



# Government vs. Governance in Natural Disasters

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## Abstract

Government is an institutional super structure that society uses to translate politics into policies and legislation. Governance is the outcome of the interaction of government, the private sector and civil society throughout the political process, policy development, and program design and service delivery. Natural disasters are catastrophic events that occur all over the world almost every day. They destroy cities, kill people and make lots of economical, social and environmental damages. Governments and governances have a lot of impacts on pre- and post-disaster activities. But their roles are different in many extents. In this study we compare roles of government and governance in natural disasters. Research is based on comparative studies of governance in natural disasters in few countries including Iran. The results present the differences among countries..

**Keywords: Governance, Government, natural disasters.**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The essence of governance is the way that state-society relations are being structured and managed [1]. Governance is the outcome of the interaction of government, the private sector and civil society throughout the political process, policy development, and program design and service delivery.

Government is typically defined with reference to both elected and appointed officials serving in core institutions at national, provincial, county or city level [1].

More than anybody else, government officials, as defined above, are responsible for words and action that influence the developmental direction of society. The decisions that they have to make are not merely in immediate response to demands from groups in society. Government does not only revolve around the aggregation of interests, values and preferences that come up via different channels to the executive level. It also implies transformative decisions that involve choices going beyond specific interests or preferences. For instance, this may sometimes mean making decisions that go against particular interests but are viewed as necessary in order to protect what members of the government view as a larger public or national interest. The readiness and ability to make such hard choices is very much a product of the ways the polity is institutionalized. The rules of the political game vary from country to country in terms of how they affect government capability in this regard [1].

What is now referred to as Western Europe was for a long time the laboratory for social and political experimentation. Philosophers in France, Britain and Germany pioneered ideas that guided new forms of political development. Montesquieu heralded the idea of separation of power between the various branches of government. Rousseau's principal message was the sovereignty of the people. Locke advocated the social contract between rulers and ruled. Hegel, and later Marx, pursued the notion that development is the product of opposing social forces. These ideas were both causes and consequences of political crises. They reflected the violent nature of European history over many centuries. They were meant to provide hope for peace and development, but often ended up causing more misery and violence. Europeans have not given up on experimenting, as the European Union project indicates, but it is significant that since the end of the Second World War, which caused so much damage to their countries, they have turned their attention to modifying inter-state relations rather than the transformation of individual nation-states [1].

The frontier of political and social experimentation moved instead to the post-colonial world or what is called here developing societies. Over the past fifty years or so, it was an extensive experimentation with political systems aimed at finding ways of accelerating economic and social development. Bold but also risky steps have been taken in Asia, Africa, and Latin America to attempt catching up with the West and often, in the process, transform these societies in a completely new direction. Much of what guides discourse on governance and development today draws its inspiration from these experiences [1].

Governments in developing societies have often been described as powerful and overbearing when it comes to managing development. The paradox, however, is that the problem is more often the opposite.