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Towards a critical geography of disaster recovery politics: Perspectives on crisis and hope

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Abstract

As disasters increasingly affect a greater proportion of the population with growing strength and frequency it is becoming even more important to comprehend how recovery from these events is mediated and managed by society. Emerging from several decades of concerted work on the social determinants of disaster, vulnerability and risk, research is now being established that underlies the importance of the politics and power in shaping the processes and outcomes of disaster recovery. In particular, there is a need to situate the central role of neoliberal capitalism in shaping the values and practices of reconstruction and recovery, particularly through engagements with crisis politics. At the same time, disasters may open up space for contestation and resistance that allows for alternative and transformative forms of recovery politics. In this paper I draw on geographies of crisis and hope to frame a theoretical perspective that encapsulates both the capitalist dynamics of disaster recovery and the radical potential of post capitalist politics for facilitating transformative action at the community scale.

KEYWORDS

autonomous activism, crisis, exception, disaster politics, disaster recovery, hope, post capitalist politics

1 | INTRODUCTION

The process of disaster recovery is intensely value laden, driven by questions of power, equity and prioritisation over what is rebuilt, by who and where (Vale & Campanella, 2005, Mulligan, 2013). Despite the 'window of opportunity' into the power structures of society that disaster provides, these processes of recovery are one of the least studied aspects of these destructive events (Berke, Kartez, & Wenger, 1993; Ride & Bretherton, 2011; Rozario, 2005). Furthermore, while a more radical interpretation of the social and political determinants of disaster has emerged since the 1970s, there is still a hesitancy to politicise disasters more generally (Olson, 2008). In this paper I argue that the politicisation of disaster is an inherent facet of how recovery is carried out and for whom these forms of recovery serve. I situate the politicisation of disaster recovery within the uneven geographies of capitalism and the possibilities for post capitalist alternatives to emerge from the rupture in the perceived normality of life.

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If it is accepted that the social and political structures of society determine the severity, distribution and nature of disaster events as they affect human populations then it is vital and necessary to understand how capitalism is implicated in and interpolated through the politics of disaster recovery. In much of the world, the hegemony of capitalist relations contributes to the manner in which disaster politics unfolds before and after a disaster event (Oliver-Smith, 2015; Wisner, Blaikie, Cannon, & Davis, 2004). However, the period of disaster recovery may also hold the potential for radically progressive social change that underlies a shift away from capitalist norms, values and practices. To conceptualise neoliberal capitalism following disaster as without alternative is to reproduce the hegemony of the construct without attention to other forms of being and acting in society (Gibson-Graham, 2006). Since 1920, disaster has been theorised as a time in which there is potential for positive change to be wrought in society (Prince, 1920). This contested idea frames the basis for theorising the emergence of hopeful forms of post-capitalist politics following disaster. Thus there is possibility for different forms of societal and economic organisation to emerge from the rupture of disaster.

In this paper I first outline the need for a greater understanding of the politicisation of disaster and the role of capitalist notions of crisis in shaping the dual threat/opportunity dynamic present in many forms of post disaster recovery politics. I touch on the value of disaster capitalism as a foundation concept but draw more extensively on theories of crisis and capitalism to underscore the importance of capitalist ideology in driving the politicisation of disasters. However, I caution the use of an overarching framework that assumes a monolithic and homogenous form of capitalism. In the second half of this paper I draw on Gibson-Graham's theorisation of post capitalism to discuss the potential for progressive social change arising from disaster that challenges the hegemony of neoliberal capitalism while fostering alternative recovery politics.

2 | EXPLORING THE POLITICS OF DISASTER RECOVERY

Disasters are political events involving not only decisions made after an event in order to respond and recover, but also decisions made prior that lead to vulnerability and risk (Oliver-Smith & Hoffman, 1999; Pearce, 2003). These events represent a rupture in the perceived normality of everyday life and the status quo (Oliver-Smith & Hoffman, 1999; Prince, 1920). It is now widely acknowledged that 'natural' disasters do not exist. Instead, these events occur at the intersection of society and forces in the natural or built environment (Oliver-Smith, 2015). Since the beginning of the 20th century the study of disaster has provided insight into how the response of individuals and society to these events is largely socially constructed (Quarantelli, 1999; Solnit, 2009). While early research in this field largely focussed on hazards and the physical determinants of disasters, during the 1970s and 1980s a greater understanding of social factors, vulnerability and risk emerged (Hoffman & Oliver-Smith, 2002; Quarantelli, 1999). Through these developments, disasters were seen as more extensively interlinked with the political and social environment (Oliver-Smith, 1999).

