

1 *Differences in volcanic risk perception among Goma's population before the Nyiragongo*
 2 *eruption of May 2021, Virunga volcanic province (DR Congo)*

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13 **Keyword:** Volcanic risk, risk perception, severity, vulnerability, Nyiragongo

14 **Abstract**

15 Risk perception is an essential element to consider for effective risk management at time of
 16 eruption, especially in densely populated cities close to volcanoes like Goma in the East of the
 17 Democratic Republic of Congo highly exposed to volcanic hazards from Nyiragongo. The
 18 perception of volcanic risk involves the processes of collecting, selecting, and interpreting signals
 19 about uncertain impacts of volcanic hazards. Using a questionnaire survey, this study describes the
 20 spatial differences and factors influencing the individual volcanic risk perception of 2,224 adults
 21 from eight representative neighbourhoods of Goma before the May 2021 Nyiragongo eruption. A
 22 composite risk perception indicator was built from the perceived severity and perceived
 23 vulnerability. Statistical analysis of survey's results shows that the risk perception was high
 24 (mean=3.7 on 5-point Likert scale) and varies less with demographic and contextual factors than
 25 with cognitive and psychological factors. Volcanic hazards were perceived to be more threatening
 26 the city and its functioning than the individuals themselves. The spatial analysis shows that
 27 respondents from the eastern neighbourhoods, affected by the 2002 eruption, demonstrated a
 28 significantly higher level of risk perception than participants living in the western neighbourhoods.
 29 This study will help to improve volcanic risk awareness-raising in Goma.

30 **1. Introduction**

31 Risk perception studies aim to answer why individuals differ in their perception of the same
 32 hazard (Slovic, 2000; Chauvin, 2018). For an individual, the risk perception involves the processes
 33 of collecting, selecting and interpreting signals about uncertain impacts of natural events, activities
 34 or technologies (Slovic et al., 2004). These signals may refer to direct observations (e.g. witnessing
 35 a hazard) or information from other sources (e.g. reading about hazard newspapers) (Paton et al.,
 36 2008). Therefore, risk perception is related to personal understanding of natural hazard processes
 37 and prior experience (Gaillard and Mercer, 2013; Barclay et al., 2015) which in turn are filtered

38 by socio-demographic factors, worldview and affective judgments (Dieckmann et al., 2021;
39 Haynes et al., 2008; Wachinger et al., 2010; Weber and Slovic, 2002).

40 Bubeck et al. (2012) states that a proper approach to risk requires both good science and good
41 judgement. Thereby, Favereau et al. (2018) point out that actions and reactions, specifically to
42 volcanic hazards, are shaped by people's perception, previous experience, risk acceptability and
43 tolerance, especially during rapid onset eruptions, like the recent May 2021 Nyiragongo eruption
44 in the East of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo) (Smittarello et al., 2022a, b).
45 Therefore, risk perception has to be regarded as an essential component of Disaster Risk Reduction
46 (DRR) by examining people's attitudes, judgments, and feelings about risk and the role it plays in
47 formulating preferences and making decisions under conditions of uncertainty (Donovan and
48 Oppenheimer, 2014; Brown et al., 2015; Donovan, 2019; Merlhiot et al., 2018). **Indeed, risk
49 perception has been a matter of research for several years and has led to the development of several
50 theories such as the Protection Motivation Theory (PMT) (Rogers, 1975; Maddux and Rogers,
51 1983), the Community Engagement Theory (CET) (Paton, 2013), the Protective Action Decision
52 Model (Lindell and Perry, 2012) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Vinnell et al., 2021).
53 Among these theories, the PMT is pioneer and widely used (Raine and Christensen, 2017). In
54 addition, meta-analyses have shown its efficiency (Milne et al., 2000; Sommestad et al., 2015;
55 Bamberg et al., 2017). However, this model has been barely used to study volcanic risk so far
56 (Kothe et al., 2019).** It states that the individual motivation to implement risk reduction measures
57 is based on two components: the threat appraisal and the coping appraisal (Sommestad et al., 2015).
58 Threat appraisal examines one's perception of the extent and likelihood of a threat to generate
59 harm, while the coping appraisal evaluate one's perception of risk mitigation measures. In
60 accordance with Floyd et al. (2000) and Mertens et al. (2018), the present study relies on a
61 conceptualisation of risk perception based on the PMT threat appraisal.

62 For DRR stakeholders, it is essential to know which factors influence population's acceptance
63 and choices regarding risks and whether risk perception is contrasted in specific neighbourhoods
64 or sub-groups of the population. Such research can contribute to a better contextualisation of the
65 vulnerability of people living near active volcanoes around the world, as in the case of the Virunga
66 volcanic province, located across the border between **the DR Congo** and Rwanda (Michellier et
67 al., 2016). The Virunga volcanic province hosts two active volcanoes, Nyiragongo and
68 Nyamuragira, generating multiple lava flow eruptions over the last century (Poucllet and Bram,
69 2021; Smets et al., 2015b). The city of Goma, which counts more than one million inhabitants, is
70 at high risk of lava flows from the southern flank of Nyiragongo.

71 As a pioneering study on population vulnerability in Goma, Michellier et al. (2020a) evaluated
72 the social vulnerability to volcanic hazards from Nyiragongo volcano in a context of data scarcity.
73 In Michellier et al. (2020a), the risk perception was assessed in a general way (based on the
74 question: *do you feel your household is in danger?*), as well as in relation to the experience of a
75 past geological disaster. It highlighted that risk perception and prior experience are strongly
76 correlated, i.e., prior experience is associated with a high level of risk perception. However, while
77 deepening that first approach, it was found that this question alone could not fully describe or
78 assess the perception of volcanic risk in Goma. In our study, we aim at characterizing the risk

79 perception of people from different neighbourhoods across the city, looking at multiple volcanic
80 hazards, and analysing the potential relationship to demographic, contextual, cognitive and
81 psychological factors. Our data were collected at the end of 2020 and therefore represent the risk
82 perception directly prior to the May 2021 Nyiragongo eruption, which affected a significant part
83 of the city's suburbs (Smittarello et al., 2022a). In addition, this study contrasts with most existing
84 risk perception studies, in which participants come from Western countries (Henrich et al., 2010;
85 Barrett, 2020). After defining the concepts of risk perception and its individual indicators, the
86 collection and analysis of the survey data is explained, before presenting the key results and
87 discussing their implication for understanding volcanic risk perception. This study aims at
88 contributing to broader research on the implementation of DRR measures for population living
89 near volcanoes like those in Goma.

90 2. Theoretical background of the study

91 While it began to be studied in the 1960's, particularly in the context of nuclear risk (Martin,
92 1989), the risk perception related to natural hazards has received increasing attention over the last
93 two decades (Donovan, 2019). Bubeck et al. (2012) noticed that the definition of risk perception
94 remained for a long period ambiguous and was used with different meanings. However, recent
95 literature has defined risk perception as processes of collecting, selecting, and interpreting signals
96 about uncertain impacts of hazards (Donovan et al., 2017; Chauvin, 2018; Dieckmann et al., 2021).
97 These mental processes involve quantitative or qualitative appraisals of two dimensions: likelihood
98 and severity. Thereby, a risk perception indicator can be built from the individual appraisal of the
99 likelihood of being personally impacted by a hazard (perceived vulnerability) and the individual
100 appraisal of a hazard's likelihood and the severity of its impacts on the inhabited area (perceived
101 severity) (Barclay et al., 2015; Botterill, 2004; Khan et al., 2019). These two components are in
102 line with the PMT threat appraisal concepts of perceived severity and perceived vulnerability.
103 Indeed, in the PMT framework, "perceived severity" is conceptualised as the extent to which
104 people perceive that a hazard could have serious negative consequences and "perceived
105 vulnerability" as the likelihood that people believe they could be personally exposed to the
106 negative effects of the hazard (Floyd et al., 2000; Sommestad et al., 2015; Mertens et al., 2018).

107 2.1. Risk perception and the psychometric paradigm

108 The most common approach used to understand why they are individual differences in risk
109 perception is the psychometric paradigm developed by Fischhoff et al. (1978) and modified by
110 Slovic et al. (1986) and Sjöberg (2003). In contrast to the cultural approach, which is a qualitative
111 understanding of risk perception (Douglas and Wildavsky, 1982), the psychometric approach seeks
112 to quantify people's subjective assessment of risk and risk-related impacts. It argues that people
113 make quantitative appraisal about the current and likely risk of various hazards and the desired
114 level of regulation of each risk (Lechowska, 2021). Therefore, the psychometric approach, used in
115 this study, is an appropriate way to characterise factors to which risk perception is related.

116 2.2. Individual factors of risk perception

117 Wachinger et al. (2013) reviewed the main factors of risk perception, particularly in connection
118 with natural hazards. They highlighted the influence of personal factors related to the demographic,

119 cognitive and psychological characteristics of the individual, as well as contextual factors related
120 to the family, community, and society in which they live.

121 *Personal factors* are demographic, such as age (Knoll et al., 2017; Useche et al., 2019), gender
122 (Bee, 2016), educational level (Carlino et al., 2008), disaster experience (Bronfman et al., 2020;
123 Paton et al., 2000) or ownership of transport (Chauvin, 2018). In addition, personal factors can be
124 cognitive, such as understanding of the risk processes (Sim et al., 2018) or interest in seeking risk
125 information (Donovan et al., 2018). The perceived availability and predictive power of
126 environmental cues (sights and sounds that are considered to indicate a hazard onset) are also
127 cognitive factors influencing the risk perception (Lindell and Perry, 2012; Perry and Lindell,
128 2008). In addition, personal factors are psychological, including anxiety (Lemée et al., 2019) or
129 trust in authorities (Bronfman et al., 2016; Siegrist et al., 2005).

