but this apparent similarity conceals considerable difference. The core of the concept is the recognition of women's experiences of disaster, where the impact of disasters is not just between social groups broadly understood as middle- and low-income, but also within those groups. This paper examines the intersection of gender and disaster risk in the context of two major food crises and events for women in rural and peri-urban areas. The paper examines the complex interactions of gender and class, and the role of gender and class in shaping power dynamics. It also explores the role of gender in shaping power dynamics in the context of food security, with a focus on the experiences of women. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of these findings for disaster risk management and gender equality.
in terms of gender, class, race/ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, physical and mental ability, culture, etc. Dealing with difference represents a significant challenge for disaster managers, one that remains largely unrecognized or suppressed in favor of a sometimes spurious egalitarianism which attempts to treat everyone the same. In this sense difference has been problematized. However, this paper argues that recognizing difference in disaster is part of the solution, not the problem. Equality, inasmuch as it is consistent with social justice, cannot be achieved by ignoring differences; this simply reinforces the dominance of already dominant groups (Phillips 1997:143). Rather it will be achieved (partly) through recognizing other voices and moving to reduce marginalization. Nevertheless, there remains a danger that an emphasis on difference, rather than a recognition and incorporation of it, will divide not unite (Harvey 1993) and may lead to a reinforcing of competition over resources.

Seeking a more nuanced approach to disaster management should not be interpreted as an adherence to a "faddish" political correctness nor an acceptance of post-modern critiques of grand narratives and universalizing theory. Rather, it is presented here in the context of a recognition that resilience to disaster comes often from dependence upon, and reciprocity within, small and changing networks of individuals (see Peacock et al. 1997 for similar conclusions), within and between varying social groups. The recognition of these differences can lead to a redistribution, not just of resources but also of risk and exposure to harm, and to the enabling and reinforcing of coping strategies within a broader context of social justice (accepting that a universally agreed definition of that concept is problematic). However, it must also be recognized that the notion of community itself is contested and can represent exclusion as well as inclusion (Young 1990; Massey 1994).

GENDER AND DISASTER

Disaster research focusing specifically on gender is a small but growing field (see Enarson 1998; Ferguson and Byrne 1994; and Foathergill 1996 for recent reviews of the literature and research issues).

Most of the work in this area is located within so-called "development" or "Third World" studies (see, for example, Agarwal 1990; Ali 1987; Begum 1993; Blaikie et al. 1994; Dreze and Sen 1989; Jiggins 1986; Kerner and Cook 1991; Rivers 1982; Sen 1988, 1990; Vaughan 1988; Walker 1994), but increasingly it is recognized that a gender sensitive analysis is necessary for understanding the industrial (or postindustrial) nations of the North (Bolin 1982; Enarson and Morrow 1998; Fordham 1998; Fordham and Kettridge 1995, 1998; Morrow and Enarson 1994, 1996; Neal and Phillips 1990; Scanlon 1996). In much of this work, the focus is specifically on making women visible in disasters and on the ways that women are vulnerable to, and made more vulnerable by, extreme events, whether floods in Bangladesh (Ahmad 1994) or Britain (Fordham 1998), hurricanes in the U.S. (Enarson and Morrow 1997), or earthquakes in India (Maybin 1994; Tokle 1994). A male-dominated official disaster response milieu (Myers 1994; Fordham 1998) has been slow in recognizing women's particular needs and experiences in disaster. However, these experiences are embedded in socially constructed modes of living which make women (and others) chronically vulnerable in their everyday existence (Blaikie et al. 1994; Hewitt 1997), necessitating more fundamental social change. Thus, the research trajectory must now bring traditional, redistributive, and social justice issues together with a recognition of difference.

EQUALITY/DIFFERENCE

The paired categories of equality and redistribution on the one hand, and difference and recognition on the other, are seen as mutually exclusive aims of conflicting projects which broadly can be stated as socialist (or, even more broadly, "Left") and identity politics, respectively. A socialist, redistributive politics, which has been characterized as "universalist" and "for all human beings" (Hobsbawm 1996:43), has been challenged, nevertheless, for privileging class above or even to the exclusion of other axes of social division—particularly gender—and thus rejecting "difference." Furthermore:
GENDER AND CLASS

With the exception of women born in colonial Africa, African women have been subjected to the same forms of domestic violence as men. The patriarchy and colonialism have been inseparable in the oppression of African women. The concept of difference is closely associated with the category of gender, and class because of their

 overcoming the obstacles of race, class, and gender. This paper looks particularly at gender and class because of their

 practical importance in understanding the concept of marginalization and its implications for the lives of African women.
allow this) but rather offers initial observations that challenge simple constructions of class and gender and point toward the need for more finely-structured observations in the field and by disaster managers.

