
Editorial: On priorities, values and relationships in practice: a new road for disaster scholarly publishing

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Three years ago, a collective of scholars from all around the world came together to call for change in the way we study what we call *disasters*. The Manifesto that was then produced, and that is since available from the [RADIX: Radical Interpretations of Disasters website](#), has stirred widespread attention with more than 500 signatures gathered from informed researchers and practitioners concerned by unequal power relations in disaster studies. This Manifesto challenges the hegemony of Western ontologies and epistemologies in understanding disasters, which, such interpretations suggest, happen more often in places beyond the West. It further tackles the skewed relationships between scholars affiliated with institutions located in the same West, and its satellites, and researchers based in places that are more often affected by disasters. The former have long driven the agenda whilst have been subjected to it, which we suggest may have led to misinterpretations of priorities and approaches in studying disasters.

Last year, the same collective reinforced by a large cohort of up-and-coming early career researchers from even more diverse places around the world has come together again to translate the principles of the Manifesto into practical recommendations for future research. Research that we hope will be more grounded, relevant and equitable as per the Accord that we published on the same [RADIX website](#). This Accord also has garnered widespread attention amongst fellow scholars. It is not a list of rigid and standardised recommendations – this would be antithetical with the ethos of the Manifesto. Rather, it encourages scholars to ask self-reflective questions upon their research, particularly who/whose/whom questions that challenge positionality and decision-making, priorities and relevance, relationships and values.

Of course, none of us, signatories of both the Manifesto and Accord, claim that we have been able to fully embrace all our principles and recommendations. We must all deal with the priorities of our own institutions, their values and accountability mechanisms, as well as the constraints of the publishing environment. Nonetheless, one of the main challenges that we have all consistently faced in trying to advance the ethos of the Manifesto and Accord is the lack of opportunities to break away from the normalised and standardised format of academic publications that embody the hegemony of Western scholarship and, henceforth, prevent the emergence of alternative approaches to understanding disasters.

It is our modest contribution here, as editors of Disaster Prevention and Management, to offer such window of opportunity. It has been a few years already that we have encouraged the publication of non-academic articles published by local civil society leaders under the banner of our voices from the communities section. However, we hereby commit to take our agenda further and open up further space for other forms of publications, whether they are written articles structured after non-Western standards (i.e. the conventional introduction + review of the literature + methodology + findings + discussion + conclusion) or other creative and locally relevant ways of communicating “research outputs”, including poems, comics, photo essays, etc. with the limitation that the language of written pieces has to be English.



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To make this possible, we have hence made the Manifesto and Accord prominent in the journal's new editorial policy. Hereon, our prospective authors are invited to discuss how they have tried to answer or reflect on the questions raised in the Accord in their cover letter. Again, we do not expect everyone to fully embody all the principles; however, we expect our authors to engage with them as much as possible. On our side, we commit to encourage our reviewers, as grounded as possible in the local context of the study in the case of empirical research to write their report in consideration of the same principles.

As a first step, we have recently published a series of three special issues that, we believe, pave the way for our new editorial policy. Issues 31(1) and 31(2) have been coordinated by a collective of early career researchers committed to the principles of the Manifesto and Accord. They met and formed as a collective during a doctoral winter school held at Copenhagen Centre for Disaster Research at the University of Copenhagen in December 2019. The whole process since then has been one of collaboration and equitable relationships between researchers of all origins, age, gender identities and disciplines. We received many abstracts and this issue has sparked global attention. We have had to deal with a number of standardised processes that could hinder breaking some barriers, for e.g. to publish a paper under a collective name. We do hope to continue to strive to break some of these barriers.

The third special issue has been coordinated by a collective of four guest editors from South and Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America. This special issue titled *Calling for change in disaster studies* embraces knowledge plurality and calls for more nuanced discussions on epistemologies and ontologies. It brings a wide variety of discussions on various issues such methods, ethics, gender etc.

We hope that all prospective authors will be encouraged by such endeavours and increasing opportunities to publish "unorthodox" pieces that aim to embody local understandings of what we call disaster in the West. Of course, this does not mean that we are, from now on, reluctant to publishing any "traditional" articles informed by Western ontologies and epistemologies, especially if they are theoretical pieces or case studies of locations where these understandings of the world make sense. Our aim is to continue to offer a space for dialogue between diverse approaches, which is a dialogue that fosters genuine and equitable relationship amongst researchers of all identities, origins and backgrounds as per the ethos of our Manifesto and Accord.

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