130 *Contextual factors* are economic, such as household income (Barclay et al., 2019, 2015) or
131 family-related, like family status or household size (Donovan, 2010; Barclay et al., 2015). Religion
132 or other cultural dimensions are also key contextual factors shaping risk perception (Gaillard and
133 Texier, 2010; Chester et al., 2008).

134 **3. Materials and methods**

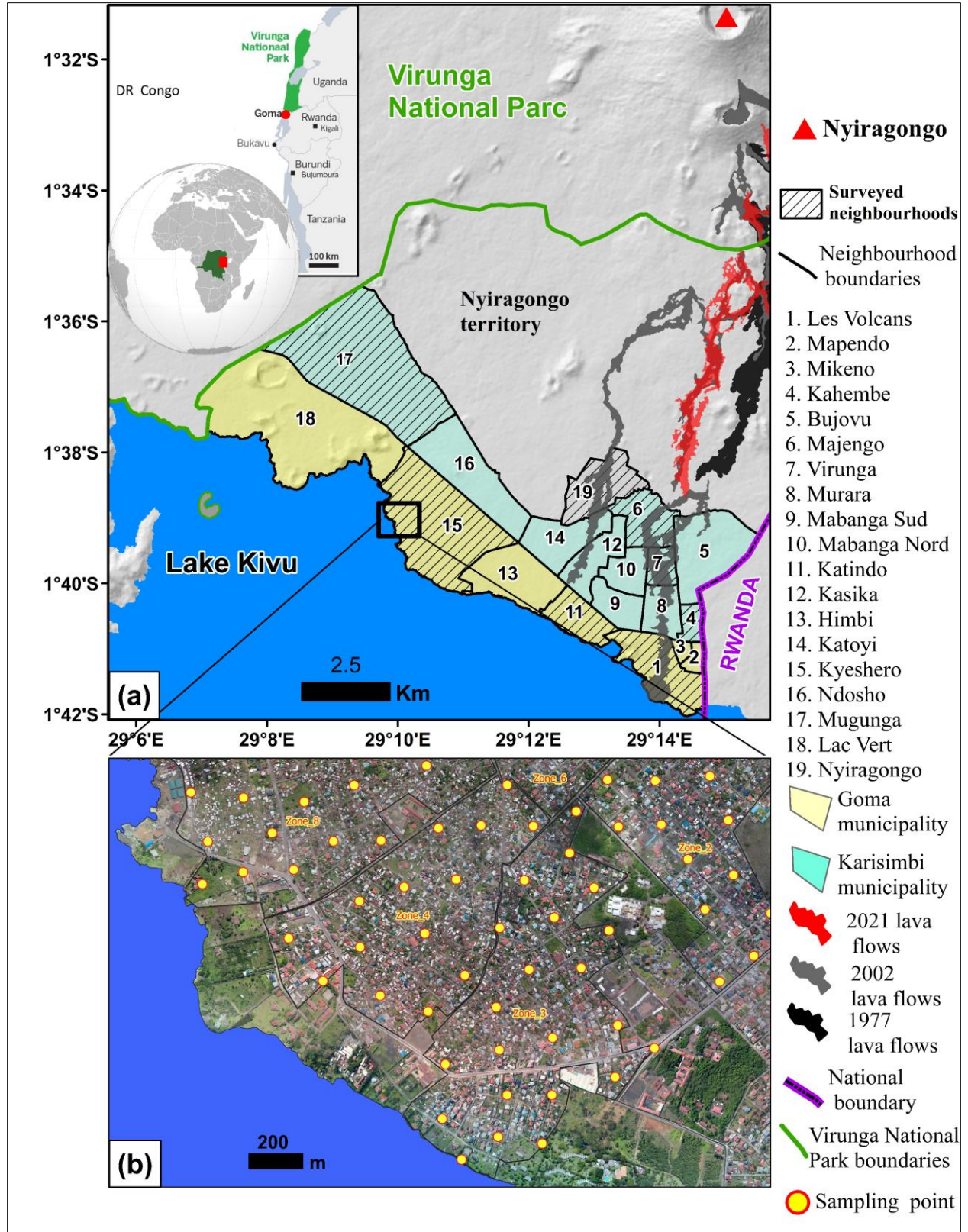
135 **3.1. Study area**

136 Goma, the capital city of the North Kivu province, is built in the lava field of the Nyiragongo
137 volcano along the northern shore of Lake Kivu in eastern DR Congo (Fig.1). It is sharing the border
138 with the town of Gisenyi in Rwanda. It is an important humanitarian hub (Büscher et al., 2010)
139 and an economic centre for regional trade (Vlassenroot and Büscher, 2013, 2011). Small business
140 is one of the main sources of income, forcing the population to spread out along the roads by doing
141 odd jobs for day-to-day survival (Syavulisembo et al., 2021; Oldenburg, 2020). Over the past three
142 decades, Goma and its surroundings have been affected by several armed conflicts (Pech et al.,
143 2018; Vlassenroot and Büscher, 2011). People from the nearby villages and towns have sought
144 refuge in Goma for safety and comfort resulting to the growth of the population (Van Praag et al.,
145 2021). Therefore, the city is constantly expanding but it is bounded (Fig.1a) to the south by lake
146 Kivu, to the northwest by the Virunga National Park and to the east by the Rwandan border, forcing
147 the expansion of the urbanised area northwards, up to the foot of Nyiragongo volcano (Büscher
148 et al., 2010; Pech et al., 2018; Michellier et al., 2020). From 2002 to 2020, the population of the
149 city had doubled, from half a million to more than one million inhabitants (INS, 2021). Urban
150 growth is associated with an increase in population exposure to volcanic hazards, especially to
151 lava flows emitted on the southern flank of the volcano.

152 Nyiragongo is a stratovolcano in the Virunga volcanic province (Pope et al., 2013). Its main
153 crater is surrounded by two main adventive cones: Baruta and Shaheru respectively on the northern
154 and southern flanks. The volcanic field of Nyamuragira surrounds that of Nyiragongo, and both
155 undergo permanent CO₂ degassing (Smets et al., 2010; Smets et al., 2015a). Since the early 1900's,
156 an active lava lake has characterized almost continuously the activity of Nyiragongo, interrupted
157 by three effusive flank eruptions in 1977, 2002 and 2021 (Barrière et al., 2022). Some of these
158 eruptions were preceded by seismic swarms (Oth et al., 2017; Barrière et al., 2022), and each

159 caused long and fast lava flows (i.e. speed of the order of 6 to 20 km/h in 1977 and less than
160 10km/h in 2002) (Muhindo Syavulisembo, 2019), that came out from eruptive fissures and headed
161 south towards the city of Goma (Favalli et al., 2009) (Fig. 1).

162 Two historical eruptions impacted the city before our survey in 2020. On 10 January 1977, the
163 first one poured 20 million m³ of lava flows over 15 km² (including 4.9 km² within the Virunga
164 National Park) on the northern, southern and western flanks of Nyiragongo destroying several
165 villages and roads north of Goma. Tazieff, (1977) reported less than 100 deaths. After a relative
166 calm period, Nyiragongo erupted on 17 January 2002, while the city was under rebels occupation
167 (Komorowski et al., 2002). This new flank eruption, which generated lava flows, was larger (25
168 million m³ over 14 km²) and more destructive than that of 1977 (Wisner, 2017; Wauthier et al.,
169 2012; Smets et al., 2015a). In less than 24 hours, Goma was crossed by two lava flows, one of
170 which reached Lake Kivu (Schmid et al., 2002). Komorowski et al., (2002) estimates that 40 people
171 died and 120,000 people had their homes destroyed. In addition, they note that several
172 infrastructures were lost and evaluate the devastated part of the city at 13%.



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Fig. 1: (a) The city of Goma and the surveyed neighbourhoods with a hillshade of SRTM-1 DEM ((c) NASA/NGA) updated with the 2016 topography of the Nyiragongo crater (Delhaye and Smets,

