

Brown, J., F. Thomalla, I. Kelman, I. Möller, R. Spence, and T. Spencer. 2002. "Towards Long-term Flood Management on Canvey Island, United Kingdom". Abstracts of the 98th Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Los Angeles, California, 19-23 March 2002.

Presentation abstract:

During a major storm surge in 1953, Canvey Island, near London in the Thames Estuary, was devastated, killing 58 residents. Following this event, flood defences were raised significantly, encouraging a substantial increase in population and development, which continues to date. Despite this increase in exposure and the possibility that a defence failure may occur in a large surge event, flood management practices continue to rely on structural solutions whilst investment in alternative means of disaster prevention and preparedness remains limited. The existing paradigm within UK flood management policy of targeting resources towards the technocratic end of hazard forecasting while simultaneously investing in flood defences must be questioned, since the timing, location and nature of a defence failure cannot be determined a priori. Nevertheless, in the presence of structural defences, modelling studies remain useful for hazard assessment as input to targeted education, flood insurance and contingency planning. In this paper, long-term disaster management strategies are developed 1) through analysing observed residential building stock vulnerability under a range of flood inundation scenarios and 2) by examining the institutional and social context through which these results are interpreted and implemented. Specifically, it is argued that comprehensive education and awareness programmes along with increasing resource input into community preparedness would better augment the population's resistance and resilience to major flood events on Canvey Island.