

# DISASTERS II

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All disasters encompass social dimensions, either because they are the result of State neglect, or omission of enterprises, or due to short, medium or long-term unbalanced relations among society sectors and the environment, or else due to the consequences they produce not only to territories, populations, but also to the environment, the basis for social life. Each case will be given this or that focus to the detriment of others, but some dimensions can be found in several disasters: the need for identification and characterization of the impacts and damages caused, liability, adopted policies and programs to repair the harm, and the need for measures regarding prevention and risk reduction. For a while, the discussion of the causes of the disasters and their relation to the social and economic development models adopted by the countries that promote and sustain social inequality and access to services and means of survival, has been taking place.

Disasters always involve the human dimension. There are always individuals involved in their causes and consequences even if they are away at the exact moment the disaster takes place. Very often, people begin to be affected even before the very accident takes place, which will be named a disaster further on. Issues related to housing, land ownership and use, use of water, freedom to come and go, often characterize conflicts that happen before the exact moment of the disaster. After the disaster, such conflicts may be more evident and even become more heated. In the urban and rural contexts, and in the public policies institutions, disasters are prone to affect life, regardless of their dimensions. They may affect food, health, work, life projects, besides the environment, fauna, flora, and the temperature of the earth. They may lead to forced dislocations, to altered livelihood resources, and they may even be used to legitimate authoritative practices and policies against the people, besides disqualifying cultural practices of given social groups. Landslides, fires, earthquakes, tsunamis, dam bursts, oil spills, draught and pandemic may also occur.

In this sense, the human rights need due attention and priority as we refer to disasters. The disciplinary way we often approach, analyze and interact with the world may lead us to “see” the disasters, while the human dimension is forgotten. The

capacity to present good solutions facing disasters – either to analyze the causes and the aftermath, or to propose prevention policies and risk reduction – demand that human rights are considered a transversal dimension. The definition of human rights acknowledges that its range neither depends on race, color, sex, language, religion, political opinion or of any other kind, nor depends on social or national origin, on birth conditions or wealth. They include the right to life and freedom, to freedom of opinion and expression, to the right to work, to health, and to education, and the right to information, dignifying homes, safe food, nationality, among many other rights.

It is well known that disasters are not limited to specific social strata, but it is clear that these episodes fall more heavily on the poorest layers of the population producing damages, losses and pain difficult to overcome by those who are struck. Populations are not all affected the same way by disasters, and those who are historically more victimized such as children, young people, women, black people, indigenous people, quilombolas, riverside dwellers, the handicapped, the elderly, especially those who are economically vulnerable, present great difficulties to face disasters in several life dimensions.

Thus, if on the one hand we have human rights warranted by legislations, treaties, international laws, a set of principles and covenants among countries, and other forms of Law, on the other hand, the way problems related to disasters are construed and analyzed often relinquish people's rights. Treaties and other Law modalities are usually meant to formally protect the individual or group rights against actions or governmental neglect that interfere with their human rights benefits, but it is essential that this formalized and somewhat consensual dimension comes true.

After this brief reflection, I introduce this second volume of *Revista da UFMG* to approach the theme Disasters. Our readers may have the opportunity to find productions on the many dimensions of disasters of many kinds. Once more theoretical and methodological plurality highlights a periodical edition. I hope that the reading of these productions offers a broader understanding of the multiple aspects involved in disasters, and that the disciplinary boundaries may be surpassed so that better knowledge and more integrated actions engaged in individual and collective rights of populations may be found.

Therefore, in this second issue of *Revista da UFMG* dedicated to the theme Disasters, the first text may be considered a big surprise. It will affect the readers in

different ways for it points out that the understanding of disasters, their causes and consequences signifies, most of all, understanding life. This article is a piece of Cordel literature titled *Fragmentos Severinos* by Fernando Antônio de Mélo, Maria Fernanda Salcedo Repolês, and André Luiz Freitas Dias, who together make use of this popular kind of literary genre, richly rhymed, sensitively conducting us to imagine, with much realism and poetry, the impacts that disasters produce in the daily lives of ordinary people. This beautiful writing depicts art as resistance and life, an act of hope before sacrifice and hardship.

In the second article named *The great forgotten disaster: a preliminary analysis of the oil spill on the Brazilian coast (August 2019/March 2020) and its impacts on the State of Bahia shore*, Lélia Santiago Custódio da Silva, Jefferson de Lima Picanço, and João Guilherme Soares Calil try to identify the impacts of the oil spill in 31 municipalities. The analysis was based on the reports by the Environmental and Renewable Natural Resources Brazilian Institute, explaining issues that are invisible to a great part of the population.

Marina Vale Viegas, in her article *The construction of the landscape and the expulsions in New York under climate change*, analyzes how climate changes have intensively transformed the New York landscape. Focusing on the relation between disasters and the urban context, the author advocates an integrated perspective of urban planning coordinating space, social practices, and technical and budgetary feasibility.

In *Disasters in Brazil and in the world: effects on children and their childhood*, Ademilson de Sousa Soares, Luan Manoel Thomé, Lucas Ramos Martins and Maria do Perpétuo Socorro de Lima Costa make an effort to identify the consequences of disasters to children, and spot the importance of taking into account the children's experiences for the policies and programs regarding the prevention and repair of disasters, while they point out education and teacher's preparation as a means to approach this dimension.