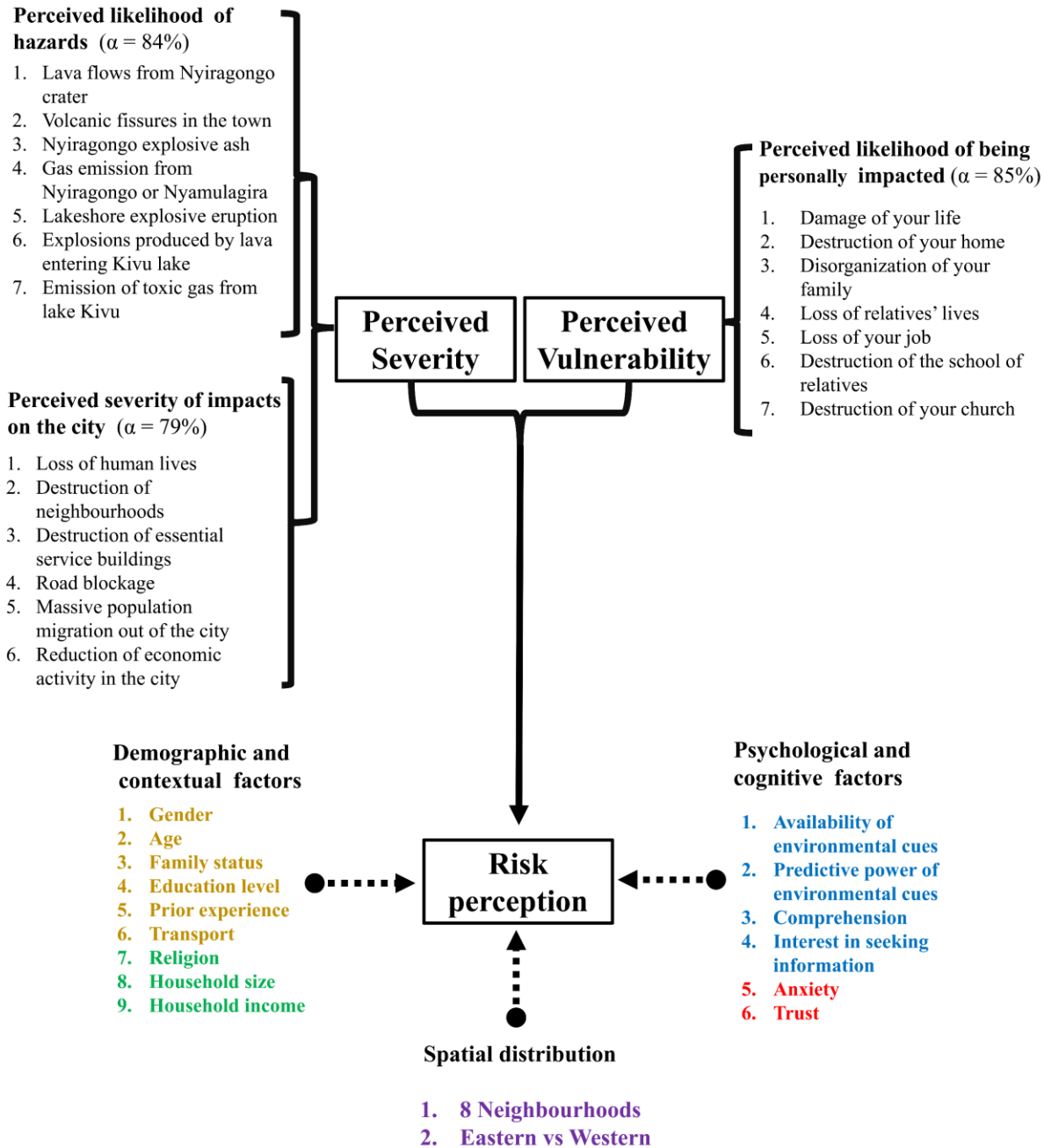
176 2021), (b) Example of sampling points automatically distributed by defining a shortest distance
 177 allowed between two randomly placed points plotted on a 2017 very high-resolution orthomosaic
 178 picture of Goma (Smets et al., 2018). The distance was determined according to the surface of the
 179 neighbourhoods; 40 m for very wide neighbourhoods and 20 m for narrower neighbourhoods.

180 3.2. Questionnaire

181 For this risk perception study, data were collected through a questionnaire survey developed
 182 on the KoBoToolbox application installed on tablets. All questions related to perception used a 5-
 183 level Likert scale. The specific questions on risk perception were constructed according to PMT
 184 (Mertens et al., 2018) as mentioned in the theoretical background of this study. The following
 185 questionnaire sections were used:

- 186 1) Demographic profile of participants: gender, age, family status, religion, household size,
 187 household monthly income, education level, prior experience of a volcanic eruption and
 188 possession of a means of transport.
 189
- 190 2) The risk perception was assessed as an aggregated indicator of perceived severity and
 191 perceived vulnerability (Fig.2). On the one hand, perceived severity is conceptualized as the
 192 degree to which people perceive (1) the likelihood of hazards and (2) the severity of their
 193 impacts on the city. On the other hand, perceived vulnerability is conceptualised as the
 194 perceived likelihood of being personally impacted. To better capture the risk perception of a
 195 person living in an area potentially threatened by several volcanic hazard such as Goma, it is
 196 critical to ask several questions depending on the hazard type, as well as the range of potential
 197 impacts. Therefore, in order to obtain one indicator, an aggregation of responses obtained is
 198 required. Before aggregating the values, the internal consistency of answers was checked
 199 using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Fig. 2). The aggregation was done according to the
 200 coefficient of variation (CV) of response values. It was done either by mean when $CV > 25\%$
 201 or by median when the $CV \geq 25\%$.
 202
- 203 3) Perceived source of risk: A set of potential sources of risk related to the technological, socio-
 204 economic, political, and natural contexts of the city of Goma was proposed to the respondents.
 205 In this section, participants determined in general their perception of impacts if each of the
 206 threat proposed occurs.
 207
- 208 4) Environmental Cues and Predictive power: Availability and predictive power of volcanic
 209 environmental cues are factors defined by Lindell and Perry (2012) in the Protective Action
 210 Decision Model (PDAM) and they potentially influence risk perception. Environmental cues
 211 correspond to sights and sounds from the environment that are considered to indicate a hazard
 212 onset. In the case of this study, the considered environmental cues included the ash plume
 213 from the Nyiragongo crater, the emission of volcanic gas, and a loud detonation in the volcano.
 214 They express the connectedness to the volcanic environment, i.e., whether the participant is
 215 able to observe and interpret the precursors of an eruption (Han, 2021). On the one hand, the
 216 availability of environmental cues indicates the perceived degree of being potentially exposed

- 217 to these environmental cues. On the other hand, the predictive power indicates the perceived
218 degree to which these signs indicate the likely occurrence of a volcanic eruption.
219
- 220 5) Status induced by the reception of risk information: anxiety (to what extent information
221 regarding volcanic risk induces degree of nervous condition) and comprehension (perceived
222 extent of understanding volcanic risk information).
223
- 224 6) Trust in authorities in charge of volcanic risk management and interest in seeking information.



225

226 *Fig. 2. Overview of the variables used in this research to derive an aggregated risk perception*
 227 *indicator from indicators of perceived severity and perceived vulnerability, and the potential*
 228 *controlling factors for highlighting differences in risk perception. Demographic factors are*
 229 *highlighted in orange, contextual in green, cognitive in blue, psychological in red and spatial in*
 230 *pink. 'α' represents the Cronbach's alpha index measuring the internal consistency of a set of*
 231 *answers.*

232

3.3. Participants

233 The survey was conducted in seven out of eighteen neighbourhoods of the city of Goma and
 234 in a part of the urbanised area of the Nyiragongo territory as an eighth neighbourhood (Fig. 1a).
 235 These eight representative neighbourhoods were selected based on the contrasted social
 236 vulnerability assessed in 2017 by Michellier et al. (2020a) and other criteria such as their existence
 237 in 2002 (year of last eruption at the time of survey), their spatial distribution relative to potential
 238 hazards and evacuation routes, and the existing contrasts in population density, average income
 239 and level of education. One neighbourhood was selected to represent two or more neighbourhoods
 240 having similar characteristics.

241 A total of 2,224 adults from the general population were surveyed. The size of sampling was
 242 calculated from the following statistical formula (Krejcie, R.V., & Morgan, 1970):

$$243 \quad n = \frac{t_p^2 \times P(1 - P) \times N}{t_p^2 \times P(1 - P) + (N - 1) \times y^2}$$

244 With:

- 245 - n: sample size
- 246 - N: population of the entire city
- 247 - P: population proportion (assumed to be .50 since this would provide the maximum sample
 248 size)
- 249 - t_p^2 : the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at a confidence level (3.841).
- 250 - y: e the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (.05)

251 According to the 2020 report of the National Institute for Statistics (INS) of the North Kivu
 252 province, the population of Goma exceeded one million inhabitants in 2020 (INS, 2021). With a
 253 50% of variance of population, 3% margin of error and 99% of confidence level, our survey's
 254 sample size should be 1,831 individuals. The 2,224 inhabitants surveyed is a larger sample than
 255 the minimum sample size required to be representative of the population of Goma, even
 256 considering the Nyiragongo neighbourhood. We worked with an almost equal number of
 257 participants per neighbourhood (almost 280 people per neighbourhood). This sample is also
 258 representative for each neighbourhood within a confidence interval ranging between .01 to .05.
 259

260 3.4. Procedure

261 The data were collected between September and October 2020. In every surveyed
 262 neighbourhood, around 280 points were randomly distributed and plotted with a defined minimum
 263 distance between points using a Geographical Information System (Fig. 1b) on a 2017 very high-
 264 resolution orthomosaic picture of Goma (Smets et al., 2018). Data were collected in one of the
 265 four households located closest to the point. We undertook the survey with a team of 16 trained
 266 enumerators. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, with a questionnaire in French. Each
 267 enumerator had a notebook with the translation of the questions into Swahili, the common local
 268 language. The interviews were conducted with people aged 18 years or above, living in the selected
 269 household. Verbal informed consent was obtained from the survey participants before the survey.

270 A survey day started early in the morning (7 a.m. local time) and was also conducted during
271 weekends, to meet parents and working adults. Each interview lasted about thirty-five minutes.

272 **3.5. Data analyses**

273 Descriptive statistics were used for categorical variables, such as demographic and risk
274 perception (Harpe, 2015). Non parametrical test of Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney (for two-group
275 variables) or Kruskal-Wallis (for multi-group variables) were used to determine the variation in
276 risk perception according to demographic, contextual, cognitive, and psychological variables.
277 Statistically significant variations were represented on boxplots. Pearson (for binomial variables)
278 or Spearman's (for Likert scale variables or ordinal demographic variables) correlations were used
279 to measure the correlations between potential risk perception factors and the risk perception
280 indicator. To analyse the spatial contrast of the risk perception, a geographic information system
281 was used.

