

Risk Perception and Communication: An Selected Bibliography

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Bostrom, A., Morgan, G. M., Fischhoff, B., & Read, D. (1994). What do people know about global climate change? 1. mental models. *Risk Analysis*, 14(6), 959–970.

Abstract: A set of exploratory studies and mental model interviews was conducted in order to characterize public understanding of climate change. In general, respondents regarded global warming as both bad and highly likely. Many believed that warming has already occurred. Respondents appeared to be relatively unfamiliar with such regulatory developments as the ban on CFCs for nonessential uses. These beliefs must be considered by those designing risk communications or presenting climate-related policies to the public.

Douglas, Mary. (1992). Risk and Blame. In *Risk and Blame: Essays in Cultural Theory*. Routledge: London and New York.

Abstract: This essay studies the concepts of risk and blame, and suggests how political and cultural bias can be incorporated into the study of risk perception and the discussion of responsibility and danger in public policy. The text goes on to discuss questions of cultural theory, including questions of autonomy, credibility and gullibility, the origin of wants, and the idea of a distinctive thought style that is part of a way of life.

Finucane, M. L., Alhakami, A., Slovic, P., Johnson, S. M. (2000) The affect heuristic in judgments of risks and benefits. *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*, 13(1), 1-17.

Abstract: Theorizes that a good feeling towards a situation (i.e. positive affect) will lead to a lower risk perception and a higher benefit perception, even when this is logically not warranted for that situation.

Fischhoff, B., Slovic, P., Lichtenstein, S. et al. (1978). How safe is safe enough? A psychometric study of attitudes towards technological risks and benefits. in *Policy Sciences*, 9:2, 127-152.

Abstract: The study investigates a risk-benefit analysis technique in which psychometric procedures were used to elicit quantitative judgments of perceived risk, acceptable risk, and perceived benefit for each of 30 activities and technologies.

Kasperson, R. and Kasperson, J. (1996). The Social Amplification and Attenuation of Risk. In *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*. 545, 95-106.

Abstract: This article outlines the concept of the social amplification and attenuation of risk, and argues that it provides an approach that recognizes that how social institutions and structures process a risk will shape greatly its effects upon society and the responses of management institutions and people.

Morgan, M. G., Fischhoff, B., Bostrom, A., & Atman, C. J. (2002). *Risk communication: a mental models approach*. New York, N.Y. Cambridge University Press.

Abstract: Provides a systematic approach for risk communication and technical experts hoping to serve the public by providing information about risks. The mental models methodology uses approaches from risk and decision analysis to identify the most relevant information; it also uses approaches from psychology and communication theory to ensure that its message is understood.

Pidgeon, N., Kasperson, R., and Slovic, P. (2003). *The Social Amplification of Risk*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Abstract: This volume brings together contributions from a group of international experts in risk perception and risk communication. Key conceptual issues are discussed as well as a range of recent case studies that span BSE and food safety, AIDS/HIV, nuclear power, child protection, Y2K, electromagnetic fields, and waste incineration. The volume also draws attention to issues in public policy, risk management and risk communication practice.

Slovic, P. (1987), "Perception of Risk," *Science* 236: 280–285.

Abstract: This research aims to aid risk analysis and policy-making by (i) providing a basis for understanding and anticipating public responses to hazards and (ii) improving the communication of risk information among lay people, technical experts, and decision-makers.

Sandman, P.M., Miller, P.M., Johnson, B.B., & Weinstein, N.D. (1993, May 7). Agency communication, community outrage, and perception of risk: Three simulation experiments. *Risk Analysis*, 13(6), 585-598.

Abstract: Evidence strongly suggests that communicator behavior, community response, and communicator-community interaction have a substantial impact on people's perception of risk. However, much that determines the public response to risk is beyond the risk manager's control: risk aversion, gender, and education.

Thompson, M and Wildavsky, A. (1990). *Cultural Theory*. Westview: London and New York.

Abstract: Intellectually based on the work of anthropologist Mary Douglas, this volume presents a typology of five ways of life - egalitarianism, fatalism, individualism, hierarchy and autonomy - to serve as an analytic tool in examining people, culture and politics.

Weinstein, Neil D. (1980). Unrealistic optimism about future life events. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 39:5, 806-820.

Abstract: Tests the notion that people are unrealistically optimistic because they focus on factors that improve their own chances of achieving desirable outcomes and fail to realize that others may have just as many factors in their favor.

Zaksek, M., & Arvai, J. L. (2004). Toward improved communication about wildland fire: mental models research to identify information needs for natural resource management. *Risk Analysis*, 24(6), 1503–1514.

Abstract: The management of natural- and human-induced wildland fires is an intricate process that must balance two considerations: that of fire as a necessary natural disturbance and that of the risks that fire poses. Reconciling tradeoffs between these risks and benefits is contingent upon informed, directed, and two-way communication between wildland fire managers and stakeholders. In an effort to aid with the design of such a communication effort, this study used mental models research to determine the unique wildland fire information and decision-making needs of stakeholders living at the wildland-urban interface of a fire-prone area. While the analysis revealed many similarities in how stakeholders conceptualized the risks and benefits of wildland fire, many misconceptions and important gaps in understanding on the part of both expert and nonexpert respondents were identified.