

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES ON FARMERS' CLIMATE RISK PERCEPTIONS IN THE BOLIVIAN HIGHLANDS?

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ABSTRACT

The Andean Highland region in Bolivia possesses a harsh climate environment that is highly variable. This study combines risk perception literature and livelihood strategy literature to examine climate risk perceptions. Studying the risk perceptions of the Aymara people can give policy-makers an understanding of the people's perception of risk, allowing them to make better climate adaptation policies aimed at the individuals.

The analysis uses survey data collected through interviews of 330 households in the municipalities of Ancoraimes and Umala in Bolivia. Ordinary least square models are used to examine the relationship between climate risk perceptions and the factors of dread and unknown, along with livelihood risk management strategies. In this study, it is found that lower dread feelings are significantly related to lower climate risk perceptions, supporting the findings in the risk perception literature. In addition, the study shows that diversification through raising crops, sheep and dairy and having off-farm income significantly reduce climate risk perceptions. Climate change adaptation policies should support farmers' livelihood diversification and off-farm farm income risk management strategies. This study shows that differences in perceptions of climate events differ within the communities of Umala and Ancoraimes. This suggests that climate adaptation policies should be flexible to include spatial diversity defined by geography and markets.