual members together transform atomic constellations of individuals into groups. The presence of

social relations between two or more individuals serves as the main characteristic of the group (Forsyth & McGovern, 1983) which helps to distinguish the group from other configurations or categories of people. Despite the great number of groups and their diversity (compare, e.g., a family and a queue in a bank), all of them have one core element in common: namely, the networks produced and altered through interaction between people. Hence, different types of interactions as well as the density and durability of networks determine the shapes that groups can take.

In order to operationalize the concept of group, different scholars have emphasized various properties of groups. For example, Cartwright and Zander put interaction and interdependence between members at the forefront of their analysis, and come up with the definition of a group as "a collection of individuals who have relations to one another that make them interdependent to some significant degree" (Cartwright & Zander, 1953, p.13). Structure, as the main feature of the group, is considered by Sherif who treats groups as "social units which consist of a number of individuals who stand in (more or less) definite status and role relationships to one another and which possess a set of values or norms of its own regulating the behavior of individual members, at least in matters of consequence to the group" (Sherif & Sherif, 1956, p.144). The role of interdependence and task-oriented interaction within the group is highlighted in Keyton's definition in which a group is regarded as "three or more people who work together interdependently on an agreed-upon activity or goal" (Keyton, 2002, p.5).

When considering the definitions mentioned above, one particular feature of the group requires specific attention, namely its size. Groups can range in size from very small units like families to those comprising thousands of members, for instance the working team of an international enterprise. Size can serve as the basic characteristic of the group - influencing its structure, the type of social ties dominating within the group, its life circle, dynamics and ability to develop. For instance, dyads are considered to be the only groups which disband when one member leaves (Levine & Moreland, 1998). The size of the group, the density of networks within this group and its dynamics are widely reflected in numerous classifications of groups. Probably, the most well-known of such classifications is proposed by Cooley (Cooley, 1955), who distinguishes between primary and secondary groups. The main distinctions between these two types lie in group size (primary groups are usually smaller than the secondary ones), lifespan (primary groups are more stable and long-living as compared to the secondary ones), types of interaction (personal face-to face interaction is characteristic for primary groups as opposed to mediated communication in the secondary ones) and organizational structure (informal and formal, respectively). Other grounds for group categorization are proposed by Cartwright and Zander (Cartwright & Zander, 1953) who claim that groups vary depending on the character of their emergence and, correspondingly, propose a dichotomy of planned (deliberately established) vs. emergent (sporadic and spontaneous in their origin) groups.

1.2.2. Reasons for group formation and affiliation with the group

Different logics of group emergence bring me to reflect on the reasons lying behind their formation and the purposes pursued by people seeking affiliation with some group. To summarize, the main elements of a group are: members (their participation and knowledge), communication (interaction between members) and tasks, it appears that groups are operating on the principle of systems which, following the system theory, have their inputs (in our case – members), processes (communication) and outputs (goal achievement) (Ilgen et al., 2005). Considering groups as systems, we can observe that some groups are created for a specific purpose, according to certain procedures and fixed rules, while others can, on the contrary, be self-creating and self-organizing systems which develop spontaneously as a result of the synchronized and coordinated actions of individuals. Moreover, groups as complex systems are also involved in broader networks along with other groups. Being interconnected and embedded in wider environments, groups are influenced by both internal and external factors. In particular, groups are formed due to personal (individual motives), interpersonal (factors internal for the group) and situational (external factors) circumstances. These triggers are clearly reflected in the fourfold taxonomy of groups proposed by McGrath, Arrow and Berdahl (Arrow et al., 2000) which is more complicated and nuanced than the distinction between emergent and planned groups. McGrath, Arrow and Berdahl propose an approach that reflects the (partial) intersections of the planned-emergent nature and the internal-external triggers of group formation (Arrow et al., 2000). Their classification includes the following types of groups: (1) concocted groups - which are deliberately created by forces external to the group (and thus characterized by the overlap of planned and external features); (2) founded groups - which are planned and settled by the future members of the group who share some ideas whose realization requires collective action (this type reflects the link between the planned and internal features of the group); (3) circumstantial groups - which are spontaneous groups emerging under the pressure of situational factors thus being formed on the intersection of emergent and external triggers; and (4) self-organized groups - that are formed by implicitly established internal interdependencies between group members and are forced exclusively by external circumstances (Arrow et al., 2000).

As becomes clear from this taxonomy, group emergence is highly affected both by external and internal factors. However, the question of the reasons for group formation and people's affiliation with groups still remains unanswered. To answer the question why people tend to form and join different groups implies an explanation of people's motivation to communicate with each other. Despite the fact that the category of motivations falls predominantly under the scientific domain of psychology, social, as opposed to biological, motivation constitutes a particular subject of sociological interest. Indeed, such motives as the need for affiliation, the need for achievement and the need for power as distinguished by McClelland (McClelland,1985) often constitute the basis for the explanation of people's willingness to establish or join a group. To consider them sequentially, meeting the need for affiliation represents classical "relationship interaction"

(Bales, 1950) in which the group serves as an instrument to meet the demand for close interpersonal relations, mutual help and understanding and the creation of a high degree of trust and cooperation. The need for achievement refers to the so-called "task interaction" (interaction focused on the group's work) (Bales, 1950) as it reflects the need to set goals, achieve them in a socially acceptable way, and to get recognition for their accomplishment. A group, thus, represents a community in which the members work on agreed goals and share responsibilities for their achievement. The last need considered in the taxonomy, the need for power, is explained through the understanding of the very essentials of power relations which imply the presence of dominance, leadership and force - making others behave in a way they would be unlikely to behave voluntarily. In this way, a group presupposes the presence of structure, and particularly, the allocation of status-oriented positions that are necessary for the realization of power relations (which makes it different from a simple constellation of individuals). Being included in a group, people seek to satisfy all these needs but, as Schutz (Schutz, 1958) puts it, they are also looking to join those with similar needs in order to "be dominated (need for power), to be liked (need for intimacy) and to be accepted in the group". Undoubtedly, the range of relevant needs and, hence, of the reasons for group affiliation is not limited to those mentioned above and can be extended by adding such reasons as the attempt to cope with external threats; the need to accomplish tasks that cannot be fulfilled individually; the desire to satisfy emotional needs, to make money; or, as a natural tendency (according to evolutionary theory). To generalize that, it can be said that the major, and most universal, purpose which brings individuals to join groups is to satisfy their personal needs, and the wider the range of personal needs becomes, the more groups an individual will tend to join simultaneously.

Along with the internal forces that drive people's intentions to act collectively, situational factors external to the group deserve particular attention for the sake of the present investigation. In my case, the forces of nature, in particular floods, represent an external factor that may serve as a trigger for group formation. Floods can be treated as situational factors not only because they are external forces of nature, but also because they constitute an external threat for those at risk. This leads me to refer to the theory proposed by L. Festinger (Festinger, 1954) who emphasizes situational factors influencing people's decision to join groups and prioritizes them over their personal predisposition to affiliation. Festinger and Scachter claim that people are more likely to join groups when finding themselves in an ambiguous or stressful situation. In this case, the reason for affiliation lies in the individuals' need to obtain more information about themselves and the physical and social reality in general, in order to decrease the level of uncertainty (Festinger, 1950). Here, information is understood not merely as access to certain data, but rather as a source of social comparison. The idea is rather straightforward: people build their perception of reality, and practice corresponding actions, taking into account the perceptions and actions of other people. As Rofe states, "humans are group-seeking animals, but their gregariousness becomes particularly robust under conditions of stress" (Rofe, 1984, p. 237).

Or, as Schachter puts it, being part of a stressful, potentially dangerous or inconvenient situation, people tend to look for others with the same experience (Schachter, 1959). By joining a group, people search not only for information but also for social support. As research shows (Cartwright & Zander, 1953), those who have just lost their jobs often try to cope with ambiguity and stress by joining former coworkers; people who witnessed the terrorist attack of September 11th tend to become involved in various discussion groups and so forth. Social support may be expressed in various forms: emotional support (manifested in caring for one another), informational support (advice), instrumental support (resources); belonging (inclusion in the group) and others (Forsyth & McGovern, 1983). While standing in the face of a common potential danger, individuals feel ready to cooperate in order to tackle the threat, realizing that the group has a greater potential to perform an effective protective action.

1.2.3. Group as a dynamic system

Referring back to the idea of groups as complex systems, two major characteristics of groups become apparent: they are dynamic, meaning that they may develop over time, and they have structure (the system of roles, norms and networks of relations between its members) that maintains group operation and development.

The dynamic nature of groups implies that every group has a life cycle, composed of several stages that the group passes in its development. One of the most widely known theories of group development was proposed by Tuckman. The theory claims that each group passes through five stages: "forming" (the first step of group formation characterized by high level of ambiguity and uncoordinated actions, as group members become acquainted to each other), "storming" (characterized disagreement of group members over tasks, norms, procedures and roles' distribution); "norming" (formation of group members' allegiance and group cohesion); "performing" (high task-orientation and productive performance); and adjourning (marks the accomplishment of the goals and the following group disband) (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). This approach demonstrates the dynamic nature of groups clearly; however, it can hardly find empirical evidence and may serve only as a set of ideal types. Thus, several researchers claim that groups do not implicitly follow the given algorithm. Some groups, for instance, never reach a penultimate stage (Zurcher, 1969), demonstrating low productivity and poor intergroup coherence, while others do not necessarily finish with a decay, transforming into a new group instead. McMorris, Gottlieb and Sneden state that some groups tend to avoid several stages; others follow the sequence in their unique order, while the development of a third type contradicts the sequence of five stages completely (McMorris et al., 2005). Another significant observation and remark was introduced in the cyclical models of group development. The main idea of the concept postulates that group development is driven by particular issues that prevail at a certain stage.

The crucial point is that the issues may be recurrent, meaning that a group can return to a particular stage several times (Mcgrew et al., 1999), thus breaking the logic of direct sequence proposed by Tuckman.

1.2.4. Organizational structure

Group dynamics, namely the development of the group and the success of its general performance, strongly depends on its structure. The 'group structure' refers to the networks of relations and interdependencies between group members, which are organized in accordance with established norms, defined roles and distributed responsibilities among the group members. In this way, three key components of group structure can be outlined: norms, roles and relations.

To simplify, norms can be interpreted as shared standards and rules that regulate individual's behavior in particular, and group action in general, by dictating what is appropriate and what is not. In this way, norms may prescribe (proposing an appropriate way to treat a situation), proscribe (by saying what is allowed and what is forbidden), describe (giving a guidance), or order (showing ways in which people ought to perform) (Forsyth & McGovern, 1983). Norms can be general, implicitly accepted by all members of society; alternatively they can be explicit and specific for a certain group, serving as rules and guidance for group performance. Norms are followed by members of the group, who are endowed with the status of member, performing one or several roles within the group (Sherif, 1966). Like norms, roles shape, but do not structure, individual behavior within the group: prescribing the actions members can take during the interaction with others. Roles bear either formal character, being deliberately created for the accomplishment of a particular task, or appear informally, by coincidence. In the most general way, roles can be distinguished in two categories: task-oriented ones, aimed at goal accomplishment, and emotional ones, focused on the maintenance of relationships within the group (Bales, 1950). Very often, especially when the level of group organization is low, or the group itself is small enough to allow personal acquaintance and face-to-face interaction between its members, two types merge together. However, as stated by Hare, being dynamic systems, groups tend to become more complex with time (Hare, 1976). An increased complexity becomes clearly reflected in the process of role differentiation, expressed in the increase in the number of roles and its specification. Thus, as a group becomes more organized, a certain set of roles tends to emerge. One of the most fundamental is the role of the leader, the person who takes charge of other members of the group and group performance in general.

Apparently, role distribution is closely related to the achievement of the group goal. Group action is very often characterized as pure task interaction, aimed at the achievement of a certain goal that requires common efforts. Goal achievement presupposes setting rules and distributing roles, which organize individual action into an agreed collective action and rule the process of decision-making. As has been previously stated, normally, groups have more

capacities than a single individual does. In this way, the act of decision-making, as any other action, may be carried out successfully if performed collectively, due to the greater informational resources, opinion and expertise sharing, and greater capacities for its implementation. At the same time, the process of group decision-making may be much longer in comparison to individual decisions, as a collective decision always requires coordination of different views and ideas. Vroom claims that the choice of a decision-making method depends on the context in general, and especially on the significance of the decision to be made.

The scholar argues that, if a problem is not very important and can be solved quickly, individual decision-making would be more beneficial than collective procedures. However, when a high-quality solution is needed, and the importance of anticipated consequences of a decision is high, collective decision-making can be more effective. At the same time, several researchers argue that groups often fail in the accomplishment of really large and important decisions (Janis & Mann, 1977). This can be explained by the fact that groups tend to perform so-called 'avoidance tactics', which hinder decision-making and negatively influence the result of collective work. These tactics may include procrastination (when group members postpone the decision, or grant a discussion over an issue as a decision itself), bolstering (when decisions are made superficially), or simplifying (when the group narrows down the issue and deals with its minor parts instead of crucial ones) (Lindblom, 1965).

Summing up, the aim of this paragraph was to elaborate the collective definition of the group concept, to understand its main properties, analyze the purposes for group formation and affiliation, and the factors that influence group formation and development. It can be concluded that, for the sake of the present investigation, "group" can be regarded as a two or more people, relating to each other, standing in role relationship, working together on an agreed goal, under the pressure of external and internal factors. Being an organized entity, a group has the potential to accumulate and coordinate various types of resources that its members possess. One of the aims of the present investigation is to examine the role, and ways of implementation, of local knowledge, which serves as a resource for collective action. For this sake, the next paragraph provides an overview of theory relating to local knowledge, and gives an idea of the basic elements and characteristics of local knowledge.

1.3. Local knowledge

In the present section, the concept of local knowledge is discussed. First, a traditional anthropological approach to local knowledge is considered to get an idea of the main characteristics and properties of local knowledge, which make it different from expert (formal) knowledge. After that, the strict dichotomy of local and expert knowledge is questioned and criticized, and the new approaches to local knowledge theorization are examined.

1.3.1. Classical approach to local knowledge definition

Initially, the concept of local knowledge was not considered as the object of my study. The importance of the concept in relation to this research was unfolded during fieldwork. Therefore, the concept was subsequently incorporated into the theoretical framework of this paper for closer examination.

Starting a discussion on the concept of local knowledge, it is reasonable to decide upon what paradigm to stick to for further analysis. Traditionally, local knowledge is regarded in a somewhat dichotomous division of two concepts of knowledge, namely 'local' vs. 'scientific' knowledge (Barnes, 2013). Such an opposition takes different names in different interpretations of scholars, depending on the central elements they find inherent to the two types of knowledge. For example, some authors stress spatial characteristics of knowledge dividing it into the categories of 'Western' and 'indigenous', while a certain group of scientists emphasize the ways knowledge is communicated and derived, distinguishing between 'formal' and 'informal' types of knowledge. Moreover, a great variety of scholars have tried to emphasize the opposition of local and scientific knowledge, introducing such binary concepts as "tacit knowledge" and "scientific knowledge" (Polanyi, 1997), "folk knowledge" and "universal knowledge" (Hunn, 1982) and others (Nygren, 1999). Having its origin in anthropological tradition, the concept of local knowledge is very often interpreted as practical, collective and strongly rooted in a particular place (Geertz, 1983). Scholars like Geertz or Van der Ploeg suggest that local knowledge should be interpreted as being produced by indigenous people, emphasizing its contextuality (the fact that knowledge is inherent and legitimate only for those territories and time spans where and when it was produced), and experiential basis - meaning that this type of knowledge is built on the experience of people with certain situations, usually repeated ones. Additionally, more recent anthropological inquiries (e.g. Roncoli and Ingram) (Ingram et al., 2002) accentuate such properties of local knowledge as selectivity – preoccupation with certain particular issues (e.g. rain forecasting, curing practices) and collectivity, representing the process of knowledge production as the result of people's interaction and collective work.

1.3.2. Critique of anthropological approach to local knowledge interpretation

Even though anthropological theorizing of the local knowledge concept has influenced this field of inquiry substantially, it makes considerable omissions, which diminish its explanatory power.

Firstly, one can notice that anthropological literature on local knowledge is predominantly preoccupied with theoretical arguments and empirical studies of the indigenous peoples of Third World Countries. Putting an emphasis on local embeddedness and uniqueness of the local knowledge, scholars literally

substitute the term 'local' by 'indigenous'. In fact, it would be reasonable to argue that local knowledge is not necessarily the result of certain specific practices and rituals radically different from those of Western societies, but can be a product of each spatially concentrated community organized along and sharing the same practices and experiences. The argument in favor of this statement can be found in the concept of "community of practice". The concept reflects the kind of knowledge, which appears from the sustainable interaction of people who have a common interest in some particular object. The interest is not of theoretical (e.g. interest in French movies), but of practical origin, as it is developed from the shared practice and experience with certain issues (e.g. the one of engineers working for a factory, lecturers in a university, etc.) (Wenger, 2011). The knowledge that a community of practice accumulates is derived from the frequent (but not necessarily permanent) interactions of practitioners, sharing their knowledge and expertise and acquiring insights, tactics and resources for the future work with an object of interest (e.g. tips on automobile assembly; principles and advice on working with a large audience of students). As it becomes clear, the type of knowledge produced by communities of practice has very much in common with the classical interpretation of local knowledge (Wenger et al., 2002). The resemblance between two types of knowledge is drawn from the fact that, just like local knowledge, the knowledge of community practitioners is highly contextual, as it is developed from certain situations and is legitimate for them; it is practice-driven and experience-based as it is developed from dealing with the recurrent and systematic tasks; it can be (but sometimes is not) of tacit nature, meaning that the production of knowledge is not formal, intentional and very often this knowledge is not acknowledged as real ; finally, it is collectively produced in the networks of durable communication of those sharing the same interest in the particular object and having experience of dealing with it.

Secondly, local knowledge is very often considered as autonomous from any other kind of knowledge. This point is widely criticized and generates a surge of research on the intersection and collaboration of local and scientific (expert) knowledge, especially in political studies and theories of organization. The body of literature concerning these issues can be divided into two branches. The first branch is aimed at the discussion of the interplay of local and scientific knowledge, regarding the attitudes of its producers towards the interaction between the two, the mechanisms of interaction, and the contexts where this interaction is produced. Thus, for instance, one of the most widely addressed topics in the classical approach to local knowledge is its isolation from scientific knowledge and rigidness when it comes to accepting the tools and the mechanisms inherent to 'formal' knowledge. In this stance, collaboration of scientific and local knowledge is considered to be traumatic for the local knowledge possessors, since the mechanisms of formal knowledge displace those of the local knowledge, hence threatening its uniqueness and identity. However, recent research claims that the supplementation of two types of knowledge is widely used in practice and represents a tool for reciprocal enrichment of the two types of knowledge.

For instance, while studying local practices of Bonam (Burkina Faso) farmers in rainfall forecasting, Roncoli and Ingram discover that instead of opposing local to scientific knowledge, farming people operate in "multiple cognitive frameworks" (Ingram et al., 2002). The scholars reach the conclusion that local people (farmers) do not resist the interference of scientific information to the local practices, and do not perceive it as a threat to the local cultural traditions and identity of community. On the contrary, local people's understanding of the limited capacities of local knowledge in terms of accurate rainfall prediction made them more open and interested in alternative sources of rainfall information. Roncoli and Ingram argue that the cognitive landscape of Bonam people is quite diverse and dynamic, as are most local knowledge systems. Thus, "farmers pragmatically mix traditional farming knowledge with extension advice, local technology with development innovations. Even in the case of local forecasting knowledge, farmers are used to combining variety of environmental observations and spiritual traditions" (Ingram et al., 2002).

1.3.3. A new approach to local knowledge implementation

The second branch relates the topic of the contest between local and expert knowledge and the legitimacy of local knowledge use in public and political decision-making. This topic is widely articulated in political and social science studies, democratic theories, international relations studies, and environmental and development studies. The main appeal here can be formulated as the need to reassess the previously dominating premise that political and social issues of various etiologies are better resolved through technical expertise than democratic discussion with those not included in scientific community. However, such an attitude towards the inclusion of local knowledge in decision-making and development has not always been accepted. For instance, in development and environmental studies, local knowledge is regarded either as a stumbling block – a retarding force for the processes of development, or, on the opposite, as a rich and infinite resource of sustainability. For the first case, where local knowledge is supposed to be an obstacle for development, scientists and developers consider local knowledge as "non-knowledge that is based on irrationality and ignorance" (Murdoch & Clark, 1994). As Blaikie puts it, this understanding of local knowledge as rigid, obsolete and inadequate had a very strong influence on the approaches of environmental management. Thus, very often the latter were built on the "top-down and state-initiated modes of operation", disregarding communities as the competent stakeholders in decision-making process (Blaikie et al., 1997). Local knowledge, hence, was not regarded as a useful source of information and insight, but as irrelevant and futile information and out-of-date practices, which required modernization and scientifically-based advancement.

However, such a top-down approach aimed at the imposition of ideas about environmental ethics, modernization of farming practices, etc. very often reveals experts' insufficient understanding and ignorance of local peculiarities of the issues in question, thus making the results of their work either abortive or

negligible. A response to this traditional approach was given in the mid 1970s through the introduction of the so-called 'neo-populist' paradigm. The new approach claimed the need to respect local knowledge and empower its bearers to participate in decision-making, at least those touching upon the state of the things in their particular community. The new vision of local knowledge became the basis for the great variety of institutions, predominantly NGOs, aiming at establishing a dialog between local people and the representatives of science and political power. Today this approach stands at the forefront of the political agendas of many nation states, for instance in the UK, where participatory decision-making is seen as an object to strive for. In this stance, in Backstrand's words, we can observe a paradigm shift from expert science to civic science, which "alludes to a changing relationship between science, expert knowledge and citizens in democratic societies" (Bäckstrand, 2003).

Chapter 2. Collective action in flood emergencies: The results of comparative empirical research

2.1.The logics of empirical data collection and analysis

The aim of this paragraph is to discuss my choice on data types as well as the methods of data collection, interpretation and analysis; to outline the challenges I faced in the implementation of this methodology; and to provide a clear overview of my research aims and outcomes.

In order to explain the reasons lying behind the choice of methodology, I shall first specify the aims of the empirical research. The first aim of mine was to define the conditions that served as a trigger for the emergence of collective action in British and Russian rural communities under study. The second aim was to reveal how collective action was manifested in the investigated communities and what level of organization was inherent to it. The third aim was to examine what the tasks and objectives pursued by collective action in response to flooding in the communities at risk were. The fourth aim was to identify the internal (inherent to the community) and external factors which either facilitated or hindered the performance and development of collective action. The last aim was to provide an explanation of the differences in forms, aims and mechanisms of collective action revealed during the investigation. Along with the tasks mentioned, an extra task was formulated during the research, namely to identify what place was held by the local knowledge of communities under question in collective response to flooding. As already mentioned above, the phenomenon of local knowledge was not initially considered as an explanatory concept or study object, but the interviewees' narratives accentuated its relevance.

According to the aims of the study, it was decided to stick to the methodology of qualitative data collection and analysis as it allows research to go beyond the classical interpretation of the main categories of "collective action", "group" and "local knowledge", and to enrich the inquiry with new perceptions, interpretations and insights.

Undoubtedly, the qualitative methodology has both multiple advantages and limitations. Along with the opportunities it provides (in-depth perspective; access to closed fields and new social phenomena; flexibility of empirical inquiry), the qualitative methodology is characterized by the lack of clear and formalized approach to data analysis. As the qualitative methodology is based on the interpretations of the observed, or reported, facts and phenomena, the data can become insufficiently opinionated and the whole investigation runs the risk of remaining purely descriptive and highly subjective. Still, I have opted for this kind of methodology as it could help me in grasping the individual perceptions of flood risks and efforts of coping with them and also help to trace the unique ways in which people from the communities under study formed groups for collective action or preferred not to do so.

The data collection was performed by means of in-depth interviewing which allowed me to collect the informants' narratives and reveal the issues the informants consider as important, as well as their perception of, and attitudes towards, the issue under study, their motivations and reasons for joining collective action and the processes and mechanisms accompanying the emergence and development of this collective action. Additionally, face-to-face interviews are one of the best ways to touch upon sensitive questions related to the traumatic experience of suffering from flooding. Nevertheless, the method also demonstrates substantial limitations. The main obstacles here lie in the fact that narratives are based on the artificial construction of plots and memory (re)production induced by the interviewer, meaning that the informants can forget, embellish or, on the contrary, underestimate certain facts and plots when narrating. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the topic of discussion is rather sensitive and normatively loaded, as it touches upon the questions of mutual aid and relations with the authorities.

2.1.1. Sampling

To provide maximal variety, the research took place in communities where collective action, incorporated in the form of response to flooding, was and was not recognized. Since one of the aims of the research was to understand what forms collective action can take during and after a flood, it appeared reasonable not to limit the scope of investigation to cases where an organized and recognized collective action was established. Additionally, as the research demonstrates, Russian rural communities at risk of flooding usually do not practice organized and acknowledged responses to flooding, yet collective action during and after the flood incident does take place. Such an approach allowed me, not only to reveal how and why organized collective action emerges, but also to understand what conditions may hinder its potential for development and to distinguish country-specific differences between the forms, aims and mechanism of collective action performed in the communities under study.

The typological sample for the investigation of Russian rural communities was composed of the residents of Volkhovsky District of Leningrad Oblast, Pasha rural settlement, where 52 villages are located. The investigated rural communities live along the Pasha River and its tributaries, and experience frequent flooding varying in its intensity from year to year. In the investigated areas, flooding demonstrates seasonal dependence - most often occurring in spring when the ice massive on the river starts cracking and melting which results in the increase in water levels.

The approach I used to select informants for deeper study was to use the maps and the notes available on the official website of the Ministry of the Russian Federation, Civil Defense, Emergencies and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters on Leningrad Oblast, Volkhovsky District, in order to define the areas permanently exposed to flooding. Due to the fact that the interviews

could not be appointed in advance, the process of sample generation was performed in the field, using the snowball technique. While contacting potential interviewees, I introduced myself, briefly described the topic of my investigation and if the person was ready to communicate, a list of filter questions, considering the duration of the potential informant's residence in the community and his/her experience of floods, was used as the initial step in the formation of the sample. If the potential informant met the requirements for the interview, the discussion was set and in the end the interviewee was asked to propose someone else whom the researcher could talk to in relation to the topic of investigation. Interestingly, very often the informants referred to the areas where, in their opinion and according to their experience, the velocity and consequences of flooding were more severe. All the interviews were conducted in face-to face interaction, though not all the interviewees invited the interviewer to enter the house: some of them would prefer to talk outdoors. Quite often, the informants were willing to demonstrate the consequences of the flood and show the area covered with water during the incident. The implemented approach was generally quite successful as almost all persons contacted were willing to discuss the issue and also to assist me in finding new interviewees. In total, ten in-depth interviews with the representatives of Russian rural communities at risk of flood were collected.

