

DISASTER, CONFLICT AND SOCIAL CRISIS RESEARCH NETWORK NEWSLETTER



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

COORDINATOR'S REPORT



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Dear Members, Colleagues and Followers of the Disaster, Conflict and Social Crisis Research Network,

With this 52nd DCSCRN Newsletter we wish to catch your attention to the biannual midterm conference in our research network and present you to a number of other issues concerning the work among our network members. We always appreciate your contributions whether you feed us with information about calls for conferences or tell about recent activities, research, publications, events or cases.

This year our midterm conference will take place on Crete, in Greece, and is arranged together with good colleagues from the Department of Sociology of the University of Crete. We will meet in the beginning of September and hope to see as many as of our members there we can.

As you can read in the call for the conference (see p. 14), the call is broad. We invite presentations dealing with causes, impacts and responses to disasters, conflicts and social crises. The causes can be natural, technological and social. The impacts identified on local, national or international levels have our interest, and impacts involving social, demographic, economic and environmental matters are also of concern to this conference. What is relevant as well is to identify and share knowledge about what kind of responses there are in circulation within Europe and outside. Sharing knowledge about 'best practices' is a common phenomenon within our field, but we would also like to invite presentations on 'next practices'. What can be identified as responses to come in the future, what are the suggestions for dealing with matters in the years to come that are not yet broadly acknowledged and implemented?

We shall discuss these topics through sessions dealing with both theoretical and methodological questions.

The conference is based on oral presentations, but we wish that participants will produce papers to be distributed in advance. However, please note that full papers are not required for participating in the conference. Work in progress is as important as full conference papers.

I hope to see as many of you in Crete as is possible. Meanwhile, I wish you a pleasant reading with this newsletter.

Best regards,

Nina Blom Andersen
DCSCRN Coordinator

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Antti Silvast
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Dear Members and Colleagues of the DCSCRN,

Welcome to the April edition of the DCSCRN Newsletter, which covers the period December 2013 – March 2014.

Arunas Juska is Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, East Carolina University, Greenville, NC, USA.

Climate Change Repetition ≠ Perfection¹

By **Ilan Kelman** (<http://www.ilankelman.org>)

Here we go again. The IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) is yet again publishing a report, as usual in three Working Groups with the reports spaced several months apart. The one perhaps most relevant to disaster scholars was released in Japan at the end of last month.

This happens every 5-6 years. 2013-2014 represents the IPCC's Fifth assessment, with the first one dating back to 1990. This year's report tells us that climate change is happening, that humans are to blame for a significant proportion of the observed climate change, that there are ways that we can deal with climate change, and that we are not doing what needs to be done.

Does that sound exciting? No, of course not.

Because that is exactly what was said previously in the Fourth Assessment Report, released in 2007. Five years of effort involving hundreds of scientists, requiring tens of thousands of hours of writing, reviewing, and editing alongside thousands of hours of travelling and meetings at an immense environmental and carbon cost (and carbon offsets do not help).

All to tell us what we know already. So why does the IPCC continue? That is indeed a good question.

As a model for science, the IPCC (similarly to all models of science) has advantages and disadvantages. The IPCC brings scientists together, assesses and synthesises the science available, and reaches consensus-based conclusions. Those consensus-based conclusions are then reviewed by scientists and governments to reach summaries and overall conclusions acceptable to all, usually involving multiple compromises.

Amongst the advantages of the IPCC process are the consensus and the compromises. Amongst the disadvantages are the consensus and the compromises. Amongst the advantages are the interactions amongst and influence of scientists and governments. Amongst the disadvantages are the interactions amongst and influence of scientists and governments. The level and scope of the IPCC's peer review is impressively thorough and intense. Nonetheless, glaring errors and misconceptions

¹An altered version of this essay appeared in the *Foreigner* in Norway on 31 March 2014, <http://theforeigner.no/pages/columns/dangerous-climate-change-and-rhetoric-where-are-we-headed-from-now-on/>.

get through to the final reports, representing a tiny fraction of the entire text yet tarnishing the whole.

Naturally, we all make mistakes. The importance is learning from them and improving.

How could the IPCC be improved? The fundamental problem is the self-perpetuating bureaucracy. The IPCC has become an institution, but it is not clear that institutionalised science, consensus-based science, or government-reviewed science produces the best science. As an experiment and as a start for the field of climate change science, the IPCC did amazingly well and is to be admired and commended. As the co-winner of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, the IPCC has demonstrated its significant political power and has earned deserved respect from society. Neither is a statement of scientific quality.

When nothing fundamentally new is presented; when so much time, effort, energy, and travel is taken away from new, original, innovative science; when an institution becomes a lightning rod for critics, is it time to recognise that senescence does not always represent betterment?

Has the time come to thank the IPCC for its needed service and then to move on from it?

The Eurozone Debt Crisis and Neo-fascist Greek Movements: The Case of the “Golden Dawn”¹



By **Nicholas P. Petropoulos**
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The emergence and growth of neo-fascist and neo-nazi movements in many modern European countries – and the accession of some of these to parliaments – is attracting the attention not only of European governments but also of social scientists, in view of recent European history. This presentation focuses on one of the these right-wing parties – the Golden Dawn (*Chryssi Avgi/Xρυσή Αυγή*) party of Greece², its historical roots, its modus operandi, its activities, its institutionalization as a political party, its popularity and the causes for its growth.

¹This text is an executive summary and update of the presentation given by Dr. Petropoulos in the European Sociological Association Conference, Torino, 28 August 2013.

²The author uses the term “party” since it has been legally recognized by the Greek Supreme Court; however, the parties of the “constitutional-” or “democratic spectrum” avoid the use of the term “party” and refer to it as a “formation” (morfoma), as they do not want to legitimize it.