

Le Masson, V. and I. Kelman. 2011. "Disaster risk reduction on non-sovereign islands: La Réunion and Mayotte, France". Natural Hazards, vol. 56, no. 1, pp. 251-273.

Abstract:

The islands of Réunion and Mayotte are French territories in the Indian Ocean and are prone to numerous and recurrent hazards as well as to increasing vulnerabilities. This paper examines disaster risk reduction on non-sovereign islands through the case studies of Réunion and Mayotte. The approach used is embedded in standard geographical approaches to risk analysis, focusing on place-based vulnerability, in order to understand disaster risk and disaster risk reduction on both islands. In addition to establishing baseline information and visiting both islands for further data, 21 semi-structured individual interviews were completed to understand the people's perceptions of the hazards and of their vulnerabilities. Disaster risk reduction strategies, and attitudes from governing bodies implementing the strategies, tend to assume similar vulnerability contexts as mainland France, despite obvious differences on the islands. Many policies are implemented in a top-down manner by those from mainland France who have little interest in, and who do not fully take into consideration, local realities. This paper contributes new case studies to the literature, especially in comparing two non-Anglophone non-sovereign islands, and reinforces recommendations factoring in local contexts when addressing 'vulnerability of a place' to disasters.