

Measuring Vulnerability to Natural Hazards

Towards Disaster Resilient Societies

EDITED BY JÖRN BIRKMANN

A seemingly non-stop series of disasters has shown that societies worldwide seem unprepared for the threats posed by natural hazards: Hurricane Katrina, drought in Africa; flooding in China and Germany; earthquakes in Pakistan and India; a tsunami in South-East Asia; and forest fires in Portugal, Australia and North America.

The tragic impacts of these events drew short-term attention from policy makers, 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 book is a unique compilation of state-of-the-art vulnerability assessment and is essential reading for academics, students, policy makers, practitioners, and anybody else interested in understanding the fundamentals of measuring vulnerability. It is a critical review that provides important conclusions which can serve as an orientation for future research towards more disaster resilient communities.

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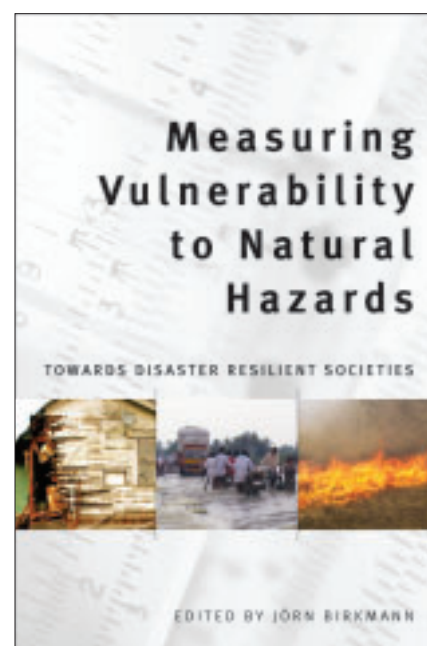
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ISBN 92-808-1135-5

ISBN 13: 978-92-808-1135-3

400 pages; paper: US\$39.00

October 2006

