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Social Responsibility, Sustainability, and Public Policy: The Lessons of Debris Management after the Manabí Earthquake in Ecuador

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Natural disasters can generate millions of tons of debris and waste, which has an impact on the environment and poses direct risks to the health of the population, hence the need to analyze public policy and its consequences following the 2016 earthquake in Ecuador. Several in-depth interviews were conducted with individuals active in public service during the post-earthquake management period, together with fieldwork analysis of debris management and the institutional strategies for its recycling and reuse in three of the most affected cities: Pedernales, Portoviejo, and Manta. The environmental impact was examined, including its taxonomy of inconsistencies within public

administration, alongside the processes of decentralization and shared decision-making. Similarly, the links between corporate social responsibility (CSR), public policy, and sustainability were analyzed at both the national and local level for their wider implications and ramifications. The study highlighted the gaps in the management of such a crisis, exposing a lack of ethics and the shortcomings of social (ir-) responsibility in the distorted processes of public welfare in the country, aspects that should rather work in concert to achieve full sustainable development.

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