

Critical Masculinity Studies and Disasters: Revisiting the Gendered Terrain

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Gender and Disasters

- Disaster studies has been slow to address gender issues in the management of disasters.
- Early contributions focused on the different ways in which disasters impacted on women and men.
- Most of the gender and disaster literature has focused on women's experiences.
- Most gender aware disaster researchers focus more on the impact of disasters rather than on prevention.

Men, Masculinities and Disaster

- Enarson, E. and Pease, B. (2016) *Men, Masculinities and Disaster*, Routledge, New York.
- 19 Chapters, 12 countries and 4 key themes.
- Critical masculinity studies and disaster.
- The high cost of disaster for men.
- Diversity of impact and response among men.
- Transforming masculinity in disaster management.

What does it mean to bring a critical men and masculinities lens to disaster?

- Moving beyond socio-biological and sex role theories.
- Gender is enacted or done rather than a state of being.
- Enactment of gender takes place in context of larger social structures which are gendered.
- Gender is intersected with other social divisions such as class, race, ethnicity, ability, sexuality and geo-political location.

Key dimensions of masculinity

- Multiple masculinities arising from different cultures and social divisions.
- Different positions in relation to power.
- Masculinity is institutionalised and embedded in organisational structures.
- Masculinities are embodied.
- Masculinities are enacted by men.
- Masculinities are fluid and change in response to changes in wider society (Connell 2000).

Hegemonic masculinities

- Culturally dominant in a given setting.
- Idealised and promoted as a desirable attainment for young men to strive towards.
- Presented as heterosexual, aggressive, authoritative and courageous.
- The manliness of men and boys is judged by their ability to measure up to this standard.
- Sport, work and power over women are signifiers.
- Associated with aggressiveness and capacity for violence.

The impact of disasters on men and what this means for women

- Men's and women's mortality rates associated with men's risk taking to 'prove' their masculinity.
- Disruption of men's livelihoods through loss of provider role.
- Men's experience of trauma shaped by masculinity.
- High levels of alcohol use, suppression of feelings and failure to live up to ideals of masculinity.
- Emphasis on stoicism and rugged individualism.
- Increased levels of violence against women.
- Men need to acknowledge vulnerabilities.

Structural analysis of gender hierarchies

- How does gender organise the experiences of men and women on the ground?
- Glass escalator effect promotes men into positions of leadership?
- Impact of caring responsibilities on men's and women's involvement.
- How is male power sustained and challenged in disasters?
- Patriarchal relations are highly resilient to disasters.

Intersectionality and diverse impacts of disasters

- Disabled people's higher rates of injury and death: disability is framed in contrast to socially constructed views about normality.
- LGBTI experiences of vulnerability connected to sexuality and gender minority status.
- Indigenous men's vulnerability in the face of climate change and political impact of colonisation.
- Vulnerability of male youth in disasters.

Some caution about the language of diversity

- Disability, sexuality, age, gender, ethnicity and race are often classified as individual characteristics.
- Diverse identities are identified in order to be managed.
- Focus on diversity conceals the continuation of systemic inequalities and structural power.
- Intersectionality moves beyond individual level to structural level of class, gender, race etc.

Transforming masculinity in disaster management

- Challenging the masculinist gender regimes in firefighting and emergency services.
- Challenging the structures and power ideals that shape risk.
- Educating disaster practitioners about gender and the doing of masculinity.
- Preventing men's violence in the aftermath of disasters.
- Engaging men to work towards gender equality and sustainable development.