

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY

The articles in this issue particularly well illustrate the general objectives and goals of the journal. We are very much interested in publishing the viewpoints of as many different social and behavioral sciences and disciplines as possible, and encouraging cross-societal research. The article by Huffman presents a legal perspective on a comparative study of natural hazard mitigation and governmental liability in five different countries: Japan, the Soviet Union, China, New Zealand, and the United States. Mileti, in his comparative article on organizational responses to earthquake predictions in Japan and the United States, likewise contributes to what still is only a small number of cross-societal studies.

Advances in a scientific area are also dependent upon the continual clarification of concepts, and the development of theories and models. The articles by Aguirre and Kreps address some of these problems. The first author points out that the concept of evacuation as used in disaster studies could better inform, and be better informed, if it were looked at in the light of all the theory and research using the concept of population mobility as it has been used in demography. Kreps presents some of his findings from his effort to empirically ground what he considers the core concepts needed to understand the organization of disaster response, and how the relationship of various social processes involved in such responses can be modeled. We recognize that even among students of disasters, not all are interested in the explication of the intellectual tools of the area. However, this journal will endeavor to publish the results of such efforts, since better research can be undertaken in the long run only if we continue to improve our basic conceptual and fundamental theoretical tools.

Of course, we will continue to publish very well executed empirical studies which establish the parameters of what we are studying. This is done in this issue in the article by Rossi and his colleagues which sets forth survey results on household victimization by natural hazards in the United States over a decade of time. How applicable the results are outside America are unclear, but the special issue of the journal scheduled for March 1985, which will be devoted exclusively to examples of the considerable amount of empirical research being done in Japan by Japanese social psychologists, communication specialists, and other social scientists, might throw some light on the matter.

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