Chapter 1

Introduction

A wide range of natural hazards, of both sudden onset (earthquakes, tornados, tsunamis, and floods) and slow onset (global climate change, environmental degradation, and deforestation), continue to pose a major risk to the lives and livelihoods of large populations around the world. Coupled with human-made disasters that are caused by technological failures (industrial accidents, spillages, explosions, and fires), the new security phenomenon of the post–September 11, 2001 context has extended the scope of emergencies, such as those based on violence (terrorism, insurgency, and civil strife). Consequently, the scale, frequency, and intensity of crises faced by the world have dramatically increased over the last decade, and there is a critical need for a careful stock-taking on disaster-management knowledge. With this purpose in mind, the aim of this book is to present the experience of emergency management from a continental perspective by focusing on the emergency response systems, processes, and actors primarily in the context of the United States, with additional examples from Europe and other continents.

In the face of these geological, climatic, environmental, and security hazards, policy makers and practitioners on both sides of the Atlantic need to revisit the understanding of hazard, vulnerability, risk, and disaster management. Owing to its collateral and indirect effects, a seemingly rapid-onset disaster can easily turn into a protracted emergency situation, as disasters can exacerbate the physical, sociopolitical, economic, and environmental vulnerabilities of societies, making them prone to other types of hazards. For example, an earthquake may propagate other hazards, some of which may occur immediately (such as a tsunami), and others that will arise over the medium to long term (such as landslides and political unrest). If disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery are undertaken in an ad hoc and inappropriate way, it can do more harm than good. Consequently, populations could be trapped in highly vulnerable living conditions.

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This book approaches the subject from a "social" rather than a "natural" phenomenon perception, putting the main emphasis on the "vulnerability" aspect of disasters instead of concentrating on "hazards" as the term is conventionally applied. Consequently, the exploration of institutional, sociocultural, and political characteristics of responding to crises more effectively forms the main thrust of discussions in this book.

Before understanding crisis or disaster management, we must define crisis and disaster. Coombs (1999) suggests that crises are perceptual; thus industrial or natural disasters are not accepted as crises by some. "A crisis is the perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders and can seriously impact an organization's performance and generate negative outcomes" (Coombs, 1999, p. 2). Crises are unpredicted, but they must also be expected. In differentiating between a crisis and an incident, the latter is defined as a minor, localized disruption (Bazerman & Watkins, 2004; Coombs, 1999). Time pressures and limited control are the prevailing barriers to crisis resolution (Burnett, 1998). Parsons (1996) divides crises into three types: immediate, emerging, and sustained. Immediate crises occur when we are unable to research the problem and certainly will not have a detailed plan prepared, well rehearsed, and ready to snap into action. Emerging crises occur slowly but are no more predictable than immediate crises, which makes response activities difficult. Sustained crises can last weeks, months, or even years.

In contrast, Faulkner (2001) compares crises and disasters by their nature. As shown in **Figure 1-1**, Faulkner defines a crisis as a situation where the cause is self-inflicted, a result of incompetence in management structures. In contrast, disasters refer to such situations where an enterprise is confronted with sudden and uncontrollable catastrophic changes.

