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Disastrous Measures: Conceptualizing and Measuring Disaster Risk Reduction¹

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Abstract:

Despite the large amount of research into disaster risk reduction [DRR], there remain significant difficulties in attempting to measure the impact of these policies. In particular, an urgent priority is the need to produce a theoretical framework for researchers and practitioners to enable the comparative assessment of the success of DRR policies. The measurement of these policies is unsatisfactory, creating a situation where it is almost impossible to assess how well the resources committed to these policies translate to improving DRR in at-risk communities. This article proposes an innovative approach to the measurement of DRR through a minimal procedural operationalization of the concept. The paper illustrates the utility of the framework through presentation of original survey data about individual DRR among residents of California. The results indicate that although most people are aware of measures of individual DRR, they have not advanced beyond that stage to plan and implement those measures themselves. The article marks a critical step towards the better measurement of success of intractable policy initiatives through the introduction of a novel measure of DRR.

Key words: disaster risk reduction, conceptualization, measurement, preparedness, response, recovery
Word Count: 9007

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