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## The role of local communities in a global risk landscape

Imperiale, Angelo Jonas

DOI:  
[10.33612/diss.131472776](https://doi.org/10.33612/diss.131472776)

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*Document Version*  
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

*Publication date:*  
2020

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*  
Imperiale, A. J. (2020). *The role of local communities in a global risk landscape: Using Social Impact Assessment to understand, recognise, engage and empower community resilience in vulnerable regions*. [Thesis fully internal (DIV), University of Groningen]. University of Groningen.  
<https://doi.org/10.33612/diss.131472776>

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# **The role of local communities in a global risk landscape:**

Using Social Impact Assessment to understand, recognise, engage  
and empower community resilience in vulnerable regions

Angelo J. Imperiale

ISBN (printed book) 978-94-034-2513-9  
ISBN (PDF) 978-94-034-2514-6  
Cover Design Mark van Wijk  
Printed by GVO printers & designers, Ede.

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university of  
 groningen

# **The role of local communities in a global risk landscape**

Using Social Impact Assessment to understand, recognise, engage and  
 empower community resilience in vulnerable regions

## **PhD thesis**

to obtain the degree of PhD at the  
 University of Groningen  
 on the authority of the  
 Rector Magnificus Prof. C. Wijmenga  
 and in accordance with  
 the decision by the College of Deans.

This thesis will be defended in public on  
 Thursday 10 September 2020 at 12.45 hours

by

**Angelo Jonas Imperiale**

born on 26 October 1984  
 in L'Aquila, Italy

## **Supervisors**

Prof. F.M.D. Vanclay  
Prof. D. Strijker

## **Assessment Committee**

Prof. E.J.M.M. Arts  
Prof. D. Ioannides  
Prof. H. Ross

“There is, however, one branch of knowledge which is still behind.  
It is Ethics, the teaching of the fundamental principle of Morality ...  
this is what Humanity is persistently demanding ...  
If the contemplation of the Universe  
and a close acquaintance with Nature  
were able to infuse lofty inspiration  
into the minds of the great naturalists and poets of the nineteenth century,  
— if a look into Nature’s breast quickened the pulse of life  
for Goethe, Shelley, Byron, Lermontov, in the face of  
the raging storm, the calm mountains, the dark forests, and its inhabitants —  
why should not a deeper penetration into the life of man and destinies  
be able to inspire the poet in the same way?”.

Pyotr Kropotkin, *Ethics: Origin and Development*, 1922

The hell of the living is not something that will be:  
if there is one, it is what is already here, the hell where we live every day,  
that we form by being together.  
There are two ways to escape suffering it.  
The first is easy for many:  
accept the hell and become such a part of it that you can no longer see it.  
The second is risky and demands constant vigilance and learning:  
seek and be able to recognize who and what, in the midst of the hell,  
are not hell, then make them endure, give them space.

Italo Calvino, *The Invisible Cities*, 1972



*To all victims of disasters of any kind  
and those who survived  
and could experience,  
learn from,  
and witness  
the paradise  
amidst the hell.*

*Please, keep this good narrative alive,  
for those who died,  
and for those who are still to come.*

*A world,  
other than disaster capitalism,  
is still possible.*





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## Overview of publications produced as part of this research

Seven chapters of this thesis have been published as journal articles. It should be noted that the version of those papers included in this thesis are not necessarily identical to the published version. It was a conscious decision to sometimes include an extended pre-publication version of the paper in this thesis, especially where journal space limitations demanded drastic surgery.

**Chapter 3** has been published as:

Imperiale, A.J. and Vanclay, F. (2016a) Experiencing local community resilience in action: Learning from post-disaster communities. *Journal of Rural Studies* 47, 204-219. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2016.08.002>

**Chapter 4** has been published as:

Imperiale, A.J. and Vanclay, F. (2016b) Using social impact assessment to strengthen community resilience in sustainable rural development in mountain areas, *Mountain Research and Development* 36(4), 431-442. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1659/MRD-JOURNAL-D-16-00027.1> (open access)

**Chapter 5** has been published as:

Imperiale, A.J. and Vanclay, F. (2019) Reflections on the L'Aquila trial and the social dimensions of Disaster Risk, *Disaster Prevention and Management: An International Journal*, 28(4), 434-445. <https://doi.org/10.1108/DPM-01-2018-0030> (open access)

**Chapter 6** has been published as:

Imperiale, A.J. and Vanclay, F. (2019) Command-and-control, emergency powers and the failures to follow United Nations disaster management principles following the 2009 L'Aquila earthquake. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* 36, 101099. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2019.101099> (open access)

**Chapter 7** has been published as:

Imperiale, A.J. & Vanclay, F. 2020 The mechanism of Disaster Capitalism and failure to build community resilience in post-disaster regions: lessons learned from the L'Aquila earthquake. Disasters (in press, online). <https://doi.org/10.1111/disa.12431> (Open Access)

**Chapter 8** has been submitted to an international journal:

Imperiale, A. J. and Vanclay, F. The top-down approach in post-disaster reconstruction and the failure to 'build back better' resilient communities after disaster: Lessons learned from the 2009 L'Aquila Italy earthquake, under review with *Disaster Prevention and Management: An International Journal*.

**Chapter 9** has been submitted to an international journal:

Imperiale, A. J. and Vanclay, F. From assessing impacts to reducing risks from planned interventions: Revolutionizing Impact Assessment to include Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, under review with *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal*.

# Part 1

## **Understanding local community resilience and how Social Impact Assessment can enhance it**

