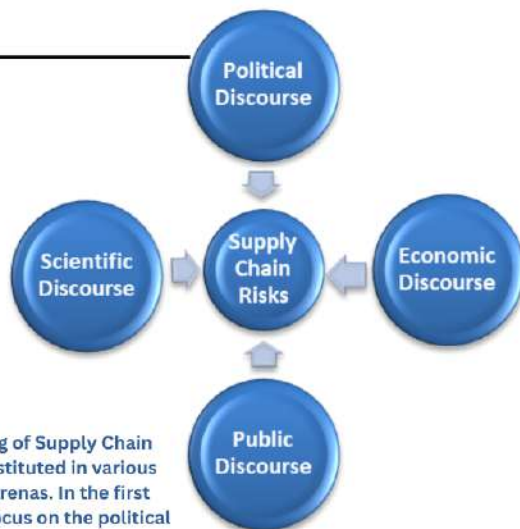
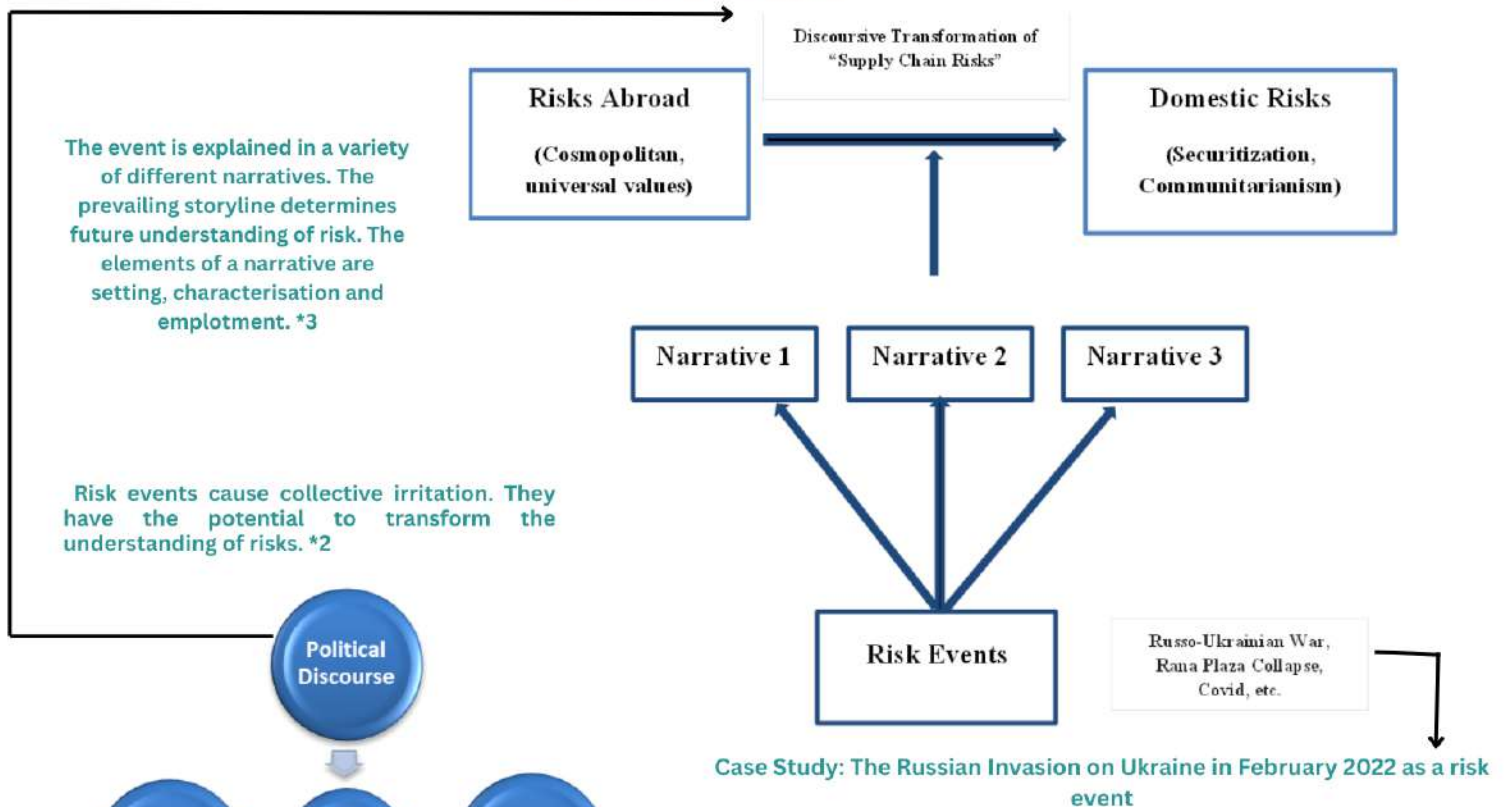


What are we afraid of?

The Social Construction of Supply Chain Risks. A Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse

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Instead of focusing only on economics or logistics, we study how political language, meanings, and interpretations influence decisions. The study uses the Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse (SKAD), which examines how social realities are built through communication. The main idea is that risks are not just facts but are created by how people talk about them. *1



The meaning of Supply Chain Risks is constituted in various discursive arenas. In the first paper, we focus on the political arena.

Literature

1. Keller, R. (2024). The Sociology of knowledge approach to discourse: Foundations, concepts and tools for a research programme.
2. Beck, U. (2007). Weltrisikogesellschaft: Auf der Suche nach der verlorenen Sicherheit.
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Phenomenon Structure of Supply Chain Risks in Bundestag Debates		
Dimensions	Pre-Event Discourse	Post-Event Discourse
Problem Quality	Ethical & regulatory risks abroad (human rights, corporate due diligence)	Geopolitical & energy risks (national vulnerability, dependency on Russia)
Responsibility	Shared moral duty of firms and state to enforce global standards	State and industry responsible for national security and resilience
Problem Solving	Regulate globalization through due diligence laws	Secure autonomy via diversification, protection, and sanctions
Model Subjects	Global South workers and ethical corporations	German citizens, domestic industries
Values & Goals	Human rights, fair trade, cosmopolitan ethics	Sovereignty, prosperity, national resilience

Before the 2022 war, political debates centred on ethical issues abroad, such as human rights abuses and unsafe working conditions in developing countries. The 2013 Rana Plaza factory collapse in Bangladesh symbolised the dangers of globalised production. Supply chain risks were viewed as moral and humanitarian issues. After the invasion of Ukraine, the debate shifted toward energy security and national interests. Politicians began discussing Germany's dependency on foreign energy sources and the need for domestic stability. Supply chains were now framed as vulnerable systems tied to geopolitical power struggles.



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