Communicating Disaster -
Multi-Disciplinary Approaches to the Disruption of Order

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Overview

1. Disasters - and their communicative construction
2. The cycle of disaster communication
   - Alarm communication and mobilizing help
   - Focusing on disaster: Help organizations and media
   - Evaluating disaster: Moral, religious and legal issues
   - Risk communication: Preparing for the next disaster
3. Goals
   - Combining micro- and macro-perspectives
   - Stimulating interdisciplinary research
   - Fostering cooperation between practitioners and researchers
   - Moving towards a better theoretical understanding of disaster
1. Disasters - and their communicative construction

- there is no such a thing as a “natural disaster”
- communicating about disaster
  - transcending boundaries: translocal and transnational contexts
  - the media
- communicating during disaster
  - dimensions of extreme social change: “rapidity”, “radicalism”, “rituality/demonization”
  - social embeddedness of disasters
    1) type of societal order
    2) involved social processes
    3) involved actors and segments of participants
    4) psychological, spatial and technical components
    5) temporal structure and communicative strategies of coping
2. Cycle of disaster communication

Alarm communication / mobilizing help
Risk communication

manifest disaster
latent disaster

Evaluating disaster: morality, religion, law

Focusing on disaster: fighting and coping
2.1 Alarm communication / mobilizing help

- Alarm communication / mobilizing help
- Focusing on disaster: fighting and coping
- Risk communication
- Evaluating disaster: morality, religion, law
2.1 Alarm communication / mobilizing help

- necessity to evoke collective reactions
- what kind of support and which networks of information are needed?
- open questions
  - which kind of help in which order?
  - processes of coordination?
  - role of new mobile technology?
  - ‘windows of opportunity’ for the mobilization?
PLEASE HELP US!

- PEOPLE
- DOG
- CAT
2.2. Fighting and coping with disaster / media

Alarm communication / mobilizing help

Focusing on disaster: fighting and coping

Risk communicakation

Evaluating disaster: morality, religion, law
2.2. Fighting and coping with disaster / media

• communicative acts concerning disaster adaption
  – on the side of victims
  – on the helping side
  – on the side of organized communication and decision-making
• the role of the media and new information technologies
LOOTERS
WILL BE
SHOT ON
SITE
2.2. Fighting and coping with disaster / media

• communicative acts concerning disaster adaption
  – on the side of victims
  – on the helping side
  – on the side of organized communication and decision-making
• the role of the media and new information technologies
• research and methodological problems
2.3 Evaluating disaster: Moral, religious and legal issues

Alarm communication / mobilizing help

Risk communication

Evaluating disaster: morality, religion, law

Focusing on disaster: fighting and coping
2.3 Evaluating disaster: monitoring, morality, religion and law

• institutions and trainings to standardize the uncalculable

• despite the rehearsals and pre-decisions: all can go wrong

=> communications on guilt, causation, responsibility and liability
2.4 Risk communication: preparing for the next disaster

- Alarm communication / mobilizing help
- Fighting and coping with disaster
- Risk communication
- Evaluating disaster: morality, religion, law
2.4 Risk communication: preparing for the next disaster

The foci of risk research:

• risk estimation
• risk perception
• risk assessment
• risk management
• risk communication
The deputy director of the National Hurricane Center gives a televised update on Hurricane Francis in 2004.
3. Goals and objectives

• Combining micro- and macro-perspectives
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