

Transitioning from hope to optimism and back again

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I consider what happens when hope is no longer needed, when hope is left behind. What displaces or pushes hope aside and for how long can this last before hope is needed yet once again. These thoughts run through my mind when I consider the economically precarious, post conflict, post earthquake country of Nepal. During seven years of conducting research in this country and through repeated, granular engagement with one particular city (Bharatpur), I found people to be overwhelmingly hopeful. Full of hope that one day their country would no longer be in 'transition'. Transition from what to what was not always clear. In the past three years (2017-2020), hope has been replaced with optimism. Then optimism has been replaced with hope. Thinking through what this signifies for people and the country will be the foundation for my reflection.

Rethinking disasters and social change: Beyond hope and despair