

Bahry, Migret. The relationship between household livelihood profile and fire and flood-related vulnerability. (BSc Honours thesis in Disaster Risk Science, 2007)

There is a high correlation between poverty and vulnerability. Poor people everywhere are vulnerable to many natural as well as human-induced shocks and stresses. A survey of disaster events reveals that the poor are generally more affected by disasters. Due to rapid urbanisation, many of the urban poor live in informal settlements, which are prone to fire and flood risks. Cape Town South Africa has a high number of informal settlements that are frequently exposed to such risks. This study focuses on TR Section (Bongweni), a young informal settlement in Khayelitsha, investigating the role of household livelihood profiles as both a driver and protective factor for informal fire and flood risks. Beginning with a general review of the relationship between poverty and vulnerability to disaster risk using Pelling's vulnerability framework, the paper considers disaster risk in the context of TR Section, discussing household demographic, livelihood and expenditure profiles in terms of the three vulnerability components of the Pelling model, namely exposure, resistance and resilience - in relation to household experience of flood or fire events. Research findings indicate that the occurrence of fire or flood events is not significantly related to individual household livelihood profiles but informed rather by shared exposure factors.