Community Resilience: A Social Justice Perspective

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Topics:

- Physical and Social Resiliency
- Sources of Social Vulnerability
- Characteristics of a Resilient Society
- Social Justice and Sustainability
Physical Resiliency

The ability to absorb and then recover

Photo courtesy of Lori Peek
Social Resiliency

- Ability to absorb and then recover
- Readiness for facing threats/abnormal events
- Adaptability to changing environment
- Tenacity and commitment to survive
- Willingness of communities to rally around a common cause and shared set of values
Hazard Resiliency Requires:

- Knowledge of the hazard
- Accurate perception of the risk
A STORM SURGE EXAMPLE:

Public Opinion on What Hurricane Hazard Causes the Most Deaths

- Flooding from Rain: 40%
- Wind: 30%
- Water from Ocean: 20%
- Don't Know: 10%

N = 459
Q7. How likely is it that your home would be seriously damaged or destroyed by storm surge in a major hurricane?

Lazo, Jeff. 2010. Survey of Hurricane Vulnerable Public – North Carolina to Texas. NCAR.
Hazard Resiliency Requires:

• Knowledge of the hazard
• Accurate perception of the risk
• Understanding of available alternatives
  – Where?
• Resources and flexibility to respond
  – How to get there?
RISK = MORE THAN HAZARD EXPOSURE
Sources of Social Vulnerability

• Unequal exposure to risk
Families in manufactured housing, minorities, renters, the elderly, etc.

Plate 1.1 A dazed man returned to his destroyed mobile home in Florida City to find everything he owned was gone except for this pair of pants.
Source: C.M. Guerrero/Miami Herald

Plate 1.2 A resident of an apartment building lowers his belongings to the street below.
Source: Chuck Fadely/Miami Herald

Sources of Social Vulnerability

- Unequal exposure to risk

- Inadequate
  - Economic resources
    - Money to mitigate, evacuate, recover
    - Insurance
  - Human resources
    - Health and physical ability
    - Education
South Miami Heights & Hurricane Andrew

- Homeowners
- Working Class
- Multiethnic
- Interviewed in 1993
- Many difficulties
  - Insurance
  - Contractors
  - Lack of resources

- Revisited in 2002
- Of those interviewed:
  - Majority still not back to normal
  - 90% reported moderate or major long-term effects on family
  - More renters in neighborhood
  - Uneven recovery
Sources of Social Vulnerability

- Unequal exposure to risk
- Unequal exposure to:
  - Economic resources
    - Money to mitigate, evacuate, recover
    - Insurance
  - Human resources
    - Health and physical ability
    - Education
  - Social resources
    - Social networks and connections
A Positive Example of Social Networks and Connections

Strong Social Network Sped Recovery Of Vietnamese Katrina Survivors

- Begin rebuilding within one month
- 90% back by one year

- Strong leadership
- Strong community network
- Shared values
- Homeowners with strong ties to area

Father Vien Nguyen, Priest, MQVC Church, Versailles

TAMU Times. Texas A & M University. September 13, 2012
A Resilient Society:

- Plans for growth and development
- Addresses chronic poverty
- Addresses chronic health issues
- Promotes social equality
- Connects families with community
- Protects the environment
After Hurricane Charley

Manufactured home in Port Charlotte

New Home in Punta Gorda built to new Florida building codes
After Superstorm Sandy

Dune and setback in Avalon, NJ

Surge erosion in Ocean City, NJ

Photos courtesy of Martin Pagliughi, Emergency Manager, Cape May County
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ACTUAL
Distribution of Wealth in the U.S.

What Americans THINK
The Distribution is

Distribution
92% Choose as
IDEAL

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPKKQnijnsM
Inequality In The Americas

The figures below represent the annual income of the richest 20 percent of a given country, divided by the income of the poorest 20 percent. The larger the figure, the greater the economic inequality. The data was culled by Latin America analyst Adam Isacson from the U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean’s annual Statistical Yearbook.

- Uruguay: 8.0
- Venezuela: 8.4
- El Salvador: 11.0
- Peru: 11.4
- Ecuador: 11.6
- Mexico: 12.1
- Nicaragua: 12.6
- Chile: 13.0
- Argentina: 14.2
- Costa Rica: 14.5
- United States: 16.0
- Colombia: 18.4
- Panama: 18.7
- Dominican Republic: 20.1
- Bolivia: 20.8
- Paraguay: 20.9
- Brazil: 21.4
- Guatemala: 22.4
- Honduras: 25.2

Source: U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
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A Resilient Community:

... is a good place to live.

"It’s a quality of life issue."

Don Geis

Sustainability Paradigm

Economic Growth

Environmental Protection

Social Justice

Sustainability

Conclusions

• Community resilience and sustainability are tied to distribution of resources
• Inequality has increased in U.S.
• Thus, safety has decreased for large segments of the population
• A social justice perception questions this from a MORAL standpoint as well as a practical one
A Just Society:

...is that society which any rational agent situated behind a veil of ignorance would choose, knowing that he or she could actually be located at any position within that society.

John Rawls, A Theory of Justice
Thank you!

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