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# The Demography of Disasters: Exploring the research praxis

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## Abstract

Both slow onset and sudden disasters have the capacity to fundamentally change the profiles of populations at local and regional levels in developed nations. Impacts vary according to the type, rapidity and magnitude of the disaster, but also according to the pre-existing population profile and its relationships to the economy, society and the environment. In all cases, the key to understanding impacts and avoiding them in the future is to understand the interplay between disasters and population change. While scholars in the field contribute greatly to descriptive knowledge on demographic change from individual disasters, the praxis between demography and disasters is an emerging theoretical and practical field. The exploration of this praxis well suits the long-term changes in paradigm shifts from disasters as challenges to the structure and organisation of society to disasters as a social phenomenon, something over which humans exert influence and therefore have the potential to prevent. With this latter paradigm driving much of the research, it is clear that understanding the fundamental composition and changes in populations prior to disasters; and then the short and long-term changes afterwards, is fundamental to progressing the contributions of the field to planning, mitigation, recovery and rebounding. In this talk we contemplate these theoretical and practical issues as a means of exploring ideas for future collaborations and developments in the area of the demography of disasters, as well as to set the scene for this session at this EUGEO conference.

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