Vale and Campanella (2005, p. 8) describe how it is possible to "observe who is in power and who is not" through what is prioritised to be rebuilt, providing insight into the power dynamics that mediate disaster recovery. Despite this, recovery is one of the least studied areas of disasters, with research largely focusing on technical and procedural aspects such as impact assessment, physical reconstruction, rehabilitation, restoration, and regulatory processes (Chang, 2010; Haas, Kates, & Bowden, 1977; Quarantelli, 1999; Ride & Bretherton, 2011). While these processes are extremely important to understand there is also a need to interrogate the politics that inform and underlie different manifestations of disaster recovery. As Quarantelli (1999) and Dello Buono (2012) have described, there are many ways that recovery can be mishandled or appropriated to cause significant damage beyond the immediate disaster event, contributing to what can be considered as 'second' or 'third' disasters.

Recently, the politicisation of emergency, response and resilience has led to a greater understanding of the politics of disaster in critical geography (Anderson, 2016; Anderson & Adey, 2012; Grove, 2013a, 2013b). The lack of focus on the politics of disasters more broadly is something Olson (2008) believes has been influenced by a

reluctance within disaster studies, as well as the perspective of many scholars in the discipline, that disasters should not be engaged as political events. Importantly, the work carried out by Grove (2013a, b, 2014a, b), Pelling and Dill (2009), Wisner (2001) and Oliver-Smith (1999, 2015) is filling this gap by explicitly interrogating the role of power, politics and capitalism. This literature is increasingly turning towards a more critical understanding of the politicisation of disasters particularly in order to understand the role of capitalism and broader societal processes in shaping disaster response, vulnerability, risk and resilience (Anderson, 2016; Grove, 2014a, 2014b; Vale & Campanella, 2005).

3 | DISASTER RECOVERY AND A CAPITALIST POLITICS OF CRISIS

In order to understand the broader political implications of disaster recovery it is possible, and indeed necessary, to frame the politics of disaster recovery through the lens of critical geographies of capitalism and neoliberalism that are being engaged in other studies of disaster. Recent critical research has linked the de-politicisation of resilience with the entrenchment of normative assumptions around power and politics that reproduce and further neoliberal capitalist discourses of self-responsibilisation and individualism (Cote & Nightingale, 2012; Cretney, 2014; MacKinnon & Derickson, 2012). The extension of this argument is that beyond resilience discourses, capitalist oriented norms, values and discourses also permeate broader discourses and practices of disaster politics. Thus, de-emphasising the political nature of disaster in general contributes to a wider de-politicisation of disaster recovery that may normalise capitalist forms of development and the societal processes that contribute to underlying patterns of risk, vulnerability and inequality.

Oliver-Smith (2015) describes how the interconnections between capitalism and disaster are clear. He states that these connections "set out a number of general frames that guide both our thought and behaviour regarding those interactions of society and environment that we call disasters" (Oliver-Smith, 2015, p. 46). Extending the work done to interrogate the role of capitalism and neoliberalism in shaping the processes of risk and vulnerability, these ideologies also permeate the values and practices enacted through processes of disaster recovery. By drawing on capitalist theories of crisis, it is possible to see how disaster recovery is politicised in specific forms to the benefit or detriment of certain groups in society. In particular, disasters as crisis events in these situations can be seen as both a threat to consolidated forms of power and legitimacy, as well as a mechanism for encouraging alternative and new grounds for economic growth within a capitalist society (Arrighi, 1978; Jones & Ward, 2004; Pelling & Dill, 2009).

Building on the popular framing of 'disaster capitalism', theorised by Naomi Klein (2007) as the manipulation of shocked populations by neoliberal corporate and economic elites, perspectives from critical geography suggest that crisis has always been an intertwined process with capitalism. Crisis is thus a process that simultaneously shapes and is shaped more broadly by the state, capitalist economies and society (Arrighi, 1978; Jones & Ward, 2012). From these perspectives the manipulation of crisis can be seen as one expression of the internal contradictions of capitalist development and growth (Arrighi, 1978). Therefore, disasters literally and figuratively open up new grounds for accumulation that can be taken advantage of to further extend social and economic policies which support the capitalist system (Oliver-Smith, 2015). Thus it is possible to frame post disaster recovery politics in the context of capitalism as interlinked with opportunities for growth and accumulation that arise through destruction and reconstruction (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Oliver-Smith, 2015; Vale & Campanella, 2005).

