

## RISKSCAPES EDITORIAL

DETLEF MÜLLER-MAHN and JONATHAN EVERTS

Riskscapes can be understood as socially produced ‘temporalspatial’ phenomena, which combine the material and practice components of risk and relate them to space. They are socially produced, because risks are not conceived in isolation, but through common perceptions, communication and collective action at societal level. They are temporalspatial phenomena, because they play out in space and time. They link the material dimension of physical threats, the discursive dimension of how people perceive and communicate risks, and the dimension of agency, i.e. how people are dealing with risk. The spatial dimension becomes obvious when one compares the metaphorical term of riskscapes to the notion of landscape. In the sense of ‘landscapes of risk’, riskscapes consist of risky territories, safe pathways, no-go areas and secured places, which are all thrown together through the perceptions and practices of the people who fill them with life.

The concept of riskscapes was introduced into the literature of risk research by MÜLLER-MAHN and EVERTS (2013), and has since then been applied and further developed by a number of empirical studies. The five contributions to this thematic issue of *Erdkunde*, together with three more articles in the following issue, present a wide range of applications of the concept in empirical research. They give evidence of the fruitfulness of the concept and help to develop it further. Their critical comments concern primarily the consideration of power relations, which have not been sufficiently acknowledged in previous versions of the concept. The last contribution to this collection of articles is a theoretical paper by MÜLLER-MAHN and EVERTS (2018) that revisits the empirical studies and critical comments to propose clarifications and further refinements of the concept of riskscapes.

The contributions to the collection of articles in this thematic issue and the following issue of *Erdkunde* illustrate the diversity of cases to which the concept of riskscapes may be applied, from critical infrastructures in Germany (KRINGS 2018), climate related risks in Tanzania and Ethiopia (GEBREYES and

THEODORY 2018) to flood risks in Mexico (STEPHAN 2018) or the slums of Nairobi (AALDERS 2018), from the household level of riskscapes related to convenience food in Germany and the UK (EVERTS et al. 2018), to hurricane monitoring in the Caribbean (BOHLE 2018) and a national riskscape of nuclear power in South Korea (LEE et al. 2018). Taking the discussion of the riskscapes concept as a common point of departure, the papers aim at refining the original concept and developing it further, based on new empirical insights. They highlight different aspects of riskscapes such as scale (AALDERS 2018), power (BOHLE 2018; et al. 2018), performativity (STEPHAN 2018), knowledge (GEBREYES and THEODORY 2018), practices (EVERTS et al. 2018), and spatial proximity (KRINGS 2018). Some articles do also elaborate on methodological questions and empirical approaches, such as approaches to visualize risk (STEPHAN 2018), or multi-sited ethnography (AALDERS 2018).

AALDERS (2018) explicitly adds a scalar dimension to his conceptualization of riskscapes, linking it to questions of inequality, gender and environmental justice. In a study of flood and other risks along the rivers flowing through Nairobi, Kenya, he focusses on competing multi-scalar riskscapes and scalar negotiations of risk resulting in marginalization of the poor and especially of poor women at, what he calls, a “sacrifice-scale”: river banks that are affected by multiple risks.

KRINGS (2018) applies the concept of riskscapes to the study of critical infrastructures like power plants and the risks emerging from them. Risks related to critical infrastructures may either be caused by hazardous incidents like emissions and other potential damages for people living in the neighbourhood, or they may be due to the failure of an infrastructure to deliver the services for which it was built, for example electricity production or water supply. In view of the specific relationship between risk and territory, the author highlights the exposure to hazardous incidents due to spatial proximity, and the vulnerability due to dependency from critical infrastructures.

BOHLE'S (2018) paper contributes the notion of power to the conceptualization of riskscapes. It applies a Foucauldian governmentality perspective to the investigation of hurricane-riskscapes of the Caribbean. In this context, the governmentality of risk is presented as a technology to control and discipline the conduct of people, and to spatialize risk by differentiating it with respect to zones.

The paper of GEBREYES and THEODORY (2018) studies the effects of climate change in relation to other risks and scrutinizes how this amalgam of multiple risk settings enhances the vulnerability of communities in the periphery of Ethiopia and Tanzania. The study shows that site-specific riskscapes combine such diverse factors as population dynamics, market volatility, state policy failure and even supernatural aspects, in addition to climate change.

In a similar vein, STEPHAN (2018) describes the uneven pattern of flood risk in Chiapas, Mexico, and scrutinizes diverse social practices of risk management. Innovative visual research methods help to analyse the performative character of riskscapes.

EVERTS et al. (2018) apply the concept of riskscape to the socio-spatial practices associated with the consumption of convenience food. Household based case studies describe how understandings of food related risks and practices of food consumption differ between diverse types of consumers and experts like health authorities and government advisors. Instead of understanding risk simply as the consequence of knowledge deficits, like in older approaches, the authors suggest to focus on 'stocks of knowledge' and their use in dietary choices. Food riskscapes can thus be understood as expressions of how consumers make sense of food risks in their everyday practices.

LEE et al. (2018) study the emergence of a riskscape at national scale in South Korea, where economic growth went along with the expansion of the nuclear energy sector. This led to a highly uneven distribution of risks related to the power plants and their allocation along the coast, and to contestation and resistance especially at these sites, i.e. at local scales. The authors explain the problematic situation by referring to the Asian Developmental State thesis, which focusses on the hegemony of the state in shaping national riskscapes.

MÜLLER-MAHN and EVERTS (2018) conclude the themed issue by conceptually broadening the concept of riskscapes. First, they elaborate on the spatial dimensions of risk and the practices and subjectivities of riskscapes. Second they introduce new theoretical depth by conceptualizing power relations from a riskscape point of view. Third, time and the practices of

future-making are identified and theorized as an important site for future research.

As the range of articles shows, the concept of riskscapes can serve as a fruitful common reference point in debates concerning the spatial dimensions of risk. We hope that the future will show how the refined notions of riskscapes present in this and the following issue are equally powerful in generating new and exciting research. Moreover, the riskscapes concept has been applied from a critical perspective. This has implications for established risk policies and the politics of risk which we challenge in a number of cases and fields. In general, we advocate a theoretically more nuanced view of the spatial dimensions of risk including practices, power relations and future-making.

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### **Authors**

Prof. Dr. Jonathan Everts  
Institute of Geosciences and Geography  
Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg  
Von-Seckendorff-Platz 4  
06120 Halle (Saale)  
Germany  
[jonathan.everts@geo.uni-halle.de](mailto:jonathan.everts@geo.uni-halle.de)

Prof. Dr. Detlef Müller-Mahn  
Department of Geography  
University of Bonn  
Meckenheimer Allee 166  
53115 Bonn  
Germany  
[mueller-mahn@uni-bonn.de](mailto:mueller-mahn@uni-bonn.de)