It is acknowledged that traditional descriptors of class have been contested from both general sociological (Clark and Lipset 1998; Hout et al. 1998; Prandy 1990; Saunders 1990) and specific feminist perspectives (Skaggs 1997; Mahony and Zrniczki 1997; Walby 1990). However, here is not the place for an extended discussion of social stratification theory and its problems and so this paper adopts a broad definition and understanding of class which locates interviewees into one of two classes, middle or working. This simple class position is based on inter alia: the individual’s, i.e., women in the own right and not subsumed under that of an assumed male head of household, relationship to the means of production (Miliband 1987; Westergaard and Resler 1976) to which of the British Registrar General’s categories they belong, i.e., related to unskilled, skilled, and professional occupations (OPCS 1992); and also including a cultural model of class based on “capital” (economic, cultural, social, and symbolic) movements through social space (cf. Bourdieu 1986: 114, 291). This position is in some opposition to Walby’s position that the concept of class should not be used to cover non-economic forms of inequality “since to do so would be to repress the concept too far from its heritage” (Walby 1990: 13).

Interviewees were not asked to which social class they felt they belonged but rather were assigned to a class (either working or middle class) on the basis of a combination of several of the following factors: their job/profession and/or that of their partner where relevant; whether they owned or rented their home; where they lived; and level of education, lifestyle, and manner (Abbott and Sapsford 1987).

Thus, typical middle-class characteristics were: home-ownership; living in areas with medium to high land/property values; having post-compulsory education; and having, now or previously, a professional occupation (social worker, business owner, etc.). Typical working-class characteristics were: having a tenancy, living in social housing; having little if any post-compulsory education; and having, now or previously, a manual or semi-skilled occupation (cleaner, hairdresser, etc.). However, in neither case were categories fixed and immutable.

VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE

The study of hazards and disasters has been guided for many years by the so-called “dominant paradigm” (Hewitt 1983) which places a major focus on the hazard agent and the individual response to it. However, an alternative “vulnerability paradigm” has been developing which places its focus on differential vulnerability to hazard and disaster and the contextualizing of disaster within everyday vulnerabilities (Blakie et al. 1994; Varley 1994; Hewitt 1997). This paradigm recognizes interlocking systems of vulnerability in both physical and social space—“geographies of vulnerability” (Hewitt 1997, p. 164).

The development of the vulnerability paradigm has similarities to that of feminist theory where the early stage of the project was to recognize and document the ways in which women, as a group, were subordinated and oppressed. However, the imposition of this static condition of “victim” was seen to be both partial and disempowering, and so the feminist project shifted its emphasis towards difference and resistance. The vulnerability paradigm is also moving from an identification of social causation and the recognition of vulnerable groups ("victim") to a more nuanced understanding of how social groups (defined by gender, age, race/ethnicity, etc.) differ between and within themselves and how they are never simply victims, but also survivors and active agents.

It is as a contribution to this latter point in the paradigm’s development that this paper is addressed. The questions it asks are not just what makes women vulnerable to, and in, disasters, but also, more positively, what creates resilience?

CASE STUDIES

Two case studies are used primarily, arising from major floods in Scotland: Perth in 1993 and Strathclyde in 1994. The early stages of this research were undertaken as part of the European Union-funded "EUROFood Project" co-ordinated by Middlesex University (Ketteridge, Fordham, and Clarke 1996; Ketteridge and Fordham
exceptions.

The next section attempts to tie in the discussion of the case studies. This is discussed further below.

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Rivertown can be regarded from the outside as a community (the problematic status of that term is accepted), but it contains within it a complex array of sub-communities, neighborhoods, and networks which are often socially and spatially distinct. In disasters, the geographic “labels” used to name them are often deceptive, tending to conceal more than they reveal. Particular locations are used to name disaster events because such areas may be well known, representative of the dominant social group, where the major damage was caused, or just where the media first located themselves. This can impose an erroneous homogeneity on the total disaster-hit area and can make invisible the smaller, often socially and politically subordinate groups and locations. Similarly, if “Rivertown” is the label given by the media to, in this case, a particular flood event, it may only be representative of one particular group, to the detriment of others. Even Rivertown is heterogeneous and must be subject to deconstruction.

