



Natural hazard risk perception of Italian population: case studies along national territory.

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Risk perception is judgment that people make about the characteristics and severity of risks, in last few years risk perception studies focused on provide cognitive elements to communication experts responsible in order to design citizenship information and awareness appropriate strategies. Several authors in order to determine natural hazards risk (Seismic, landslides, cyclones, flood, Volcanic) perception used questionnaires as tool for providing reliable quantitative data and permitting comparison the results with those of similar surveys.

In Italy, risk perception studies based on surveys, were also carried out in order to investigate on national importance Natural risk, in particular on Somma-Vesuvio and Phlegrean Fields volcanic Risks, but lacked risk perception studies on local situation distributed on whole national territory. National importance natural hazard were frequently reported by national mass media and there were debate about emergencies civil protection plans, otherwise could be difficult to obtain information on bonded and regional nature natural hazard which were diffuses along National territory. In fact, Italian peninsula was a younger geological area subjected to endogenous phenomena (volcanoes, earthquake) and exogenous phenomena which determine land evolution and natural hazard (landslide, coastal erosion, hydrogeological instability, sinkhole) for population.

For this reason we decided to investigate on natural risks perception in different Italian place were natural hazard were taken place but not reported from mass media, as were only local relevant or historical event. We carried out surveys in different Italian place interested by different types of natural Hazard (landslide, coastal erosion, hydrogeological instability, sinkhole, volcanic phenomena and earthquake) and compared results, in order to understand population perception level, awareness and civil protection exercises preparation.

Our findings support that risks communication have to be based on citizen knowledge and conscious in natural hazards. In fact, informed citizen could participate actively in decision in urban development planning and accept positively legislation and regulation introduced to avoid natural risks. The study has gone some way towards enhancing understanding in citizens conscious in natural risks and allow us to say that communication on natural risks could not be based only in transferring emergency behavior to citizens but also allow people to improve their knowledge in landscape evolution in order to assume aware environmental behavior.