



Public Perception of Climate Risk: The Case of Greece

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Climate change is generally considered as one of the greatest challenges our world is facing. In the case of Greece climatic change seems to be associated with sea level rise, increase in temperature, variation in precipitation patterns, and extreme weather events. As a result of climate pattern changes a series of consequences are expected in areas involving build environment, infrastructures, health and various sectors of the economy. Even though climate change is probably going to affect Greece in terms of human welfare and economic growth, public perception and attitude do not always identify it as the most important, amongst others, environmental area of concern, or compared to various socio-economic issues.

Considering that topics related to climate change involve a certain degree of uncertainty public perception seems to be important when dealing with adaptation strategies to manage or prevent risks from climate change impact and therefore people's reaction to risks seem to be an issue of great importance in future policy planning and implementation. The key issue of this paper is to investigate and analyse public perception in Greece as regards to climate change risk. Through a questionnaire survey this research investigates people's understanding, specific knowledge, opinion, awareness, emotions, behavior with regards to climate change risks and their willingness to pay in order to minimize or prevent risk. In addition, it examines people's willingness to alter current lifestyle and adapt to a changing climate.

The information derived from survey data concern the topics and the perceived importance of the causes of the climate change between certain groups of people; the analysis of the data is focused on the correlation between perceived risk and knowledge about the issues involved. Rather than applying a specific technique extensively, we choose to deploy a number of methodologies with which we are able to draw different aspects from the data. To this end, we apply descriptive statistics, cluster analysis techniques and logistic regression. Descriptive statistics result in some general conclusions from the data concerning sex, age, location, residential characteristics, level of education and level of actual knowledge. Cluster analysis gives us an intuitive on how the subjects are grouped in certain profiles, according to their attitude towards climate change and the associated risk. Logistic regression provides a probabilistic approach in order to interpret the way the subjects respond to our questions in relation to their specific background.

Based on analysis results, this paper, amongst others, points out the vulnerability of Greek society to climate risk and highlights factors that influence individual perception; in addition it identifies drivers of behavior change that can facilitate efficient adaptation plans for future use. The results of this research could be used as a basis for understanding public responses to climate change risk and for facilitating communication between experts, policy makers and communities.