

Interactive comment on “A global comparison of community-based responses to natural hazards” by Barbara Paterson and Anthony Charles

Anonymous Referee #1

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General comments The subject of the article ‘A global comparison of community-based responses to natural hazards’ is interesting and relevant to the scientific interests of NHESS. However, it seems that no conclusions can be drawn that can be generalized as the authors would like. The main problem is that they attempt to produce indicators of the communities’ response to natural hazards based not on the results but on the frequency of previous studies per response category. But this way of analysis involves the risk of misleading conclusions, or at least of high uncertainty. Unless we accept that the trend of published studies on community response corresponds to the true trend of the communities’ responses, the results of the article are not solid. Which is even more difficult to accept because the trend of publications is being examined globally and not for one region. But the number of publications on a topic and area

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is composed of many parameters that can hardly be taken into account. The authors in some cases try to explain the number of publications by category and area taking into account relevant limitations, leaving the reader with the feeling that the frequency may not be significantly related to the actual trend. In that sense, I think that policy and governance implications may also be volatile. The methodology followed for the categorization of responses seems appropriate, even though different topics (adaptation/emergency/recovery responses to hazards) are altogether included in the analysis. I suggest the authors to reconsider their point of view, perhaps looking also at the temporal trend of the response priorities. That is to look at the change in the scientific interest, which could reflect a certain shift in response priorities through time. Or, to include other information in the aggregated Tables and the discussion section, e.g. ratios of the number of articles per number of the corresponding hazardous events for each world-region (EMDAT may have such data). This could show the low scientific interest or the low production of articles with such targets.

Specific comments The title refers to natural hazards; in the beginning of the Introduction, the reader assumes that the weather-related natural hazards will be addressed in the article, and particularly the ones threatening the coastal regions; in the beginning of Methods, geophysical hazards seem to be also included in the analysis. I suggest this to be clarified in the Intro and the abstract. It seems that the authors include in their analysis responses that correspond to 3 different timings with respect to the disaster: Before – during – after disaster responses, which mean: responses to prepare/adapt – emergency response – recovery response. These are 3 different topics and I would expect this to be addressed. Aren’t they related also to different attitude of communities against natural hazards? Is this aspect important for the classification of responses? Other issues with respect to policy implications have not been addressed: in addition to positive aspects of the responses, did the writers in the review also distinguish negative aspects? eg, emergency responses that led to opposite results? In some cases it seems that conclusions may not reflect the tendency of the market. E.g. 3.3: green infrastructure for cities adaptation to climate change is however a growing sector. Could

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the authors look at the temporal trends of response priorities?

Technical comments I understand that the number of articles reviewed is very large; could it be, however, provided within a Table, eg having 1 column for the categories, or the hazard type, or the area, and 1 for the references separated by ';'? I don't really understand Figure 1 and the percentages written. P8,I7: correction: in terms OF the total... P9,I6: correction: THEN we conclude...

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