

Framing of Capability and Vulnerability in Emergency Planning Documents

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Introduction

- Annually, disasters impact annually **over 270 million** people worldwide (WHO, 2013).
- Response to disasters requires a collaborative effort across different jurisdictional levels.
- In 2011, FEMA proposed a **“Whole of Community” (now commonly referred to as All-of-Society)** approach to disaster management, to provide a framework to include citizens in disaster risk reduction.
- This UROP project is a sub-study within a larger project focused on the social construction of disaster resilience and vulnerability. Our objective is to explore discourse around capability and vulnerability across 5 emergency management documents.
- The specific research question is:
“What is the discourse around capability and vulnerability, in terms of a “whole of society” approach to disaster management, across international and national level emergency documents?”

Method

Discourse analysis was used to analyze 5 emergency planning documents from international and national levels: 1) Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction; 2) CPIP: Planning Guidance for the Health Sector; 3) An Emergency Planning Framework for Canada; 4) WHO: Emergency Response Framework; 5) Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive Resilience Action Plan for Canada

A coding grid was developed inductively, and was used to code the documents using NVivo10 qualitative software. Theme analysis was conducted using a consensus approach, including all authors.

Results

Theme 1: Institutional space is a prerequisite for application of an all-of-society approach to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

An all-of-society approach is a global recommendation for DRR. While this concept is mentioned in many planning documents, its integration is not apparent. Application of an all-of society approach requires institutional space, which is the establishment of space for collaboration and mutual learning between stakeholders. Institutional space requires shifting paradigms to regard the expertise of different stakeholders as important.

“Resilient capacity is built through a process of empowering citizens, responders, organizations, communities, governments, systems and society to share the responsibility to keep hazards from becoming disasters.” (Public Safety Canada, 2017)

“The realization of this outcome requires the strong commitment and involvement of political leadership in every country at all levels in the implementation and follow-up of the present Framework and in the creation of the necessary conducive and enabling environment.” (UNISDR, 2015)

Theme 2: Engagement and collaboration occur along a continuum from passive to active

At one end of the continuum, passive engagement can be regarded as token consultation – involvement that has a risk of not being meaningful inclusion of citizens. On the other end of the continuum, active citizen participation involves leaders placing value on citizen voices and ensuring that citizens have a “seat at the table” and opportunities to take part in meaningful contribution.

“Inclusiveness – stakeholders are consulted, views are taken into account, and any disproportionate impact on particular groups is considered” (Government of Canada, 2015)

Results (continued)

**Theme 3:
Deficit labelling is indicative of a lens oriented towards vulnerability**
Empowerment requires application of an asset lens and shifting paradigms toward recognition of capability. Building resilience requires redressing the balance between asset and deficit-oriented thinking. This includes consideration of deficit oriented labelling.

Conclusion

Citizen participation and collaboration occur along a continuum – from passive to active participation. An “all-of-society” approach to disaster risk reduction requires willingness and commitment of political leadership to shift paradigms and foster opportunities for meaningful citizen participation. This includes ensuring institutional space to facilitate active participation.

To support a lasting paradigm shift, deficit oriented labelling needs to be examined. Discourse is reflective of the lens being applied while recommending an all-of-society approach to DRR.

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