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**Governing Terrorism through Risk: taking precautions, (un)knowing  
the future**

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# **Governing Terrorism through Risk: taking precautions, (un)knowing the future<sup>1</sup>**

## **Abstract**

9/11 appeared to make good on Ulrich Beck's claim that we are now living in a (global) risk society. Examining what it means to 'govern through risk', this article departs from Beck's thesis of risk society and its appropriation in security studies. Arguing that the risk society thesis problematically views risk within a macro-sociological narrative of modernity, this paper shows, based on a Foucauldian account of governmentality, that governing terrorism through risk involves a permanent adjustment of traditional forms of risk management in light of the double infinity of catastrophic consequences and the incalculability of the risk of terrorism. Deploying the Foucauldian notion of 'dispositif', this article explores precautionary risk and risk analysis as conceptual tools that can shed light on the heterogeneous practices that are defined as the 'war on terror'.

**Keywords:** terrorism; governmentality; risk society; precaution; securitisation;  
governmentality

## **I Introduction**

We have come to a fork in the road. This may be a moment no less decisive than 1945 itself, when the United Nations was founded ... I believe the time is ripe for a hard look at fundamental policy issues, and at the structural changes that may be needed in order to strengthen them. History is a harsh judge: it will not forgive us if we let this moment pass (Anan, 2003)

Kofi Anan's statement speaks of a shared feeling in the post-9/11 world. Novel and exceptional, 9/11 had all the qualifications of a historic 'event'. The world of IR attempted however to mould this dramatic novelty to fit its already existing tools: just war, preemptive action, or even civilisational clashes. More radical engagements with state practices post-9/11 brought about an analytical mixture of continuity through the construction of otherness and exceptional practices and discontinuity through the intensification and increased visibility of these practices. Yet, the 'war on terror' is a more complex discursive and institutional formation than these theories have been able to account for, configured by practices that are neither exclusively nor predominantly military, a specific imbrication of continuity and discontinuity. From Guantanamo Bay to biometrics and increased surveillance, or from extraordinary rendition to the categorisation of terrorist suspects as enemy combatants, the 'war on terror' has regimented a whole series of practices that do not fall under the description of war. More attentive to the radical novelty of terrorism, the work of the German sociologist Ulrich Beck saw in terrorism another manifestation of 'world risk society' (Beck, 2002; see also

Coker, 2002b; Rasmussen, 2004; Spence, 2005). Comparing the terrorist attacks of September 11 with the Chernobyl of the 1980s (Beck, 2002; 2003), Beck has claimed that September 11 drove home the lesson that we now live in a 'risk society', a society in which there are uncontrollable and unpredictable dangers against which insurance is impossible. Beck's view on terrorism as a risk that goes 'beyond rational calculation into the realm of unpredictable turbulence' (Beck, 2002: 43) has also motivated security scholars to reconsider the research agenda of security studies (Rasmussen, 2001; 2004; Griner, 2002). As Rasmussen argues, '[t]he attack on the World Trade Centre in September 2001 is a tragic example of a new asymmetrical strategic reality that is better understood by the concept of risk society than by traditional notions of terrorism' (Rasmussen, 2001: 308).

Beck's risk society is not the first formulation of the need to think security in terms of risk. An earlier debate tried to open the concept of 'securitisation' as formulated by the Copenhagen School to risk analysis. Against the limitation of securitisation to urgency, immediacy, survival, or exceptional practices, Didier Bigo proposed an understanding of securitisation as routinised practices of bureaucracies.<sup>2</sup> An attention to practices and routines translated to an attention to risk management, to the proactive practices of security professionals to prevent the occurrence of dangers in the future (Bigo, 2004b: 1). While we agree that the concept of risk provides a useful way of analysing security practices in the 'war on terror', we argue that Beck's understanding of risks, formulated in the context of environmental struggles in Germany in the 1970s, pertains to a specific approach to modernisation and the role of knowledge that does not travel well to the current practices and technologies of risk deployed in the war on terror.

Although Beck presents risk society as riddled with risks of which we can have neither knowledge nor measure, the ‘war on terror’ displays an insatiable quest for knowledge: profiling populations, surveillance, intelligence, knowledge about catastrophe management, prevention, etc. Therefore, this article takes issue with the particular conceptualisation of risk that is being appropriated from Beck and explores the potential of another approach to risk analysis to make sense of what security entails in the context of the ‘war on terror’.<sup>3</sup> While it is problematic to argue, as Beck does, that all practices of security can be reduced to one type of risk, the ‘war on terror’ can also not be reduced to practices of proactive risk management as analysed by Didier Bigo. We argue that the ‘war on terror’ is a new form of governmentality that imbricates knowledge and decision at the limit of knowledge, war and strategies of surveillance, injunctions to integration and drastic policies against anti-social behaviour. What is new is not so much the advent of a risk society as the emergence of a ‘precautionary’ element that has given birth to new configurations of risk that require that the catastrophic prospects of the future be avoided at all costs.

We contend that a different conceptualisation of risk as ‘precautionary risk’ can shed light on the contradictory and complex developments of the post-9/11 world. Following Michel Foucault’s work on governmentality and more recent social analyses of risk, we conceptualise risk as a *dispositif* for governing social problems.<sup>4</sup> Governmentality has been broadly defined as the ‘conduct of conduct’ or the social practices that attempt to shape, guide or affect the behaviour of persons (Gordon, 1991). Governmentality as an analysis of representations of social problems, the means to remedy them and their effects on the construction of subjectivity has informed a series of

approaches in International Relations. Globalisation (Larner and Walters, 2004; Lipschutz and Rowe, 2005), Europeanisation (Barry, 1993; Walters and Haahr, 2005) security (Dillon, 1996; Huysmans, 2004a; Bigo, 2002b), development (Brigg, 2001), complex emergencies (Dillon and Reid, 2001), refugee regimes (Lippert, 1999) or human trafficking (Aradau, 2004a) have all been explored through a governmental perspective. The dispositif of risk as a heterogeneous assemblage of discursive and material elements will enable us to locate developments as diverse as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the targeting of Muslim communities by counter-terrorism measures or indefinite detention of suspect terrorists in the UK as elements of precautionary governance through risk. Rather than bellicose decisions or arbitrary executive measures, these different policies will be shown to function within a dispositif of precautionary risk.

To this purpose, we shall proceed in three stages. Firstly, Beck's theory of risk society and its problematic appropriation in security studies will be revisited. Secondly, we shall discuss an analysis of risk that privileges heterogeneity over homogeneity, constructivism over realism, and contingency over determinism. This analysis of risk is 'governmental', inasmuch as it sees risk as rationalities and technologies that have developed and diversified historically in order to deal with social problems. Thirdly, the deployment of the dispositif of precautionary risk in the war on terror will be explored. By way of conclusion we shall discuss some of the implications of our analysis for (critical) security studies.

