

Session No. 35

Course Title: Social Dimensions of Disaster, 2nd edition

Session 35: Exercise Analysis

1 hr.

Objectives:

- 35.1 Illustrate four alternative general positions regarding the simulated mitigation policy proposal
- 35.2 Describe four reasons why the simulated mitigation policy proposal should be adopted
- 35.3 Describe four reasons why the simulated mitigation policy proposal should not be adopted
- 35.4 Discuss the linkage between core social values and the general alternative positions taken regarding the simulated mitigation policy proposal
- 35.5 Discuss at least four moral criteria that could serve as rationales for disaster mitigation policy.

Scope:

Students are introduced to the linkages among core social values and alternative mitigation policy positions; moral criteria for policy analysis and selection are illustrated.

Readings:

Student Reading:

Wisner, Ben. 2001. "Capitalism and the Shifting Spatial and Social Distribution of Hazard and Vulnerability." *Australian Journal of Emergency Management* 16 (Winter):44-50.

Professor Readings:

Beatley, Timothy. 1989. "Towards a Moral Philosophy of Natural Disaster Mitigation." *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters* 7:5-32.

Background References:

Federal Emergency Management Agency. 1997. *Multihazard Identification and Risk Assessment: A Cornerstone of the National Mitigation Strategy*. Washington, D.C.: Federal Emergency Management Agency (especially Chapter 19 entitled “Wildfire Hazards,” pp. 233-246).

Alexander, David. 2000. *Confronting Catastrophe: New Perspectives on Natural Disasters*. New York: Oxford University Press.

General Requirements:

Provide evaluations of persuasive speeches (Session 34).

Use Overheads (35-1 and 35-2 appended).

Use Student Handout (35-1).

See individual requirements for each objective.

This session provides opportunity for guided class discussion. Hence, a general framework is provided rather than more detailed lecture notes except regarding Objective 35.5.

Objective 35.1 Illustrate four alternative general positions regarding the simulated mitigation policy proposal.

Requirements:

Provide evaluations of persuasive speeches.

Use Overhead 35-1.

Use Student Handout 35-1.

Remarks:

I. Introduction.

A. Evaluations.

1. Distribute written evaluations of persuasive speeches.
2. Recommendation: prepare a 3 x 5 index card for each student which indicates their name, numeric grade, and a few comments regarding

strengths and weaknesses. If preferred, such information could be provided on-line.

B. **Distribute** Student Handout 35-1; “Policy Analysis Framework.”

C. **Display** Overhead 35-1; “Policy Analysis Framework.”

D. **Explain:** “As we analyze the mitigation simulation exercise, I will record some key points of reference on this overhead. You should use your worksheet for more detailed note taking. Also, you will want to refer to the notes you made during the exercise since these will provide helpful examples.”

II. General alternative positions.

A. **Ask students:** “Based on what you heard during the simulation exercise, what types of general positions were taken?”

B. **Record** student illustrations as they are presented on Overhead 35-1; “Policy Analysis Framework.”

Supplemental Considerations:

This section may be very **brief** and serve as a “warn-up” to the more detailed assessments and reasons for and against the proposal. The **key message** is that **broad positions**, both for and against the mitigation proposals can be **identified**. Given the **range of viewpoints** found in most communities, positional **variations** among **stakeholders** is to be expected. Perceptual and political **differences** are **normal**, not atypical.

Objective 35.2 Describe four reasons why the simulated mitigation policy proposals should be adopted.

Requirements:

Use Overhead 35-1.

Use Student Handout 35-1.

Remarks:

I. Introduction.

A. **Emphasize:** “Like in any other community, we heard differences regarding the proposals from our simulated town meeting.”

B. **Focus:** “Focus your attention now on your notes from the speeches we heard and identify the speakers who favored the simulated mitigation proposals.

