
Editorial

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Biographical notes: James R. Bohland is Vice-President at Virginia Tech responsible for their National Capital Region campuses and is Interim Director of the Centre for Community Security and Resiliency.

1 Introduction

This special issue focuses on the ‘soft dimensions’ of resiliency. Increasingly, the absence of strong leadership or the lack of public understanding are major elements contributing to the human miseries during and post catastrophic events. The timing, extent, and shape of response and recovery have important technology components, but truly resilient communities have a governance infrastructure that fosters coordinated response to events and builds leadership across both the important organisations that must react and lead under conditions of duress and among citizen responders.

2 Contributions

The first paper provides a framework for understanding resiliency and for developing metrics that can be used to assess how well communities can cope with different types of threats. The key to advancing the ‘science’ of resiliency is linked clearly to our ability to *define* and *measure* the concept under different conditions. Unless we can agreed upon a set of metrics for assessing different resiliency dimensions, the field will not advance.

The second paper in the collection illustrates how careful planning can identify risk categories for seismic events and locate response needs to those risks in a geographic framework. The approach provides local and state leaders with a tool that can be of great value in planning resource allocations prior to the occurrence of the event.

The final paper provides a case study of one of the more tragic events in recent history – Hurricane Katrina. Unfortunately, the case study is one that highlights the need for improving our understanding of social-technological interactions and how best to plan for the unforeseen consequences of events that heretofore were not deemed possible. In many of our environmental-technical disasters throughout history, the leadership required to achieve what the author calls ‘exceptional recovery’ has not been forthcoming.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Professors Paul Knox and Jack Harrald at Virginia Tech for providing leadership in framing the conference agenda in Zurich. Also, special thanks to Denise Orden for her help in providing the logical support and making certain the participants could focus on the issues of science free of concerns with organisational matters. I also wish to acknowledge the assistance of Lamine Mili for helping with this special issue.