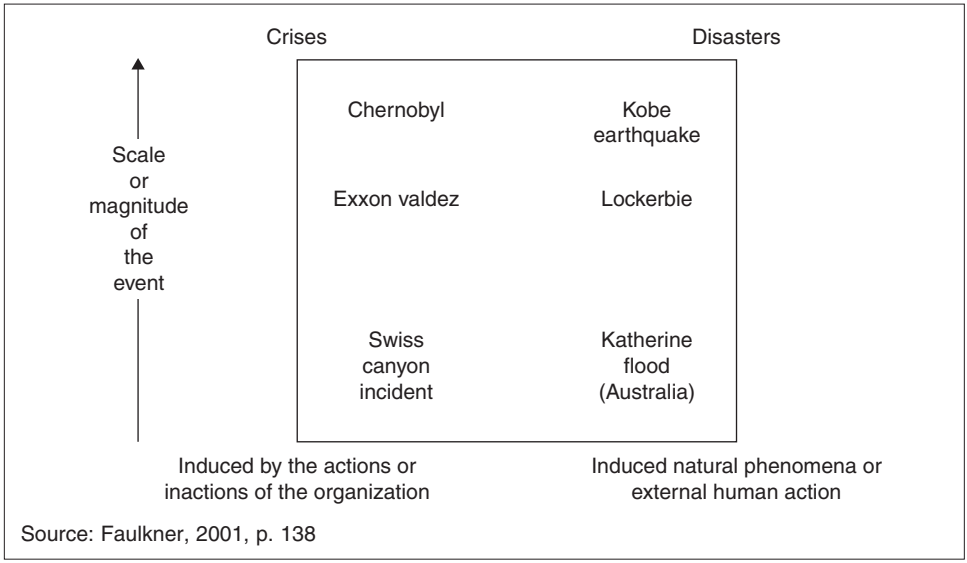

Figure 1-1 *Crises and Disasters*

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In disaster response, each activity is supposed to be governed by a set of policies and procedures under the auspices of a lead agency. A myriad of governmental, international, and local organizations take part, each with its own specific roles and responsibilities. Who is responsible for which activity, with which means, and what are some of the key considerations to be borne in mind in the planning and implementation of disaster response? In the emergency phase, ensuring the survival of the maximum number of "victims," resuming the provision of basic services and infrastructure, protecting and assisting vulnerable groups, and paving the way for a speedy and effective reconstruction are some of the primary objectives.

This book demonstrates how practice fares against the theory of emergency management, utilizing wide experiences from the United States, Europe, and some select international cases. In these analyses, the discussion explores state–civil society cooperation and the effectiveness of existing prevention and preparedness mechanisms. As such, the specific roles attributed to governmental, international, and private-sector participants at a legislative level and the activities by which actors conduct their work together are explored.

Experience shows that the successful management of routine and catastrophic disasters is closely linked to the way leadership and decision making is structured and communicated. It is often the case that from mitigation to response, a wide range of myths exist among civil society and disaster management organizations about each other's roles, capacities, and capabilities. Therefore, this book deals with a series of misconceptions about how different stakeholders could and should take part in crisis and emergency management through a number of case studies.

Finally, having reviewed the experience of responding to disasters in varying contexts, this book addresses the ethical concerns of contemporary disaster response in terms of accountability, politicization, corruption, and humanitarian imperative. These areas are the sources of some of the most common criticisms in emergency response around the world; consequently, it is necessary to set the framework for an effective emergency management organization after investigating the possible methods to avoid such shortcomings. In terms of ways to improve current practice, the book takes an agency-centric perspective and elaborates on recommendations related to contingency planning, training, decision making, and coordination. Furthermore, future directions for development are considered by focusing on the crisis management systems in the United States and in Europe.

To lay the foundations for future discussions, Chapter 2 presents an overview of the principal hazards, vulnerabilities, and risks in the United States and Europe, elaborating on key terminology and concepts. To elucidate how to deal with emergencies more effectively and link response with recovery, it is imperative that the book explores the concept of vulnerability and investigates the role it plays in the creation of disasters. More importantly, how vulnerability could be tackled in the response and recovery phases, so that disaster-affected societies can have a real hope for an effective, relevant, and sustainable rebuilding, is the main question that Chapter 2

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seeks to answer (Alexander, 1997). This general review of principal hazards that affect the United States and European countries also includes the increased focus on terrorism as the most high-profile hazard in modern society.

Chapter 3 focuses on the mitigation and preparedness phases of emergencies and crises. In general, mitigation is the initial phase of all-hazards emergency management, although it may be a component in the other phases as well, and should be considered long before an emergency occurs so as to eliminate or reduce the probability of the occurrence of an emergency or disaster. Mitigation includes activities designed to postpone, dissipate, or lessen the effects of a disaster or emergency. Preventing the development of hazardous areas, such as homes built on floodplains, or adjusting the use of these areas, such as by elevating structures, can reduce the incidence of flood damage. Meanwhile, preparedness focuses on planning how to respond in case of an emergency or disaster, and developing capabilities and programs that contribute to a more effective response. Preparedness offers insurance against emergencies, as mitigation activities cannot always prevent emergencies from happening (Quarantelli, 1998; Waugh, 1994). Thus the objective in Chapter 3 is to explore these two key phases of disaster management by investigating the issues of cooperation, collaboration, and communications in a national response framework. How emergency operations are activated and run and which roles can be designated at intergovernmental and interorganizational levels are also covered in this chapter.

Chapter 4 elaborates on the context of activities in disaster response and recovery. Response is the first phase and occurs when the disaster is imminent or soon after its onset. The typical activities in this phase are intended to minimize the risks created in an emergency by protecting the people, environment, and property, and to provide emergency assistance for disaster victims. The response phase also includes efforts to reduce the probability or extent of secondary damage through such measures as security patrols to prevent looting, and to reduce damage with efforts such as sandbagging against impending floodwaters or remedial movement of shelters in heavily contaminated fallout areas, or other measures that will enhance future recovery operations, such as damage assessment. Recovery activities continue beyond the emergency period immediately following a disaster. Their purpose is to return all systems—informal and formal—to as near their normal state as possible. They can be broken down into short-term and long-term activities. Short-term activities attempt to return vital human systems to minimal operating standards and usually encompass approximately a two-week period. With specific reference to the state–civil society relationship in the context of the relief-to-reconstruction continuum, Chapter 4 incorporates response and recovery experiences from a number of post-disaster environments.

