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Cash Grants to Manufacturers after Cyclone Idai: – RCT evidence from Mozambique

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In March 2019, Cyclone Idai hit central Mozambique and caused widespread damage, including businesses in the enterprise sector. We use panel data and a randomized controlled trial (RCT) to estimate the impact of unconditional cash grants on micro enterprises and their recovery. We find that, on average, the cash grants had a positive effect on firm revenue, profits and savings, as well as on the likelihood of having their roof repaired. The cash had a stronger impact in the more damaged city (Beira) compared to the less affected location (Chimoio), and was particularly effective for carpenters. These findings indicate that access to finance is critically important for firm recovery following disasters.

Situating ‘Verano Boricua’ Within Puerto Rico’s Financial Debt Crisis and Hurricane Maria Recovery Process

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El Verano Boricua—specifically the island-wide strike and mass street protests which toppled Governor Ricardo Rosselló’s government—represents an agonistic moment in contemporary Puerto Rican politics. This moment is impossible to understand outside of a two-decade long economic recession, the decade-long “Debt Crisis,” austerity politics, and the long-term Hurricane Maria recovery process. The 2019 mass street protests emerged from the student strikes at the University of Puerto Rico, effectively organized boycotts of the referendum, political parties, labor union protests, feminist activism, anarchist and socialist collectives, environmental justice advocates, art, and many more sources that had become disenchanted with Puerto Rican politics and the promises of postcolonial sovereignty. Using historical research and interview methods, this paper will contextualize and historicize the contemporary emergency situation in Puerto Rico by situating it within these long-term processes.

In the moment of impact and in the wake of hurricanes and other disasters, the ability to recover is directly shaped by existing socioeconomic and racial inequalities. The risk-prone environments of the marginalized and rural-poor magnify the impacts of catastrophic events like Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico—exposing stark inequalities. Disaster-vulnerability and exposure to risk are unevenly distributed throughout every community—the situation being especially dire in Puerto Rico in the context of “Debt Crisis” and imposed austerity measures. Puerto Rico’s “Debt Crisis” has its origins in the ten-year phase-out of Section 936 of the U.S. Tax Code which began in 1996 and ended in 2006—the year Puerto Rico’s current depression began. Many U.S. corporations were initially drawn to the island through the strategy of “industrialization by invitation,” and then kept on the island throughout the 1970s period of trade liberalization with incentives in a special tax regime under Section 936. The phase-out of Section 936 triggered a deindustrialization process (Caraballo-Cueto and Lara 2018).

Not everything in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria has been negative, however. *Spaces of popular, agonistic sovereignty have emerged in People’s Assemblies throughout Puerto Rico and the U.S. mainland,* challenging disaster neoliberalism (privatization) and austerity measures imposed by the Financial Oversight and Management Board. Hurricane Maria exposed poverty, environmental injustice, and differential vulnerability, but since *El Verano Boricua,* a debate has opened for the need for a transformation of the island based on popular sovereignty.

References

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Cycles of Disasters, Long-term Recovery, and Identity: How Biloxi's Recovery from Hurricane Katrina Started in 1969

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"Camille killed more people in 2005 than she did in 1969." Many people shared this perspective with me in my fieldwork in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in Biloxi, Mississippi. But beyond this, Camille and recovery from it also set up the Biloxi that Katrina would affect and the recovery decisions that would be made in the aftermath of the storm when intertwined with other existing issues of identity and power.

Following Katrina, Biloxi found itself working to recover from devastation, much of which was focused on the oldest part of the city, filled with shotgun houses, social clubs and churches rooted in ethnic and national heritage, the seafood industry, and casino barges. The recovery process itself was shaped not only by what had physically been there before and the path of the hurricane, but also by pre-disaster
social, cultural, political, and economic forces, including people who lived in areas far less impacted by the storm and a history of repeated hurricane strikes in the area.

The area's history of neighborhood, ethnic and racial, and socioeconomic class identities was interwoven with memories of Camille and other hurricanes to shape priorities for pre-Katrina preparedness and post-Katrina response and recovery. Understanding this historical and cultural context is vital to our understanding of long-term recovery from disasters, of Katrina's lasting impact on Biloxi, and of the ways in which cycles of disasters can influence recovery, in turn, setting up what and who will be hit by the next disaster.

