

Emergence of the sociology of disaster

The increase of negative happenings requires good understanding of the phenomenon (14,000 disaster during the 20th century)

The influences of scientific knowledge on structural mitigation measures

Social studies of disasters and crises after World War II

The distinction between newer disasters and crises and traditional ones

Theoretical Bases

Systems theory that dominates early disaster research still evident today

Realist assumptions

Classic definition of disaster:

[A]n event, concentrated in time and space, in which a society, or a relatively self-sufficient subdivision of a society, undergoes severe danger and incurs such losses to its members and physical appurtenances (“stuff”) that the social structure is disrupted and the fulfillment of all or some of the essential functions of the society is prevented (Fritz 1961, p. 655).

Theoretical Bases

Social construction view of disasters

Disasters are not simply “natural” but socially constructed

Sample historical events

1775 Lisbon earthquake (Dynes 2000)

1995 Chicago heat wave (Klinenberg 2002)

2004 Hurricane Katrina (Cutter 2005; Freudenburg et al. 2009; Tierney and Bevc 2007)

Sample activities

Earthquake (Stallings 1995)

Nuclear explosions (Eden 2004)

Theoretical Bases

Social reproduction of disasters

Challenging disasters as discrete events with a beginning, a middle, and an end, but as part of the social order

Recognize hazards as triggers but disasters are products of social inequality (e.g., settlement of vulnerable population in hazardous areas) (Blaikie et al. 1994)

Resurface states and institutions as key actors

Theoretical Bases

Organizational-institutional view on disasters

Organizations as “arbiters of risk” (Clarke 1988)

Plans as “fantasy documents” (Clarke 1999)

Example: CRP-2B(crisis-relocation program) based on a hypothetical scenario of nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union

Natural versus Technological Disasters

The basic assumption: the inherent nature of the causing agent involved make a difference

Technological disasters present more varying kind of challenge to human societies

The distinction is losing popularity

The borderline between natural and technological becomes blurred

Social settings are seen more important than the causing agent

Natech Disaster

A combination of natural and technological disaster



Fukushima nuclear meltdown, 2011

What to study in **Disaster?**

DISASTER TIMELINE

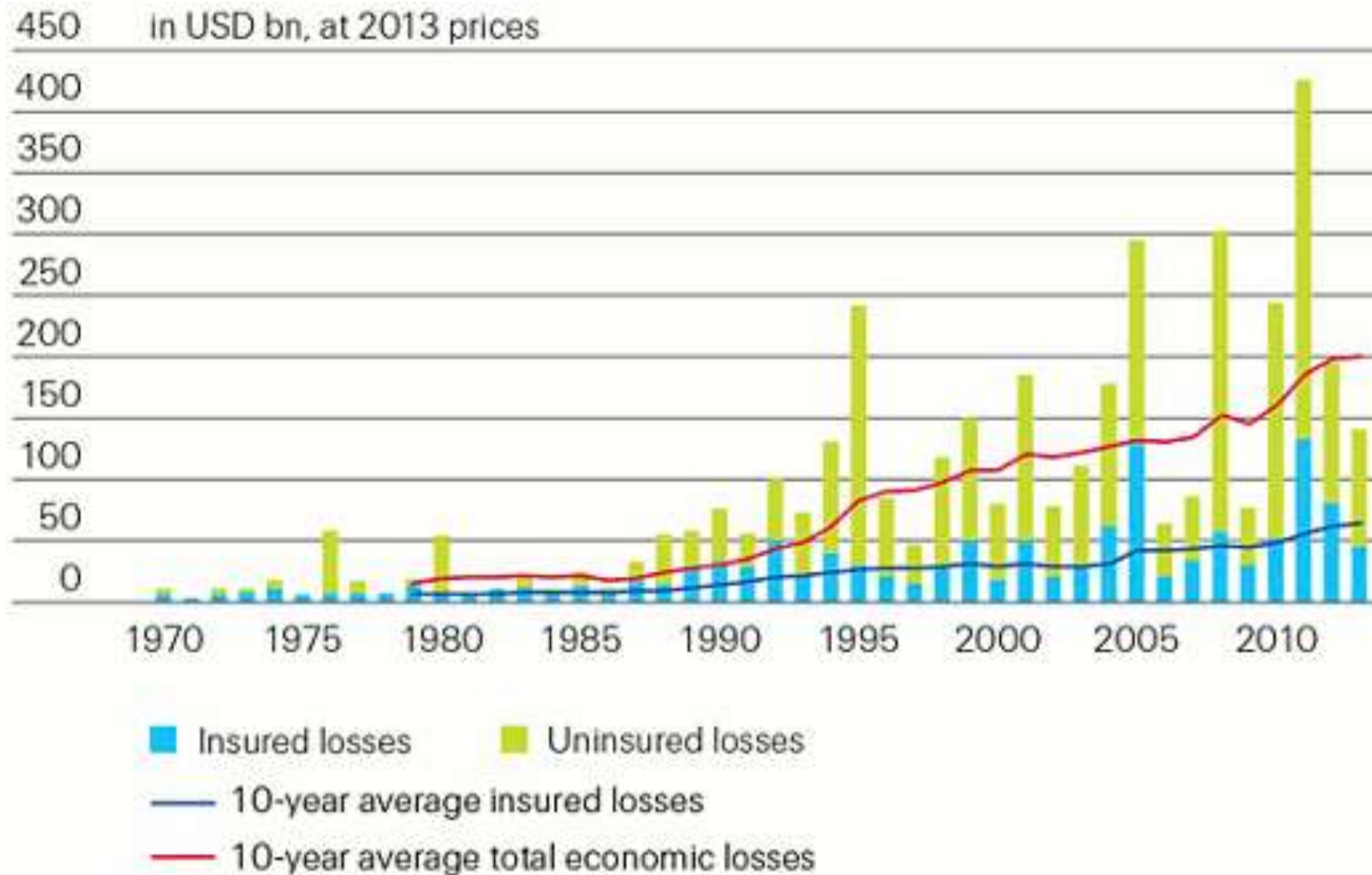


Pre-disaster

During disaster

Post-disaster





Economic loss = Insured + uninsured losses

Source: Swiss Re Economic Research & Consulting



Behavioral Differences

In some crises, *looting* is very rare while in others it is very common

The impact of the crisis to social organization at the community level (conflict type tends to disrupt established social relations)

The role of the media (how the media responds to the destructive events)

Social Changes

The impacts of disaster on:

- Social structures and relations
- Political systems
- Institutions
- Demography
- Economy
- Culture and education

Example: Post-tsunami Aceh: the peace agreement between Free Aceh Movement and Indonesian government.



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