## **II Security studies: Living in the risk society**

Security studies have recently – though belatedly – discovered Beck’s analysis of risk society. In search for conceptual tools that can make sense of what security means and does nowadays, security analysts have hailed the risk society thesis as the promise for a renewed understanding of the world. Today, or so the argument goes, we all live in a (global) risk society. Beck argues that contemporary Western societies have undergone a transition from industrial societies to risk societies. The main difference between these two phases of the modernisation process is the way in which risks are perceived. In the industrial society, the foremost objective of decision-making is to produce and distribute wealth in conditions of scarcity. The reigning idea about risks was that they were the unintended, latent side effects of industrialisation that could be tamed through risk compensation and insurance schemes that worked on the basis of scientific expertise and calculations. In the (global) risk society, this relationship is reversed. The onus of decision-making is no longer on the production and distribution of ‘goods’, but on the prevention of ‘bads’. Technological and industrial progress has led to a situation where risks can no longer be conceived as the manageable side-effects of growth.

At the centre of risk society lies the consciousness that risks such as global warming, pollution and the hole in the ozone layer have become so immense that they create social and political dynamics that radically contradict the language of control in industrial societies. On the one hand, risks in risk society have become impossible to predict, either because of their low statistical probability or because they are non-recurring. On the other hand, these low-probability risks have hazardous effects that



cannot be compensated for through existing schemes of (financial) compensation. They are, as Beck puts it, 'irreversible threats to the life of plants, animals and human beings' (Beck, 1992: 13).

The advent of risk society is intimately related to Beck's notion of reflexive modernisation. The existence of irreversible risks in itself is not sufficient ground to speak of the emergence of a risk society. Indeed, Beck maintains that it is the social awareness of the catastrophic impacts of risks that defines the threshold between industrial society and risk society:

The concept of risk is directly bound to the concept of reflexive modernization. Risk may be defined as a systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernization itself. Risks, as opposed to older dangers, are consequences which relate to the threatening force of modernization and to its globalization of doubt. They are politically reflexive (Beck, 1992: 21).

Reflexivity is a form of self-critique and self-transformation that emerges in the advent of uncontrollable risks. It refers to the situation where societies have come to see themselves as risk societies, that is, as societies in which public debate and political conflicts are shaped by the awareness of irreversible risks and their impact upon the foundations of modern industrial societies.

More specifically, Beck accounts how the world of industrial societies and calculable risks has been dislocated along three dimensions: spatial, temporal and social

(Beck, 2002: 41). Risk society is ultimately a *world* risk society with no hiding places from delocalised risks with consequences that stretch over extended, or even indefinite, periods of time (Beck, 1996; 1999). Most interestingly, Beck argues that these uninsurable risks undermine the social arrangements through which risks have been made controllable in the past. Control is no longer possible in risk society, which instead ‘balances its way along beyond the limits of insurability’ (Beck, 1999: 32). When risks take the form of low-probability/high-consequence risks, questions of compensation, liability, and harm minimisation lose their significance. While Beck is rather vague about what kind of risks to include, moving from the earlier ‘manufactured’ risks such as pollution to ‘intentional’ risks such as terrorism and financial risks such as economic crises, his general point of departure seems to be that in conditions of extreme uncertainty, decision-makers are no longer able to guarantee predictability, security and control. ‘[T]he hidden central issue in world risk society’, he argues, ‘is how to *feign* control over the uncontrollable – in politics, law, science, technology, economy and everyday life’ (Beck, 2002: 41, emphasis added). Control is ideological, doomed to fall short of the measure of reality.

Following Beck’s evolutionary account of the two phases of modernity, Rasmussen (2004) similarly claims that in the war on terror the ideal of complete security is being replaced by a focus on the management of risks in conditions of uncertainty. However, while the introduction of the concept of risk in security studies is a valuable way of moving the debate about the meaning of security forward, its heavy reliance on Beck’s framework of risk society is not without difficulties. More specifically, two sets problems can be identified with the thesis of risk society. The first is empirical and refers

to the difficulty of locating a threshold between early modernity and reflexive modernity, which in turn renders problematic the claim that today we live in a world risk society. Although Beck in his more recent writings has somewhat moved away from the notion that ‘it makes no sense to insure against the worst-case ramifications of the global spiral of threat’ (Beck, 1999: 142), he still maintains that private insurance has become obsolete in risk society, as no private companies would be willing to bear the costs of future catastrophes such as terrorist attacks (Beck, 2002: 44). In times of crises, he argues, the neo-liberal ethos of privatisation, liberalisation and deregulation gives way to sovereign state power, as ‘the power of definition of experts has been replaced by that of states and intelligence agencies; and the pluralisation of expert rationalities has turned into the simplification of enemy images’ (Beck, 2002: 45).

At first sight, Beck’s observations on the uninsurability and incalculability of risk seem to have some empirical value. Barely a month after the attacks of 11 September, the Subcommittee on Capital Markets, Insurance and Government Sponsored Enterprises of the US House of Representatives met up to deal with the fall-out in the insurance and reinsurance industries (Cooper, 2004). Although most of these losses were borne by re-insurers (Ericson and Doyle, 2004), the Subcommittee discussed recommendations for the wholesale restructuring of private insurance. The insurance industry itself vigorously lobbied the US government to provide a bailout measure that would designate the government as the last resort re-insurer of terrorism risk. In his congressional testimony, Richard J. Hillman of the US General Accounting Office claimed that ‘both insurers and re-insurers have determined that terrorism is not an insurable risk at this time’ (cited in Kunreuther, 2002: 427). In 2002, accordingly, the US Senate passed the 2002 Terrorism

Risk Insurance Act (TRIA), which effectively regulates government involvement in the compensation of insured losses. While there has been a drift from private to public insurance arrangements, the private industry remains a significant insurer in the post-9/11 environment. The TRIA is only intended as a temporary bailout measure and states explicitly that in the future terrorism insurance should be provided for by the private sector:

[T]he United States Government should provide temporary financial compensation to insured parties, contributing to the stabilization of the United States economy in a time of national crisis, while the financial services industry develops the systems, mechanisms, products, and programs necessary to create a viable financial services market for private terrorism risk insurance (US Congress, 2002, Sec. 101(6)).

