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'Understanding volcanoes and society: the key for risk mitigation'



A Critical History of Policy Mobilities in Global Volcanic Risk Reduction

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An estimated 800 million people worldwide are exposed to disaster risk from volcanic activity. Elected governments are generally responsible for reducing such volcanic risk within their territories through the development and implementation of public policy (Smith and Petley, 2009). Volcanic risk reduction (VRR) policy varies between jurisdictions, dependent on a variety of volcanic and socioeconomic factors (Wilkinson, 2013). The pursuit of 'best practice' VRR remains a long-term goal of volcanology and global disaster risk reduction (UNISDR, 2015). The international mobilization of policy, expertise and resources has shaped VRR to date, with some approaches proving more successful and influential than others (Macias and Aguirre, 2006). Such international exchanges will very likely continue to influence VRR. This study seeks critical understanding of the movement of policy and knowledge in VRR through the introduction of policy mobility studies to applied volcanology. The policy mobilities field examines the processes that accompany policies and knowledge around the globe in order to determine "how, why, where and with what effects policies are mobilised, circulated, learned, reformed and reassembled." (McCann and Ward, 2012). The mobilities field aims to understand how certain approaches come to be identified as 'best practices' at an international level and their impact in new jurisdictions. Policy mobility investigations typically 'follow' case studies chronologically, constructing narratives from archival research, interviews and observations to document and map the events, agents and networks that shape policies and their movement and reception (Peck and Theodore, 2012). We present a history of the development of the global policy field of VRR (Hannigan, 2012) and its evolution over the 20th/21st centuries. Using this history, this study will proceed to identify case studies exemplifying diverse approaches to VRR and perform comparative policy analyses.