



Social capital and sociological resilience in megacities context

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Abstract

Purpose – During the last few decades social resilience and social vulnerability have been two crucial sociological concepts for everyone involved in crisis and disaster management. The fundamental purpose in the present analysis is based on the consideration of resilience from a sociological perspective and the notion of social capital, its proper features, dynamics and processes within different groups of people involved in a disaster process.

Design/methodology/approach – All these social components could be evaluated as social indicators of vulnerability and resilience according to the sociological approach and its main theories about social capital and resilience, social and methodological implications. The operative context of this theoretical reflection has been constituted by megacities, considered as the “new” social space where, nowadays, major social relations and risk reduction actions take place through a collaborative pattern not based on a top down organizational model.

Findings – Attention is focused on the sociological findings as the importance of social cohesion, strengthening social relationships with particular consideration for the crucial role of social capital during all stages of the disaster process: prevention and preparedness, planning, warning communication, physical and psychological impacts, emergency and disaster response, recovery and reconstruction with the specific aim of enhancing social resilience and attempting to diminish social vulnerability.

Originality/value – The originality of this proposal in the field of disaster resilience is its use of the sociological approach and its theoretical characteristics and instruments, such as, for example, the definitions of social capital. The consideration for this topic will be future challenges to improve urban disaster risk reduction according to social relationship and its characteristics of interconnection and multidimensionality.

Keywords Resilience, Social capital, Disasters, Megacities, Risk management

Paper type Conceptual paper

Introduction

Nowadays (Bauman, 2004) our contemporary societies have been defined according to some fundamental characteristics such as the change of time and space perception and their uses (Harvey, 1990). The globalization process has had a main role within these dynamics and their cultural change.

Some years ago Beck (1986) defined new society as “risk society”, in particular the term risk is often, when not always, correlated with a possible crisis that is explained through the components of threat, uncertainty and urgency (Boin and ‘t Hart, 2006).

In this context a population’s perception is determined by an increasing number of risks, whatever origin they may have (Lombardi, 2005): natural, technological or terroristic attacks.

Risks create diverse types of disasters according to the physical agent typology and the typical social conditions where disasters occur (Gilbert, 1995).

This paper will pay attention to the sociological perspective on disasters considering German and American traditions, which define disaster as a social process related to collective and social features.



In particular when disaster strikes a community, its daily life and routines are disrupted because of the inner characteristics of the disaster itself (Perry, 2006). Perry's contribution is oriented on the crucial role of social context and its characteristics when a disaster has taken place, above all regarding the social construction of vulnerability, preparedness and response to the disaster, in order to better understand social changes.

For this reason specific attention should be paid to social context defining it as the shared space of human relationships and social interactions directly involved in planning and prevention activities.

Turning to social and human interaction between the people at risk and the emergency professionals, disasters from a social and sociological perspective can be comprehended through the social features which characterized the community life such as: social change, conflict, solidarity, decision making processes just to cite the main sociological topics.

Considering this framework is useful and necessary to show the principal argument of this paper: our societies are at natural risk as well as a technological one: we are made vulnerable by different factors (economical, environmental, social and individual) and above all by a vulnerable internal social structure and the complex organization of present societies. Thereafter through the identification of social resilience and its methodological potentiality to cope and respond to a disaster (natural, technological, man-made, terroristic attack) it is possible enhance our social and individual capacities to respond to the next disaster better.

The aim of the paper is to understand the link and the implications regarding how social resilience can be enhanced by social capital which seems be a crucial issue for a future disaster research agendas.

We present the context of this discussion as belonging to the social vulnerability (Pelling, 2003) and social resilience in megacities, which are the new social context to be studied in order to plan emergency practices better taking the evolution of our contemporary (urban) societies into consideration.

The paper is organised as follows: the first part is a methodological presentation about a qualitative approach such as life stories for an operative proposal in order to collect data and information about resilience and social capital from the voices of witness, disaster managers and first responders.

The second part analyses some fundamental concepts of social vulnerability and social resilience related to the definition, discussion and strong role of social capital.

The reason for this presentation is established by the importance of the sociological link between social capital and social resilience to enhance resilience itself within all disaster stages.

Megacities have been defined as the sociological and spatial context where this proposal can take place because of their social importance and influence of interactions and relationships.

The final findings of this elaboration can bring in new disaster management and organization as well as different policies in crisis and security themes.