In most localities, there are obvious physical differences between the easily recognizable working—and middle-class areas. In Rivertown, the former is distinguished by (frequently large) estates of tenanted social housing, often of architectural uniformity; the latter, by owner-occupied properties, generally small in number, often of some architectural variety. While physical distances may be small between these two locations, the inhabitants remain strangers to each other, with, sometimes surprisingly, little understanding of each other’s experiences and needs.

The working-class community

In the working-class community there may be differences, spatially delineated and historically determined, which work for or against vulnerability limitation. The working-class community in Rivertown is divided into three different sub-areas for illustrative purposes.

The first working-class sub-community comprises alienated individuals or small groups living in poverty, violence, and deprivation. Here, women are survivors from everyday crises and have to be resilient, but disaster events can finally overwhelm their coping strategies. Here there is competition for resources, and information concerning the
Women and Disasters

Women are often overlooked in disaster planning and response. Despite their critical role in households and communities, women's needs and experiences are often neglected. In many disasters, women are disproportionately affected, facing unique challenges that can further marginalize them.

Disasters can exacerbate gender inequalities, with women often shouldering the burden of care for family members and the community. They are more likely to be affected by displacement, lack of access to basic necessities, and increased risk of violence and abuse.

Women's leadership and contributions are essential in disaster response and recovery. Their expertise in community-building, conflict resolution, and resource mobilization can facilitate more effective and sustainable outcomes.

It is crucial to incorporate a gender-sensitive approach in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery plans. Engaging women as active participants in decision-making processes is key to ensuring that women's needs and perspectives are met.

The impact of disasters on women's health, livelihoods, and autonomy must be assessed and addressed. Policies and interventions should prioritize women's empowerment and resilience in the face of future disasters.

In summary, women are integral to disaster management. Their active involvement can lead to more inclusive and effective responses, ensuring that every sector is represented and empowered to recover.
Once they came home [from the temporary accommodation] and you saw... I mean there was a lady, and I've seen her house, and I mean I would kill for her house, kill for it! [said laughing]. And this is what everybody is saying. People who weren't insured got better houses, better than they ever had. Everything was new. I would kill for that!

Those without insurance are seen by the insured as irresponsible in not choosing to protect themselves against future flood risk and therefore not deserving of relief funds. However, in some high-crime areas, flood insurance (with premiums set on crime statistics, not flood risk) is unavailable to the poorest members because it is too expensive; it is not necessarily the case that they choose not to buy insurance.

An example from the 1997 Moray floods is indicative of the problems that can arise in the use of temporary accommodation that normally has a specific function. One family (a lone mother with two children at home) was placed in a homeless persons' hostel. While this property was newly built, structurally sound, clean, and well decorated, its usual tenants were subject to strict rules which were also imposed on the flood victims. There was no personal telephone (one was available in the Warden's office where there was no privacy); tenants had to check in and out, including all visitors (this was very difficult for the children and their friends who also had to check in and out each time). No visitors were allowed after 11:00 p.m.; tenants had to report if likely to be out late; the key to the dwelling could not be taken off the premises. No alcohol was allowed on the premises, and staff came in daily to check for damage.

As a council tenant she had no choice but to accept this accommodation. She could not choose to go anywhere else. And choice, or the lack of it, is the key differentiating factor between the middle-class and working-class areas and people. While some of the difficulties faced by middle-class flood victims are set out below, nevertheless, at a general level, they are less vulnerable through their ability to exercise choice and a degree of control over their lives.

The second working-class area has strong community links, neighbor and kinship networks:

I went down, got my pensioner [senior citizen] and put most of her stuff up [stairs], and I said “Right, lock up and come and stay with us.”

[In] the flooding everybody coped together. “Can I help you?” “I've got clothes there.” “I've got this here.” Because everybody was in the same boat. And everybody helped everybody out. You know, “I’ve got stuff over here,” “I’ve got a kettle you could have.” Yeh it was great... there was a great community spirit.

