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Climate Change Resilience in Small Communities –
and the Methodological Approaches to Explore it



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Forest fires and landscape identity - values, meanings and engagement in local communities

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In the summer of 2018, Sweden faced one of the greatest national disasters in modern times. In total, about 60 forest fires ravaged around the country. In this paper, we draw on the concept of landscape identity (see e.g., Butler et al., 2018) with the purpose to investigate how local citizens were affected by these forest fires. The concept of landscape identity refers to the way that our identity is tied to how we engage with the landscapes in which we find ourselves. As such it can be utilized as a way to gain deeper knowledge of social aspects related to climate related events such as forest fires (Stobbelaar & Pedrolí, 2011; Butler et al., 2018). This makes it possible to understand landscape as a social product, as something that rests upon processes, practices and cultural discourses (Either, 2010). On an individual level, on the other hand, landscape is internalized through values, meanings and engagement (Butler et al., 2018). When a landscape drastically changes, as in the case with forest fires, both practices and meanings associated with this landscape are likely to be affected. This paper rests on interviews with people that had to evacuate their homes due to the forest fires in 2018. The result indicates that values, meanings and engagement associated with the landscape played a significant role in how people made sense of the situation they found themselves in.

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After the fire? Practices and perceptions of wildfire risk education in Portugal

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Disaster resilience is an increasingly explored topic in environmental and risk reduction education. Particularly, in the central interior areas of Portugal, there is a need to strengthen preparedness and adaptation for coexistence with extreme weather events, particularly those connected with wildfire disasters. Rural contexts are particularly challenged by the lack of work and study opportunities, ageing and mobility difficulties. Children and young people living in rural territories are exceptionally vulnerable to forest fires, being the first generation to have to adapt to climate change in territories where they live in isolation and in greater direct contact with nature. Hence the importance of disaster risk education and its inclusion in local prevention plans, according to the Sendai Framework, which considers that children can be agents of change within their communities.

In the Portuguese context, risk education is included in a cross-curricular area of Education for Citizenship in formal school curricula and is also addressed in some municipalities through civil protection initiatives and local associations. The National Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2021-2024) recognises the right of children to have access to information and participation in matters of their interest, including through preventive civil protection measures. However, with regard to the design of existing awareness programmes, children's participation is non-existent, given the limited understanding of the role children can play in reducing risk in their communities (Delicado et al. 2017).

Based on a case study of a Portuguese municipality affected by the mega forest fires of 15-16 October 2017, this contribution seeks to analyse young people's perceptions and their practices regarding risk and emergency education. Following an ethnographic approach, 20 interviews were conducted with children and young people between 10 and 25 years old, as well as interviews with local trainers belonging to a humanitarian emergency association. Drawing on the capabilities approach (Nussbaum 2011; Robeyns 2020) the importance of children and young people's disaster experiences for the design of local risk prevention strategies is highlighted.

From vulnerability to transformation of gender role: Photo voice experience of Sundarbans' women amidst climate change

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Larger climate change debates often designate women and girls as the least resilient to environmental changes. Off course, the global climate change has brought several precarities to the local gendered vulnerabilities that exist predominantly in global south. Women, who largely engage in climate sensitive livelihoods like fishing and agriculture, are susceptible towards detrimental impacts of climate change manifestations of sea level rise, frequent cyclones or salinity ingressions. However, strong patriarchal norms and regulations often limit their choices of resilient alternatives and bound them to settle for less desirable livelihood options. Although, women have to bear the burden more than their men counterpart, they are resilient enough to cope with gendered specific challenges and aspire for better future.

Participatory visual action research method 'photovoice' can potentially open up new and existing conversations around uncertainty and resilience that otherwise might be impeded by hierarchical social structures, such as caste traditions or gender inequities. By providing representation to the voices, knowledge and perspectives about resilience from 'below' i.e. vulnerable and marginalized population, who are often framed as recipients of policies rather than active stakeholders, photovoice method seek to address power imbalances and ensure that hidden and subaltern perspectives of women and children remain central to our research ethic. Through photovoice we are going to explore the resilient stories of women from the Sundarbans delta-a climate change hot spot of South Asia, who came forward to participate in a photo voice project, despite their triple burden of livelihood restoration, child care and household chores. Their photo narratives describe everyday lived uncertainties, their negotiation with societal norms and local policy process and raising voices for their children's health. The women's photo voice experience ended up with a 'change within' which has potential to transform community resilience amidst climate change as well as the existing gender dynamics, especially by the 'weaker' section.