Methodological implications

This paper would be a theoretical and methodological proposal about the possibility of studying social resilience from a sociological perspective; the following methodological considerations are based on the preliminary work within the context of my doctoral thesis.

The operative aspect is improved by a methodological proposal which is based on the appropriate assumptions of qualitative methods (Bichi, 2000) related to the importance of giving voice to the population affected by a disaster (Heijmans, 2001) and other people involved in a disaster process: it is the use of storytelling to collect various experiences about disasters lived through by both civilians and professional personnel.

Furthermore, according to Italian tradition, the collection of data using surveys or other quantitative methodological instruments to study disaster management is not common and it has specific practical limits and problems if applied, for this reason it is better to focus attention on the possibility of collecting information and data directly from the people who had lived through a disaster experience.

The use of qualitative methodological instruments such as life stories (Bertaux, 1997) has many important implications for social researchers: it allows a collection of multi-voice stories about disaster, including its development and consequences, which is useful to understand the social dynamics present during a disaster process; furthermore it is possible to consider social ties through the premise of the shared social and collective memories of the disaster process by the population, victims and professional personnel (Halbwachs and Jedlowski, 1987).

Specifically, this methodological approach:

[...] concerns the interviewee's social experience – relative to the phenomenon investigated – and therefore as the *interviewee* defines it. In this type of interview the words of the interviewee, meaning the account of his/her experience of social life, are the focus of attention for the researcher, and therefore for the interviewer, whose task is to enable the interviewee to express – as “freely” as possible within the interview dynamics – his/her way of seeing the world, perceptions, assessments and, therefore, his/her experiences as s/he has lived them (Bichi, 2007).

This interviewing approach could be applied not only to interviewing people affected by a disaster but as said before, also experts, leaders and disaster managers involved in a disaster process with different roles, functions, competencies and backgrounds.

In fact, it allows the possibility of understanding the following social resilient dimensions better: the roles played by the population, victims, experts, operative personnel – their perceptions of the disaster experience, their personal and social dynamics with other people involved.

In the future, the use of these methodological instruments will increase the knowledge about the presence or absence of social capital and shared ties in a society before and during all disaster stages.

Social vulnerability

Within the theoretical context of disaster studies, we agree with the definition of a disaster as multidimensional event (Smith and Hoffman, 2002).

The dimensions could be said to belong to different areas of human life: political, institutional, ecological, social and economic and for this reason when we speak about this argument the interdisciplinary accent is inevitable (Voss, 2010).

However, we propose a sociological understanding of these concepts disposed at mesolevel (Merton, 1949): it appears useful, in conceptual terms, to define the theoretical base on which to collocate vulnerability and resilience to disasters referring to sociological theories.

Megacities represent the vulnerable social and ecological context, within which we can argue about the best resilient practices to enhance our capacity to cope in the face of a disaster.

Knowledge, awareness and analysis of vulnerability is made possible considering the local, regional and national context, its fundamental basilar consideration regarding how risks and hazards are distributed in a potential “at risk” population (Phillips *et al.*, 2010).

We can define vulnerability as:

[...] potential for casualty, destruction, damage, disruption or other form of loss with respect to a particular element (Alexander, 2000).

Social vulnerability can be explained as Blaikie *et al.* (1994) defined it:

[...] some group in society are more prone than others to damage, loss, and suffering in the context of differing hazards. Key characteristics of these variations of impact include class, caste, ethnicity, gender, disability, age, or seniority.

This issue is important due to its strong connection to the megacities context, because within them there are various kind of groups and people, who could be more or less vulnerable to some risks or hazards, because of their individual, personal, collective or communitarian features.

We can argue about the concentration of risks and hazards referring to megacities and their features and urbanization process, immigration, growth of the population in a context of continual social change.

This approach is oriented to improve the capacity to cope with a disaster, that partially belonged to the population at risk and needs to be improved: for this reason resilience is considered through a social perspective, because for sociologists, it is not only individual and psychological attitudes and competencies, instead it is possible to be used and enhanced in a collective sense at a social level.

Referring to social vulnerability our attention must be focused on social issues which allow these kind of conditions: the presence of vulnerable groups or community, for example children and older people, people with disabilities or those who live in loneliness and poverty (Cutter, 2005). According to this, it would seem useful to understand the importance of strong connections and shared information made possible by social services (Mathbor, 2007; Newburn, 1993) through routine work with relief aid assistance organizations and the civil protection systems (institutional as well as volunteer components).

