Introduction

Trust, Citizenship and Exclusion in the Risk Society
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“Risk” obsesses us. Over the last twenty years or so, risk has become a key contemporary concern, not only in government and business, but in the wider culture and in our universities, (Lupton 1999; Garland 2003; Power 2004). I will define risk, following Anthony Giddens’s definition (2002: 22), as danger that is “actively assessed in relation to future possibilities.” Much of contemporary life, like this book, is organized around risk. We are preoccupied with risks from SARS to violent crime, and, especially since 9/11, terrorism. We have seen the rise of new tools and strategies for containing risk, and of new professional “risk managers.” Indeed, some key thinkers say we have become a “risk society” (Simon 1987; Beck 1992). The six chapters that follow can all be situated in the theoretical context of an emerging risk society. The authors, whose diverse specialties crosscut various realms of risk society, examine the powerful implications of our focus on risk, concerning whom we trust, who has the rights of a citizen and who is excluded. Before introducing these chapters, I will lay out the key themes concerning the risk society that run through them.

Key Themes of the “Risk Society”
The idea that we had become a risk society first appeared in the 1980s, developed by two influential social theorists, Ulrich Beck in Germany (Beck 1992, 1999, 2002; Beck and Lau 2005) and Anthony Giddens in Britain (Giddens 1990, 1991, 2002). In the last fifteen years, a second crucial set of theory, strongly influenced by Michel Foucault’s work on “governmentality” (Foucault 1991), has also drawn our attention to the key new place of risk in government (see, e.g., Simon 1987; Castel 1991; Ewald 1991; O’Malley 1992, 2004). I will argue, following Richard Ericson and Kevin Haggerty (1997), that key elements of these theoretical schools on risk can be combined. Thus, I will use the term “risk society” here in a way that draws on both sets of social theory. I will highlight nine different facets of the risk society that are shown by the following chapters.

Firstly and most simply, risk society is characterized by a heightened awareness of risk. Risk society is focused on efforts to know and control that risk, especially through probabilistic expert knowledge. Indeed, contemporary institutions, like the police, are organized around knowledge and communication about risk (Ericson and Haggerty 1997). Some of the chapters in this book are talking about the massive spread of the discourse of risk in government; other chapters are looking at strategies and techniques
that have emerged to manage risks, even if they do not use the term risk explicitly. Instead, as we shall see, the same techniques and ways of thinking are implicit in the emphasis on assessment of dangers, with the focus on risk minimization, especially through probabilistic calculations by experts.

Secondly, as Beck (1992) argued, in risk society, the social hierarchy is increasingly based on risk, rather than on wealth. Risk society focuses on the distribution of “bads” rather than the distribution of “goods.” Several chapters here concern governing people who have been marginalized or excluded due to class, gender, race and other bases of social inequality; for example, welfare recipients, or female young offenders in a Saskatchewan detention centre, many of whom are Aboriginal people. In risk society, such people are often seen as being both at-risk and risky themselves. Marginalized people are exposed to more risks, but are also themselves categorized as bad risks: this constitutes part of the process of their exclusion. Thus, they are people who might need our help, but who are also, paradoxically, seen as a threat. A key tendency is that, more and more in risk society, the emphasis is placed on the threat posed by the marginalized, rather than on helping them. As documented here, the tendency is to say: being at risk is your problem; just do not be a risk. Risk society is thus also increasingly an “exclusive society” (Young 1999). There is a consequent decline in trust relations and a resulting denial of full citizenship, if we adopt for the moment the definition of citizenship as simply the status of being a full member of a community (for debates around this definition, see Bulmer and Reese 1996). Using this definition, exclusion is the denial of full membership in the community, and is thus antithetical to citizenship.

Thirdly, the “risk in government” scholars have analyzed how the discourse of risk hides moral judgments in technical assessments of the probability of harm (Ericson and Doyle 2003; Hunt 2003). This phenomenon, along with the work of Beck and Giddens, can be seen as another key facet of our “risk society.” There is a growth in the use of expert knowledge to lump people, especially marginalized groups, together into risk categories. Although these risk categories may be presented in technical language that is ostensibly neutral, moral evaluations are buried in the technical wording of experts. This way of framing risk is difficult for ordinary people to resist and anti-democratic, because it is hidden in scientific language. However, risk society also contains in it the seeds of ways of resisting its various undemocratic tendencies.

