

Disaster & Social Crisis Research Network Electronic Newsletter

Nº. 35, July – September, 2008

<http://dscrn.cindy.ensmp.fr/>

Coordinator's Report

Susann Ullberg

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Dear D&SCRN members and colleagues, greetings to all of you from the south of the south! In Argentina we are enjoying spring a wonderful weather and beautiful trees in blossom, but also fearing increasing inflation and new shortages of food as well as fuel due to the current conflict between the agricultural producers and the national government. This conflict is embedded in a larger context of different economic and political interests, not only at a national level but within a complex web of international connections. This occurs furthermore in the midst of a world financial crisis whose global repercussions are yet to be seen. The sense of being at the mercy of “invisible hands” when it comes to crises (of the market or nature alike) is sometimes overwhelming, but we shouldn't forget that there is a political side to it, just as Ilan Kelman underscored in his article in the last issue of the newsletter. It is very much up to ourselves, as citizens, scholars, decision makers, neighbours, parents and fellow human beings, to decide how we want our local communities, national societies and this world to be. Let's do our share here as academics and practitioners!

The D&SCRN is a space to exchange ideas and experiences on how to cope with, mitigate and reduce risk of disasters and crises for communities worldwide. I am pleased to see that every issue of our newsletter has interesting contributions from members and colleagues all over the world, such as those of the last issue by Ilan, Sumana Sanyal and Dikaios Sakellariou, that not only inform us about disasters taking place, but that also provokes us to

think about how to analyze them in order to act upon them.

One such project is that of Dikaios, as you could read in the last issue of our newsletter. I had the pleasure to meet Dikaios personally at the 10th Biennial Conference of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA) held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, last August. He presented a very nice poster on his upcoming research in Greece and he also participated in the workshop “Experiencing calamity, expressing the unthinkable” that my Argentine colleague Sergio Visacovsky and myself had convened. In spite of some last minute dropouts, due to family and personal reasons, but thanks to the entry as a co-chair of Nina Gren, we had the pleasure to moderate the presentations of five very interesting papers. These ranged from how Palestinian refugees in the West Bank made sense of their recent experiences of violence and insecurity through moral narratives and practices (Nina Gren), how Old Colony Mennonites in Bolivia and Argentina imagine the end of times (Lorenzo Cañas Bottos), how people experiences of physical pain and loss in post-Soviet Chechnya (Mantas Kvedaravicius), how violence, fear and loss remembered and expressed by people in different social contexts in Kosovo (Karin Norman), and how subjective experience of floods is collectively expressed by way of social mobilization in Santa Fe, Argentina (myself). Our D&SCRN colleague Sandrine Revet, who unfortunately couldn't participate, sent her paper “The meaning of the disaster: Three scenarios for La Tragedia, Venezuela 1999” and it was distributed among the participants. The workshop lasted an entire day of conference and was on the whole a very fruitful exchange of research results and analytical possibilities. For those interested to hear more about this workshop, either contact me directly or check out the conference web page at www.easa2008.eu.

This leads me to think about our upcoming ESA conference in Lisbon next year on September 2nd - 5th, 2009. I have been approached already by members in our network to hear more about it. Well, now is the time! The overall theme of the conference is “European Society or European Societies?” and

aims at directing discussions to issues of European homogeneity or increasing heterogeneity in terms of class, ethnicity, and religion, e t c. There is as always a vast amount of relevant topics to arrange discussions around, beginning with the conference theme which opens up for a comparative perspective in a number of areas related to disaster and crisis research. I have also suggested earlier to organize a session on disasters and the role of mass media for example. In accordance with the Coordinating Committee I have also approached some of the other ESA research networks to explore the possibilities of arranging some joint sessions. I will of course keep you posted on how these discussions develop. Thus, **I hereby want to invite and encourage all members and colleagues of the D&SCRN to submit proposals for sessions.** All proposals will be considered! The Coordinating Committee will evaluate the proposals and then issue the call for papers. Below is the call for session proposals and all the details (see “Upcoming events and calls for papers” on page 5). We look forward to your proposal!

All the best from Argentina //Susann

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Editor's Note

Eduardo Runte

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Dear D&SCRN members and colleagues,

This is the third issue of the Disaster & Social Crisis Research Network Electronic Newsletter in 2008. It covers the period from June to September.