II. Reasons for adoption.

A. **Identification.**

1. **Display** Overhead 35-1; “Policy Analysis Framework.”
2. **Ask students:** “OK, now who were two or three of the players who spoke most convincingly **in favor** of the mitigation proposal?”
3. **Record** on Overhead 35-1; “Policy Analysis Framework.”
4. **Ask students:** “Let’s identify a few more names. Who else made a powerful speech **in favor** of the proposal?”
5. **Record** on Overhead 35-1; “Policy Analysis Framework.”

B. **Content identification.**

1. **Ask students:** “OK, now that we have correctly identified some of the people who favored the proposal, what were the major reasons they gave for their position?”
2. **Record** on Overhead 35-1; “Policy Analysis Framework.”
3. **Ask students:** “Well, that hits some of the more obvious points. What other reasons were given in the several speeches as to why this proposal should be adopted?”
4. **Record** on Overhead 35-1; “Policy Analysis Framework.”

Supplemental Considerations:

The **key message** of this section is that there are numerous **good arguments** that favor any disaster mitigation proposal. Through a series of questions like those recommended, the professor can help **guide students** to explore these and relate them to the general framework outlined by Burby (2000) during the prior session (i.e., Session No. 34; “Disaster Mitigation Exercise”). Some professors may wish to **extend** the analysis and demonstrate how reasons favoring the mitigation proposal **differ** among the **sectors of government**, e.g., local versus state and federal. Also, contrasts to the **private sector** could be highlighted.

Objective 35.3 Describe four reasons why the simulated mitigation policy proposal should not be adopted.

Requirements:

Use Overhead 35-1.

Use Student Handout 35-1.

Remarks:

I. Introduction.

A. **Emphasize:** “Despite those who believe that disaster mitigation is some kind of inherent good that never can be questioned, there are many types of costs and other very legitimate reasons why some of the consequences of mitigation are not desired.”

B. **Focus:** “Focus your attention now on your notes from the speeches we heard and identify the speakers who opposed the simulated mitigation proposals.”

II. Reasons for rejection.

A. **Player identification.**

1. **Display** Overhead 35-1; “Policy Analysis Framework.”

2. **Ask students:** “OK, now who were two or three of the players who spoke most convincingly **against** the mitigation proposal?”

3. **Record** on Overhead 35-1; “Policy Analysis Framework.”

4. **Ask students:** “Let’s identify a few more names. Who else made a powerful speech **against** the proposal?”

5. **Record** on Overhead 35-1; “Policy Analysis Framework.”

B. **Content identification.**

1. **Ask students:** “OK, now that we have correctly identified some of the people who were **against** the proposal, what were the **major reasons** they gave for their position?”

2. **Record** on Overhead 35-1; “Policy Analysis Framework.”

3. **Ask students:** “OK, that hits some of the more obvious points. What other **reasons** were given in the several speeches as to why this proposal **should not** be adopted?”
4. **Record** on Overhead 35-1; “Policy Analysis Framework.”

Supplemental Considerations:

The **key message** of this section is that there are numerous good arguments that can be identified as opposing any disaster mitigation proposal. Through questions like those recommended, professors can **guide students** to identify these and thereby **enhance** their understanding of the complexities inherent in the **implementation** processes that comprise disaster mitigation. Various social class, occupational, and constituency differences among the role players can be highlighted. Some professors will **expand** the analysis to introduce **community variations** in power distributions, consensus building practices, decision-making styles, etc. Also the **intergovernmental system** can be used as a way to introduce discussions of **structural cleavages** and **threat perceptions**.

Objective 35.4 Discuss the linkages between core social values and the general alternative positions taken regarding the simulated mitigation policy proposal.

Requirements:

Use Overhead 35-1.

Use Student Handout 35-1.

Remarks:

- I. Introduction.
 - A. **Display** Overhead 35-1; “Policy Analysis Framework.”
 - B. **Ask students:** “What about the space here on the right hand side of the overhead? Let’s focus on that section now. What is meant by the term ‘social values’ What are some examples?”
 1. **Supplement** as necessary, e.g., **definition:** social values are criteria or preferences used to select or identify desired states of affairs.
 2. **Examples:** equity, fairness, public health and safety, freedom, others.
 - C. **Ask students:** “Think back to the assigned reading (i.e., Wisner 2001); what are examples of social values reflected in that article?”