A fourth point is that, in risk society, despite the sometimes obsessive efforts to control risk, ironically, risk increasingly seems to be out of control. This is ironic because, at least for Canadians, and inhabitants of the global northwest, people are probably in many ways safer than ever. For Canadians, life expectancy is going up, mortality rates from various illnesses are declining, and auto fatalities and crime figures are (mostly) going down.

However, what is really important in a risk society is the meaning of
risk in people's lives (Wynne 1996). As Leiss and Powell (2004: 27) note, many controversies surrounding risks like mad cow disease and global warming are tied to poor communication, “rooted in the difference between experts’ quantitative language and the qualitative terminology ordinarily employed by citizens in everyday life.” As experts well know, and as the work of Mary Douglas (1985) and others has affirmed, much of the time it does little good to tell ordinary people who feel they are at significant risk that science says that “objectively” they are not. If risk is “objectively” reduced, ironically, people in risk society tend to dwell more on the risks that remain. Increased “reflexivity” or self-monitoring in contemporary society leads to a constant awareness of risk, and an awareness that it is always partly beyond our control. Indeed, risks, by definition, elude certainty and control, and the more we think about risks, the more we know what we do not know about them. As O'Malley (1999: 139) puts it, “the focus on risk minimization draws attention to the riskiness of everything and the certainty of nothing.” Many of these institutional and cultural tendencies are also exacerbated in the post 9/11 era, epitomized in the months following the attack on the World Trade Center by a near-constant state of heightened alert in the United States.

This leads to what Beck and Giddens describe as a climate of doubt and fear in risk society. Put another way, there is an “increasingly endemic sense of insecurity — experienced even by well-to-do individuals who are, by historical standards, healthier and more affluent than ever before... [but who] enjoy their freedoms against a background of a newfound dependency upon expert systems and newfound uncertainty about the lives they choose” (Garland 2003).

The climate of doubt and fear is connected with the ambiguous contemporary place of science and technology. In risk society, scientific advances dominate our lives, for better or worse. Yet science seems to be in crisis. Science and technology have introduced new sources of risk such as global warming, or nuclear contamination, which Giddens (2002) describes as “manufactured risks.” According to Giddens, manufactured risks are unknown quantities because they are new. There is no historical record against which to judge them, and this makes coping with manufactured risks particularly difficult.

Beck’s analysis — his version of risk society — focuses on low probability, high consequence environmental risks that occur as a result of peace-time human activity, such as nuclear or biochemical accidents. These risks can only be understood and managed through science, yet they increasingly call science into doubt. As Beck put it, “Science becomes indispensable, and at the same time devoid of its original validity claims” (Beck 1992: 165). Because of their newness and rarity, such risks have an unknowable quality. (Beck argues at length this is demonstrated by the fact that they are “uninsurable” although this is not empirically accurate, as the insurance
industry will often insure risks in the absence of much of a capacity for reliable prediction) (Ericson and Doyle 2004a; 2004b).

Giddens, in his book *The Consequences of Modernity* (1990), argues that in risk society, issues of trust are central, especially trust in experts and expert systems. He defines trust as “confidence in the reliability of a person or system.” For Giddens, the key is that we rely increasingly on experts to manage risk. There is an insatiable demand for expert knowledge of risks. Yet expert knowledge is never definitive, never final, always incomplete, imperfect and fluid: this makes it difficult for people to have trust in experts. Thus, paradoxically, risk society is characterized both by increasing dependence on experts and, at the same time, declining trust in these same experts and, consequently, declining trust in our major social institutions (see, for example, the essays in Pharr and Putnam 2000). Distrust is thus not simply targeted at risky marginalized populations but is pervasive, including a distrust of those providing security at a time when a yearning for security is profound. An unprecedented level of higher education and access to knowledge through the Internet add to the climate of perpetual doubt, undermining public faith in science and other central institutions like the government and the marketplace. Thus, a fifth key aspect is that risk society has a trust deficit, which forms a central element of the climate of uncertainty and fear.