The argument that catastrophic terrorism is incalculable and uninsurable appears therefore inattentive to the institutional measures and actions that surround the tragic events of 9/11. Against the backdrop of radical contingency and incalculability, institutions have attempted to devise means to minimise or avoid the catastrophic promise of the future, seeking for alternative ways to predict and master it. Indeed, as Bougen has shown, terrorism and other catastrophic risks (including natural catastrophes and ‘man-made’ ones) are actually insured by private insurance companies (Bougen, 2003). Departing from Beck’s sweeping assumption that risk society is an uninsurable society, risk analysis should instead focus on ‘the variety of ways in which catastrophe risks are

already being governed in this new environment' (O'Malley, 2003a: 276). Yet, the major role that the insurance industry has played in redefining terrorism and the post-9/11 vision of the future has been relegated outside the boundaries of IR even if the OECD has recently reviewed market evolutions and existing national arrangements to cover exposure to terrorism and other catastrophic risks (OECD, 2005b, 2005a).

Since introducing theories of risk into IR should allow us to understand how various institutional actors respond to terrorism and other global risks, it is not clear how a theory of risk based on an evolutionary understanding of modernity can explicate the risk technologies deployed in the war on terror. Contrary to the thesis of risk society, the fact that 'Western governments simply are much less certain of whether and when they are secure, and how – and to what extent and at what price – security can be achieved' (Rasmussen, 2004: 382) does not in itself entail specific technologies of risk to deal with uncertainty. The problem with the risk society thesis is that it fails to acknowledge that the identification of risk is *not* the same as recognising the uncertainty of future events (Luhmann, 1991).<sup>5</sup> On the contrary, the identification and management of risk is a way of organising reality, disciplining the future, taming chance and rationalising individual conduct (Werner, 2005). Hence, 'reflexivity' in the sense of social awareness of risks has been a constant characteristic of governmental processes. Not the threshold of risk society, reflexivity is characteristic of all processes of governing the future, including security (Albert, 2001: 66-67). Rather than non-reflexive practices somehow characteristic of pre-risk society, security studies have read mutual deterrence (the arms-race, the development of second-strike capabilities) as insuring the present against a full

exposure to an uncertain future. What is different, however, are the manifold ways in which the future can be assessed, calculated and mastered.

This brings us to the second problem with the risk society thesis. As the conceptualisation of risk is intrinsically linked to a macro-historical account of history, Beck wrongly assumes that risks have the same features independent of the sphere in which they are articulated (e.g., environment, medicine, security, energy, the clinic). Risk is viewed as something given in the world and not as something constructed. Post-industrial society is laden with catastrophic risks as a result of concrete technological developments. Risk is not a modality of approaching reality, of inscribing social problems as risk, but what happens in the world ‘out there’ (cf. Dean, 1999; Lupton, 1999; Mythen and Walklate, 2005). It should be stressed, however, that others have pointed out that a more constructivist reading of Beck is possible as well (Rasmussen, 2001: 292, fn. 32).<sup>6</sup> According to Beck himself, “[t]he decision whether to take a realist or constructivist approach is ... a rather *pragmatic* one ... I am both a realist and constructivist” (Beck, 2000b: 211-2). With this somewhat puzzling statement Beck means to say that while risks are out there (realist ontology), it depends upon cultural, subjective and social categories which risks are selected for treatment (constructivist epistemology) (Beck, 2000b: 219). Hence, cultural selection is posited as an intervening variable between material risks on the one hand and the response to them on the other.<sup>7</sup> Social construction is only a secondary process and the constructivist elements of interpretational struggles or solidarity-creation are ‘merely’ an addition to a positivist world of ‘really existing risks’.<sup>8</sup> Concomitantly, IR-theorists who have used the risk society framework have examined how transnational loyalties are constituted around a

common interest in the management of global risks (Coker, 2002a; Griner, 2002; Rasmussen, 2004; Spence, 2005).

This view of catastrophic risks as something given denies the existence of other notions of risk and precludes any substantial analysis of the ways in which governing by means of risk has changed over time as it has become attached to different types of knowledges, rationalities, techniques and locales. An analysis of catastrophic risks is also limited to three categories, namely economic, environmental, and terrorist. The framework of global risk society could not accommodate crime, migration, or human trafficking, as risks are supposed to emerge from a technical decision and culturally selected only later on.<sup>9</sup> Organised crime or everyday muggings for example *become* risks through the way they are rendered knowledgeable and thinkable as well as through the technologies that are mobilised to tackle and manage them. Moreover, Beck's analytical dichotomy between incalculable risk/pretence of control by the authorities seems to be overturned in these cases. The risks of crime or migration are brandished as uncontrollable and catastrophic by the authorities themselves. Rather than focusing on these phenomena which become risk through an inscription of response to specific social problems, we shall focus on terrorism as the hard case of a governmental conceptualisation of risk contra Beck's risk society.

Although post-9/11 terrorism appears to lend itself logically to Beck's paradigm of catastrophe and uncontrollability, discoveries of social problems always presuppose contestation over the means to deal with them. As Mitchell Dean has shown, risks have often been made 'calculable' through qualitative, non-quantifiable and non-scientific forms of knowledge (Dean, 1999: 189). This is also the case for the risk of terrorism,

which is increasingly made ‘calculable’ through speculation and gambling instead of probability and severity (Ericson and Doyle, 2004: 137). Rather than assuming that risks have become incalculable under the conditions of reflexive modernity, that we are now living in a global risk society as Beck’s title of a recent lecture at the London School of Economics indicates (Beck, 2006), we analyse risk as ordering our world through managing social problems and surveying populations. Such a governmental analysis of risk is able to expose how the world and existing problematisations are made into risks, what effects this form of ordering entails upon populations. It is also able to understand changes in the modes of governing through risk depending on representations of the problem at hand and the subjects to be governed.

### **III Governing the risk society: From insurance to precaution**

Rather than a homogeneous development of industrial modernity, risk can be understood as a *dispositif* to govern social problems in Michel Foucault’s sense of the term. A *dispositif* consists of ‘discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions’ (Foucault, 1980: 194). The heterogeneous elements that make up a *dispositif* can be understood more systematically as rationalities and technologies of government.<sup>10</sup> In modernity, all forms of government have attempted to ‘rationalise’ themselves, to account for the ‘authority of their authority’. Rationalities appear therefore as knowledgeable discourses that represent objects of knowledge, confer identities and agencies upon social and political actors, and identify problems to be solved (Dean and



Hindess, 1998). Put simply, rationalities are ways of thinking about a social problem that will make its management practicable. Technologies are the means of realisation of rationalities, the social practices which are aimed at manipulating the social and physical world according to identifiable routines (O'Malley, 1992: 269, fn. 2). Governmental rationalities and technologies affect behaviour and 'construct' forms of ordered agency and subjectivity in the population to be governed as part of the social problem identified.

