



Lower levels of education and income for vulnerable groups affect perceptions of personal control over public issues

The role of social vulnerability in risk perception and, consequently, risk mitigation has been demonstrated both between and within societies. A well-documented phenomenon, first observed in 1994 by Flynn, Slovic, and Mertz (see source document for full reference), is that white males, compared to women and people that belong to ethnic minorities, report relatively low perception of risks (the so-called 'white male effect'). One of the common explanations of the 'white male effect' states that women and ethnic minorities in the United States (where the majority of studies have been conducted) are less educated and have lower levels of income compared to white men, which affects their perception of personal control over public issues. Since these groups perceive that they have a lower level of control they are more fearful of all kinds of risk (Finucane, Slovic, Mertz, Flynn, & Satterfield, 2000).

Note: See source document for full reference.

Applicable to:

Stakeholders: [Social exclusion](#), [Socio-economic status](#), [Gender roles](#), [Ethnicity](#), [Worldviews](#)

Disaster Phases: [Prevention](#), [Preparedness](#)

Types of Actors Concerned: [Non-active citizens](#)

Hazards: [Natural hazards](#)

Recommendations:

- [Develop risk assessments methodologies, which consider cultural factors, the manner in which people cognitively process information and which employ a gender perspective](#)

Source

[Deliverable D4.2 "Report on 'risk cultures' in the context of disasters" \(page 41\)](#)

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