1. **Equity** in the distribution of risk, e.g., gender, social class, age, ethnicity (pp. 44-45).
2. **Sustainable development** (p. 48).
3. **Human rights**, i.e., “. . . recognition of protection from avoidable harm in extreme natural events as a human right.” (Wisner 2001, p. 48).
4. Others.

II. Social values and policy positions.

A. **Display** Overhead 35-1; “Policy Analysis Framework.”

B. **Ask students:** “OK, now let’s focus on the supporters of the proposal. What types of social values are reflected in the reasons given for supporting the simulated mitigation proposal?”

C. **Record** on Overhead 35-1.

D. **Ask students:** “Now what about the opposition? Think about the reasons given for being against the simulated mitigation proposal. What core values are reflected in these reasons?”

E. **Record** on Overhead 35-1.

Supplemental Considerations:

Depending on the student responses, course context, and professorial interest, this section could be **expanded** through more guided discussion of the types of **social values** and the specific linkages among them and various policy preferences. The **key message** is to enhance student understanding of the **mix of value positions** reflected within communities and how these values **influence policy** preferences. Other professors will **expand** discussion of the **Wisner (2001)** analysis. **For example**, students could be **asked a question** like this. “**In what ways do the distributions of risk associated with the wildfires hazard parallel the impacts of capitalism described by Wisner?** Such explorations would greatly enhance any **emergency manager’s** understanding of the broader **moral context** of their **profession**. In brief form, it also could serve as a **transition** into the next section.

Objective 35.5 Discuss at least four moral criteria that could serve as rationales for disaster mitigation policy.

Requirements:

Use Overheads 35-1 and 35-2.

Remarks:

I. Introduction.

- A. **Explain:** Professor Timothy Beatley, School of Architecture, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia.
- B. **Explain:** Beatley has urged disaster researchers and emergency managers to think harder about the ethical and moral dimensions of the emergency management profession.
- C. **Explain:** Beatley (1989) asks and then proposes alternative answers to this question: “What might constitute a moral theory of hazard mitigation?”

II. Five moral criteria.

- A. **Display** Overhead 35-2; “Five Moral Criteria.”
- B. **Briefly** review each of the criteria proposed by Beatley (1989) with explanations and examples that follow.
- C. **Utilitarian criteria.**
 - 1. “Disaster mitigation can be justified and defended based on utilitarian ethics—that is, that the policy or program seeks to maximize net social benefits.” (p. 8).
 - 2. “. . . the utilitarian perspective views the need for public disaster mitigation where benefits from a mitigation project or action exceed the costs . . . “ (p. 8).
 - 3. “Furthermore when choosing between public mitigation policies, planners and policymakers should choose those policies and projects which produce the greatest overall level of social benefits.” (p. 8).
- D. **Basic rights criteria.**
 - 1. “Some moral philosophers have sought to place restrictions on the workings of utilitarians by arguing that individuals have certain basic **rights** that cannot be superseded or disregarded simply because the policy or outcome would lead to maximal social benefits.” (p. 12).

2. “Such rights can stem from many different sources, including state and federal constitutions, moral proclamations and some rights are said to be **natural** rights—that is inherent in everyone by virtue of his or her humanness.” (p. 12)
3. “We may conclude, for instance, that each individual has a basic right to ease of evacuation and perhaps more specifically has the right to be free from evacuation times which exceed, say, twenty-four hours.” (p. 13).

E. **Culpability and prevention of harm criteria.**

1. “. . . we restrict the liberty of automobile owners to drive at high speeds through residential neighborhoods because such a freedom would violate the rights of neighborhood residents. Exercising the automobile owner’s liberty in this case has ‘external’ effects on others.” (p. 15).
2. “We may also employ the **principle of culpability** to establish policies which impose the responsibilities and costs of mitigation onto those individuals and groups creating the disaster or harm in the first place.” (p. 16).
3. “. . . such a principle might justify a policy of requiring a developer to undertake a mitigation—perhaps some form of flood control—because his or her project will increase tremendously the flooding problem down river (e.g., by building in the floodplain).” (p. 16).