In this analysis, risk is a multiform and heterogeneous combination of rationalities and technologies, a 'family of ways of thinking and acting, involving calculations about probable futures in the present followed by interventions into the present in order to control that potential future' (Rose, 2001: 7). A dispositif of risk creates a specific relation to the future, which requires the monitoring of the future, the attempt to calculate what the future can offer and the necessity to control and minimise its potentially harmful effects. Thus a dispositif of risk goes beyond the ecological, economic, and terror risks identified by Beck to link in a continuum everyday, ordinary, everyday risks such as crime risks and extraordinary and catastrophic risks such as terror risks.

A dispositif of risk is subject to transformation and modification, depending on the knowledgeable representations of the problems and objects to be governed and on the available technologies to produce particular effects in the governed. Risk inscribes reality as harbouring 'potential dangerous irruptions' (Castel, 1991: 288) and deploys technologies to avert these events in the future. As risk has been thought for a long time to be coextensive with the insurable (Ewald, 1986), it has been shunned by security studies. Traditional security studies could not fit a logic of insurance within their definition of danger and the military techniques to neutralise these dangers. Constructivist

approaches such as the Copenhagen School have looked at the performative naming of security and could not therefore identify techniques and rationalities of risk if not explicitly named as such.<sup>11</sup> Bigo has introduced a risk approach in security studies by analysing how the managers of unease use the ‘authority of statistics’ to classify and prioritise the threats and determine what exactly constitutes security (Bigo, 2004a). As the police for example make use of insurantal knowledge, statistics and profiling for the purposes of prevention, risk entered the remit of security. Security is therefore not only about the exceptional, that which threatens survival and goes beyond normal politics, but about everyday routines and technologies of security professionals.<sup>12</sup> It also relies on what Beck would dismiss as the ‘ideological formation of risk’, as the pretence of professionals that risks can be controlled against their intrinsic incalculability and unpredictability.

What happens however when the authority of knowledge and statistical technologies become insufficient or are surpassed by catastrophic events? Risk understood as a *dispositif* for governing possible future irruptions of social problems offers an answer to this dilemma. Between exceptional measures and the immediacy of action on the one hand and the ordinary administrative, police or insurance measures on the other, the ‘war on terror’ spans the whole space between the two definitions of securitisation. A genealogy of the *dispositifs* of risk would us allow to understand the challenge of the catastrophic and the ‘incalculable’ in relation to the ordinary practices of risk management.

François Ewald’s (1986) and Jacques Donzelot’s (1984) genealogical analyses of risk have shown that risk provided a response to the problematisation of specific social

and historical problems. Interestingly, the dispositif of risk insurance emerged where politics and economics proved incapable of managing social problems. Insurance provided an answer to the ‘scandal of the poor’ in the post-revolutionary French *République*, where neither political equality nor capitalism could (Donzelot, 1984). Despite equality before the law and equal sovereignty, the poor had no property and were therefore forced to sell their labour. Yet, free access to work did not mean the end of indigence. The resolution of the social question – impossible through either political claims or economic measures – was given in the form of mandatory insurance. Risk could convert conflicting demands within the Republic and mitigate the ‘shameful opposition between the owners of capital and those who, living only by their labour, remain enslaved to them at the same time as they are proclaimed politically sovereign’ (Donzelot, 1988: 396). The wage system was the first form of collective risk insurance, guaranteeing rights, giving access to benefits outside work and protecting workers from the peril of indigence.

In this context, other social problems of industrial modernity became governed by technologies of risk insurance.<sup>13</sup> The dispositif of risk insurance emerged out of a contestation over means to deal with a social problem and became dominant given its non-revolutionary claims in dealing with the social. The discovery of the work accident, for example, could have disrupting effects for the social fabric, given its disputable claims to responsibility and the exacerbation of questions of exploitation. A rationality of risk reformulated accidents as something inherent to work, against which workers could however be protected through insurance. Solidarity through insurance could make up for the shortcomings of society, compensate for the effects of poverty and reduce the effects

of oppression. With insurance, state actions targeted only the forms of social relations and not the structures of society. Thus, insurance could ‘modify the relations between capital and wage-earners without distorting the historical logic on which they rest, ensure a better moralisation of the individual by transforming the social milieu, concretise the invisible bond between men of which the State is the visible expression’ (Donzelot, 1988: 399). The injured, sick or unemployed worker did not need to demand justice before a court or by taking to the streets as the proletarians had done in 1848. Instead, the worker could be indemnified by the State, the greatest social insurer. Through insurance, workers could be protected against unemployment or accidents, in a word, against indigence, the great political concern of the century. More generally, the dispositif of risk insurance never calls for the reorganisation of society but to compensation of damages caused by the social division of labour – and this is not done in the name of a fundamental injustice (Donzelot, 1984).

The dispositif of risk insurance modified the traditional understanding of risk as individual responsibility. The classical paradigm of risk was that of prudent individuals who negotiated the vicissitudes of fortune on their own and avoided becoming a burden on the others. With risk insurance, individuals are no longer directly and solely responsible for their fate. The state creates a general principle of responsibility in which individuals cannot be disentangled from one another. Yet, with the expansion of insurance beyond the wage system, solidarity is simultaneously undermined by the division and classification of populations in high risk/low risk groups. As risks of muggings, crime, AIDS, cancers, illegal migration all rely on the classification of groups, the dispositif of insurance is based upon technologies of dividing and categorising social

groups and the statistical computation of probabilities. Risk profiling entered the dispositif of insurance by using probabilistic and epidemiological knowledge to identify factors associated with risks of certain pathologies (Rose, 2001: 8).

Risk insurance has undergone further transformations linked with the historical context in which its technologies are deployed, on the one hand under the attack of neo-liberalism and on the other through the challenge of scientific discoveries. The dispositif of risk insurance has been contested and transformed by competing representations of society and the population, by the knowledge mobilised to support these representations, and the new technologies that neo-liberalism deployed. With the rise of neo-liberalism, the practice of collective risk management tends to be supplanted by 'prudentialism', in which subjects are required to prudently calculate, and thereby minimise, the risk that could befall them. This does not however reactivate the traditional understanding of risk, but redirects the dispositif of insurance towards the individual – hence the reference to the notion of 'new prudentialism' (O'Malley, 1992: 261). Insurance becomes a matter of individual responsibility rather than societal solidarity; it functions like a market which individuals enter for the provision of their own security. Thus, neo-liberalism entails a shift towards private security arrangements and a rediscovery of individual responsibility.