The past three months saw the beginning of the worldwide crisis in the financial markets, the South Ossetia war, the effective re-activation of the United States' 4th Fleet (Central and South America), and numerous other events that should be of both concern and interest to us as researchers and practitioners in the

field of disaster and social crisis.

In this issue of our newsletter, you will find Lt. Col. Monnappa's story of his discovery of a little known Indian deity – a disaster deity! We have also scooped from the internet a few conferences and seminars about disasters, crises, safety... But I direct your attention to the **call for sessions** mentioned by the D&SCRN Coordination. The network will be responsible for a number of sessions during the ESA 9th Conference in Lisbon, 2009, and we need your input!

Sincerely,

Eduardo

D&SCRN Web Manager report (July – September, 2008)

Eduardo Runte

dscrn.website@gmail.com

- 1. Updates:** (1) Dr. Martin Voss (Germany) has changed his physical and email addresses; (2) Dikaios Sakallariou (UK) has changed his email address; (3) Dr. Adi Fahrudin (Indonesia, Malaysia) has changed his email address and professional affiliation. These changes will be posted on our website at <http://dscrn.cindy.ensmp.fr> within a few days.
- 2. Website.** Our website has been added to the “resources list” of the Canadian Centre for Emergency Preparedness at <http://www.ccep.ca>.

Writers' Corner

The Disaster Deity

By Lt. Col. K. C. Monnappa

monaps1@gmail.com

It was ostensibly to check the readiness and to liaise with the district authorities for disaster preparedness that I and a clueless party of ten set out. The journey encompassed visiting the vulnerable coastal districts.

The coastal area of AP is notorious for its cyclones. It has a long and torturous past where cyclones and floods are concerned. It has experienced more than 71 cyclones in the past 115 years, each causing colossal damage and destruction to life and property.

The team and I meandered from one officialese briefing to another. The obvious irony though could not be avoided. Though most coastal communities were living in thatched dwellings, they were not necessarily poor. More lives were lost in the past due to the lack of communication and infrastructure, however, livelihoods never collapsed owing to their strong social structure. The strong social structure coupled with a robust means of livelihood ensured that the community had evolved a

natural coping mechanism where disasters were concerned.



Unfortunately, the centuries old tradition slowly ebbed as one witnessed the rampant mushrooming of roadside illegal liquor vendors springing to life, when the fishermen returned after a hectic and weary day at sea. The concept of responsible drinking probably never existed in their lexicon. True, one definitely cannot fathom the depredations that they suffer owing to the harsh conditions out there in the deep sea (Old man and the sea??? anyone?? Papa Hemingway??) and like so many of us, one would not like to grudge the fisherman's *stairway to heaven* by indulging in Bacchus's brew, no, definitely not, but what one saw was a crass form of binge drinking which led to petty fights over mundane issues. Such bouts of binge drinking have led to many a fisher-folk leading a life of penury. This also made them vulnerable. It further weakened the social bonding amongst the community members, thereby corroding the social structure from within. The community in modern times always finds itself in doldrums after a disaster.

As we moved into the hinterland, disaster presented itself in another form. In the form of floods. Due to the severe cyclone, the accompanying storm surge causes the rivers to swell and overflow.

We were now in the catchment area of the mighty Godavari. She from times immemorial had been the boon and the bane of the people inhabiting the fertile banks of this mighty river. In order to tame her, a modern dam (a temple of modern India???) straddles across the river at Dowlaiswaram. As we marveled at the mighty behemoth, I chanced upon a beautifully constructed stone and wooden roofed tenement on the near side of the river bank, which was in stark contrast with the other buildings nearby. The wooden roof was painted a crimson red and the stone walls wore a steel grey hue. Curious, I asked the accompanying protocol official (deputed to conduct the team) as to what the strange edifice was all about. He explained that it was a museum dedicated in honour of the deity who built the first barrage to tame the river. A deity? As in a supernatural being? He gave a wise smile and answered in the affirmative pointing to broken masonry that was strewn all around down river. He then took us to a spot where the old barrage (anicut in the local lingo) still

stood, defying the depredations of nature. It clearly stood apart. It was astounding to see the skill and architectural beauty of the ancient barrage or what was left of it. The new dam on the backdrop stood like an unfeeling concrete and steel beast, imposing and cold.

