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A comparative analysis of how types of impact, key areas of vulnerability and governance arrangements affect post-disaster response in three cities

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Abstract

This paper examines the ways in which types of shock and governance arrangements influence post-disaster responses. In an era of both increasing frequency and magnitude of disasters, and urban areas facing a multitude of stresses, the need to understand what types of disaster response are required is critical. While case studies are necessary and helpful, comparative analyses are required in order to make systemic insights into what factors determine the need, and influence the effectiveness of disaster response. This paper compares six in-depth city case studies that reflect different types of impact, governance arrangements and points of vulnerability, and responses. Based on a depth of qualitative and quantitative data in each of the six cities, these different arrangements, critical vulnerability pathways and concomitant post-disaster responses are compared. The study finds that critical areas of vulnerability are often in unrelated sectors to the disaster shock or stress, and that response need is therefore unexpected and highly specific to the city. The results call for a deeper understanding of how city systems connect with each other, and for an interdisciplinary approach to disaster resilience.

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