282

283 **4. Results**

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285 **4.1. Demographic profile of participants**

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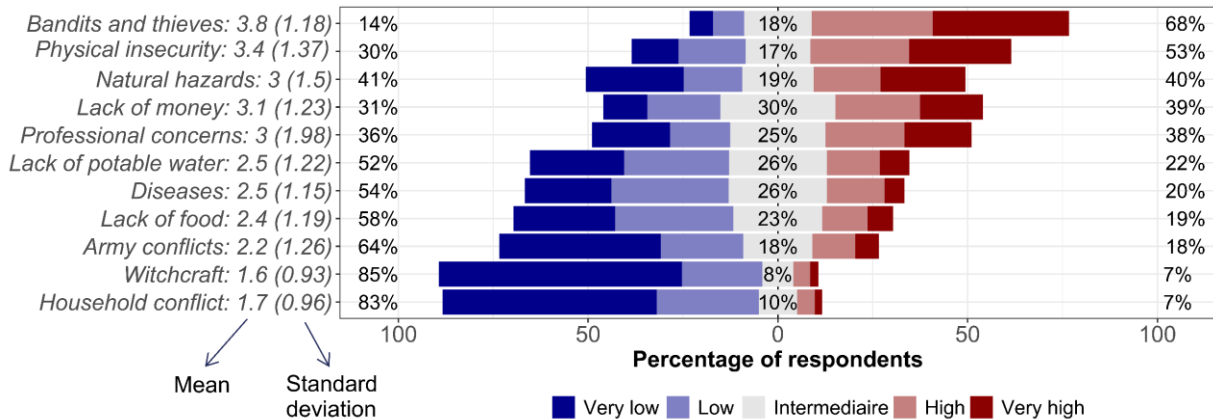
287 Table 1 describes the demographic profile of the survey participants. There were fewer men
288 than women among the participants and most of them were parents. The majority lives in large
289 households: half of the households surveyed counts four to seven persons and 30% have eight to
290 eleven persons. Despite the large household size, the average monthly income is very low. More
291 than half of the households live on less than USD 250 per month and another significant proportion
292 (29%) live on a monthly income of USD 250-500; thereby limiting access to certain services such
293 as transport. Nevertheless, 34.2% of the participants have a university degree and 47.3% achieved
294 their secondary school. The high rate of participants who did not experience the 2002 eruption is
295 an indication of the high migration reported in Goma. Table A in appendix shows differences in
296 demographic characteristics of participants between neighbourhoods. In general, households with
297 very low income live mainly in Karisimbi municipality and the territory of Nyiragongo. In
298 Mugunga neighbourhood, one third of participants are not educated, and this proportion falls to
299 1.7% in Katindo or 4% in Les Volcans neighbourhood. To summarise, there are strong economic
300 contrasts, but sampled respondents in the different neighbourhoods are homogenous in term of
301 demographic characteristic (age, gender, household size).

302 *Table 1. Demographic profile of participants*

Gender	n	%	Prior experience	n	%
Female	1231	55.4%	No	1204	54.1%
Male	993	44.6%	Yes	1020	45.9%
Age	n	%	Education	n	%
18-30 years old	888	39.9%	No educated	172	7.7%
31-45 years old	914	41.1%	Primary level	239	10.7%
46-65 years old	365	16.4%	Secondary level	1052	47.3%
Over 66 years old	57	2.6%	Graduated	761	34.2%
Household size	n	%	Family status	n	%
1-3 persons	277	12.5%	Grandparent	48	2.2%
4-7 persons	1133	50.9%	Parent	1472	66.2%
8-11 persons	685	30.8%	Child	591	26.6%
Over 12 persons	129	5.8%	Other relationship	113	5.1%
Household monthly income	n	%	Transport	n	%
0-250US\$	1262	56.7%	No	1570	70.6%
251-500US\$	645	29.0%	Yes	654	29.4%
501-750US\$	213	9.6%			
Over 750US\$	104	4.7%			

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304
305 **4.2.Risk perception**
306

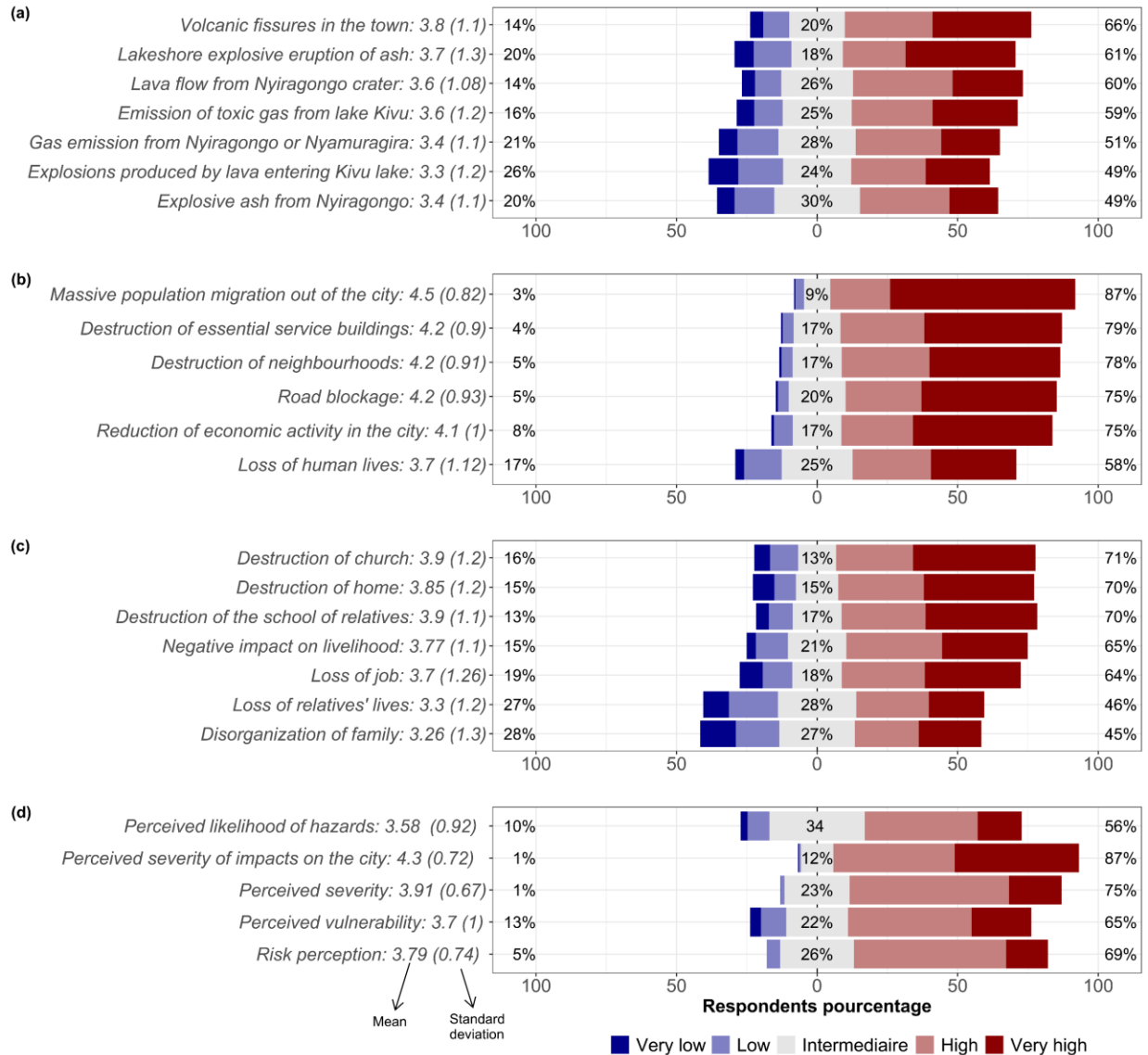
307 When asked to rate their perception of a range of threats, the population does not mention
308 natural hazards as the main source of danger (Fig. 3) but rank it among its top five threats, after
309 the physical insecurity, at the same level as personal economic insecurity, and above other
310 environmental or health threats.
311



312
313
314 *Fig. 3.: Level of perceived likelihood of hazards as potential source of harm to the respondent.*
315 *After converting the Likert scale into a numerical scale (Very low= 1 to Very high= 5), the mean*
316 *indicates the average perceived level of likelihood of occurrence of each hazard with a range of*
317 *variation that the mean may have (standard deviation). The percentages on the right represent the*
318 *proportion of those who perceived a high to very high likelihood of hazard occurrence/impact.*
319 *The percentages on the left represent the proportion of those who perceive this likelihood to be*

320 *low and very low. The middle percentages represent the proportion of the population with an*
321 *intermediate perception level of the likelihood.*
322

323 When evaluating perceived severity, there is no major variation in the levels of perceived
324 likelihood of different hazards (Fig. 4a), as well as in the perceived severity of their impacts on
325 the city (Fig. 4b). This similar level of perception is surprising, as several of the hazards mentioned
326 had not occurred (i.e., release of gas from lake Kivu, explosive eruption at shoreline of lake Kivu,
327 explosive ash from Nyiragongo) in recent history at the time of the survey and thus nor their
328 potential impacts. Although all the listed hazards are possible scenarios at Nyiragongo, their
329 homogeneous perception is interpreted to reflect a poor understanding of the contrast between
330 these hazard processes, rather than a proper understanding of all eruption scenarios. Regarding
331 perceived vulnerability, most respondents have a high to very high perception of damaging impacts
332 on infrastructure and functioning of the society. When considering the potential impact on their
333 own life, participants have a lower perception of the risk of loss of life and family disruption, than
334 the perception of other impacts (Fig. 4c). When indicators of perceived likelihood of hazards and
335 the perceived severity of impacts on the city are aggregated as the perceived severity, it is higher
336 than the perceived vulnerability (Fig. 4d), suggesting that volcanic hazards are perceived to be
337 more threatening the city and its functioning than the individuals themselves. In general, the
338 perception of volcanic risk by the population of Goma was high (mean=3.7) before the May 2021
339 eruption of Nyiragongo.



