Resilience and Vulnerability at the Interface between Theory and Practice: A Case Study of Japan and Kyrgyzstan

This paper highlights how multiple discourses of disaster create and recreate the concept of resilience and vulnerability within the disaster cycle. With examples from the aftermath of Great East Japan Earthquake and Kyrgyzstan Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) policies, I reconsider how resilience and vulnerability are conceptualized in theory and practice.

My main argument is that concepts of resilience and vulnerability shift within the disaster cycle as a result of multiple encounters between discourses and actors. The formal understanding of vulnerability and resilience plays an important role but also the way formal (policies) is appropriated by the actors on the local and national level. Disaster under certain conditions creates the opportunity for various actors to contest, change or contribute to the dominant discourse and reshape the policies.

To conclude, resilience and vulnerability are constructed at the intersection between discourses of three different social domain's actors: scientists and disaster managers, bureaucrats and politicians, and local respondents. All these actors interpret in their own way resilience and vulnerability and then negotiate their position in order to support their agenda and interests.