

CHARACTERISTICS AND EVALUATION OF CHINA'S EARTHQUAKE DISASTER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

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Background

This presentation summarizes our ongoing hybrid sociological-Geological research into China's earthquake Disaster Management systems. Our methodology is a grounded research approach, based firstly on field observations related to the Wenchuan earthquake, including interviews with survivors and professionals responsible for Disaster Management; secondly on an extensive review of the English Language Disaster Management literature. China's earth scientists, frequently in collaboration with international scientists, have created a substansial English-language literature, but the social literature on disasters in China is scant. China's geographic variation is complex, with significant fault lines criss-crossing the nation.

Discussion

Approximately half of the Population lives in areas with a high risk of earthquakes. The two most devastating of these since 1949 were the 1979 point source Tangshan earthquake with mortality of 242.419, and the 2008 huge-area Wenchuan earthquake with mortality of 69.226. Our research has found that China's earthquake disaster management system at the local, provincial, and national levels respond rapidly to earthquakes. National mobilization for rescue-relief after the Tangshan earthquake began within six hours, and within two hours for the Wenchuan earthquake. These system are also characterized by reconstruction planning that function in parallel to, and melds into, the relief effort streams. China's mayor infrastructure projects, such as hydro-electric power damns, are designed to resist extreme earthquake; however, rural mountain populations and the historic built-environment have low earthquake resistance, conditions which will endurance for a long time.

Conclusion

As a result of the Wenchuan earthquake, China has undertaken ambitious three-dimensional monitoring and response programs. We recommended studies and action to reconnoiter, investigate, and prevent population exposure to geohazard,

particularly in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. In summary, China excels at disaster response but has not yet entered a development era of preventing the population's exposure to earthquake hazard.

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