

Since the mid 1970s, critical researchers have disproved the notion that disasters are unavoidable acts of “nature” or “God.” They are, instead, historically prolonged processes in which social practices enhance the materially destructive and socially disruptive capacities of geophysical phenomena, viruses, and technological “malfunctions.” Disasters are socio-material manifestations of society’s pre-existing inequalities, exclusions, exploitation of nature, and ideologies that prop up these conditions. Disasters, and the catastrophic events associated with them, have the potential to expose a society’s fault lines of inequity, whether they be along lines of race, class, age, gender, or sexuality. While this understanding of disasters is well established across various social science disciplines involved in their study (geography, sociology, anthropology), such a perspective is not always shared by media outlets, elected officials, and even disaster-affected publics.

In the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, a generation of scholarship was built on a platform of political ecology, centering on vulnerability. More recently, the field of disaster studies has witnessed a proliferation in the analytical vantagepoints through which researchers approach the subject, including perspectives rooted in science and technology studies, environmental justice, securitization, and affect theory, to name a few. And while disaster research has experienced much innovation and growth, disaster risk has increased at a global level as policymakers and disaster responders have continued to prioritize economic growth over environmental protection and socio-economic inequity reduction. What is more, the concept of resilience has also emerged during the last half century as an anchoring concept that threatens to roll back the analytical and political gains made by vulnerability theory. Without clarification, resilience is often treated as a panacea, while it simultaneously whitewashes the specificities of anti-racist, intersectional, critical perspectives coming from marginalized communities.

This ***blind peer reviewed*** series aims to bring critical attention to the social, political, techno-scientific, economic, and cultural structures that create disasters out of “natural” and technological hazards or political events and that shape the responses to catastrophe. Combining long-term ethnographic fieldwork typical of anthropology and increasingly adopted in similar social science disciplines such as geography, sociology, and science and technology studies, [this](#) series will mainly consist of edited volumes that critically scrutinize the multiple dimensions of disasters and important policy/practice questions for the field of disaster research and management.

*Catastrophes in Context* builds on these increasing theoretical and practical interests in the subject, providing a sustained space for institutional rethinking and growth in the field. We specifically aim to challenge the scholarship to be both critical and deliberately inclusive of traditionally marginalized communities and scholars. We also explicitly aim to interrogate and integrate the separate spheres of scholarship, policy, and practice. As we detail below, and as the increase in the media profile of global disasters demonstrates, there is a large and growing potential market to be tapped. Building on this increasingly rich, sophisticated, and timely scholarship, *Catastrophes in Context* aims to be:

1. Theoretically innovative
2. Transformative and social justice focused
3. Informed by in depth, longitudinal analysis`
4. Policy and practice relevant
5. Practicing citational justice

### **Guiding principles of the series:**

Recent social science scholarship on disasters has begun to include voices from impacted communities and combine theorizing with readable prose. We are aiming for *Catastrophes in Context* to have a reach into practitioners, solidarity organizations, and active citizens in addition to students and other scholars. Especially given the opportunities provided by new media we aim to explore making timely scholarship on disasters accessible and actually engage various publics. While there is no compromising on solid scholarship, we aim for clear, engaging prose.

Following the examples set by recent work and setting a new standard, books in *Catastrophes in Context*:

- Center perspectives of marginalized groups
- Include a diversity of voices (practitioner, scholar, journalist, activist)
- Specifically work to include local voices, from the area affected
- Combine on-the-ground reporting of timely events with structural analysis
- Focus on global connections, moving away from the fetishization of the discrete disaster events narrative
- Analyze the narrative construction of the disaster case

### **Works to be proposed in the series:**

Alternating between very timely case studies and theoretically driven comparisons, we envision two books to come out every year. We aim to remain both readable and cutting-edge theoretical scholarship, on issues within the study of disasters that are either timely, theoretically innovative, and/or relevant to policy or practice. Some topics can include: disasters and development, gender and disasters, archaeology of disasters, disasters and climate change, disasters and migration, humanitarian clusters, and impacted communities as first responders, among others.

### **To submit a book in the series:**

Authors and volume editors are encouraged to contact the series editors (contact information below) with an idea for a volume. The editors will offer timely feedback about the idea and its fit within the series goals. When ready to submit a formal proposal, there is a short "New Book Outline" [available on Berghahn's website](#). Authors are to submit this New Book Outline to the series editors.

The proposal – and manuscript – will receive a full-blind peer review process. Series editors will work with reviewers to ensure timely and constructive feedback, regardless of the editorial decision. Decisions about publication will be made conjointly with series editors and Berghahn’s editorial team.

**Public Engagement:**

*Catastrophes in Context* aims explicitly to engage the public and private, local and international agencies working on disasters in order to influence policy formation and implementation. Editors and authors would be encouraged to host speaking events and engage traditional and new media in discussions. Volume editors will be encouraged to have a website that will empower contributors to post media stories and action alerts.

Opportunities for simultaneous paperback publication remain for volumes that have a detailed, specific, and realistic plan for public engagement, media outreach, and policymaking intervention.

**Series editors:**

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