As the aim of the research was to reveal and compare different forms of collective action, the sample for the British case was composed of the members of the Community Flood Action Groups, which represent an organized and recognized form of collective response to flooding issues throughout the UK, and with the representatives of the National Flood Forum involved in the CFAGs formation and facilitation through the Pathfinder project launched by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The informants were contacted in advance through a recruiting letter. The contact details of the informants (e-mail addresses) were acquired with the help of the representatives of the Flood Hazard Research Center, Middlesex University, where the researcher undertook an internship in August 2014. In total, ten personalized e-mails were sent out which resulted in eight responses. Interviews were collected in different modes including face-to-face conversation and conversation using landline and Skype software. All interviewees demonstrated high interest in the research, and asked to share the results after the investigation is finished. Moreover, one of the representatives of the NFF interviewed during the research approached the researcher in April 2015 asking to share the results of the investigation as these might be of use for the report on the Pathfinder project the interviewee was involved in. During one of the interviews, I was invited to attend a CFAG meeting, which allowed me to get a deeper insight into the work of the CFAG, and also gave me an opportunity to establish further contacts with the CFAG members and find new informants. The general number of interviews in the UK amounted to seven.

In both cases, interviews were conducted in a way which allowed interviewee to take the lead whereas the researcher was implicitly guiding the discussion. The average length of the interviews in both cases amounted to one hour and a half;

however, in certain cases, interviews were shorter (around 40 minutes) while in other cases they lasted for more than 2.5 hours. A total number of seventeen in-depth narratives were collected.

2.1.2. Transcription, coding and analysis

The interviews were recorded using a dictaphone and a cell-phone voice recorder (as a precautionary step in order not to lose the data). Recordings were then transcribed as accurately as possible in order to prevent the researcher from ascribing subjective values to the informants' statements: the repetitions, conversational strands and emotional coloring of the statements (e.g. "laughing", "disappointment", "sounding angry") were registered. No significant mistakes such as disruption of technical devices were made during the recording; however, due to the fact that some recordings were made outdoors, extraneous noises complicated the process of transcription substantially. The transcription of recordings took a long time and proved a demanding process, yet in the end the transcripts have constituted a fruitful ground for in-depth qualitative analysis.

In the course of data analysis, the ATLAS software package was used, as it meets the requirements of the research and was highly recommended by other researchers who were also able to give advice and instructions on how to use it. This software was chosen as it makes a convenient tool for text analysis, allowing the researcher to upload different data formats. In terms of coding, ATLAS also provides various opportunities to create codes, group them into families and build the relationships between codes and categories. Additionally, the program allows making memos in relation to particular codes. The interface of the program is rather intuitive and convenient to use.

The process of coding was also rather demanding and time-consuming. As the first step, the interviews were divided into several semantic units, in accordance with the most important and frequent topics actualized during the interviews. Then each semantic block was divided into subtopics which in fact constituted the categories, or the "families of codes", composed of codes related to one subject (e.g. different examples of the CFAG functions were merged into one category "CFAG functions").

2.1.3. Problems of gaining access to the field and limitations of the research

In both cases, the process of gaining physical access to the field was rather demanding. With respect to the British case, due to the fact that the investigation took place in a country foreign for the researcher, it was required, firstly, to receive financial support for the investigation and to find an organization where the researcher could receive the position of an intern to conduct the field research. Finding and applying to a research institution with a

high level of expertise in this particular field of inquiry was a long and challenging, yet rewarding process. After being enrolled as an intern in the Flood Hazard Research Centre, I received substantial support in gaining access to the field from the researchers of the Centre in terms of the contact details of potential interviewees, and practical advice on how to write recruiting letters, start a discussion with an interviewee, and comply with ethical issues.

The access to the Russian filed was, surprisingly, more difficult, as I had to get in contact with individuals who were not connected to any organization. Additionally, in some cases I had to spend some time to win the favor and trust of the informants. It was therefore necessary to provide a detailed explanation of the project, as sometimes the informants incredulously perceived me as a representative of mass media or local authorities.

In all cases, the interviewees were asked whether they could be recorded and whether they preferred to stay anonymous in the transcripts and representation of empirical results. Only one interviewee expressed unwillingness to be recorded. However, after the researcher gave a clear outlook of the project, explained that the all the data collected would be used exclusively for the purposes of scientific analysis and interviewee's identity would remain concealed in the reports, the informant agreed to be recorded.

2.2. Russian case: Sporadic on-site collective action

This paragraph focuses on the discussion of collective action performed in Russian rural communities as a response to the permanent risk of flooding. Firstly, the concept of local knowledge is introduced and discussed to examine the role of routinized knowledge systems in the mechanisms of local communities' self-protection against floods. Secondly, the forms and mechanisms of collective response to flooding are analyzed.

2.2.1. The elements of local knowledge shared by Russian rural communities

The first step in the investigation of Russian rural communities was to reveal the informants' experiences of being flooded, their perception of the recurrent threat and their strategies of coping with it. All locations where interviews were collected are subject to annual floods varying in intensity from year to year. Experiencing floods on a permanent basis, the interviewees demonstrate detailed knowledge of the sources and causes of flooding, the possible courses of the incident, its scale and seasonal dependence. For instance, some residents possess rather detailed knowledge of the frequency and periodicity of floods: *"The flood comes with certain intervals, four-time and eight-time, sometimes these intervals coincide, and the level of water becomes extremely high"* (R7).

The observation of the natural environment in general and the course of the flood – in particular often allows local residents to make cause-and-effect forecasts and hence predict and assess the degree of personal threat. This is reflected in such statements of the interviewees as: "*This year no one expects any flood because, firstly, there was no water level, the ice was not thick, it was not accumulated by crystallization either, there were only two frosts for the whole winter*" (R9). Additionally, it was observed that practice-specific knowledge characterized by a certain degree of expertise may influence the range of clues the interviewees treat as predictive for the coming threat. For instance, an interviewee whose main occupation is apiculture saturates his everyday observations with some elements of professional knowledge: "*There is no ice on the river, the climate becomes milder, see, I have noticed that the bees made their first flight before March 8. It is too early, it has never happened before, no ice, no water, that's it*" (R9). This, in turn, demonstrates that local knowledge can hardly be acknowledged as "instrument-dependent" but rather is somewhat of a composite in nature (Corburn, 2003). The prediction of floods is based on intimate knowledge of the native area and its landscape derived from lived experience: "*Those territories are not flooded, there is a higher ground, but in the upper reaches of the river they are flooded badly, the riverbanks are very low there, and the ice gets stuck in the bridge, see, and the flood begins*" (R10). This, in turn, allows local dwellers to estimate the extent of personal involvement in flood emergencies, comparing different properties of the environments where floods are likely to happen with those of their residence.

Such intimate knowledge of the area and the expertise in flooding issues represent a vivid example of local knowledge. The elements of this knowledge listed above allow us to draw a resemblance between the empirical observations and the classical theoretical interpretations of the concept. For instance, the spatial specificity of local knowledge becomes rather apparent. It is not surprising that local knowledge produced in a place permanently subject to flooding contains several issues concerning the nature of the threat and the ways of adaptation to and protection against it. Indeed, in sociological theory it is notorious that local knowledge makes the product of cognition intrinsically influenced by the social, environmental and institutional contexts (Blaikie et al., 1997) in which it is embedded. As to local knowledge being highly context-specific, the emphasis in scholarly discourse is very often put on the influence of the spatial context where the knowledge is produced. Thus, in Geertz's words, local knowledge can be characterized as one "strongly rooted in place" and "based on immediacy of experience" (Geertz, 1983, p.75). In other words, local knowledge is the result of spatially specific practices, observations and experiences acquired and tested throughout the life and "time-honored traditions" of past generations (Blaikie et al., 1997, p.218).

In classical theories, local knowledge is regarded as a product of everyday life developed from personal and group experience and routine practices. However, my empirical observations demonstrate that the opposite is also true: the local knowledge can be regarded as an instrument for the construction and reproduction of everyday practices, or, to use Gertler's terms, local knowledge

"both defines and is defined by social context" (Gertler, 2003, p.76). By this, I mean that local knowledge is clearly reflected in people's everyday practices and their ways of life organization. The evidence for this can be found in the fact that the local knowledge about the causes, sources and outcomes of flooding often makes people realize their everyday practices in a certain way, predominantly in order to prevent or minimize the negative outcomes of the threat. This trend finds expression in numerous practices unfolded by the bearers and practitioners of local knowledge which jointly constitute the mechanisms of the communities' adaptation to the conditions of permanent threat. As becomes clear from the interviews, the main trajectories of local knowledge application are closely connected with ways of protecting the respondents' property. For instance, local knowledge is clearly reflected in the ways local residents perform farming practices and organize house construction. One of the local residents recalls: *"Well, you can judge by the old house's basement: here is the highest mark that water reached. And for the new one, you see, I have made a 50 cm basement. At least it's guaranteed that there will be no water in the house. It was possible to make it lower, in fact it is not that necessary, but it turns out that there are 90 cm from ground to the floor, well, just to be safe, because in the house, as it happens in spring, especially when the ice is drifting, you wake up in the morning – and your blankets are soaked"* (R7). Although local knowledge is frequently applied to resolve private pragmatic tasks, it is still collectively generated and distributed. In the next paragraph, I shall focus on the channels of such dissemination of collective local knowledge.

2.2.2. Channels of local knowledge transmission in Russian rural communities

Even though the research on local or, generally, informal knowledge transfer is rather scarce (Ernst & Kim, 2002), some of the local residents' practices provide examples of how local knowledge is derived and transmitted through the interaction between its carriers. Here we can find at least two trajectories of information transmission. The first trajectory demonstrates the succession of experience from generation to generation. For example, when asked about the measures to take in order to protect their property and general wellbeing during flood, the informants often refer to the efforts taken by their parents and forefathers: "*I remember that my father made decking. He would throw the logs broadwise and then lay decks upon them, make a decking, then again, when water rises, more logs and new decking would be added, and when the water is gone, it would be all dismantled… we always had planked footbridges and still do – here you can't do without them, we also enforce the bank with sand"* (R7).

The second trajectory consists in the transmission of experiences between the local residents by means of oral storytelling and narratives sharing. Such exchange of experience can, to a certain extent, refer to the phenomenon of community of practice (Wenger et al., 2002). Undoubtedly, this does not mean that local residents gather deliberately in order to give advice to each other or

spread information. However, at the same time, flooding represents a shared concern – the problem and the topic which is of interest for all those "at risk". Thus, interacting on a daily basis, local residents share their expertise and insights and deepen their knowledge of the problem as well as the ways to resolve it. Such experience transfer finds expression, among other things, in the farming practices and can be illustrated by the following utterances: "*I had neighbors here – they have spent their whole life here, I suppose, and they had their own land cultivation technique: when they were making garden beds, very interesting, they made a row between the beds... and then I learned that the locals, since they had been living here for a long time, got accustomed to that and those crazy rows, there's something about them... and then I started digging the rows that way myself*" (R1). Thereby, local residents accumulate this knowledge and develop tacit understanding of the problem they share.

It is important to mention that the local knowledge of the residents of Russian rural communities is axiomatic tacit knowledge, i.e. it is not acknowledged as "real", legitimate and articulated, knowledge, which can be used as a valuable resource. Neither is it seen as knowledge that should be purposely achieved through the formal channels of knowledge transmission. Hence, local residents acquire their knowledge of flooding problems not deliberately, but performatively – through everyday observation, mundane practices and comprehension of environmental clues. Thus, local knowledge serves here as an unconscious instrument of monitoring, interpreting and responding to the permanent threat of being flooded.

2.2.3. Carriers and practitioners of local knowledge in Russian rural communities and recognition of local knowledge

The linkage between local knowledge and the everyday practices of community members has been examined above. However, what has not been discussed yet is how local knowledge influences the perceptions of, and the attitudes toward, the threat.

It appears rather evident that the perception and acknowledgment of the crisis situation determines people's actions in relation to this situation, and flooding is no exception here. However, it is important to understand what determines the perception of the situation as such. The argument here is that local knowledge possesses significant potential to affect its carrier's perceptions of the situation. The permanence and high repeatability of flood leave a visible imprint on the knowledge, and hence on the attitudes, of people towards the problem of flooding. The constant threat of being flooded constructs people's perceptions of flooding in a way that it is regarded as somewhat of a routine, as an essential and inevitable element of living in the given location. Thus, when asked about the perceptions of coming water during the most recent floods, people often refer to the fact that flooding has become a habit, an unwanted but inevitable environmental condition they have to adapt to: *"Water is approaching and approaching, we are quite calm: it's just a regular thing"* (R3). The routinization

of the threat and its deep embeddedness in the local knowledge and habits are also highlighted by the fact that the attitude towards floods does not change over time: *"Why should it ever change? Spring will come, and there will be water again. Every year we have problems getting to the house: one has to get a boat to reach the porch, and you can only walk in rubber boots"* (R4)*.*

As it becomes clear from the field materials, local knowledge possesses a substantial influence on both the perception of flooding, and the actions taken as a response to it. Herein, we can observe that local knowledge can be regarded as a latent resource of local residents' resilience against floods, as it is developed from the experience of coping with the situation in question and has a predictive power that helps people perform protective measures against the threat.

The acknowledgment of local knowledge as a valuable resource is certainly not new and is described in an extensive body of literature, which regards it as somewhat of a "panacea" for community resilience. The potential of local knowledge to serve an instrument of local residents' sustainability becomes particularly revealing in the situations when local knowledge is either absent or neglected. Numerous investigations bring evidence on how inattentiveness to the peculiarities of local context and disregard of the practical insights of local knowledge bearers may lead to the failure of the enterprise, be it the use of natural resources or the implementation of a new policy (Kellert et al., 2000). The failure to take into account the contextual specificity often reflects social heterogeneity, meaning that there emerges a symbolically loaded distinction between the bearers and the non-bearers of local knowledge. Being regarded as a resource, even if a latent one, local knowledge is not homogenous within the community, and those who are lacking it often find themselves in a disadvantaged position.

The examination of the Russian case brings vivid examples of the negative consequences of certain actions performed in a disaster situation in either full absence or ignorance of local knowledge. The investigated rural communities demonstrate a strict division of their dwellers into two groups: the local residents – those who live in the village permanently – and the cottagers (*dachniki*) – people who come to the village only in summertime to spend their vacations. Due to the lack of permanent contact with local residents and the material setting, the cottagers lack corresponding lived experience and do not acquire the local knowledge necessary to perform effective protective measures against floods. Most clearly, it is expressed in their practices of housing and farming. For instance, being unaware of the soil structure, some cottagers use inappropriate materials to construct their houses, such as concrete, which later leads to buildings collapsing as the constructions sink into the bog soil under their own weight. For example, one of the interviewees points out: *"We have bought a house – an old one – and decided to reconstruct the porch, it was small and unattractive. We have called people who specialize in this kind of work... they have cemented it, made stakes and in a couple of years we got this picture.*

See, it was all ok, but then everything started to bulge and collapse, I mean no basement, nothing should be cemented here: you either build it on piles or on the wooden floater, like those locals" (R1).

Moreover, those who do not possess relevant knowledge of the magnitude, frequency and causes of floods, do not adapt their farming and housing facilities for the coming water and often unintentionally break the systems of water diversion*: "Here we have a beyshlot (a ditch or floodgate), and if it were not there, there would be no road as well. When you buy a ground lot, it is specified in the documents that you are prohibited to do anything with it – including covering it with sand, but they would still do that: no one knows why – water should go there. All in all, people make things worse for themselves because of ignorance" (R1).*

In fact, the division of community members into permanent and non-permanent residents has a substantial impact on the recognition of local knowledge. Even though the local knowledge of the residents of Russian rural communities is tacit and is not perceived as a valuable resource or an effective instrument that may bring certain benefits, it still represents an important element of local identity and becomes acknowledged in the classical opposition of "us" vs. "them" (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000) – those who do and do not possess the local knowledge.

As it appears, local knowledge bearers have an advantage over those who have not acquired this knowledge. However, interestingly, it has been observed that some manifestations of local knowledge may also lead to rather controversial and even negative consequences. For example, the intimate knowledge of typical flood problem (sources, course and outcomes) which often results in the routinization of threat may cause a negative impact on the bearers' wellbeing. As it becomes clear from the interviews, local residents can fairly accurately assess the extent to which they are affected by flood, based on the periodic observations of coming water and their lived experience of floods: *"Well, water usually gets to the basement, up to the frontier, but does not enter the house, it never did" (R8).* However, such a routinization of flood can lead to the underestimation of threat and leaves people unprepared for the abnormal water levels which exceed the habitual, cherished notions about the course and extent of the flood. The perception of such "exceptional" events, especially those resulting in serious property damage, varies significantly from the ordinary attitudes to floods labelled by local residents as "normal". This difference sometimes finds expression in the narratives of the witnesses in which accounts of floods as something routine and inevitable often change into the rhetoric of blame and futility. In such narratives, the residents would claim either the failure of the local authorities to manage the problem, or the overall impossibility to cope with the unpredictable forces of nature. The following quotation represents a clear example of such rhetoric: *"But these are forces of nature! For instance, I say that I have been at the same place for 33 years, and water seldom went up to the lower frontier, through the creeks, through the drains, there has been high water before, but not so high. And here, because of the jammed ice and the*

inertia of the Ministry of Emergency Situations officers, I give 100 per cent that nothing else is to blame. I mean, if they had blown the ice down there on time, there would have been no jam at all, everyone admits it. There are no such river meadows here as in other regions as the Voljskiy and the Central one. Here, if water ever rises, its level is normal, let's say, tolerable" (R9).

As the research demonstrates, the utilization of local knowledge serves as a latent resource of community residents in their resilience against floods. However, these self-protective mechanisms are not enough for Russian villagers to cope with the threat, and therefore a joint effort is required. The following paragraph discusses the forms and mechanisms of collective response to floods in Russian rural communities.

2.2.4. Forms and mechanisms of collective response to the permanent threat of flooding

The present paragraph is aimed at the discussion of collective action as a response to the permanent threat of flooding to which the investigated communities are exposed. As theory claims, collective action is a form of action aimed at the achievement of a common good which cannot be obtained the individual acting alone and thus requires joint effort (Ostrom, 1990). Being predominantly a "task interaction", focused on the achievement of the goals and accomplishment of tasks and projects (Bales, 1950), collective action may take place prior, during, or after the flood. The examination of the Russian case has shown that collective action in rural communities is incorporated in the form of spontaneous gatherings built around the rapid resolution of applied tasks. The interviewees' narratives bring various examples of collective task resolution, ranging from the attempts to save property and belongings: *"My son came, my son-in-law came, they have elevated the washing machine and fridge, things like that" (R2)* to the evacuation of the disabled from the areas at risk: *"Well, of course there was help, why one would not help an elderly person, for example, my neighbor helped me get my wife and mother-in-law out of here by car" (R10).* As the research demonstrates, collective action performed in Russian rural communities normally takes place during and after the incident, when momentary, predominantly physical, help is required. Such collective action usually takes the form of mutual help.

When speaking about the mechanisms of collective action performance, it should be emphasized that even though social bonds, such as kinship and friendship, do matter for the members of local communities, we cannot observe any strict spatial or social conditionality in the provision of help. In emergency situations, the assistance is sporadic and spontaneous and thus is not subjected to any strict regulations of whom to help. True enough, members of the same family tend to engage in relations of mutual assistance. For instance, the interviewees often recall their attempts to reduce the negative consequences of flooding using the capacities of other family members: *"In fact, water came from different parts of the yard. We ourselves were just keeping it away with*

sandbags" (R4). However, the collected interviews also indicate that so-called 'help without asking' often takes place, too. This kind of help is not peculiar to flood incidents only but is generally embedded in the everyday life of the investigated communities and is considered a routine practice. This kind of help is aimed at rapid task resolution that does not require special resource costs, such as time, money, skills and so forth. This kind of help is rather instrumental and is most often found in routine farming and housekeeping practices, for example, in pulling the boats ashore or dropping neighbors to the city by car. Such routinization of help becomes particularly evident when the interviewees report on the help provided during and after the flood.

Interestingly, the majority of interviewees claim that they did not receive any help during or after a flood; however, later the discussion reveals that different kinds of assistance were actually either received or provided by the informants. This controversy finds explanation in the way the interviewees interpret the notion of "help". By *help* they usually understand some resourceful support that goes beyond the everyday practices and comes from external parties (e.g. regional authorities). In this context, the most frequent narratives on *help* were related to the reparation of damages after the flood. Meanwhile, the help received during the incident from neighbors or relatives is often neglected as routine practice, nothing more than a habit.

Some informants point out that mutual help provision constitutes an inherent rule of interaction within the community: *"Because that's how it's done here, it cannot be done otherwise, because if you don't help another person, no one would help you out, that's all"* (R6). Mutual help is regulated by the principles of so-called 'direct reciprocity' which presupposes the balance between the help provided and received (Thomése et al., 2003).

When analyzing the mechanisms of collective action, it is important to understand whom the local residents consider to be the potential providers of assistance. Even though it has been stated that close social ties do not ultimately play a decisive role in the provision of support, the residents' narratives demonstrate that local dwellers tend to seek help among the locals, not the nonresident cottagers. This observation finds its explanation in the so-called support exchange theory which claims that help provision among neighbors is strongly affected by their confidence in returned support. This confidence normally appears when the relations within the community are stable, for example, when members of the community reside in the same area for a long period of time, thus ensuring a strong orientation towards neighbors in help seeking (Campbell & Lee, 1992), rather than towards nonlocal individuals. As several researches suggest, this stability gets disrupted when the community experiences a certain extent of disintegration. Disintegration, in turn, is normally associated with increased residential mobility within the community. With respect to the Russian case, cottagers are the carriers of the high degree of mobility as they move to and from the village dependent on the season. This inconstancy in the place of residence and social networks organized

predominantly outside the rural community make them disintegrated with the local dwellers. This decreases the locals' confidence in them as providers of reciprocal support.

Thus, analyzing different examples of collective action in floods performed by Russian rural communities, I can conclude that it bears sporadic, unorganized and spontaneous character and is aimed at the provision of mutual help and on-spot resolution of momentary tasks. Problem resolution in the long term perspective also takes place; however, it is commonly performed in the form of individual initiatives and activities focused on property protection, e.g. river bank protection: "…*and I have put these planks and the bricks under them, tamped it all with sand not to let the water go, just to make it a bit higher*" (R10), or homes insuring: "*I have been paying for the insurance for two years already, hope that at least you might get something. Down there, couple of houses away, those who only had water reaching the floor, they have received 100.000, basements cracked and that's why they received it*" (R10). However, individual strategies are sometimes insufficient to efficiently cope with the threat. Meanwhile, the collective strategies make an exception in local communities' resilience efforts. Therefore, the question arises: What are the conditions that hinder the development of collective action into organized action aimed at long-term problem resolution in Russian rural communities?

2.2.5. Conditions influencing collective action in Russian rural communities

Answering the question about what the factors that determine the form of collective action and limit its development in investigated communities are, I propose that we should distinguish between two groups of conditions:

The first group is composed of positive conditions which can, to a certain extent, facilitate the emergence of organized collective action. The first condition is the *permanent and universal threat of flooding* the majority of community residents are exposed to. Flooding, thus, is an issue of common concern and a source of disturbance, which requires resolution. Since the majority of the community residents suffer from floods, the management and resolution of this problem constitutes a common good, which, in turn, requires joint effort, or to put it in another way, collective action. Organized collective action represents the means of achieving a common good as it allows the group to accumulate and coordinate individuals' resources in a way that facilitates resolution of the problem.

The second condition which may cause a positive effect on the emergence of organized collective action is represented by *the logics of direct reciprocity* and mutual help provision which regulate interaction within the communities in question. Long period of residence in one community, networks of personal and indirect acquaintance and stability of relationships make local residents reliable partners and constitute a comfortable environment for cooperation. The

following statement of the interviewee is indicative of it: *"Of course, if the neighbor comes to another neighbor, will they help? Of course, I tell you, there are 80 ladies; they have lived all their life cheek by jowl, there is no need to cooperate somehow in a special way. If a son comes to one granny, he will help her neighbor, because they know each other, they are locals, their children grew up together, there are no non-locals, all are the locals, so would they help each other? They all live on water here. Here you do not have to ask, they all grew up together"* (R4).

However, due to the fact that organized collective action was not observed during investigation of Russian rural communities, the question appeared as to what the obstacles that hinder organized collaboration of residents in the long run are.

To answer this question, I propose to have a look at the second group of conditions, which constitute the barriers for self-organization and collective task accomplishment. These barriers are the following:

1. The first group of barriers considers the issue of *'heterogeneity'* classical for collective action theory. For the present case, two types of heterogeneity are of particular importance: socio-cultural heterogeneity of residents within the community and diversity of resources they possess. Analyzing the former, it appears that the strict division of a community into local dwellers and cottagers that has been described above plays a crucial role in the organization of long-term collaboration of community residents. This statement is based on the observation that while speaking about the possibility of cooperation, local residents imply that the latter is only possible among the local residents. Such a negation of non-permanent members of the community as potential partners in long-term resolution of problems stems from the belief that cottagers, to use the interviewees' words, do not have enough interest to invest in the production of a common good, as they are more concerned about their own personal well-being and possess enough resources to ensure it. Thus, one of the interviewees recalls: *"basically, all of them are cottagers, for whom 10000 rubles for a square meter are worth nothing. There are no local residents, very few people left, there is no one to cooperate"* (R9). To some extent, it refers to the idea of "critical mass" essential to collective action theory. The idea suggests that, for collective action to emerge, a certain number of highly interested actors resourceful in terms of money, time and education and willing to provide a collective good is required (Marwell & Oliver, 1993). Respectively, the absence of such actors diminishes the likelihood of organized collective action emerging. Additionally, the negation of cooperation between the locals and the cottagers brings up the questions of confidence in support provision and stability of relationships discussed previously. It appears that local residents do not consider cottagers as permanent members of their local community, as they are not involved in a long lasting process of interaction and support exchange. In their eyes, the circle of permanent contacts that the cottagers have exceeds the boundaries of the local community and their high mobility enriches their practices of support-seeking outside the community, thus providing them with additional resources and reducing the need to interact with the local environment.

