

## BOOK REVIEW TITLE: DISASTER WITHOUT BORDERS: THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS OF NATURAL DISASTERS

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### Abstract

*The book "Disaster Without Borders: The International Politics of Natural Disasters" written by John Hannigan is a retrospective multi-disciplinary analysis of the impact of natural disasters from a political, institutional, sociological, technological, historical, and economic perspective. The interaction of normative, political, and institutional elements that shape how we perceive and respond to disasters is highlighted in this book. As a result, readers will have a better grasp of how actors at all levels make meaning of disasters, which is a viewpoint that is seldom covered in the present literature.*

**Keywords:** *Disasters, humanitarian, political, politics.*

### INTRODUCTION

Natural disasters have social and economic negative repercussions in the afflicted countries, but it is difficult to quantify these effects. John Hannigan's book "Disasters Without Borders: The International Politics of Natural Disasters" is divided into nine chapters: (1) the disasters politics nexus; (2) the global policy field of natural disasters; (3) the kindness of strangers; (4) a safer world?; (5) climate of concern; (6) disasters politics as game playing; (7) mass media and the politics of disasters; (8) disasters politics: a discursive approach; (9) conclusion. This book has three main storylines, they are (i) Disaster aid vs. Disaster Reduction, (ii) Blurring of Humanitarian Response and Military Involvement, (iii) Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Adaptation.

The Author, John Hannigan is a Professor of Sociology at the University of Toronto, where he teaches courses in cultural policy, urban political economy, and environmental sociology. He has written four famous books. The book 'Fantasy City' was nominated for the 1999-2000 John Porter Award of the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association.

The first chapter of this book attempts to provide a simple and applicable definition of "disaster" and the nexus that exists between natural disasters and politics. Before going deeply into the natural disaster linkage with the politics, there were entities of Post-disaster Utopia and the Altruistic Communities and De-politicizing emergencies in this chapter, wherein formal rules and regulations are set aside, the positive and helping hand were the apex attitude that mentioned. 'Four years ago (1974), I felt that humanitarian aid was beyond politics,' says former UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, according to Kent. Now I understand that humanitarian aid is a political issue.' The United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and USAID (United States Agency for International Development) all relate their political aims to humanitarian catastrophe operations. Political forces, according to Kathleen, a leading American disaster sociologist, drive decision-making across the disaster spectrum, including framing hazards as social problems requiring governmental intervention, political agenda-setting, crisis planning and response, the

issuance of presidential disaster declarations, and disaster assistance provision.

In the second chapter, the author depicted the current structure as 'the global policy field of natural disaster' which consisted of nine major actors or players in this field: national states and local governments; regional organizations; international finance institutions (IFIs); United Nations disaster agencies and other international governmental organizations (IGOs); non-governmental organizations (NGOs); multi-actor initiatives and partnerships; scientific, technical, and academic communities; and the mass media. The locus of power and control in this field is fluid, but in recent years it has resided in a small group of IFIs and donor states, NGOs, and private sector organizations.

The third chapter, Strangers' Kindness, explores the concept and virtue of humanitarianism. Furthermore, as the title of this book suggests, humanitarian assistance, particularly disaster relief, cannot simply be contained inside national borders. A dedication to humanity, as Barneth points out, entails a world without ethical limits. Humanitarianism, which is fuelled by a strong trust in "the goodness of strangers," remained largely uncontested as the favored method to disaster management until the 1990s, when the language of disaster risk reduction (DRR) developed. The book recounts the history of humanitarian disaster relief from its beginnings at the turn of the twentieth century until the 1980s, when, as a result of political upheavals and complicated situations on the African continent, it both experienced significant turbulence and rose to new heights. However, he begins by providing a quick review of humanitarianism, its basic essence, and the constraints that it faces.

The fourth chapter focuses on the International Decade for Natural Hazard Reduction's development, relevance, and criticism (IDNHR). The United Nations General Assembly overwhelmingly voted on December 22, 1989, in Resolution No. 44/236, to make disaster prevention and preparation against natural severe occurrences a priority, designating the 1990s as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. As the IDNHR developed, it began to draw criticism from a variety of sources. As geographer Cannon points out, the resolution establishing the UN Decade for Natural Disasters includes no mention of vulnerability or the potential role of social science in disaster preparedness. It is heavily weighted in favor of scientific and engineering methods. The Yokohama Conference (1994), the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (formed in 2000), and the Hyogo Conference were among the several UN disaster management organizations and conferences established in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century (2005). Finally, there was a growing agreement in favor of catastrophe prevention rather than just disaster relief. Simultaneously, ongoing disputes regarding the physical vs. socioeconomic nature of disaster susceptibility, as well as the nature of the linkage between disaster mitigation, sustainable development, and poverty reduction.

