

Disaster & Social Crisis Research Network Electronic Newsletter

Nº. 28 (Regular Edition), October - December 2006

www.erc.gr/english/d&scrn

Note from the D&SCRN Coordinator

Philip Buckle, Coordinator
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Work towards Glasgow in September goes ahead but the response so far in terms of abstracts (only 1 so far and 1 promised) has been disappointing. I'm waiting for a last minute rush. My request for other sites to advertise the calls for abstracts was answered only by Nick and Avi. My hope is that members will contribute; I look forward to your advice.

I believe that a survey of universities and research institutes teaching, working and investigating disasters and social crises would be helpful to us all. In this field I am concerned at the lack of conversation between people and institutions with similar interests. I recently reviewed a book on vulnerability edited by Jorn Birkmann of the United Nations University in Bonn. This is a very worthwhile piece of research with papers by a few dozen authors. I know of only 3 or 4 of them. The others were mainly German researchers and I felt disappointed in myself that these 'colleagues' lived only 600 kilometers away as the crow flies but inhabited a different world. I had not heard of them and presumably they hadn't heard of me or others at Coventry University working in this field.

This is mirrored by a growing duplication, replication and overlap of much work. For example, the ProVention Consortium lists numerous methods of assessing vulnerability and capacity. All of them are worthwhile, derived from good practice and applied with sensitivity, discipline and purpose. But I ask whether we need 12 different methods, is there not a possibility of rationalising in some degree our activity. A few years ago Juergen Weichselgartner wrote a paper listing, as I recall, 26 different definitions of vulnerability. To my eye the differences between most were of subtle nuance. I assume also that there are 26 or more definitions of capacity (or resilience) and of risk, hazard not to say disaster.

My desire for order may arise from a previous life as a bureaucrat. But I am concerned that much good work is undertaken that has already been done before.

A step towards limiting such duplication of effort would be a list of institutions engaged in the sociology of risk, disaster and crisis.

I would be grateful if you could send me brief details (even web page addresses) of relevant institutions.

I hope to see also some abstracts arriving shortly.

Happy New Year to you all, with special thanks, to Susann, Nick and Eduardo.

Regards,

Philip Buckle

Editor's Note

Eduardo Runte, Editor
efarunte@hotmail.com

Dear D&SCRN members and colleagues,

This issue of our quarterly newsletter covers the period from October to December, 2006. Please notice the call for papers for the 2007 European Sociological Association Conference. This year, in addition to the regular D&SCRN sessions, a joint session has been planned with the Sociology of Risk and Uncertainty group.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my wishes of a happy new year to all of you.

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D&SCRN Web Manager report (June – December, 2006)

