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Who is worst off after disasters?

Kate Brady







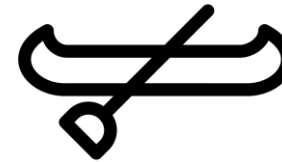
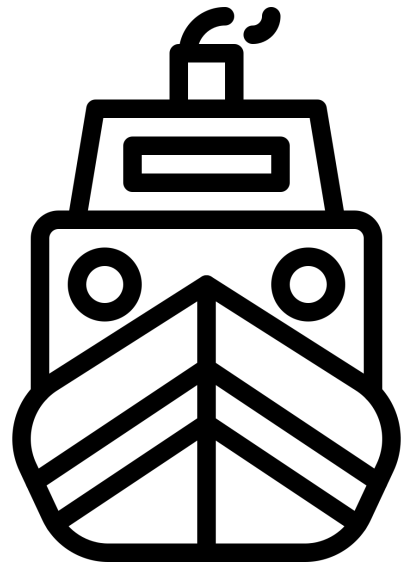
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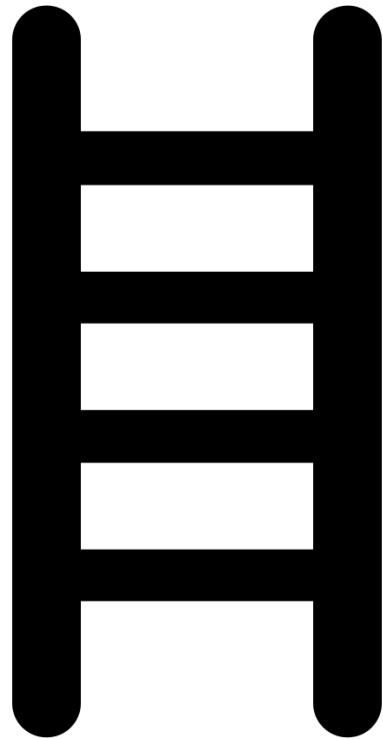
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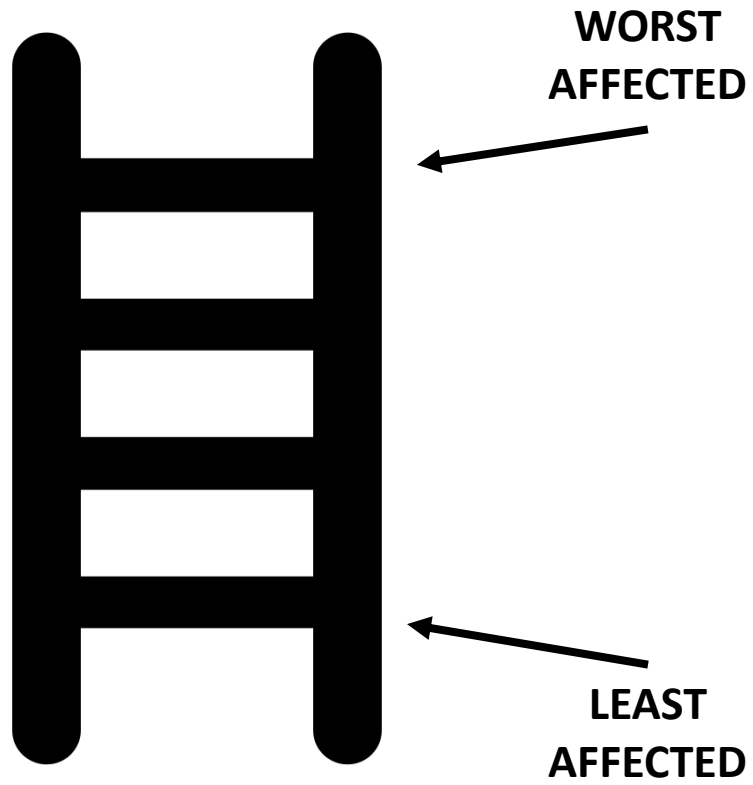


“It’s as if [they] have lost their navigation equipment, both their inner compass and their outer maps.”

Kai Erikson, 2014



Hierarchies of affectedness

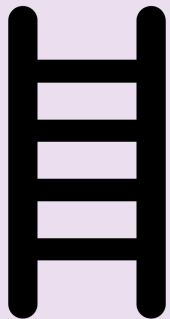


Hierarchies of affectedness



Hierarchies of grief

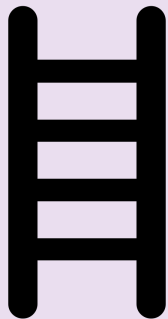
Hierarchies of harm





Hierarchies of grief

Hierarchies of harm

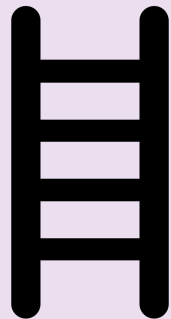


- Some impacts are elevated, some are diminished.