In such communities, neighbors/relatives check that all have received the call to evacuate before themselves evacuating, and there is cooperation over resources (when one hears of free clothing being given to flood survivors, they tell the others so all can benefit). Because many working-class communities are situated in large estates, vulnerability is reduced through strength of numbers and the support systems (both official and unofficial) which accompany them. Because of the large numbers in one place, emergency services prioritize the area for evacuation; after the flood, insurance companies may set up mobile offices to give help and advice to claimants, and the local authorities often set up a “Flood Team” to give advice on claiming from flood or hardship funds. However, a more negative aspect may be a process of “massification,” where people feel that they are never treated as individuals with specific needs but always as an undifferentiated group—“flood victim.” They are made to feel grateful for what they are given even when it is inadequate or misplaced.

Existing community networks are sometimes disrupted by disaster management itself when people are split up and moved away to temporary accommodation while their disaster-damaged homes are repaired. Women who care for sick, disabled, or elderly relatives and neighbors or provide unpaid child care for their grandchildren...
The middle-class community

The middle-class community forms an essential part of the middle-class community. They are relatively more stable and have a lower rate of turnover compared to other social groups. The middle-class community also has a higher level of education and income, which provides them with more opportunities for social mobility. They are also more likely to be involved in community activities and organizations, which can help to strengthen their social connections and provide a sense of belonging.

The middle-class community is also more likely to be involved in political and social issues. They are more likely to vote and participate in political campaigns, and they are also more likely to be involved in social justice movements. They are also more likely to be involved in community service and volunteering, which can help to build a stronger community and improve the quality of life for all residents.

The middle-class community is an important part of the social fabric of any society. They provide a stabilizing influence and a bridge between the upper and lower classes. They also provide a role model for the next generation, showing them the importance of education, hard work, and community involvement. The middle-class community is an essential part of the social fabric of any society, and it is important to support and nurture this community in order to build a strong and prosperous society.

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in competition with each other. Some have compared their own experiences unfavorably to working-class communities (see also Morrow 1997: 167, for similar findings) who had agents working for them as a group and who appeared to have had better conditions and services secured for them:

Where it’s council property that’s affected they will get work done quicker than what they would if it’s private property. I think you’re left very much on your own. “Well, too bad,” you know, “you get on with it.” This is the attitude I think.

And what we found here was all the help was focused on X [working-class housing estate]. I mean we got no help whatsoever... Everything was focused on X... nothing got filtered out here... and that got on our nerves.

They [the Flood Team] did a lot, I know, they organized a lot for the kids and all the kind of stuff but I felt that it was for people that were with the council. I didn’t think it was really for us... “Us”? That sounds really snobby but you think that they’re actually less fortunate than you whereas they’re not... if you’d bought your house then you weren’t quite as welcome to go to get benefits and things like that. That when you went they were all looking at you and saying “Tut! Greedy person” sort of thing, you know “you can manage yourself” whereas you don’t always manage yourself.

Some middle-class residents had difficulty finding temporary accommodation while their homes were being repaired. They were in competition with the other flood victims, and good property nearby was hard to find. They found themselves forced to take low quality, rented houses which were dirty and in poor repair—well below what they normally considered to be an acceptable standard. This they contrasted with the powers of local authorities to get access more easily to large numbers of better quality properties for their tenants. (The working-class interviewees, however, often had other views on the properties made available to them; see above.)

The second, middle-class community sub-division is elderly sheltered or wardeden accommodation where age and infirmity make the residents potentially vulnerable. Ironically, however, such places are usually well known in terms of their exposure to risk; they appear on relevant lists and generally are among the first to be contacted (“rescued”) in times of disaster. Thus, this particular sub-community becomes less susceptible through its visibility and identification as vulnerable. However, this is not always the case, and emergency responders cannot be complacent about this and assume that someone has contacted the residents, as this example from the working-class community illustrates:

By this time [the water] was coming in, all the drains were coming up, so I thought, “Right, I’ll get out the back.” It was worse out the back, I couldn’t get out there either. So I’ve one of those alarm phones and I pressed the button and, they’re very, very good, so she said, “How can we help you Mrs A?” I said, “This place is being flooded.” “Yes,” she said, “We’re watching it on the television!” “Well,” I said, “would you please get somebody to get us out?”