However, disasters also present a threat to the status quo as perceptions of the ruptures they cause in normality cultivate a politics of fear towards legitimacy and social order (Tierney, 2008). The contradiction here lies in the opportunities that disasters present to expand and capture opportunities for economic growth alongside the potential for political instability. This dynamic may be compounded by the increasingly interlinked relationship between economic and market functions and the legitimacy of the state (Brown, 2015). As such, the political response to disasters is likely to be one that utilises the crisis of disaster to both maximise the potential to enforce legitimacy through enabling economic and market functions, while also warding off threats to legitimacy more broadly.

In his formative work in disaster studies, Hewitt (1983) uses a Foucauldian influenced analysis to suggest that the political separation of the disaster event from everyday life represents the desire to distance the destructive event from the social systems and political structures that create risk and vulnerability. One manifestation of this is expressed through the use of exceptionality to establish a context in which democratic politics can be suspended in response to a construction of emergency (Honig, 2009). It has been argued that neoliberal politics have increasingly moved towards normalising the state of exception as a way to foreclose democratic politics and to enforce a technocratic and managerial enactment of neoliberalism that entrenches existing power relations (Agamben, 2005; Thomas & Bond, 2016). In the context of disaster, this form of post disaster politics represents one way the state in particular can respond to disaster as both a threat and opportunity to the hegemony of neoliberal forms of capitalism.

One example of the on-going implications of these multiple forms of politicisation in disaster recovery is found in the emerging literature on the role of the state in the city of Christchurch's recovery from earthquakes in 2010 and 2011 in Aotearoa, New Zealand. In this case, the New Zealand government orchestrated, in part through unprecedented legislation, a highly centralised command and control approach to the recovery that emerged in relation to the wider context of political and economic vulnerabilities in New Zealand (Hayward & Cretney, 2015). This led to what Hayward (2013, p. 3) describes as the use of exceptional politics resulting in "the loss of an effective or meaningful democratic voice at local government level" in order to consolidate the status quo for the operation of politics and economy. Thus the state was able to entrench opportunities to extend the status quo of the economy while warding off potential threats to political legitimacy through foreclosing some aspects of democratic processes. Similarly, the significant scholarship focused on the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina has demonstrated how the political response was highly mediated through a motivation to reinforce the existing ideological positioning of issues such as poverty, the economy and forms of neoliberal privatisation (Giroux, 2006; Luft, 2009; Solomos & Koumparoulis, 2011; Tierney, 2008). As Giroux (2006) describes, the use of exceptionality in the recovery from Hurricane Katrina entrenched what they describe as politics of disposability that generated widespread violence and authoritarianism while also rendering marginalised groups of society invisible.

An awareness of the politicisation of these aspects of disaster recovery including, but not limited to, concepts of neoliberal capitalism and exception, sheds much needed light on the way the politicisation of disaster orders and prioritises which forms of recovery can occur and how. While considering the role of these politics in shaping the form of disaster recovery it is integral to remain cognisant that the experience of disaster recovery is not consistent or even across contexts (Oliver-Smith, 1999; Wisner et al., 2004). Different contexts provoke different responses and conditions which foster different forms of post disaster politics. Indeed, the uneven nature of capitalism and development have been long theorised as a contributor to patterns of vulnerability and risk globally (Oliver-Smith, 2015; Wisner et al., 2004). Theorising disaster politics as interlinked with processes of capitalism and crisis beyond a single lens of disaster capitalism allows for a framing of these uneven and differentiated manifestations of post disaster politics through recognition of the similarly inconsistent and uneven representations of neoliberal capitalism (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). Of particular relevance here is the work by Larner (2011), Peck, Theodore, and Brenner (2010) and Brenner and Theodore (2002) that discusses the importance of seeing neoliberalism as a contradictory social process that is expressed in different manners in different locations. This framing of neoliberal capitalism is integral for understanding the nuanced and contextual politicisation of disaster recovery.

