

# NATURAL HAZARDS

*State-of-the-Art at the End of the Second  
Millennium*

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Reprinted from *Natural Hazards*,  
Volume 21, Nos. 2 & 3, 2000



SPRINGER-SCIENCE+BUSINESS MEDIA, B.V.

A C.I.P. Catalogue record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN 978-90-481-5571-2      ISBN 978-94-017-2386-2 (eBook)  
DOI 10.1007/978-94-017-2386-2

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*Printed on acid-free paper*

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Originally published by Kluwer Academic Publishers in 2000

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2000

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# Table of Contents

Editorial	vii
S. VENKATESH, W. GONG, A. KALLAUR, P. A. MAKAR, M. D. MORAN, B. PABLA, C. RO, R. VET, W. R. BURROWS and R. MONTPETIT / Regional Air Quality Modelling in Canada – Applications for Policy and Real-Time Prediction	101–129
M. L. KHANDEKAR, T. S. MURTY, D. SCOTT and W. BAIRD / The 1997 El Niño, Indonesian Forest Fires and the Malaysian Smoke Problem: A Deadly Combination of Natural and Man-Made Hazard	131–144
NINING SARI NINGSIH, TAKAO YAMASHITA and LOTFI AOUF / Three-Dimensional Simulation of Water Circulation in the Java Sea: Influence of Wind Waves on Surface and Bottom Stresses	145–171
A. C. HINTON / Tidal Changes and Coastal Hazards: Past, Present and Future	173–184
Y. ALTINOK and Ş. ERSOY / Tsunamis Observed on and Near the Turkish Coast	185–205
SALVADOR F. FARRERAS / Post-Tsunami Field Survey Procedures: An Outline	207–214
LE KENTANG / An Analysis of the Recent Severe Storm Surge Disaster Events in China	215–223
C. EMDAD HAQUE / Risk Assessment, Emergency Preparedness and Response to Hazards: The Case of the 1997 Red River Valley Flood, Canada	225–245
V. CUOMO, G. DI BELLO, V. LAPENNA, S. PISCITELLI, L. TELESCA, M. MACCHIATO and C. SERIO / Robust Statistical Methods to Discriminate Extreme Events in Geoelectrical Precursory Signals: Implications with Earthquake Prediction	247–261
P. F. BIAGI, A. ERMINI, E. COZZI, Y. M. KHATKEVICH and E. I. GORDEEV / Hydrogeochemical Precursors in Kamchatka (Russia) Related to the Strongest Earthquakes in 1988–1997	263–276
P. P. DIMITRIU, E. M. SCORDILIS and V. G. KARACOSTAS / Multi-fractal Analysis of the Arnea, Greece Seismicity with Potential Implications for Earthquake Prediction	277–295
D. I. MAKARIS, N. P. THEODULIDIS and G. N. STAVRAKAKIS / Estimation of Strong Ground Motion Due to Hypothetical Fault Ruptures and Comparison with Recorded Values: The Zakynthos, Western Greece Earthquake of 18 November 1997	297–315

G. NOVER, S. HEIKAMP and D. FREUND / Electrical Impedance Spectroscopy Used as a Tool for the Detection of Fractures in Rock Samples Exposed to either Hydrostatic or Triaxial Pressure Conditions	317–330
V. SCHENK, Z. SCHENKOVÁ, P. KOTTNAUER, B. GUTERCH and P. LABÁK / Earthquake Hazard for the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia – Contribution to the ILC/IASPEI Global Seismic Hazard Assessment Program	331–345
FRANCISCA GÓMEZ-FERNÁNDEZ / Contribution of Geographical Information Systems to the Management of Volcanic Crises	347–360
M. T. PARESCHI, L. CAVARRA, M. FAVALLI, F. GIANNINI and A. MERIGGI / GIS and Volcanic Risk Management	361–379
A. AMENDOLA, Y. ERMOLIEV, T. Y. ERMOLIEVA, V. GITIS, G. KOFF and J. LINNEROOTH-BAYER / A Systems Approach to Modeling Catastrophic Risk and Insurability	381–393
M. L. KHANDEKAR / Hazards-98: Summary of Papers	395–398



This issue is dedicated to the memory of Mohammed Ibrahim El-Sabh, 1939–1999, founding President of the Natural Hazards Society and founding editor of *Natural Hazards*.

## Editorial

This issue of *Natural Hazards* contains a selection of articles that were presented at the Seventh International Symposium on Natural and Man-Made hazards (Hazards-98) held in Chania, Greece, 17–20 May 1998. The symposium was organized by the International Society for the Prevention and Mitigation of Natural Hazards (NHS), the IAPSO commission on natural marine hazards and the Tsunami Society. The theme of the symposium was “Natural Disasters – How Do We Mitigate Them?”.

Hazards-98 was very timely, given the large number of natural disasters that occurred in various parts of the world during the 1990's, which was also the United Nations' International Decade for Natural Disasters Reduction. Along with the traditional hazards such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, cyclones, storm surges and river floods that caused great devastation and significant loss of life during this decade, the issue of climate change and the anticipated hazards associated with it have attracted great attention, particularly in this decade.

The climate change problem is much broader than the Greenhouse warming issue and possible sea level rise. Climate change has occurred throughout Earth's history and will continue to occur due to natural processes, whether there is human interference or not. One of the most important aspects of climate change is the geographical shift in cyclone tracks leading to large scale changes in the patterns of floods and droughts. The extremely serious large scale smoke problem in South-East Asia during the second half of the year 1997 and the early part of 1998 was directly attributed to the major El-Niño event of that time and reminded everybody of our susceptibility to large scale atmospheric pollution hazards.

The symposium included sessions on the following topics: “Earthquakes”, “Volcanic Hazards”, “Tsunamis”, “Meteorological Hazards”, “Geological Hazards”, “Socioeconomic Aspects” and “Miscellaneous”. Participants from 20 countries around the world presented over 120 papers during 13 sessions of the symposium. The abstracts of all of the papers presented can be found in the symposium abstracts volume. Sixteen papers were accepted to be included in this post-symposium publication after rigorous scientific peer review. This special issue of *Natural Hazards* summarizes the state of the art in natural hazards research at the end of the second millennium. A summary report of the Hazards-98 symposium is also included in this special issue.

We wish to thank all the authors that submitted their papers in this special issue as well as more than 20 reviewers for spending time in order to review and increase with their recommendations the scientific quality of the articles.

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*Editors*