



Special Session Proposal

Navigating the Storm: Exploring the Socio-Economic and Behavioural Impacts of Natural Disasters on Communities

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Abstract

Natural disasters have significant implications for the socio-economic outlooks of affected places, as well as on the behavioural response of affected communities.

The physical infrastructure of a region, such as buildings, roads, and utilities, can face severe damage or destruction, leading to disruptions in transportation, communication, and essential services. These disruptions can hamper economic activities, impede recovery efforts, and affect the overall local development trajectories. Agricultural sectors may suffer from crop loss or damage, affecting food security and livelihoods for rural communities. Small businesses, which are often the backbone of local economies, may face financial strain or closure due to physical damage, reduced consumer demand, or disrupted supply chains. Additionally, tourism-dependent regions may experience a decline in visitors, impacting revenue and employment in the hospitality industry.

Natural disasters often result in the displacement of individuals and communities, leading to social dislocation, increased vulnerability, and disruption of well-being. Displaced populations may experience challenges in accessing healthcare, education, and employment opportunities, exacerbating existing inequalities and potentially leading to long-term social and economic repercussions. The socio-economic impacts of natural disasters are often disproportionate, affecting marginalized communities and low-income populations disproportionately. Socio-economic disparities can exacerbate the vulnerability and resilience of communities in the face of natural disasters, as marginalized groups may lack access to resources, information, and support systems necessary for effective disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

The impact of natural disasters on the socio-economic fabric of places also triggers behavioural responses in affected communities. Natural disasters can trigger exhibit solidarity, cooperation, and altruism as they come together to support and assist one another. This social cohesion plays a vital role in facilitating collective resilience and effective disaster response. Conversely, disasters may also induce instances of panic, looting, fear, resentment or social unrest, highlighting the complex interplay between social dynamics and disaster situations. By recognizing the diverse range of reactions and behaviours, effective policy design can promote adaptive responses, facilitate community engagement, and foster resilience.

The composite array of issues related to natural disasters become even more relevant in the present times, which are characterized by chains of different shocks (natural disasters, environmental and socioeconomic shocks).

Understanding the socio-economic elements affected by natural disasters is crucial for policymakers, planners, and disaster management agencies. Evidence is needed to support effective policy design both in the after-disaster stages and in the prevention and mitigation.

This special session is, thus, centred on the spatial socio-economic impact of natural disasters, the resilience of communities, the behavioural responses and the impact of policy interventions. The focus is on empirical research on the interconnectedness between natural disasters, socio-economic elements and behavioural responses, emphasizing the need for comprehensive approaches that address both the immediate and long-term impacts on affected communities.

Topics may include (but are not limited to):

- Impact of disaster risk management policy
- Socio-economic impacts of natural disasters
- Behavioural impacts of natural disasters
- Winner and Losers of natural disasters
- Natural disasters and territorial inequalities
- The composite impact of natural disaster, climate change and socioeconomic shocks