2.   The question of social heterogeneity is closely related to one of *resource diversification*. Denying the possibility of cooperation with summer residents, local dwellers propose themselves as the only possible actors of collective action. However, as informants note, the number of non-permanent residents exceeds the number of local residents significantly. The situation is also complicated by the fact that the majority of locals are pensioners, which means that the amount of resources they may invest in collective action is substantially limited. It appears that even though local dwellers are interested enough in achieving a common good, their resources (health and money) are limited to such an extent that they cannot be invested in some extra routine activities. Thus, as it appears from the interviewees' replies, one of the main obstacles for collective action is the lack of resources, meaning that there is a very limited number of people, if any, who are able to cooperate and make a definite contribution to the achievement of a common good: *"First of all, there are locals and there are cottagers. Locals are generally elderly people and are lucky to just get out of the house… for example, if I need to get some water from the river, what can I do? Problems are everywhere – because of the water going, elderly, unable people everywhere. They only have to live to see. Cottagers – they are interesting – I mean, they are all different: some have opportunities, they make a concrete come-down, other things, but to bring them together... some are like this and others like that, try to bring them together, everyone has their interests and that's why it is difficult"* (R1). Another interviewee says: *"Considering the whole village, there are no people... even those aged 62, like me, are not so many"* (R9). Along with the lack of manpower, the scarcity of financial resources poses a significant barrier on the potential of local residents to cooperate. The lack of finances has been one of the most widespread motifs voiced in the narratives on cooperation possibilities. Such a concern becomes clear from the statements such as: *"Well, actually yes, it is difficult today to buy a boat "just in case". When everything drowns, water reaches the floor, you have to do something, but what's the price for a boat? Could elderly people buy it? They won't, even the most basic rubber boat costs money"* or *"I can understand when it's done on your own, to bring the gravel to the old lady's house, but what would be the price? Nothing is done for free these days. The own force does well, but you need money that you do not possess"* (R5). Therefore, it becomes clear that social heterogeneity and resource scarcity represent substantial obstacles for collective action organization.

3.   The third group of barriers for organized collective action emergence is constituted by the so-called "*rhetoric of futility",* which represents the attitudes of residents towards collective action. Futility of collective action is reflected simultaneously in various aspects such as: inability to cooperate because of the lack of resources and of people willing and able to collaborate; the belief that it is impossible to manage the flooding problem by means of the collective capacities of the residents; the opinion that floods cannot be managed as it is an unpredictable force of nature; disbelief in the possibility of cooperation with authorities and others. Putting aside the subject of resource scarcity, the distrust towards local authorities and disbelief in the very possibility of cooperating with them constitutes the second major topic raised in the interviewees' narratives in

relation to the possibility and significance of collective action as a response to flood. It was observed that, even though residents very often claim that the flooding problem in its usual manifestation cannot or even should not be managed, the dominant idea is nevertheless that the consequences of floods should be resolved by the authorities: *"Authorities are in charge, those who are sitting over there, if there is a problem they cannot cope with immediately and people are the ones who have eventually tackled it, then they are in charge, no exceptions. You see, if I have done whatever I can, okay, and I have suffered from some amount of damage, who is to compensate it? It's them, of course"* (R6).

4. Analyzing such statements, it becomes unclear whether local residents leave room for the possibility of collective action in flood problem management. In fact, the place for collective action is envisaged in the minimization of the possible consequences of floods. While being asked to project a situation where the problem of resource and manpower scarcity is not so urgent, the informants claim that collective action may yield certain results if accompanied with assistance from the authorities. However, the interviewees do not assume these kinds of activities as feasible in a real-time situation. It was observed that the answers to the question of responsibility for flood management reflect very negative attitudes towards local authorities, demonstrating a high level of distrust and discontent with the actions of local officials*: "There was a meeting after the flood, I went there... I don't' even want to mention it. They won't even listen to what they are told; they would still go on. It was in the community center, they do not hear a thing, you ask questions and they tell you about their reports and records concerning works that are done and what has been accomplished"* (R4). It was also observed that the residents' dissatisfaction with local authorities is not restricted to the official response to flooding only, but is of a general nature with regards to the questions of the aggregate welfare of the village. Based on earlier unsuccessful experience of collaboration with the authorities (e.g. in claiming compensations for damage after flood), yet not always personal experiences, the residents develop attitudes towards collective action that are characterized by political apathy and disbelief in personal efficacy. As a substantial body of literature on human functioning claims, this belief in personal ability to influence a situation constitutes the basis for people's motivations and actions (Bandura, 1982). As Bandura claims, "perceived efficacy plays a key role in human functioning because it affects behavior not only directly, but by its impact on other determinants such as goals and aspirations, outcome expectations... and perception of impediments and opportunities in the social environment" (Bandura, 1982). In this way, the lack of belief in personal efficacy, and the denial of even the possibility of cooperating with the authorities, make collective action desirable, but not achievable.

Characterizing the general tendency in collective action development, it was observed that local residents express a certain degree of willingness to collaborate in order to address common issues including the flooding problem. Moreover, locals even suggest certain solutions that could minimize the outcomes of floods (e.g. to deepen the riverbeds and turns, or to keep a

common boat or raft) based on their experience and local knowledge. However, the rhetoric of futility concerning the collaboration with authorities and the lack of personal resources put the perspective of collective action at such an angle that very few people are ready to invest in achieving any collective good, as contributions are supposed to be large, while the likelihood of achievement is believed to be extremely low. The next section seeks to demonstrate how different forms of collective action can develop when facilitated by both internal (inherent to community) and external factors by the example of British rural communities.

2.3. British case: Organized and recognized collective action

In this paragraph, I provide a description and analysis of various forms, aims and mechanisms of collective action performed by British rural communities as a response to a permanent flooding issue. Firstly, an unorganized emergent collective action will be discussed in brief, while the main emphasis of the chapter will be placed on the organized form of collective action performed by the Community Flood Action Groups (CFAGs), as it represents fruitful ground for collective action comparison in two countries. Secondly, the role of local knowledge as an instrument of CFAG performance will be outlined.

2.3.1. Forms of collective action

Spontaneous collective action

The examination of British case has revealed that collective action may take several forms varying in the degree of organization. The first type of collective action that was observed is characterized by low degree of self-organization and emergent character, as it arises under the influence of external factors, in our case flood. This type of collective action is embodied in the form of mutual help provision rendered by people exposed to a threat. As it emerges from the interviewees' narratives, mutual help provision and volunteering is a rather common response to a flood incident and is organized around the resolution of momentary tasks. Spontaneous help provision is predominantly of physical nature having its aim at property protection, as evidenced by the interviewees' stories: "our house was the property that had the water first, so everybody came to our house to help and then, as other houses became affected, other volunteers from the village hearing about our property under water came to assist us, so it was very informal, no telephones, you know... no radio, it was just people turning up to help', or 'well there were groups of people helping each other with the caravans and helping on load and trying to move out to the higher ground. There was a bit of that going on" (LA).

Such unorganized and sporadic collective action represents classical task interaction focused on the realization and accomplishment of certain objectives and goals, performed by the members of spontaneous gathering. This form of

collective action is more often seen during the flood when immediate help is required. To explain the mechanisms of this type of collective action, it appears reasonable to refer to the concept of "collective community spirit". Interestingly, the term was proposed by the interviewees themselves, and occurs in several interviews in relation to the discussion on residents' actions during the flood, and subjects concerning mutual help provision among the neighbors. As interviewees put it, and as theoretical inquiry suggests, mutual help provision can be interpreted as a component of community spirit, which is incorporated in the form of resident's concern about the quality and general wellbeing of the community. The latter, thus, represents a kind of a common good, which each member of collective action is interested in and ready to strive for. The wellbeing is achieved through the shared responsibilities of residents and, hence, presupposes individual investment of each person engaged in action in its attainment. Mutual help provision, thus, represents a form of individual investment and the mechanism of collective common good achievement.

Examination of the case reveals that the form of collective action can change substantially with time, depending on the stage of the flood incident. It has been found that, after the incident, an organized collective action embodied in the form of group work often develops. As a result, the unique phenomenon of Community Flood Action Groups (CFAGs) aimed at the close collaboration of the members of local communities permanently subject to flood in order to increase the level of community resilience against future threats emerges. In contrast to unorganized collective action aimed at momentary task accomplishment, CFAGs' performance is characterized by a high degree of self-organization and focus on the long term resolution of a problem.

Organized collective action: Community Flood Action Groups

Trigger of CFAG emergence

Community Flood Action Groups appear as a response to the permanent threat of flooding, where the latter serves as the precondition and the trigger for collaboration. This observation resonates in disturbance theory, claiming that abnormal, unpredictable and severe events that go beyond the everyday routine may cause at least two effects on a community exposed to threat: reorganization, meaning that community becomes more resilient to the future threats; or breakdown (Rykiel, 1985). The phenomenon of CFAGs emergence represents a clear example of community reorganization, as the new element of social structure aimed at community protection against substantial material and emotional loss appears. As research suggests (Geaves & Penning-Rowsell, 2014), a flood incident serves as a real trigger for group emergence, yet its severity does not play an ultimately decisive role in the process. As Geaves suggests, organized collective response to flooding issues emerges when the community experiences either a large-scale flooding, or a series of small incidents that cause disturbance (Geaves & Penning-Rowsell, 2014). To confirm this, it has been observed that individuals engaged in CFAG collective action

are not necessarily directly exposed to the issue of flooding, but can be indirectly involved in the incident, meaning that their neighbors or habitual activities were disrupted, which causes substantial stress and frustration.

Thus, for instance, a chairman of one of the CFAGs points out that the decision to get involved in group work was made after he had familiarized himself with the official flood defense plans: *'It was not a real flood then, it was a future plan of flood defense, and when I saw it I said: my Goddess, I have to do something or lose my house. So it was not an actual event, flood. Then there were subsequent floods, year after year, yes, and then they obviously highlighted the issue even more apparent, how serious the problem was'(DK).*

CFAG Structure

As a group, CFAG possesses certain organizational structure, which establishes the networks of interdependencies and role relationships between the members. In general, CFAG structure can be described as a classical continuum from center to periphery. The center here consists of the group chairman, a person who is in charge of all group actions, and the permanent group members, those most actively involved in group performance. As it comes from the informants' narratives, the group membership is determined not only by the extent of individual's engagement in group work (whether he/she is active or not), but also by his or her ability to invest in it on a permanent basis and comply with all the attributes peculiar to the group. The statement of an NFF member makes it clear: "I*n some of my areas, I have people working shifts, they would want to be involved, but they cannot be involved, and some have a full time job and children to put in bed and things like that, so they are actively involved in other ways, just not part of the group" (NG)*. One of the most important attributes of the CFAG is group meetings where group members discuss topics related to finance distribution, analysis of the previous actions and mistakes made, the development of flood plan, and the trajectories of further group development. The importance of attending meetings stems from two facts. Firstly, meetings have a significant instrumental function, being a platform for debate and collective decision-making. Secondly, face-to-face meetings represent the mechanism and the instrument of group cohesion formation, as they presuppose repetitive interactions, which allow group members to sustain stable relationships. Additionally, meetings reproduce the structure of role relationships and interdependencies, which constitute the core elements of the group. Altogether, organizational capacities of meetings allow for a simple collection of individuals to perform as a self-organized entity, as a group. Another attribute, which possesses a strong organizational function, is the Flood Plan, which is very often informal. The Plan is the document that establishes the basic provisions of the group, its aims, and regulates the actions of the members. The Plan can be regarded as a classical attribute of the group, in its standard theoretical interpretation, as it represents somewhat of a collection of rules and

norms elaborated within the group and also serves as the source of group identity, as it allows its members and the third parties to acknowledge the group and distinguish it from all the others.

The next "layer" of the group structure is composed of the so-called third parties, or the "partners" of the group, people and institutions who are not considered to be permanent group members and the composition of which changes frequently. The third parties are usually representatives of various agencies responsible for flood management, including emergency responders (fire brigades, police), Greater London Authority, Environmental Agency, National Flood Forum, Local Council and others. Even though third parties are not considered as group members, since they are not involved in the permanent activities of the group, they are still acknowledged as a valuable social, political and economic resource.

The last layer, the periphery, is composed of actors, with whom the group interacts on a temporary basis and establishes temporary situation-based contacts. The examples of these actors may be other Flood Action Groups, different types of voluntary associations (e.g. Rotary club, churches) and particular individuals (e.g. journalists, individual volunteers). The short-term contacts with them are usually established for the accomplishment of a particular task. One example of such a task could be CFAG advertising or published information : "*The local papers obviously will put some photographs taken by myself cos I get in close and I have some good photographs, so I will send them to the press, you know, to advertise and say this is what's happening in Purley, they know what is down there, anyway, because we talk to the reporters but the reporters keep changing every three month (laughing) and I have met the new one yesterday – Polly, she is a Purley journalist*" (TF). Another example of the task for selective momentary collaboration can be the call for volunteers: *"I am chasing in regards volunteers from the Rotary clubs, located in Croydon, because it gets flooded in Croydon as well"* (TF).

Speaking about the CFAGs structure, it seems important to point out the age composition of the group. The following citation gives a clear idea about the average age structure of the CFAG: *"I have an electrical engineer, retired, I have a retired school teacher, I have a retired consulting engineer, I have a retired architect, I have a director of a process machinery company, he designs auto conveyor systems for factories, I have a retired company director, two retired school teachers, actually. So lots of retired people as volunteers and in fact I have one very helpful I like, he formerly was an engineer with a rivers authority which was a government organization responsible for the engineering of all of our waterways, so he is very helpful, and he works in the village now as a fish farmer"* (LA). Such age structure is representative of the majority of CFAGs and is also very often indicative for the engagement in different types of secondary groups and for the whole issue of civic participation. As several pieces of research demonstrate, civic participation, ranging from individual activities to group work, is socially patterned, meaning that such individual properties as age, gender, level of education, level of income, health and so

forth significantly influence the level of engagement (Baum et al., 2000). Baum suggests that older people are more likely to be engaged in various community groups, such as service clubs, or volunteer associations. In fact, the explanation of this trend is rather controversial.

On the one hand, retired and elderly people are often associated with low level of income and poor health conditions that do not allow people to be active in some extra routine activities. On the other hand, retired people are assumed to have more free time to invest in collective group activities, as they are not burdened with work schedules   or nurturing children. Additionally, some research claims strong correlation between the so-called 'sense of community' that individuals possesses and their willingness to participate in voluntary activities, emphasizing the role of community identity. Here the explanation comes from the fact that retired people have relatively low level of mobility as compared to younger generations. Meanwhile, high mobility operates as a barrier to the construction of extensive networks of stable communication and connectedness, interdependence, reinforcement, and shared emotional connection, which constitute the sense of community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Thus, those people who are less mobile are more capable of developing strong, long-lasting relationships and a sense of belonging to the community as their daily routines and everyday communications are bounded within the community. Limited mobility may also influence people's decision to engage in community activities in such a way that it restricts the capacities to escape the area and thus, makes people become more concerned of the quality and amenity of their area of residence. This explanation corresponds to Hardin's finding, which claims a rather straightforward correlation between the contribution to collective action and the presence of personal alternatives, meaning that the lack of alternatives may serve as the trigger for engagement in collective action.

2.3.2. Mechanisms of collective action

Mechanisms of CFAG initiation

Speaking about the mechanisms of CFAG performance, it appears reasonable to start with a discussion on the mechanisms of its emergence. The interviewees' narratives describe two scenarios of group emergence: a bottom-up scenario and a top-down scenario. With respect to the former, the CFAG emerges upon the personal initiative of one or several members of the community exposed to flooding. The decision to act collectively comes predominantly from the understanding of the limited number of individual resources, which are considered insufficient for the achievement of the desired good – security of property and wellbeing, or, speaking generally, resilience. Resources here are understood in at least two forms: instrumental, such as manpower, skill and others, and strategic, which are manifested in the group's ability to express collective interest and concern and to lobby it. The founder of one of the CFAGs explains the reason to launch a group: *"The main reason was*

to make a group, make it happen and to have a plan, a strategy and then the best way to implement that was to have everybody saying the same things, so that's why we have the group of the local residents, so the local residents have a group, they were saying the same message, and the message was to implement the strategy which was to save our houses, in the long term. So that's why we did it, that's why we joined as a group. Cos when you are on your own, you are very… just one guy, just one vote (laughs). *With 25 guys you are more… stronger, you understand? So united, united" (DK).* While being established, groups tend to seek support from the authorities in terms of financial and institutional assistance required for the realization of short-term functions and long-term projects, aimed at building community resilience. The described mechanism of group formation represents, according to Arrow and Berntha (Arrow et al., 2000), an example of the "founded group", as this type of CFAG is planned and created by internal forces and ambitions of individuals who remain the members of the group.

The second scenario for group emergence implies that the group is launched at request from or proposal of the authorities (e.g. the Local Council), or other third parties (e.g. the National Flood Forum).

Below is a quote from the interview with the chairman of the CFAGs, which demonstrates how the mechanism of top-down group formation works: *"Ok, ahm, in July 2007 in the United Kingdom we have a very major flood that affected most of the UK, flood from very heavy rains, and my house flooded during those rains, not from the river, just surface water flooding across farmland, and then, maybe six month after the flood, just after December and January 2008, the parish council which is the small council here in the UK, they asked me whether or not, as a flood affected resident, if I would assist them in setting out and chairing the flood resilience group, as we call it. So that is how it started" (LA).* This type of initiation results in "concocted" groups, representing an intersection of planned-external dimension of group formation, where the initiation of group is performed by actors who are not the members of the group.

Mechanisms of CFAG composition. Mobilization of human and social capital

Most often, the establishment of the group starts with the appointment of a leader. This process depends on the mechanism of group formation. In founded groups, the leader is usually the person who initiates the very formation of the group and whose candidacy is then supported by the initial members of the group. The following is an example of informal leader appointment*: "There were people already volunteering to be members of the group, and I acted as a chairman for the group. I. But how did you decide to be the chairman? R: ahm… the group members informally asked me, collectively, it was democratic at that point' (DK).* As for concocted groups, the leader of the CFAG is usually a person contacted by the authority or other agency to lead the group*: "I started it because of the environment agency and great London council, I was the*

chairman, and then we had all the other members of the committee. K: So it is like the government was initiator? R: They wished it, yes. People know me, they know my interest, my interest in ecological planning. I was doing it in Malaysia, and they approached me on Wednesday, and I had to be here on Monday, there was a big meeting, and I came and got the job" (LA).

The process of leader appointment, as well as the process of general group formation, is accompanied by intensive mobilization of social and human capital. The latter brings a certain amount of resource heterogeneity to the group in terms of skills, experience, knowledge and social networks that significantly facilitate group performance.

Mobilization of social capital here is reflected in utilization of, in Bourdieu's words, "durable networks of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu, 2008). For example, it is very often the case that CFAGs use already existing social structures, such as, for instance, Residence associations, as a potential source of new members and others resources required for group performance. The following is the extract from the interview with a CFAG member who explains how the group was formed: *"Ok, I was an executive member of what is called Purley residence association on the T. Flora and the GLA (The greater London Authority), environmental agency and Croydon Council, they collected and identified Purley as a high flood risk area, and they wanted to see if there is a volunteer group around that would put a plan into place, and we stepped forward and said – yes, we will do it... They saw we were the best group because we had a considerable membership in the Residence association"* (TF). Existing nodes of civic participation allow using the already established networks of acquaintances and guarantee a certain extent of trustworthiness within the CFAG and between the group and wider community.

Along with social capital, the human capital embodied in the form of individual's knowledge, skills and experience plays a significant role in CFAG composition and performance. Different manifestations of the listed forms of human capital reflect social heterogeneity within the group. Even though social heterogeneity was neglected in classical theory of collective action, empirical observations suggest that it has substantial influence on the process and the outcomes of group action. It has been observed that social heterogeneity in terms of knowledge, skills and experience to a certain extent ensures resource heterogeneity within the group. Through the interviews, it has been revealed that the background of CFAG members, their former occupation and experience in certain issues are considered as valuable resources and often serve as the basis for the distribution of roles and duties. For instance, one of the CFAG recalls: *"There is an acknowledgment within the group that we have, including myself, three people who are very practical and focused on engineering, so these people are seen better equipped and able to deal with hard stuff. Checking on drains and understanding how the things like these work. We have other members of the group dealing with other issues, identifying people within the community that maybe need our assistance more, people that maybe don't*

have financial resources, or elderly who need an assistance with their own drainage from us. People within the group have, if you like, migrated towards the roles. We have not formally set the tasks, we discuss these things" (LA). A flood warden of another CFAG states similarly: "H*e volunteered to take this voluntary group, or form the group, and one or two agreed with him, and I was, you know, I step forward and said I would help by writing the plan and being a flood warden because I had some experience in military life and then managed a large shopping center in Croydon where I had to deal with emergencies and write emergency plans anyway, so I have some experience of doing that" (TF).* The heterogeneity of human and social capital increases resource heterogeneity within the group, thus allowing the group to compose it in a way to improve and optimize its performance.

Mechanisms of CFAG operation

Intensive utilization of social and human capital is seen not only in the processes of group formation, but also in the general mechanisms of CFAG performance. It has been observed that mobilization of social and professional ties is built around both formal institutionalized networks and informal networks of kinship, friendship and neighborship used as a source of information, new knowledge and valuable resources, ranging from manpower to instrumental help provision. The example of the second type is brought by the following informant's statement: "*I had a communication with Kenley, with the gentleman, he has agreed, he is passing my plan around… and my flood warden stuff around the residence association in Kenley, and we will get a feedback. A good thing is also that we will get more flood soldiers, people on the ground, flood wardens which can, you know, walking up and down the same routes, so whatever helps us. We are hoping to get the new members from the Kenley association which is affected a little bit harder than Purley when it floods, so they might have more mutual interest and get volunteers which will help us*" *(TF).* The statement is also demonstrative of how social capital originates in social interactions, where particular persons and their social networks represent the source of the benefit.

The utilization of institutionalized formal networks becomes most evident in the mechanisms of CFAG interactions and interrelations with local authorities and third parties (predominantly agencies responsible for flood management). In the majority of cases, the two entities act as facilitators and advisors in CFAG performance and development. These functions can be divided in the following groups:

1.   Facilitation of acquaintance and interaction within the CFAG;

2.   Establishing contact with the agencies responsible for flooding problem management;

3.   Assistance in establishment and maintenance of communication with wider communities.

As for the first group, the function is applied predominantly to concocted groups, where CFAG initiators (Local Council, National Flood Forum) are involved in the process of group formation. The execution of this function is most clearly seen from the case when the National Flood Forum launches the group. As has been revealed, the function is normally performed in several stages. At the first stage, the very formation of the group is happening. The formation process usually starts with a call for volunteers, very often an informal one, which attracts the people interested in flood problem resolution. This is how the member of the National Flood Forum describes it: "*If we take my area, when we first set up, we were going along the road, knocking the doors and saying we are looking for people willing to set up a flood action group, come to this address if you be interested and join the group. So, it gets so many people who wanted to come, and so many people suggested they want to be actively involved, and the group was formed*" (NG). At this stage, the potential of the group action to manage the flood problem and decrease its consequences is usually outlined, and the idea of community empowerment, meaning that community residents themselves can cause a difference in flood management process, is introduced. The initial acquaintance of the group members usually happens on the first meeting launched and led by the National Flood Forum representatives. However, very often, not all the people who attended the first meeting then become permanent members of the CFAG. At the next stage, the main task of the NFF as advisor is to adjust different kinds of resources (social and human capital) the group members possess in order to distribute the roles and allocate responsibilities within the group to facilitate its performance. The extract from the interview with the NFF representative is rather demonstrative here: "*In some groups, you will find a natural chair and natural secretaries for group, but they don't particularly want that responsibility initially, so they are a bit more organized by us, which is kind of happening with the two groups that I am involved in, because although one of the chairs is very good and has been involved in lots of chairs in the past and lots of meetings, he is getting old, unfortunately, and he doesn't have computer access, so there are some things that I have to facilitate there. But one of the other members now who is getting a bit more confidence to have a computer access, we are trying to make him more of like a group secretary*" (SP). While working with the CFAG, the NFF representatives organize group structure and action. Very often, the organization then becomes reflected in the so-called community flood plans, which coordinate CFAG members' actions during and after the flood. An important point here is that the NFF serves as an advisory body, meaning that it does not intervene in group decision-making and general performance – which is led by the residents of communities themselves. This is how the NFF member explains the logic of CFAG collaboration with the agency*: "We are trying to facilitate the meetings, we are trying them to organize, trying to show them how it should be run, but we are trying to make sure that it is really the residents or the flood action group people, whoever it is made of, they are involved" (HS).*

The second group of functions performed by CFAG facilitators takes place when the group already possesses certain organizational structure and is capable of voicing collective interest. Most clearly, this function, again, can be seen from

the cooperation of the CFAGs and the National Flood Forum. At this point, the logics of empowerment become articulated, as the NFF establishes the dialog between the group and those officially responsible for flood risk management. The mechanism most often used for dialog establishment is multiagency meetings, initiated by the NFF members as a platform for discussion and devolution of responsibilities. That is how the member of the NFF explains the meaning of the meeting: "W*e work with the community to develop any issues they might have, and then we go together to the multiagency meetings where we have all the agencies related to flood risk such as county council, borough district council, environment agency, water company, highways and Warwickshire resilience, they deal with personal resilience, community resilience plans, working with the parish council, there you can get all the authorities, location specific, so network is right, there are five that come along, and then you present that to them, and the reason for them to look at this is one of community frustrations, they really go about the problem... because, for example, when you need to sell the house, and it is not the first company that you speak to, and you just get passed around, and no one really accepts responsibility for it, whereas here they all are in the same room, they have maps, and the responsibilities will be established. The thing is, when they all are in the same room, they can discuss the funding, because it might be that it doesn't benefit just one agency, but it benefits other two, so instead of one agency paying all it will be split into two, they can find a partnership for funding from anyone else"* (NG).* As it becomes clear from the interviews, the forum serves as a mediator between the group and different authorities responsible for flood management. By helping them to articulate their interests clearly and voice the concerns of the whole community, the NFF launches a network of interdependency where different actors, including the CFAGs, have to take responsibility for the execution of certain functions, and then to give a report on the efforts made and outcomes achieved. Devolution of responsibilities here becomes beneficial for both the CFAGs and the agencies, as the decision-making and problem management are now performed in a satisfying way. The basis for this cooperation will be discussed comprehensively in the paragraph on local knowledge as an instrument of CFAG operation.

The third group of functions is aimed at establishing contacts between the CFAG and the wider community. That does not necessarily mean that facilitating agencies set this communication deliberately: they rather serve as a resource of group promotion and information distribution. For instance, local authorities provide CFAGs with platforms such as Parish council notice boards, websites and newsletters, where the groups can report on their activities, updates in their organization and tasks, and give a call for volunteers, thus supplementing informal information spread with more formal and acknowledged dissemination channels, which allows the group to reach a wider audience. Additionally, groups seek financial support from the authorities for the production of bulletins and leaflets containing necessary information for the community residents, such as recommendations on the action prior, during, and after the floods, information about the group contact persons and agencies responsible for flood management. These activities resulting in information

circulation within the community have two main outcomes: the first one is the realization of the major function of the CFAG, namely its interaction with community residents aimed at increasing the level of community resilience. Spreading information about the CFAG's work as well as the measures that community residents can and should take to protect themselves and their property increases the level of their preparedness for future threats. The second outcome of the detailed information spread about the group activities is the emergence of trust within the broader community, and acknowledgment of the CFAG as a reliable source of information and assistance the community can refer to in an emergency, as compared to impersonal communication with the representatives of flood management agencies.