Nicholas Petropoulos, Webpage Manager
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1. Updating of D&SCRN information regarding the new Coordinating Committee. Following my communication with Tuula Gordon, the new VP responsible for Research Networks and with Elianne Riska, the editor of the ESA newsletter, I am happy to report that the summer issue of the *European Sociologist* (No. 22, Summer 2006) has updated the information with regard to the post of Coordinator, in line with the website information.
2. Loading of the E-newsletters on the webpage. The 26th and 27th regular issues of the the D&SCRN E-Newsletter, the 28th Special November 2006 issue that contains the Network's initial call for contributions to the 8th ESA Glasgow conference and the announcement of the recent changes in the editorship of the Electronic Newsletter, as well as the CV data of the colleagues who became members of the Network during the March-September 2006 period, have been loaded on the Network's website.
3. New D&SCRN members. During the period June-December 2006, the D&SCRN has acquired five new members: (1) **David E. Alexander** of the University of Florence and of the Center for Civil Protection Studies in the Department of Public Health, Italy (d.alexander@virgilio.it), with interests in emergency planning and management; (2) **Piotr Matczak** of the Institute of Sociology, UAM, Poznan Poland (matczak@amu.edu.pl), with interests in natural disasters, local consequences of global change and risk analysis; (3) **Juan-Andres Rincon**, Crisis Management Consultant, of IABC, Mexico (jarincon@zimat.com.mx), with interests in the human aspects of crisis response; (4) **Martin Voss** of the Southeast Asian Studies University of Passau, Germany (martin.voss@uni-passau.de), with interests in theory, development contexts, disasters and globalization; and (5) **Bibhuti Bhusan Gadnayak** of NISWASS, Orissa, India (bbgadnayak@rediffmail.com), with interests in disaster management under crisis conditions. I would like to welcome the new members to our Network and look forward to their contributions to the Network's activities. The names, affiliation, disaster interests and full contact details of the new members not yet posted in our webpage membership list will be posted, along with the publication of the December 2006 E-Newsletter in our website.
4. Missing Helsinki 2001 conference papers. The missing full papers for Session VI ("Disaster and Development: A Vital Connection") of the D&SCRN have been loaded on our website. We now have the complete set of downloadable full papers for Session VI. Thanks to Tibor Abheuer for noting the gap and to Maureen Fordham for locating and sending me the missing papers.
5. Updating of our Network's webpage links. I have not yet updated our webpage links because I have not received a response from members of the Coordinating Committee and the members of our Network with regard to new links. I am republishing the call for webpage links before I proceed to the updating: "Following a validation of our existent website and e-mail links, I discovered that 18 of the 31 webpage links and several of the e-mails in our links page were no longer active. This does not mean that these disaster organizations have ceased their activities. Most likely they have undergone changes. An attempt will be made to update the links of existent organizations with ongoing activities. In the meantime, I invite the members of the Coordinating Committee and all the members of D&SCRN to send us webpage links to organizations, academic and research institutions, civil protection NGOs, periodicals, journals, data bases and networks dealing with social, economic, legal, political and psychological aspects of disasters and social crises. The webpage links should be accompanied by a brief description of the organization (e.g. title, affiliation, country etc.)." Prospective members are urged to spell out their affiliation and not provide only an abbreviation which may not be known to all our members.
6. New page in D&SCRN Webpage. Following upon a proposal by our Coordinator, Philip Buckle, a new page has been added to the D&SCRN webpage with the title, "Calls and Announcements". The purpose of this new page is to facilitate the publication of urgent calls for contributions, announcements and other relevant news that come up between the publication of the quarterly electronic newsletter and demand the immediate attention of the Network members. The new page features the D&SCRN general call for contributions to the 8th ESA Glasgow Conference as well as the call for contributions to a joint session between the D&SCRN and the Sociology of Risk and Uncertainty Network for the above conference.

Disaster and Social Crisis Research Network: ESA 2007

The purpose of the Disaster & Social Crisis Research Network (DSCRN) is to promote the study, research and analysis of "natural", "technological" and "social" disasters with a view to contributing to the development of disaster-resilient European communities and preventing or mitigating the human, economic, social, cultural and psychological effects of disasters. The DSCRN's website is <http://www.erc.gr/english/d&scrn/>

We are calling for abstracts to be submitted for the 8th ESA Conference in Glasgow in September 2007. The conference general theme is "Conflict, Citizenship and Civil Society." Abstracts should be submitted by 28 February 2007. If you have any queries please contact the DSCRN's co-ordinator, Philip Buckle, on philip.buckle@gmail.com.

Proposed themes include:

- Disaster, crisis, society and community: re-examining central concepts
- Globalisation and disaster: threats, trends and responses
- Climate change, risk and society

We welcome proposals for additional session themes, as far as they can be accommodated in the conference schedule. Authors from countries within and outside of Europe are very welcome to participate.

Abstracts should be submitted through the ESA conference website <http://www.esa8thconference.com> before 28 February 2007. They should include: name(s) and affiliation(s) of the author(s); contact details of presenting author (postal address, telephone, email address); title of proposed presentation; and an abstract of the paper of 150-200 words.