The mystery shrouding the deity coupled with natural curiosity tugged the by now weary legs (giving it a new lease of life) towards the museum. The curiosity and awe gave way to sarcasm when I set eyes on what was a crude statue of a European gentleman (in the characteristic pose struck by all Englishmen, posing for a statue).

I glanced at my old guide and asked him, with a hint of sarcasm, if this was the deity he was alluding to. He smiled and nodded his head like a man who had heard the same comment before. He took no offense. Rather calmly he proceeded to recount an old and strange tale which he said he had heard from his forefathers and village elders. The European gent was an architect by the name of Capt. Sir Arthur Cotton.

The river Godavari, as explained earlier, was both a boon and bane to its children residing on its banks. The inhabitants were able to lead a meager existence (after paying taxes to the East India Company) by cultivating the fertile plains adjacent to the river. Owing to its plentiful water during rain, the river swelled to bursting point and flooded large swathes of land bringing death and destruction to the by now weary inhabitants who were resigned to their fate and blamed the periodic floods as destiny which their forefathers had faced and they too would have to face.

The receding floods as a parting gift left mineral rich silt that helped the beleaguered farmers who generally lost all their meager possessions to again to cultivate enough for survival. Storing and building large granaries was useless as the next year's floods would anyway destroy everything. Then came drought. The never failing rains failed when most unexpected leaving the farmers totally at the mercy of the British East India Company.

The area was declared as famine affected by the East India Company's administrators. The people were dying in thousands. The Company officials bore the brunt as this caused a huge dent in their profit margins and the shareholders back in Mother England were baying for their blood. Something had to be done quickly before their myopic mentors back home would choke their money supply and kill what was otherwise a *golden egg laying goose*.

After a lot of debate, a solution in the form of hiring the services of a young British adventurer called Capt. Arthur Cotton was arrived at. He was a trained engineer. The young captain was given the onerous task of devising a durable solution to tame the river, so as to fill up the Company's coffers and ah, also to put an end to the misery of the Natives. The brave captain then

embarked upon a journey that was to change the lives and fortune of the riverside inhabitants and their progeny forever.

The Godavari basin is characterized by high and steep mountains along its banks in most of the places and as road communication was non-existent in those days, the good captain had to carry out his survey single handed with rudimentary equipment on horse back surviving on local bananas, that grew in plenty in the region.

Legend has it that during one of his surveys, he chanced upon a Brahmin on the banks of the Godavari chanting a strange mantra which went something like *'om cotton ain ne namah'*. This, when the Brahmin who was leading a secluded life hadn't even heard of the Englishman!!! So the future of the Englishman was already predicted.

Finally the arduous survey came to fruition when the captain chanced upon on what he thought was the ideal spot. The place that he chose for his anicut was Dowlaiswaram. After years of back breaking labour, an anicut was finally built across the Godavari to tame her.

The function of the anicut was simple. It basically consisted of a wall like structure built on the bed (when the river was dry) with a portion of the wall raised so that it jutted of the water. When the river flowed, the anicut acted as a barrage and ensured that only a portion of water that was above the level of the anicut was able to flow out to the sea. The portion of water below the anicut was always available for the farmers for irrigation and drinking etc even when there was no rainfall during the season.

Capt. Arthur Cotton had indeed changed the economic condition of the inhabitants leading them to view him as god's messiah who had delivered them from a life of penury. Soon he came to be viewed as a deity and a small temple was built in his honour where the thankful people could offer their gratitude in the form of prayers.

The museum also houses a painting where a benevolent Cotton gazes down on the hapless natives with his armed wide open. Reminds of a certain other messiah who did the same eons ago... doesn't it? Well and why not? Capt. Sir Cotton could certainly be named as the first disaster manager of modern India ...albeit a British ... knowing the penchant of hindus to honour anything or anyone that touches their heart... deification is just a way of life. Another one added to the huge pantheon of gods and goddesses!!! India's only disaster deity I think!!!!

About the author:

Lt. Col. K. C. Monnappa is a Disaster Mitigation professional. He is an MA in Social Work from the prestigious Delhi University, India. He has published a book on Disaster Preparedness and has been a regular contributor of articles to various professional journals.