In terms of sociological understanding, social vulnerability is represented by social factors useful to know the real dimension of a potential impact in case of a disaster and the system of norms and values which are stricken by a disaster. In fact the critical event begins with a moment of crisis, that is defined according to space and time coordinates: threat, uncertainty, urgency (Boin and 't Hart, 2006), in this moment the accepted daily norms and values are suspended due to the specific and particular moment that requires new forms of control, order and management.

The issue of order is a classical argument in all sociological Western tradition: considering the work by Comte, Durkheim, Weber and, coming into the new era, Parsons, Merton, Foucault and many others.

The question is not simply order nor its maintenance, instead it is the complexity of social conditions when disaster occurs:

[...] the everyday living conditions of the nation's poorest, sickest, most dependent, and most isolated residents directly and indirectly increase the exposure of these residents to physical hazards and to the social, economic, political, and psychological impacts of disastrous events (Waugh and Tierney, 2007).

What is important to underline is also the complexity and interconnection of disasters in the context of megacities:

[...] complexity often causes social vulnerability to be underestimated and that social vulnerability is not inevitably synonymous with lack of resilience (Waugh and Tierney, 2007).

Specifically, social vulnerability can be present during all disaster stages and it represents local resources and its capability to respond to emergency and disaster.

In this context importance is also determined by local and popular risk perception and emergency behaviours.

Social resilience

At the same time a society can exhibit social vulnerability as well as social resilience: understanding social resilience features and its practical application within emergency response practices appears as future challenges for the disaster researcher and managers in our contemporary complex society.

Social resilience (Neil, 2000) is not the opposite of social vulnerability: they are two fundamental components of living together in the same time and space, present in all of us as single people and as collective groups.

Social resilience from the sociological perspective is different to the definition by Sapirstein (2006) and it can be defined as the capacity of people in a group (formal and informal) to face up to disaster during the emergency and reconstruction time, starting from collective and individual resources made available for all people involved having needs to be satisfied through altruistic behaviour and shared social relationships. It is a conceptual idea and the focus is on the importance to better understand capacities and resources of all types already present before a community or society is stricken by disaster.

Resilience has had a lot of fieldwork (Plodinec, 2009), but until now the attention within the sociological area of disaster research has been concentrated on the community resilience model as presented by Rowel (2009), instead this theoretical proposal is a sociological interconnection between ecological resilience as a concept used to:

[...] describe ecosystems that continued to function more or less the same in spite of adversity (Plodinec, 2009).

and community resilience by Pfefferbaum *et al.* (2005):

[...] the ability of community members to take meaningful, deliberate, collective action to remedy the impact of a problem, including the ability to interpret the environment, intervene, and move on.

In this way we can consider some important aspects for the continuing proposal:

- ecological definition and context of application (megacities);
- individual and community levels as a basilar component of social resilience;
- interconnection, multidimensionality, complexity of current social systems;

- social capital as a fundamental concept to propose a social resilience based on shared social relationships and communications; and
- changing views about crisis and disaster management from a top-down model to a collaborative pattern and the empowerment of the population as the victim (potential or real).

The open question is how to enhance social resilience in a megacities context and not only within a limited (spatial and according to socio demographic characteristics) community?

The answer is made possible through the introduction of human and social capital as fundamental components of social resilience.

Social capital as a key factor to enhance social resilience

What hallmarks social resilience is the presence of human and, above all, social capital.

Human capital (Schultz, 1972) has been defined as the union of personal acquaintances, attitudes, competencies and skills that one person acquires during his/her career. It is correlated to organizational and corporate logic, but in this specific context it can be defined as the whole of personal acquaintances, attitudes, competencies and skills belonging to a person useful not only because of their occupation, but also during all their daily life and eventually in disaster response.

Instead social capital has a sociological tradition that can be collocated, referring to the work done by Bourdieu (1983/1986), Coleman (1990), Putnam (1993) and Dynes (2002), specifically to disaster issues.

Social capital is an important concept in the disaster management process, because as we have seen previously with social resilience, Fritz (1961) and Barton (1969) pointed out that:

[...] community response is shaped by pre-existing social organization (Miller, 2007).