Abstracts will be reviewed by a panel according to the following criteria:

- Will the paper make an original and meaningful contribution to current debates about disaster, crisis and society?
- Is it clear from the abstract from what research the evidence is derived and what conclusions are drawn for debates about disaster, crisis and society?
- If the paper presents new theoretical considerations: is it clear which existing theories and concepts the paper is discussing and what new considerations will be added to the debate?

"Sociology of Disasters and Social Crises versus Sociology of Risk and Uncertainty: Convergences and Divergences"

Is there a substantive qualitative difference among the Sociology of Disasters and Social Crisis and the Sociology of Risk and Uncertainty? While from the view of 'sociological practice', there seems to be an evolution from 'disaster'-management to 'crisis'-management and 'risk'-management the question arises whether a respective change in theorizing provides us with added value for research and practice.

The traditional sociologists of 'disaster', influenced mainly by the mainstream functionalist tradition, have usually dealt with 'natural' and 'technological' risks on a collective level as if these events occurred outside of society. Sociologists of 'social crises', influenced principally by the symbolic interaction and social constructionist perspectives, have maintained that risks, whether 'natural' (e.g. earthquakes), 'technological' (e.g. nuclear reactor accident) or 'social' (e.g. terrorism), constitute types of social crises-albeit on a collective level.

Sociologists of 'risk and uncertainty' approach risk problems in a societal perspective. Influenced by a range of socio-cultural or societal approaches from 'risk and culture' via the 'risk society' to the 'governmentality approach' and even 'systems theory' they share some of the perspectives with the disasters approach. But they are not restricted to disasters but examine all sorts of issues of risk-taking and management of uncertainty (for example unemployment, health and illness, marriage, war on terror, genetically modified food, insurance). In so doing they emphasize the social processes which select, construct and constitute problems of risk and uncertainty, either on the social macro- or micro-level.

The main purpose - and challenge - for the contributors to this joint session is to show differences and similarities between these perspectives in order to provide theorizing and practice with valuable insights.

Abstracts should be submitted through the ESA conference website <http://www.esa8thconference.com> before 28 February 2007. They should include: name(s) and affiliation(s) of the author(s); contact details of presenting author (postal address, telephone, email address); title of proposed presentation; and an abstract of the paper of 150-200 words.

Chairs: Nicholas Petropoulos, Emergencies Research Center of Athens, (erc@otenet.gr) and Jens O. Zinn, Social Contexts and Responses to Risk network (SCARR), University of Kent, (j.zinn@kent.ac.uk).

XVII World Congress of Sociology

In 1998, the World Congress of Sociology was in Montreal, Canada. In 2002, it was in Brisbane, Australia. In 2006, it was in Durban, South Africa.

In 2010, it is coming back to Europe after a 16 year absence. (It was in Bielefeld, Germany, in 1994.) The location is Gothenburg, Sweden and the dates are July 11-17, 2010.

It's still a long way away but it's worth marking the dates in your calendar.

Many of those involved in the network have found it difficult to find sufficient funds to travel to Australia or South Africa. This should be much less of a problem with the Congress back in Europe.

Please let the organizers know if you have ideas for a session topic or simply plan to submit a paper.

The organizers are Joe Scanlon from Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada (jscanlon@ccs.carleton.ca) and Lori Peek at Colorado State University in Fort Collins in the USA (lori.peek@colostate.edu).

Disaster-related sessions are allocated based on how many persons belong both to the International Sociological Association and the International Research Committee on Disasters. The committee's new chair – he takes office in February – is Ron Perry of Arizona State University. He can be reached at Ron.Perry@asu.edu.

Writers' Corner

The Myth of 9/11, by Ilan Kelman

<http://www.ilankelman.org>

The horrendous terrorist attacks in the northeast USA on 11 September 2001 are frequently identified as indicating a paradigm shift in disaster risk reduction and disaster research. They are discussed as being unique, changing the world, epitomising the unforeseeability of events, and forcing us to think of disasters differently.

One author wrote "We didn't foresee – could probably never have foreseen – the eventuality of airplanes being used as missiles to take out civilian targets". Yet Adam Hall's novel "Quiller Solitaire" (William Morrow & Company, 1992) details such an attempt and Toronto's CN Tower and Paris' Eiffel Tower were both threatened by that possibility prior to 2001.

