

“I have a question for you, being the scientist that you are” – Insider/Outsider Relations in Disaster Risk Reduction

Perception of Risk, Communication, Interpretation and Actions within Social Ecological Systems (PERCIAS) Project ARIES, NSB Risk Management, NSB EMO, Va. Tech, UCL IRDR & Tuzzy Consortium Library
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Introduction

- Disasters necessitate outside assistance, which can be problematic¹.
- Seismicity, climate change and weather are just a handful of the natural phenomena that can cause disaster in Utqiagvik, Alaska.
- Remoteness and high costs² make outside assistance even more important here, while colonial histories³ make insider/outsider relations especially tense.

Aim: To identify where insider and outsider perspectives align in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

- Current insider/outsider tension in DRR
- Risk perception
- Roles of insiders and outsiders
- Relocation



Figure 1. Utqiagvik during a storm surge. Source: Out of Ice & Time (2010).

Methods

PERCIAS⁴ is a longitudinal study that adopts participatory action theatre to encourage preparedness and decision making in the North Slope Borough, Alaska.

Five focus groups conducted with community groups in Utqiagvik as part of PERCIAS.

Seven semi-structured interviews conducted with ‘expert outsiders’.

Two semi-structured interviews with those on the insider/outsider boundary.

Key findings

- Preconception that outsiders lead to tension, colouring outside DRR projects before they have started.
- Differences in risk perception did not lead to tension.

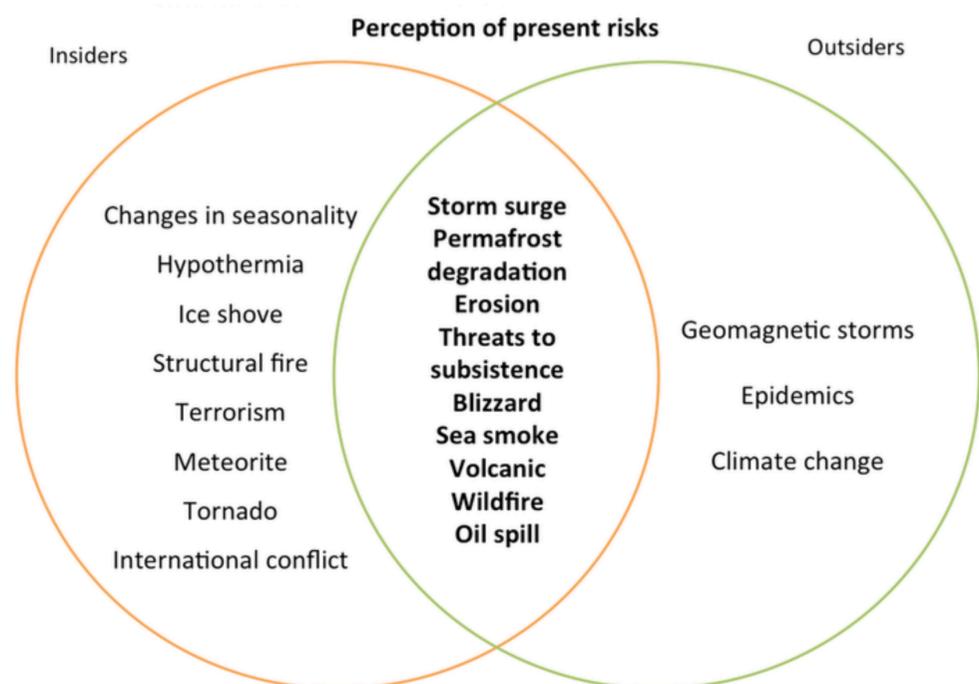


Figure 3: Risk perception of insiders and outsiders.

“The first step would be talking to the community and working out what hazards they are concerned about because then you know which ones they are willing to accept and which ones they want to plan for”.

- Perception of vulnerability was mainly associated with dependence on deteriorating infrastructure and disruption to air travel.
- Flood zoning not implemented due to *“a few well-connected individuals”* having homes in the proposed flood zone. Whose responsibility is it to correct internal community dynamics that perpetuate vulnerability?
- Some insiders wanted to relocate while most outsiders did not identify a need or desire for relocation. Therefore, it is unlikely that there will likely be outside assistance for Utqiagvik to relocate.
- This could lead to **entrapment** (where only those with the means to relocate do so), or **mass post-disaster resettlement**.

References

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- ²Marino, E., & Lazrus, H. (2015). Migration or Forced Displacement?: The Complex Choices of Climate Change and Disaster Migrants in Shishmaref, Alaska and Nanumea, Tuvalu. *Human Organization*. 341-350.
- ³Cameron, E. S. (2012). Securing Indigenous politics: A critique of the vulnerability and adaptation approach to the human dimensions of climate change in the Canadian Arctic. *Global environmental change*, 22(1), 103-114.
- ⁴ARIES (2016). Applied Research in Environmental Sciences Nonprofit Inc. Date accessed: 7th August 2017. Available at <http://www.arcticobservingsummit.org/sites/arcticobservingsummit.org/files/Kilioni_Garland-HERMYS%20Brochure.pdf>

Insiders

Five focus groups
Community groups

Outsiders

Seven semi-structured interviews
Expert outsiders

Two semi-structured interviews

Figure 2: Sampling and method.