



## **Hydrological Extremes: Unravelling the Influence of Risk Perception on Human Response**

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The increase in human population is causing stress on water resources globally, and natural hazards such as floods and droughts are causing increasing damage. One of the main unknowns in this field is how human societies respond to the occurrence of hydrological extremes. Given the interdisciplinarity of the issue, studying this unfamiliar behaviour in an era of profound climate change represents an even greater challenge. To uncover how different societies respond (and influence) to hydrological extremes, this study analyses and compares two case studies using qualitative tools such as surveys and interviews. The current development of Panta Rhei research and the ongoing survey of global water crises has offered the possibility of choosing two hotspot areas among a variety of cases. A high-income region in the Po River basin is compared to a low-income (or developing) region in the Limpopo River basin. These two multinational study areas are affected by both floods and droughts, but recent trends show that they are both experiencing an increasing drought severity. These two hotspot areas are used to test the hypothesis that human response to hydrological extremes is highly influenced by the perception of the risk entailed, and that strengthening the social memory of affected communities might be a first step towards a more aware (and prepared) society.