

Assessing Resilience of Mountain Communities Hit by the Central Italy Earthquakes of 2016

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Abstract

Community resilience is "the ability of a system to recover from the effect of a hazard, preserving its essential structures and functions". Psychological aspects have a significant influence on the adaptive capacity of populations hit by natural disasters. Among such aspects, place attachment appears to play an important role.

The well-being deriving from the identification with a place has been acknowledged in literature; the loss of one's own place has devastating effects on the emotional state of individuals.

Studies about natural disasters have largely underlined how such events change the emotional bonds with the territory, but only recently place attachment has been explored as a crucial aspect for maintaining the communities' resilience; most of the papers concerned climate change resilience, very few earthquake resilience.

This chapter aims to contribute to the understanding of the influence of territorial bonds on the social resilience of communities hit by earthquakes.

Data were collected through paper questionnaires, in three small mountain communities of central Italy, about one year after the earthquake of August 24th, 2016. Results show that place attachment was a central value for the three-quarters of the interviewees, despite the seismic hazard, in all three areas.

Findings encourage further investigations in other areas with different territorial settings and urban size, for a better knowledge of the role of place attachment for earthquake resilience.

Keywords: community resilience, earthquake, place attachment, Italy, Marche region.

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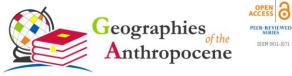
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