Besides the facilitation of CFAG interaction with the community, various agencies such as the National Flood Forum or Environmental agency contribute to the establishment of the dialog between the CFAGs throughout the country to establish the exchange of information and experience.

Concluding, I would like to emphasize that the mechanisms of CFAG operation are basically pragmatic in nature. The relations with particular persons and agencies are often built purposefully and continue as long as they provide benefits. As it has been demonstrated above, this pragmatic attitude is applied to the delineation of group boundaries (where only those able to invest in CFAG by working on a permanent basis are acknowledged as group members) and serves as the principle for the maintenance of networks which CFAG builds with the agencies, which becomes clear from the following statement of a CFAG member: *"...in fairness and in truth, most of the properties that are flooded are businesses and not too many residents. Thus we dragged in a Purley business association to help form the group but, to be honest, it was very ineffective, very ineffective, because when I emailed and tweeted them that there is a problem, because I have the contacts and know the chair –Simon, that interaction was very little. When you see on the front page "is coordinated by", you know where the house is sinking, there is what is called Purley residence association and Purley business association. Well, in the first days of the plan that was the case, but the Purley business association don't do any coordination, and Tarsem told me about dropping them off because they are totally ineffective" (TF)*. As it has been demonstrated, the CFAGs intensively utilize social and human capital to benefit the process of group performance. However, as the research shows, their implementation is not always unambiguously positive. It has been observed that social heterogeneity, for instance, may also cause negative impact on the CFAG performance. The case is that, even if the interest in the common good is the same among its members, social heterogeneity represented in terms of individual backgrounds, education, previous occupation and others may bring dissent against the means of achieving that common good. One of the most indicative examples of this situation was brought by the flood warden of one of the CFAGs in the discussion on the tasks of the group. The citation is rather long but vividly illustrates the whole issue: *"I mean, basically Tarsem is the eldest statesman, he took the lead because he is a plan coordinator. I am more on the practical side. So I wrote the emergency plan*

because I don't think Tarsem knew how to write the emergency plan, to be honest... I am a general manager, and he is a CEO, chief executive, because CEO is looking more strategic, whereas I am working between… I am qualified and I got management degrees, I am quite qualified to look at strategic policies but what I prefer to do is the practical and operational side which is beyond strategic.

Ok, but I can operate between all three! I just chose to work on the field where we are weaker, and I seat on the ground doing something, I think he got that message till the day. Because we talk around in circles but we don't have actually the practical issues sorted. Like we need more flood wardens, we need flood warden training, and all the thing we are trying to do for the year or two is nearly actually happened! We only talk about it. Because Trasem is on the different level, he doesn't come down to the operational side. He is not working on streets, you know, he sits on the end of the throne, bla-bla-bla, but he is a natural leader because of his knowledge in architecture and his experience elsewhere, and he is good in doing that, and he is the voice of the association and the eye of authorities, because who he is? He is a world renowned architect, well respected gentleman. At the end of the day, we are trying to help people, not the political arguments that go on, why they didn't do so, why you couldn't do that and bla-bla-bla. Putting on the defenses are going to take time and money, and realistically we probably will never have money to put the defenses Tarsem wants, like the bounce lakes, and we should concentrate as much on the practical help, if you wish, for the residents, as much as that" (TF). Different understanding of means of problem resolution leads to communicative failures and disorder in group activities. The imbalance in the combination of tactical and strategic activities may cause certain negative impacts on the CFAG performance. The negative consequences can be the following: on the one hand, if the tactics and activities on the ground prevail over the long-term plans of problem resolution, there is a high probability of the decrease in substantial financial transfers from the authorities, as the outcomes of the CFAG work become less evident. On the other hand, when the long-term resource intensive projects inhibit the short-term tasks at ground level (e.g. monitoring water levels, collecting information about the community residents), the CFAG loses its meaning because it breaks the relationships and trust between the group and the broader community and makes the group disrooted, while the tight connection with the locality and its intimate knowledge is the hallmark of the CFAG.

2.3.3. Local knowledge as a resource of collective action

Almost all of the functions performed by the CFAGs have one specific feature in common, which makes CFAG actions unique in comparison to those performed by the authorities or other agencies aimed at working with the communities in the attempt to increase their resilience in the face of future floods. This feature is local knowledge, which is reflected in almost all activities performed by the groups. Just like in the theoretical interpretations of the concept, local knowledge shared by British CFAGs is contextually determined and experience-

based. Upon closer examination, it becomes clear that CFAG members have an intimate knowledge of the area, starting with the landscape and socio-spatial outline of the community (houses inhabited by the elderly, disabled, people with low income, those who have limited individual capacities to protect themselves and their properties against flood) and ending with precise knowledge of the source and course of flooding and areas at greater risk, developed out of contextual experience of the CFAG members. Not surprisingly, local knowledge developed out of the context where the flood constitutes one of the main attributes of living in the area, is enriched with the patterns, which reflect the nature of the flood risk and adaptive practices of community residents permanently subject to it. Floods represent a recurring issue for the communities in question, which allows residents to develop a certain degree of acknowledgment of threat and experience in dealing with it. Thus, local knowledge based on the observation of various types of environmental clues (length of rainy season, wind strength, the water level) allows local residents to build cause-and-effect forecasts, which may serve as an instrument for self-protection.

Putting aside the standard manifestations of local knowledge, it appears reasonable to put an emphasis on the ways CFAGs implement local knowledge in their practices. Being formed over a long period of time, local knowledge transforms into a defense mechanism which is applied not only for self-protection of the local knowledge possessor, but also acts in the interests of the whole community. Knowledge of the sources and causes of flooding and its socio-economic effects developed from the observations is used by the CFAGs as a systematic method of creating risk scenarios. The flood warden of the CFAG explains how local knowledge is implemented in the group's daily work: *"Myself and now with my wife, we are going round and do a long walk along the roads where it normally floods, down A22, whereas the other wardens like Iris and Keyton will let me know about the basements, because that is the good indicator, if it is water in the basements then we got a problem, a rising problem which means if we have heavy rainfall that will meet with the groundwater level coming up and cause flooding" (TF).* Systematic observation and monitoring incorporated in various practices, such as walking down the rivers and flood-prone areas or communicating with community residents, later result in a set of benchmarks, or reference points, that are usually reflected in the CFAG flood plans. Such markers serve as the triggers for particular actions of the CFAG to be performed: *"Using that information and our own observations, our own eyes and ears walking around, then we can decide whether the situation is serious enough for us to invoke the emergency plan, and that means basically if any of the triggers are met, or any of warnings are met, any flood warden, or Tarsem can contact the local councils into and declare a flood problem in Purley, and thereafter the emergency planning department will decide upon the level of response they will send down to the area" (TF).* Using intimate knowledge of the source, course, velocity of flood as well as people and areas at greater risk of being flooded, CFAGs coordinate their actions and inform local authorities about the situation in the area and measures required.

It has been observed that local knowledge finds its implementation both prior to, and during, the flood. Even though CFAGs are not allowed to interfere in the actions of official responders, local knowledge often constitutes a resource that supplements the official response. This becomes the case when official responders, due to certain circumstances, do not possess intimate knowledge of the area. Providing necessary assistance, police or fire brigades, however, are not always able to meet the needs of local residents, in terms of information and advice on further actions. The most vivid example of such informal collaboration of official response and CFAGs local knowledge was provided by one of the interviewees: *"During the recent flooding in January, February, I was walking around, talking to the police, the police was drafted from everyone in London because it was such a big problem that local police was not enough to deal with, people who come to the police and say 'well we got this road blocked off and how do I get to so and so?', and the police was not having the knowledge of the roads and could not answer them, whereas I could. And there was one case, I was able to tell one lady how she can get to her mother by navigating the road closures, whereas the police coming from different boroughs couldn't do that"* (TF).

Such use of local knowledge in terms of flood management is often considered a valuable resource and substantial aid in community resilience building. The CFAG members are thus acknowledged as a source of valuable information, which can hardly be derived from any official sources, and it is not devoid of accuracy and predictive power. That is what the representative of the NFF says about collaboration with CFAGs: *"They gave us valuable information we couldn't have got from any models and maps about the flooding sources or the time the water stays, and all the information was sometimes missed by the agencies because they don't know the local knowledge, they don't live in the area, so it is really important to get that local knowledge and also to ask people what they think is required or what they think the problem is"* (SP).

The topic of local knowledge utility is not new and constitutes a substantial body of research and literature advocating the need for its acknowledgement and active use, as a facilitator of certain processes and practices, such as resource conservation, effective environmental management and others. The majority of these works demonstrates how local knowledge becomes a useful instrument for those who do not possess it initially (e.g. researchers, managers, policy makers). The case of the CFAG introduces a slightly different angle on how, by whom and for what purposes local knowledge is used. Here we can observe a situation where local knowledge is transferred from the category of tacit 'know how' to the acknowledged instrument of goal achievement. Such a shift can be explained by the fact that local knowledge becomes the node around which the interactions between the group, authorities and third parties are built, meaning that it constitutes a subject of permanent articulation and common interest. This articulation happens when the CFAGs, authorities and other agencies are establishing relations of reciprocity. Different trajectories of cooperation between the CFAGs, authorities and other agencies, demands from the groups to explain what they can "bring to the table" in order to perform their main function, to build community resilience, and to receive support. The benefits

provided by the authorities and third parties are rather straightforward as most often they are incorporated in the form of financial, institutional and organizational aid as they are either facilitating the emergence of a CFAG or contributing to its further development. The reciprocal benefits provided by the CFAGs are less evident, yet not less important. As has already been said, the CFAGs are acknowledged as the sources of local community knowledge. Based on their intimate knowledge of the area and long-term observations of the flooding issue, the groups become the providers of information of different character: notification of agencies about the flooding issue in the community and the state of affairs within it. In this case, the CFAGs represent not only the source, but also a convenient channel of information dissemination as they report on the general state of the community and the measures required for its protection in real-time. Additionally, the CFAGs provide predictive information about the flood, based on the observations of flood markers, reporting where and when the incident may occur, and report about the possible sources of flood, for instance the failure or the blockage of the drainage system. Generalizing, the CFAGs possess local knowledge, which serves a valuable source of insider information about the community, which allows them to work as an intermediary between the authorities and the community.

2.4. Comparative analysis of forms, aims and mechanisms of collective action in British and Russian communities

The comparative analysis of the two cases under study is divided into three parts in accordance with the main elements of the research question: the forms, aims and mechanisms of collective action performed as a response to flood in British and Russian rural communities.

2.4.1 Forms of collective action

My first aim in this paragraph is to provide an overview of the forms of collective action as observed in two cases and propose an explanation of their differences. The examination of both cases demonstrates that collective action representing a clear example of task interaction can take place at various stages of the incident: prior, during or in the aftermath of a flood, depending on the aim that the collective action pursues. It has been observed that the forms of collective action may vary according to the stage of the incident. The investigation of the Russian case reveals similar forms of collective action both during and after the flood: here, collective action is normally incorporated in the form of a spontaneous gathering of community members aimed at rapid task resolution. The same form is also characteristic for British communities during the flood; however, in the aftermath of disaster, the collective action tends to take the form of an organized group action. Such an organized form of collective

response to flooding is performed predominantly by the Community Flood Action Groups, the major aim of which is to increase community resilience to future floods.

The discovered differences in the forms that collective action takes in two countries can be explained by several factors, either internal (inherent to the community) or external in character. The internal factors can be described as follows:

- **Perception of the threat**: in both cases, flooding is perceived as an environmental condition which should be accepted, but the influence of which should be managed in order to minimize its negative consequences for the community in terms of financial and emotional damage. For instance, a Russian interviewee recalls: "*Well, we survived it, well, I have seen what it's like, but anyway, how can it affect my life, if I have moved here once, if I live here, then I have to accept this*" (R3). One of the British flood wardens expresses a similar opinion: "*I spoke to my wife and I said: 'Look, shall we move to an area without the same flood risk?' She said at that time: 'No, she wanted to stay', and at that point I said: 'Well, if we are staying then we have got to do what we can as individuals to make the village and the surroundings more flood resilient" (LA)*. However, even if the perception of a problem is more or less the same in two countries, the views on the ways in which it can be managed are strikingly different. The residents' perception of the forms and the very possibility of flood management also powerfully determines the forms which their collective action takes. In the Russian case, the attempts to manage the flooding problem bear either individual character (e.g. measures intended at individual property protection), or unorganized collective character when rapid task resolution is required. The latter collective action finds expression in the form of mutual help provision among the residents of the community and is predominantly of a physical nature (e.g. assistance in lifting belongings to the upper floors). The low probability of the spontaneous form of collective action developing into a more organized collaboration can be explained by the interviewees' evaluations of the very possibility of managing the problem. Local residents do not have any clear idea of how organized collective action may profit each individual and the whole community, as they are skeptical about the very possibility of managing the flooding, perceiving it as an unpredictable and unregulated force of nature, whereas collective efforts and resources are regarded as totally insufficient to resolve the problem. The British case demonstrates a completely different perspective on the possibilities of flood management, revealing an understanding of what can and should be done. Undoubtedly, this does not mean that all residents of British rural communities are aware of the tools and mechanisms of community protection and problem management in the long run. Just like in the Russian case, a significant number of residents are rather concerned about the safety of their own property and do not see any need for investment in collective work. However, those individuals who join collective action and become members of the CFAG apparently perceive flood management as possible and required, and assess their intragroup capacities as capable of influencing the situation.

- **Resource heterogeneity**: the investigation of two cases demonstrates that the volume of available resources plays a crucial role in the determination of the form the collective action takes. It has been observed that for collective action emergence an "acceptably insufficient" amount of resources within the community is required. Since organized collective action presupposes individual investment in the achievement of a common good, potential participants should have resources scarce enough to understand that the goal cannot be achieved by individual means, but at the same time sufficient for investment in achieving the common good on a permanent basis. When individual resources are limited to the extent that they cannot be invested in activities that go beyond the routine, organized collaboration can hardly happen. The examination of the Russian case demonstrates complex interrelations between social heterogeneity and resource heterogeneity. It has been found that resource heterogeneity in Russian communities is conditioned by their social composition. Social heterogeneity is represented by the strict division of community members into local and non-local residents. As the collected narratives show, local residents are predominantly low-income pensioners, while non-locals are middle-aged people who enjoy greater material prosperity. On the one hand, the presence of highly resourceful actors is necessary for the "critical mass" to emerge (to use Oliver's terms) (Marwell & Oliver, 1993), which later leads to the appearance of the organizers and the executors of collective action. However, as theory suggests, another property that the critical mass should possess is a high level of interest in achieving the common good. Herein I find the following controversy: those members of Russian communities who have substantial resources are not interested enough in investing in collective action. The lack of interest and the unwillingness to act collaboratively are conditioned by the availability of personal alternatives in the resolution of the flooding problem. Personal alternatives are conditioned by their high level of mobility and the large amount of individual resources which non-permanent residents possess. This allows them to manage the flood problem individually, thus ensuring personal well-being (e.g. to concrete riverbanks, put their houses on piles, etc.). Permanent residents, on the contrary, are highly interested in flood management, which constitutes a common good for them. This expressed interest is determined by the lack of personal alternatives caused by the low mobility level (due to their age and health problems as well as low financial welfare) and strong emotional attachment to the community which has developed due to their lasting residence in the community and the establishment of firm socio-emotional networks with its residents. However, the amount of resources that the local residents possess is substantially limited, which does not allow them to invest in organized collaboration on a permanent basis. The scarcity of financial resources is accompanied by the lack of the social resources, namely manpower. This deficiency is further aggravated by the fact that local residents do not consider the cottagers as potential partners for cooperation, as they are not rooted in the community, meaning that they are not deeply involved in the networks of interactions and durable processes of direct reciprocity, which constitute an informal norm of community operation. Such obstacles hinder the potential of collective action to develop into a more organized form of group work. The example of British CFAGs demonstrates that

a substantial amount of (instrumental and strategic) resources are required for collective action to take the form of an organized group action performed by the CFAGs. It has been observed that, along with the individual resources, the actors within such groups possess so-called community resources that serve as facilitators in the emergence and development of organized collective action. Community resources here are the elements of community social structure (e.g., already established institutions of civic engagement). The example here can be the Residents Associations in British rural communities, which is a form of residents' cooperation aimed at the discussion and resolution of community problems. In the investigated Russian communities, such forms of civic participation are not practiced, which significantly limits the residents' understanding of the advantages that collective action brings in problem resolution. Although local dwellers have matters of common concern (e.g. village infrastructure), they prefer to address them individually, in the absence of the experience of collective problem resolution.

Speaking about the external factors influencing the forms collective action takes, most generally they can be described as the approaches to flood risk management and the related general political context. My main argument here is that the approach of community members to flood risk management exerts a significant influence on the forms of collective action performed by communities at risk. The British approach to flood risk management demonstrates an evident "social turn" in the issue of flood mitigation as it undergoes a shift from a defensive approach to a more "civic model" (Nye et al., 2011). One of the main ideas of the new approach is to increase the level of community participation and engagement in flood management and to devolve certain responsibilities concerning the resilience toward future floods to the community level. The idea of this approach is deeply rooted in a broader political context, and is reflected in the sustainable development agenda (e.g. Community Action 2020 – Together We Can Programme), and also in environmental policymaking claiming the need for community empowerment and its inclusion as a competent actor in the decision-making processes. Furthermore, these ideas also reflect the very broad context concerning the ideas of Third Way social democracy, active citizenship and responsible collaboration of civic society and the state for the good of efficient governance. The Flood Resilience Community Pathfinder project funded by DEFRA may serve as an example of how the approach to flood management and the political context can influence the form of collective action. This project seeks to enable communities at great risk of flooding to increase their resilience by working in collaboration with local authorities and various agencies responsible for flood risk management. As part of the project, CFAGs are established. The CFAGs represent a form of organized collective response to flooding and serve as a mediator between the community and the authorities. Additionally, as the collected narratives of the NFF representatives demonstrate, it is often the case that community residents willing to tackle the flooding issue turn to the NFF for organizational, institutional and financial support. To summarize this, the governmental and non-governmental

institutions play the role of supportive and facilitating agencies that condition the transformation of unorganized collective response to flood into organized and well-established group work.

By contrast, the Russian approach to flood management does not contribute to the formation of organized collective action and sometimes directly impedes it.

The Russian approach to environmental governance, and flood mitigation in particular, retains both the guise and the content of its Soviet predecessor, as it maintains high reliance on hard engineering solutions and a hierarchical top-down approach to decision-making, thus neglecting communities as competent stakeholders in flood management and community resilience building. Such an approach causes reluctance and unwillingness of local authorities and other institutions to help the communities to organize collaboration, which, in turn, leaves the local residents without institutional support and resources and thus hinders the formation of organized collective action.

Based on what has been said above, I conclude that collective action performed in Russian communities is hindered by a great variety of obstacles ranging from the lack of resources and the rhetoric of futility, to the political context unfavorable for civic participation. However, as the research demonstrates, even a well-organized collective action does not necessarily unfold unproblematically. One of the main issues revealed in the course of the examination of organized collective actions is the "free rider" dilemma classical for collective action theory. The examination of British CFAGs reveals the following controversy: the effective functioning of the group is expressed in such forms as the maintenance of drainage infrastructure in the community, the supply of protective devices, and the assistance in coping with the aftermaths of the incident which are undoubtedly positive outcomes and the benefits the CFAGs are striving for. On the other hand, such efficiency of group performance often leads to situations when other members of the community stay passive both in cooperation with the CFAG and, even more importantly, in the performance of self-protective and preparation measures. For instance, one of the member of the NFF complains: *"One of the issues we are facing in both areas, and lots of the residents are saying themselves, is that sometimes other neighbors rely on them to go on and pass on information, so sometimes, if they have a good group, other people are getting lazy, and that is not worth them joining, because they just rely on information from the people who are already involved, you know (laughs). Sometimes they can be double-edged, so if you have a quite good group, sometimes other people don't join the group 'cos they think they don't really need to, because I find all the information, and they will do it on our behalf, so sometimes people rely on other residents, other neighbors to do on their behalf" (SP).* In this way, other members of the community where the CFAG is operating devolve their responsibilities to the active members of the group, as they understand that the common good will be achieved regardless of the extent of their personal investment. This situation adversely affects the CFAG itself, as it restricts the inflow of the new volunteers to the group, which is very often required. The lack of the people willing to contribute to the group work

often leads to the situation when the groups grow composed of the people who are not very well prepared for membership in the CFAG. For instance, one of the flood wardens reports: *"R: Ok, and could you explain, how did you decide to invite those particular people? I: Right, good question. In a way, I had no choice. Those who came forward when I asked, I had to take on. On the other sight, I would not have taken them, if you know what I mean. I had to take three people from businesses, the fourth guy, he moves out of the area, so anyway, but generally they all have businesses, and in the other case I would not be taking them because they were affected and couldn't deal with it. So, the thing was I had no choice because no one else came forward. No one else came forward, knocking on my door when I put in a press that some flood wardens are required" (TF)*. This example also reflects an interesting controversy. On the one hand, it seems reasonable that people who were personally affected by flood can contribute to the group work substantially, as they know the problem from inside and are more passionate to invest in its resolution. On the other hand, as the interviewee's statement demonstrates, personal involvement in a flood incident sometimes does not allow the member of the CFAG to act in the general interests of the community, while his/her own interests are under threat.

The free rider dilemma can sometimes also arise within the CFAGs when some members of the group invest in collective action more actively while the others find themselves not so involved knowing that they will receive a certain fraction of a common good in any circumstance. The following utterance of one of the flood wardens clearly describes this situation: *"The whole plan needs reviewing, and I accept that, I mean, the aims have changed, the contacts have changed, but everybody who signed upon that plan, they have not changed, but none of them came back to me and said: 'Ah, that's wrong now'. This is what I mean: they have been endorsing the plan by accepting it, but it is totally under the desk, and don't refer to it, that is my frustration. But I need to review and change things on it, but I don't want to do too many changes yet because I have to spend time doing it, I have other things to do in my life" (TF)*. This, in turn, can lead to the disintegration of the group, as those who invest more and do not get positive response or support from the others begin to experience discontent and frustration.

2.4.2. Aims of collective action

The categories of forms and aims of collective action are strongly linked to each other, as the form largely determines the range of aims that can be achieved by the group, while the aims determine the forms the action takes, at least in regard to planned action. My investigation of two country-specific cases demonstrates this relationship clearly. Unorganized and spontaneous action registered in both communities (predominantly during and after the flood) is built around the accomplishment of a momentary task (e.g. helping the elderly to evacuate from an area at risk), where rapid task resolution constitutes the aim of the action. The character of the aim (short-duration and task-specificity) determines the emergent and disorganized character of collective action as the

means of achieving this aim. The on-the-spot task resolution requires fast mobilization of collective resources, the utilization of which does not require prolonged organization and ordering. Being incorporated mostly in the form of mutual help provision, collective action is therefore channeled through already established informal networks of social ties and relations of direct reciprocity and thus does not require any new structures of performance and interaction to be produced. The emergent nature and inconstancy of collective action do not allow a clear structure to emerge; neither do they enable the community members to direct their actions in a collaborative way for the realization of long-term tasks.

On the contrary, the organized form of collective action discovered in British communities allows setting and executing the tasks of a long-term nature. This is facilitated by the organizational structure of the groups. Firstly, the structure allows accumulating, reconciling and coordinating the interests and resources of separate actors and directing them to the collective realization of their goal. Secondly, the realization of complex long-term aims requires coherent processes of decision-making, role distribution and allocation of responsibilities, as well as the establishment of intragroup norms of interaction regulating encounters and negotiations both within and outside the group, which altogether facilitates group performance. The achievement of sophisticated aims also assumes long and continuous interaction of collective action participants with each other and with the third parties (as the source of additional resources), which can hardly be established without certain organizational structure. For instance, the example of the CFAGs demonstrates that the organizational structure of the group often enshrined in a separate document (e.g. a Flood Plan) allows pursuing durable objectives. Communication within the community (in the form of education and advice on protective measures against the floods), performance of the applied functions "at-ground" (e.g. monitoring water levels) and cooperation with local authorities (e.g. notification about the flood in the community) becomes possible due to the presence of the group structure, since this structure allows members to distribute the roles and establish networks of interdependencies that bind and guide the work of separate individuals into the collective achievement of the common good. The British case is also indicative of such correlation as the more resources the process of goal achievement demands, the more organization it requires. As has been described earlier, along with the functions "at-ground", another group of functions performed by the CFAGs is aimed at the realization of long-term projects which reflects the ambition of the communities to resolve the flooding problem in the long run. Since the realization of the projects is resource-intensive, the internal resources of the CFAGs are usually insufficient to reach the goal. This necessitates the group to interact with external resource providers such as local authorities, the Environment Agency, the National Flood Forum and others. Interaction with these actors requires intensive utilization of group structure for the deliberate distribution and performance of functions that the CFAGs take as partners in project realization. The regulatory power of structure becomes of particular importance here since the result depends on the coherence of interaction between all the participants of collective action.

2.4.3 Mechanisms of collective action

The mechanisms of collective action performance are dependent on its forms and aims. As it has been observed in two countries, unorganized collective action, which mainly aims at the instant on-the-spot task resolution, is built around the non-institutionalized networks of kinship, friendship and neighborship, and informal norms which regulate community functioning. These mechanisms allow rapid resource accumulation for goal-achievement since the networks of cooperation are already, albeit tacitly, established. However, the volume of available resources is limited by the boundaries of the community, which narrows down the range of activities that can be collectively performed.

A more complex organization of collective action both ensures and requires a wider spectrum of mechanisms used for the realization of multiple functions. The examination of the British case demonstrates that the complex organizational structure of the CFAGs, as well as the multiplicity of functions performed by the group, presuppose the establishment and utilization of different mechanisms which address the needs of the group. One of the most evident mechanisms of the CFAGs performance is cooperation with local authorities and other agencies which serve as resource providers for the group operation. The mechanisms of cooperation are often accompanied by the activation of resources (e.g. social and human capital) which the individual members of the CFAG, and the CFAG as a group, possess. For instance, such individual resources as educational background and skills as well as some manifestations of the participant's social capital (e.g. affiliation with a particular organization or simply involvement in informal networks) allows the CFAG to establish contacts which would benefit group performance. The following fragment from the interview with a flood warden of one of the CFAG illustrates such a possibility: *"Phil, you have probably noticed him, he has been part of the residence association for a long time, and he is also the editor of the Journal, so he is a politician who is also a journalist, so he has started our Journal, pushed it together. Now he came because he is gonna be a joint thing between Residents association and the Purley business association because, in fairness and in truth, most of the properties that are flooded are businesses and not too many residents. Thus we dragged in a Purley business association to help form the group"* (TF). Additionally, it has been observed that not only individuals but also organizations can serve as mediators in the mechanisms of resource gain. An example here would be the National Flood Forum which acts as an intermediary between the CFAGs and other agencies. The NFF assists groups in establishing contacts with the agencies responsible for flood management by means of the multi-agency meetings where the CFAGs can articulate their interests and needs and receive the help they are in need of.

