

## The Social Perception of National Security Risks: A Comparative Perspective

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**Abstract :** Nowadays, the individual plays a central role in the state's architecture. This is why the subjective dimension of the security represents a key concept in risk assessment. The paper's scope is to emphasize the discrepancy between expert and lay evaluations of national security hazards, which is caused by key factors like emotions, personal experience, knowledge and media. Therefore, we have chosen to apply, using these two different groups of respondents, the Q-sort method, which reveals individual beliefs, attitudes, preferences hidden behind the subjects' own way of prioritizing the risks they are confronted with. Our study's conclusions are meant to unveil significant indicators needed to be taken into consideration by a state's leadership in order to understand the social perception of national security hazards, to communicate better with the public opinion and prevent or mitigate the overestimation of the severity or probability of these dangers.

**Keywords :** risk perception, Q-sort method, national security hazards, individual beliefs

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