The power of communities: Facing (chronic) disaster

Katherine Stroebe, associate professor, department of social psychology
Resilience in the face of chronic disaster

• A capacity for successful adaptation in the face of disturbance, stress, or adversity (Norris et al., 2008)
  • Ability/process rather than outcome
  • Adaptability rather than stability

• Resilience at different levels:
  – Individual
  – Community
  – Organization

Bonanno, Romero & Klein, 2015
This talk

1. What is individual and community level resilience
2. Individual level resilience
3. The power of communities
Chronic adversity: the Groningen gas extraction

Legend
Magnitude
- < 1.5
- < 2.0
- < 2.5
- < 3.0
- < 3.5
- > 3.5

Bron: KNMI
Generaledatum grafiek: 9 maart 2017
Extent of problem

- Gas extraction has negative impact on almost entire province of Groningen

- 410,000 residents of the province of Groningen are exposed to induced earthquakes

- 134,363 adults have damage to their property. With children: ± 170,000

- 68,343 have multiple damages. With children: ± 85,000
Challenges to resilience

- Undermines safety perceptions
- Affects all parts of the population regardless of age, SES, work or living situation etc.

Question: how safe have you felt in the place you live the past four weeks – in het context of the gas extraction? (1 = very unsafe, 5 = very safe)

Bron: Postmes, Stroebe et al. (2016) Rapport 1
Undermines individual-level resilience

- Significant decrease of (mental) health among those with multiple damages to property

- Causal relationship (pre versus 'post' gas extraction)

- Multiple damages: 85,000 / acute health problems: 10,000

Model of main findings

- Trust in government
- Damage
- Injustice
- Perceived unsafety
- Neighbourhood cohesiveness
- Negative health outcomes
Individual & community level resilience

- Perceived ability to adjust (adapted from Sampson et al., 1997)

- Your neighbourhood or village changes drastically:
  - How would you respond to such a change?
  - How would inhabitants of your village/neighborhood respond?

- Example items: Show little response; help others (e.g., if there are neighbours who find this difficult); find the strength (together/as individual) to deal with this change
Community resilience

- Groninger ‘volksaard’ (character)?
- Active communities!
- People may not be protesting that much but they are:
  - Seeking a lot of information
  - Helping each other
Conclusion

• Gas extraction undermines mental health

• The power of groups & communities (Drury et al., 2009; Jetten et al., 2012; Rime, 2009; Stroebe et al., 2018; van Zomeren et al., 2008):
  • Buffer health
  • Resilience in the face of disaster
  • Make proactive!
Implications

• Increase individual level resilience: safety and health!

• Recognize the power of communities:
  • Bottom-up approaches needed – with inhabitants

• Take into account challenges/threats to communities
  • Damage procedure
  • Fortification of buildings
Questions, comments?

k.e.stroebe@rug.nl

See also: www.groningsperspectief.nl (English summary)
What actions can you take?
(Stroebe, Postmes & Roos, in prep, N=164, N=21)

Do nothing

Inaction (7%)
Stop voting
Not protest or demonstrate

Self-focused action (23%)
Emotional
Stay positive, keep calm
Distract self

Protest, demonstrate
Voice discontent
Political action

Other focused action (39%)
Express solidarity, support

Stressor-focused action (31%)
Financial compensation
Vigilant (safety house)
Search for information
Stress and coping

- 60 interviews
- Timeline: ‘gas’ related life events
- 3 patterns of stress:
  1. Low (27)
  2. Oscillating (25)
  3. Increasing (7)
- No ‘objective’ differences
Disaster

- *Disaster*: A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity, leading to one or more of the following: human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts. (UNISIDR)
Ons onderzoek

- Gronings Perspectief (jan. 2016 – heden)
  - >2.150 respondenten uit Groningen
  - Gezondheid, stress, veiligheid, vertrouwen, toekomstperspectief
- Lifelines (sept. 2016)
  - 2.912 respondenten (niet representatief) uit Noord Nederland
  - Gezondheid, stress
- GGD gezondheidsmonitor
  - 16.284 respondenten, representatief
  - Gezondheid, evaluatie woonomgeving
Depressive symptoms

Perceived health

Schade aan woning
- Geen
- Eens
- Meerdere keren

Percentage geestelijk ongezond

Percentage dat geen goede gezondheid heeft

Tijdstip

Feb 16, Jun 16, Dec 16, Apr 17, Nov 17
**Gezondheid**

**Verhoogd gezondheidsrisico voor mensen met schade**

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<td>5.6%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
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*Tabel 5: Geschatte percentages en aantallen met verhoogd gezondheidsrisico*