To summarize, I can conclude that spontaneous and unorganized collective action uses the already existing tacit mechanisms of collaboration between community members while organized group work requires planned, deliberately established and artificially constructed mechanisms for the realization of complex aims.

Another distinction discovered in the course of comparison of two cases lies in the implementation of local knowledge. The investigation shows that in both cases communities demonstrate and implement local knowledge strongly contextualized by the constant presence of the threat of flooding. In this stance, local knowledge is incorporated in various forms ranging from the intimate knowledge of the area's landscape and sources, causes and possible outcomes of floods, to the socio-economic outlook of the community and full awareness of its weak points (e.g. places and residents at greater risk). It has been observed that local knowledge developed out of practice and experience of being affected or witnessing flood exert a significant influence upon the way of life of the communities, and is reflected in the routine practices of people at risk. In both cases, local knowledge is used as a tool for adaptation and the mechanism of protection against floods. However, the difference in the ways local knowledge is used is drastic. With respect to Russian rural communities, local knowledge is used predominantly in the mechanisms of self-protection (e.g. specialized practices of farming and housing) and bears the character of tacit "know-how". This knowledge is accumulated collectively (through succession or in the form of oral storytelling) and distributed and enriched informally: through everyday communication and unintentional exchange of experience.

In British communities, local knowledge becomes an important mechanism of community protection when accumulated and used by the CFAGs. For the CFAGs, local knowledge represents a resource, which is used in the following ways. Firstly, the deep engagement of the CFAGs members in the community allows them to articulate the residents' interests and meet their needs with greater success as compared to outsider agencies aimed at working with the communities. Secondly, local knowledge constitutes one of the main resources around which the collaboration between the authorities and the CAFGs unfolds. Groups are often an ultimate source of information about the community and various properties of flood incident, which can be hardly collected from any other sources. Being the carriers and practitioners of local knowledge, the CFAGs members can assess and propose the ways of protecting their community taking into account the socio-environmental peculiarities of the area. In this way, the CFAGs serve as a mediator between the communities and the authorities.

Besides the fact that in the British case local knowledge is used not as an individual, but rather as a collective mechanism of protection, the acknowledgment of local knowledge also differs substantially in two cases. In comparison to the tacit and performative knowledge of the Russian communities, the local knowledge implemented in the CFAGs work is acknowledged and verbalized as a valuable resource and a source of benefits

both for the possessors and the users. Being an object of direct reciprocity, local knowledge experiences transition from the form of implicit and unspoken knowledge to the acknowledged, articulated and deliberately accumulated one.

Conclusion

In the final section of this paper, I shall come back to the questions outlined throughout the thesis. I shall give a brief overview of my empirical results and establish connections between the research findings and the theoretical concepts analyzed in the first chapter of the paper. Finally, the limitations of the investigation will be discussed along with the ideas for future research, which can update the results proposed in the paper.

My research seeks to provide a comparative analysis of collective action performed as a response to flood in British and Russian rural communities. The investigation covers three characteristics of collective action: its forms, aims and mechanisms – to be compared in two cases under study.

The investigation is based on the theoretical framework organized around two major concepts: collective action and local knowledge. With respect to the former concept, recent research demonstrates a shift from the purely economic interpretation of collective action to the more nuanced sociological approach questioning the interpretation of an individual's decision to join and invest in collective action as strictly-utilitarian, cost-benefit, implicitly rational and independent. Following this trend, the present research demonstrates how classical sociological categories such as "norm", "reciprocity", social bonding and others influence and channel collective action. Despite the fact that the concept of collective action is extensively addressed in disaster studies, especially in the field of resilience inquiry, the bulk of attention is paid to the organized and institutionalized forms of collective action. Meanwhile, the present research extends this limited approach and demonstrates that, along with planned and well-organized group actions, a less formal, emergent and sporadic form of collective action often unfolds in natural disasters, which deserves particular scrutiny. As the classical approach to collective action suggests, collective action is performed by groups, or even more, by organizations. This means that collective action is assumed to involve a substantial level of organization and coordination. One of the main findings of my research is that, as a matter of practice, collective action, like groups themselves, can vary considerably in the level of organization. To draw the distinction between the forms of collective action, the group dynamics theory is applied. The concept of group is suggested for detailed consideration as it allows to trace the differences in the level of group organization, group dynamics and mechanisms of performance.

The second theoretical concept used in my theoretical framework is local knowledge. The concept of local knowledge was not initially assumed as relevant for my research but it proved itself relevant after the first wave of empirical research when it was discovered that local knowledge was extensively

used by rural community members as an instrument of individual and community protection against floods and simultaneously the resource for collective action performance.

As regards my empirical findings, I propose to present the results following the main elements of the research question.

It has been discovered that collective action in British and Russian rural communities represents a form of community members' response to the flood or the risk of being flooded. The flooding issue thus serves as the trigger for the emergence and development of collective action. The flooding issue is acknowledged by the investigated communities in a twofold manner: on the one hand, flooding is perceived as an inherent attribute of the environment, which the residents have to adapt to if they agree to stay in the area "at risk". On the other hand, in both cases flooding is acknowledged as a problem, which should be managed in order to regulate its consequences. Collective action here is an instrument of flood risk management practiced by the communities. As the research demonstrates, for the Russian rural communities, collective action takes the form of immediate response to a threat, meaning that in most cases it is performed during, or right after, the incident. In this case, collective action takes the shape of mutual help provision, which appears immediately and sporadically as a response to the external threat. This type of collective action is characterized by low degree of organization and by a short period of existence, as collaboration vanishes when the task is accomplished (help is provided).

This type of collective action is also indicative for the British case during the flood, when immediate task resolution is required. At the same time, the British case also demonstrates another form that collective action can take. This collective action is embodied in the form of group work, aimed at cooperation with the local communities in order to increase the level of community resilience through the prevention or minimization of negative consequences of the future threats. This long-term action, characterized by a high degree of self-organization, is performed by the groups of local communities' residents that bear the name of Community Flood Action Groups. This form of collective action represents a response not only to the actual incidence of the flood, but also to the anticipated threat, meaning that it is more focused on the premeditated preparation than on-the-spot problem resolution.

The form that collective action takes largely determines the aims and objectives that the participants of action would pursue. The reverse is also true, meaning that the form of action is often conditioned by the aims this action is designed to achieve. Based on the results of my empirical analysis, I can distinguish between two categories of aims that can be achieved by means of collective action: short-term and long-term ones. As the name implies, short-term aims are focused on momentary site-specific task realization and are normally observed during or in the immediate aftermath of the flood. The realization of these aims does not require the establishment of any clear organization of the action: the action can be performed even without strong cohesion and interdependence of the participants, and does not impose strict boundaries on those who are or are

not involved in the action, as the composition of the members changes frequently. Long-term aims are achieved by means of an organized collective action. As the British case demonstrates, the long-term aims are focused on the preparation of the community for the future threats of flooding. The aims of the CFAGs express this logic clearly. In general, the aims of the groups can be divided into two categories: those targeted at the realization of applied functions "at ground", which include the function of education and advice on precautionary measures and personal risk assessment, and those focused on the realization of long-term projects and seeking to resolve the flooding issue in the long run (e.g. to establish a hard-engineering defense, or to install a pump) which requires close collaboration with the authorities and the lobbying of residents' interests. However, the fact that the CFAGs are focused predominantly on the realization of long-term aims leaves open the possibility of the groups also getting involved in rapid task resolution during a flood. Help provision constitutes a significant part of the CFAGs activities, yet it varies depending on the level of group organization and stage of development.

The aims and the forms of collective action exert a significant influence on the mechanisms of emergence and development of collective action. The empirical data demonstrates that spontaneous and unorganized collective action aiming at mutual help provision during and after the flood is performed mostly through the utilization of already existing networks and norms not subjected to verbalization that shape and regulate interaction and cooperation within the community. The informal networks of kinship, friendship and neighborship, as well as the commonly accepted norm of direct mutual reciprocity, constitute the basis for collective action formation and operation. Together with the external, situational forces (flood incident), the adherence to the norms and socio-emotional ties constitutes the conditions under which the emergent, unplanned collective action arises.

As my empirical research suggests, the realization of more complex aims, as well as the maintenance of the organized character of collective action, requires a wider spectrum of mechanisms. The interrelation of aims and mechanisms used by CFAGs serves an illustrative example here. The examination of the CFAGs demonstrates that the achievement of long-term aims requires substantial resource inputs. These inputs are provided through the accumulation of the resources within the group (utilization of individuals' human and social capital) as well as through the involvement of outsider "investors" such as local authorities and other agencies responsible for flood risk management. The reciprocal interaction of CFAG with the external partners constitutes one of the main mechanisms of group performance. The reciprocal character of CFAG collaboration with authorities and other agencies originates from their mutual contribution to the achievement of the common good – the resilience of the community. As CFGAs are key resource suppliers, local authorities and charities provide them with the financial support used for the realization of long-term projects and functions "at ground" (e.g. publishing leaflets, booklets and other means to create awareness of flood risk in broader communities) and institutional assistance, in terms of helping the CFAGs to become recognized

groups and to establish links with other professionals in the field. The groups, in turn, serve as the carriers and providers of local knowledge, which allows the local authorities and other agencies to get a snapshot of community's internal processes, needs and interests. Being insiders to their rural communities, such groups are able to work on behalf of other residents, clearly voicing their interests and concerns to the authorities, and, in this way,find acceptable solutions to the flooding issue factored in the peculiarities of the environmental and the socio-economic outlook of the area. Being a valuable resource around which the collaboration of the CFAGs as well as authorities and charities is built, local knowledge gradually ceases to be tacit and informal and becomes widely recognized and articulated. Here I have found the distinction between the character and the functions of local knowledge in British and Russian communities. Local knowledge shared by the members of Russian rural communities is fully consistent with the classical interpretation of the concept, being implicit, tacit and unacknowledged as "real" legitimate and valuable knowledge - it remains predominantly the instrument of individual protection against floods. Due to the fact that the development of organized long-term collective action is substantially hindered, and the role of local communities as competent stakeholders in flood management and resilience building is almost absolutely neglected, it appears that local residents do not have the opportunity to share their knowledge with the actors responsible for flood risk management even on the local level and thus to turn it into a recognizable and valuable source of information.

Based on the discussions introduced above, I conclude that my empirical findings correspond to the chosen theoretical frame in the following way. Although, according to the classical interpretation, collective action presupposes a certain extent of organization and institutionalization, the examination of British and Russian rural communities demonstrates that collective action can take various forms, ranging substantially in the extent of organization exhibited. The phenomenon of the CFAGs is an illustrative example of planned and organized group action possessing such properties as the presence of a formal and/or informal leader, clear membership, structured distribution of roles and other attributes, which allow us to identify the boundaries of the group and distinguish it from all the others. Such properties are indicative of group action and thus find resemblance with the main postulates of the theory. The Russian case, in turn, is indicative of the case that collective action should not necessarily possess the explicit characteristics of group action. In fact, collective action observed in Russian rural communities can be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, it can be considered as an action performed by so-called "emergent groups" characterized by a low degree of institutionalization. As theory claims, these groups are not explicitly organized but are likely to develop some elements of structure (Forsyth & McGovern, 1983). The examination of the Russian case demonstrates that, indeed, the observed collective action is often not regulated by written or otherwise artificially established rules, but the interactions within the group are nevertheless regulated by informal and unconditional norms. There are no status-oriented relationships in Russian rural communities, yet people involved in collective action know what to do and whom

to follow. These groups do not presuppose membership *sui generis* but their participants are still involved in the networks of interdependencies. On the other hand, collective action in Russian communities may be indicative of a complete absence of the group, as all properties of the structure mentioned above may be regarded as developed not within the group as such, but in the broader community where the collective action takes place.

With respect to the second theoretical concept, local knowledge, my empirical findings question the traditional interpretation of local knowledge as purely indigenous and strictly opposed to formal, expert knowledge. The research demonstrates that local knowledge can be produced by each spatially concentrated community organized around shared practices and experiences. Indeed, local knowledge is highly contextualized, interactively-derived, practice-based and legitimate mostly for the community where it was produced. However, as the investigation shows, the situational character of local knowledge does not result in the lack of expertise. Undoubtedly, this expertise and specialization is of different character as compared to the academic one, but under certain circumstances it is of equal value. The research also questions the opposition of local and formal knowledge by demonstrating clearly that local knowledge is often developed not autonomously, but in combination with expert knowledge, which substantially enlarges its functional capacities. For instance, the CFAGs use both formal knowledge (e.g. weather forecasts) and informal observations in order to assess the level of anticipated threat with greater accuracy. In this way, I can conclude that the dichotomy between local and expert knowledge is purely analytical, artificial and can be used only as an ideal type, while empirical evidence suggests that the boundaries between these two concepts are blurred, and we can often observe how local and formal knowledge intertwine in the course of applied problem resolution.

A key limitation to this study has been my inability to explore the selected cases in more detail and include other stakeholders beyond the local communities, CFAG and NFF members in the sample. As for the Russian case, speaking to the representatives of the local authorities and other bodies responsible for flood risk management would make an important contribution to the discussion on the possibilities of developing more organized collective action and the evaluation of the prospects of the increase in the contribution of rural communities in resilience building. The same is true for the British case. Additionally, the representation of different views on the issue might be also provided by addressing the members that perform different functions within the CFAG (not only chairmen) as part of the sample. As my research demonstrates, the people who occupy different positions in the group strongly differ in their opinions on a particular problem.

Putting aside the methodological issues, a topic worth consideration has intentionally been left outside the scope of the present paper: namely, outlining the influence of risk and uncertainty on the emergence and development of collective action. Collective action performed as a response to flooding cannot be regarded as an ordinary type of civic engagement in community problem

resolution. This can be explained by the fact that resolution of the flooding issue, which, in this case, represents a common good for collective action, features a high degree of individual risks and uncertainty, as personal contributions may be incommensurable with returns. In other words, the discrepancy of contributions and achievements, in cases when the former outweigh the latter, may cause substantial negative impact on individuals' wellbeing. This requires the extraction and formalization of the rules of decision-making and defining the conditions that guide the process of individuals' affiliation with the group and their willingness to invest in collective action.

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Appendix I Table of respondents

British case

Name	Gender	Age	Occupation	Experience with flood
Lee Atkins (LA)	Male	52	Accountant. CFAG (chairman).	Property affected
Dee Caldwell (DC)	Male	43	Sales manager. CFAG (chairman).	Property affected
Tarsem Flora (TF)	Male	71	Architect. CFAG (chairman).	Not affected
Tony Farell (TF)	Male	62	Businessman. CFAG (flood warden).	Business affected
Naomi Gibson (NG)	Female	-	National Flood Forum, Pathfinder project. Launched CFAGs.	Was not personally affected
Sarah Parkington (SP)	Female	-	National Flood Forum, Pathfinder project. Launched CFAGs.	Was not personally affected
Heather Shepherd (HS)	Female	-	National Flood Forum, Pathfinder project. Launched CFAGs.	Was not personally affected

As for the Russian case, due to the ongoing process of compensation payment distribution, none of the respondents agreed to disclose their identities. Herein, in the table the interviewees are identified by numbers.

Russian case

Respondent code	Gender	Age	Occupation	Experience with floods
R1	Female	63	Pensioner, not working.	Property affected
R2	Female	77	Pensioner, not working.	Property affected
R3	Female	74	Pensioner, not working.	Property affected
R4	Female	55	Pensioner, nurse	Property affected
R5	Male	65	Pensioner, not working	Property affected
R6	Male	49	Fisherman	Property affected
R7	Male	52	Pensioner, entrepreneur	Property affected
R8	Male	74	pensioner, not working	Property affected
R9	Male	62	Pensioner, beekeeper, farmer.	Property affected
R10	Male	66	Pensioner, fisherman.	Property affected

Appendix II Interview Guide (Russian case)

Спасибо, что согласились принять участие в исследовании. Исследование посвящено изучению коллективного действия и самоорганизации в наводнениях. Если во время интервью у вас возникнут какие-то вопросы, пожалуйста, не стесняйтесь спросить. Я бы хотела записать наш разговор на диктофон, если вы не возражаете, тогда у меня не будет необходимости записывать ваши ответы вручную, и это сэкономит Ваше время. Вся полученная информация будет использована только в целях моего исследования. Во всех отчетах и текстах Ваша личность останется анонимной. Если вы пожелаете, чтобы Ваше имя также нигде не фигурировало, пожалуйста, дайте мне знать. Также, если во время интервью мы затронем какую-либо тему, обсуждение которой Вы хотели бы не записывать на диктофон, пожалуйста, дайте мне знать. Это интервью представляет собой обычную беседу, и здесь нет правильных или неправильных ответов.

Community

Скажите, пожалуйста, как долго вы проживаете в этой деревне?

Попробуйте описать, какова организация вашей деревни.

Есть ли в ней лидер? (гласный, негласный)

Как бы вы описали отношения между соседями?

Есть ли какие-то аспекты, которые объединяют вас? (Если да) Какие?

Есть ли какие-то проблемы, вопросы, которые волнуют всех (большинство) жителей деревни? Какие? (например, улучшение инфраструктуры и пр.)

Как такие вопросы разрешаются?

Принимаете ли вы лично участие в обсуждении, решении этих проблем (вопросов)? (Если да) каким образом вы принимаете в них участие? Почему вы решили принимать в них участие?

На ваш взгляд, озабочены ли жители деревни тем, что в ней происходит? (Если нет) Как вы думаете, почему жители остаются безучастными?

Есть ли какие-то вопросы, которые волнуют лично вас? Какие? Пытались ли вы их как-то разрешить, урегулировать? (Если да) Каким образом? (Если нет) почему?

В целом, интересует ли вас состояние вашей деревни? Или же для вас важнее благосостояние непосредственно вашей территории?

Flood experience

Расскажите, пожалуйста, доводилось ли Вам когда-нибудь наблюдать наводнение?

Как вы оказались вовлечены в наводнение?

Как вы узнали о наступлении наводнения?

Помните ли вы момент, когда вода начала прибывать? Какова была ваша реакция?

Постарайтесь вспомнить, что происходило в момент наводнения.

Где находились Ваши родственники, друзья в тот момент?

Как вы восприняли наводнение? Было ли это что-то обыденное для вас, или это была настоящая катастрофа?

Как скоро вы поняли, что вам нужно отложить ваши повседневные дела и начать предпринимать какие-либо действия для того, чтобы защитить себя, свою собственность?

Каковы были ваши действия в момент наводнения?

Попробуйте вспомнить, что делали другие люди в момент наводнения?

Нужна ли вам была какая-либо помощь? Ели да, то какого рода помощь?

Обращались ли вы к кому-нибудь за помощью? Если да, то к кому?

Почему вы решили обратиться именно к этим людям?

Была ли помощь оказана?

Была ли у вас возможность оказать помощь другим людям, оказавшимся в такой же ситуации, как и вы?

Это была ваша инициатива или к вам обратились за помощью?

(Если инициатива) Как вы поняли, что этим людям нужна ваша помощь?

(Если обратились) Как вы думаете, почему именно к вам обратились за помощью?

(Если да) Какого рода помощь вы оказывали?

Постарайтесь вспомнить, нужна ли вам была какая-либо дополнительная информация? Информация какого рода? Пытались ли вы каким-либо способом добывать эту информацию? (Если да) Каким способом?

Постарайтесь вспомнить, как местные власти действовали в критической ситуации?

Поступали ли какие-либо предупреждения о возможном наводнении? (Если да) От кого и в какой форме?

Какова была ваша реакция на эти предупреждения?

На ваш взгляд, были ли действия местных властей удовлетворительными или чего-то не хватало? Как вы считаете, чего именно не хватало, чтобы улучшить ситуацию?

Распространяли ли вы информацию о происходящем? (Если да) в каких кругах? Каким образом? (Если нет) Почему вы не стали никого предупреждать?

Helping groups

Не замечали ли вы своего рода групп, в которые люди объединялись для того, чтобы помогать друг другу или другим жителям деревни?

(Если да) Знаете ли вы, как эти группы возникали? По какому принципу люди объединялись?

Были ли вы членом одной из таких групп?

(Если да) Не могли бы вы объяснить, почему вы решили участвовать в деятельности группы?

Как вы оказались вовлечены в работу группы?

Чем группа занималась? Какого рода помощь оказывала? Кому?

Как вы определяли территорию и людей, которым нужно помочь?

Как в группе распределились обязанности?

Каковы были ваши обязанности в группе?

Был ли в группе лидер? Как он стал лидером?

Возникали ли какие-либо проблемы, противоречия во время работы группы?

Как вы думаете, что послужило причинной возникновения группы? Почему вы решили действовать коллективно, а не поодиночке?

No helping groups

Скажите, пожалуйста, каковы были последствия наводнения для вас?

Нужна ли вам была помощь после того, когда вода отступила?

Какого рода помощь вам была нужна?

Обращались ли вы к кому-нибудь за помощью? (Если да) к кому? Почему именно к этим людям?

Был ли люди, которые предлагали вам помощь? (Если да) Кто это был?

Как вы думаете, были ли такие люди или организации, которые были **должны** вам помочь? (люди, структуры). Чья обязанность это была? Почему они должны были вам помочь? Какого рода помощь они должны были вам оказать? Обращались ли вы к ним за помощью? Каков был

ответ? (Если не обращались) Почему не обращались? Обращался ли кто-то из ваших знакомых, соседей к ним за помощью? Каков был ответ?

Была ли у вас возможность помочь другим людям после наводнения? Предлагали ли вы кому-нибудь свою помощь? Кому? Почему именно этим людям? (Если да) Кому вы помогли? Каким образом?

На ваш взгляд, в чем заключались основные причины неблагоприятных последствий наводнения? (например, отсутствие заблаговременного оповещения, отсутствие материалов для защиты дома от наводнения).

Как вы думаете, что могло бы помочь снизить ущерб (моральный, материальный), причиненный наводнением?

Предпринимаете ли вы какие-то действия с вашей стороны, чтобы улучшить ситуацию в будущем?

Есть ли какие-то аспекты, которые местные власти или другие организации должны были учесть, чтобы не допустить произошедшего или хотя бы сократить негативные последствия? Какие меры они должны предпринять?

Как вы считаете, если бы вы объединили усилия с другими людьми (соседями), могло бы это сократить негативные последствия наводнения?

(Если да) С кем бы вы хотели объединить усилия? Почему именно с этими людьми?

Какого рода деятельность вы бы осуществляли?

Кому бы вы оказывали помощь? Какого рода?

Хотели бы вы осуществлять эту коллективную деятельность формально или неформально?

Хотели бы вы взаимодействовать только лишь внутри вашей общности (деревни), среди местных жителей, или вы бы хотели также взаимодействовать с представителями власти, организациями, ответственными за урегулирование подобных чрезвычайных ситуаций?

С кем бы вы взаимодействовали?

Как вы думаете, могли бы вы в некоторой степени помогать организациям, ответственным за урегулирование подобных ЧС? Например, сообщать о первых признаках наводнений, о людях, которым нужна помощь в первую очередь и пр.? (Если нет) Почему нет? (Если да) Почему вы не пробовали так поступать?

Как вы считаете, возможно ли создание подобного рода групп?

На ваш взгляд, каковы основные препятствия для их создания?

Posteffect

Как на вас повлияло наводнение?

Будете ли вы что-либо предпринимать, чтобы не допустить подобных ситуаций в будущем? Что именно?

Есть ли какие-то уроки, которые вы для себя извлекли после произошедшего?

Какие советы вы бы дали людям, оказавшимся в подобной ситуации?

Flood experience

Пол

Возраст

Профессия

Appendix III Guide for a CFAG member. British case

Dear (),

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the interview. Your participation and experience is very important as help in understanding the development of flood action groups. My research represents a comparison between Russian and British experience of coping with floods. Your knowledge and experience is of particular importance since in Russia these practices (practices of helping-groups and flood-action groups) are not as well developed as in the UK.

First of all, I would like to clarify whether you will have 45 minutes for the interview.

I would like to record our conversation as it will save time writing your answers. The information will be used only for my personal analysis purposes. Your identity will be kept anonymous in reports. If there is anything you would not like to be recorded, please say.

This interview is an ordinary conversation, and there are no right or wrong answers there.

QUESTIONS

FLOOD EXPERIENCE

First of all, I would like to ask you if you have ever witnessed a flood. Were you personally affected or you just witnessed it?

YES (affected): When did it happened?

How soon did you realize that you have to stop your daily routines and start to somehow protect yourself or your property?

Where were your relatives/closest people when it was happening? How did you communicate with them? (did you have any possibilities to communicate with them?)

Could you recall what you and other people were doing?

Did you need any help or assistance?

YES: Did you ask anyone for help? Whom did you ask?

Was the help provided? In what way?

And did anyone ask you to assist? YES: Were there any possibilities for you to help this person(s)?

Can you recall what sort of help it was?

Did you assist anyone upon your own initiative? YES: Why did you decide to do that?

Do you remember how the local authorities were acting? Were there any emergency services, how did they perform?

In your eyes, were those actions sufficient, or anything else should have been done?

Where there any good practices of the authorities and emergency services?

Have you ever joined a helping group? YES: Was it during that flood you are talking about?   When did you join it?

NO (Just witnessed)

Have you ever joined a helping group? (during the flood)

YES: Let us now talk about the flood during which you joined this helping group.

Could you recall what you and other people were doing?

Did anyone ask you to assist? YES: Were there any possibilities for you to help this person(s)?

Can you recall what sort of help it was?

Did you assist anyone upon your own initiative? YES: Why did you decide to do that?

NO: Do you remember how the local authorities were acting? Were there any emergency services, how did they perform?

In your eyes, were those actions sufficient or anything else should have been done?

Where there any good practices of the authorities and emergency services?

NO: Are you now the member of the flood-action group? What was the point when you decided to join the group? Was it after some particular flood or it happened regardless of your flood experience?

Ok, let us now talk about the flood during which you joined the flood action group.

Could you recall what you and other people were doing during that flood?

Did anyone ask you to assist? YES: Were there any possibilities for you to help this person(s)?

Can you recall, what sort of help it was?

Did you assist anyone upon your own initiative? YES: Why did you decide to do that?

NO

Do you remember how the local authorities were acting? Were there any emergency services, how did they perform?

In your eyes, were those actions sufficient or anything else should have been done?

Where there any good practices of the authorities and emergency services?

VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE

Have you previously participated in any kind of voluntary activities? YES: What kind of activity it was?

What were your personal duties?

Are you still participating?

In your eyes, does your experience of volunteering somehow influence your participation in the helping/ flood action group? In what way did it influence your initial decision to join the group?

NO: Was the participation in the helping group/flood action group your first experience of volunteering?

This is to clarify – when did you decide to join the helping group/flood action group? Was it during the flood you witnessed/experienced or afterwards?

Why did you decide to join the group? (were you trying to protect yourself/your family or you realized that someone needs your help?)

What was the point when you realized that your own abilities are not enough to tackle the problem?

