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In the Non-Technocratic Reality of Being Existentially (and not Imaginarily) in the World:

Some Implications of Continued Adherence to the End-to-End (E2E) Model of Disaster Management

Management of hydro-meteorological disaster tends to remain oriented to an End-to-End (E2E) cultural model consistent with the linearity of technocratic planning. This orientation normalizes “quantitative” data generation as the best way to minimize loss and increase resilience. An important issue arising through this framing is that the costs of supporting programs that utilize the cutting-edge technologies (e.g. satellites and supercomputers) increasingly regarded as the only valid producers of the data deemed necessary if disaster management is to be effective are at all times justified, regardless of their actual efficacy. As such, the necessity of these costly technologies is set beyond question, even as analogical evidence to the contrary accumulates. This is a classic moment of the divergence between what is believed ‘ought’ to be the case in a situation and what actually ‘is’, a divergence that has serious implications in the real world of lived experience. Not least of these implications is that costly investments in such technologies have distributional consequences that echo across the global economic system. The reality is that few countries in the “developing” world have the resources necessary to acquire such technologies, even as continued blind adherence to development narratives all but require them to seek assistance (e.g. “technology transfers,” “capacity building” workshops, etc.) from more “developed” countries to acquire them. In this way, the inequalities inherent in the very structures of the global system are actively reinforced through normalization of the E2E model as the only valid approach to hazard management. Another implication is that economically marginalized populations in those developing countries are increasingly rendered invisible, even as they are subject—in the non-technocratic reality of being existentially (and not imaginarily) in the world—to the increasing frequencies and intensities of hazard events that result from ongoing expansions of fossil fuel productions—including, ironically, those needed to produce the cutting-edge technologies required by the E2E model. A significant issue, therefore, is how adherence to the model tends to supplant the long-held hazard-avoidance strategies of those invisible populations whose resilience it had ostensibly hoped to increase in the first place. In this way, disaster management through the model can be compellingly argued to be ever only superficially concerned with such outcomes as reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience within such populations, despite mission statements and glossy publications to the contrary. In truth, the E2E model continues, arguably, to be more useful for ensuring the career resilience of scientists in institutions that utilize it to frame the quite reflexive benefits of a management approach that only their indisputable expertise can provide.