He has wide ranging experience in dealing with both man-made and natural disasters and was a consultant to Oxfam India Trust during the tsunami disaster that struck the coasts of Tamil Nadu and Andamans. He helped the organization in implementing various disaster relief programmes and also helped in its evaluation and assessment. He has also conducted various training programmes and workshops to help spread disaster awareness in schools, colleges and professional institutes.

Resources

New Website on "Disasters and Social Conflicts"



Following the dissolution of the Emergencies Research Center (ERC) of Athens in January 2007, the Emergencies Research Center's URL address (www.erc.gr), which hosted the D&SCRN's webpage for the period 2004-2007, was transferred and became the URL of a new website organized, administered and sponsored by Dr. Nicholas Petropoulos, ERC's former Scientific Director.

The new website maintains the interest in "natural" and "tehnological" disasters but also adds the dimension of "social conflicts", in view of the fact that social conflicts (e.g. wars) often have more serious consequences than either "natural" or "technological" disasters and also in view of the sponsor's long-term interests in the world peace movement. In addition, the new website is bilingual, with an English and a Greek page, in order to promote communication and exchange of know-how between Greek and foreign social scientists/scholars working in the area of disasters and social conflicts and also contribute to a better organization of Greek civil protection.

Colleagues can learn more about the structure, the categories of disaster and the types of conflict, as well as the objectives of the revised website and the criteria for submitting materials, by going to the central page of the website (www.erc.gr). The website is in the process of development and most pages are still under construction. Aside from the publication of the administrator's relevant research materials on disasters and social conflicts, the website also welcomes theoretical, empirical or policy materials – either in Greek or in English- that have made or promise to make a *critical difference* in civil protection and the promotion of non-violent conflict resolution through an analysis and attack of the root causes of conflict and the adoption of non-violent methods, including the restructuring and strengthening of the role of the UN.

Two e-mails have been created, one for longer articles (<50 pages double-spaced) (em_text@erc.gr) to be

published in the regular pages of the website under the various categories of disaster and social conflict and another (em_bulletin@erc.gr) for brief articles/news/commentaries/reports etc. to be published in the website's bilingual electronic newsletter, the "Emergencies Bulletin". The "Emergencies Bulletin" will be published at least 3 times a year, with the first issue coming out in December 2008. Materials for the website can be submitted at anytime while materials for the "Emergencies Bulletin" may be submitted by November 15 for the Fall issue, March 15 for the Winter issue and by July 15 for the Spring issue. *Thus, the deadline for submitting materials for the first issue of the "Emergencies Bulletin" is November 15, 2008.* Materials published in the website will be accompanied by the author's (authors') name/names who will have the sole responsibility for the content of the texts.

Nicholas Petropoulos, Ph.D.

Sociologist

erc@otenet.gr

Ph.D. course in safety management/organization: Analyzing risk and safety - theoretical and methodological approaches

Academic Responsibility

- Professor Erik Hollnagel, Ecole des Mines/NTNU
- Professor Jan Hovden, NTNU
- Professor Per Morten Schiefloe, NTNU

Target Groups

- Ph.D. students within HES (health, environment and safety) and related fields, with background in social sciences or technology;
- Ph.D. students in organization;
- Max. number of participants: 16.

Dates

- Session 1: NTNU, Trondheim, 03-05/02/2009
- Session 2: Ecole des Mines, Sophia Antipolis/Nice, 21-23/04/2009

Evaluation

The course is worth 10 credit points. For credit points to be awarded, students must participate in both sessions and have a term paper/article draft approved. This shall aim for international publication. Plans for term paper to be discussed in session 1 and a draft to be presented in session 2.

Session 1 (preliminary program)

Day 1: Theoretical and methodological approaches to mapping and analyzing safety on different levels –

individual, organizational, societal;

Day 2: Presentation and discussion of recent empirical examples of causal analysis and safety appraisals;

Day 3: (1) Workshop: safety challenges in Integrated Operations in the Oil&Gas industry. (2) Preliminary presentations of plans for papers.

Session 2 (preliminary program)

Days 1 and 2: Resilience Engineering: theoretical and methodological approaches for the development of safe operations;

Days 2 and 3: Presentation and discussion of article drafts.