Meanwhile, we are told that 9/11 introduced amazing new challenges for disaster management. Yet many were addressed to some extent long beforehand. Mass casualty identification was written up following the 27 March 1977 jumbo jet collision on Tenerife. A 1988 paper is entitled "The collapse analysis of steel columns

in fire using a finite strip method". Much has been learned due to 9/11 (although not necessarily applied) but the challenges are hardly new, different, or unique.

Will the events of that day dictate how we prepare for and react to future disasters? In the USA, it will have an influence because of funding. Compare FEMA's budget with DHS' anti-terrorism budget. Compare the USA's 9/11 and terrorism research budget with the USA's ISDR contribution and research budget for non-terrorism disasters. Compare the funds available for addressing root causes of terrorism with the funds available for iris scanners at airports. 9/11 will influence views of disaster, but by a deliberate choice to make that happen, not from any inherent 9/11 characteristics.

9/11 was no more complex than hospitals in Niue (South Pacific) and St. Kitts (Caribbean) being destroyed by cyclones only to be reconstructed in the same locations and then destroyed by later cyclones. 9/11 killed no more people than several individual heat waves and earthquakes over the past decade. 9/11 affected almost as many people as some pandemics – but only through the American government's decision to close American air space. 9/11 was an unacceptable, despicable, human action – as have been all the other unacceptable, despicable, human actions which continue to kill millions through disease, drought, famine, floods, environmental degradation, poverty, injustice, and inequality.

9/11 was a catastrophe. 9/11 shows the worst that humanity offers. But it will change our fundamental views of disaster risk reduction only if we are blinded to the worst that humanity offers on a daily basis.

Interdisciplinarity in addiction and social crisis studies, by Charalambos Tsekeris *

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The Summer Institute on Alcohol, Drugs and Addiction will be held at the International School for Humanities and Social Sciences of the Universiteit van Amsterdam, July 8-20, 2007 (<http://www.ishss.uva.nl/addiction>). The Summer Institute offers students of various disciplines and professions a great opportunity to advance their knowledge in the field of addiction studies in an international environment. The Institute is an intensive two-week summer programme that seeks to provide an interdisciplinary approach to the study of addiction and to promote opportunities for international networking among participants. This announcement turns my thoughts towards my personal experience in coping with similar problems, that is, my practical work-placement, which had been located in the Hellenic Centre for Intercultural Psychiatry and Care (HCIPC), Athens, Greece. The HCIPC (a non-governmental, non-profit-making organisation) constitutes a multidimensional project of combating social exclusion

in the context of substance abuse and promoting harm and risk reduction (preventing the transmission of infectious diseases).

In a harm and risk reduction context, services include needle exchange programmes, safe use and safe sex advice, counselling, psychosocial support, motivation to seek treatment, coverage of basic hygiene needs, user referral to treatment programmes, information on the services provided by various health service providers, support during crisis situations, and prescription of methadone. Such projects are quite common in EU Member States. In a macro-level, the project promotes the development of social structures and networks which will improve living standards and conditions for socially excluded and ethnic minority groups. Such an experience surely strengthens certain theoretical assumptions.

The acute and pressing problems of contemporary society can only be solved by applying highly interdisciplinary approaches (for instance, problems such as AIDS and substance abuse are neither purely medical nor purely social; they are sociomedical problems) and by mixing different cultural perspectives. Additionally, it is very difficult to pose clear-cut distinctions between technological, natural, and social problems, crises and disasters, as demonstrated by the recent sociological studies on technoscience. In sum, interdisciplinarity appears as the best methodological practice in social crisis and disaster prevention and recovery.

* Charalambos Tsekeris graduated from Brunel University (2000) and earned his doctoral degree in Sociology from Athens Panteion University (2006). He is currently dealing with the complex relationships between technoscience, risk culture and politics.

