

RGS-IBG 2003 Annual Conference, London, 3-5 September

Environmental Risk Under Political Transition
Wednesday 3 September

Convenors: Mark Pelling (DARG), Jonathon Oldfield (PSGRG)

Environmental risk from technological, industrial or 'natural' sources is a constant and pressing concern with financial, human and ecological losses seen to be increasing rapidly. Received wisdom on environmental risk management places a strong emphasis on the role of popular participation and of civil society actors. This session drew together work conducted in states that are making or have recently made a transition from centralised towards democratic polities (Russia, China, Eastern Europe and a number of states from Latin America, Africa and Asia), and sought to identify key environmental risks and the challenges faced by stakeholders within evolving environmental risk management regimes.

Komal Aryal (University of Northumbria at Newcastle) discussed vulnerable peoples' perceptions of disaster and disaster management in a recently completed Community Development & Disaster Management Project in Nepal. The need for integration of indigenous coping practices with modern disaster management and developmental work was highlighted. **Jonathan Oldfield** (Queen Mary, University of London) reviewed existing data on environmental management and risk in the Russian Federation, and examined the capacity of state and non-state actors to respond to contemporary environmental risk. **Mark Pelling** (University of Liverpool) used case study evidence from the industrial region of Samara in the Russian Federation, to examine the intermediary pressures that act to separate citizens from formal citizenship rights and result in the unjust distribution of environmental risks. **Andy Gouldson** (London School of Economics and Political Science) focused on the influence of the 1998 Aarhus Convention in changing the EU policy regime for environmental regulation with a comparative study of multi-stakeholder participation from chemical complexes in Scotland and England. **Jeroen Warner** (Wageningen University, The Netherlands) offered a comparative critique of multi-stakeholder management from South Africa and Peru. Preliminary impressions suggested that multi-stakeholder approaches mainly develop when shocks such as disaster and political change create a sense of urgency, opening windows of opportunity for collaborative action.

Presenters:

Komal Aryal (Northumbria). Vulnerable peoples' perceptions of disaster and disaster management in Nepal

Jonathan Oldfield (QMC). Environmental risk in the Russian Federation.

Mark Pelling (Liverpool). Environmental citizenship and environmental justice in Samara, Russia

Andy Gouldson (LSE). Risk, regulation and the community 'right to know': assessing the impacts of access to information on local structures for corporate environmental governance.

Jeroen Warner (Wageningen). Participatory water resource management in Peru and South Africa