This experience was told with some humor, but it could have had serious consequences. Sheltered housing, as in this case, is normally single story with no upper floors to which to escape, and in Rivertown the floodwaters rose with considerable speed and to a depth sufficient to drown.

Thirdly, an elderly middle-class woman on her own in an outlying fragmented community or isolated location, even if she has financial resources and insurance, is potentially as vulnerable and in need of help as a woman in a large working-class community which may not have the same financial resources or insurance but may have access to social networks such as neighbors, family, and welfare support workers. Post-disaster resources are often located—for very good reasons—in
Importing the Visions/Strategies

Headings below some resourcing decisions, these points are expanded under separate categories in the text. The emphasis on understanding the economic impact of policies to increase in funding or shifting the burden of costs to a different level of government is significant. A reduction in spending. A reduction in the effective tax base of different localities, and the need for a more equitable distribution of resources, needs to be re-evaluated in the context of community support and resource allocation for more equitable provision of services. The paper examines gender and social class in this context.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Other kinds of support

Policy Implications and

Women and Crime

(Elevation 1997: 2)

Domestic violence is not contained to a particular social class, so that women are vulnerability to violence.

Women may be found predominantly in lower class areas, where economic deprivation is more widespread. Women may be more likely to experience violence in areas where economic deprivation is more widespread.

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in emergency rest centers and administering to them in a top-down fashion can be disempowering and often demeaning. A better way of thinking about such emergency provision is in terms of an enabling function that gives victims/survivors greater control and the space to make a positive contribution. This is beginning to be recognized by some disaster workers, generally those in the social work field:

For God's sake! You've got resources! You've got 300 people sitting here! Traumatized they may be but they're not in.ca.psible. Yesterday they were running households, they were managing... that hasn't been destroyed overnight. They still have those qualities and maybe we should be the ones that giving them those back. [Social worker, part of the Flood Team]

It seems like a very "social work" kind of thing to say but I think its important that people don't get overrun in terms of the decision making process. That people have various capacities to make decisions, we all have those capacities and we should make sure that folks will be allowed to make those decisions and we should not make those decisions for them. But... I'm not saying we shouldn't give them support, advice and help. It's remarkable how some people... they realize there's a crisis, they call out, "What're we going to do?" With a bit of advice and a bit of help they reach their own decisions about what they want to do and that seems to me perfectly correct that they did that. Other people, with less resources, couldn't make decisions and in a sense we sought to make more decisions on their behalf. I suppose. With the less resourceful folk. [Social worker]

Retaining self-esteem

Official provision, however well-intentioned, can be unpalatable and, because of that, may be subverted. One elderly flood victim/survivor revealed that she continued to attend a weekly "drop-in" center, set up by a social services department to provide community support for flood victims/survivors, not because she still had need of it but to support the social workers who were running it! It is important for people's self-respect that they are not always on the receiving end but feel that they are in a position to give. This woman retained self-esteem through the belief that she was the one that was providing.

The right person for the job

Furthermore, while this paper has focused on some of the diversity and the conflicts within the victim/survivor community, there is equal diversity and conflict within the disaster management community. Disasters are high profile events, and they can make or break people's professional careers. They are perceived by some to be "plum jobs": "Disasters are sexy! Professionals often get involved, not out of altruism but out of a recognition that they can see an opening, they are empire building, then they get in there and close the doors to other people who genuinely want to lend a hand." [Social Worker].

Some professionals are not the right persons for the job. They are there for a variety of reasons and skill and experience may not be included; neither is a willingness to relinquish control. Placing more control with the communities themselves is necessary to ensure the correct identification of problems and needs from a community perspective (see Maskrey 1989). These needs, and the accompanying provision, are also likely to be diverse; what is suitable for one group may not be suitable for another. If provision is made that is unsuitable, then it means resources are being wasted.

The need to understand social theory

This adds to the skills necessary for emergency/disaster managers and calls more for an understanding of social theory in disaster management than an extension or improvement of technical abilities. This is normally the province of social workers, often at the later stages of the disaster process, but the research presented above suggests a
INTRODUCTION

William E. Lowdermilk

A synthesis of food research in Bangladesh

GENDER AND DISASTER

CONCLUSION

...
Women and Disasters

From Theory To Practice

Edited by
Brenda D. Phillips and Betty Hearn Morrow
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