

**3rd ESCI, 2-3 JULY 2008**  
**EUROPEAN SECURITY CONFERENCE INITIATIVE**

MAIN THEME: SECURITY AND SOCIETY  
EVOLVING CHALLENGES AND COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSES



**ABSTRACT**

***Gebhard Geiger***

German Institute for International and Security Affairs – Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP),  
Berlin/Germany

**The Social Study of Risk: Psychometric and Cultural Approaches to Risk and Risk Perception Responses**

Individual and group behaviour under risk and uncertainty is one of the most critical issues security policy and safety and security management have to cope with. An overview of current research on basic human risk acceptance and response patterns in various fields will be given. The outline broadly includes work done in psychometrics, sociology and cross-cultural comparisons of social attitudes toward risk. Basic results that have been obtained in these disciplines will be reviewed from the methodological perspectives of quantitative research in social science. The analysis leads to a number of conclusions concerning applied security research and civil security risk planning and management. In particular, quantitative methods and approaches to model building and security risk assessment will be suggested that are based on the analysis.