Application

By e-mail to torun.lovseth@svt.ntnu.no, stating theme of Ph.D. thesis and information on academic background;

Deadline: 10/12/2008

Questions? Contact perms@svt.ntnu.no

Upcoming Events & Calls for Papers

3rd Symposium on Resilience Engineering

October 28 – 30, 2008

Antibes-Juan-les-Pins, France

The term Resilience Engineering represents a new way of thinking about safety. Whereas established risk management approaches are based on hindsight and emphasise error tabulation and calculation of failure probabilities, Resilience Engineering looks for ways to enhance the ability of organizations to create processes that are robust yet flexible, to monitor and revise risk models, and to use resources proactively in the face of disruptions or ongoing production and economic pressures. In Resilience Engineering failures do not stand for a breakdown or malfunctioning of normal system functions, but rather represent the converse of the adaptations necessary to cope with the real world complexity. Individuals and organizations must always adjust their performance to the current conditions; and because resources and time are finite it is inevitable that such adjustments are approximate. Success has been ascribed to the ability of groups, individuals, and organizations to anticipate the changing shape of risk before damage occurs; failure is simply the temporary or permanent absence of that.

Point of contact

symposium@resilience-engineering.org

Look for updates at

www.resilience-engineering.org

World Conference of Humanitarian Studies

4-8 February 2009

Groningen, The Netherlands

Update

As we speak, we have received many, many paper abstracts for the World Conference of Humanitarian Studies 2009. We are very grateful for the interest shown in the conference. However, many panel organizers as well as interested colleagues/participants have indicated to be still working on their paper abstracts. For the success of the conference, we really want to take these valuable contributions on board as well. Therefore, we have decided to extend the deadline for the delivery of paper abstracts to the 30th of October.

So please go to www.humanitarianstudies2009.org and submit a 250-word abstract in one of the panels.

Conference topic

Humanitarian crises caused by conflict or natural disaster have increasingly become the subject of study of a range of disciplines, including international relations, international law, development studies, anthropology, conflict studies, and forced migration studies. In addition, new research groups are being formed that focus especially on humanitarian action. In particular, the present growth of these fields in countries regularly struck by crises is significant. Yet, there is no venue where these scholarly communities can debate their different insights and understanding of humanitarian crises, in dialogue with policy actors and implementing agencies. The Universities of Bochum, Groningen and Wageningen therefore organise the first world conference of humanitarian studies.

Since the early 1990s, the manifestations and understandings of humanitarian crises have changed constantly: From post-Cold War optimism to caution when numerous intra-state conflicts started and/or ended, to become dominated by the Global War on Terror and its grand conflicts. Recurring droughts and climate change have altered our perception of disasters from sudden and exceptional events to repeating or chronic forms of crises. Response mechanisms to humanitarian crises have likewise undergone rapid developments, ranging from new forms of integrated response combining diplomatic, military and development approaches; new judicial instruments including the International Criminal Court and UN-Resolution 1325 that advances women's leadership in the resolution of crises, and – in the domain of natural disasters – mounting attention for disaster preparedness. Humanitarian action has become highly professionalized, yet continues to be beset by challenges

including the positioning of principled humanitarian aid in relation to other interventions, flaws in the infrastructures of aid, and the coordination of the numerous old and new actors that have entered the scene. Media attention has become more critical, and populations receiving aid have frequently become sceptical about its results.

Although humanitarian studies are part of many different academic domains, we propose to define the nascent field as mono- or multi-disciplinary studies that analyze

- the causes, dynamics and effects of humanitarian crises (conflict and/ or natural disaster);
- the politics and discourses of humanitarian crises;
- the responses to crises, including local coping practices as well as political, military and humanitarian interventions; the dynamics of humanitarian response policies, programmes and organizations;
- the processes of rehabilitation, and the linkages with development, peace-building, and security;
- the legal issues pertaining to humanitarian affairs;
- the experiences and lifeworlds of refugees and internally displaced people, and the refugee regimes employed towards them.

There are – fortunately – no uniform methodological or theoretical approaches to the study of humanitarian crises. Yet, calls for more reflection about humanitarian action abound and criticism is common. There remains a dire need for independent, in-depth research into the realities of humanitarian crises. Much research takes place at the policy level; implementation processes and local aspects urgently require more attention. Most of the humanitarian scholars are based in the North, outside of the main crisis areas, thus replicating some of the shortcomings of humanitarian policy.

