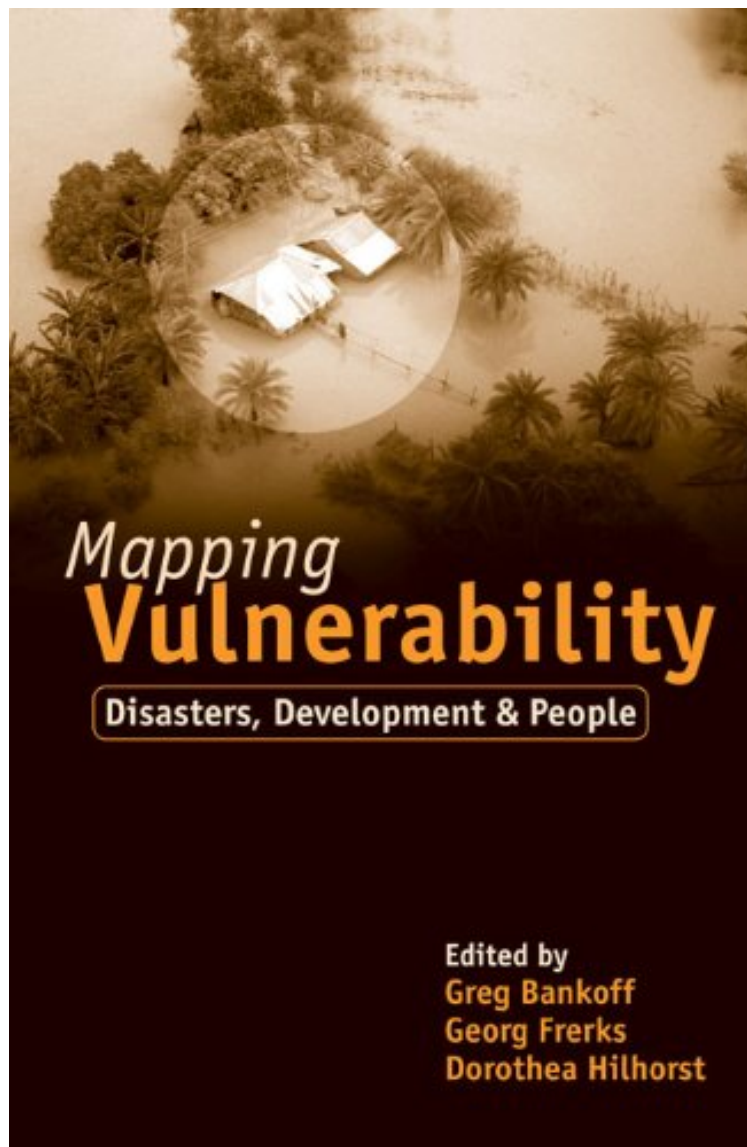


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Raging floods, massive storms and cataclysmic earthquakes: every year up to 340 million people are affected by these

and other disasters, which cause loss of life and damage to personal property, agriculture, and infrastructure. So what can be done? The key to understanding the causes of disasters and mitigating their impacts is the concept of 'vulnerability'. Mapping Vulnerability analyses 'vulnerability' as a concept central to the way we understand disasters and their magnitude and impact. Written and edited by a distinguished group of disaster scholars and practitioners, this book is a counterbalance to those technocratic approaches that limit themselves to simply looking at disasters as natural phenomena. Through the notion of vulnerability, the authors stress the importance of social processes and human-environmental interactions as causal agents in the making of disasters. They critically examine what renders communities unsafe - a condition, they argue, that depends primarily on the relative position of advantage or disadvantage that a particular group occupies within a society's social order. The book also looks at vulnerability in terms of its relationship to development and its impact on policy and people's lives, through consideration of selected case studies drawn from Africa, Asia and Latin America. Mapping Vulnerability is essential reading for academics, students, policymakers and practitioners in disaster studies, geography, development studies, economics, environmental studies and sociology.

"Hazards are natural, disasters are not. Social processes generally result in unequal exposure to risk by making some people more disaster-prone than others. This book explores aspects of vulnerability as key to understanding risk and the human response to hazards. Critical to this understanding is an appreciation of how human systems place people at risk in relation to each other and the environment--a relationship that can be best understood in terms of an individual, household, community, or societal vulnerability. These issues are examined through scholarly and case-study perspectives."--Natural Hazards Observer

About the Author
Greg Bankoff is associate professor in the School of Asian Studies, University of Auckland, New Zealand, and research fellow in Disaster Studies, Wageningen University, The Netherlands. Georg Frerks is professor of Disaster Studies, Wageningen University, and chair of Conflict Prevention and Conflict Management at Utrecht University, The Netherlands. Dorothea Hilhorst is associate professor in Disaster Studies at Wageningen University.