

## Addressing Risk Perception Through Anthropology: Methodological Pathways into the Cultural Dimensions of Risk

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### Abstract

The increasing frequency of extreme events caused by climate change underscores the need for a more comprehensive approach to risk perception studies, as understanding how societies select and interpret hazards is crucial for developing effective risk reduction plans (Douglas and Wildavsky, 1983). While current research, which mainly uses quantitative and psychometric methods, provides valuable insights into awareness and individual responses (Wachinger et al., 2013), it often overlooks or oversimplifies the complex cultural dimensions of risk (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1983; Revet & Langumier, 2018). This is where anthropology can play a crucial role. Anthropology, with its critical and integrative approach, is particularly well-suited to address the complexities of how people perceive and respond to risk. It recognizes that perceptions are shaped not only by socio-economic conditions and cultural contexts but also by history, power relations, and governance systems (Schneiderbauer et al., 2021; Wilkinson, 2001). Given this need, the paper explores why and how anthropological methodologies can be applied to the study of risk perception. Through historical analysis, ethnographic fieldwork, and a holistic perspective, anthropology helps reconstruct the “dense fabric of situations” in which risk is experienced (Revet & Langumier, 2018). This approach enables a deeper understanding of the meanings people attribute to risk, supporting the development of more context-sensitive strategies for disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation.

### Keywords

Risk perception, Anthropology, Climate change, Disaster risk reduction, Local Knowledge.

