

Disaster Research: Surveying Displaced Populations

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Chapter Outline

- Introduction and Background
 - Defining Disasters
- Challenges in the Design and Conduct of Survey Research
 - Study Design
 - Questionnaire Development
 - Field operations
 - Ethical issues
- Conclusions and Recommendations



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Disasters 101

- Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED)

- Definition

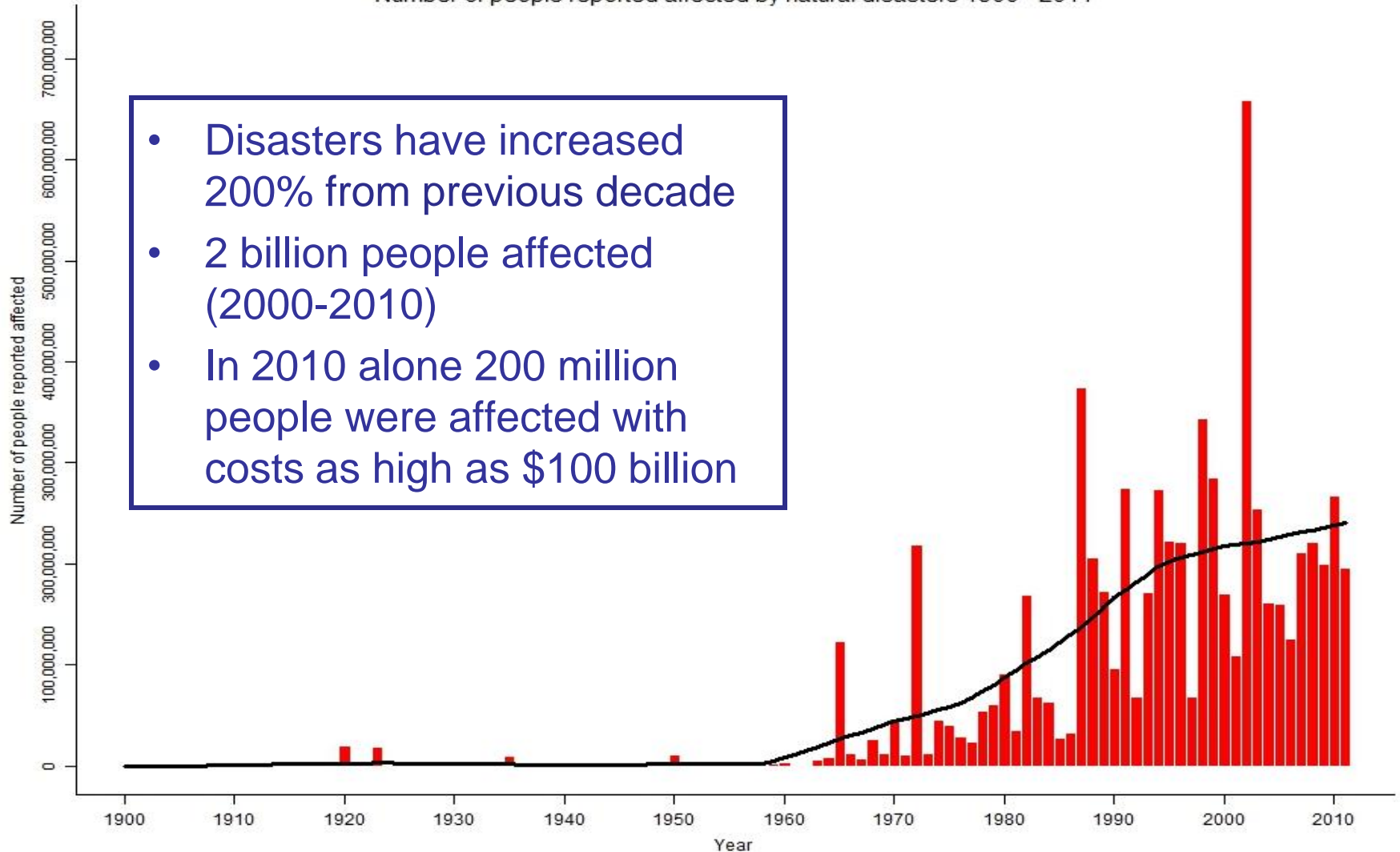
- 10 or more people reported killed
- 100 or more affected
- Declaration of a state of emergency
- call for international assistance

