

Reaction Paper Makiko Kikuchi

In "Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies", Kingdon illustrates that how and to what extent various 'focusing events' differently draw public attention, affect industries, and enhance political incentives. Regrettably, it is true that "something must happen, and that something often is a real crisis—the sort of thing government decision makers cannot ignore" not only in U.S. but also in all over the world. However, it is not the time these days for us to wait for another disaster as benevolent motivation for act, because the Earth seems to run out of its capacity to absorb man-made atrocities.

In "WAKE OF THE EXXON VALDEZ, How Environmental Disasters Influence Policy", Birkland articulates that how a visually striking technological disaster induces public attention, mobilizes environmental groups, and renders policymakers willingly to take actions. It always makes an issue entangled that there are conflicting stakeholders even within a disaster-affected area, some of which are reluctant to implement risk-averse regulations to maintain their profits. Nevertheless, there might not be another solution besides seeking a productively compromised risk-averse strategy among the stakeholders, though this requires daunting efforts.

In "Focusing Events, Mobilization, and Agenda Setting", Birkland analyzes the dynamics of 'focusing events' such as earthquakes, hurricanes, oil spills, and nuclear power plant accidents respectively by illustrating distinctive group mobilization and agenda setting derived from them. Birkland elaborates two contrastive notions of disasters, one of which is 'act of God' reflecting natural disasters, the other is "human and corporate malfeasance" referring to technological disasters. Though they are understandable public cognition, I propose to take a step further to acknowledge that we should not escape from our own responsibilities to amend the resource consuming life style. In fact, disasters can not always be attributed to God's, others', and corporate liability.

In "Business and Political Dimensions in Disaster Management", Birkland and Nath portray the politics of 'business disasters'—that is, how the media, interest groups, governmental officials, and other actors react to these events in the political arena". I found it convincing to "view(s) opposing or mobilizable groups as stakeholders in the broader business environment", since lay people have got to know that boundary of conflicting tenets between industrialization and conservation of natural environment became obscure. Most people may realize that we could not survive any longer, if these were mutually exclusive.