How did you know that some people are going to cooperate to tackle the problem?

Could you recall how you joined the group? Was it your own decision or were you invited?

OWN DECISION: Why did you decide to join?

INVITED: How were you invited and who did it?

When you joined the group, did it already exist or you participated in the formation of the group from the very beginning?

COMPOSITION OF THE GROUP

Talking about the composition of the group, who was the leader, the person who took charge of other members and directed all the actions the group was performing?

Can you tell, how the leader appeared? Was he/she elected or was he/she already the community leader, like a Mayor or whoever?

Who were the other initial members of the group? Were you previously acquainted with them?

Have you noticed how the new members joined? Were they invited? Or maybe you promoted the group? (spreading information though the call for volunteers to join the group) IF YES: How did the group do that?

How big was the initial group? (during the period of the flood (FOR HELPING GROUP) OR when the flood action group just emerged)

Try to recall what your role and duties in the group during that flood were.

What kind of tasks the group was performing, what was the general aim (at the initial point)?

How was the process of decision-making organized?

When everything was happening, can you recall any kind of conflict of interests? How were such conflicts resolved?

Where did you get all the information? Did you trust the information from the members of the group more than the information coming from the authorities? Was this information always correct?

Were you aware of other flood action groups or other kinds of volunteers?

In your eyes, were they needed or they just caused mess and confusion?

Did your group communicate/cooperate with them? YES: What kind of cooperation it was? Maybe you shared the resources to help people (e.g. equipment) or information about those who were in need of assistance?

Whom did you help? (members of the group or the whole neighborhood?) How did you choose the area in which the group was performing?

How was the situation covered in media/ social networks (Facebook, Twitter)? Was there any call for volunteers to participate or any information about those people who were in need of help?

Do you think that it might have served a trigger for the group emergence?

Can you say that your involvement in the group was beneficial for you? In what way?

What has happened with the helping group after the flooding?

FLOOD-ACTION GROUP

Try to recall, when you joined the group, did it already exist or you witness the formation of the group from the very beginning?

From the very beginning: Does it mean that you were one of the founders of the group?

Already existed: Do you know what the origins of the group were? Maybe you know whether it emerged from the scratch as a pure flood action group or it was based on a previously existing group/collaboration (e.g. interest group).

Could you recall how you joined the group? Was it your own decision or you were invited? OWN DECISION: Why did you decide to join? INVIVTED: How were you invited and who did it?

COMPOSITION OF THE GROUP

Talking about the composition of the group, who was the leader, the person who took charge of other members and directed all the actions the group was performing?

Can you tell, how the leader appeared? Was he/she elected or was he/she already the community leader, like a Mayor or whoever?

Who were the other initial members of the group? Were you previously acquainted with them?

Have you noticed how the new members joined? Were they invited? Or maybe you promoted the group? (by spreading information through the call for volunteers to join the group)? IF YES: How did the group do that?

How big was the initial group? (during the period of the flood (FOR HELPING GROUP) OR when the flood action group just emerged).

Try to recall what your role and duties in the group were during that flood?

What kind of tasks the group was performing, what was the general aim (at the initial point)?

How the process of decision-making was organized?

When everything was happening, can you recall any kind of conflict of interests? How were such conflicts resolved?

Where did you get all the information? Did you trust the information from the members of the group more than the information coming from the authorities? Was this information always correct?

Were you aware of other flood action groups or other kinds of volunteers?

In your eyes, were they needed or did they just cause mess and confusion?

Did your group communicate/cooperate with them? YES: What kind of cooperation was it? Maybe you shared the resources to help people (e.g. equipment) or information about those who were in need of assistance?

Whom did you help? (members of the group or the whole neighborhood?) How did you choose the area in which the group was performing?

How was the situation covered in media/ social networks (Facebook, Twitter)? Was there any call for volunteers to participate or any information about those people who were in need of help?

Do you think that it might have served a trigger for the group emergence?

Can you say that your involvement in the group was beneficial for you? In what way?

PRESENT STATE OF THE FLOOD ACTION GROUP

What has happened with the group right after the first flood in which it had participated?

How long have you been a member?

What is your role and personal duties in the group now?

How big is the group now? How many members does it comprise?

What is the main aim of the group now and what kind of tasks does the group fulfil?

POST EFFECT:

Do you believe that volunteers are necessary in a flood emergency or afterwards? Do you have any plans of volunteering in the future?

Did you change your attitude towards floods after being affected/after joining a helping/flood action group?

Are there any lessons you have learned from this situation? Any valuable experiences?

What would you change in your efforts/efforts of the group?

What advice would you give to people facing the same situation?

PERSONAL INFO:

Age

Gender

For how long have you been living here?

Summary:

To sum up, what I have understood is that...

END: Is there anything else that you find important but we have not discussed yet?

Is there anyone else you know I could interview in relation to this research?

Thank you for your participation! If you are interested, I can share my MA paper with you once it is finished.

Appendix IV Interview guide for the National Flood Forum representative. British case

Dear (),

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the interview. Your participation and experience is very important as help in understanding the development of flood action groups. My research represents a comparison between Russian and British experience of coping with floods. Your knowledge and experience is of particular importance since in Russia these practices (practices of helping-groups and flood-action groups) are not as well developed as in the UK.

First of all, I would like to clarify whether you will have 45 minutes for the interview.

I would like to record our conversation as it will save time writing your answers. The information will be used only for my personal analysis purposes. Your identity will be kept anonymous in reports. If there is anything you would not like to be recorded, please say.

This interview is an ordinary conversation, and there are no right or wrong answers there.

QUESTIONS

First of all, I would like to ask you how you became involved in the area of flooding and started working with the community.

Have you ever been personally affected by the flood? Yes: When did it happen?

How soon did you realize that you had to stop your daily routines and start to somehow protect yourself or your property?

Where were your relatives/closest people when it was happening? How did you communicate with them? (did you have any possibilities to communicate with them?)

Could you recall what you and other people were doing?

Did you need any help or assistance?

YES: Did you ask anyone for help? Whom did you ask? Was the help provided? In what way?

And did anyone ask you to assist? YES: Were there any possibilities for you to help this person(s)?

Can you recall what sort of help it was?

Did you assist anyone upon your own initiative? YES: Why did you decide to do that?

HELPING GROUP EXPERIENCE:

Were there any helping groups (groups of people who started to collaborate during the flood to help each other)? Yes: What did they do? Did you join these groups? No: Why?

Yes: Why did you decide to join the group? (Were you trying to protect yourself/your property or did you realize that someone needed your help?)

Try to recall, when you joined the group, did it already exist or did you witness the formation of the group from the very beginning (like you were the founder of the group)?

How did you learn that some people were going to cooperate to tackle the problem?

Could you recall, how you joined the group? Were you invited (how?) or was it your own decision? (why?)

Talking about the composition of the group, who was the leader, the person who took charge of other members and directed all the actions the group was performing?

Can you tell me, how the leader appeared? Was he/she elected or was he/she already the community leader, like a Mayor or whoever?

Who were the other initial members of the group? Were you previously acquainted with them?

Have you noticed how the new members joined? Were they invited? Or maybe you promoted the group? (by spread information through the call for volunteers to join the group). IF YES: How did the group do that?

How big was the initial group? (during the period of the flood)

Try to recall what your role and duties in the group were during that flood?

What kind of tasks was the group performing, what was the general aim (at the initial point)?

How was the process of decision-making organized?

When everything was happening, can you recall any kind of conflict of interests? How were such conflicts resolved? Where did you get all the information? Did you trust the information from the members of the group more than the information coming from the authorities? Was this information always correct?

Were you aware of other flood action groups or other kinds of volunteers?

In your eyes, were they needed or did they just cause mess and confusion?

Did your group communicate/cooperate with them? YES: What kind of cooperation was it? Maybe you shared the resources to help people (e.g. equipment) or information about those who were in need of assistance?

Whom did you help? (members of the group or the whole neighborhood?) How did you choose the area in which the group was performing?

How was the situation covered in media/ social networks (Facebook, Twitter)? Was there any call for volunteers to participate or any information about those people who were in need of help?

Do you think that it might have served a trigger for the group emergence?

Can you say that your involvement in the group was beneficial for you? In what way?

What has happened with the helping group after the flooding?

VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE

Have you participated previously in any kind of voluntary activities? YES: What kind of activity was it?

What were your personal duties?

Are you still participating?

In your eyes, does your experience of volunteering somehow influence your participation in the helping/flood action group? In what way did it influence your initial decision to join the group?

NO: Was the participation in the helping group/flood action group your first experience of volunteering?

No: Have you ever witnessed a flood? How many times?

YES: Can you tell me what people usually tend to do prior to and during the flood? (Do they help each other? In what way? Do they collaborate? For what purposes?) How do people tackle that problem?

EXPERT:

As far as I know, now you are managing a project devoted to flood action group formation within the communities.

Can you please tell me a bit more about these flood action groups? What are they?

Have you ever observed how flood action groups are performing?

According to you experience, how do these groups usually appear? What are the main purposes of their emergence?

What kind of people usually join these groups? (are they local activists or else)?

Please try to trace how these groups are formed (When do they emerge? Who are the members? Do they collaborate because of their friendship, or membership in one interest group, or just because they are neighbors?)

How does the group choose the area in which to perform?

How do new members join the group? Are there any activities the groups perform to attract new members? Is it easy to join the group?

How big are the groups usually?

How do the groups develop? (Do they try to attract new volunteers to make the group bigger, or do they try to become more formal to communicate with the authorities on equal terms? Are there any other factors?)

Where do the groups obtain information about the flood? Were there any practices when the authorities or emergency services went first to flood action wardens to warn them about the possibility of flood and ask them to spread the information further?

What kind of tasks do groups perform during and right after a flood?

N your opinion, why do people tend to join these groups? In what way do they benefit from such a membership?

How do the groups collaborate and communicate with each other?

Please, correct me if I am wrong, but I have got an idea that the authorities are interested in flood action groups formation. If yes: In what way do authorities contribute to group formation and maintain those already existing?

How do the flood action groups communicate with the government? Do they ask for help? What sort of help? (e.g. financial support? What should a CFAG do to obtain this kind of support?) Could you assess the actions of CFAGs, are they sufficient?

Are there any drawbacks of CFAGs' actions? What are the main problems CFAGs face?

POST EFFECT:

Do you believe that CFAGs are necessary in a flood emergency or afterwards?

Did you change your attitude towards floods after being affected/after joining national flood forum?

Can you say that you obtained any valuable experiences?

What advice would you give to people facing the same situation?

PERSONAL INFO:

Age

Gender

For how long have you been living here?

Summary:

To sum up, what I have understood is that...

END: Is there anything else that you find important but have not discussed yet? Is there anyone else you know I could interview in relation to this research?

Appendix V Example of the interview transcript (British)

August 16. Male, 62. LR

Tony Farell (TF).

K: Could you please tell me how did you become involved in the area of flooding and working with the community?

T: Ok, I was an executive member of the what is called Purley residence association on the T. Flora and the GLA (the greater London Authority), environmental agency and Croydon Council, they collected and identified Purley as a high flood risk area, and they wanted to see if there is a volunteer group around that would put a plan into place, and we stepped forward and said – yes, we will do it. So I wrote the book, the emergency plan that you had a sight of, and made people look through it, to make it fit the purpose, and so basically we are a voluntary group who has some funding from the authorities in London under what they called 'the Drain London authority', and that's how we started. They saw we were the best group because we had a considerable membership in the Residence association, and that we would take on all what we did.

K: Aha, ok, and could you please elaborate more on this residential association, what are the main tasks of the association?

T: Yeah, lots of areas have residence associations, and these are people who live in the area and are concerned about the quality and amenity of their particular area, and they could arrange everything from people doing so much development, taking trees down. Residence association is basically a residence of voice to the councils and the developers and to those in power to listen to our concerns. So that is what the residence association does, and obviously we are concerned when our community floods, so that is why residence association is probably a key in any particular area, in this case it's Purley, but it could be anywhere, being the voice of the public, and we will go to meetings the councils have, we will voice our concerns about the areas issues, and that is much what we did till the day when we are talking about flood. Ok? Did I answer your question?

K: Sure, thank you, and does it mean that all the members of nowadays Purley Flood action group are also the members of the residence association?

T: Technically yes, I mean Tarsem will tell you about six or seven hundred members of the residence association. We live and work in Purley, they predominantly live in their homes here but not all of them are active, they will pay their (???). And in the latest news what the action group is, it is an executive community – just Tarsem and you know, few 7-10, shall we say, people voicing their concerns to the authority. So that three monthly journal that no doubt Tarsem will give you a copy, if you ask, will give you an idea

what things are discussed now. That Journal has a piece from Tarsem and a piece from the leader of the Council, they all have their little corner, and they say what is on their minds in that particular time and what they are doing, I mean, flooding is a particular issue that hold that panel, an umbrella, if you wish. So, it is only a small team who step forward to assist with the flooding problem, I mean, we wish we do more. Tarsem volunteered to take this voluntary group, or form the group, and one or two agreed with him, and I was, you know, I stepped forward and said I would help by writing the plan and being a flood warden because I had some experience in military life and then managed a large shopping center in Croydon where I had to deal with emergencies and write emergency plans anyway, so I have some experience of doing that.

K: Ok, yeah, I got it, and have you ever been personally flooded?

T: Me – no, because I have sense to live on a hill (laughing). I mean that is why I am probably good as a flood warden. Two or three of our flood wardens that we have nominated have a business in Purley. One of them has a jolly farmer pub, one of them is an estate agent and another one runs a news agency shop. Me I have already introduced to you (laughing). What happens if property floods or could flood, then they get involved with their own property and have to be effective as flood wardens, so that is why we are looking to get new people. If I don't get flooded, my tension can be concentrated on the issues at hand and I do not have to worry about me, so that is the sort of thing we would expect from the flood warden, that he is not involving in flood and could not drop down from the heights, look at the problem and then retire backwards again.

K: Yes, that's important.

T: That would be the ideal thing.

K: But I guess that you witnessed flood a lot of times

T: Oh yes, I mean when we have heavy rain I just walk down and I can see flooding. I walk along from Purley to Widley when we have serious rain, and I just check to see if there are any flooding indicators and just bring up to attention. You know I mean that that all goes to the plan, whether we trigger a flood plan or not, is determined by flood warnings from the Council, the Met office and our eyes on the ground – the flood wardens point of view.

K: Aha, and have you noticed what people usually do during the floods? Do they tend to help each other?

T: Yeah, that is what they do. Besides the official response, you know, from the Fire brigade etc., the neighbors will help each other, you know, I mean most people, if they gonna gave their basements flooded or the ground level flooded, they will help each other move important things upstairs. So there is a collective community spirit, when people flood, so they help each other. I mean the amounts of help obviously depends on the neighbor but generally in

the community if they can't get the help they will call the Council and give the advice and help.

K: Ok, you told me that you were not personally flooded but I wanted to ask whether there was anyone who asked you to help them?

T: Ehm, they only asked for advice. One of the things we don't do is we don't physically get involved as flood wardens because we are not ensured if we get injured. We are not ensured to take on the risk of moving furniture or trying help them to get rid of the flood. We give them advice and intermediate between them, the residence and the authorities because we have local knowledge. We can phone up the Council and say we are flooded in so and so location, so the bla-bla-bla, it is close by, so we can give them some information, so their responses can be measured dependent on what we have told them. But all residents can do exactly the same. They can phone the Council, the number, and they can say: 'I got a flooding problem', and the Council will need to response to that. So we working in a parallel, I think you see. We don't do anything on our own. But actually I do! I go along to see the triggers, to see the signals, have rain, constantly, then I just put my flood jacket on and go to have a look on what is happening at time. Three wardens mentioned earlier who have businesses in the Purley town centre will contact me, and I will contact Trasem, so the flood team will all make ourselves aware there is a problem, ok? And thereafter Tarsem and I will decide on the level of escalation, whether we call a Council, the fire brigade or whatever, you know.

K: Ok. And during that floods, have you noticed, you know, any kind of helping groups, I mean, people who started to collaborate during the flood and started to help each other or other members of the community?

T: Well, one group that stands out in that way was a church group, ok? The Baptists church in Purley cross. They would offer their space inside the church for those who needed rest or cups of tea, so that was a collective community spirit, if you want, from the church. I mean they would give the tea to the police or fire brigade 24/7, you know, throughout the night, and things like that, they would offer that. There were also shops in Candy, I know one florist who made some cups of tea and coffee for the fire brigade 24/7, and we have the thing called 'Salvation Army' and in the Council also, they have the taxi service between two locations along the A22 where they would pick up elderly and drop them off near the shops and things like that, ok, so they can do the shopping without using their cars because the roads were blocked, so there were the other taxi service looking out for elderly people in particular who were trying to walk to the shops and offer them a lift. So that was a good thing. You know, personally I didn't see massive groups forming together and lifting furniture or anything like that, but these groups do work together and the gentlemen that came to the meeting – Mike – who was from the Candy area, he was invited to the group because Candy was flooded probably more sore than people in Purley on the A22, so they had a bigger problem, but we were keeping an eye on them. By that time, as I mentioned in the meeting, we were ineffective because the response was very quick and the authorities

responded quickly, started knocking on doors, giving people information about what they should do if they got flooded etc., we get to know about that because it is what we expect them to do. Yeah? So really we were in parallel, and I got many phone calls from people, not just in Purley, but also from the Brighton road whose basements were flooded, and I was giving them advice, telling them what numbers to phone, you know, contact the fire brigade, if there was serious danger of life, then phone the police, but there were many people around like the fire brigade in most cases: what they have to do is walk outside, shout to someone: 'Can you help me', you know, because there were already around, in the area.

K: Ok, so please correct me if I am wrong but as far as I understood the group was formed in 2011, right?

T: Yes. In March.

K: Yes, and when did you join the group? I mean did you join the group...?

T: Straight away, I was one of the founders. If you look to the brochure, the core team was actually the founders. So that was Tarsem, myself, (???) who represented Purley business association. So technically we were the founder members. Ok?

K: Yes, now I got it. But were you invited or that was your own initiative to join the group?

T: Ehm… Tarsem gave me a call, cuz he knew my experience. I knew hem before, because I was the member of Purley residence association and committee, and the time before that we sat once a month with Tarsem and discussed plan initiatives and all the issues we mentioned earlier, to approach the Council that we cut down too many trees or building too many homes, or whatever. So that association, the residence association be in existence for many, many years. I mean that Tarsem had been a chairman for a long, long time, ok? He retires next year.

K: Yes, he told me. And could you explain me why did you decide to join the group? Of course you had an experience like in military forces and you are aware of what is happening in your area, but what was the trigger?

T: Because, generally, I volunteered for lots of things, I am in the rotary, I don't know if you heard about the rotary, it works locally, nationally and globally in fifteen countries, and we bring disaster relief, and we are trained a lot to do things like that. So yes, we use our background to help people, and basically I am one of those who can do something with this, I can stand up prompting my services. I mean, in the royal navy we didn't go round shooting people, we were going round helping people, most of the time and it is just a natural thing for me. I am concerned about my community as much as about the next person and I like to make sure that the amenity and the wellbeing of this community is maintained, if you wish, to an acceptable degree to work and live here. Some people are most proactive, if you know what I mean, and

I am one of those people. I am the action man! (laughing). 62 years of age I am still in action.

K: Oh, I appreciate this. And talking about the composition of the group, could you please explain me a bit who was the initial leader because, you know, I have got an impression that Tarsem is the leader of the group and he is like a general manager.

T: And you are right, I mean, basically Tarsem is the eldest statesman, he took the lead because he is a plan coordinator. I am more on the practical side. So I wrote the emergency plan because I don't think Tarsem knew how to write the emergency plan, to be honest, but Tarsem ,as we sort of indicated till the day, is the CEO of our organization, I am a general manager, and he is a CEO, chief executive, because CEO is looking more strategic, whereas I am working between… I am qualified and I got management degrees, I am quite qualified to look at strategic policies but what I prefer to do is the practical and operational side which is beyond strategic, if you know where I am coming from. Ok, but I can operate between all three! I just chose to work on the filed, we are weaker, and I seat on the ground doing something, I think he got that message till the day. Because we talk around in circles but we don't have actually the practical issues sorted. Like we need more flood wardens, we need flood warden training and all the thing we are trying to do for the year or two is nearly actually happened, we only talk about it. Because Trasem is on the different level, he doesn't come down to the operational side. He is not working on streets, you know, he seats on the end of the throne, bla-bla-bla, but he is a natural leader because of his knowledge in architecture and his experience elsewhere, and he is good in doing that, and he is the voice of the association and the eye of authorities, so you know, in every business or organization you need that, you need the spokesman, and that is where Tarsem naturally fits in, because who he is? He is a world renowned architect, well respected gentleman, and the only thing I have against Trasem is… he is a very good friend of mine, is that he talks too quietly! (laughing). And people can't hear what he is saying! And everyone knows that. So really that is why he is a chairman in the residence association, he was one approached by the GLA, etc. So he naturally took on and volunteered the services of the rest of us, therefore he is sitting up a position of leadership. The rest of the group… we respect them for doing their roles. Phil Riged, you probably noticed him, he has been part of the residence association for a long time, and he is also the editor of the Journal, so he is a politician who is also a journalist, so he has started a Journal, pushed it together. Now he came because he is gonna be a joined thing between residents association and the Purley business association because, in fairness and in truth, most of the properties that are flooded are businesses and not too many residents. Thus we dragged in a Purley business association to help form the group but, to be honest, it was very ineffective, very ineffective, because when I emailed and tweeted them that there is a problem because I have the contacts and know the chair – Simon Crips, that interaction is very little. But to be honest, it is just me and Tarsem doing most of it. Many talk about the rest of the team, you see we

enroll them into the flood wardens, right, and at the moment we have got me, my wife, she only just joined, cuz she walked around with me during the recent floods, probably more to keep an eye on me (laughing), but she learned a lot, then jolly farmer, local news agent, Poll Shinerock who owns Shinerock estate agency, the other two people, Gon and Iris. Every summer we do a change, and I got to do the plan because no one else would do it. Ok?

K: Ok, yes, and speaking about the flood wardens, they are the main members of the group but were they somehow appointed or they just proposed themselves to be the flood wardens?

T: Well, it is twofold, really. Because when I wrote the plan I was envisaged to be a flood warden but I wrote what the flood wardens should be doing. Now, to be honest, we didn't get the volunteers we expected, and we were very small group, and I am, or probably two of us were, effective out of the group, so we were recruiting more wardens, that's why we came engaged with Candy, because that would give us some more volunteers. Because I am the rotary, I can get some volunteers from the rotary organization, but, to be honest, I volunteered to be a flood warden because no one else came forward, who was active and willing to work around and do things. So we hired… well… not hired, Iris, Poll and Keyton, basically, they joined us as flood wardens because of their self-interest which was their business being flooded. So they thought: 'Oh, I can be a flood warden', in fact that was probably the worst thing we could have done, is take on people who were affected by flooding to be flood wardens. But, although we have been trying to get more to join… I think that is one of the practical things Tarsem should be concentrated on and not talking… he is talking about what the Council is doing, etc., but with it we need foot soldiers doing something that is helping the community on the ground. Ok, so basically I volunteered because I saw we don't have anyone who is willing to walk around like I do and do things. And the other 3-4 joined because their business is affected, and thereafter they are not as effective as we wanted them to be. My wife will be, because she enjoys walking around with me, so we are not moving forward with the type of flood warden we want. I am the younger person who can do a bit of walking, but someone who knows the area, locally, because that knowledge of the area is very important when we are acting in between the Council, responders and the residents and businesses. So basically, it can be someone who can walk a lot, or someone who has an intimate knowledge of the local area which she can get to those that respond officially. I will give an example, can I?

K: yes, sure.

T: During the recent flooding in January, February, I was walking around, talking to the police, now the police was drafted from everyone in London and the fire brigade because it was such a big problem that local police was not enough to deal with it, people who come to the police and say: 'Well we got this road blocked off, and how do I get to so and so?', and the police was not

having the knowledge of the roads and could not answer them, whereas I could. And there was one case, I was able to tell one lady how she can get to her mother by navigating the road closures whereas the police coming from different boroughs couldn't do that. And the Council advised information centre who is only opened two days of the week and the police offices in Purley, they had only two days a week to get information, now to me, we could been doing that, five days a week, you know, giving information, cos some of the Council offices did not know what we were talking about, because they are destructed from Croydon, they do not know Purley intimately, and here I see the role of the flood warden – we should be used, firstly we should be acknowledged, that we exist and I thought I was quite obvious because the council signed the flood plan I wrote (laughing). They endorsed it. But when the real thing happened, we were ignored, now we were resources, willing to do things, and that's I think we should do. And secondly, the council will tell you, when the council has to evacuate people, right, they know they need an organization to look after them. When I wrote this plan, it was not just about the flood, if you take the word flood out of it and put in fire, explosion, whatever, it is good for any disaster. Now, for instance, if you are to evacuate people, let's say at the air crash… crush in Purley, where the immediate area was raised to the ground with an explosive fireball, we have to evacuate people, now the council don't have staff to look after people. Now, if you google Rotary international or Rotary Britain and Island you will get a flavor of what we do. Another path for the country during flooding, especially in the Somerset levels where there was really, really serious flooding, and people could not get to their homes for weeks, the Rotary groups, flood action groups, local groups, just like ours, were helping out and looking after them even if they were relocated into a school, hall, St. Johnes ambulance only have staff to cover maybe only six hours, initially, that's why they need more local community groups, bigger than ours, if you wish, especially in a big town, that can actually go along and can look after the people and bring their services. I mean, for example, there was a lady, an old lady in her 80s or 90s who is on medicine, she couldn't get to the chemist, there could be a problem, so local voluntary groups can find out who that person is, right, and if she requires a medicine they can do that and deliver, so lots of little areas where voluntary groups can help, where the council probably wouldn't do it, or if they want to do it, they wouldn't have the resources to do it without the voluntary people in the community helping. Anyway, I probably go off from your question.

K: No, no, that's fine.

T: So it's a big subject, you know. And how it would work in Russia, if they adopt the model?

K: Ehm, that's a difficult question to answer. I am not sure that it is possible to fully adopt the model in Russia, you know to perform like this. Because, you know, while I am listening to your stories and while I am talking to the members of other flood action groups, they always emphasize all those links

between the community and the government, environmental agency, fire brigades, etc. but I understand that in Russia these links are not as tight if there are some, at least.

T: Yes, too bureaucratic?

K: I would say, too many barriers to build the links.

T: Oh yeah, too many barriers. Oh, and see on our meetings where we have environmental agency there and the council, and in other meeting we invite the police and the fire brigade, you know, the only persons we never see there is Thames Water. And they are the other problem. But that's political (laughing).

K: It is. And coming back to the other members of your group, were they invited by Tarsem? I just try to understand how the group was formed.

T: No, by me.

K: By you? Ok, and how did you decide what members to ask to join the group?