In this presentation what is of interest is the analysis of social capital in terms of shared human capital within a community, society or other different social groups.

By Bourdieu (1983) social capital was defined as:

[...] the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possessions of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively – owned capital, a “credential” which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word.

Coleman (1990) identifies six forms of social capital: obligations and expectations, informational potential, norms and effective sanctions, authority relations, appropriate social organizations and intentional organizations. His approach can be understood within the individualistic approach in sociology; instead Putman's (1993) definition of social capital was focused on:

[...] features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions.

His theoretical framework can be understood through collective thinking and the importance attributed to social values.

Dynes (2005) shows that:

[...] [of] all the forms of capital, it is less damaged and less affected. Consequently, during the emergency period, it is the form of capital that serves as the primary base for a community response. In addition, social capital is the only form of capital which is renewed and enhanced during the emergency period.

Referring to the discussion of these perspectives on social capital, it is possible to argue about the difference of context: a community stricken by a disaster and megacities.

We can consider megacities as an “at risk” place where there is less possibility to live at a community level with social resilience practices as Barton (1969) explained:

[...] a community in which kinship and friendship ties are poorly developed in general, for example, in a big city apartment area full of isolated people, or a newly settled suburb full of strangers, will have much less informal communication even about a socially random impact than one with more dense social ties.

However, megacities have experience of qualitative and structurally different risks, than for example other kind of places such as a little mountain community or coastal areas.

Megacities is an “urban context” and for this reason it requires different preventive and planning actions to manage risk and disaster: it seems that this discussion could be related to the opposition shown by Toennis in his work “Community and Society”, 1887.

The point is the difference between these diverse social organizations before and after the industrial era; instead what should be considered in megacities is the possibility of internal resilience and the awareness of infrastructure vulnerabilities present in terms of an external outcome in case of the occurrence of a disaster.

Considering the previous definition and basic elements of social capital we can propose another view of this process and overcome the limits of the opposites: community versus megacities.

We recognize that community and megacities are spatially, culturally, socially, economically and politically different contexts within which to live, but we can also consider the presence of universal elements of human and social conditions, which are able to highlight resilience capacities through the use of human and social capital present both at an individual, familiar, community and megacities level.

The Italian perspective focuses attention on the relational nature of social capital and the most important element – that social capital has been represented by social relationships and their social, human and cultural resources (Donati, 2007a, b, c).

Donati (2007a, b, c) presents social capital as a relational reality making of the potentiality of social and human relationships which characterize societies, communities and social groups.

The focus is not only the singular action done by a person, but it is on the social relationships, which constitute social and relational capital.

Lin (2002) explains in part this question through the assumption of a network society and the importance of social networks, which are symbolic and sometimes virtual spaces within which it is possible to find embedded resources and, in our specific, main, argument they are able to cope and respond to a disaster.

Attention is on the interaction at a relational level and the potential of a collective response (institutional, professional, familiar and communitarian – in a megacities context).

This situation identifies different types of networks: network resources, contact resources and network locations. They are based on the assumption of existing strong

and weak ties, which orient the possibility of activating one or the other in case of emergency or need.

Considering social capital as relational capital, it is connected to contact resources and the internal components of social relations as shown by Bassi (2000).

They are divided into two sectors represented by strategy of solidarity and strategy of exchange: the first is correlated with structures of sense or meaning, the second instead is connected with structure of control.

Although we recognize the role of social capital and its possibility of social control, we finally consider social capital as the main element to define and improve social resilience and to decrease social vulnerability, because of its relational features and the possibility to use it at a different level: among people, groups (informal and formal), infrastructural systems and institutions.

What must be emphasized is the possibility of social resilience offering an effective answer to a disaster or crisis but only when, in the social place stricken by a disaster, whether that be a community, society or megacity, there is the presence of participative groups and associations already active before the critical event.

In spite of this assumption, the role of human and social capital referring to social resilience would be less without the actions and communication made by associations, volunteer groups and social services.

Megacities as sociological context

The spatial context of our theoretical and methodological reflection is represented by a new place correlated with the process of urbanization, emerging during the last few decades: megacities.