340
341
342 *Fig. 4. (a) Perception of likelihood of hazards; (b) Perception of severity of impacts on the city;*
343 *(c) Perception of likelihood of being personally impacted; (d) Aggregated indicators.*
344

345 4.3. Factors of risk perception

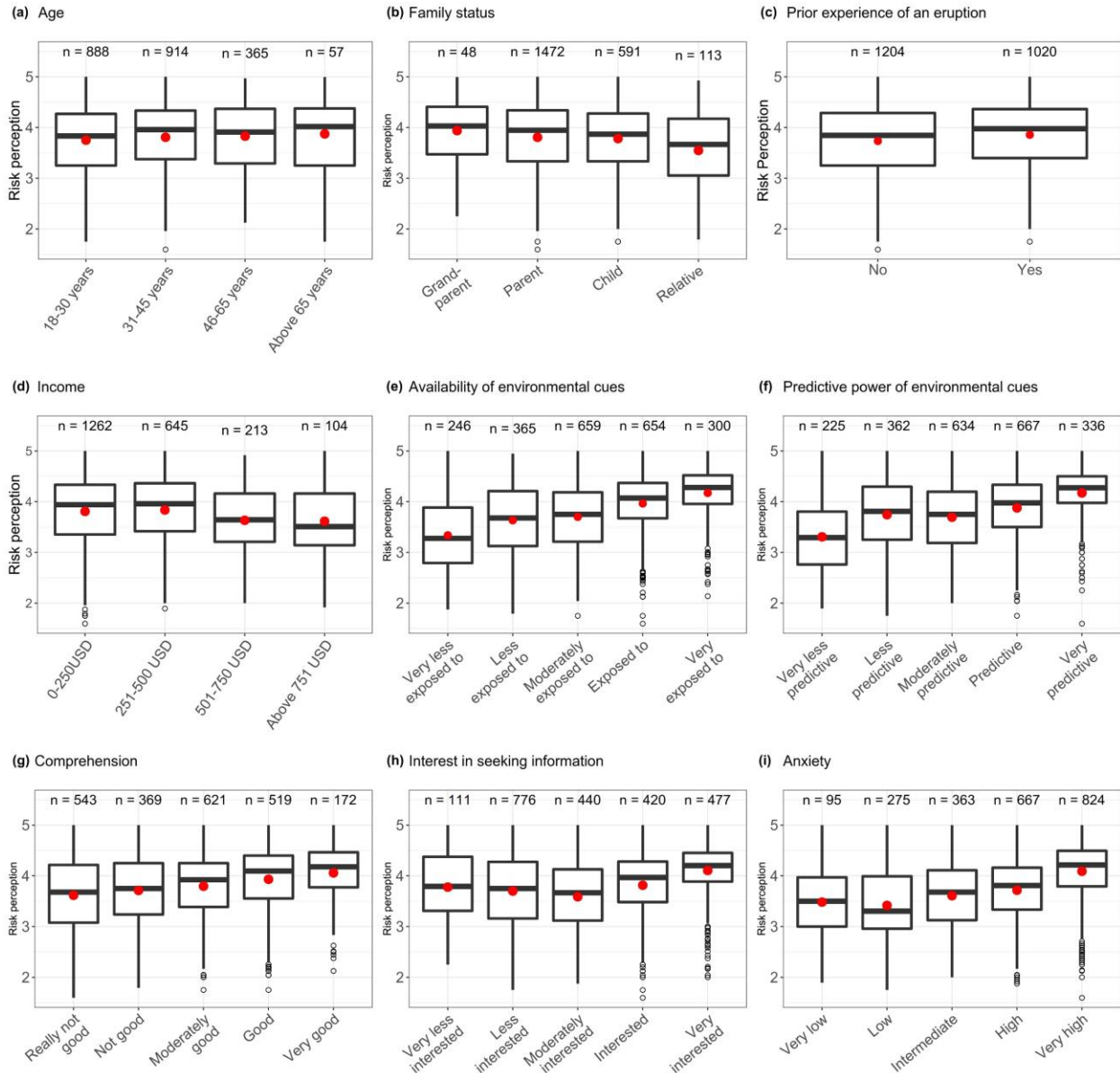
346
347 Table 2 shows the results of the tests of differences in the means of risk perception according
348 to the different potential risk perception factors. Figure 5 presents the variation of the risk
349 perception indicator according to factors for which the Wilcoxon and Mann-Whitney or Kruskal-
350 Wallis's test highlighted a significant contrast between the factors' categories (table 2). The level
351 of risk perception varies less with demographic and contextual factors than with cognitive and
352 psychological factors. Indeed, there is a limited variation in risk perception by age group, i.e., older
353 age group having a slightly higher risk perception, family status, and prior experience of a volcanic
354 eruption (Figs. 5a, b, c). The results interestingly highlight that respondent from households with
355 lower income tend to have a higher risk perception than respondents from wealthier households.

356 Moreover, the positive relationship between risk perception and anxiety suggests that the high-risk
 357 perception among the population of Goma induces fear of impacts from volcanic hazards. The risk
 358 perception is directly proportional to the perception of availability and the predictive power of
 359 environmental cues, as well as the comprehension and interest in seeking risk information (Fig.
 360 5d, e, f, g, i). This means, as expected, that feeling exposed to the signs and sounds that indicate
 361 an onset eruption leads to a perception of a likely occurrence of a hazard and its impacts.

362 *Table 2. Results of Wilcoxon and Kruskal-Wallis tests testing the control of different variables on*
 363 *risk perception W indicates Wilcoxon rank sum test and χ^2 the value of Kruskal-Wallis's chi-*
 364 *squared test.*

Factors	Test value	df	p value	Factors	Test value	df	p value
1. Demographic				3. Cognitive			
Gender	W = 621255		0.5039	Availability of environmental cues	$\chi^2 = 269.4$	4	0.0000
Prior experience	W = 555810		0.0001	Predictive power of environmental cues	$\chi^2 = 244.7$	4	0.0000
Transport	W = 510589		0.8392	Comprehension	$\chi^2 = 94.8$	4	0.0000
Age	$\chi^2 = 6.38$	3	0.0942	Interest in seeking information	$\chi^2 = 162.8$	4	0.0000
Education level	$\chi^2 = 2.57$	3	0.4626				
Family status	$\chi^2 = 13.797$	3	0.0032				
2. Contextual				4. Psychological			
Religion	$\chi^2 = 3.8$	8	0.5626	Anxiety	$\chi^2 = 314.7$	4	0.0000
Household size	$\chi^2 = 4.8$	3	0.1839	Trust	$\chi^2 = 5.8$	4	0.2132
Income	$\chi^2 = 25.0$	3	0.0000				

365



366
 367 *Fig. 5. The level of risk perception according to significant determining factors. The level of risk*
 368 *perception is in numerical scale from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high). In each boxplot, the horizontal*
 369 *bold line represents the median, the red dot indicates the mean and the small circles the outliers.*
 370 *Apart from family status and experience of a volcanic eruption, the levels of each factor are in an*
 371 *ascending order.*

372 4.3.1. Demographic and contextual factors

373 Table 3 indicates the correlation of demographic variables with risk perception as well as
 374 perceived vulnerability and severity. Risk perception has low to very low correlation with
 375 demographic and contextual factors ($r < 0.1$). Even though it is weak, the risk perception is
 376 negatively correlated with household income but positively with prior experience of a volcanic

377 eruption. With age and education level, these are the only demographic and contextual factors that
378 have a significant correlation.

379 *Table 3. Correlation matrix of demographic and contextual factors with the risk perception*
380 *indicators*

	Gender	Age	Household size	Household income	Prior Education experience	Transport	Perceived vulnerability	Perceived severity	
Age	-0.10***								
Household size	0.02	0.13***							
Household income	-0.08***	0.07**	0.13***						
Education	-0.22***	-0.17***	-0.06**	0.31***					
Prior experience	-0.06**	0.18***	0.10***	0.05*	0.06**				
Transport	-0.12***	0	0.03	0.47***	0.27***	0.07**			
Perceived vulnerability	0.02	0.03	0.02	-0.08***	0.03	0.07***	0.01		
Perceived severity	-0.01	0.06**	0.05*	-0.03	0.05*	0.08***	0.01	0.39***	
Risk perception	0.01	0.05*	0.03	-0.07***	0.05*	0.09***	0.01	0.91***	0.74***

*** p value < 0.001; ** p value < 0.01; * p value < 0.1

381

382 In turn, household income is correlated with education and availability of a mean of transport.
383 Women are less educated than men ($r=-0.22^{***}$). Older respondents are less educated than young
384 people ($r=-0.17^{***}$). As expected, older respondents more commonly reported a prior experience
385 of a volcanic hazard. Even if it is a very low correlation, the household income influences the
386 **perceived** vulnerability, not **perceived** severity. Although risk perception is derived from the
387 aggregation of **perceived** severity and **perceived** vulnerability, it is more correlated with **perceived**
388 vulnerability than **perceived** severity. Indeed, perceived vulnerability has a high standard
389 deviation, and therefore vary more between participants.

390 **4.3.2. Cognitive and psychological factors**

391 Correlation coefficients between cognitive and psychological factors with risk perception are
392 indicated in the table 4. As expected, the correlation results suggest that Goma's population
393 become anxious when they perceived the occurrence of hazards as likely, as well as when they
394 perceive themselves as likely to be impacted by volcanic hazards. The trust in authorities is weakly
395 and negatively correlated with risk perception, meaning that people with little trust in authorities
396 have a high risk perception.