Hierarchies of grief

Hierarchies of harm

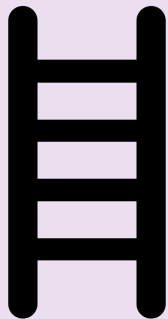


- Some impacts are elevated, some are diminished.
- Tools are often blunt and unwieldy.



Hierarchies of grief

Hierarchies of harm

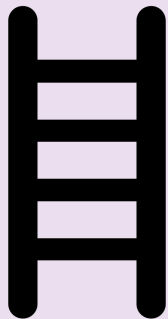


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- Tools are often blunt and unwieldy.
- Affected people are forced to compete for resources.



Hierarchies of grief

Hierarchies of harm

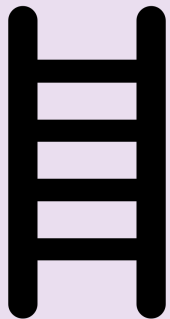


- Some impacts are elevated, some are diminished.
- Tools are often blunt and unwieldy.
- Affected people are forced to compete for resources.
- Create divisions.



Hierarchies of grief

Hierarchies of harm



- Some impacts are elevated, some are diminished.
- Tools are often blunt and unwieldy.
- Affected people are forced to compete for resources.
- Create divisions.
- Can lead to secondary harm.



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Assoc. Prof Julia Gerster
Tohoku University, Japan

“A universal hierarchy perceived in the same way by everyone [after a disaster] does not exist. On the contrary, there are hierarchies of affectedness that are experienced, perceived or expressed in individual ways.”

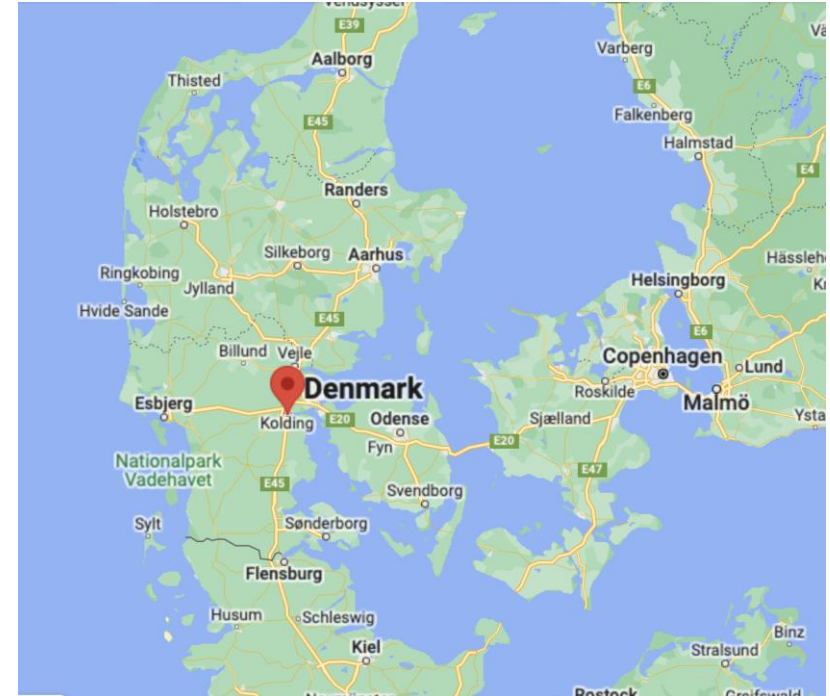
2019



Assoc. Prof Julia Gerster
Tohoku University, Japan



Prof. Nina Blom Andersen
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Roskilde University





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Accomplishment of
the social category
of affectedness



Accomplishment of
the social category
of affectedness

From agreement to
disagreement

*“Now there is no reason for
people this neighbourhood to cry
anymore. You’ve either got a
new house or restored the old
one – so stop complaining.”*



Accomplishment of
the social category
of affectedness

From agreement to
disagreement

Comparison to
other disasters

*“We really felt like we’d been
pushed out in the cold when then
tsunami happened between
Christmas and New Years Eve.”*



Health & Place 72 (2021) 102687



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](#)

Health and Place

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/healthplace



Hierarchies of affectedness after disasters

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Disaster
Disaster recovery
Hierarchies of affectedness
Disaster impacts
Resilience