Also problematic is the fact that Katrina was, of course, not Camille and shaping decision making for disaster preparedness and recovery for Katrina on experiences with Camille was no guarantee of success and potentially continues a pattern of similar problems. In fact, following Katrina decisions were made to relocate casinos onto land near the water, eliminating the hazards associated with their status as
barges, but continuing existing risk as they remained in the strike zone for hurricanes, as proven with both Camille and Katrina.

In an era of climate change, studying these cycles and their role in long-term preparedness and recovery in disasters is critical. With changing patterns tied to climate change, we have seen increases in disaster frequency and severity, which opens the way for this pattern of relying on experience with one disaster to shape behavior in another completely different disaster to potential ill effects to be repeated more often.

Putting out Fires: A Multiple Streams Analysis

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Sweden has not traditionally been known for a high occurrence of large forest fires, but events in the past few years have manifested the opposite. The 2014 forest fire in Västmanland was by far the largest in modern times and four years later, in 2018, a number of fires destroyed twice the area the 2014 forest fire had burned. Crisis management in Sweden rests with municipalities, which face the challenge of adapting their crisis management and preparedness architecture in order to be combat the risk of large forest fires. However, policy change is not an automatic result of a crisis. Furthermore, mechanisms of policy change at the local level in the field of crisis management is poorly understood. In this paper, we employ the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) to analyze the organizational and policy changes in the Swedish municipality of Sala, which was hit by the forest fires both in 2014 and 2018. Through semi-structured interviews and a survey collecting network data, we map the network of actors that contributed to the changes after 2014. We employ MSF to show that the fires constituted a focusing event that exposed serious inadequacies in the crisis management municipal structures and policies. Concomitantly we shed light on the framing of the event by relevant actors as well as contextualize it in the Swedish national crisis management context.

10 years of recovery process in Tōhoku through the eyes of the storytellers of the disaster

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Kataribe is the Japanese word that describes the ancient practice of telling stories related to local history and tradition. After the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, commonly known as 3.11, kataribe groups with different origins and purposes flourished through affected areas of Tōhoku (North-East Japan). In the beginning, they were telling the story of how the tsunami hit the area, including personal experiences and stories about the single towns. While the recovery/reconstruction process was ongoing, kataribe started to address tourists, volunteers, and other groups of visitors including more details on the local traditions and attractive elements such as natural resources, food, and places of interest.

This year marked the 10-year commemoration of the 3.11 disaster. While some of the affected towns are being rebuilt, important questions are raising: whose recovery is this? The area of Tōhoku is in fact depopulated and many people that evacuated after the disaster are not coming back. Even so, houses were built together with major infrastructures, including massive seawalls object of strong controversy. Along this recovery process, kataribe-storytellers are also reflecting on their role and their mission: which kind of narratives are being told and remembered? Who are the recipients of kataribe stories? If it is true that this practice has become more and more tourism-oriented, what does the local younger population know about 3.11 disaster and about how Tōhoku looked like before it? This contribution is based on 5-year ethnographic research (started in 2015) on kataribe-storytelling in the area of Miyagi Prefecture and it would like to offer an occasion to reflect on the development of the recovery process after a disaster that sometimes is seen as more visitor-oriented than adapted to the local needs.

The Oakland Berkeley Firestorm: A Thirty Year Chronicle of Emotions, Effects, and Their Import

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On October 20, 1991 a spark from an old fire reignited and swept down the hills behind Oakland and Berkeley, California. Within four days it destroyed 3,356 homes and 456 apartments. The Oakland Firestorm remains the largest urban fire that the United States has ever witnessed. Twenty-five people died. Six thousand people were left homeless. I am one of the survivors. In the fire I lost my home, clothing, furniture, heirlooms, car, pets, twenty-five years of anthropological research, seven manuscripts, all my other writings, projects in development, photos, lectures and course notes, and entire library. To describe the devastation both physical and psychological of this kind of loss is like trying to define eternity or infinity. I had no salt to put upon my food or for my tears. I had no thread to stitch my daughter's hem or to continue the continuity of my life. I lost the addresses and phone numbers of everyone I ever knew; the vita and record of my past. The fabric of my life, utterly unraveled. The experience and its upshot changed not only my life but also my anthropology. Inadvertently rendered a survivor, I became a researcher, activist, and advocate for the victims of disaster. In the thirty years hence, I have turned into an ardent voice devoted to the issues of risk and disaster. Still my personal recovery from the vast loss lingers. This paper explores the chronicle of long term recovery and the continuing experience almost thirty years since.