The more severe blow to strategies of risk insurance came from the scientific discoveries that seemed to undermine the very logic of calculability and the possibility of providing calculations for the future (Beck, 1999). As Ewald has succinctly formulated this latter challenge, risk 'tends to exceed the limits of the insurable in two directions: toward the infinitely small-scale (biological, natural, or food-related risk), and toward the infinitely large-scale ('major technological risks' or technological catastrophes' (Ewald,

1993: 222).<sup>14</sup> The two ‘infinities’ of risk remind us of Beck’s incalculable risks, the risks created by science or civilisation itself. Yet, infinity is not synonymous to incalculability. For governmentality, the question becomes one of taming the infinities of risk and integrating it within a *dispositif* of governance.<sup>15</sup> After all, the limit of knowledge has always confronted insurance technologies. Insurance against risks means making the seemingly incalculable subject to calculation (Ericson et al., 2003: 284).

The infinity of risk is doubly manifested in their potential effects and in their ‘being’, posing a conundrum for the insurance *dispositif*. The first element of infinity that undermines a politics of insurance is the *catastrophic element*, the grave and irreversible damage that an event can cause. The second element of infinity is that of *uncertainty*. Ewald’s infinitely small or infinitely large-scale risks are both related to scientific knowledge. When knowledge is unable to define the prospect of the future, to compute its own effects upon the future, the logic of insurance is surpassed (Ewald, 2002). Insurance requires the identification of risk and the statistical estimation of an event happening.

The double infinity of risk, as Beck hypothesised, makes terrorism difficult to govern by the technologies of insurance risk. Yet, this does not mean that these technologies dwindle out of existence or that governmentality is suspended. Social problems are always subjected to the imperative of governmentality. The representation of the double infinity of terrorism has led to the emergence of a ‘new’ *dispositif* of risk, precautionary risk, which has been grafted upon the ‘old’ technologies of risk management. Despite the similarity to Beck’s uninsurable risks, a Foucauldian approach does not portray risks as calculable/incalculable, but rather focuses on ‘how’ presumably incalculable catastrophic risks like terrorism are governed. Ewald himself does not speak

primarily of catastrophic risks, but of the precautionary paradigm. The precautionary dispositif inscribes upon the existing technologies of insurance other forms of calculation and relationality to the future. Thus, while Beck is right to argue that strategies of insurance risk have been challenged by scientific uncertainty, the governmentality literature adds to this insight by (re)conceptualising Beck's ideas about risk society and incalculability in terms of a rationality of government (Rasmussen, 2001: 292, fn. 32).

Despite its familiar ring, precaution can neither be reduced to traditional responsibility in the face of dangers nor to neo-liberal prudentialism. It is not a reminder of precautions that must be taken individually by entering on the insurance market. Precautionary risk introduces within the computation of the future its very limit, the infinity of uncertainty and potential damage. It is therefore exactly the opposite of prudence: if the latter recommended what 'precautions' to take under conditions of knowledge, the former demands that we act under scientific and causal uncertainty. The weight of the future is not simply that of contingency, but that of catastrophic contingency.

This new dispositif of risk that has a precautionary rationality at its core is derived – much like Beck's risk society – from environmental politics. The environment was the first area where catastrophic events were possible and not scientifically provable. Formulated initially within the legal realm, the precautionary principle has its roots in the German *Vorsorgeprinzip*, or foresight principle, which emerged in the early 1970s and developed into a principle of German environmental law.<sup>16</sup> It has informed international policy statements and agreements – initially recognised in the World Charter for Nature, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1982; and subsequently adopted in

the First International Conference on Protection of the North Sea in 1984. The European Commission, which recognised it for the first time in relation to the environment in the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, later extended it to other situations (European Commission, 2000). The definition of the precautionary principle is however most often traced back to the 1992 Rio Declaration: 'Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation' (United Nations, 1992).

The precautionary principle asks us 'to take regulatory action on the basis of possible 'unmanageable' risks, even after tests have been conducted that find no evidence of harm. We are asked to make decisions to curb actions, not on the basis of what we know, but on the basis of what we do not know' (Guldberg, 2003). The European Commission's Communication puts in a nutshell the context for applying the precautionary principle:

Whether or not to invoke the Precautionary Principle is a decision exercised where scientific information is insufficient, inconclusive or uncertain and where there are indications that the possible effects on the environment, or human, animal or plant health may be potentially dangerous and inconsistent with the chosen level of protection (European Commission, 2000: 10).

Terrorism is to some extent a 'risk beyond risk', of which we do not have, nor cannot have, the knowledge or the measure. The precautionary dispositif would apply to terrorism where the scientific technologies for 'representing' the world find themselves



surpassed by reality itself. Unlike insurance which is based upon statistical models of reality, precautionary risk ‘applies to what is uncertain – that is, to what one can apprehend without being able to assess’ (Ewald, 2002: 286). Precautionary risk has not however spelled the death of insurantal risk or of prudentialism. It has reconfigured them in a new dispositif that deploys already available rationalities and technologies of risk and adds a precautionary element.

#### **IV The new logic of risk: taking precautions against terrorism**

Responsible science and responsible policymaking operate on the precautionary principle (Blair, 2002).

What, then, is this new dispositif of governing terrorism through risk? We argue that precautionary risk has emerged in the dispositif of risk to govern terrorism, where other technologies have proven fallible or insufficient. Precautionary risk has modified or supplemented other technologies of risk management and has reconfigured them at the horizon of the double infinity of terrorism. According to Ewald, ‘the precautionary principle does not target all risk situations but only those marked by two principal features: a context of scientific uncertainty on the one hand and the possibility of serious and irreversible damage on the other’ (Ewald, 2002: 282).<sup>17</sup> This double infinity of risk is not intrinsic to terrorism, as Beck would probably maintain, but has emerged out of a contest over the representation of terrorism.

We have seen that a risk dispositif consists of rationalities and technologies to monitor and predict dangerous occurrences in the future. Precautionary risk is based on four interlinked rationalities that allow for the deployment of specific technologies of government: zero risk, worst case scenario, shifting the burden of proof and serious and irreversible damage. These rationalities are derived from the catastrophic and radically contingent elements of risk and they replace the earlier rationalities of risk insurance: risk identification, risk reduction and risk spreading. Any level of risk is now considered unacceptable; risk must be avoided at all costs. Risk minimisation and other forms of risk management (such as ‘contingency planning’) derive from the joint realisation that the catastrophe will happen. The worst case scenario and its irreversible damages logically lead to a politics of zero risk which modifies the solidaristic equation that took for granted that a risk was acceptable as long as it was reparable or repaired (Ewald, 2002: 284).