The first section of this book concludes with Chapter 5, which focuses on myths and demands within emergency preparedness and response so as to present a holistic picture of a wide range of responsibilities and roles by different actors, putting emphasis on the neglected yet critical involvement of affected communities themselves. Overall, the public in the developed world increasingly expects better

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public-sector leadership before, during, and after emergencies (Kapucu & Van Wart, 2006). Public participation in all phases of disaster management represents an important step toward more effective and collaborative disaster response (Col, 2007). As leaders of first-response activities, local administrators should have basic scientific knowledge of possible disasters that might happen in their region. In the United States, homeland security is now considered a national responsibility, and is "about the integration of a nation and a world—driven by a philosophy of shared responsibility, shared leadership, and shared accountability—in essence, a renewed commitment to the federalism upon which our nation was founded" (Ridge, 2004). What such integration means to different societies is explained by exploring the concept of community resilience. The discussions in Chapter 5 show that efforts to create disaster-resilient communities have not always been successful because of government neglect of three important facts about people: 1. often people do not act rationally; 2. people are not completely obedient; and 3. people are culturally, socioeconomically, and intellectually very diverse. At the same time, as argued in this chapter, it is not solely the government's responsibility to perform emergency management functions, and society as a whole should be engaged in all phases of emergency management, necessitating education on the prevention of potential environmental hazards (Özerdem & Jacoby, 2006).

The second section of this book addresses issues related to decision-making processes with specific reference to leadership and challenges faced in the interaction between individual and institutional levels of emergency management stakeholders. Chapter 6 presents an overview of such stakeholders at local, state, federal, and private-sector levels and their responsibilities, as well as investigating the role of the local emergency program manager. The task for leaders of agencies is to respond to a disaster in ways that protect and preserve lives and properties. Local authorities and disaster-affected people are often the first responders. In the United States, for example, if the mission is largely federal in nature, the response operations can be federalized. In European countries, the main response would be national, but supranational structures for major disasters could be activated, if required. In most U.S. states, county governments are responsible for coordinating emergency response operations, and some major cities have their own emergency operations centers. Unfortunately, disasters tend to easily overwhelm the resources and capabilities of local governments, so they rely on assistance from state governments, with some emergencies requiring federal government intervention as well. High standards of responsiveness and the ubiquitous media compel political leaders and administrative heads to coordinate resources effectively. Thousands of organizations are currently engaged in monitoring known and suspected hazards, and encouraging hazard reduction. Nonprofit voluntary groups range from large environmental groups to small church or community organizations. Some offer highly specialized disaster-related skills, such as search and rescue, amateur radio communications, and emergency feeding or shelter, whereas others are much broader in scope (Comfort, 2006).

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Chapter 6 explores how coordination of the massive number of public, nonprofit, and private organizations involved in catastrophic disasters requires both horizontal and vertical communication and decision making (Christoplos, 2003).

The nature of disasters necessitates the involvement of various sectors, organizations, and stakeholders; thus collaboration plays an important role in achieving success. With this point in mind, Chapter 7 unpacks the process of decision making in managing disasters and crises. The chapter investigates the main decision-making styles and attributes of an effective decision maker, and explores the challenges of ethical decision making and problem solving.

Chapter 8 builds upon this discussion by focusing on the main styles of decision making in emergencies: transformational leadership; the ability to inspire a sense of common vision and mission; a decentralized approach that engages organizational members; and charisma. During this coverage, it is asked whether the U.S. military's leadership approach might be effective in disasters due to its centralized command and control structure and its emphasis on training and leadership at all levels. Conversely, a flexible leadership approach is vital for understanding the varying leadership roles across the four intertwined phases of emergency management (Derthick, 2007; Waugh & Streib, 2006). Using a number of case studies, the importance of "executive powers" for timely and effective decisions in response to disasters is explored in depth in Chapter 8.

