COMMUNITY RESILIENCE & POST-DISASTER HOUSING RECOVERY: 
THE CASE OF CANTERBURY EARTHQUAKES OF 2010/2011

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RESEARCH QUESTION & OBJECTIVES

Research Question:
What is community resilience & how is it shaped (or) not by access to post-disaster housing recovery & the democratic participation of communities themselves as key stakeholders in the process?

Research Objectives:
1. Broaden the current theoretical understanding of community resilience by elaborating a critique of the concept with an emphasis on the study of power relations
2. Empirically assess the applicability of this theoretical approach by mapping the complex & rapidly changing context of post-disaster housing recovery & the role of communities within it using the Canterbury Earthquakes as a case study

Methods:
- Theory Construction
- Qualitative Systematic Review
- Directed Content & Discourse Analysis
- Participant Observation (Fieldwork)
- In-Depth Interviews (Key Informants)
- Document Review (Policy & Media)
THE DISCOURSE OF ‘RESILIENCE’

Helping cities around the world become more resilient to the physical, social, and economic challenges that are a growing part of the 21st century.
**BACKGROUND**

**Community Impacts**
- After the earthquakes there was a 'coming together' of society, evidence of a strong sense of community & belonging
- Large numbers of internally displaced & social dislocation, as entire neighbourhoods in the east were ‘red zoned’ & will not be rebuilt
- ‘Population shift’ from the east to the west & demographic changes with the arrival of thousands of rebuild workers
- Communities identified as important stakeholders in the response & recovery process after earthquakes but not awarded a significant role in the decision-making process
- Community service providers had to do more with less

**Housing Pressures**
- Housing is a key social determinant of health & wellbeing & the adverse health effects of substandard housing are well established
- Housing recovery is essential to safeguarding the basic humanitarian need for ‘shelter’
- 91% of 190,000 dwellings damaged
- Important contributor to disaster-related economic losses & biggest recipient of earthquake-related investment (2013-2017)
- Increased homelessness or ‘severe housing deprivation’ (more than 50 percent), & house prices & rents (more than 30 percent)
- ‘Slow progressing’ recovery
Housing recovery is key to revitalizing communities after natural disasters & critical component of local economy & social fabric.
· Climate of ‘command & control’ developed with the creation of CERA
· Local government ‘fell in line’ with the takeover of ECAN & the weathering of CCC’s sphere of influence
· The Government’s conservative economic ideals & the unprecedented level of insurance coverage coalesced to produce a ‘market-led’ or 'insurance-led' approach to post-disaster housing recovery
· The market was not necessarily ready to 'lead', as they were grappling with their own losses.
· This would signify a public response that was focused away from significant economic investment in increasing the city’s affordable housing stock & exerting greater regulation over the market, de-regulating instead to incentivise private investment
KEY FINDINGS

- This approach lacked the benefit of a ‘whole of government’ approach or an overarching strategy that brought together insurance, land use, ‘managed retreat’ from red zoned areas, temporary, social & emergency housing, the rebuild of the CBD, land acquisition, & policies to develop new forms of higher density inner-city living, together with other aspects like social & economic recovery

- Developers have a preference for suburban greenfields development, questioned in terms of quality & sustainability

- This has contributed to an accelerated suburbanization of the city, contrary to a previously established mandate for more compact development

- Missed opportunity to promote inner-city living & more dense, innovative, & affordable housing types on a larger scale

- ‘Bettering' housing is essential for housing to be more resilient to future disasters but this was not the case with the 'insurance-led' recovery of housing in Christchurch;

- There is a need for more security of tenure & regulation of the private rental market with a warrant of fitness (WOF) & a rental cap policy
MOLESWORTH STREET
WELLINGTON CBD
(KAIKURA EARTHQUAKE, 14-11-16)
CONCLUDING REMARKS

• In line with international evidence, this study confirms that pre-existing social structures were continued, if not reaffirmed by the disaster.

• The disproportionate impact on the vulnerable & those with low-incomes, has been described as an example of the ‘inverse care law’.

• These inequalities notwithstanding, the case of Christchurch shows that, even though democracy was taken away from the city & communities where greatly dislocated, communities were ‘agents’ able to respond by ‘filling the gap’, providing much needed support, social services, collective spaces, & leading their constituencies in innovative ways to cope with the impacts of the earthquakes.

• Community resilience – the capacity of communities to respond collectively to adversity & take control of their futures – requires democracy, transparency, & participation in the decision-making process (in addition to engagement & consultation) & promotes the consideration of the ‘human factor’, in all recovery policies, especially those affecting housing.
THANK YOU
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