As a result, the dispositif of insurance has tipped towards drastic prevention. If responsibility in insurance was reduced to the case of moral hazards (when the behaviour of the insured was likely to lead to risk)<sup>18</sup> and was therefore part of the assessment for the purpose of compensation, the precautionary principle holds the other responsible for ‘irreparable damage’. Against immeasurable and irreparable damage, George Bush’s ‘infinite justice’ gains its full meaning. The sanctioning of those deemed responsible becomes itself immeasurable, therefore infinite. From ‘Bin Laden dead or alive’ to ‘infinite justice’ we discover the whole spectrum of practices activated by risk – from the imaginary of vengeance against an individual evil-doer and his accomplices on the model of criminal sanctioning and responsibility to the infinite sanctioning of suspects. The

debates around pre-emptive strikes, the exceptional status of Guantanamo Bay, practices of extraordinary rendition or indefinite detention in the UK appear as technologies appropriate to precautionary risk.

The other does not only harbour a catastrophic risk, but groups of high risk cannot be easily detected. If risk management based on insurance technologies could function within the horizon of knowledge, precautionary risk faces the limits of knowledge that subvert the traditional means of risk management. The insurance paradigm of risk was based on scientific calculus and group profiling. Profiling as a technology of 'social sorting' (Lyon, 2002) depends on the categorisation of social groups, their profiling and statistical computation of risk. Once terrorist suspects cannot be clearly identified through technologies of profiling, we have a renewed panopticism, forms of surveillance that target everybody, as the potential terrorist could be any of us. Gordon Woo, one of the best-known risk analysts of the London-based firm *Risk Management Solutions* has formulated this dilemma of the undetectable terrorist:

What would be especially puzzling to security forces is the apparently haphazard variation in the commitment of a specific individual to the terrorist cause. Such individuals would not be classified as hard-liners, and would soon disappear from the terrorist radar screen ... These individuals may not themselves have any prolonged history of links with radical groups, so they would be hard to identify in advance as potential suspects ... (Woo, 2002).

The traditional technologies of risk management become more extensive, as profiling and surveillance attempt to encompass the whole population (van Munster, 2004). As the underestimation of intelligence and knowledge is considered irresponsible from the viewpoint of precautionary risk, the scope and field of intelligence needs to be enlarged accordingly. Yet, at the limit of knowledge, intelligence becomes itself insufficient. The Home Office official report on the 7/7 London bombings points out this conundrum: nothing marked out the four men involved in the attacks, they were all 'unexceptional' (Home Office, 2006). 9/11 has therefore given way to more pro-active forms of surveillance of suspect populations, leading to a surplus supply of data and an over-prediction of threats (Lyon, 2003; Levi and Wall, 2004; Amoore and de Goede, 2005). Precautionary risk management implies the surveillance of all the population, of all flights for example, independent of existing intelligence. Hence more and more technologies of surveillance are indiscriminately targeted at the whole population: stop and search policies in the UK, biometric identifiers or the introduction of identity cards. If profiling had a racist effect, targeting surveillance towards racial minorities, the governance of terrorism supplements this form of racist profiling with a renewed desire for total surveillance. While profiling is still essential in the war on terror, its targets are increasingly arbitrary. Beyond categories of religious and ethnic affiliation, all other characteristics become blurred. Terrorists can be unemployed or employed, poor or not so poor, young or old, legal residents or citizens, illegal migrants or tourists. Uncertainty slowly extends profiling to the entirety of the population.

Precautionary technologies change therefore the relation to social groups, to the population as created by the dispositif of insurance. Statistical computation and risk

management relied upon the scientific representation of social groups that were to be governed; profiling was an important technology for selecting these groups and targeting them. At the limit of knowledge, this relation to representation becomes an arbitrary connection. Gordon Lafer (2005: 341) has noted that in the United States, Latin American immigrants were treated with increased suspicion despite the lack of any evidence of a link with terrorist attacks. The link with knowledge can be loosened at the horizon of infinite damage and uncertainty. The imperative of zero-risk lead to policies such as 'shoot-to-kill' in Britain which claimed its first victim immediately after the 7 July attacks.

Political decisions can also no longer sustain the imaginary of being grounded in the certainties of science, as the precautionary principle severs or rather exposes in its contingency the very relation between knowledge and politics. Tony Blair's response to criticism against his position on the war in Iraq brings to light a politics of decision which has severed its relation with science, with expertise or with management:

Sit in my seat. Here is the intelligence. Here is the advice. Do you ignore it? But, of course, intelligence is precisely that: intelligence. *It is not hard fact. It has its limitations.* On each occasion, the most careful judgment has to be made taking account of everything we know and advice available. But in making that judgment, would you prefer us to act, even if it turns out to be wrong? Or not to act and hope it's OK? And suppose we don't act and the intelligence turns out to be right, how forgiving will people be? (Blair, 2004).

Expert knowledge is exposed as an insufficient and unreliable resource for political decisions. If the contingency of political decisions could be 'hidden' under the weight of knowledge and the necessity of expertise, they now reappear as ungrounded, arbitrary attempts to subdue the contingency of the future. When the limits of technical or scientific knowledge are exposed, politics discloses its own necessary decisionism, its immanent limit. Yet, this does not mean that knowledge no longer plays any role in risk management, that the imaginary of knowledge grounding politics has been undone. The 'managers of unease', in Bigo's formulation, always try to use first the already available technologies. Blair's approach to the war in Iraq has wavered between an initial reliance on intelligence and a later invocation of the 'uncertainty' of this knowledge.

The rationality of catastrophic risk translates into policies that *actively* seek to prevent situations from becoming catastrophic at some indefinite point in the future. War is mobilised alongside other technologies of precaution in a governmental dispositif to avoid terrorist irruptions in the future. The 'war on terror' or the consequent war of Afghanistan and Iraq do not speak of a recent rediscovery of militarism, but of a governmentality that activates all the technologies imaginable in the face of uncertainty.<sup>19</sup> Christopher Coker has also pointed out that war is one of option for avoiding the bleak promise of the future, for 'when we do turn to the military option we do so to reduce the opportunities for bad behaviour, to prevent them from posing an even greater risk in the future' (Coker, 2002b).

