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Back to the roots of socially constructed disaster risk. Revisioning and envisioning disaster aid and governance

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**Politecnico
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ScuDo

Scuola di Dottorato ~ Doctoral School

WHAT YOU ARE, TAKES YOU FAR

Doctoral Dissertation

Doctoral Program in Urban and Regional Development (33rd Cycle)

Back to the roots of socially constructed disaster risk

Revisoning and envisioning disaster aid and governance

By

Giacomo Cazzola

Supervisor:

Prof. Maurizio Tiepolo

Politecnico di Torino

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Abstract

This thesis reflects on the acknowledgement and usage, for disaster aid and governance, of the Disaster Risk Creation (DRC) theoretical construct and investigates the barriers and challenges of addressing the processes enhancing exposure and vulnerability. The methodological approach adopted builds upon well-established Disaster Risk (DR) root causes analytical models and questions their relevance and urgency for aid and Disaster Risk Management (DRM) actors in Haiti and Guatemala, two highly exposed and vulnerable Countries. Recollecting aid workers' tales and explanations of DRC restated the overall paralysis in dealing with "usual" clusters of DR drivers, particularly dysfunctional governments, hazard-prone buildings, and environmental degradation. Besides this awareness, actors revealed a certain degree of self-consciousness also of the side effects of their practices, of their active role in unwittingly reinforcing and amplifying disaster risk: this through and due to lack of common long-term strategies and coordination, conflicting prioritizations and interventions, duplicated and counterproductive services, failed and ineffective recoveries, etc. Stated DRM and aid's contribution to DRC, the thesis intercepts relevant academic frameworks that already captured some explanations to such dynamics and open to theoretical and practical implications that could reverse such vicious tendencies and resist to new creations of DR.

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