It should be noted that key theorists like Beck and Giddens provide relatively little empirical evidence concerning public experiences of risk and fear to support their various claims. Some of their arguments are actually very supportable with quantitative evidence: for example, there is a great deal of research showing declining trust in major contemporary institutions and experts. However, the accounts of Beck and Giddens diverge from some other empirical findings, for example, those showing that “new” environmental risks actually tend to rank very low in people’s priorities (see, for example, Pollara 2004).

Another key factor contributing to a climate of doubt and fear is the mass media. For reasons that are unclear to me, neither Beck nor Giddens gave enough consideration to the central importance of mass media, both mainstream and alternative media, in constructing risk. The news media are pivotal in shaping public understandings of both “old” risks like crime and new ones like global warming and post-9/11terrorism. Beck (1992) argues key contemporary risks, like global warming, have few tangible manifestations beyond expert knowledge, and thus are particularly prone to definition through the media. Yet, as critics point out (Cottle 1998; Tulloch and Lupton 2001), the conception of media in risk society theories is not well developed theoretically or empirically.

There is also declining trust in the news media themselves (see for example, Jones 2004). Furthermore, the mass audience is fragmenting as the media increasingly narrowcasts rather than broadcasts. In an expanding
and increasingly fragmented media universe, where people are increasingly seeking out their own specialized media, there is more room than ever for alternative discourses about various risks. Although all of this adds to the culture of uncertainty and doubt, it also fosters seeds of resistance, as I will discuss shortly.

A sixth key element of risk society, bound up with the previous ones, is that it is future-oriented. There is a breakdown in tradition, traditional communities and traditional certainties. Instead of being caught up in the old ways, risk society is very oriented toward understanding and controlling the future. This raises certain ethical difficulties. This is a key theme that comes up in a number of the following chapters, a concern about future-oriented control. How much is it ethical to control people based on uncertain future outcomes or uncertain future behavior?

Risk society is also characterized by globalization and confronting global issues. According to Beck, although risks are generally hierarchically distributed, one paradoxical further effect of risk society is that certain worldwide risks, such as those of a nuclear holocaust or global warming, have a paradoxical kind of levelling effect around the globe, crosscutting nation-states, in that, according to him, we are all equally vulnerable.

An eighth point about risk society is this: risk society is increasingly individualized as we are stripped of various supports and left to fend for ourselves. In our neo-liberal society, the “risk in government” scholars have highlighted how risk is increasingly being downloaded from governments, both to individuals and to business, to private institutions and private organizations (Ericson, Doyle and Barry 2003: Ch. 1). Indeed, risk itself is a mechanism of ensuring responsible responses, in that it constructs dangers as phenomena we assess for the purpose of doing something about them. This downloading of the burden of risk is in part a response to broad political and economic shifts, and resulting economic insecurities that also feed into the climate of doubt and fear. They may in fact become crystallized in response to other risk issues such as crime, as David Garland (2001), Jock Young (2003) and others have argued. Beyond the purely economic changes, there is also a breakdown in traditional social ties and community (Putnam 2000), which is both liberating, in that one has greater ability to define one’s own identity, and also a source of anxiety (Wilkinson 2001). Indeed such anxiety is bound up with the new freedom we experience (Bauman 2002).

All this paints a black portrait, but I referred earlier to the seeds of potential resistance to the undemocratic tendencies of risk society. So where are these wellsprings of opposition? There is indeed declining trust in expert and major institutions. The decline in trust is also due in large part to a key ninth and more positive final point about risk society — the fact that people are in general more educated, and think more critically. They are more politically aware, and are less trusting of conventional politics. They are more inclined to participate in politics outside of institutional channels, and in
social movements, than ever before (see, for example, Inglehart 1990, 1997). People are also more inclined to be proactive and to seek out information for themselves from the vast array of new and alternative sources available, notably the Internet. Giddens calls this increased reflexivity in people: in general, people are more educated, thoughtful, proactive and critical.

