Geophysical Research Abstracts
Vol. 15, EGU2013-3160, 2013
EGU General Assembly 2013

Seismic risk perception test

Massimo Crescimbene, Federica La Longa, Romano Camassi, and Nicola Alessandro Pino
Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia, Rome, Italy (massimo.crescimbene@ingv.it, +3906855082007)

The perception of risks involves the process of collecting, selecting and interpreting signals about uncertain impacts of events, activities or technologies. In the natural sciences the term risk seems to be clearly defined, it means the probability distribution of adverse effects, but the everyday use of risk has different connotations (Renn, 2008). The two terms, hazards and risks, are often used interchangeably by the public. Knowledge, experience, values, attitudes and feelings all influence the thinking and judgement of people about the seriousness and acceptability of risks. Within the social sciences however the terminology of 'risk perception' has become the conventional standard (Slovic, 1987). The mental models and other psychological mechanisms which people use to judge risks (such as cognitive heuristics and risk images) are internalized through social and cultural learning and constantly moderated (reinforced, modified, amplified or attenuated) by media reports, peer influences and other communication processes (Morgan et al., 2001). Yet, a theory of risk perception that offers an integrative, as well as empirically valid, approach to understanding and explaining risk perception is still missing". To understand the perception of risk is necessary to consider several areas: social, psychological, cultural, and their interactions. Among the various research in an international context on the perception of natural hazards, it seemed promising the approach with the method of semantic differential (Osgood, C.E., Suci, G., & Tannenbaum, P. 1957, The measurement of meaning. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press). The test on seismic risk perception has been constructed by the method of the semantic differential. To compare opposite adjectives or terms has been used a Likert's scale to seven point. The test consists of an informative part and six sections respectively dedicated to: hazard; vulnerability (home and workplace); exposed value (with reference to population and territory); seismic risk in general; risk information and their sources; comparison between seismic risk and other natural hazards. Informative data include: Region, Province, Municipality of residence, Data compilation, Age, Sex, Place of Birth, Nationality, Marital status, Children, Level of education, Employment. The test allows to obtain the perception score for each factor: Hazard, Exposed value, Vulnerability. These scores can be put in relation with the scientific data relating to hazard, vulnerability and the exposed value. On January 2013 started a Survey in the Po Valley and Southern Apennines. The survey will be conducted via web using institutional sites of regions, provinces, municipalities, online newspapers to local spreading, etc. Preliminary data will be discussed. Improve our understanding of the perception of seismic risk would allow us to inform more effectively and to built better educational projects to mitigate risk.