F. **Paternalism and personal risk-taking criteria.**

1. “Gerald Dworkin (1971, p. 108) defines paternalism as the ‘interference with a person’s liberty of action justified by reasons referring exclusively to the welfare, good, happiness, needs, interests or values of the person being coerced.’” (p. 18).
2. **Example:** Proposal by a developer to construct homes on a barrier island where access is limited to a ferry boat (p. 18).
3. “In reviewing this proposed project, the County Board of Commissioners decides that they are not willing to approve the project unless the development company agrees to make a number of mitigation expenditures, including the construction of a bridge to the mainland.” (p. 19).

G. **Public trust obligation criteria.**

1. “Do we have obligations to prevent the filling of wetlands or the destruction of beaches and dunes for non-disaster reasons, for instance because these are deemed to be ‘public trust’ resources, to be maintained and enjoyed by the public in perpetuity . . . ?” (p. 24).
2. “Do we have an obligation to maintain the natural flow of rivers and to prevent development in river corridors not because of the risk to man but rather because such activities would jeopardize the continued existence of endangered species . . .” (p. 24).
3. “Do we have obligations to future generations to protect sensitive environmental areas for their beauty and spirituality . . . ?” (p. 24).

III. Linkages.

- A. **Ask students:** “What linkages or implications do you see between these five types of moral criteria and the types of policy positions and social values we summarized regarding the simulated mitigation proposal exercise?”
- B. **Display** Overhead 35-1; “Policy Analysis Framework.”
- C. **Review** and integrate as required.
- D. **Ask students:** “In what ways do some of these five moral criteria reflect Wisner’s (2001) analysis?”
- E. **Display** Overhead 35-2; “Five Moral Criteria.”
- F. **Review** and integrate as required.

Supplemental Considerations:

Some professors will prefer to keep this section very **brief**. The presentation might be **limited** to the material on Overhead 35-2 (“Five Moral Criteria”) with only a brief summary of how these criteria were reflected in the simulated persuasive **speeches** and the **article** by Wisner (2001). Other professors may wish to **greatly expand** this section. Additional **lecture material** could be developed through more detailed presentation of the **ideas** and **examples** outlined by Beatley (1989). Other analyses could be integrated here as well, especially Alexander (2000), Beck (1992), and Murphy (1994). In contrast, some professors may use a **question-answer approach** and guide student discussion of the **linkages** among certain types of **moral criteria**, the **positions** advocated by Wisner (2001) and the various **arguments** presented in the student speeches. Through such analyses, the **level** of student **understanding** of such matters will be enhanced. Certainly, improved understanding of the **ethical** and **moral dimensions** of their profession may enhance the **effectiveness** of emergency managers.

Course Developer References:

- I. Alexander, David. 2000. *Confronting Catastrophe: New Perspectives on Natural Disasters*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- II. Beatley, Timothy. 1989. "Towards a Moral Philosophy of Natural Disaster Mitigation." *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters* 7:5-32.
- III. Beck, Ulrich. 1992. *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. London: Sage.
- IV. Dworkin, Gerald. 1971. "Paternalism." Pp. 107-126 in *Morality and the Law* edited by R.A. Wasserstron. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing (as cited in Beatley, 1989, p. 29).
- V. Federal Emergency Management Agency. 1997. *Multihazard Identification and Risk Assessment: A Cornerstone of the National Mitigation Strategy*. Washington, D.C.: Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- VI. Murphy, Raymond. 1994. *Rationality and Nature: A Sociological Inquiry into a Changing Relationship*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- VII. Wisner, Ben. 2001. "Capitalism and the Shifting Spacial and Social Distribution of Hazard and Vulnerability." *Australian Journal of Emergency Management* 16 (Winter):44-50.