

Sustainability | Individual communication

IC - (21392) - PLACE ATTACHMENT, RISK AND EMOTIONS WHEN COPING WITH CLIMATE CHANGE

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Background and objectives

Climate change poses a major threat to coastal areas. For example, the sea-level is expected to rise in the next decades with implications on coastal regions and communities. In Portugal, Aveiro is expected to be one of the most affected regions due to the exposure of urbanized areas to coastal hazards.

The prospects of such future threats may trigger a set of cognitions (risk perceptions) and emotions (eco-anxiety) in response. Literature suggests that coping strategies to deal with such risks may vary according to the threat evaluation and the type of place attachment (active vs traditional) of residents.

We hypothesize that residents with traditional place attachment would show lower risk perception and lower levels of eco-anxiety, accepting the risk as part of their living condition and adopting passive coping strategies (e.g., relativization). Active place attachment would be related with higher risk perception, higher eco-anxiety, and the adoption of active coping strategies (e.g., problem-solving).

Process and methods (for empirical research)

An online self-report questionnaire was conducted to examine Aveiro's residents cognitive and emotional responses to sea-level rise threat and the mediating role of risk perception and eco-anxiety in the relationship between place attachment and coping. Data collection is in course, but preliminary analyses were conducted with 141 participants.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

Preliminary analyses suggest a sequential mediation for predicting active coping, confirming that higher active place attachment relates to higher levels of risk perception, which in turn relate to higher eco-anxiety, and this positively relates to adopt active coping strategies. Results also suggest that a low level of eco-anxiety (as found in this sample) is positively related with adopting more active coping strategies and less passive coping strategies.

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

This study contributes to better understand the relevance of affective variables on how people cope with climate change, contributing with important information for the design and implementation of coastal strategies.

Palavras-chave : climate change, emotions, place attachment, eco-anxiety, risk perception, coping