The World Conference of Humanitarian Studies provides a meeting ground of these different scholars and practitioners. It aims to reflect one of the key characteristics of humanitarian studies: the close collaboration and dialogue with policy makers and practitioners. Hence, it is open to participation by all these groups, provided that participants present papers. As a World Conference, it aims to establish a global representation of humanitarian studies and foster interdisciplinary debate on a grand scale. Its central aims are

- to provide a meeting ground for academic communities and practitioners concerned with in-depth research on humanitarian issues;

- to take stock of the current theory, debates, and issues of humanitarian studies;
- to reflect on current practice and identify opportunities for improving humanitarian practice; and
- to involve Southern scholars and practitioners more strongly into humanitarian politics, responses, debates, and studies.

Important dates

15 June - 30 October - submission of paper abstracts

1 October - 31 October - early bird registration

1 January 2009 - close of registration

Contact Information

info@humanitarianstudies2009.org

<http://www.humanitarianstudies2009.org/>

SRA 2009 Annual Meeting

28th June - 1st July, 2009

Karlstad, Sweden



Society for Risk Analysis Europe



From the everyday to the extraordinary: challenges for risk analysis and management

The 18th SRA-Europe Annual Meeting will take place between 28th June – 1st July 2009 in Karlstad, Sweden.

The conference theme will span across a broad range of issues from everyday risks to extraordinary events. The conference aims to provide a forum for traditional SRA themes such as risk identification, quantification and mitigation, risk perception and communication, policy making and legislation, as well as opening up for new risk-related topics.

Conference theme and aims

The Society for Risk Analysis (SRA) is a multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, scholarly international society that provides an open forum for all those who are interested in risk analysis. Risk analysis is broadly defined to include risk assessment, risk characterization, risk communication and perception, risk management and risk policy. It may concern individuals, public and private organizations, and society at a local regional, national or global level. SRA-Europe is a regional organization of the Society for Risk Analysis.

The 2009 conference of SRA-Europe will take place in

Karlstad, Sweden. The conference theme will span across a broad range of issues from everyday risks to extraordinary events. The conference aims to provide a forum for traditional SRA themes such as risk identification, quantification and mitigation, risk perception and communication, policy making and legislation, as well as opening up for new risk-related topics. The conference aims to facilitate interaction among all players in the risk field: risk experts from all disciplines, and risk stakeholders as policy makers, the private sector, NGOs and other interest groups.

Specific topics

The conference will be a forum for presentations on existing and emerging risk issues, from all related research disciplines. Presentations in the following areas are particularly welcomed:

- *Everyday risks and prevention of injuries*: Issues here include identification and analysis of major determinants of injury mortality and morbidity and analysis of achievements in safety related work;
- *Management of natural risk and climate change*: From a European perspective, the major consequences of climate change will be negative. Vulnerability analyses, risk and disaster management strategies and conditions for learning and developing warning systems are pertinent topics here;
- *Disaster risk management in an international context*: This theme addresses the role of European stakeholders in supporting safe and secure societal systems in the developing world and the possible contributions of risk oriented research;
- *Future risks and technologies for security and safety*: The growing dependence on technical systems in critical infrastructures has resulted in growing risks in society. This theme calls for security risk assessment methods and experiences that contribute to increased confidence in and understanding of such technologies.

Conference activities

The conference will start on Sunday evening 28th June with an opening reception and will last through until lunch Wednesday 1st July. Each conference day will open up with a plenary session with keynote presentations and discussions, followed by parallel sessions including oral papers, round table discussions and symposia reflecting particular themes of interest. A special drinks and buffet poster session is planned on Monday evening. A conference dinner will take place on Tuesday evening, providing the delegates with an opportunity to enjoy the beautiful countryside and midsummer light in the county of Värmland. The conference language is English.

Organization and support

The conference will be co-hosted by Karlstad University, the Swedish National Defence College and the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency. The latter will be established 2009 and is the main sponsor of the event.

Location

The conference venue will be the new Technical Centre at Karlstad University (www.kau.se).