ABSTRACT

Disasters result in a range of impacts that significantly disrupt the health and wellbeing of those affected. After disasters, a hierarchy of affectedness may be explicitly or implicitly developed, where those affected are compared to each other, and to people affected by disasters in other locations. When an individual's sense of place is so significantly disrupted, these hierarchies are critical to improving the understanding of recovery trajectories, including mental health and well-being outcomes. These hierarchies have practical implications that influence the health outcomes of those affected, including eligibility for disaster aid, support services, and the way that people affected by disasters relate to others in their community. This paper expands the 'hierarchy of affectedness' concept coined by Andersen (2013) using findings from a qualitative study in Australia and New Zealand. Using a letter writing research method, twenty people who had been impacted by a range of disasters in different locations described what they considered helpful and unhelpful in the recovery. One emergent finding in this study was that hierarchies of affectedness are negotiated between impacted individuals, others affected in the same community, and outsiders. These hierarchies served as a helpful sense-making tool for some people impacted by disasters, while causing considerable secondary stress for others. Based on these findings, we offer



Participants felt
disorientated by
where they found
themselves.



Participants felt disorientated by where they found themselves.

“Some of us lost people, some of us lost their houses, some of us lost their jobs and livelihoods and some of us just got lost.”



Some participants used hierarchies to try to reorientate themselves, and these comparisons were helpful.



Some participants used hierarchies to try to reorientate themselves, and these comparisons were helpful.

“Our whole [house] repair was grueling, but we were the lucky ones...”



Participants who
felt invalidated
used hierarchies as
confirmation of
impact.



Participants who felt invalidated used hierarchies as confirmation of impact.

“...the hardest thing we were told from day 1 was that we were all affected equally... and the other worst thing was when people said ‘at least no one died.’ ”



The comparisons
could be helpful
and unhelpful at
the same time.



The comparisons could be helpful and unhelpful at the same time.

“One of my friends once said to me that I couldn’t possibly understand the hurt and pain she was going through as I hadn’t grown up in [location name]. This hurt. I have compassion and empathy. I lived through the [disaster] and witnessed people be hurt or killed.”



Some participants
just accepted that
'outsiders' couldn't
understand.



Some participants just accepted that ‘outsiders’ couldn’t understand.

“They will have no idea what you’ve been through, they will have no idea how you feel and they will not have the capacity to help you.”



Accomplishment of
the social category
of affectedness

From agreement to
disagreement

Comparison to
other disasters



Assessments of affectedness

- Formal hierarchies by outsiders
- Self-assessments
- Assessments by others affected



Assessments of affectedness

- Formal hierarchies by outsiders
- Self-assessments
- Assessments by others affected

Fast
Blunt
Tangible
Static

Slower
Nuanced
Comprehensive
Dynamic



Assessments of affectedness

- Formal hierarchies by outsiders
- Self-assessments
- Assessments by others affected

Validation and invalidation of impacts

- Helpful
- Unhelpful
- Mix of both



Assessments of affectedness

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Validation and invalidation of impacts

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Role of hierarchies

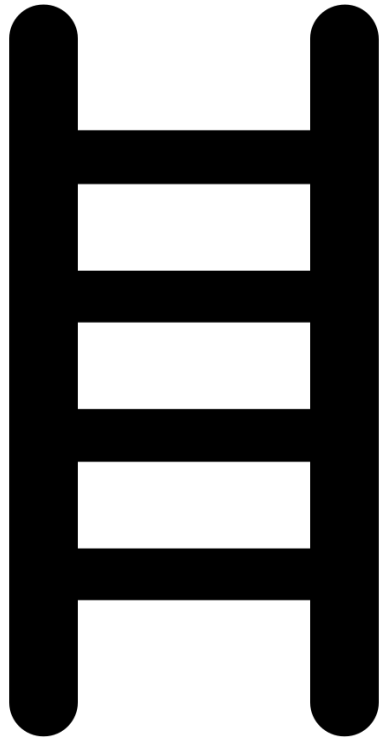
- Help re-orientate
- Self-justify need
- Enhance empathy
- Create divisions
- Fuel resentment



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Does any of this even matter?



Hierarchies of
affectedness have
real implications.

They can:

- Impact the help people can access.



Hierarchies of
affectedness have
real implications.

They can:

- Impact the help people can access.
- Influence whether affected people feel validated and supported.



Hierarchies of affectedness have real implications.

They can:

- Impact the help people can access.
- Influence whether affected people feel validated and supported.
- Cause divisions and secondary stressors.



But they will still
need to happen.

So we should better understand that our
assessments may:

- Not be comprehensive.



But they will still
need to happen.

So we should better understand that our
assessments may:

- Not be comprehensive.
- Diminish the experiences of people affected.



But they will still
need to happen.

So we should better understand that our
assessments may:

- Not be comprehensive.
- Diminish the experiences of people affected.
- Cause divisions within disaster affected communities.



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There are
approaches that
can help.



There are
approaches that
can help.

- Broad approaches to defining ‘affected’.
- Community-led approaches to recovery.
- Dynamic, on-going needs assessments.
- Flexible support.



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Thank you.

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