Members' publications

Naim Kapucu

Assistant Professor, University of Central Florida
<http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~nkapucu>

Kapucu, Naim. "Emergency Logistics Planning," *The Journal of Emergency Management*. Forthcoming.

F. Necati Catbas, Melih Susoy, and Naim Kapucu. (2007). "Structural Health Monitoring for Improving Transportation Security: Case Study for Bridges," *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management*. Forthcoming.

Shawn (XiaoHu) Wang and Kapucu, Naim. (2007). "Public Complacency under Repeated Emergency Threats: Some Empirical Evidence," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory (JPART)*. (Submitted on March 8 2006, revised and resubmitted on July 6 2006.). Forthcoming.

Kapucu, Naim. (2007). "Examining the National Response Plan in Response to a Catastrophic Disaster: Hurricane Katrina in 2005," *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*, Volume 24 (August) (2): XXX*XXX. Forthcoming.

Kapucu, Naim. (2007). "Better Community Organizing, Better Public Emergency Preparedness: Evidence from 2004 Hurricanes in Florida," *Disasters: The Journal of Disaster Studies, Policy, and Management*. Forthcoming.

Events coming up

Please make sure to confirm dates and locations with the respective events' managers.

8th Conference of the European Sociological Association



Conflict, Citizenship and Civil Society

September 3-6, 2007

Glasgow, UK

www.esa8thconference.com

28th International Disaster Management Conference



February 8-11, 2007

Orlando, USA

<http://www.enlrc.org/disaster2007.htm>

SCARR Conference on "Risk & Rationalities"



March 29-31, 2007

Cambridge, UK

<http://www.kent.ac.uk/scarr/events/rrcontext.htm>

2007 SEA Annual Meeting

Society for Economic Anthropology

The Political Economy of Hazards and Disasters

April 13-14, 2007

Greensboro, North Carolina

<http://sea.org.ohio-state.edu/2007meeting.htm>

EGU General Assembly 2007



European Geosciences Union

Economical aspects in risk management of natural hazards

April 14-20, 2007

Vienna, Austria

<http://meetings.copernicus.org/egu2007>

15th World Congress on Disaster and Emergency Medicine



15th World Congress on Disaster and Emergency Medicine

May 13-16, 2007

Amsterdam, The Netherlands

<http://www.wcdem2007.org>

2nd International Conference on Environmental Economic Geography (ICEEG)



Regional Sustainability in a Global Context

May 21-24, 2007

Storrs, USA

<http://geog.uconn.edu/ICEEG>

Biannual Meeting of the German Geographers



Dealing with risks – Catastrophes, destabilization and security

September 29 – October 5, 2007

Bayreuth, Germany

<http://geographentag-bayreuth.de>

The D&SCRN Electronic Newsletter

This is the quarterly electronic newsletter of the Disaster & Social Crisis Research Network. The purpose of the D&SCRN is to promote the study, research and analysis of “natural”, “technological” and “social” disasters with a view to contributing to the development of disaster resilient European communities, and preventing or mitigating the human, economic, social, cultural and psychological effects of crises and disasters.

The D&SCRN Electronic Newsletter is published four times a year (March, June, September and December). The previously published newsletters are downloadable at the network's new webpage www.erc.gr/english/d&scrn.

Announcements of conferences, book, film, and CD-ROM reviews, reportage on conferences, disaster diaries, brief articles on best or worst practices in disaster prevention and recovery, commentaries on disasters and crises, human interest stories relevant to disasters, etc. should be sent electronically to the editor, Eduardo Runte (efarunte@hotmail.com) no later than the first of the month of publication. Contributions to the newsletter should preferably be written in a concise format (½-1 page long maximum) in order to make reading comprehensive albeit focused.

Relevant contributions from the field of disaster and crisis research, as well as from applied disaster and crisis management practice, are most welcome!

All “signed” texts express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of the editor or those of the D&SCRN.

Philip Buckle, D&SCRN Coordinator

Eduardo Runte, E-Newsletter Editor