

“Trust”

The one issue came to my mind repeatedly while I was reading articles on transboundary risk management is North Korean refugee issue. I am afraid this might not perfectly fit in the scope of the articles, but I wonder North Korean refugee issue can also be analyzed in the similar manner.

Currently, North Korea kept “spilling” refugees to neighboring countries, such as South Korea, China and sometimes to Japan. South Korean government has already started to feel the burden of accepting constant influx of refugee from North Korea. North Korean Refugees are not just financial burden, but also created diplomatic issue between Japan and China in 2002. When Chinese police barged into the Japanese Consulate Office in Shenyang and drug North Korean defectors out from the Consulate compound, it created diplomatic tension between Japan and China. On and off, North Korean defectors has been a source to “enlarge and exacerbate¹” existing tension among North Korean neighbors.

Dynamics between the risk source country and the effected country is slightly different in this North Korean issue, as the risk source country does not participate in the risk management process *per se*. However, comparing with two case studies (the Barseback nuclear plant case and Ignalina nuclear power plant case) and my example, the ideal way the risk to be managed is the same -- trust.

As the article points out, current Swede policy towards Ignalina works fine -- “As long as the Swedes are concerned [about Ignalina] and pay for their concern.²” Aid targeted to ensuring the nuclear safety seems to be a simply *ad hoc* management for transboundary risk. The most ideal way is to create enough confidence between the risk source country and effected country so that concerning parties can communicate on risks. Perception of risk, as Slovic points out, will likely be different among parties with different interest, and that is why positive communication with trust to each other to improve capability to manage the risk is crucial.

It appears to me that transboundary risk will remain risky as long as the risk factor can be seen as “our” or “their” issues. If “our” risk is “their” benefit, we will have to be back in realpolitik, However, transboundary risk does not have to be played by a rule of the zero-sum game. The issue here seems to be the way and degree to which risk is perceived by different actors. Win-win situation in transboundary risk management can be won by confidence building.

¹ J. X. Kasperson and R.E. Kasperson, “Border Crossing” in *Transboundary Risk Management*. P211

² R. E. Loftstedt and V. Jankauskas, “Swedish Aid and the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant.” In *Transboundary Risk Management*. P57