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SOCIAL PERCEPTION OF NATURAL HAZARDS IN A REGION OF THE SPANISH MEDITERRANEAN

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Natural disasters are socio-natural phenomena whose effects are not always distributed equally over the population. The risk of disaster arises from the product between threats and vulnerability. The impact of natural risks influences the sustainable development of a society. The way in which the human being relates to nature and the human action, are prone to generate situations of danger. The likelihood of a natural hazard materializing seems to have been assumed. For that reason, the human being lives in constant risk on the Earth, something that is not new. The climate models indicate an increase in climate irregularity in the Mediterranean regions. In general, climate change poses scenarios of greater risk in the face of natural hazards. From environmental psychology, the study of risk perception as a factor for risk analysis is addressed. From this perspective, this study is proposed, with the purpose of knowing some aspects such as: the perception of threat, the risk exposure, the awareness of the damage, the evolution of the risk, the elements of concern, the level of concern, the elements of exposure, the mode of attribution, knowledge of natural risk and, in particular, the knowledge of forest fire risk. The study population is made up of citizens of the Valencia community, a region of Eastern Spain that has a singular climate and topography, which makes it more susceptible to have episodes of droughts, floods, strong winds from the west, heat waves and wild land fires, mainly. It is necessary to know how society perceives risk due to adverse natural phenomena, for this reason, we hope that the results of this study will contribute to the improvement of the risk reduction programs in this region of the Spanish Mediterranean.

Biography

Jaime Senabre is Psychologist and Environmental Consultant. He completed Doctoral studies in the Department of Personality, Evaluation and Psychological Treatment of the UNED. He is the Chief of Brigade in a forest fire service with more than 20 years of experience. He collaborates with several companies and institutions in the area of training in Psychology in Emergencies and Human Resources. He is a Professor at the University of Valencia at the Master's in "Intervention and operational coordination in emergencies and catastrophes" and other Postgraduate courses on emergencies. He is the Director and President of the International Scientific-Professional Committee of the National Symposium on Forest Fires (SINIF). He has lectured internationally and has been part of the Organizing Committee of several international Congresses on Earth Sciences and Climate Change. He has published articles on forest fires, stress, psychosocial risks and emotional trauma, mainly in relation to emergency services and natural disasters. Currently, he is assigned to the Research Group on Climate and Territorial Planning (University of Alicante), where he researches on the social perception of forest fire risk and behaviour in the event of possible disasters.

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