

In his article, Slovic proposes the 'risk perception' research as a means of supporting risk analysis and policy-making by two ways: 1) providing a basis for understanding and anticipating public responses to hazards and 2) improving the communication of risk information among lay people, technical experts and decision-makers. The most crucial lesson from this research is perhaps that public risk perceptions have wisdom as well as errors. Risk communication and risk management efforts, therefore, necessitate collaboration and mutual respect between public and expert sides.

When a risk transcends a nation border, however, communication gets more complex than the process at a national level due to jurisdiction, sharing of sensitive information and so on. Through evaluating and analyzing Swedish risk communication program towards Denmark and its aid to Lithuania, Lofstedt underscores some areas where innovation in transboundary risk communication is necessary. His study reveals that trust is a primary element in various ways. In the case of the Baserback nuclear plant, important thing is whether the Danish public trusted Swedish technology proficiency rather than their policy makers. For Danish policy makers, frequent contradictions on their Swedish political counterparts affected their developing trust towards Swedish side. Furthermore, politicians and media amplified the mistrust and hampered risk communication efforts between two sides. During such escalation, the issue of the plant was switched into a political matter rather than a question of its long-term security impacts on the Danish.

While reading Lofstedt's article on the Ignalina nuclear plant, two comments particularly interested me, though a bit apart from the main topic of the class. The director of the Ignalina viewed that the Swedish aid to the plant was very much originated of their own security, not really of local safety, and then commented, "as long as the Swedes are concerned about Ignalina and pay for their concern, we will be concerned as well." Lofstedt points out that the Lithuanian public may resent aid that benefits the donors however it seems to me that much of foreign aid has that kind of element or at least flavor in it, especially such tendency is prevalent in environmental aid. Reading this comment, I was remembering last week's Platt's readings on the US federal disaster relief program. According to him, since the program was viewed more as 'entitlement' for those who suffered from disasters, it has raised the problem of 'moral hazard', creating disincentives for local and state governments to spend resources on disaster preparation, mitigation, response and recovery. Faced the indifferent comment of the director of Ignalina, I had the impression that among Lithuanians the same type of 'moral hazard' was spreading.

The other interesting issue has come up to me is who should or can determine the use of aid, which is deeply related to the problem of conditionality of aid. As the results of interviews with Lithuanian policy-makers illustrated, they were strongly frustrated about the fact that Sweden and other Western nations were making decisions about how the environmental aid should be spent without adequately consulting them. Interestingly, these Lithuanian politicians were apprehensive of the plant. Considering these facts, I was wondering that the root cause of this problem was the attitude of aid donors towards Lithuania, smearing Lithuanian pride and consequently dividing them from being able to reach to an agreement in this issue.