

DISASTER THEORIES: Geophysical vs. Societal

1. Natural hazards are neither explained by nor uniquely dependent upon the geophysical process.
2. Human awareness of and response to natural hazards are not dependent solely on geophysical conditions.
3. The causes, features, and consequences of natural disasters are not explained by conditions or behavior particular to calamitous events (Hewitt, 1983 in Tobin and Montz, 1997).

Mileti on Placing Blame: “What we do most wrong in this country in the area of natural hazards is that we do not own up to our problems and responsibilities--we blame nature or God.” (1998)

Social Creation/Societal Injustice Perspective:

1. Focusing on the vulnerability of people to hazards.
2. Viewing as amoral the scientific (traditional) approaches.
3. Looking at disaster subjectively through the eyes of victims
4. Viewing the people who experience disaster as the victims of powerful interests who have created the conditions leading or contributing to their hazard

vulnerability.

5. Searching for blame.

On Unequal Exposure to Risk

Unequal Exposure to Risk

“...the explanation of disaster causality is only possible by understanding the ways in which social systems themselves generate unequal exposure to risk by making some groups of people, some individuals, and some societies more prone to hazards than others. . . ” (Cannon, 1994).

“Studies have shown that in general it is the weaker groups in society that suffer worst from disasters: the poor (especially), the very young and the very old, women, the disabled, and those who are marginalized by race or caste.”(Twigg, 2001).

“An instance of victimization that may once have been seen as resulting from an act of God, the uncontrollable forces of nature, or sheer bad luck may now be seen as having been caused by some part’s negligence.

These new interpretations can in turn lead to conflict, criticism of organizational performance, and in some cases litigation. Moreover, members of the public may now expect more from government when disasters strike than they once did.”

(Tierney, Lindell, Perry, 2001).

Personal reflection

1. Identify one theory and describe how it has affected people's reactions to disasters

PRINCIPLES OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Introduction and overview

This topic explains the principles of emergency management that seeks to promote safer, less vulnerable communities with the capacity to cope with hazards and disasters.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this topic the learner is expected to:

1. Explain each principle stated
2. Give relevant examples on how to apply each principle

Emergency Management Principles by FEMA, USA

Comprehensive

Emergency managers consider and take into account all hazards, all phases, all stakeholders and all impacts relevant to disasters.

Progressive

Emergency managers anticipate future disasters and take preventive and preparatory measures to build disaster-resistant and disaster-resilient communities.

Risk-Driven

Emergency managers use sound risk management principles (hazard identification, risk analysis, and impact analysis) in assigning priorities and resources.

Integrated emergency managers ensure unity of effort among all levels of government and all elements of a community.

Collaborative

Emergency managers create and sustain broad and sincere relationships among individuals and organizations to encourage trust, advocate a team atmosphere, build consensus, and facilitate communication.

Coordinated

Emergency managers synchronize the activities of all relevant stakeholders to achieve a common purpose.

Flexible

Emergency managers use creative and innovative approaches in solving disaster challenges.

Professional

Emergency managers value a science and knowledge-based approach based on education, training, experience, ethical practice, public stewardship and continuous improvement.

Personal reflection

1. Using relevant examples outline any five principles that can be of great use when handling a disaster in your community.