4 | DISASTER RECOVERY AND A POLITICS OF HOPE AND POSSIBILITY

Beyond understanding the different geographic forms of capitalist disaster politics, disasters also provide a fervent ground for forms of hope, possibility and resistance (Cretney & Bond, 2014; Dello Buono, 2012; Greenberg, 2014; Luft, 2009). It is necessary to explore the way different forms of politics beyond capitalism are facilitated through diverse practices and approaches to recovery, particularly at the grassroots scale. If the vulnerabilities that differentiate and distribute the effects of disaster are mediated, at least in part, by the social and political processes of

neoliberal capitalism, then there is the potential to tackle these underlying social determinants of disaster in reshaping the possibilities for a post-capitalist politics through recovery. In this section I outline how disaster recovery also represents a period of time in which progressive social change may encourage and foster hopeful forms of alternative politics that work within and beyond capitalism. I discuss this potential at the local and everyday scale through autonomous activism and the creation of post capitalist and experimental forms of politics

While there have been numerous perspectives on the role of capitalist crisis in political and economic change, the nature of post disaster social change is not well defined or fully understood. Despite this there is a small but promising foundation of literature which sketches the basis for disasters as agents of progressive social change and transformation (Davis, 2005; Greenberg, 2014; Luft, 2009). Theoretically, the power of disaster lies in the rupture of everyday life. Samuel Prince's early research captures this in one of the first accounts of the role of crisis as an agent of social change:

> "Life becomes like molten metal. It enters a state of flux from which it must reset upon a principle, a creed,
> or purpose. It is shaken perhaps violently out of rut and routine. Old customs crumble and instability rules"
> (Prince, 1920, p.20)

The basis of this work rests on the principle of crisis as an intense period of change and flux in which new values and ways of being in society can be nurtured. In this way a disaster is a not only a material event but a "multiplicity of interwoven, often conflicting, social constructions" (Aradau & van Munster, 2011, p. 24).

From the assertion that disaster is a time of rupture in the perceived normality of everyday life, a sole focus on the role of capitalism and crisis in relation to manipulating and engaging disaster may inadvertently obscure the different forms of resistance and recreation that can emerge in the post disaster context. Gibson-Graham (2006) believe that the current approach of many critical theorists reinforces the dominance of neoliberal and capitalist ideology. They argue that by creating a discourse of capitalism as "larger than life" the existence of alternatives are obscured, disempowering those creating change and disenchanting others (Braun, 2005, p. 840). By taking care not to enshrine neoliberalism as an all-powerful, monolithic ideology, this more nuanced perspective also avoids the over-theorising of capitalism as without an alternative (Gibson-Graham, 1996, 2006; Wright, 2010). When applied to the context of disaster recovery, this perspective illuminates how discourses of the passive disaster victim, and overarching narratives of disaster capitalism could act to disempower citizens and foreclose opportunities for different approaches to reconstruction and recovery (Solnit, 2009).

Given the alternatives that already exist within and beyond capitalism, there is the potential for radically hopeful post capitalist politics to occur during disaster recovery. Many scholars have described the difficulty and uncertainty around identifying and measuring wider regional or national patterns of political change following a disaster (Birkmann et al., 2008; Drury & Olson, 1998; Passerini, 2000). However, the theoretical perspective of post capitalism provides an avenue of exploration into the "politics of possibility" that emerge through alternative forms of community recovery (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.xxvii). These forms of everyday politics focus on the systemic change that emerges from activism that aims to shift subjectivities, enact different values and build different ways of being in society in the capitalist present (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006).

5 | LOCALISED, EVERYDAY HOPE AND RESISTANCE

Theories of alternative or community-based economies that transcend, work within and resist the practices of capitalism are an important development beyond a conceptualisation of economy that is conflated with capitalism (Wright, 2010). More widely, a focus on these potentially radical arrangements facilitates a hopeful perspective on the possibilities for change and transformation (Cameron & Hicks, 2014; Gibson-Graham, 2006; Lawson, 2005). By incorporating theories of post capitalism with perspectives of radical hope, there is an opportunity to focus on the everyday realities of disaster experience and the possibility for hopeful change that can emerge. It is this possibility

that suggests disasters can act as catalysts for long term social change, even if this is at a localised, every day level for the lives of the residents most affected (Greenberg, 2014; Luft, 2009; Vasudevan, 2014). In order to build on the critical insight from theories of disaster politics and crisis I suggest that engaging with these hopeful geographies, particularly those that focus on localised everyday actions and alternative economies can provide a way to build societal alternatives to capitalism from the devastation of disaster.

