



Measuring Vulnerability to Natural Hazards: Towards Disaster Resilient Societies

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A seemingly nonstop series of disasters has shown that societies worldwide seem unprepared for the threats posed by natural hazards. They include Hurricane Katrina, drought in Africa, flooding in China and Germany, earthquakes in Pakistan and India, a tsunami in Southeast Asia, and forest fires in Portugal, Australia, and North America. The tragic impacts of these events drew short-term attention from policymakers, the media, and the general public, but their response was too late to prevent serious harm. Societies need to measure their vulnerabilities in advance, and make adequate provisions. To do so, they have to understand the complex relationships between natural hazards and the related social, economic, and environmental vulnerabilities. Recognizing and measuring vulnerabilities is the first and perhaps most important step towards disaster-resilient societies. Measuring Vulnerability to Natural Hazards presents a broad range of current approaches to measuring vulnerability and contains concrete experiences and examples from Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Europe to illustrate the theoretical analyses. This is a unique compilation of state-of-the-art vulnerability assessment. It is a critical review that provides important conclusions for future research towards more disaster resilient communities.

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