



The Social and Cultural Construction of Risk: Essays on Risk Selection and Perception (Risk, Governance and Society)

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The Social and Cultural Construction of Risk: Issues, Methods, and Case Studies Vincent T. Covello and Branden B. Johnson Risks to health, safety, and the environment abound in the world and people cope as best they can. But before action can be taken to control, reduce, or eliminate these risks, decisions must be made about which risks are important and which risks can safely be ignored. The challenge for decision makers is that consensus on these matters is often lacking. Risks believed by some individuals and groups to be tolerable or acceptable - such as the risks of nuclear power or industrial pollutants - are intolerable and unacceptable to others. This book addresses this issue by exploring how particular technological risks come to be selected for societal attention and action. Each section of the volume examines, from a different perspective, how individuals, groups, communities, and societies decide what is risky, how risky it is, and what should be done. The writing of this book was inspired by another book: Risk and Culture: An Essay on the Selection of Technological and Environmental Dangers. Published in 1982 and written by two distinguished scholars - Mary Douglas, a British social anthropologist, and Aaron Wildavsky, an American political scientist - the book received wide critical attention and offered several provocative ideas on the nature of risk selection, perception, and acceptance.

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