



Producing confusion and uncertainty to exploit power relations

The intentional production of confusion and uncertainty among affected communities is an important example of how power relations can be exploited. Many man-made disasters, whilst clearly always under different circumstances, continue to show predictable patterns of power abuse. DMAs need to integrate plans to identify and manage such abuses of power, in order to better mitigate and contain disaster impacts. It is a complex and sensitive task to be able to manage abuses of power, since stakeholders are multiple and high ranking and the disaster and management processes unfold constantly and unpredictably, amongst other reasons. For example, in response to the unfolding Exxon-Valdez oil spill in 1989, it was President George H. W. Bush who requested that Exxon itself should manage the oil spill clean-up. Many of those affected felt this was “putting the fox in charge of the chicken coop”.

Note: See source document for full reference.

Applicable to:

Stakeholders: [Rule of law](#), [Power relations](#)

Disaster Phases: [Prevention](#), [Preparedness](#)

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

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

Recommendations:

- [Limit cases of power abuse by protecting whistle-blowers and encouraging the formation of advocacy and/or pressure groups](#)

Source

[Deliverable D7.3 "Report on cultural factors and citizen empowerment" \(page 48\)](#)

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