397 *Table 4. Correlation matrix of cognitive and psychological factors with the risk perception*
 398 *indicators*

	Availibility	Predictive power	Comprehension	Interest	Anxiety	Trust	Perceived vulnerability	Perceived severity
Predictive power	0.29***							
Comprehension	0.01	0.07***						
Interest	-0.01	0.09***	0.29***					
Anxiety	0	0.13***	0.12***	0.29***				
Trust	-0.03	-0.03	0.13***	0.22***	0.08***			
Perceived vulnerability	-0.04	0.31***	0.13***	0.13***	0.28***	-0.12***		
Perceived severity	-0.03	0.16***	0.23***	0.23***	0.30***	0.06**	0.39***	
Risk perception	-0.04*	0.30***	0.20***	0.20***	0.34***	-0.06**	0.91***	0.74***

*** p value < 0.001; ** p value < 0.01; * p value < 0.1

399

400 Both the reported extent of comprehension and interest in seeking information about volcanic
 401 risk are positively correlated with the risk perception indicator ($r=0.20^{***}$). Specifically, the
 402 comprehension of volcanic processes rather leads to a higher perceived severity than to a higher
 403 perceived vulnerability. The perception of risk is positively and significantly correlated with the
 404 perception of the predictive power of environmental cues, in contrast to perception of the
 405 availability of precursory signals of volcanic hazards occurrence.

406 4.4. Spatial differences in risk perception indicators

407 The spatial differences in risk perception indicators were assessed at two level: between
 408 neighbourhoods and between the western and the eastern parts of the city. We used a Kruskal-
 409 Wallis rank sum test for analysis between neighbourhoods, and a Wilcoxon test for contrast
 410 between the western and the eastern parts of Goma. Results in table 5 indicate that there are
 411 significant risk perception differences between neighbourhoods due to variations in perceived
 412 severity and in perceived vulnerability. In addition, a contrast was observed between the western
 413 and the eastern parts of the city. Participants living in the eastern neighbourhoods, affected by the
 414 2002 lava flows, demonstrate a higher level of perceived risk than respondents from the western
 415 neighbourhoods. In addition, there are significant differences in both perceived severity and
 416 perceived vulnerability between participants from these two areas.

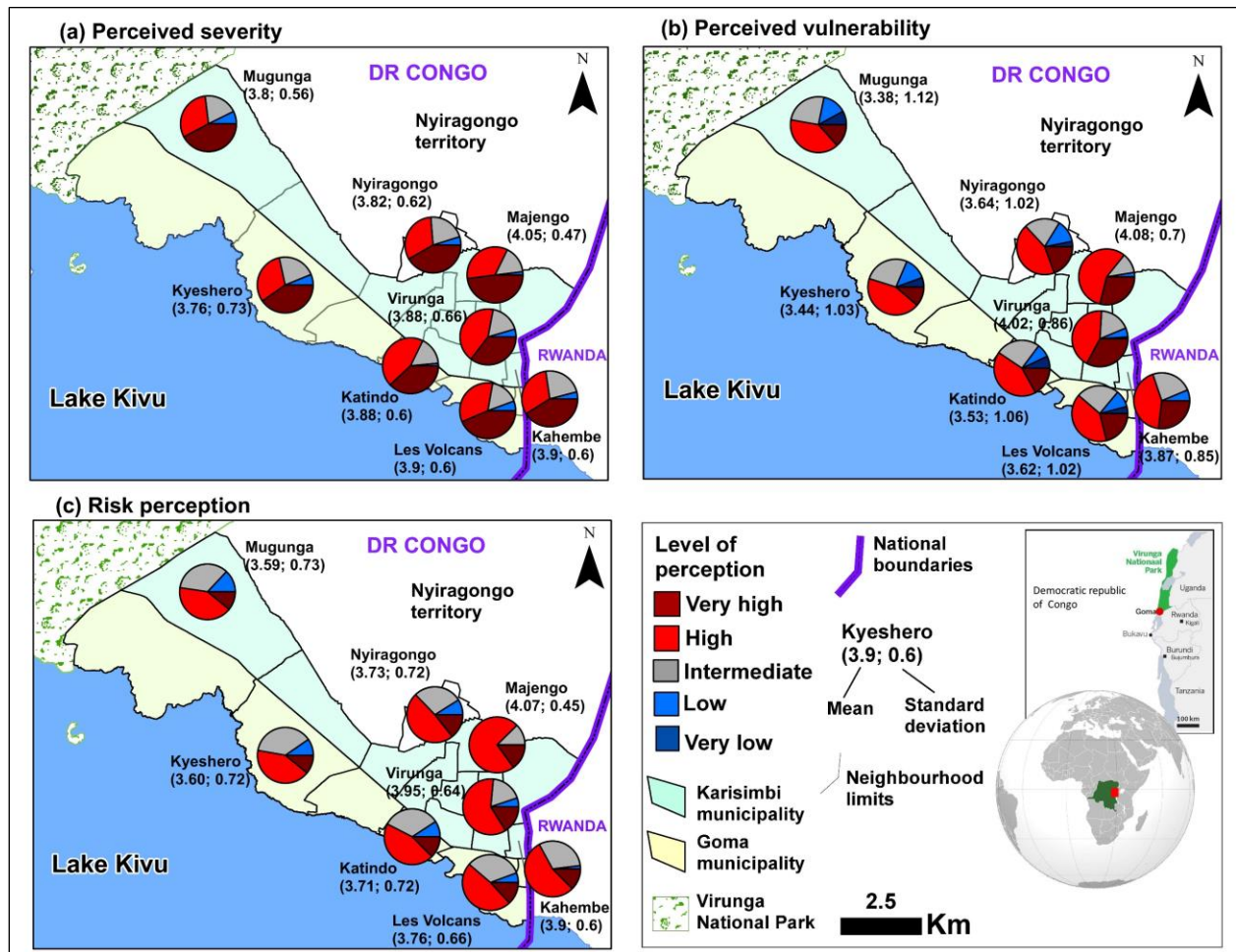
417 *Table 5. Results of Wilcoxon and Kruskal-Wallis tests testing the spatial differences in risk*
 418 *perception. W indicates Wilcoxon rank sum test and χ^2 the value of Kruskal-Walli's chi-squared*

Indicators	Test between neighbourhoods			Test between the east and west	
	Test value	df	p value	Test value	p value
Risk perception	$\chi^2 = 109.6$	7	0.0000	W=694475	0.0000
Perceived severity	$\chi^2 = 43.3$	7	0.0000	W=639979	0.0000
Perceived vulnerability	$\chi^2 = 121.8$	7	0.0000	W=704505	0.0000

419 *test.*

420

421 The maps in Figure 5 illustrate the differences in risk perception indicators per
 422 neighbourhoods. The lowest levels of **perceived** vulnerability or severity are observed in the
 423 extreme west (Mugunga and Kyeshero), while the highest levels of these two risk perception
 424 indicators are observed in the neighbourhoods that were severely impacted in 2002 (Majengo and
 425 Virunga) and in Kahembe (the neighbourhood that hosted the Virunga and Majengo disaster
 426 victims in 2002). The risk perception as a derivative of the **perceived** severity and vulnerability
 427 follows the same pattern.



428

429 *Fig. 6. Spatial variation of (a) perceived severity, (b) perceived vulnerability and (c) risk*
 430 *perception. The perception levels were converted into a numerical scale (Very low= 1 to Very*
 431 *high= 5). The mean indicates the average level of perception by neighbourhood with a range of*
 432 *variation within the neighbourhood (standard deviation). The spatial variation across all*
 433 *neighbourhoods was determined by the coefficient of variation of the perception indicator within*
 434 *all the neighbourhoods. It is 36.8% for the **perceived severity**, 27.0% for the **perceived***
 435 ***vulnerability** and 18.0% for the perception of risk.*

436

5. Discussion

437

5.1. Factors of volcanic risk perception

438 According to Chauvin (2018), Barclay et al. (2015) and Haynes et al. (2008), several socio-
439 demographic factors (gender, age, level of education, level of income,...) have been shown to
440 influence risk perception. However, in Goma, prior to the May 2021 eruption, only age (Fig. 5a),
441 family status (Fig. 5b) and monthly household income (Fig. 5d) were associated, to a limited
442 extent, with variation of risk perception. Younger people and those who do not belong directly to
443 the **close family** have a lower perception than older people and **close family members** (Fig. 5b).
444 The sense of responsibility for the well-being and security of the household seems to be one of the
445 determinants of risk perception in Goma as documented in several other case studies (Gaillard and
446 Dibben, 2007; Gaillard and Mercer, 2013). In addition, a high household income reduces the level
447 of risk perception (Fig. 5d). Indeed, the perceived risk of assets loss or impact on livelihoods is
448 higher compared to the perceived impact on lives (Figs 3, 4-b&c). This can be interpreted by the
449 fact that, although poor household people have little to lose, they would experience a relatively
450 large impact of such loss, whereas rich people having many more assets would be relatively less
451 affected by the loss. **Blake et al., (2017) argues that people who are labelled as vulnerable,**
452 **especially the poor, typically find it more challenging to reconstruct their lives after a disaster**
453 **strikes.**

454 Considering the demographic factors that control risk perception in other volcanic
455 environments around the world, **mostly assessed in Western countries (Barrett, 2020)**, family
456 considerations do play a role in Goma. Reviewing socio-demographic factors of risk perception,
457 Chauvin (2018) notes that gender is a determining demographic factor in controlling of risk
458 perception in several cases; women having a higher level of perception than men. However, in
459 Goma, it is the economic context of the family, the position of the respondent in the household and
460 his/her age that control the perception of risk. Considering these three parameters, it can be
461 deduced that a parent or a responsible person in the household (usually the oldest of the household)
462 with limited resources is more concerned by the household vulnerability to external hazards and
463 its risk perception level is higher than other family members. **Wu and Zhong (2022) highlight that**
464 **people in collectivist cultures, as is the case to some extent in Goma, are better insured and**
465 **supported by their close and extended family members, as well as by friends in their communities.**
466 **In other words, collectivist culture acts as a form of implicit mutual insurance to protect people**
467 **from catastrophic losses, which leads to less perceived risks by family members who are not**
468 **directly responsible of the household or community.** Thereby, risk perception is influenced by the
469 household's sense of responsibility and desire for well-being. Risk assessment and development
470 of DRR strategies at the household level should be prioritised over those at the individual level.

