



Assessing the Social Psychological Aspects of Vulnerability and Resilience for Natural Hazards: Theoretical and Methodological Contributions

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The increasing burden of natural hazards worldwide on communities necessitates the collaboration of scientists and policy-makers working in the field of disasters. This collaboration includes gaining an insight on both the technical and non-technical aspects of natural hazards. Still, an interdisciplinary connection is needed to gain an improved understanding of the interplay between natural hazards and the affected communities. Research on vulnerability and resilience has the great potential to inform such interdisciplinary connection. Regarding the non-technical aspects, the psychology discipline, particularly social psychology, offers various theoretical and methodological insights on the study of vulnerability and resilience for natural hazards. Of great importance is the line of research on how individual, societal, and institutional factors influence natural hazard preparedness. This work aims to provide an overview of the psycho-social resources and capacities that play a critical role in adoption of preparedness behaviors at the household level. Research has revealed that increasing facilitating factors (such as action-coping, outcome expectancy, and self-efficacy) and decreasing hindering factors (such as fatalism, denial, and externalized responsibility) for preparedness at the individual level are important for enhancing preparedness. In addition, individual-level preparedness needs to be supported with community- and institution-level preparedness by means of increasing community participation, collective efficacy, empowerment, and trust. Further, various social psychological theories have been employed to delineate the social-cognitive processes involved in hazard-related perceptions and reactions of individuals. Empirical insights gained from this line of research as well as intervention studies for increasing preparedness are essential for their implications for disaster resilience policies.

Keywords: Natural hazards, vulnerability, resilience, community, social psychology, preparedness