

Exploring reasons why the risks of natural hazards seem to be ignored

by H. Asbjørn Aaheim, CICERO

Researchers give different explanations to why the risks of natural hazards seem to be ignored by individuals, and management strategies are often deemed inappropriate. This presentation combines empirical evidence from various disciplines and theoretical insights in order to identify critical issues, or "Achilles heels", in the development of management strategies to deal with natural hazard risks. It is pointed out that evaluation of management strategies by itself is challenging, because risks are rarely assessed to its full extent, and it is difficult to evaluate risks. Still, management of natural hazard risks often suffer from a lack of coordination between actors involved in the decision making, such as private agents, local authorities and central authorities. Each of them may behave rationally within their own framework, but the final outcome may nevertheless turn out disastrous. On this basis, a few criteria for successful management is suggested.