In alignment with the perspectives of Gibson-Graham (2006) and the over-theorisation of capitalism, hopeful geographies advocate for an awareness of the everyday forms of experimentation and visioning that aim to create new ways of doing and being in society (Anderson & Fenton, 2008; Head, 2016; Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006). In this sense, ruptures in the status quo, such as those wrought by disaster, may be seen as "generative moments" of possibility holding the potential for hope (Head, 2016, p. 166). Cameron and Hicks (2014) describe how this engagement with hope is not a form of blind optimism but rather a commitment to action and struggle to create other worlds outside of capitalism and neoliberalism. This emergent imaginary embodies a politics that emphasises the existence and need for the development of forms of non-capitalist relations, practices and values (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Healy, 2014). This includes engagements with different forms of economy, the creation and maintenance of economic practices beyond capitalism and prefigurative forms of organising that re-create and re-negotiate the values, norms and practices of society (Fickey, 2011; Gibson-Graham, 2006; Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006). While grounded in these material examples of hopeful action, a politics of hope neither avoids nor denies struggle or grief, and is instead attuned to cultivating and illuminating space and practices for the possibilities of life and politics beyond capitalism (Anderson, 2006; Head, 2016).

Hopeful geographies largely engage forms of resistance and experimentation at the local, everyday level, something that has been criticised as too short sighted and parochial to challenge the global dominance of capitalism (Kelly, 2005; Samers, 2005). However, as authors such as Hosking and Palomino-Schalscha (2016) argue, these practices are often engaged in a relational manner that goes beyond the local. They argue that these "more-than-local" relations are integral to the transformative potential of community economies (Hosking & Palomino-Schalscha, 2016, p. 5). Others have also argued that these small-scale forms of resistance contribute to wider and interconnected relational approaches to resistance (Chatterton, 2010; Jerne, 2016; Nelson, 2014). For instance, Pickerill and Chatterton (2006) describe the use of everyday practices as the foundation for a hoped for 'future in the present', a process they describe as messy, experimental and highly contextual (Chatterton, 2010; Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006).

These propositions provide hope that alternatives do and can exist, and in the context of disaster may facilitate practices and values that challenge the foundation of capitalist forms of society. Combined with the rupture in perceptions of normality and everyday routine, the process of disaster response and recovery is often experimental and context dependent, making it an interesting site for exploring the enactment of everyday alternatives to capitalism. For example, Houston (2013, p. 446) has described this intersection of disaster and possibility through environmental justice activism that emerged in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina:

> The Lafitte Corridor project brings together embodied cultural and environmental connectivities in a post-disaster frame: a desire to create walkable, convivial spaces, a reinvestment in community place making, and the sustainable management of ground and storm water in urban contexts.

Here, the post disaster landscape provides an important context for reconfiguring a politics of crisis and disaster that creates transformative and alternative possibilities for how we live in society (Houston, 2013).

Experimentation in this context also involves openness to the possibilities within post disaster projects and the potential for generating participatory engagements through recovery for communities. This was particularly evident in the case of an earthquake recovery organisation in Christchurch, New Zealand, that undertook projects on vacant land that aimed to cultivate "presence and interactions outside of commodity culture" (Reynolds, 2014 p.171). Reynolds (2014, p. 169) describes how the organisation aimed to "watch, listen and reflect" then adapt or remove projects in response to how people engaged with their installations in the city to best serve the needs of the public. These iterative projects link to wider social and environmental issues to reinforce a "spirit of hopefulness toward

connections and openings" as well as an experimentation with new political possibilities for engaging and facilitating participation (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p. 1; Larner, 2014).