Can the two most prominent schools of risk in social theory indeed be reconciled in a model along the lines of what I have just sketched? The account I have just given perhaps emphasizes the work of Beck and Giddens the most, but also draws in various key ways with what I am calling the “risk in government” school, the Foucauldian body of work that analyzes the spread of a risk paradigm in government within and beyond the state. As I have suggested, this latter work highlights some key aspects of the version of the “risk society” I have presented here: the rise of technicist, ostensibly morally neutral, preventive management by experts of statistically calculable dangers, the rise of risk profiling and regulation of populations by a fragmented myriad of state and private institutions, the hidden moralization discussed above and the neo-liberal tendency for the downloading of responsibility for risk onto the individual (for example, O’Malley 1992; 2004a; Ericson, Barry and Doyle 2000; Ericson, Doyle and Barry, 2003). However, in contrast to the work of Beck and Giddens, the writings on “risk in government” tend to be silent on questions such as the existence of “real” new risks like environmental disaster, and also on the place of risk in the broader culture — the climate of doubt and fear, the decline in trust, and the more critical public. More generally, the “risk in government” theorists bracket out questions about actual public experiences of risk. Critics of the “risk in government” perspective point out that it ignores the “messy actualities” of how these tendencies in government play out in everyday experience (O’Malley et al. 1997). We can begin to engage these “messy actualities” by drawing on the work of other scholars of risk.

Ericson and Haggerty (1997) argue, as I have here, that Foucauldian work on the “microphysics of power” can be used to help build a macrosociology of the risk society. Are these two perspectives incommensurable? When we consider that another key divergence between the “risk in government” or governmentality literature and the risk society literature might be the split between the Foucauldian understanding of the subject and the more active model offered, for example, by Giddens, we can conclude that this is really a shift in emphasis rather than a disagreement per se. The self is reflexively understood in terms of her biography, as Giddens argues. However, while Giddens (1991) sees a more active role for the individual in constructing self-identity through her own autobiographical narrative, Ericson and Haggerty see this biography as more constituted by institutional risk classifications. These are seen to have a profound effect on identities, yet Ericson and Haggerty argue that, even so, in varying circumstances there
is more room for manoeuvre and improvisation by individuals. I suggest, then, that these two ways of thinking about risk can indeed be quite usefully drawn together.

The Case Studies

Having sketched this broad picture of a “risk society” that draws on both these theoretical perspectives, I will now go on and briefly introduce the six chapters that follow, spotlighting how they can flesh out this vision, and what each can tell us about trust, citizenship and exclusion in risk society. Firstly, Dayna Scott’s chapter critically examines the move to what she calls a “risk frame” in Canadian regulation of the biotechnology sector, and in regulation of what she calls “novel foods” in particular. In the first part of her chapter, Scott provides a summary of the key points in Foucauldian literature on the spread of the “risk frame” or “risk discourse,” which she argues is moving towards becoming the central framework of law and government. The risk frame, Scott, argues, following Nikolas Rose (1998), “is a means of channeling institutional practices and systems into the following mold: assess, predict, manage. The effect is to transform the pervasive uncertainties and indeterminacies, generated when rapid technological change is applied to complex social and ecological systems, into calculable probabilities of harm to be managed by rational experts.” She argues that this technocratic frame increasingly colonizes various contested areas of social life, silencing alternative socio-cultural ways of framing them and limiting the space of ordinary citizens for debate.

Scott’s analysis is nuanced and draws on the work of Pat O’Malley (2004) and Mariana Valverde, Ron Levi and Dawn Moore (2005) who argue that, since risk is “heterogenous” and a “variable” technique of governance, its particular manifestations need to be studied in specific contexts. (Indeed it might be argued there are currently at work a whole variety of “risk logics” (Ericson and Doyle 2004a)). Scott’s position is that, because it recognizes this heterogeneity, this “risk in government” literature allows a more nuanced appreciation of the contemporary place of risk than what she sees as the more one-dimensional vision of Beck. In the case of biotechnology regulation in Canada, governance in an era of a “climate of innovation” is not only about shifting risk onto individual, responsible, informed, self-governing “consumer-citizens” (as is the case with respect to the health risks of novel foods), it can also be about collective risk-sharing and risk-spreading (as is the case with respect to securing investment in biotechnological ventures). Indeed, Scott argues, both techniques may be an important part of the repertoire of neo-liberal governments. Whether the discourse is one of minimization and avoidance of risks imposed by new technologies, or one of the embrace of risk (Baker and Simon 2002) required to foster innovation in the new economy, it is always a discourse of “manageable” risk. As Rose points out, “risk thinking seems to bring the future to the present and make
it manageable” (Rose 1998:177). A key point for Scott is that the risk frame relies on and valorizes expert knowledge, which leads to the silencing of alternative non-"expert" voices.