471 The sub permanent lava lake hosted in the Nyiragongo crater emits a gas plume (Arellano et
472 al., 2017; Michellier et al., 2020b), and in some inhabited neighbourhoods, there are localized
473 emission of dry volcanic gas through fractures, called *mazuku* (Smets et al., 2010). Moreover, in
474 January 2002, before the eruption, strong detonations were heard from the volcano (Komorowski
475 et al., 2002). These are environmental evidence that most of the respondents consider as good
476 predictor (warning signs) of an imminent or starting eruption. Indeed, the predictive power of these
477 processes is considered very high for respondents that have a high-risk perception. However,
478 Lindell and Perry (2012) warn that the perception of these environmental cues can bias
479 interpretations of a hazard prediction. For the individual, a good knowledge of the mechanisms

480 related to the hazard is required, as well as an understanding of the uncertainty associated with
481 predictions of the natural event.

482 Our study also highlights a logical link between the level of interest in seeking information
483 related to volcanic phenomena and the level of their understanding. It is however unclear whether
484 the understanding is higher because people actively look for information on the volcano, or
485 whether a good understanding of the threat encourage inhabitants to further inform themselves on
486 the volcanic activity. Both elements are associated to a high level of risk perception. Moreover,
487 confidence in the actors involved in DRR does not influence the perception of risk ($r = -0.06^{**}$),
488 but it influences the interest in seeking information ($r = 0.22^{***}$). This means that the population
489 considers that it is possible to find reliable information from those actors. Finally, as advocated by
490 Gaillard and Mercer, (2013), increasing knowledge about volcanic phenomena could have a real
491 impact on the level of risk perception.

492 **5.2. Influence of prior disaster experience on risk perception**

493 **5.2.1. Homogenisation of the volcanic risk perception**

494 In 2017, Michellier et al. (2020a) assessed Goma residents' judgement of whether their
495 household was at risk from natural hazard or not. Consistent with similar studies, they found that
496 considering one's household to be at risk was positively correlated with past experience of a
497 geological hazard (Plattner et al., 2006; Heitz et al., 2009; Chauvin, 2018; Miceli et al., 2008;
498 Paton et al., 2008; Lindell and Perry, 2000). However, our results (Fig. 5c) show little variation in
499 risk perception between those who experienced the 1977/2002 eruptions ($n=1204$) and those who
500 did not ($n=1020$). The correlation between eruption experience and risk perception is very weak
501 (0.09), although positive and significant. This limited influence of experience of past eruptions -
502 before the May 2021 eruption – on risk perception can be explained by four reasons: (1) the long
503 period (nearly 20 years) since the last eruption prior to our survey, in agreement with Perry and
504 Lindell (2008); Merlhiot et al. (2018); (2) the experience of the 1977/2002 eruptions but without
505 having suffered considerable personal damages as found also by Hall and Slothower (2009); (3)
506 for those who have not experienced, the high risk awareness maintained by the Goma Volcano
507 Observatory's communications combined with anxiety caused by false alarms spread by social
508 media **in accordance with** Mileti and O'Brien, (1992); and (4) the fact that Nyiragongo is an open
509 system volcano, with regular gas plume and red glow at night (i.e., the activity of the volcano is
510 well known for everyone in the city, not only those who were there during the last lava flow
511 eruption). A further study of risk perception after the recent May 2021 eruption would allow a
512 better interpretation of the effect of prior experience on risk perception after a short time period.
513 Despite this homogenisation of risk perception, the spatial analysis of our data shows differences
514 between neighbourhoods and between the eastern (prior impacted area) and the western parts of
515 Goma.

516 **5.2.2. Influence of living in a prior impacted area on risk perception**

517 Previous studies had highlighted spatial variations in the perceived severity of volcanic hazards
518 according to the distance between the location of an inhabitant and a volcano (Quinn et al., 2019;
519 Chester et al., 2008; Haynes et al., 2008; De la Cruz-Reyna and Tilling, 2008; Njome et al., 2010;

520 López-Fletes et al., 2022). Goma is located 18 km south of Nyiragongo, but this volcano is clearly
521 visible from all parts of the city. Lava flow is the main volcanic hazard, as experienced in 2002,
522 when it crossed the city centre from north to south, and reached lake Kivu (Favalli et al., 2009,
523 2006). **The variation in risk perception between neighbourhoods does not differ depending on**
524 **whether the neighbourhood is far from the volcano or not** (Fig. 5a). Brown et al. (2017) state that
525 it is almost exclusively with the ballistic volcanic hazard that the perceived likelihood of hazards
526 and the severity of their impacts vary with distance from the volcano. However, at Nyiragongo
527 volcano, the constant ‘visibility’ of the threat and the knowledge that lava flows can extend to
528 large distance cause a homogeneous risk perception. Furthermore, impacts from an eruption like
529 the one of 2002 are expected to be high and affecting the whole city (fig. 4b).

530 In addition, Goma is not officially subdivided in risk zones in contrary to some volcanoes areas
531 around the world (Slovic, 1991; Capra et al., 2015; Brown et al., 2017; Tsang and Lindsay, 2020).
532 Therefore, the perceived likelihood of volcanic hazards and the severity of their impacts on the
533 city could not be influenced by official risk zonation, despite the fact that the hazard from lava
534 flows is not homogenous across the city (Syavulisembo et al., 2015; Favalli et al., 2009; Michellier
535 et al., 2020). Indeed, in Italy as a concrete example, the areas of Vesuvius and Campi Flegrei are
536 subdivided into risk zones (red, yellow and blue zones) and a spatial variation of the perceived
537 likelihood of hazards was observed in these different zones (Barberi et al., 2008; Ricci et al., 2013).
538 In Goma, the existing map of lava flow probability (Favalli et al., 2009; Kervyn et al., 2022a) is
539 not sufficiently disseminated among the population, or in official documents, like the volcanic
540 eruption contingency plan, to influence the risk perception. Therefore, it seems to not be a specific
541 factor that pushes people living in different neighbourhoods of Goma to perceive differently the
542 likelihood of occurrence of volcanic hazards.

543 The variation in risk perception between neighbourhoods does not differ depending on whether
544 the neighbourhood is far from the volcano or not. The highest level of risk perception is observed
545 in the east of the city (Fig. 5c), i.e., the area that has been historically impacted by lava flows, but
546 also the oldest inhabited area (Komorowski et al., 2002; Michellier et al., 2020a). Although the
547 difference in the average perception per neighbourhood is limited, living in an area historically
548 impacted by eruption influence the level of risk perception. Indeed, in an editorial review, Gaillard
549 and Dibben (2007) showed that the spatial dimension of risk perception is closely related to
550 memory of past events or the prior experience. This demonstrates that, in some cases, it is not the
551 individual experience that matters, but rather that of a community in a neighbourhood where the
552 impacts of past eruptions are still visible (Gaillard and Dibben, 2007). In Goma, **signs of the 2002**
553 **lava flow impact** are still visible in the eastern neighbourhoods, and these events are part of the
554 oral tradition, suggesting indeed that it is not so much individual experience as collective memory
555 of the event that affects the risk perception in a specific neighbourhood. For example, during the
556 survey in the Virunga neighbourhood, an old man told us: “My neighbour used to tell me that in
557 2002, the volcanic eruption had surprised them with a red-hot cloud and a puff of heat. After the
558 eruption they returned in our neighbourhood, built on lava flows. Now, those who experienced the
559 eruption and us who did not, all of us live in the likely path of lava flow”.

560 Participants' socio-economic vulnerability may also affect their perception of risk. Barclay et
 561 al. (2015) realized that in most cases high conditions of vulnerability of an individual usually leads
 562 to a high level of his/her risk perception. For instance, Khan et al. (2019) indicate that the physical
 563 vulnerability of buildings of an inhabitant is positively and significantly correlated with his
 564 perception of earthquake risk. In Goma, Michellier et al. (2020a) found that the social vulnerability
 565 of the population of Goma is high in the peripheral neighbourhoods of the city, like Mugunga, part
 566 of Kyeshero and Nyiragongo territory. In contrast, our results indicate that the mean level of
 567 perceived vulnerability in these peripheral neighbourhoods is low (Fig. 5b). Therefore, spatially,
 568 our results show that perceived vulnerability is weakly related to the social vulnerability index.
 569 Moreover, the perception of being personally at risk is negatively correlated with household
 570 income. In addition, people perceive the concern of losing their assets more than the fear of being
 571 physically impacted (Fig. 4b & c). As a result, the vulnerable population in the peripheral
 572 neighbourhoods of Goma is also the one that feels the least concerned by volcanic risks. Wisner
 573 et al. (2005), Van Praag et al. (2021) and Michellier et al., (2020a) highlight that in Goma, social
 574 vulnerability is underpinned by political context, armed conflicts, limited access to livelihoods and
 575 dependent economies, so that people are more concern by daily survival than natural hazard (Fig.
 576 3). Another explanation of the low perceived vulnerability in the peripheral neighbourhoods could
 577 be that these neighbourhoods are far from the path of historical lava flows.