T: I, well, we wanted a lot more than we've got. We wanted 20+, but we never go anywhere near that because people wouldn't come forward. I don't know why, they saw flooding not as their problem, until they flooded, and that it is their problem. But we have all these heavy floods earlier this year, but we still have no volunteers to look forward, the problem is we do not put any money into advertising, right? It's like anything: you have to market what you want. Tarsem is not very good at that, right? (laughing). His market lies in these bounce lakes and things like that, but he is not going to the basics where we are, like I want more flood warden jackets. At that point, we could not take on board more flood wardens because we do not have the equipment to give them. What we need to do is get the press involved, I probably should not do anything without Tarsem but Tarsem is very slow in thinking these things over and doesn't come up with the action points. You know, when we have meetings, it is never an action point, saying the same things over and over again. Because every time we meet we are talking about something different but the same, if you know what I mean. Anyway, that's my view, my personal view. Because I have chaired a lot of committees in my life.

K: Ok, and could you explain how did you decide to invite those particular people?

T: Right, good question. In a way, I had no choice. Those who came forward when I asked, I had to take on. On the other sight, I would not have taken them if I doubt that people, if you know what I mean. I had to take three people from businesses, the fourth guy, he moves out of the area, so anyway, but generally they all have businesses, and in the other case I would not be taking them because they were affected and couldn't deal with… you know, they were attracted in… now, the thing was I had no choice because no one else came forward. No one else came forward, knocking on my door when I put in a press that some flood wardens are required, I gave presentations, I

have got presentation slides, I can give you on power point, which I gave to some local groups… Rotary... Rotary was volunteered but they don't want to be under Tarsem. Rotary is a bigger thing then a residence association. So they have their own way of doing things. Tarsem is… he likes to keep things to his chest, and he doesn't like people taking the way what he thinks is, it is his domain, right? He owns it, it is his baby, if you know what I mean. So we have no choice. When I asked does anyone want to be a flood warden, when we were talking about the business association connection, my people came forward, and they were the only who came forward, and I was stuck with them. So we gave them PP – personal protection equipment – hard hats, keep bags, etc., and they were the wardens, but, as I said, they are very ineffective and normally phone me up when something happens, so I went down and talked to the service, where this is happening, and they said yes, but they were not doing it, but they will be the set of eyes in the immediate location, you know, in town where their businesses are, they will feed back and tell me anything outside there. So they are effective in that way. Ok, and I can draw a picture and I can talk to Tarsem and say: are we going trigger the plan or not? To trigger up the plan, we basically have to phone up the council and emergency planning officer and say that we got a serious flood problem, and then hopefully the council will take over the role saying what to do. Say, flood wardens, me, we are here not just when it happens. Awareness, the booklet you saw, we gave them loads and loads during March 2011, but most of them were in a bin, because that March was very warm, no rain, no floods, so people forget easily, and they only take when it happens again, so they get their interest again, and that's why I gave loads more of that books, living them outside Tescos as the rain was coming down the paths being flooded, and there were people focused, and they wanted to know more. So from that point of view, the flood warden is more of an information point and actually and… I mean if I saw someone on danger personally, I would help them, physically, but, we are not meant to, if you know what I mean, it is human nature to help, alright, ee… that's I am, that is how I have been trained throughout my life, to help people, so if I see someone in danger I will go and help, if they need help, but we are not meant to, as you probably see from our plan, because we have no insurance… if we got insured and this is also the thing I am trying to get over about the flood wardens and the authority flood wardens, if we are a recognized group and they would appeal, and we are, then we should be getting budget, by the council, since we are official flood wardens, they should be responsible for training us, I can do certain amount of training, cos of my background, but there are things the council should take upon and pay for, but at this day we all are volunteers. So it is difficult… in this country we are, I think, well off because we do have in the main people who will help each other, and we live on voluntary groups and charities all the time. I mean Rotary… we fundraised the charity all there around, I am the president of the local Rotary, and we organize annual fundraising to help charities, and we help people, so it's a whole thing, I mean, it is just part of my life, although sometimes it gets a big part of life when it is raining and flooding.

K: So, ok and could you please help me just to trace this process of group formation? So first, in 2011 the GLA asked the Resident association to form this Purley flood action group and they asked Tarsem and…

T: Yes, and then he put it to the committee meeting in a regular committee meeting of the residents association: would we volunteer? And we basically said 'yes'.

K: And after that you prepared the plan and also became a flood warden, and then you decided to invite the new members but mostly people were not willing to come, and how did you invite them?

T: I knew them from the resident association and Purley business association who were generally affected by flooding.

K: Ok, finally I got it. And you know, regarding all the processes within the group, could you please tell me how the process of decision-making is happening? Did you arrange all the plans and duties before the flooding?

T: Yes, well, the emergency plan all stems from that which I wrote when around all the authorities, I did all, suggested the changes, etc. and now we have, I think, revision 19, and reviewing it again by the way, anyway from that time it is what we were to do, should we suffer from flooding. So that underlies what we do, the emergency plan does that. Now inside it there is a section for the flood wardens, what they need to do, and the triggers for invoking the plan. Now invoking the plan, what happens now, all the flood wardens get the met office warning directly from the met office in some cases but mainly to the Croydon Council, the emergency planning officer. So when the met office makes the warnings out, rain, flood, ice, snow, whatever, then we get that message e-mailed to us fairly quickly, so we can dig into that and find out what is going on, according to the weather forecast. Using that information and our own observations, our own eyes and ears walking around, then we can decide whether the situation is serious enough for us to invoke the emergency plan, and that means basically if any of the triggers are met, or any of warnings are met, any flood warden or Tarsem can contact the local councils into in Croydon council and declare a flood problem in Purley, and thereafter the emergency planning department will decide upon the level of response they will send down to the area a local authority liaison officer to have a look and see what needs to be done. So the plan really depends on…what is going on thereafter, this is where Tarsem comes in, we are forever walking around looking flood defenses, I mentioned the fact that the collision the drains that have never been cleaned, and I have mentioned that the have been blocked for a year or more, so we try to hold the council to task, to do certain things, and if you look into the plan, there are places where we go monitor, you know in the early days of the warning we go monitor certain areas to see if there is a big change in the height of the river, we can go to see where the flood is likely to happen, recorded it in the plan people go and look at those areas where there is a problem, they will listen to what their neighbors and residents are saying, the people from the businesses are

saying that their basements are flooded, which indicates that the ground water levels are coming up, etc., so there will be a few triggers, or indicators, that will allow us to make an informed decision to invoke the plan, and invoking the plan literally means contacting the emergency planning office, officer of Croydon Council and thereafter they take out our hands a little bit.

K: And do you distribute the roles, the duties, I mean for example one or two flood wardens are supposed to monitor the water level while the others monitor all the drainage systems and ditches?

T: Basically we do not have wardens to do all of that. Myself and now with my wife, we are going round and do a long walk along the roads where it normally floods, down A22, whereas the other wardens like Iris and Keyton will let me know about the basements, because that is the good indicator, if it is water in the basements then we got a problem, a rising problem which means if we have heavy rain fall that will meet with the ground water level coming up and cause flooding. So the two virtues are the rain coming up from land into the valley, and we see ground water levels which we can find out because lots of basements and properties around Purley start seeping. We do not gain an indicator, as was mentioned yesterday, about the manholes, the council monitors or the environmental agency monitors. It would be good if we got that information (laughing) cos we could know if there was a rising because if the ground water level is being very high it will cause the problem, all the problem is from rain, if there would be no rain it would not flood, and the bigger problem of course is the fact that the sewage system runs, they closed to the run off the drains, so if they both get of the capacity, they mingle, and safe water becomes polluted. So lots of issues, but basically for flood wardens, we… you know, me, because I am probably one that is able to walk the route and the others will report with their eyes and ears, basically from their locality, and that fits in to me, I will talk to Tarsem: 'see, we have got a concern here, I recommend we invoke the plan, then the council will know'. In the meantime, we do not know that there might be people who are flooded who already phoned the council, but we will contact the council and they will let us know that they get another contact. But really, we have not been tested, once because the flood wardens… because most of the flooding was in the Candy area, and their council is better prepared for more flooding. So it is very difficult, we got few people on the ground, and what we do is basically we… and the other thing of course, during the year, we are ready to give advice, when people are worried about of being flooded, we can advise them what to do, we can put them in touch with people who can talk about flood defenses, what is up with the insurance, they need to contact the association of insurance, etc. Of course they can also talk to Tarsem, because Tarsem is more involved on that side. So lots of things we can advise to do through the year. I do get cell phone calls to my home and when it is raining heavily, saying 'we are in danger of flooding what we do?', so I give them some words of advice. But most comes to nothing unless we are really serious when amending the Council and emergency responders, they are pretty quick. I

mean at that time they start the early warning, long before we did, we did nothing, to be honest, they move very fast and effectively.

K: So I have read through the plan that you gave me, and as far as I understood, the main tasks of your group are to monitor water level, drainage system, to educate and encourage residents if possible and also to propose systems to mitigate flooding and to communicate with all these agencies who may help people, but I was wondering what your group is usually doing during the flood?

T: We do not do very much during the flood, to be honest. Once the responses go in from the council, police, fire brigade, we do very little – and that is the point, we should be more proactive by mining information centers, making ourselves available, but, as I already said, effectively there are only two or three wardens, one is gonna be on holiday… so we do not have all resources to be able to do what we would like to do, but, as you know, we are working on it, we are joining with Candy and Rotary to be able to do that but we don't do… I mean, basically what I do is I was walking around even when the fire brigade was in charge, I went to the command vehicle to see what they were doing, how they are dealing with things making myself informed by asking questions, just in case I was asked question by local population, cos they see the flood warden and they could go to me and say 'what is happening?' So basically what I do although the others probably do not do as much as I do, I make myself available around where the problem is, talking to the councilors, etc. I mean there is a lot we could do, that a lot more depends on the number of people willing to do it, that is what my plan suggests. We can give advice during the year, when it happens we can give further advice because preparing for flood is important, dealing with flood and in the aftermath which takes a lot longer to recover from, recover is always longer part of the plan really, but that where the council coming to their own because once the police and the fire brigade moved away and the flood is over, there is a lot of people probably not in their homes being displaced and that is where the council really comes in to their own, on the recovery side. But for the flood wardens during, is just a matter of walking down, checking day to day what's going on, find out if there is anything we can do to help, visiting the information centre two days a week, to see if they had any news that we didn't know. But I would think that they would be asking us, and that is what did not happen on this occasion, we were… the responses were so big and fast, they went to a high priority that we were just insignificant voluntary group with no enough resources, to be honest, whereas all that professional teams were doing what was required. So it was a bittersweet, if you know what I mean, we were there; I was there but not being really significant or effective because other groups were there to do it.

K: Ok, so it means that you know it is prohibited for the members of your group to intervene to the actions of the agencies?

T: That's right. I mean the legal authority

K: Yes, but you personally tend to assist them?

T: Yes, they do not know everything about Purley. They do not know about 80year old woman living on the ground floor of the building. They would not explain people how to put flood defenses when the warning goes in, or to move things upstairs. We would, hopefully. I mean I would talk to the charity groups if necessary and I am trying to work this out with the council, that we should have information via them as to vulnerable people who cannot act on their own and they need help. Now, I think our role is to identify the people and let the council know about them. And then the council will come with the big guns and help them. But the local information that we have and that the council would not have, nor the police. The police that is coming is not from the local area, they do not know area at all, they do not know intimately, anyway, so I think there is a role where we come back to the intimate information about the local area that will be helpful to the responders to help them save life or, you know, their property. Tarsem may see as I see it. Door knocking even, I mean knocking on doors when we get a warning, for instance if I have enough people we could knock on doors in the flood risk areas and just warn them in advance, that's all of thing. We know who gets flooded and we knock on their door saying 'be prepared. Are you aware that there is a weather warning in place and do you know what you need to do?' I mean taking people on the ground, knocking on doors. The council probably does a bit of it but they do it after the event, whereas we could do it perhaps before the event.

K: Yes, so that is what I wanted to ask: how did you spread the information about what is happening and what may happen?

T: Well there are certain ways we do that; we try various things. Also at the AGM (annual general meeting of the resident association) there is also a little corner about the flood, flooding in Purley, and advice is given a little bit there. What we should be doing is more dedicating forums which are publicized, and that is what Tarsem has not actually achieved as such, although we keep talking. Another thing, we got little booklets, what to do in the event of the flood. Myself and one of the persons, last year we went round with hundred of these putting them through letter boxes. But, as I said, this information is gonna be constant, you can't just do a warn of and the year later expect they want to remember. It should be a constant awareness campaign to the local news agents and newspapers, through the council meetings, local residents meetings, all that sort of it. I mean we can do that, we can make some leaflets and I am gonna suggest it to Tarsem: when we get a severe weather warning, we are all out to be there in the flood plain if we are sufficient soldiers on a ground and knocking on doors or putting leaflets to give the advice. That is what we can do.

K: I got it, and during the flood have you ever noticed other volunteers, individuals who were volunteering?

T: Yeah, I talked to them. I mean one of the guys was called Chris, he was on the meeting and lives on the corner from me, he rode his bicycle several times down to the A22 to find what was going on and report back to me, etc. Eee… flood groups just keep up a little dialog with the other flood wardens. But they are never here on one time, that's the problem, that's why we need more recruits.

K: But they are not the permanent members of the group?

T: Well, flood wardens are not the core members but they are members of the group. I mean, the whole group is the community emergency flood team, and the team consists of the offices, if you want to call them that way, which is Tarsem, myself, Phil, and then the flood wardens which is once again me, again and the others who actually do the practical side of the plan, so they are part of the team, we encouraged them to be the team members.

K: Aha, and could you tell me how the situation is usually covered in media or social networks, is there any call for volunteers?

T: No, not directly, I mean I will use Twitter to go out to all Twitter addresses and Facebook contacts I know locally to let them know the problem, I put on the piece on Twitter telling people what the situation is. So, social media is not one of Tarsem's favorite subjects (laughing) and if anything is done like that it is via me, you know, what I want to do or can do. The local papers obviously will put some photographs taken by myself cos I get in close and I have some good photographs, so I will send them off to the press, you know, to advertise and say this is what's happening in Purley, they know what is down there, anyway, because we talk to the reporters but the reporters keep changing every three month (laughing), and I have met the new one yesterday – Polly, she is a Purley journalist. Anyway, so yeah, I do something on social media and I use Twitter and now I have a Twitter address called 'the Purley community' as well as my own, I have got one called 'At Farell Tony' which is me and the other one 'At Purley Community' for more community, if you would like. When it is snowing, does your neighbor have a clear path? Does she need help? Is she warm? This sort of things, you know. And to also give some feedback that way, people helping other people. On the flooding, I was putting upon the Rotary… did I give the copy of the Rotary emergency support group, a piece of paper?

K: Hemm, no, not yet.

T: Because on that, this is ours: people know how the Rotary can help, we use our social media vehicle to call for help, and Tarsem does not want to go with it because he sees it been rested of him, he loses his control. But we have a bigger group than Purley residence association called Rotary, and we got over one hundred members between us who could help a lot. Because I am Rotarian and I am also a member of residence association, so I have a conflict of interest.

K: Aha, and could you please tell me what kind of changes the group has been experiencing during this time, I mean from 2011?

T: Changes in what?

K: Whatever, composition, structure, duties, aims.

T: Well this is what the whole meeting was about: that we been doing or not doing the same thing all the time and not review it. Now, what Tarsem doesn't understand is that we need to sit down outside the people around the table and discuss the plan, whether it is viable still. I don't think it is. That is what I am trying to get over this day is that the plan needs reviewing. And I can review it cos I wrote it but I want other people input in it. And I think that the monitoring points on that maps need the change, there is need of more of them, we need to extend them further up to the Candy valley. So there are changes required in what we actually do once we have a flooding situation and the plan probably doesn't cover it, right? If you look at some pages into the plan, it identifies long term issues, yes, what needs doing by council or whether. Well, the thing is those views will change, the situation will change, but we are not doing anything about our plan, you know, the report that we set by the end of the week and one by the end of December, because those plans may have information, sorry, those reports may have information in them I can include in the plan. So the whole plan needs reviewing, and I accept that, I mean the aims have changed for one, the contacts have changed but everybody who signed upon that plan, they have changed, but no of them came back to me and said: 'ah, that's wrong now', this I what I mean, they have been endorsing the plan by accepting it, but it is totally under the desk and doesn't refer to it, that is my frustration. But I need to review and change things on it but I don't want to do too many changes yet because I have to spend time doing it, I have other things to do in my life but I don't want to keep changing it incrementally, I want to make a change, to make sure it is more effective. And that way we can get feedback from the flood wardens which I will get. I was hoping to have the other three or four of flood wardens there on the other day, cos I was going to talk to them, to make a meeting outside of this meeting, to discuss what we need to do or not to do in the future, if it happens again. Cos sometimes these meetings are going on in a different direction or they don't spend enough time on the particular subject to get a natural point. It slowly, slowly gets to it, I mean, how the GLA said, we are far more advanced than the other groups doing this in the London Boroughs, but that is because of the pushing by me and Tarsem, to be honest. You know, we need to be recognized as a voluntary group trying our best but we need help from the council as well in doing our job, or the council tells us what they want us to do, and if we are happy to do it, we will do it. If we not, we would not do it (laughing). You know, cos we don't get paid (laughing).

K: Ok and did the composition of the group change a lot from the very beginning?

T: No, not really. The only thing that has changed, and we have discussed, is dropping out the Purley business association, because it is totally ineffective, it doesn't come to meetings. When you see on the front page "is coordinated by", you know where the house, the image is, do you have it in front of you?

K: Yes.

T: In the front page of the Purley community emergency flood plan, there is a house sinking, to the right there is "coordinated by", and there what is called Purley residence association and Purley business association. Well, in the first days of the plan that was the case but the Purley business association don't do any coordination, and Tarsem told me about dropping them off because they are ineffective. As I said earlier, I will keep contact to Twitter and other social media to let the businesses know about what we are doing, and when to check their basements and other information, but they don't coordinate anything, it is just Purley residence association, ok? So the slight changes are needed to be done.

K: Yes.

T: Ehm... and the flood wardens… so these are the members we have to do… because people dropped off or whatever. Now we will probably not dissociate ourselves with the Purley business association but will not be giving them credit, cos they do nothing to enforce the plan, ok?

K: Yeah, so, and as far as I understood, in general the group is composed of five or six permanent members, and other members are from GLA, Environmental agency and are more about the management, right?

T: Yes, they are our group when we talking about the partners, ok? I would say more partners than the part of the plan. They are partners, ok? Authorities, environmental agency, Thames Water and the London Councils, in particular Croydon Council, ok?

K: Yes, and how do you think, in what direction the group is developing? I mean, you are trying to become bigger, because you have told that you are going to cooperate with another ones, like Candy…

T: Yes, basically if you think of the issue and what really happens when it rains in Warlingham upon the hills, 3,5 miles away from here, the water goes from Kenley valley into Purley, it is like a washing up ball, we are in a ball, and people pouring water into us and along that route, that channel is Kenley, so it is natural that we do away the Council borders, because rivers and flooding don't have any border control, and we need to engage and to cooperate with the groups that are affected as well as ourselves. And with a joined up thinking, as I call it, and the better coordinated look at what we need to do. I mean the Council has to do that anyway but I am looking more at the voluntary groups so what we need to do if we gonna be joined up, then we all have to agree on a common purpose. I had a communication with Kenley, with the gentleman, he has agreed, he is passing my plan around… and my flood warden stuff around the residence association in Kenley, and we will get

a feedback from that to see how we go forward in more we can agree with. A good thing is also that we will get more flood soldiers, people on the ground, flood wardens which can, you know, keep walking up and down the same routes so whatever help us. So that is something we are moving forward from the meeting till the day. When I say 'we', that's me! (laughing). And obviously that will generate another meeting with Tarsem to say that now we are in partnership with Kenley residence association, so that it would be Purely residence association talking to Kenley residence association, and in some distant future we will hopefully talk to the residence associations further upstream, because that is where the area is getting first and then comes down to us and then we get joined up. So it becomes a bigger group because of the flooding area, I mean the flood determines the area rather than the individual, yeah? So hopefully we will get more people helping.

K: Yes, and does it mean that you are trying to attract the new members, right?

T: Yes, well, we are hoping to get the new members from the Kenley association which is affected a little bit harder than Purley when it floods, so they might have more mutual interest and get volunteers which will help us. But I am chasing volunteers from the Rotary clubs, located in Croydon, because it gets flooded in Croydon as well. You know, because I own the shopping centre, and we used to have massive floods in our basement, and we have to deal with them but it all stems from the rivers, river Wondle flooding, when all this flood water from Purley is going in towards Croydon down on the Brighton road, so basically we are flooding Croydon. Ok, but the biggest problem of course that I pointed out is the fact that building all these properties and increasing their capacity of sewage and drainage… so if you have more people putting stuff into the pipes, and they don't change them to larger ones, so we gonna have problems, and this is what the Thames Water keeps talking. And these are part of those solutions we are saying, you know… in the plan we are trying to look for permanent solutions to flood defenses as opposed to dealing with floods. Ideally, what we need to do, our aim would be, my aim for the flood plan would be that in ten years' time we can forget the flood plan because the flood defenses will be adequate enough for us not to worry about the flooding. So that would be my aim, that is to disband the flood team in ten years' time, because everything is in place.

K: Ok, and does your group communicate or cooperate somehow with other flood action groups?

T: No. Tarsem might, by his position being on the flood forum, the member of national flood forum. So at certain level Tarsem will, but once again, I fear that Tarsem doesn't actually talk on the right level. He will talk about strategy, he will not talk about practicality all the time. But he is the boss, he is the leader, but I do not know whether he is engaged with other groups, I mean that information… did you see all that information? I haven't seen any of that. That is what I mean, Tarsem keeps everything to himself. And only gives out bits of information. I like this guy but he doesn't know how to communicate, he is an

architect (laughing). He doesn't command many military services or manage people, you know he manages an office, but he doesn't know how to communicate. Forgive me for saying that, but we have some of the issues in the past between me and Tarsem, and one of them is that he keeps all the information to himself, and I arrive at the meeting, and I am blind because I don't know what he is gonna talk about, and that shouldn't be the case. But that is just Tarsem. Ok, anything else?

K: Yes, I also would like to know whether the residents really rely on your group. What are in general your relations with Purley residents?

T: No, short answer. But I think that is the fault of lack of publicity, more than anything else. They probably don't… a lot of residents probably don't know we exist.

K: Ok, it is just because your group has no promotion, or what is the reason?

T: Correct, and I keep talking with Tarsem about that. But, I mean the same answer is 'no'. I get phone calls because, I mean, because particularly in the last flood I had some phone calls because people remembered me, right, still had that little booklet and contacted me. So in that way that was occasional phone calls, they remembered some things, they remembered somethings from the journal three month ago or whatever, and that is how it is happening, it is not an information… For instance, I designed the website for the journal many years ago. When I stepped down from webmaster, Tarsem got someone to redevelop it, so there is a website but it has not been changed, I mean, I used to play with it every week and put new information on it but the web master is not doing that. So there is a vehicle we could forget, no channel for new information because people can use websites, so all they need to do is just go to that website for the latest information on Purley. There are ways I can do it because that is the Rotary, Purley Rotary, we host the community website and we can put information on that probably, but we have to really clear up what we want to put on it before we put something on it, if you know what I mean, something concise, informative, this is what you need to do if you have flooding problem. I am looking for the ways; I am working outside Tarsem really because he is not interested in this, so I just get on with it. So the publicity side is not good, I mean, during many floods people only: 'oh, I remember something about that', but it should be a constant matter. I mean it not as a warning of thirty-year occurrence, it is warning ten or even less. I mean we have flooding in 2001, then we have flooding in 2007, 2011 and we have flooding this year, so I don't know where people get these figures from, to be honest. Anyway, what were we talking about? I go off the track again, forgive me, I like this (laughing), keep talking

K: Oh no, I really appreciate your willingness to tell me everything. So, and can you say that there is a kind of a lesson that you have learned as being a flood warden?

T: Lesson… lessons… lessons… only that I think flood wardens, or all the plan, the membership should be more proactive, really, and not just wait for

the event to happen, because, as only I think, it is hard to criticize the council but I can, because we have inside information from the guy called J. Brian, who was on that meeting, he was an environmental consultant, a friend of mine, he lives up in the hills of Warlingham and this is where the problems starts, ok? Four days after it starts raining there, we get flooded, so he is our eyes and ears and he is able to tell us when to expect the flood. But lessons I would like to think would develop… I wish we were closer to the council, because at the moment, I think, we just rubber stamping the fact we exist without acknowledgement or giving us the fine role within their organization. So lessons to be learned are: don't… I mean, the council didn't react to the flood team, they reacted to the flood. So we have to find some, making sure we have started that process, we gonna have budget, we gonna be identified as a group you can turn to for help and information. I think one of the lessons I also have learned is not to purchase lots of equipment because in the earlier days we bought six emergency bags that we should fill with water, purification tablets, bandages, blankets, well, it turned out that at the end of the day all flood wardens required a good foot wear, suit and maybe a little walking stick with a measure on it, so they can poke it in water and read off how deep it is, that is all, I think. So we spend a lot of our budget that we got in the early days on emergency bags which we not really used, and I had some additional emergency bags made with spare blankets and stuff like that, but at the end of the day the council would probably issue them to people who need them, we just need an outfit for flood wardens, and I think some of the other things we need to be able to communicate with the council even by telephone when we are on the ground, wish we have a police radio or something, one of the Croydon radios so we can call and say: 'I am here, I have got a flood problem, I have got an injured person, bla-bla-bla'. But these are things we look out. I mean the plan is the plan, it is fairly new in terms of plan, but we just need the council who endorsed it and will send out all responsible people, the environmental agency, GLA all that copies, all the revision, 19th, the same that you have got, because it does need reviewing, and then it needs input from other people. So the lessons I have learned, what lessons I have learned? Not to walk too far (laughing), cos I did a lot of walking in the January, February, March. I mean, one of the lessons we have learned, we were not really invoking the plan properly, were we? At the end of the day. If I want to seat on my backside all day long and do nothing I couldn't do that and no one would do. So I think it is personal intervention more than anything, I am learning my personal intervention is what is necessary. Slightly other day I brought up the question 'do we need the flood team? Are we effective?', although Tom said 'yes we should keep' and Phil said 'yes we should', but Phil doesn't walk along the flooded areas. So I don't think we have a balanced feel of what flood wardens should be doing and whether they are needed or not.

K: Aha, and how do you think, should the group become more formal, or is it enough management already?

