

Reaction Paper Jeevan Sahota

1. Political Responses To Natural Hazards: Social Movement Participation following a Flood Disaster by Blocker et al.

The authors at the very beginning state that their goal is not to test the two well known models explaining participation in the social movement viz. social psychological perspective and resource mobilization models. However, at the end they in fact end up in testing these models only. However, their findings (other than testing two models) do contribute significantly our understanding of community response in the aftermath of a major natural disaster. The study also highlights the need to expand the scope of disaster research to not natural events but also the effects of human-nature interaction. Further, the discussion is silent on the 'external validity' of the findings i.e. whether there is evidence that the findings of this study would hold across socio-economic-cultural settings.

2. Vulnerability To Disaster And Sustainable Development: A general Framework for Assessing Vulnerability by Mary B. Anderson

While the paper reviews various approaches taken by researchers in disaster research, the discussion is very general but certainly can be termed a useful compilation. Although the whole notion of sustainable development is complex, the paper's discussion on importance of disaster vulnerability as an important element of planning for sustainable development is praiseworthy. This in fact again highlights the need to carefully examine the whole planning apparatus especially in developing countries where sectoral approach to planning without due regard for integration (left hand doesn't know what other hand of the govt. is doing) is still prevalent.

3. Targeting Households At Risk For Storms: Community vulnerability mapping by Betty Hearn Morrow

The paper's discussion of social aspects of disaster vulnerability is excellent. Although, the link between poverty and vulnerability is not very strong, the poverty does in fact as documented very well in this paper, interact with other social, demographic and development planning variables to increase the vulnerability of people to respond to disasters. I think the discussion is also valid for rest of the world in that socio-economically and culturally marginalized communities and women do suffer more by disasters.