The way disasters expose vulnerabilities and the unequal distribution of consequences also provides grounds for work against growing inequalities in society (Greenberg, 2014). In particular, Luft (2009, p. 502) found that Hurricane Katrina provided the opportunity for what they termed "crisis organising" in which the community was able contribute to the remaking of social policy, particularly as it related to social housing. Similarly, Greenberg (2014, pp. 47–50) describes the "radical rupture" that occurred through the crisis of Hurricane Sandy that provided new networks of solidarity, particularly in relation to labour alliances that have aimed to address the underlying injustice in the disaster while also transforming "existing models of post-disaster rebuilding". These actions demonstrate the strength and importance of post disaster activism and mobilisation at the local scale, particularly as they intersect with important historical legacies and vulnerabilities to focus on environmental and social justice in the recovery of the disaster (Houston, 2013; Luft, 2009). These forms of community-led disaster recovery can actively challenge the capitalist processes that underlie forms of injustice and vulnerability in the post disaster context.

The experiences of residents following Hurricane Sandy in the United States of America also demonstrates how existing activist resources and social infrastructure can be utilised to both respond to the disaster event and contribute to social change through recovery. The Occupy movement's involvement in challenging the response to the financial crisis provided the background for the mobilisation of this support during Hurricane Sandy which according to Vasudevan (2014, p. 16) exposed the everyday work that Occupiers "do and have done each day". This included providing thousands of meals, supplies and social support, as well as contributing to activism resisting recovery policies that were perceived as supporting gentrification and uneven urban development (Greenberg, 2014; Manski, 2013).

Similarly, the emergence of post capitalist community economies through co-operatives and alternative currencies has been demonstrated as a response to disaster related disruptions in the supply of goods and services, particularly in relation to growing and distributing food (Chan, DuBois, & Tidball, 2015; Cretney & Bond, 2014). By making and sharing commons in this way, these community led recovery actions underpin different forms of post capitalist politics and economy that also contribute to broader shifts in norms and values (Chatterton & Pickerill, 2010; Dombroski, Diprose, & Boles, 2016). Other examples of these activities include the creation and maintenance of knowledge commons alongside property commons (Dombroski et al., 2016) and the mobilisation of activism around reconstruction and political accountability (Davis, 2005; Luft, 2009).

The success and role of these locally based groups and networks through disaster recovery provides an important avenue for participation in the politics of disaster (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Harris, 2009). The radical potential of these forms of hopeful post disaster action through recovery lies in this potential for opening up new spaces and opportunities that foster the cultivation of different practices, perspectives and relationships beyond capitalism. Such action also has the potential to influence wider processes of governance as shown by Luft (2009), and to target the interlinked social conditions of capitalism that construct and exacerbate the foundation of risk and vulnerabilities (Greenberg, 2014).

6 | CONCLUSION

Disaster recovery is a period of intense politicisation surrounding the practices and forms of both physical reconstruction and the reimagining of a place (Rozario, 2005). In this paper I have argued for a critical geography of disaster recovery that recognises post disaster recovery politics as a multiplicity of interconnected processes that can both entrench and challenge hegemonic capitalist relations. To supplement this argument I have briefly explored several examples of these processes. These cases illustrate the entanglement of capitalism and politics through the multiple processes of disaster recovery at different scales. Through a framing of disaster as crisis, I have explored the interconnected relationship between capitalism, crisis and disaster to highlight how these events provide opportunities for

extending strategies of growth and accumulation, exceptional politics and the exacerbation of inequalities. Understanding these complex and multifaceted aspects of politicisation is integral to moving beyond a singular framing of 'disaster capitalism' and to conceptualise the many different forms of regressive politics that emerge after disaster. In particular this includes the use of exception as a strategy for foreclosing democratic processes and entrenching the status quo of capitalist forms of economy and society.

The radical potential of disaster lies in the experience of rupture that shifts the way individuals and communities see the world and the way society operates. I argue that the importance of the everyday scale is to make visible the possibilities for radical action within and beyond capitalism that emerge through community and activist-led forms of disaster recovery. This potential for radical post capitalist action emerges from these community interventions that are characterised by a desire to challenge the dominant norms and values of society and to experiment with different relationships and networks. These actions may also contribute to challenging the underlying societal determinants of inequality and vulnerability through engaging new practices of society and challenging the hegemonic values and norms of capitalism. However, it is also necessary to see these actions in the context of the wider politicisation of disaster which can and usually does have a detrimental effect on marginalised groups in society. We must take care not elevate the disruption caused by disasters as a desired condition, but instead work to understand and resist disaster politics that foreclose democratic rights and exacerbate inequalities.

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