T: Ehm… I think that they need a different level of management than that Tarsem brings, if you want me to be brutal. I think Tarsem is doing right things in community but he is an architect, he knows about flooding but that wastes the council senior level. When it comes to flood wardens and helping the community, that is more what I am doing and sometimes it does not fit what Tarsem wants. But I will continue doing it as long as we require to do it. We were funded by the GLA, therefore we are responsible for making sure the plan does exist because we were funded, officially. I mean you can't just fund someone and then just disband it. So all the time the GLA, environmental agency wants us to be here, and we have got to do it because we got money from them. But at the end of the day, we all are volunteers, now if I decided that I don't want do it anymore, then, I think, the plan would physically collapse. I don't want to blow out my own bugle, but I think it will. At the end of the day, we are trying to help people, not the political arguments that go on, why they didn't do so, why you couldn't do that and bla-bla-bla. Putting on the defenses is going to take time and money, and realistically we probably will never have money to put the defenses Tarsem wants, like the bounce lakes, and we should concentrate as much on the practical help, if you wish, for the residents, as much as that. And that is the better balance towards the practical side. I mean I have discussion with Tarsem, but he hasn't managed people before too much and he got this different level. But I mean, don't get me wrong, he is a good guy, but I think if I would have to change anything, and if this plan would still be supported by authorities, I would say we doubt two levels of management. We doubt the strategic management who do the policy decisions, right, long term view of trying to get the money and funding to put flood defenses in, and then the operational management which is what I am doing, but not recognized as doing because they put me down as a member, and the flood warden, and there should be… if you ever do anything in the future I would say you need more of the practical approach rather than the strategic approach. Strategic approach is necessary for policy but that is the long term vision of massive funding, cos he knows how to take the problem away, right, we cannot solve this problem overnight, we can only mitigate it. However, the hardship of people being flooded will exist, and they are the people who need the help, practical, and they need people in the community working on their behalf to help them or giving them information they require to help themselves.

K: Ok, and do you know...

T: I am not sure it makes any sense, but I am sure you will work something out (laughing).

K: Hah, no doubts. And can you give any advice to those people who are at risk of being flooded?

T: Yeah, I mean there are lots of advice available. From the environmental agency, I mean this is what we need to put on a leaflet. You know you need to prepare for flooding; you need to prepare your own personal flood plan; you need to know what to do when you are flooded; you need to know where your

isolation cobs for your electricity, water or gas. You don't need to find it out when it happened. And once again, these people need advice where to go to look for that advice. Now we have got the advice, we probably do not have the time, but what we can do is give them a flier or a leaflet with all the links to environmental agency, flood line etc., advice on insurance, property, advice on flood defenses. You know we have got all that information we can in part send them out, but I think that all would be to give them the link to the sight, that would give them a more professional answer, cos we are not ensured to give professional advice. We might have the experience and advice but we are not ensured to give it, if you know what I mean, cos in this country if you give advice and something goes wrong you can go to jail. That is why the flood wardens are really only partly effective, because we can only advice, we cannot say: 'he needs to do this, he needs to do that', we just say: 'we suggest to do that, and this is where you should look', yeah? We don't put ourselves in danger, me personally, I probably would, but the other flood warden will just help with advice, I think. So I think the change needs to be that we have to look at our rules of engagement, if you wish, and actually verify what we need to do and what we are happy to do, is most of the point, I think. Whereas I am happy doing more and more, again, the other people might not be. And I think that is where you get this between human beings, I mean 'so I don't want doing that. I will do that but I am not doing that'. So you need to all agree on a level of input and what is acceptable and what is not. Whereas people sign the plan without looking on it. Anyway.

K: Just a question of clarification, for how long have you been living in Purley?

T: Me, since 1999, my wife lives all her life here.

K: So you are like the real experts of the area.

T: Not really, you should not use that word 'expert'. An expert is someone who knows more and more about less and less, until in the end he knows everything about nothing (laughing). I don't like 'expert' (laughing), I am just an informed person with a reasonable knowledge of the area.

K: Ok, is there anything else you find important but we didn't discuss yet?

T: Well, remind what you are going to do with this information? You are doing a thesis, right?

K: Yes, I am doing a research for my master's thesis.

T: Ah, I wish you a good luck with that. Do you hope my paper will help your community?

K: That is the case. It is somewhat an attempt to share the experience. Because, you know, Russian communities, especially in the rural areas are strongly affected by flood, predominantly in spring, when the ice on the rivers begins to melt down quickly, they know almost nothing about what to do, they are not prepared and very often negate the risk of being flood. And government does not pay too much attention for preparing them.

T: What we do, I mean, we are getting better, but they allow developments on flood plains, do they? That is one of the issues in the UK, that is identifying flood plains and stopping the development, because if you don't build on a plain you won't be flooded.

K: Yeah, but the case is also that people like to live near water.

T: Yes, and that is always the price to pay. If you want to live on the river, you are going to expect to be flooded. But I think a lot of the cases are... is the management of the land, making sure that drainage happens, and the silt is cleaned, and that the river is not manually forced up by lack of maintenance and stuff like that. I mean, a flood plain is a flood plain, flood plains have been there a lot longer than the human beings, but we can help the situation by making sure maintenance is done, but that cots money. I mean, during our recent floods all the spheres of farmland were flooded for weeks, but it is a natural flood plain, so if you want to build a house on a flood plain – expect the flood. All they say is that environmental agency should have dragged the river more regularly, but, anyway, I cannot think about anything we could not have covered, I mean if you would have something, please, let me know. But, I wish you luck with your thesis. But perhaps you could give me a copy of it?

K: Sure, it is written in English.

T: That helps!

K: So when it is finished I will share it with you if you are interested in that.

T: Thank you for that!

K: So, and is there anyone else you know I could interview in relation to this research?

T: Have you done Tarsem?

Discussion about people to talk to.

Appendix VI Example of the interview transcript (Russian)

May 8. Female, 63, (R1).

В: Можете рассказать, как вы заметили приход воды?

О: А приход воды очень интересный, вот когда у нас щуки в огороде плавали, это значит лед уже ушел, это было в июне месяце, потому что у меня сын еще учился в школе, меня муж привез сюда на выходных, в понедельник он уехал, три дня дул ветер с Ладоги, нагнал воды, хорошо он сделал тогда мостки деревянные, мы по ним тогда ходили, то есть вода была вровень с мостками, три дня понадобилось, чтобы столько воды надуло.

В: Ага, а было какое-нибудь предупреждение?

О: Ой, никакого, потому что это все стихийно, я встала сегодня в полпятого утра, так вот за три часа погода менялась раза четыре, это совершенно непредсказуемый вариант, откуда что берется.

В: То есть даже если бы было какое-то предупреждение, то…

О: Да ну, какое тут предупреждение, я помню, что я поставила парник алюминиевый, посадила там все, и вот три дня дуло так, что все эти алюминиевые штучки, все это согнулось, и я его выбросила – и все, у меня у мамы на 45 километре дача, у нее он жив до сих пор. Вот такая здесь зона рискованного земледелия.

В: А можете рассказать, что люди во время наводнения делают, что вы делали?

О: Что мы делали, ну вот, когда последний раз было наводнение, когда вода подошла к нашему гаражу, я просто пошла вперед туда, на Свирь, потому что там была пробка, и сзади была пробка, я просто пошла посмотреть, как все это движется, и когда я пришла туда и вернулась обратно, здесь все прорвало, и вода ушла, а одно лето я ходила в резиновых сапогах, и вот эти вот канавы, которые между грядами прорыты, я ходила в сапогах, но это давно было. Что сейчас будет, я не знаю, потому что вот такого я никогда не видела (что мало воды).

В: А соседи ваши что делали?

О: А соседи что делали, да я даже не знаю, я все боялась, что у нас там дрова лежали, я боялась, что они уплывут, ну а что можно сделать, потому что это все бывает в считанные минуты, потому что, если здесь наводнение идет, когда лед идет и пробка образуется, тут раз – и вся вода пошла через край, ну и что ты можешь с этим делать? Ничего абсолютно.

В: А нужна вам была какая-нибудь помощь во время наводнения?

О: Ну, у нас вот уже несколько лет взрывали на Свири, делали что-то, но лед взрывали, а вот Кондратьево, обычно там бывает пробка, и там даже скот есть, так его убирают, в дома заводят или даже чуть ли не на чердаки, потому что там у них топит здорово, потому что они ниже.

В: А после наводнения нужна была какая-то помощь?

О: Вот было один год, когда было серьезное наводнение, вот с той стороны за домами, там прорыли канаву, ну, чтобы она в себя воду выводила, и потом для местных, мы-то дачники как бы, а для местных, им по барже песка выделили, и они на свои участки все это высыпали, чтобы поднять повыше, потому что здесь почва такая, что уходит все, копай не копай, сыпь не сыпь, все равно все земля забирает, вот такая вот была помощь от администрации, но это было в Советское время, а потом это все накрылось медным тазом, и сейчас ничего такого нет.

В: А соседская взаимопомощь есть?

О: Ну так а чего здесь соседи? Каждый спасает свое добро, если что. Но в принципе здесь народ уже привычный к этому делу, ну, как-то старается себя огородить от чего, но по мере возможностей.

В: А знаете, какими способами люди пытаются обезопасить себя от наводнений?

О: Ну, а что можно сделать, даже не знаю, что можно сделать, ну, во-первых, чтобы забор был, потому что если что-то есть на участке, то чтобы оно за участок не вынесло, а так, ну, тут заборы сами видите какие, это сейчас стали железные ставить, а раньше все же было просто, видите стоит деревянный забор, и все, ну вот, если дрова есть за забором, то они не уплывут, а если где-то здесь оставлены, то могут и уплыть.

В: А замечали, может быть, как во время наводнений люди начинают объединяться между собой, чтобы либо друг другу помогать, либо пожилым, к примеру?

О: Нет, ну вот здесь такого безобразия не было конечно никогда, поэтому такого я не наблюдала. Я говорю мы здесь с 89 года здесь живем, и два раза была вот такая вот история, но в принципе особо страшного такого особо ничего и не было. Конечно очень неприятно, когда ты выходишь в огород и тебе приходится ходить там по колено в воде. А местные, у них своя система земледелия, они вот когда грядки делают, очень интересно, они взяли и вот этот вот ручей, это называется ручей, они каждый год перекапывают гряды, забрасывают этот ручей и делают новый, ну, исключительно на случай если что-то такое случится, вода придет. Ну, вот это местные, а дачники они ничего этого не знают и даже не представляют, с чем им придется столкнуться, а местных тут осталось, вон там большущий дом, вон они местные, вот в этом доме местные, а дальше уже не знаю где, потому как все уже поумирали, остальные разъехались, тут продали все, а те, кто покупают это, они

даже не знают, что они покупают, и не представляют, с чем они могут столкнуться.

В: Ага, а как думаете, кто ответственный за урегулирование наводнений?

О: Ну, во-первых, это стихия, тут не может быть никакого регулирования, а во-вторых, нашему государству всегда было наплевать на своих граждан, потому что, ну, что тут можно делать, потому что если в советское время хоть что-то делалось, то сейчас не делается вообще ничего и ни о чем и никогда, вот что я могу сказать.

В: А как думаете, если люди бы объединили свои силы, то могло бы это разрешить эту проблему?

О: А как это может решить проблемы? Еще раз говорю, это стихия. Вот мы, например, когда приехали, наводнения такие большие бывают раз лет в двенадцать, ну, как эти циклы, то есть мы с этим не сталкивались, а когда столкнулись, тогда поняли, что это такое, а пока не сталкиваешься, все хорошо, все прекрасно, замечательно, а потом раз – и накрылось медным тазом все, так что это не регулируется вообще. Так что, когда мне рассказали, что вот там, где дорога, там катера ходили, там вообще все в воде было, дороги вообще не было. Я не знаю, как это можно регулировать, потому что земля… она – это саморегулирующаяся система, где-то берет, откуда-то убавит, никто не знает, почему, и никогда, вот не знаю, может, кто-то из ученых узнает, но я до этого не доживу. Потому что это все там подземные воды, еще чего-то, магнитные дела, никто ничего не знает, и предсказать ничего невозможно.

В: То есть вы думаете, что и пытаться не стоит это как-то разрешить?

О: Единственное что, я говорю, вот когда нам прорыли вдоль домов эту канаву, это помогло нам как-то обезопасить себя, вот это помогло, потом еще то, что дали песок, бесплатно, подняли участки, но я еще раз говорю, здесь такая почва, что она все под себя засасывает, что говорится, не в коня корм. Но все равно как бы повыше стало на какое-то время, так что нужно все равно что-то добавлять, природа здесь странная, никогда не знаешь, что здесь вырастет, когда и зачем. Вот мы когда жили на том участке, ну, вы видели, мы, когда приехали, у нас там было пол участка разработано, а остальное было как-то вода, наводнения и все такое, и потихонечку я это разрабатывала, и я разработала весь кусок, я перекопала осенью всю землю, а на следующий год наводнение пришло, и все это накрылось медным тазом, и мне было так обидно, мне было жалко своих сил, потому что участок там был довольно приличный, и все это своими руками, а здоровья особо нет, вот, и все это раз – и залило, и тогда я поняла, что местные, поскольку живут здесь уже не первый год, они к этому уже приспособились, и вот эти вот их канавы сумасшедшие, вот что-то в этом есть. Но вы понимаете, что сейчас у нас все по-другому, сейчас все

меняется, климат меняется, и поэтому неизвестно, чего ждать, как и почему.

В: А вы не думали у этих местных жителей как-то перенять их уловки?

О: А нет, я тоже копала, вот огороды которые копала, поскольку они соседи у меня были, я делала вот все эти канавы, и все у меня было замечательно, но черт меня дернул начать копать дальше, потому что, ну, сухо, ну, жалко, но номер не прошел, и мне было очень обидно, когда все это пропало, так что не зря говорят, зона рискованного земледелия, потому что вот когда бывает наводнение, тут вообще совершенно непонятно, раз – поднялось и ушло быстро, а бывает что тут эти завалы, заторы. Вот хорошо, что в последнее время начали взрывать, я не знаю, как в этом году, а раньше мы с мужем жили здесь постоянно, но я знаю что там, на Свири, они приезжали заранее и долбили, взрывали, чтобы все это могло уйти, ну это МЧС этому способствует, еще кто-то, то есть они помогают.

В: А как думаете, то, что они делают, этого достаточно?

О: Ну, так а что еще можно сделать, не знаю.

В: Ну, например, мешки с песком?

О: Так а какие мешки с песком, куда их?

В: Ну, вот, например, чтобы защитить свои дома, многие так делают..

О: Ну, вот раньше, еще давно-давно, вон те дома, они же не просто так их делали, во-первых, здесь нет колодцев, потому что грунтовые воды подходят очень близко, болотная вода, пить ее невозможно, то есть нет ничего, так они делали что, они делали плоты деревянные и на них ставили дом, то есть плот, на нем дом, и когда вот эти всякие наводнения случались, дом, ему ничего не грозило, потому что дом вместе с плотом поднимался, здесь нет ни подвалов, ну, как обычно, погреба, здесь ничего этого нет, потому что здесь очень близко грунтовые воды, и вот эта вот история с плотом, она от всего это защищала. А сейчас все ставят фундаменты, это вообще полная хрень. Вот у нас, пойдемте, покажу, вот у нас стоит дом, у них раньше была веранда, просто никакая, маленькая, неказистая, и мы позвали из Паши людей, которые этим занимаются, они там приехали, сделали, смотрите, что они сделали, они зацементировали, сделали столбики, и вот через несколько лет мы получили вот такую картину. Видите, вот все было нормально, но потом все стало выпирать, все разваливаться, то есть ничего никаких фундаментов, ничего цементировать нельзя, то есть здесь либо делать на сваях. Либо на том деревянном плоту, потому что это полное безобразие. Вот выперло у нас все на полметра, вот такая вот история. Ну, мы то думали, что раз те из Паши, они все сделают прекрасно, но они понятия не имеют, как и с чем они работают, а нам сказали потом, что не надо было никак ничего цементировать, а просто положить деревянные бревна и на них начинать строить, вот это наша

почва, обидно, не то слово, слава Богу, муж мой не увидел всего этого, его бы кондратий хватил сразу. Он так старался, договаривался, а главное, знакомые люди, а потому что они не учитывали все эти особенности местности, получилась вот такая вот хрень.

В: Ясно, а можете сказать, как на вас повлияли наводнения, изменилось у вас отношение к ним?

О: Ну, если они бывают раз в двенадцать лет, что они могут изменить в моей жизни, Ну, пережили, ну, я посмотрела, что это такое, ну, а как это еще может повлиять на мою жизнь, ну, если я уже сюда приехала, если я здесь живу, то мне надо уже как-то с этим смиряться.

В: А вот то, что вы рассказывали про местных, про то, что они канавы роют, вы это у них как узнали?

О: Так они у нас соседи были, они копали эти гряды, пришли и сказали, что лучше сделать так, мы пришли, посмотрели и стали делать как у них, просто пришли и дали совет, мы общались, там, с ними. Вот на 45 километре, там все совсем по-другому, я здесь одну грядку копаю три дня, потому что земля очень тяжелая, непригодная для всего этого, и вот у нас участок, за домом, там фактически болото, там вообще нечего делать, там вода, то есть сюда столько всего нужно, если хочешь там жить, но это все абсолютно бессмысленно, потому что эта земля вбирает в себя все, ну, это болото, я не знаю, как это еще объяснить. Постоянно туда нужно добавлять, поэтому обходимся минимальным.

В: А вот после наводнения, у вас с домом такое случилось, вы не просили о помощи у администрации?

О: Нет, ну, во-первых, у нас на этом участке вообще наводнения не было, только на старом, но какая там могла быть помощь, единственное только что нам прокопали канаву на участке, и она до сих пор там, и она там воду убирала. Копали вообще вон там, а муж договорился, чтобы нам на участке еще заодно прокопали, он подумал, что это может обезопасить.

В: То есть, по большому счету, никак эту проблему не решить, потому что кто-то говорил о том, что хорошо бы поставить дамбу…

О: Какую дамбу? От чего дамбу? Против кого? Какая здесь может быть дамба, я вообще не представляю. Вот идите сюда, вон там начинается дорога, а здесь стоит бишлот, и вот если бы этого бишлота не было, дорога бы здесь не стояла, и даже когда вы покупаете участок, то там оговаривается, что в этом бишлоте вы ничего не имеет права делать, вот у нас тут мостки поставлены, но его вообще нельзя засыпать, но везде это засыпается, зачем – непонятно, потому что в него должна уходить вода, в общем от незнания люди сами делают себе хуже. А потом я вам скажу, но это между нами, у нас такая администрация, что всем на нас глубоко плевать, я еще раз говорю, в советское время все было по-другому, а сейчас всем все по барабану, потому что вот, видите,

у нас стоит столб, на нем висела лампа, 350 лет, мы ходили года четыре назад, у нас была лампа куплена, мы к ним приходили и говорили: вот стоит столб, у нас есть лампа, вы скажите электрику, чтоб он пришел и повесил эту лампу, а перед этим нам мэр сказал, что вы дачники и вам вообще ничего не положено, но столб стоит на территории местной жительницы, мы пришли, сказали, а он говорит, что мы ему голову забиваем, он нам дорогу делает, мост строит, видела наш мост понтонный? Ну, это полная порнография, у меня нет слов по поводу этого моста, я бы выругнулась просто, причем он нам показывал несколько проектов этого моста, и был один проект очень хороший, но он стоил чуть дороже, чем вот этот, ну, и, естественно, они сделали то, что подешевле, получилась полная задница, потому что сейчас вода ушла, и мы ушли все вместе с водой туда, а один проект был очень хороший, вот, а он говорит, вы ко мне тут с электричеством, а у меня муж говорит, ну, елки зеленые, лампа есть, все есть, ну почему не сказать, не дать указание электрику, чтобы он пришел и поставил здесь освещение? Никому ничего не надо, просто никому, я поэтому и говорю, что нашей администрации… а у него фамилия очень интересная, он Лихадеев, он или лихо делает, или делает лихо, то есть от него толку просто никакого, а еще до него был очень интересный мэр по фамилии Рыжов, вон там в той стороне сейчас уже все разбито, но у него там раньше была дача, он ее прихватизировал после перестройки, так вот, в ту сторону был проспект имени Рыжова, то есть у нас вообще никто никогда ничего не делал, ни дорог, ничего, вот вам отношение администрации. Следующий мэр пришел, Потапов, дорога к нему была сделана отличная, а у нас все как было, так и осталось, вот я вам и говорю, что администрации на нас попросту наплевать.

В: А есть вопросы в деревне, которые заботят всех жителей?

О: Ой, ну я так с ними на эту тему не общалась, но хорошо бы у нас вообще дорогу сделать нормальную, ну хоть немного засыпать эти ямы, но я еще раз говорю, в ту сторону, при Рыжове, был просто проспект, а в эту сторону, ну, мы уже привыкли к этим колдобинам, вот такая вся жизнь и есть.

В: А пытались как-то разрешить этот вопрос?

О: А это никому не нужно, потому что у него там дача, а здесь у него ничего нет, и поэтому он всех нас в гробу видал и в белых тапках.

В: А к нему ходил кто-нибудь, просил?

О: А то, а то, ходили!

В: А индивидуально или коллективно?

О: Насчет коллективно я не знаю, но вот во всяком случае подвижек в отношении дороги не было никаких, потому что у нас тут, сами понимаете, ну что тут, дорога, что ли? Единственное, что в прошлом году, вон там участок дороги заделали. Потому что была такая история,

что пустили здесь какое-то плавучее сооружение, которое выкапывало землю и кидало сюда, они якобы делали дорогу, вон ту площадку мой муж засыпал сам, а до этого там все глиной было заброшено, а она такая, что по ней не проехать, не пройти, не проползти было. То есть там такой ужас был, но в прошлом году они как-то привели ее в форму, но это был вот такой маленький кусочек, а остальное все, ну, вы видите. А сейчас здесь все еще ездят на иномарках, посадка низкая, ну, попробуй здесь проехать, все шкрябают.

В: А как думаете, если бы люди объединились…

О: А что значит объединились, это как?

В: Ну, сорганизовались и пошли в мэрию представлять свои интересы?

О: Во-первых, есть дачники, а есть местные. Местные уже все очень старые и пожилые, то есть им дай бог из дома выйти. Вот меня, например, вчера сын привез сюда, вот мне, например, чтобы набрать воды из реки, вот что я могу сделать, там не набрать, то есть кругом проблемы, из-за того, что шла вода, кругом люди пожилые, немощные, им уже лишь бы дожить просто, а дачники, а дачники все очень интересные, то есть они все разные, у одних есть возможности, они делают себе спуск бетонный, там еще чего-то, а собрать всех в кучу, одни такие, другие такие, попробуй их собери, у всех свои интересы, и поэтому все это очень сложно.

В: Ага, а если бы было такое объединение, вы бы хотели в нем участвовать?

О: Ну вот объясните мне, какое может быть объединение?

В: Ну, вот, допустим, есть, скажем, десять человек на этой улице и у них есть общий интерес – отремонтировать дорогу, вот они все идут и начинать лоббировать свои интересы?

О: Ну, я могу привести такой пример, вот видите, перед нами стоит машина, слева, одна из них принадлежит зятю бабушки, которая здесь постоянно живет, так вот, зять этот приезжает сюда летом, ну, несколько раз в год, приехал и уехал, а бабушка приходит к моему мужу и просит привезти воды из Паши, 25 канистр, при том, что ее зять приехал и уехал, а я понять не могу, вот почему они считает, что мой муж должен ехать за водой, а зять бережет свою машину, потому что лишний раз проехаться по такой дороге, вы меня извините. То есть я еще раз говорю: у каждого свои понятия, у меня муж был безотказный, но я у него спросила, а почему вот он приехал, уехал, что ему привезти, нет проблем, но жалеет машину, нормально, да? А соседскую не жалко, так что я вам еще раз говорю, у всех свои интересы, так что на счет объединения – все это очень проблематично.

В: А вообще жителей деревни интересует общее состояние деревни или скорее важно то, что у себя на участке происходит?

О: А что значит общие проблемы деревни?

В: Ну, те же самые дороги.

О: Ну, вот вы, когда оттуда шли, вы видели, наверное, такой зеленый забор новый, на участке еще ничего нету, так вот, те, кто делали этот забор и этот участок засыпали землей, они раздолбали эту дорогу окончательно, и им на нас просто взять и положить, они сделали свое дело, а то, что они после себя оставили, никому не интересно, и мы сейчас имеем то, что имеем, а кому идти жаловаться? Как обычно.

В: А какой совет могли бы дать людям, которые подвергаются наводнениям?

О: Ну, постараться учитывать все факторы, которые им доступны, известные, иметь это в виду и не пускать это на самотек. То есть вот они знают, что такое возможно, то они должны как-то учитывать, но сейчас ведь весь фокус в том, что здесь местных жителей осталось очень мало, они все поумирали, продали дома, и приезжают люди, которые вообще ничего не знают, куда они приехали, они просто не понимают, что их здесь ждет, а вот когда они с этим столкнутся, вот тогда, может, что-нибудь у них там в голове и перевернется. Но им никто этого не говорит, потому что главное – это продать участок, в сухое время, они продали, те приехали – и они вообще ничего не знают.

В: Они не ходят, не пытаются узнать у местных?

О: Я вам говорю, здесь местных почти нету, вот бабулька, ее привезли сейчас на лето, вон там за этим участком она одна живет, следующая живет на повороте. Там, где канал, то есть здесь практически местных не осталось никого, и спросить не у кого. Они приехали, здесь река, все красиво. Но они вообще не знают, что их здесь ожидает, то есть они будут по мере проживания еще что-то узнавать (смеется), потому что у нас главное – это маркетинговые ходы: главное – продать, а что там дальше будет, это всем все по барабану. Вот еще раз говорю, что, если бы администрации было бы хоть какое-то дело того, кто здесь живет, было бы все по-другому. Вот когда мы сюда приехали, здесь было четыре детских сада, порт, магазин, потом его прихватизировали, то есть здесь была жизнь, все работали, а потом, когда перестройка началась, здесь все накрылось медным тазом. У нас баня старая была, потом начали строить новую, ее построили – и раз, тут же прихватизировали, и вообще ничего не осталось, все сикось-накось пошло, не стало работы, прожить просто не на что было, стали в лес ходить, все это начисто выносили, рыбу ловили, потому что нужно было как-то прокормиться. Раньше все как-то было совсем по-другому, до людей было хоть какое-то дело, а сейчас… я не знаю, все разруха какая-то.

В: А я не спросила, чего они стали канаву рыть?

О: А это после наводнения, чтобы вода с участков собиралась, они осушали ее. А вот это я не знаю, на нашем участке все и закончилось. Но

я знаю, что местным жителям и всем до Свири, им всем по барже песка выделили, чтобы они подняли участки.

В: А если бы сейчас мэрия это делала, было бы лучше?

О: Это было бы хорошо, но это стоит очень дорого, а мэрия… или нет денег у них, либо себе забрали.

В: А никто не ходил, не просил?

О: Ой, да ну что вы, сейчас все на коммерческой основе, это раньше было что-то бесплатно, а сейчас, тем более здесь старики, что они могут купить-то. Вот что ни говорите, а при советской власти было лучше, и о детях заботились и о пострадавших, а сейчас только деньги волнуют.