

The role of gender in social resilience against floods. An analysis on two case studies

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Disaster community resilience is based upon existing strengths and relationships and it is proved to be one of the major resources in managing natural risk, also following CE Directive 2007/60. Social capital (in the sense proposed by Putnam) and social resources are acknowledged as the main pillars of resilient communities. The role of the gender, inside this social dynamic, is strategic and must be taken into account while implementing strategies to build and increase resilience. These issues are discussed by the analysis of two disasters occurred in Italy in the last century, the Polesine Flood event of 1951 and the Vajont landslide and consequent flood of 1963. The first one is a typical case of non-resilient community while the latter, known as the major hydrogeological disaster occurred in Italy in the last centuries is, on the contrary, an event characterized by an extraordinary strong resilience. We show how different social structure and mutual relationships have made the difference in two of the major hydrogeological catastrophes recorded in the last century and leading to quite opposite outcomes for the future of the community.