

Reaction Paper Makiko Kikuchi

In "Disaster Pressure and Release Model", authors argue that "disasters must be analyzed as the result of the impact of hazards on vulnerable people". To achieve this, they introduced the "pressure and release model (PAR model)" as a "tool for showing how disasters occur when natural hazards affect vulnerable people. The model tangibly sketches the "cascade" composed of three steps, i.e. "Root Causes", "Dynamic Pressures", and "Unsafe Conditions" in which people gradually increased their vulnerability. It enables us to admit the notion that the vulnerability may have been increased as the authors mentioned, because industrialization -- though it in part contributed to development of risk-averse technology -- has exacerbated the "Dynamic Pressures".

In "Access to resources and coping in Adversity", the authors begin by showing weakness of the PAR model that "the generation of vulnerability is not adequately integrated with the way in which hazards themselves affect people". Alternatively, they propose the "access model" to describe how differently various kinds of population are inflicted by and coping with hazards. Interestingly, this model is described in a closed circle, which ironically shows a vicious cycle in which people with less "access profile" tend to obtain less again. This really encourages exogenous actors such as a government and aid organizations to interfere with the vicious cycle to minimize the undeserved vulnerability.

In "Stretching the Bond", Morrow uniquely depicts that how the minority group coped with the hurricane Andrew by employing kin networks. She also articulates not only sociocultural aspects but also psychosocial aspects of the coping strategies. The most interesting observation was about two competing impressions that the affected people had about their community, one of which is affirmative cognition represented a notion of "therapeutic community", and the other is lack of trust derived from a sense of unevenness. We tend to overestimate virtue of the "therapeutic community" as resilience of the affected people; however, the ambivalent emotional status should be discerned and considered as an alert to show their eroded coping capacity.

In "Factors and Influencing Disaster Preparedness and Response", authors illustrate "how preparedness and response activities vary as a function of several different sets of factors". Regarding the "sets of factors", they mentioned three categories; disaster-related capability (risk perception, hazard adjustments, disaster experience), socioeconomic/cultural/demographic factors (ethnicity and minority status, language, social bonds, income inequality and economic resource, gender, age and physical capability), and disaster agent characteristics (natural versus technological disasters). As the authors claim that these factors are entangled each other, it is not feasible to implement one simple assistance. It might be true that policy-makers should always strive to provide "custom-made" assistance to meet their distinct needs.