Next, Flora Clarissa Cardim Pimentel, author of the article *Life in the slums while the disaster doesn't take place: faces of social and environmental injustice in the city of Recife* presents an ethnographic study carried out in the slum Alto José Bonifácio (Recife, State of Pernambuco) aiming to understand the relation of the residents with the territory facing poor housing and the subsequent disaster risks. She tried to connect the dimensions of injustice and environmental racism explaining practices of breach of rights and the blaming of the population.

The case of the fire occurred in the nightclub Kiss in 2013 in the city of Santa Maria, State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil is analyzed in the article *The responsibility of the State in the case of the nightclub Kiss: an analysis of the biased disaster law* by the authors Michelli Linhares de Bastos, Milena dos Santos Vieira and Cristiane Feldman Dutra. The study aimed at identifying and analyzing the state liability from the perspective of Niklas Luhman and the law in what concerns disasters.

The next text entitled *The imaginary in the pandemic: the symbolic impact of “a little cold” and the State’s negationist discourse*, the authors Claudio Paixão Anastácio de Paula, Eliane Pawlowski de Oliveira Araújo and Tiago Alves analyze the ways that a pandemic, as great and serious as Covid19, dwells in the imagination of the population, and they highlight the effects that the discourse of the State may have on people, increasing fear and anguish.

The Covid19 pandemic is still the subject of analysis in the article *The management of solid waste: challenges and strategies facing COVID-19 in Brazil* by Cynthia Fantoni Alves Ferreira, Luciana Alves Rodrigues and Liséte Celina Lange, who focus on the challenges and strategies of the waste management during the pandemic.

In *Challenges of primary care in the disaster risk management in Iha Bela-SP*, Waldemir de Albuquerque Costa, Natalia de Campos Carvalho, Pablo Andrés Piccinelli and Maria da Paz Feitosa de Sousa analyze the role and importance of health care sectors struggling disasters, though not always prepared to deal with such complex situations. They stress the great potentiality of the Basic Health Care to act in the places stricken, while they also identify the need for major investments in training and institutional support, especially when it comes to territories and sectors occupied by vulnerable populations.

In *From Ruins to Reconstruction: the Lisbon earthquake of 1755*, the author Angela Brandão analyzes the impacts caused by the Great Earthquake of 1755 in Lisbon, Portugal, and the aspects arising of its reconstruction. Based on illustrations such as “visions of the earthquake”, the eighteenth-century disaster aesthetics shows the different interpretations given to the event.

In the article *Les enseignements de l’expérience amérindienne kalinago sur les risques naturels dans les Antilles françaises : une culture de la résilience*, the authors Guillaume Lalubie, Jean-Raphaël Gros-Desormeaux and Lise Tupiassu lead us to the context of the French Antilles to analyze the residing Amerindians’ vocabulary and their relation

to the frequent natural disasters. They propose a reflection considering the notions of cultural resilience and culture of resilience viewing the capacity of this regional population to get adapted to the usual dangers and threats of the natural disasters.

The next article entitled *Civil Liability for pain and suffering : the applicability of the punitive theory in collective actions*, the authors Silvia de Abreu Andrade Portilho and René Vial analyze the theory of punitive damages as applied in actions arising of the breach of rights of collective and non-individual subjects. They come up with a possibility: the assignment of the punitive character to the *pain and suffering* compensation.

The disasters of mining dams ruptures in Brazil and Canada are analyzed in the article named *Mining, Disasters, and Critical Education: cases in Brazil and Canada* by Daniela Campolina Vieira, Lussandra Martins Gianasil, Judith Marshall, Patricia Ellie Perkins and Bernardo Jefferson de Oliveira. The authors propose an analysis considering that the dam ruptures are one of the elements involved in broader processes and forms by which mining is operated. They emphasize that the invisibility process of the risks linked to the promise of local development are harmful to the locals, and point out the importance of the schools in the informative and citizenship critical education processes.

Next, the article by Ana Carolina Oliveira Veloso, Roberta Vieira Gonçalves de Souza, Ana Elisa Dias Malheiro, Elisa Maria Campos de Almeida, Marina Rohlfs Naves, Ramiro Felix da Silva Junior and Thadeu Ribeiro Abreu Neves entitled *An analysis of the thermal comfort in buildings made of iron ore mine tailings* point to the potential use of mine tailings. One of the existing initiatives proposed by the authors refers to the development of houses that employ tailings as construction material. The study presented aimed to analyze the thermal performance of this kind of housing, and concludes that the use of mining tailings in the construction system with blocks and mortar may be an alternative for civil construction.

The mining impacts on water resources are presented and analyzed in *Ore slurry pipelines and their socio-environmental implications: a legal overview and legal reflections about the Minas Gerais' scenario* by Antônio Pereira Magalhães Júnior, Regina Paula Benedetto de Carvalho, Daniel Machado Facury, Gabriel Andrade Camilo and Giovanna Soares Ramanery. From the documentary analysis of the legal and institutional condition of ore slurry pipelines, mismatches related to licensing, installation of constructions, water use and other political and economic consequences could be found.

Enjoy, all readers, this diversity of perspectives on disasters.