For more information

<http://sraeurope.org/>

D&SCRN Call for Session Proposals ESA 2009

September 2 – 5, 2009

Lisbon, Portugal



ESA RN 8 “Disaster and Social Crisis”

Call for Session Proposals

The topic of the Conference is “European Society or European Societies?” The aim is to consider whether we can look at European society as an increasingly cohesive entity or whether divisions of nation, class, ethnicity, region, gender and so on continue to be more salient. Traditionally, the nation state has been explicitly or implicitly the unit of analysis in European sociology. But is the nation state the most appropriate unit through which to explore European society or should we be trying to find other perspectives? This raises the issue of whether there is convergence or divergence between regions in the European area. A particular focus of the Conference will be upon the role of sociology in helping to understand the European area and how sociologists from different countries and different traditions can work together to meet this challenge

The purpose of the ESA Research Network 8 ‘Disaster and Social Crisis’ 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 D&SCRN Coordinating Committee invites all members and colleagues to the network to **submit proposals for sessions** to be held at this conference. Abstracts should be submitted no later than **December**

13th 2008. We welcome all proposals but particularly such that engage with the conference theme, with key theoretical issues in this field of research and/or with pressing problems in the field of disaster and crisis policies and practices.

Members and colleagues from countries within and outside of Europe are very welcome to participate. If you have any queries please contact the D&SCRN's coordinator, Susann Ullberg, at susann.ullberg@fhs.se.

Disaster Management 2009

September 23 – 25, 2009

New Forest, UK



Introduction

Recently, there has been a disturbing increase in the number of natural disasters affecting millions of people, destroying property and resulting in loss of human life. These events include major flooding, hurricanes, earthquakes and many others.

Today the world faces unparalleled threats from human-made disasters that can be attributed to failure of industrial and energy installations as well as terrorism. Added to this is the unparalleled threat of emerging and re-emerging diseases, with scientists predicting events such as an influenza pandemic.

Human made and natural disasters in 2004 were estimated to have claimed tens of thousands of lives worldwide with economic losses in the order of US\$100 billion. The year 2005 further tested the international relief community with ‘unparalleled frequency and scale of natural disaster’; Hurricane Katrina alone having destroyed 300,000 homes, displaced 770,000 people, and cost US \$200 billion. Figures for 2006 and 2007 follow similar patterns.

All these events pose unprecedented risks to human health on a world scale which requires a massive effort by the international community. This conference therefore focuses on current global health risks, and how best to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters in order to reduce human health impacts.

It will help participants to understand the nature of global risks, learn risk management strategies to prepare for disruptive events, and identify the best prevention methods in disaster management and public health. It will provide a forum for the exchange of information between leading academics and partners in disaster

management.

Topics

- Global risks and health
- Chemical emergencies
- Extreme weather events
- Food and water safety
- Natural disasters
- Pandemics and biological threats
- Radiation emergencies
- Terrorism
- Offshore disasters
- Remote areas response
- Emergency preparedness and planning
- Risk mitigation
- Surveillance and early warning systems
- Disaster resilient communities
- Disaster epidemiology and assessment
- Disaster mental health
- Business continuity
- Human health economics
- Recent incidents and outbreaks
- Public health preparedness

Abstract and Paper Submission Information

Papers are invited on the topics outlined and others falling within the scope of the meeting. Abstracts of no more than 300 words should be submitted as soon as possible. Abstracts should clearly state the purpose, results and conclusions of the work to be described in the final paper.

We strongly encourage the submission of abstracts electronically, by clicking on the 'Submit an Abstract' button found at the top and bottom of this page. If you prefer, abstracts can be sent by email, fax or mail to the Conference Secretariat. Details can be found on the left side of this page. Please include your name, full address and conference topic on all submissions.

Final acceptance will be based on the full-length paper, which if accepted for publication, must be presented at the conference. To be fair to all participants, each registered delegate will only be able to submit one paper. The language of the conference will be English.

The paper deadline will be advised after submission of abstracts.

For more information

<http://www.wessex.ac.uk/09-conferences/disaster->

[management-2009-6.html](#)

XVII World Congress of Sociology

July 11 – 17, 2010

Gothenburg, Sweden

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 time 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 of the Research Committee on Disasters 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 took office in February – is Ron Perry of Arizona State University. He can be reached at Ron.Perry@asu.edu.

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 webpage: <http://dscrn.cindy.ensmp.fr/>.

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 (dscrn.news@gmail.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. Ideas should be referenced (Author, year), but there is no need for complete reference list.

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 coordinator, the editor or of the D&SCRN.

Susann Ullberg, D&SCRN Coordinator

Eduardo Runte, E-Newsletter Editor