

Book Review

Risks Southwards: Diversity of Risks in Disaster-Related Contexts for Argentina

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Risks Southwards: Diversity of Risks in Disaster-related Contexts for Argentina

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316 pp.

\$330.00

ISBN 978-950793902-1

Unlike our grandparents, we live in a world of risks, torn in a globalized geography where any event resonates in minutes in any geographical point of the World. Doubtless, following Baudrillard's fears, "the spectacle of disaster" produces an allegory of what will happen, but to understand this better, risks are enrooted in future... Of course, the heated discussion between probabilists and constructivists on the nature of risk seems to be far from being closed. While for probabilists risks are object likelihoods which can be forecasted using mathematical algorithms, some other voices alluded to the socio cultural logic of risks, which vary on culture, time and person. Risks are cognitively selected according to a much deeper preceding background. Those threatening risks that loom some cultures are ignored in others (Korstanje 2010; 2015).

In this context, Fernando Briones & Jesica Viand present their book, *Riesgos Al Sur (Risks Southwards)*, an edited collection formed by seven sections and 17 ground-breaking chapters. The main goal of this project discusses the upsurge of multi-layered risks in Argentina, South America. Policy makers should contemplate the importance of nation-state as well as private sector in drawing programs of risk-contention. This book which is based on the risk-management fields helps readers understanding the geographical contexts that lead society to disasters. Argentina in this vein is a country unprepared to face global risks and disasters. By the introduction, editors explain that the book derived from light-hearted talks in Buenos Aires, Argentina which were crystalized in a summit later (Taller Regional de Gestion de Riesgos de Desastres en Latinoamerica y Caribe- Regional course of Risk Management with focus in disasters for Latin America and Caribe) hosted by ROLAC and CONICET. The original goals were aimed at discussing risk management programs to prevent real disasters in Argentina, and other Latin American countries. Their main obstacle to overcome was a shared meaning of risks beyond the current fragmentation of knowledge. Since each discipline has developed its definition of risk, it was a task very hard to grasp. Though risks and hazards are

disseminated to all members of society, they open the doors to a new hierarchy where privilege classes make decision often affect more vulnerable groups. The material asymmetries produced by capitalism equals to long-simmering structural inequalities that not only affects victims but has an impact in how risks are handled. This is the moot-point discussed by Diego Rios and Lucila Moreno, who from different angles and approaches center his analysis on gated-communities affect the urban fabric which is more vulnerable to floods. The case of Sanctuary of Cromañón, a sacred shrine erected to rememorize a made-man disaster where 194 youth lost their lives, was addressed by Diego Zenobi. By the induction to an interesting ethnography, Zenobi observes that the sanctuary sublimates by the pain of victims and survivors that sometimes are in opposition to political status-quo. Susann Baez Ulberg addresses the floods in Santa Fe dated back in 2003 with more than 130.000 evacuees in which case it prompted a strong protest against officialdom. For popular parlance it resulted in the decline of nation-state after stock-market crisis in 2001 that placed the country between the wall and blue sea. As many of the revised chapters in this book, she contends that memory exerts the right to remind but at the same time forget something. This is the reason why memories of disasters are politically selected. At a closer look, the same argument remains in next chapters authored by Tamara Beltramino (fifth) who traces an historical background of Floods in Santa Fe from 1982 up to date, Eduardo Aguirre Madariaga (sixth) exploring the dichotomies of urban growth which intersected with the lack of planning or even Hortensia Castro, a well-read scholar who analyzes the environmental risk in Quebrada de Humahuaca that is sensitive to floods and hydraulic issues. Expanding the current understanding of why disasters take hit is one of her main goals, as the restant chapters of this pungent book. It ranges the studies of Martin DeMaria (fires in Cordoba), Agustina Girardo & Soledad Iturralde (focusing on the anthropological factors of risk in la Pampa), Anabel Calvo & Sandra Pereira (working on risk management toolkits in farming, Miriam Teresita Aparicio and Isabel Balmaceda (Educative programs of evacuation in quake contexts), or Carolina Domizio, Francisco Calderon & Noemi Maldonado (risks in schooling and schools in seismic zones) among others. The final chapters are finely-ingrained into VI section entirely dedicated to volcano activity in La Patagonia and southern Coast in its effects on civil society (Murgida, Gentile, Torrens, Jurio, Membribe, Perez, Outes, Villarosa, Demenico, Gomez, Lissarague, Beigt, Manzoni, Arretche, Ferrari & Monti). As some large country rich in multilayered geographies, Argentina needs from risk-management programs to make from urban spaces a better place to live. As Gabriel Asato noted, the new ICTs may help in rationalizing the available information to prevent situation of chaos and decontrol in disaster-related contexts. Digital information plays a crucial role in mitigating the negative aftermaths of disasters.

Although the reviewed piece offers an all-encompassing diagnosis in the potential risks Argentina faces, little attention was drawn to the dependency of victims and financial assistance of nation-state in post disaster environs. As many risk management analysts, editors and authors trivialize the cultural roots of risk perception, and how it can be financially and politically tergiversated in order for status quo to keep their legitimacy. As the floods in La Plata evinced, there is a global tendency for state to ask for soft loans to assist victims and survivors instead of intervening directly on the recovery process. Instead of solving the complex glitches that made the disaster possible, states are prone to lend money. This slippery matter was widely studied by Haigh & Amaratunga (2010) throughout build environment literature. Far from been shortened, the financial dependency of elite and less privileged-classes is enlarged after the disasters beats. It is unfortunate that a vicious circle surfaces, where financial capitals needs from disasters to survive. At some extent, many nation-states usher victims in the needs of soliciting a loan to banking system to reconstruct the community posing a serious ethical dilemma for the paradigm of well-fare state. As Naomi Klein puts it, capitalism not only recycles from the adverse situations but also generates further profits and dependency once the disasters obliterated a whole part of community. It triggers a hot debate which merits to be discussed in next layouts.

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Maximiliano E. Korstanje is editor in chief of *International Journal of Safety and Security in Tourism* (UP Argentina) and *International Journal of Cyber Warfare and Terrorism* (IGI-Global, US). Besides being Senior Researchers in the Department of Economics at University of Palermo, Argentina, he is a global affiliate of Tourism Crisis Management Institute (University of Florida US), Centre for Ethnicity and Racism Studies (University of Leeds), The Forge (University of Lancaster and University of Leeds UK) and The International Society for Philosopher, hosted in Sheffield UK. With more than 700 published papers and 25 books, Korstanje was awarded as Outstanding Reviewer 2012. *International Journal of Disaster Resilience in the Built Environment*. University of Salford, UK, Outstanding Reviewer 2013. *Journal of Place Management and Development*. Institute of Place, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK and Reviewer Certificate of Acknowledgement 2014. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* (IJCHM), University of Central Florida, US. Now he co-edits almost 10 specialized journals in such themes as human rights, mobility, tourism and terrorism. Korstanje is subject to biographical records for Marquis Who's Who in the World since 2009. He had nominated to 5 honorary doctorates for his contribution in the study of the effects of terrorism in tourism. In 2015 he was awarded as Visiting Research Fellow at School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Leeds, UK.