



Disaster and the Politics of Intervention (A Columbia / SSRC Book (Privatization of Risk))

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Government plays a critical role in mitigating individual and collective vulnerability to disaster. Through measures such as disaster relief, infrastructure development, and environmental regulation, public policy is central to making societies more resilient. However, the recent drive to replace public institutions with market mechanisms has challenged governmental efforts to manage collective risk. The contributors to this volume analyze the respective roles of the public and private sectors in the management of catastrophic risk, addressing questions such as: How should homeland security officials evaluate the risk posed by terrorist attacks and natural disasters? Are market-based interventions likely to mitigate our vulnerability to the effects of climate change? What is the appropriate relationship between non-governmental organizations and private security firms in responding to humanitarian emergencies? And how can philanthropic efforts to combat the AIDS crisis ensure ongoing access to life-saving drugs in the developing world? More generally, these essays point to the way thoughtful policy intervention can improve our capacity to withstand catastrophic events.

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