A key task of emergency management is to ensure that the public is adequately prepared for impending disasters so that loss of life and property is minimized. Governments have an important role to fulfill in collecting and disseminating this kind of information (Boin, Hart, Sterm, & Sundelius, 2005). A recurring theme in many analyses, such as those undertaken in the wake of Hurricane Andrew in 1992 and the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, is that information collection and sharing were deficient. Indeed, the inability to obtain and disseminate accurate rescue and recovery information is partly to blame for the slow governmental rescue and recovery response during Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Chapter 9 argues that a governance approach should be adopted in both building infrastructure and sharing the disaster risk (Comfort, 2006). A shared vision should be built among public, nonprofit, and private organizations to ensure a sustainable civil infrastructure and reduce the risk of disasters. Furthermore, Chapter 9 examines how the relationship between people and sources of information can influence hazard preparedness. Because trust in civic emergency planning agencies influences preparedness, the relationships among people, civic agencies, and the information provided must be considered when planning communication. Familiarity with information about hazards underlines the relative importance of trust; moreover, levels of trust are influenced by community characteristics (Paton, 2007).

The third and final section of this book focuses on institutional aspects of emergency and crisis management in terms of team building, accountability, evaluation, collaboration at the international level, and future challenges. Effective disaster

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management requires an ability to assess and adapt capacity rapidly, restore or enhance disrupted or inadequate communications, utilize flexible decision-making processes, and expand coordination and trust of emergency response agencies. These requirements are imposed upon conventional bureaucratic systems that rely on relatively rigid plans, exact decision-making protocols, and formal relationships that assume uninterrupted communications. Yet, "in crises circumstances the disparities between demand and supply of public resources are much bigger, the situation remains unclear and volatile, and the time to think, consult, and gain acceptance for decisions is highly restricted" (Boin et al., 2005, p. 11).

Chapter 10 examines the U.S. National Response Plan (NRP), which establishes a comprehensive, all-hazards approach to enhance the United States' ability to manage domestic incidents. This plan places a strong emphasis on the coordination and integration of capabilities at all levels of government, private organizations, nonprofit organizations, and individual citizens. Local governments play an important role, as the plan calls for handling all incidents at the lowest possible organizational and jurisdictional level. To support this strategy, a variety of coordination mechanisms link local responses to federal capabilities for intelligence gathering and incidence response National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA, 2004). The NRP encompasses several key concepts: threat assessment strategies; incident reporting; vertical and horizontal communication and information sharing; training and exercising; mitigation strategies; organization and planning to mobilize resources at different levels; response and recovery activities; safety of personnel and the population; and hazard-specific components of the preceding elements.

Response to disasters is not a simple task that any single organization could handle alone, but rather requires the involvement of a network of well-coordinated organizations. Chapter 11 argues that this interaction often brings a clash between bureaucratic and collaborative cultures. In a bureaucratic culture, performance is measured based on the expectations of the supervisor. In contrast, in a collaborative network, performance is measured based on the collective mission and goal. The status is not important in networks; instead, the contribution to attaining collective goals is seen as essential. Thus accountability in a network organization is a matter of contributions. Chapter 11 explains the complexity of ethical concerns in the context of disaster management. For example, in public–public partnerships, hierarchical and professional accountability obstructs partnership development, whereas political accountability facilitates partnership development. In public–private partnerships, legal, professional, and political accountability promotes partnership development, whereas hierarchical accountability impedes it. In private–private partnerships, which are characterized by an absence of hierarchical accountability, legal and political accountability works toward partnership development. Moreover, from the collection of funding to its delivery, the assistance of relief and reconstruction is often open to manipulation and corruption. Using a number of different

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examples, Chapter 11 focuses on the issues of accountability, professional misconduct, and ethical dilemmas.

Disaster management has become increasingly international in scope. Disaster-affected countries typically require international coordination and collaboration to ensure effective mitigation and response operations. In an attempt to contribute to the knowledge in international emergency management and improve governance of response operations, Chapter 12 identifies current systems of international disaster management with regard to coordination, collaboration, and networking capacities. It closely examines the major actors and the activities of international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), World Bank, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and World Health Organization (WHO) in managing international disasters and coordinating initiatives to do so. This study then identifies problems in the system in terms of coordination and collaboration, and proposes ways of effectively resolving them. This chapter benefits significantly from an article in the *International Journal of Emergency Management* (Kapucu, 2011).

Finally, Chapter 13 discusses future directions in emergency and crisis management based on the coverage in this book. These considerations can be classified as challenges and opportunities at the global, national, and professional levels. Many of the trends identified by emergency management scholars in the early 1990s continue to dominate emergency management today, including increased exposure to environmental hazards, increased capabilities offered by advanced emergency management information technology, increased recognition of the need for pre-impact action in the face of inertia or outright resistance, and the increased professionalization of the emergency management field. Nonetheless, some new issues have emerged that must be addressed, including the potential for changes in the nature of environmental hazards and the increased salience of terrorism as a threat to communities throughout the United States and Europe and in other regions.

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