Cultural impacts on EMSC tools usage

EMSC has observed via their tools some cultural differences thanks to the comments left by eyewitnesses. Indeed, residents who experience shaking in countries that have a strong Muslim culture tend to leave very religious comments that meet their moral support needs. This is in line with studies demonstrating that risk perception is influenced by culture (Ifrc 2014). A qualitative study of the comments also shows that the elements used to describe the way the earthquake was felt vary depending on local culture and previous experience of this type of events. For instance, after an earthquake in Sweden in 2016, people compared the sound of the earthquake to a snow drop from the roof when usually this sound is compared to a truck. More systematic linguistic analysis would be needed to improve the knowledge of such cultural differences in the comments left by eyewitnesses. Earthquake frequency in a specific area also impacts the way people use LastQuake. Testimonies conversion rate are found to be higher in regions where this type of events is rare, compared to highly seismic regions. Previous experience of the disaster also appears to influence the use of EMSC tools during an earthquake. For instance, after a series of earthquakes in Skopje EMSC recorded 700 testimonies for a M2.7 earthquake. This high response to a small earthquake was explained by a user on Twitter by the anxiety linked to earthquake due to the 1963 earthquake which killed over 1,070 people (see Figure 5.13 in source document), demonstrating the importance of local histories for the use of the tool.

Note: See source document for full reference.

Applicable to:

Stakeholders: Norms/values, Customs/traditions/rituals, Individual/collective memory

Disaster Phases: Prevention, Preparedness, Response, Recovery, All disaster phases

Types of Actors Concerned: Non-active citizens

Hazards: Man-made non-intentional hazards or emergency situations, Man-made intentional hazards

Recommendations:
- The use of new technologies (e.g. Bluetooth) can improve communication strategies in disaster management situations

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Source

Deliverable D3.1 "Cultural factors and technologies" (page 78)

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 653748.

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