



The Nature of US Natural Hazards Research, 1988-2008

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Numerous academic disciplines have contributed to the body of published research on natural hazards and disasters. Geologists, engineers, geographers, and sociologists have participated since the topic first emerged as a formal research agenda in the early 1950s. In more recent decades, psychologists, political scientists, economists, historians, archeologists, anthropologists, architects, computer scientists, and artists have added to our understanding of environmental risk, hazard, and disaster. When examined in-print, what are the discipline-demographics of natural hazards? Who contributes and who tends to have the greater influence on scholarly discourse related to the topic? Are there clear trends in methods, techniques, or paradigmatic approaches? To what degree does this inherently interdisciplinary topic render interdisciplinary research? This paper will present initial findings from a larger data set on natural hazards and social science research. We will describe the discipline-demographics of natural hazards scholarship by examining college-level texts, peer-reviewed journal publications, federally-funded reports, and federally-funded research grants relating to natural hazards or disasters from 1988 to 2008. The citation frequency of sampled references will also be examined as a surrogate for influence on the scholarly discourse of natural hazards. In this paper, we will focus attention on the contributions of social scientists during this period, including an assessment of temporal trends relative to specific disaster events.