



The socio-cultural construction of disasters

Disasters are not only a possible consequence of natural/man-made hazards. Disasters are also socio-culturally constructed, and they are political events as well. For example, DMAs, the media, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders control the dissemination of information about the disaster. By extension, and in other ways, they also hold some control over the “social production of meaning”. Thus, “disaster communication” or “risk communication” are worthy topics in themselves. Button (for literature reference see original source document) argues that feelings of uncertainty are deliberately produced in some disaster situations, as an ideological tactic, which becomes part of a public relations or political strategy. In essence, “politically generated uncertainty reconfigures both the landscape of disaster and our social arrangements. In the process, it inflicts greater harm in the wake of disasters and makes effective response difficult”.

Note: See source document for full reference.

Applicable to:

Stakeholders: [Communication](#), [Social control](#), [Access and use of infrastructure/services](#), [Power relations](#)

Disaster Phases: [Response](#)

Types of Actors Concerned: [National civil protection body](#), [Local authorities](#), [Non-active citizens](#), [Entrepreneurs](#), [Media](#), [Government](#), [Red Cross](#), [NGOs](#), [Military](#), [Law enforcement agencies](#), [Healthcare and emergency services](#), [European Civil Protection Mechanism](#), [UN and other international organisations](#)

Hazards: [Natural hazards](#), [Man-made non-intentional hazards or emergency situations](#), [Man-made intentional hazards](#)

Recommendations:

- [Inform citizens about the risk they may face and about possible actions and measures, they can take to reduce vulnerability and better prepare themselves](#)
- [Use cultural factors to improve the effectiveness of disaster communication](#)

Source

[Deliverable D7.3 "Report on cultural factors and citizen empowerment" \(page 47\)](#)

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