- Categories

- Geophysical (e.g. earthquakes)
- Meteorological (e.g. hurricane)
- Hydrological (e.g. flood)
- Climatological (e.g. drought)
- Biological (e.g. epidemic)
- Technical (e.g. industrial accidents)
- Complex or Multiple (e.g. Japan 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear accident)

The Need

Number of people reported affected by natural disasters 1900 - 2011



- Disasters have increased 200% from previous decade
- 2 billion people affected (2000-2010)
- In 2010 alone 200 million people were affected with costs as high as \$100 billion

Unique Aspects of a Disasters that Impact Survey Design and Implementation



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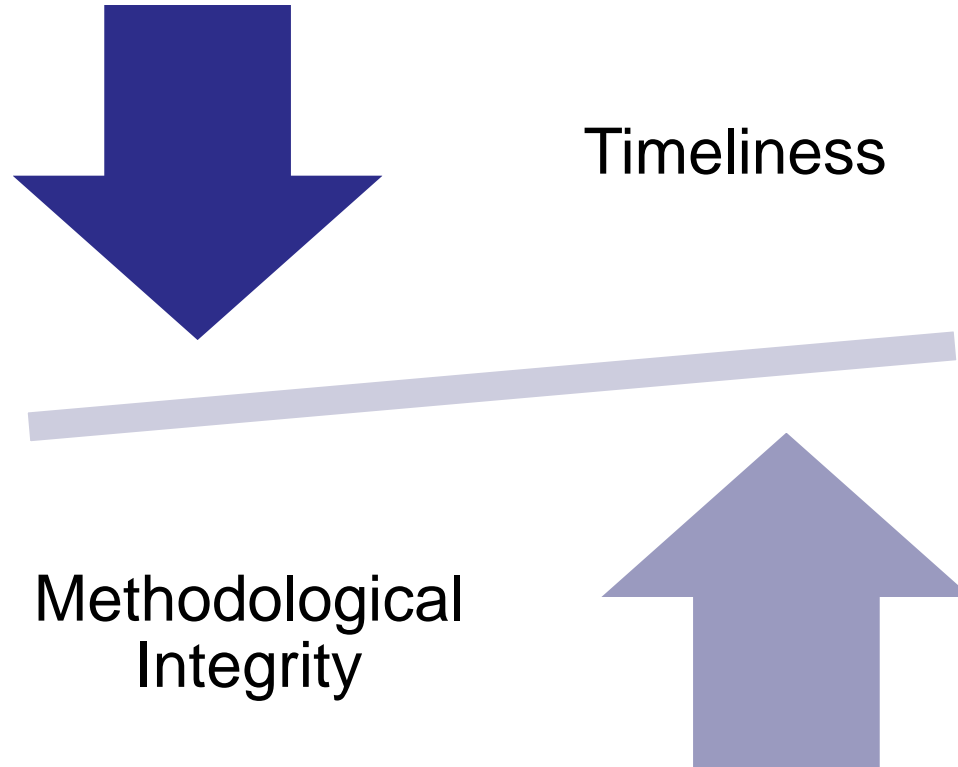
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Unique Aspects of a Disasters that Impact Survey Design and Implementation



