

Annual Association of American Geographers Meeting

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CALL FOR PAPERS: Social Geography of Risk: Which Approaches?

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ABSTRACT:

The possibility of developing an articulated set of approaches to assess the risk due to industrial activities or “natural” hazards opens the floor to an interesting list of questions. In fact, risk analysis has been dominated by engineering perspectives if not by a “culture of emergency” largely ignoring the human geography of a territory and the health conditions of its population. In the past decade many researchers have begun to rethink risk analysis, as well as the connections between mapping, circulating information and power relationships. Additionally, the emergence of the use of GIS offers new tools for reconsidering perception of risk, simulation of accidents, mobility and exposure of a population.

In this session we want to focus on the definition of risk, the way this category is constructed, through which relations and which spatialities is forged. Building on real case studies, we are interested in understanding the role of geographers and social scientists when investigating the “societies at risk” and the “vulnerable” groups.

Emerging issues in this area of work are related to the need to integrate environmental and social information and the fact that we have to face the implementation of complex investigations including among others: environmental measures, descriptive epidemiology, analytical studies, social surveys and GIS modeling.

This is a call for papers that examine and critically interrogate the spaces, politics, and praxes of geography when tackling “areas at risk”. We welcome theoretical or empirical studies.

Possible paper topics might include but are not limited to:

- The definition of risk
- Ontology of risk
- “Natural” vs “non-natural” risks
- Industrial risk
- Risk perception
- Risk and environmental practices, landscapes, ideologies of nature, etc.
- Vulnerability modeling
- Multidisciplinary social approaches of risks
- The power relations of communications that build “risk”
- The different scales and possibilities to map risks
- The artificial barrier between human and physical geography in the field of risk studies
- The political implications of theoretical assumptions and the limitations and possibilities of the role of experts in real cases

We are also interested in constructing a panel discussion to be held immediately following the paper session(s).

If interested, submit a paper title with an abstract of not more than 250 words by **Friday 16 October** to Pierpaolo Mudu (piermudu@gmail.com) and Elise Beck (elise.beck@ujf-grenoble.fr).