When faced with the limits of surveillance, biographical profiles, biometric identifiers, decisions must be taken beyond the horizon of certainty. The computation of the future has become decisional. If evidence is uncertain, the responsibility of the

'suspected terrorist' is a matter of decision. This decision is no longer the juridical decision for which careful consideration of evidence is necessary, but it becomes an administrative decision, where the rule of zero risk takes precedence. In this context, it is immaterial whether the evidence against the terrorist suspects in the British high-security Belmarsh Prison consists of a pair of boots donated to Islamic Chechen rebels or something more material (The Observer, 2004). The 'burden of proof' is no longer on the state to show guilt, but on the prisoners to prove that they are harmless. Their responsibility is uncertain and *a priori* to the event and therefore impossible to accommodate by the juridical system. Judgements of responsibility are transferred to the sphere of administrative decisions against juridical procedures. The rationality of zero risk makes those considered potentially dangerous *a priori* responsible, subjected to administrative measures that are now equivalent to juridical sanctions. The inclusion of 'indefinite detention', 'house arrest' as instruments in the UK fight against terrorism, the creation of 'legal limbos' like Guantanamo captures the inadequacy of law to deal with situations of precautionary risk. What counts is a coherent scenario of catastrophic risk and imaginary description of the future. The other's actions are no longer relevant.

Uncertainty as the 'limit of knowledge' has also led to the creative development of new technologies of insurance. Although scientific knowledge and the possibility of gauging the extent of damages or their probability have been surpassed by the radical contingency of catastrophic terrorism, the insurance industry has adjusted and has borrowed technologies from a different field, trying to shift insurance risk to the capital markets. Even if statistically incalculable, catastrophe risks can still be subsumed to the logic of profit:

Where the insurer feels that a risk can be handled through an acceptable loss ratio, it may be insured regardless of scientific and technological uncertainty. This decision depends on the financial condition of each insurance company. Indeed, each company will have a different definition of catastrophe depending on its loss ratio arrangements and financial condition (Ericson and Doyle, 2004: 138).

Beyond the normal strategies of spreading risk to re-insurers and involving the state of the ultimate re-insurer, there has been a crossbreeding between risk insurance and the capital markets. Through transfer to the capital markets, decisions at the limit of knowledge become a form of governmentality. The transferral of precautionary risk to the capital market does not just transform the forces of catastrophes into business opportunities. Risks are no longer subjected to calculations of frequency and severity but to capital market speculations. This ‘governmentality of uncertainty’ (O'Malley, 2003b) is derived from an imaginary of ‘expectation’ rather than the imaginary of stable prediction upon which insurance relied.<sup>20</sup>

Precautionary risk therefore recreates a governmental *dispositif at the limit*. If Beck saw the uninsurability and incalculability of risks as the limit of governmentality, a pretence supported by expert systems, a Foucauldian approach understands precautionary risk as a *dispositif* that attempts to ‘tame’ the limit and govern what appears to be ungovernable. Thus insurance and its technologies of prevention and compensation are adjusted to the double infinity of risk. Profiling and surveillance encompass the whole



population. Moreover, everybody is regimented into technologies of vigilance and prudentialism. We are not only supposed to monitor our own behaviour, but detect signs of risk in the others. Insurance technologies have already incorporated the limits of knowledge in the capital markets by means of speculative risks. Yet, when technologies of knowledge reach their limit, precautionary risk relies on decision as a technology for governing uncertainty.

In contrast to Beck's assumption that the risk society will reinvent politics along more democratic lines with slow procedures where expertise knowledge is deliberated in global public forums (Beck, 1992, 1999), the precautionary principle privileges a politics of speed based on the sovereign decision on dangerousness.<sup>21</sup> The precautionary dispositif of risk reconfigures the debates between securitisation as the introduction of speed and urgency at the heart of democracies (Buzan et al., 1998) and a risk-based approach that emphasises the everyday practices of bureaucrats and security professionals (Bigo, 1996). Decisionism and speed coexist with routines and everyday practices of the police, the military, immigration officials and other managers of unease. Moreover, the need for urgent decisions at the limit of knowledge removes concerns from the slow procedures of law to practices of the administration.<sup>22</sup>

## **V Conclusion**

This article has argued for a different conceptualisation of risk for security studies, which would depart from Beck's (global) risk society thesis. A governmental analysis of risk that pays attention to the modifications and reconfigurations of a dispositif to tackle

social problems allows us to understand the multiple and heterogeneous practices that are subsumed under the label 'war on terror'. Technologies of risk management provide a logical connector for developments which seem to lack a common rationality and are often put down to the actors' ignorance or interests. We have argued that the 'war on terror' should be understood through the prism of precautionary risk rather than the traditional theoretical lenses of IR. In an attempt to unpack the governmentality of the 'war on terror', the paper took issue with Beck's view that all practices of security can be reduced to one type of risk, explainable within a macro-sociological account of the transformation from industrial society to risk society. It has argued that risk is a modality of governing and ordering reality, which implies the creation of complex technologies as well as political rationalities.

The dispositif of risk deployed to prevent terrorist events is made possible by the representation of terrorism as doubly infinite in its catastrophic effects and the uncertainty of its occurrence. Contra Beck, we have shown that the infinity of risk does not lead to a democratic politics that debates what is to be done, but to intensified efforts and technological inventions on the part of the risk managers to adjust existing risk technologies or to supplement them. For a governmental approach, what counts is not whether terrorism can be controlled or not, but the dispositif that is being deployed to make action upon the contingent occurrence of terrorism thinkable and practicable. Technologies of intervening upon the future are always failing; their failure is however part of governmentality, the very motor of the continuous requirement for new technologies and more knowledge. Governing terrorism through risk entails drastic prevention at the catastrophic horizon of the future as well as generalised and arbitrary

surveillance at the limit of knowledge. New technologies such as biometrics are supposed to enlist everybody under the category of suspicion. The possibility of irreparable damage severs suspicion from knowledge. Thus, suspected terrorists can be indefinitely detained independent of any evidence that exists against them. The contingency of knowledge leads to technologies of new prudentialism, of responsabilising and regimenting everybody in the war on terror. Citizens are to be vigilant, attentive to any sign of suspicious behaviour.

While a governmental analysis of risk is an agenda to be explored and debated in security studies, we have suggested that such an analysis brings a different perspective upon the debates in security studies. Through the perspective of risk management, securitisation is shown to function through the deployment of technologies to manage dangerous irruptions in the future. Yet, the limit of knowledge and catastrophe mobilised in the precautionary dispositif introduces a decisionistic form of politics as a form of governmentality of the future. The dilemma of exceptionalism versus routinisation in security studies can therefore be reformulated as their coexistence in different configurations depending of the dispositif of risk deployed to manage particular social problems.