In spite of its topicality now, they are not a recent phenomenon as Kraas (2011) explains:

“[...] while in the 1950s there were only four cities with a population greater than 5 M, by 1985 there were already 28 and in 2000 39. Depending on the threshold accepted as a lowest population value for a megacity, there are currently worldwide 16, 24 or 39 megacities; in the year 2015 there will probably be almost 60 [...]” and again “two thirds of the megacities are now in developing countries, most of them in East and South Asia. At the moment just under 394.2 M people live in megacities, 246.4 M of them in developing countries, more than 214.5 M in Asia. In 2015 there will be about 604.4 M people living in megacities”.

We concentrate particular attention on megacities as a spatial context where a disaster could occur because their characteristics in terms of density, use of geographical areas and needs for different quantitative and qualitative infrastructure services should be considered during the preventive and planning activities, thinking of a future disaster and its response or reduction.

The reflection is about the possible network that could be stricken by a disaster: we have seen the interconnection and domino effects in the recent earthquake in Fukushima, Japan in March 2011.

In fact, it is important to consider the space where a disaster could take place: it is not only a physical agent, but it could also be a virtual or abstract space: the network society (Castells, 1996).

Further, what is more important are the values and beliefs attributed to a place and space by the population at risk. The urban spaces and places are socially and culturally constructed by people and social groups.

In particular, a network society is the present one because of the strong importance attributed to social ties as networks within which all people are involved.

Koetter (2004) proposed an interesting analysis of megacities where their characteristics are the adequate operative framework to understand the possible contribution of social capital during a disaster process.

Particularly, he pointed out some interesting aspects such as the role of globalization and its effect on megacities, the worrying situation of excessive urbanization and edification near industrial areas at risk, natural sites such as coastal areas, social and economic disparity correlated to the governance issue.

This last one indicates the importance of new reflections and proposals to better understand the dynamics of the disaster management process and improving it. Considering the main characteristics of our contemporary societies, governance in the field of disaster management should deepen the organizational pattern devolving from a top down to another more collaborative and participatory one.

It is important to recognize that urban hazards and risks are different from those in coastal areas or in uninhabited places, for example:

[. . .] patterns of hazard and disaster are likely to vary widely among megacities (Mitchell, 1999).

During all the history of mankind, space has always been thought of, at the same time, as both a physical and symbolic element. It has deeply oriented the possibility of people to survive and grow up, organizing the social structure of exchange and social relations among all people gathered in one bounded spatial area.

A lot of research work (Pelling, 2003) has demonstrated the fundamental consideration for space in terms of social context where collective ties and relationships have also been useful in case of a disaster. Furthermore, risks and hazards vulnerability are specifically presented in the so-called new social space such as megacities (Pelling, 2003).

As cited by Heijmans (2001) vulnerability is a matter of perception which is typical to the geographical and social area where the disaster occurs.

According to the operative issue of risk and disaster management, the central attitude of coordination does not seem enough to respond effectively to an "urban" disaster, considering its communicative needs at local, regional and national levels (Sagun *et al.*, 2009).

The megacities context plays an important role in planning and prevention referring, for example, to the protection of infrastructures and their vital interconnections.

Therefore, the top down model or the best known command and control chain within the European area does not seem useful when applied to the main characteristics of megacities. This means that we are at the point of a conversion in this fieldwork. In fact the collaborative pattern provides for participation related to specific roles, competencies and functions of citizens, institutional authorities and professionals.

The aim of this change is to improve the communication systems during an emergency and disaster and to enhance the sharing of information through an "*ad hoc* model" based on the needs and demands of all people involved, encouraging the participation and use of all social and individual resources placed in a specific physical and social context.

Megacities are in a vulnerable context different from all the others that were present in past eras.

Understanding what is social vulnerability within this new social methodological context allows us to rethink social resilience and the role of human and social capital during the disaster process in all its stages (prevention, emergency, reconstruction).

Furthermore, is better to remember that, as Barton (1969) argued:

[...] disasters lay bare the social problem of a society.

Trying to understand, before a disaster occurs, the vulnerable characteristics of societies, groups of people and communities is the only theoretical and methodological way to adapt the response process to a disaster in the new spatial and social context of megacities.

Conclusions

Taking into consideration all these important aspects of social capital such as trust, ties, shared communication and knowledge, anthropological bases and human and relational resources, we could propose the social resilient theoretical reflection in the context of megacities as a guideline for institutions, administrations and professional people involved in different tasks and competencies in the field of crisis, emergency and disaster management, for population and groups (formal or informal) of people potentially at risk or affected by a disaster.