In Chapter Five, the climate becomes the only factor in dealing with significant development and management concerns. Before the 1970s, the climate was considered to be mostly stable, with severe occurrences being deviations on the usual climatic spectrum. Climate change is considered to influence catastrophe in two ways: it increases the range and frequency of catastrophic floods, storms, and other weather-related disasters; and it causes fundamental changes in the economy of Southern countries, particularly in the agriculture and food sectors. Within the global policy field of natural disasters, climate change/disaster has become a primary target of both competition and collaboration. The World Bank is increasingly discussing development, climate change, and catastrophe risk management in the same sentence. Climate change problems have been accepted by the majority of actors in the humanitarian assistance

and development sectors. Climate change adaptation, on the other hand, irritates a variety of practitioners, analysts, and stakeholders in the international development sector in a manner that DRR does not. Southern countries are concerned that CCA (Climate Change Adaptation) is being used as a justification for avoiding global obligations to poverty reduction.

In chapter six, John Hannigan has discussed disaster politics from a realist perspective under five headings: political considerations in allocating and providing disaster assistance, political considerations in accepting or rejecting disaster assistance, disaster diplomacy, disaster as a crisis of political legitimacy, and disaster as a catalyst of political and social change. Under the first and second headings, researchers have repeatedly found that governments make decisions about how much disaster aid to approve and where it should be directed not primarily in sympathy with the interests of victims, but rather to serve the broader imperatives of statecraft and that potential recipients of disaster aid engage in political game playing as well. Natural catastrophes may be used to reduce antagonism and bring nations together by breaking down preconceptions, creating goodwill, and building new networks of cooperation under Disaster Diplomacy. Under the heading of Disaster as a crisis of political legitimacy, the political reputations are enhanced or destroyed. For instance, at the very least, Presidents and Prime Ministers are required to rush to the disaster scene and be seen by the media to be in charge, even if this is not the case. And lastly, under the disaster as a catalyst of political and social change; natural disasters sometimes spark a challenge to entrenched political structure to entrenched political structures and offer an opportunity for radical change.

Chapter seven stresses the ability and credibility of media in the international politics of disaster. The media's impact stems largely from their function as a fundraising outlet during the mega-disaster. In humanitarian crises and natural disasters, the media is frequently seen as the primary mover of foreign policy. This may be traced back to the early 1990s Somalian famine when the term "CNN" was first created. According to this policymaking paradigm, the media covers a catastrophe extensively; a shocked public demands action; and governments have no option but to act. This chapter illustrates the discrepancy in perception based on class disparities, which is also visible in international news coverage, as southern countries are cast as "them." The researchers claim that television portrays the Third World as "the other," while "we" define the peaceful, ordered, stable, ethical, humanitarian, capitalistic, industrialized, and civilized West, while the Indian Ocean countries are portrayed as "chaotic, foolish, and as recipients and victims" in a study of television network news from the early 1980s.

Chapter eight focuses on the constructivist approach rather than the international politics of catastrophe, which may be explained using a realist viewpoint but is insufficient to explain the enormous increase in humanitarian concern and reaction since WWII. As a result, a constructivist approach, which is a wide system of communication that communicates ideas, is extremely useful. The most active debate in the global catastrophe policy area is that of disaster risk reduction, which is highlighted in this chapter (DRR). DRR is at the crossroads of four discourses: hazard, risk, and safety; humanitarian relief; international development; and environmentalism and climate change. Despite its widespread use within the disaster management industry, DRR remains peripheral to mainstream international development and has only a sliver of public acceptance. It does not adhere to global polity institutionalism or normative socialization theory in this regard. One important issue is that most current dialogue in the worldwide sphere of natural catastrophes takes the character of coordinative rather than communicative discourse. That is, it takes place in the policy realm rather than the political or public realm. Engaging in the process of discursive drafting, as he termed it, is one possible

answer to this dilemma.

The critical study and thorough treatment of natural disasters and post-natural disaster reconstruction efforts, as well as community recovery cooperation, are the book's primary contributions. Indeed, according to the author, the long-term recovery strategy is built on modern technology and international cooperation. This book also demonstrates that there is no such thing as a free lunch in this world. Even humanitarian aid and humanitarianism are cloaked in politics for the sake of power and mileage. It's nothing more than a disguised kind of international political and strategic involvement. In this case, the book shows a lack of concern for local citizens and stakeholders. It was possible to see the nature of primacy from the top down.

This book is an excellent introduction to international development studies, disaster management, politics and international affairs, and environmental geography or sociology for students, teachers, and practitioners.

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