



Citizen perception of effectiveness of authorities in natural vs man-made disasters

Generally, it seemed that there was more trust in the effectiveness of authorities in disasters caused by natural hazards than by man-made hazards, in particular major terrorist attacks, due to their perceived uniqueness and unpredictability. At the same time, participants outlined the positive media coverage of professional response in case of natural hazards-caused disasters as particularly trust-building. Here, again, they referred specifically to emergency services and voluntary aid institutions: “The things I saw on TV. The THW with the landslide in Tibet where they flew right in [...] they needed 12 to 14 hours to get there by plane, but I think they were the only ones who hit the road right away, who are dedicated. They have their dogs and they do something, so there are always success stories” (G10-P6). At the same time, the mere absence of negative media coverage appeared to create feelings of trust as well: “You do not hear any negative news in case of a large-scale accident. Otherwise the media would certainly make an issue of it like 'something bad has happened and the rescue services were completely disorganised. ' They would certainly report about it [...] It creates trust that you never hear anything negative about the rescue services. I have to admit this” (G5-P9). Such success stories “when the rescuers fly with their dogs to the most remote corners and always find at least one survivor” (G10-P10) sell well in the media and can, in particular when the rescue forces are deployed abroad, be a source of trust through (national) pride, whereas incidents with police forces or other authorities deployed locally may be more often subject to local criticism due to being so close to “home”, and may result in distrust.

Note: See source document for full reference.

Applicable to:

Stakeholders: [Norms/values](#), [Communication](#), [Attitudes toward authorities](#), [Attitudes toward the media](#)

Disaster Phases: [Response](#), [Recovery](#)

Types of Actors Concerned: [National civil protection body](#), [Local authorities](#), [Government](#), [Media](#), [Red Cross](#), [NGOs](#), [Military](#), [Law enforcement agencies](#), [Healthcare and emergency services](#)

Hazards: [Natural hazards](#), [Man-made non-intentional hazards or emergency situations](#), [Man-made intentional hazards](#)

Recommendations:

- [Engage in activities and develop strategies aiming to improve trust between citizens and authorities](#)
- [Inform citizens about the risk they may face and about possible actions and measures, they can take to reduce vulnerability and better prepare themselves](#)
- [Use cultural factors to improve the effectiveness of disaster communication](#)

Source

[Deliverable D5.6 "Report on citizens' reactions and opinions: Citizen Summit 4 \(Germany\)" \(page 23\)](#)

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