We deeply believe in the potentiality of social capital applied through useful reconsideration of crisis and disaster planning activities.

Social capital is the most important anthropological, cultural and social component of social resilience, if we mean by this, the capacity of people, groups, communities and cities to cope and respond in an efficacious and relational way to a disaster.

Social capital is not a resource that could be enhanced only in emergency, response or reconstruction stages, instead it is based on the identification of facilitators to better understand vulnerable groups, collective mental maps of spaces and environments, knowledge of services and best practices to respond to an emergency or disaster and in the end, survive it.

Social resilience in the context of megacities could be improved by institutional administrations (i.e. the civil protection system) through different methodological activities:

- research through secondary data analysis about the institutional and associative resources (social services, groups of volunteers) based on the contributions they could give in case of disaster, but also in the preventive phase regarding training activities for emergency behaviour;
- work in cooperation with social services to better understand the vulnerable groups, their presence and the characteristics that should be enhanced and protected; and
- elaboration of practical instruments such as adopting a visual map model featuring key actors, types of resources, infrastructure systems and interconnection with other people or social groups.

As a research agenda we can propose the following model in order to apply some social capital features to enhance social resilience in a megacities context and referring to disaster stages:

- *Prevention and preparedness.* Enhancing social capital through training activities for the population and shared competencies for risk communication allowing an improvement in resilience when a disaster occurs and awareness of the specific risks present where people live.

In fact, risk communication and population training are two crucial actions within the crisis communication model (Lombardi, 2005) trying to connect authorities and the population in resilient disaster management activities.

- *Planning.* This disaster stage is more technical than the others and for this reason it involves professional people and is based on human resources and networking activities directly referred to within disaster response organizations such as Fire Departments and Civil Protection Departments.

Social resilience in this context is based on the link between professional competencies and both disaster response and the population's behaviour.

- Warning communication should be represented according to social capital's definition (Lin, 2002) and the importance of a network for sharing social resilience. In fact, warning communication is well defined by the image of the network as the flow of information that circulates among professional, volunteers and groups of people.

Warning communication is a sort of disaster resilience test pulling together preventive and planning actions with first responders' activities.

- *Physical and psychological impact.* Attention to relational ties such as trust among families, volunteers and authorities which are constructed during prevention and preventive stages.

Further this is the stage of primary sense and meaning-making oriented by the cultural construction of population.

- *Emergency and disaster response.* In this stage social capital has a crucial role (Dynes, 2005) in order to permit an effective response by the population, volunteers and professionals.

Mutual help, trust and cohesiveness become predominant aspects of social capital presence with the aim of enhancing social resilience through a participation with and awareness of the disaster management process.

- *Recovery.* In this stage it is possible to understand the type and quality of social capital presence in a megacity stricken by disaster, especially regarding relationships among parents, friends and neighbours and their shared helping actions. Especially within a megacities context this means a reshaping of urban space (also as a mental imagine) and all the services (social services, civil protection authorities, local authorities) in terms of spatiality and mobility.

- *Reconstruction.* This last disaster stage represents the core question of how social capital can enhance social resilience. Reconstructing a city or, better, a megacity stricken by a disaster not only in architectural terms, but also with specific attention to social ties, is possible only through recognition of social capital and its network aspects.

In particular, training is basic activity for all professional people, which should be enhanced to better guarantee a specific resilience that belongs to all people, experts as well as operative personnel, involved in disaster management.

Working in a megacities context means referring to specific activities at three levels: individual, collective and social. Human and social capital seem to be two useful theoretical concepts to better enhance and stimulate preventive and response practices for a possible disaster, not forgetting the important role of using and implementing resources already present (voluntary services, non-profit associations, third sector agencies, social services) and the importance of involving people for specific tasks and activities (civil protection and experts meeting for example).

Finally, as shown, this presentation was based on a theoretical note of human and social capital in the social resilience field from a sociological perspective: the common starting point was constituted by the deeply held belief of the importance of social relationships as a resource for possible prevention instruments shared among groups, organizations and institutions before a disaster occurs.

The possibility to develop, in practical ways, and integrate this theoretical approach into disaster planning could demonstrate the absolute need of a coordination and cooperation model to enhance resilience, safety and security in our complex societies and the megacities spatial context.

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