Although the emergence of a dispositif of precautionary risk entails a series of modification in how (in)security is governed, these modifications are subject to contestation. The parameters of contestation and of what it means to govern (in)security and risk have however shifted and a dispositif of precautionary risk raises a number of conundrums about the formulation of a critical stance in the 'war on terror'. Political interventions have mostly focused on the relation to knowledge that the 'war on terror'

presupposes. The 'worst case scenario' of Iraq possessing or intending to use weapons of mass destruction or the catastrophic potential of terrorist attacks have all been questioned. Charles Tilly (2005) has ironically noted that Al-Qaeda is not the World Bank. As they require extensive funding and training, attacks of the magnitude of 9/11 are not easily replicable by smaller organisations or individuals. Yet, challenges that invoke knowledge as a critique appear increasingly powerless when confronted with the politics of decision as a technology of taming the limit. It is the very imbrication of knowledge and decision at the limit, of the arbitrary sovereign decision and its grounding in 'objective' socio-economic configurations that challenges political engagement and resistance against the practices of the 'war on terror' to develop forms of accountability that take precautions against a precautionary politics of arbitrary decisions at the limit of knowledge.

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<sup>2</sup> On this distinction, see Bigo's (2002a, fn. 26) editorial in *Cultures et conflits*. Huysmans (1998) has also criticised the Copenhagen School for the limitation of the logic of security.

<sup>3</sup> The criminology literature which has applied risk analysis to the war on terror has regarded it as a pretext for the expansion of risk management, surveillance and control throughout society (Mythen and Walklate, 2005: 13-4). Yet, it is important not to formulate post-9/11 developments in 'incendiary terms, which serve only to collapse arguments about risk into a political ideology – neo-conservatism – and reduce them to a form of warmongering' (Runciman, 2004). Contra the criminological literature, we consider practices of surveillance and control alongside war as technologies in a dispositif of precautionary risk.

<sup>4</sup> Despite the peril of exoticism, Foucault's coinage 'dispositif' has been preserved as such in English contexts due to the perceived inadequacy of translations such as mechanism and apparatus. Neither equivalent could account for the heterogeneity that dispositifs imply.

<sup>5</sup> Although Luhmann's distinction between uncertainty and risk captures the important point that risk is a way of colonising and calculating the future, his view of risk as the outcome of a personal choice only captures the responsibility paradigm of risk (see section III). In this paradigm, subjects are stimulated to behave prudently by ranking the foreseeable effects of their behavioural alternatives. However, as Ewald (1986) has pointed out, risk also plays an important role on the collective level through the socialisation of responsibility (see also Wæver, 2002). This dissolves the subjective/objective distinction insofar as objective threats (e.g., the accident at work) are rendered calculable in collective insurance schemes which operate independently from individual choices, but at the same time also seeks to regulate and discipline individual conduct (e.g., by prescribing workers to wear a helmet on the work floor).

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<sup>6</sup> Rasmussen (2001: 292, fn. 32) does not elaborate on what enables a constructivist approach or what such an interpretation would entail. In our opinion, however, Beck's account of risk cannot be distinguished from his wider sociological account of reflexive modernity. Risk society and reflexive modernity are two sides of the same coin. In fact, Rasmussen's claim that risks can also be socially constructed would seem to render Beck's conceptualisation of risk as a material and objective effect of reflexive modernity largely irrelevant.

<sup>7</sup> Here, the risk society thesis comes close to the conceptualisation of risk in cultural studies or cognitive studies, which also have investigated the role of perception in explaining responses to risk (e.g., Douglas, 1992; Sjöberg, 2001).

<sup>8</sup> Guzzini (2000) has pointed out that social constructivism is defined not just by the social construction of knowledge but also by the social construction of reality. While a more culturally sensitive reading of the risk society thesis may be possible, this does not entail a move towards constructivism.

<sup>9</sup> Beck is only able to tackle migration within a parallel theoretical framework. The distinction first modernity/second modernity is not just that between the welfare state and the risk society, but becomes also a distinction between nation-state modernity and cosmopolitan modernity. Rather than a risk, migration bespeaks of the cosmopolitan age (Beck, 2000a; 2005). Migration or labour mobility are also considered in relation to global economic inequalities, in a retrieval of the economic that had been superseded in the theory of risk society as a democratic exposure to risks.

<sup>10</sup> Huysmans (2004a) has analysed the securitisation of free movement in terms of rationalities and technologies of government.

<sup>11</sup> Ole Wæver (2002) has discussed the semantic differentiation of 'dangers' and 'risks'. If one moves from word/text to ideas, how to analyse risk is less straightforward. If risk is understood however as a dispositif of tackling social problems, it is less important whether the late modern society perceives itself as 'risk society'. Risks become such through interventions upon the real.

<sup>12</sup> See Bigo's work on the security professionals and their technologies of risk management (1996; 2002b; 2004a).

<sup>13</sup> Beck rejects the idea that the 'insurance state' is part of risk society as it is concerned with the distribution of 'goods' and not of 'bads', i.e. modernisation risks (O'Malley (2001).

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<sup>14</sup> Of course, it depends on cultural and social dispositions which risks are qualified as catastrophic. See Douglas and Wildavsky (1982).

<sup>15</sup> We borrow the term taming from Ian Hacking's (1990) formulation, 'the taming of chance' in relation to probabilities and statistical laws.

<sup>16</sup> Whereas the German word '*Vorsorge*' (foresight) refers to the precautionary principle, the insurantal model of solidarity is best described in German as '*Umsorge*' (taking care, caring).

<sup>17</sup> Ewald sees the possibility of the precautionary principle being exported outside its original territory (1999). Baker (2002) and Sunstein (2005) claim that the precautionary principle increasingly permeates other forms of risk as well.

<sup>18</sup> See Ericson and Doyle (2003) on risk and morality.

<sup>19</sup> This approach is at odds with the criminological literature which sees the 'war on terror' as having triggered intensified surveillance and extended prevention.

<sup>20</sup> For an empirical discussion of the crossbreeding of insurance and capital markets in catastrophe risks, see Bougen (2003) and (Ericson and Doyle 2004). The cross-fertilization between the insurance industry and the capital market has given rise to new networks of institutional risk communication and analysis. Bougen, for instance, shows how re-insurers are repackaging catastrophic risks as investment opportunities for financial speculators on the capital market, bringing together re-insurers, scientists and speculators. Ericson and Doyle, illustrating how the uncertainty of actuarial knowledge has led to speculative underwriting in the insurance industry, also show how, in the case of life insurance, the insured are brought to the capital market by letting choose between different products that all involve some sense of speculation (investment bonds, equity market index funds, flexible interest rates, and so on).

<sup>21</sup> On securitisation as decisionism and politics of speed, see Huysmans (2004b) and Aradau (2004b).

<sup>22</sup> Scheuerman (2004) offers a pertinent discussion of the challenges that a politics of speed and social acceleration pose for liberal democracies.

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