Competing Interests



The Shoreline of Banda Aceh, Indonesia June 2004



The Shoreline of Banda Aceh, Indonesia June 2004 and December 2004



Field Operations: Recruiting and Training Interviewers

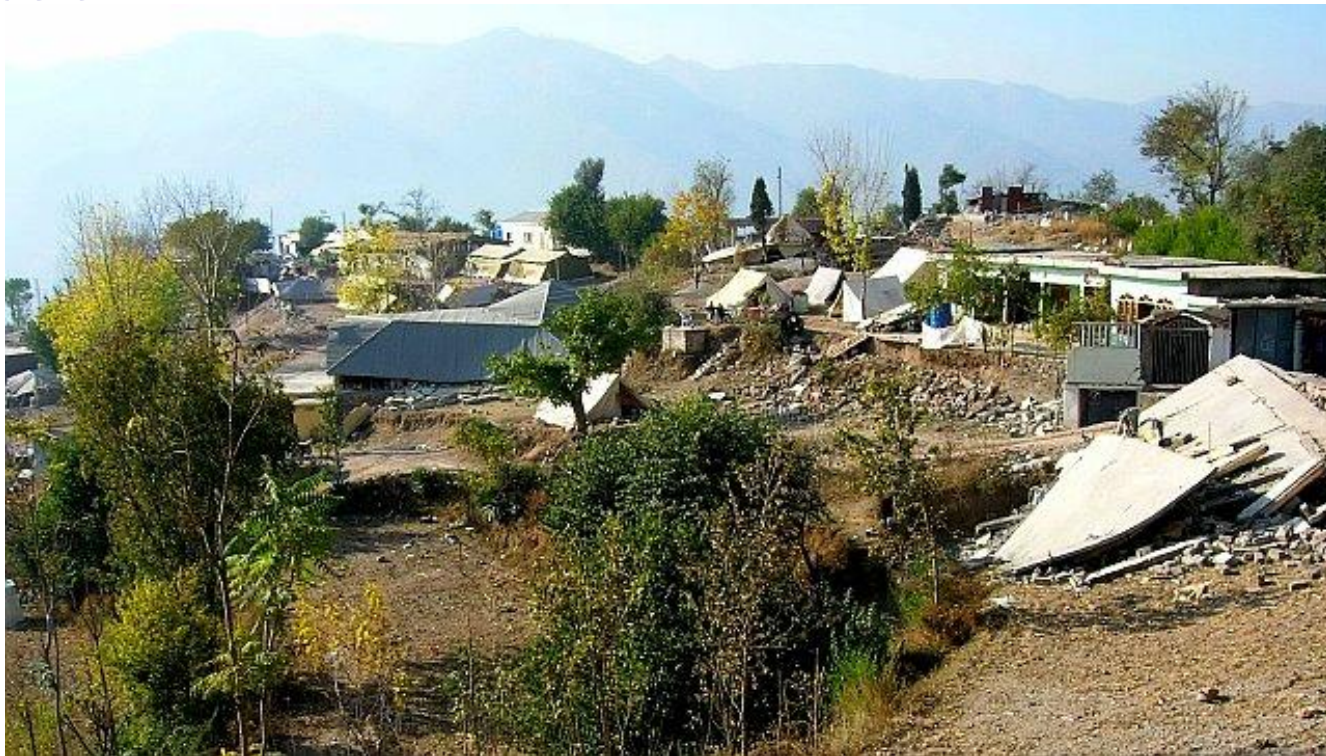
- Local interviewers vs. travelling teams
 - Depends on severity of the event
 - Language skills needed
 - Need for interviewer-respondent matching criteria
- Training in the context of a disaster
 - Respondent and interviewer safety
 - Respondent distress

Field Operations: Community Engagement

- Forming partnerships in the local community is vital
 - Travel and access
 - Obtaining records
 - Community leaders can help to develop a cultural context for the field staff

Field Operations: Environmental Hazards

- Affect will depend on type, severity, and location
- Physical, chemical, and biological hazards make data collection difficult post-disaster



Field Operations: Security Issues



- Damaged government buildings
- Government security personnel may be limited or overwhelmed
- Interviewer safety

Field Operations: Logistical Issues

- Maps missing streets or landmarks and boundaries no longer there
- Limited or no communication capabilities
- Incomplete reports
- Inaccessible temporary living centers
- Finding suitable accommodations for interviewers



Ethics: Risk-benefit

- Evaluate risk-benefit
- Respondents may be over burdened with survey requests
- Voluntary consent concerns
- Confidentiality



Ethics: Vulnerable Persons

- Overall respondents are found to have positive experience with participation

HOWEVER...

- Vulnerable persons more likely to experience further trauma from recalling events
 - Preexisting distress
 - Younger and older age
 - A history of multiple trauma exposure
 - Social vulnerability
 - Greater physical injury severity



Ethics:

Respondent Concerns & Expectations

- Respondents may misinterpret intentions of survey
 - Misconception that participation in survey research was a prerequisite for obtaining clinical care
 - Respondents worry that aid or assistance may be taken away or reduced if they participate in a survey

Ethics:

Welfare of Interviewers

- Interviewers or their family members may have experienced event
- Witnessing and hearing respondents' experiences may cause mental or emotional stress to fieldworkers



Conclusions

- **Timeliness vs. Methodological Rigor**
 - Evaluation of the cost-error tradeoffs will take on additional complexity
- **Disaster context will impact every phase of the survey lifecycle**
 - Five characteristics have been found to influence every phase of disaster studies
 - Event type, Severity, Phase, Location, & Goal of the research
- **Future direction**
 - Need greater transparency in approach and methods

Thank you!