

**PERCEPTION AND EVALUATION  
OF RISKS: *Findings for  
New Zealand and  
Cross-Cultural Comparisons***

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# ABSTRACT

In a socio-psychological field study, perceptions and subjective evaluations of risky activities and environmental conditions were investigated in three countries: Germany, New Zealand and Australia. The aim of this cross-cultural project is to analyse the cognitive structure of judgments about the magnitude and acceptability of risks to which individuals are exposed, and to compare risk judgments across countries in which risk issues in general as well as particular risk sources (eg, industrial facilities or natural hazards) have different salience.

Data comparisons for countries, for societal groups (eg, ecologists, engineers, feminists) and for types of risks demonstrate manifold differences. However, the considerable influence of psychological aspects on judging risks can be shown in all settings.

Altogether the findings confirm the significance of the cultural context of risk evaluations. They are relevant for a better understanding of conflicts about risk and for improving risk communication among the various involved parties.

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