578 **5.3.Limitations and perspectives**

579 This study is affected by several limitations, one of which is the demographic characterization
 580 of respondents that did not consider the housing tenure of respondent (ownership vs rental), and
 581 the duration of residence in a specific neighbourhood. A qualitative approach through focus groups
 582 and interviews could help to capture local interpretations of the volcanic risk depending on culture.
 583 Our survey formulation of “perceived vulnerability” might have led to misinterpretation between
 584 the likelihood or the impact. Thus, multiple phrasing should be tested for the same concept.

585 Future research on risk perception in Goma should also consider (1) the impact of the
 586 population growth by highlighting differences of risk perception according to migration status; (2)
 587 the impact of false alarms spread by social media on risk perception; (3) the influence of risk
 588 experiences in general (vicarious, life difficulties, disaster experience, insecurity related to civil
 589 wars or criminality) on volcanic risk perception. As our survey was conducted prior to the 2021
 590 eruption crisis, it would be needed to study how this eruption and the associated evacuation has
 591 affected the risk perception of inhabitants. Finally, it would be relevant to further analyse how the
 592 highlighted contrasts in risk perception impact population’s preparedness and responses during a
 593 volcanic crisis.

594

595 **6. Conclusion**

596 By describing the risk perception of 2,224 inhabitants of Goma prior to the May 2021
 597 eruption of Nyiragongo, we highlight the main factors controlling risk perception and its spatial
 598 distribution in the city of Goma. In general, the perception of volcanic risk by the population of
 599 Goma was high. Volcanic hazards are perceived to be more a threat for the city and its functioning,

600 rather than for the individuals themselves. In contrast to other populated volcanic areas, distance
601 does not significantly affect the risk perception, but a variation between the historically impacted
602 eastern zone and the rest of the city is noted. Demographic factors are not the key factors shaping
603 risk perception but rather cognitive and psychological ones. Furthermore, unlike studies in other
604 volcanic areas, the experience of a past volcanic eruption is not a key factor in shaping risk
605 perception at an individual level; however, the spatial difference in risk perception suggests that
606 collective memory of past events in areas affected by a previous eruption does play a role.
607 Cognitive factors and the family context are the key factors shaping the volcanic risk perception
608 in Goma. Therefore, to enhance risk perception in the perspective of motivating the population to
609 be well informed and prepared to face the volcanic risk, awareness-raising tools that strengthen
610 the knowledge of inhabitants and the collective memory beyond the directly affected
611 neighbourhoods would be essential. In addition, risk assessment and development of DRR
612 strategies at the community level should be prioritised over those at the individual level in
613 opposition to most risk perception studies conducted in western countries (Somestad et al., 2015;
614 Brewer et al., 2007; Bamberg et al., 2017). Another further study testing the impact of tools to
615 improve knowledge of volcanic phenomena would provide a better understanding of how
616 psychological and cognitive factors can influence risk perception through risk-awareness raising.

617 This study also discusses how the risk perception contrasts with the vulnerability of the
618 population of Goma as assessed by scientific methods. Indeed, we highlighted that the factors
619 determining the social vulnerability index are not necessarily those that make the population
620 perceive that they are vulnerable or at risk. Moreover, we pointed out that people living in the
621 peripheral neighbourhoods, far from the historically path of the lava flow, have a low perception
622 of their likelihood of being impacted. An unexpected eruption of Nyiragongo, like the one in May
623 2021, with a different lava path from the one taken by the eruptions of the last century, would
624 affect a population that consider itself not highly vulnerable. It is therefore urgent to disseminate
625 the map of lava flow probability (Kervyn et al., 2022b). As a perspective, more research about risk
626 perception should be conducted in the Global South, as in the case of Goma. It could help better
627 understand the difference of risk perception between individualist and collectivist cultures. As a
628 result, this could lead to a better balance of factors controlling risk perception globally.

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635 Nouvelles Technologies of Goma (ISSNT) that help collect the data.

636 **Data availability**

637 The raw and processed data from the co-authors' research findings cannot be shared at this time
638 as these data are also part of ongoing PhD research. Research design and questionnaire design (in
639 French) are available on request from the corresponding author.

640 **Author contributions**

641 BMN, CM, MK conceived the study. BMN conducted interviews, designed questionnaires,
642 analysed the data, and wrote the original draft of the manuscript, with key input and revisions from
643 CM, MK, FMH and FK. CM and FMH provided technical advises for data collection.

644 **Ethical statement**

645 The HARISSA (Natural HAZards, RISks and Society in Africa: developing knowledge and
646 capacities) project, under which this research was conducted, was approved by Congolese national
647 government (ministry of research and technology) and local authorities. The survey questionnaire
648 and research protocol were approved in term of ethical considerations by the academic office of
649 the University of Goma and local authorities at the municipality and neighbourhood levels in
650 Goma. Verbal informed consent was obtained from the survey participants for their anonymized
651 information to be published in this article.

652 **Competing interests**

653 The authors declare no conflict of interest.

654 Appendix

655 Table A. Detailed overview of the participants demographics characteristics across
656 neighbourhood

	Karisimbi municipality						Goma municipality						Nyiragongo territory			
	Kahembe (n=270)		Mugunga (n=275)		Majengo (n=276)		Virunga (n=286)		Katindo (n=271)		Kyeshero (n=290)		Les volcans (n=266)		Nyiragongo (n=290)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Age																
18-30 years	108	40.0%	107	38.9%	120	43.5%	141	49.3%	109	40.2%	118	40.7%	94	35.3%	91	31.4%
31-45 years	106	39.3%	129	46.9%	114	41.3%	89	31.1%	95	35.1%	111	38.3%	122	45.9%	148	51.0%
46-65 years	45	16.7%	32	11.6%	32	11.6%	49	17.1%	56	20.7%	57	19.7%	46	17.3%	48	16.6%
Above 65 years	11	4.1%	7	2.5%	10	3.6%	7	2.4%	11	4.1%	4	1.4%	4	1.5%	3	1.0%
Household size																
1-3 persons	33	12.2%	35	12.7%	37	13.4%	35	12.2%	35	12.9%	35	12.1%	40	15.0%	27	9.3%
4-7 persons	155	57.4%	139	50.5%	127	46.0%	133	46.5%	134	49.4%	134	46.2%	158	59.4%	153	52.8%
8-11 persons	67	24.8%	95	34.5%	94	34.1%	93	32.5%	80	29.5%	101	34.8%	58	21.8%	97	33.4%
Over 12 persons	15	5.6%	6	2.2%	18	6.5%	25	8.7%	22	8.1%	20	6.9%	10	3.8%	13	4.5%
Income																
0-250USD	191	70.7%	226	82.2%	200	72.5%	173	60.5%	91	33.6%	132	45.5%	39	14.7%	210	72.4%
251-500 USD	65	24.1%	47	17.1%	72	26.1%	88	30.8%	110	40.6%	100	34.5%	88	33.1%	75	25.9%
501-750 USD	10	3.7%	2	0.7%	4	1.4%	20	7.0%	48	17.7%	46	15.9%	78	29.3%	5	1.7%
Above 751 USD	4	1.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	1.7%	22	8.1%	12	4.1%	61	22.9%	0	0.0%
Education																
Not educated	20	7.4%	59	21.5%	19	6.9%	13	4.5%	3	1.1%	23	7.9%	7	2.6%	28	9.7%
Primary level	46	17.0%	48	17.5%	30	10.9%	21	7.3%	13	4.8%	29	10.0%	7	2.6%	45	15.5%
Secondary level	139	51.5%	144	52.4%	154	55.8%	141	49.3%	100	36.9%	120	41.4%	80	30.1%	174	60.0%
University level	65	24.1%	24	8.7%	73	26.4%	111	38.8%	155	57.2%	118	40.7%	172	64.7%	43	14.8%
Gender																
Female	151	55.9%	170	61.8%	150	54.3%	170	59.4%	145	53.5%	148	51.0%	121	45.5%	176	60.69%
Male	119	44.1%	105	38.2%	126	45.7%	116	40.6%	126	46.5%	142	49.0%	145	54.5%	114	39.31%
Prior experience																
No	119	44.07%	185	67.3%	137	49.6%	141	49.3%	129	47.6%	147	50.7%	163	61.3%	183	63.10%
Yes	151	55.93%	90	32.7%	139	50.4%	145	50.7%	142	52.4%	143	49.3%	103	38.7%	107	36.90%
Transport																
No	220	81.5%	246	89.5%	231	83.7%	226	79.0%	136	50.2%	191	65.9%	76	28.6%	244	84.14%
Yes	50	18.5%	29	10.5%	45	16.3%	60	21.0%	135	49.8%	99	34.1%	190	71.4%	46	15.86%
Family status																
Grand-parent	4	1.5%	3	1.1%	6	2.2%	8	2.8%	9	3.3%	5	1.7%	8	3.0%	5	1.72%
Parent	187	69.3%	217	78.9%	182	65.9%	167	58.4%	155	57.2%	187	64.5%	149	56.0%	228	78.62%
Child	72	26.7%	50	18.2%	83	30.1%	102	35.7%	81	29.9%	80	27.6%	76	28.6%	47	16.21%
Relative	7	2.6%	5	1.8%	5	1.8%	9	3.1%	26	9.6%	18	6.2%	33	12.4%	10	3.45%

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659 **Survey questionnaire**



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