



The importance of being resilient

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Despite many efforts to pin down resilience in terms of measurable indicators and indices, there is little agreement about what is the most appropriate scale, level of (dis)integration, functional relationship and trade-off between the various constituents of resilience. More than anything else, resilience is knowledge. Knowing how to prepare, respond and recover from hazard strikes. More than that, resilience is a capacity to deploy that knowledge. To help oneself to get back on feet after having sustained a blow. To learn how to. Resilience has many forms and manifestations. People convalescing after having lost what was dear to them. Communities recovering from shattering blows. Economies getting back on track after having sustained major shocks and losses. However, resilience has also negative connotation: the persistent overlooking of the threat and perceived powerlessness of individuals, in front of unacquainted community or nonsensical institutions, to make any difference.

During the flood emergency situations, the community resilience is determined at individual level by the willpower and readiness of community members to help others in need ('we don't step away') and themselves, and the degree to which they know how to. In this sense, the preparedness comprises capability and experience that can be acquired or trained, and commitment which is transmitted by moral obligation and community membership. In the most cases it is not the professional staff trained for emergency situation which arrives as first at the place of disaster, however well the emergency response is organised. Before the professional rescue teams, the ordinary people intervene, or can do so, with positive or negative outcomes.

The articles revisits recent flood events and identify factors and measures that boost community resilience to flood (REF). In Italy, the analysed events included 2000 Soverato, 2006 Vibo Valentia floods, both places situated in Calabria on Ionian and Tyrrhenian cost respectively, and 2000 flood event in Piedmont, in the North. Although different in nature and consequences, all these events have considerably influenced the flood risk governance in Italy. The research activities include analysis of the risk perception and communication; performance of the early warning systems, evaluation of the predictability and return period of the analysed extreme events; and the normative and judicial review of the flood risk institutions at the national and regional scale.