Scott reviews the history of Canadian federal government initiatives regulating biotechnology; she notes how they operated on a model based on case-by-case technical predictive assessment by experts of risks to health and the environment, assuming continuation of past tendencies. Scott shows how this brackets out wider public participation and broader questions, particularly those concerned with culture, ethics and morality. The ultimate aim of managing risks is based on the assumption that these are an unavoidable and necessary consequence of scientific progress. Resistance outside of the risk frame is understood as irrational. Scott shows how responsibility for governing the risks of genetically modified foods is downloaded to consumers through product labeling. Meanwhile, through Canada’s “Innovation Agenda,” rewards are provided for “responsible risk-taking.” Both forms of dealing with risk are premised on the notion that risks must be managed but are necessary for social progress.

While Scott’s chapter details how the risk frame is difficult to resist, her final section also explores opportunities for such resistance by documenting the alternative discursive strategies deployed by activists. She argues that too many activists have made the mistake of adopting and normalizing the risk frame through the use of their own experts, rather than breaking out of the risk discourse. Such activists have also accepted mandatory labelling as the appropriate goal, thereby focusing on a narrow avenue of resistance based on responsibilization of the individual consumer. Scott holds up the alternative example of resistance in France that tapped into other broader socio-cultural currents, for example those against globalization and concentrated ownership, and explicitly moved beyond simply a technical debate in mobilizing an alternative non-scientific form of expertise — “paysan savoir faire.” This example shows the potential for disrupting the risk frame and giving ordinary people a voice in the debate.

Next, Christie Barron’s chapter complements Scott’s, by offering an empirical study of how the risk frame is deployed in governance of female young offenders in a Saskatchewan youth detention centre, and how it contributes to the marginalization and exclusion of these young, often Aboriginal, women. Like Scott, Barron situates her analysis in Foucauldian literature on risk, here conceptualizing it in terms of a Foucauldian version of the “risk society,” one which also connects with recent key theorizing on social exclusion (Young 1999; Bauman 2000). Barron argues that the construction of risk is key in such exclusion; she quotes Jock Young who shows how risk and exclusion are intertwined, arguing exclusion is a “shifting process which occurs throughout society… a gradient running from the credit rating of the well-off right down to the [authorities’ perceived] degree of dangerousness of the incarcerated (Young 1999: 127).
Barron offers a rich array of empirical data as she details how processes of risk management and exclusion are bound up in the detention centre for young women. Firstly, she highlights how the detention centre has been transformed through fostering a culture of increased risk consciousness. For example, a barbed wire fence was added around the facility, a new security system was introduced, and so were new methods of physically restraining the young women. Such changes are situated by her in a broader failure of faith in the ability of the criminal justice system to change behaviour and a consequent turn to managing risks for purposes of safety, although local factors such as the introduction of older offenders into the facility also fed into this. Barron shows how emphasis on safety and prevention in all interactions with youth fosters diminished relations of trust between the authorities and girls.

Secondly, Barron teases out how focus on the girls’ “risk/need factors” reflects new understandings of “rehabilitation” in the risk society. The implementation of risk assessment tools that she examines, particularly the Level of Service Inventory (LSI), focus on “objective” criteria rather than unstructured “subjective” clinical evaluation. This fits with the rise of what Feeley and Simon call “actuarial justice,” based on “techniques for identifying, classifying and managing groups assorted by levels of dangerousness” (Feeley and Simon 1994: 173). This approach to criminal justice exemplifies a “risk in government” approach. Because such actuarial techniques do not alter the underlying sources of violence, risk assessment identifies problems rather than solving them. There is a movement away from a psychiatric approach aimed at reforming the offender. Barron shows how, although the measures can be used to identify the girls’ “needs,” in practice there are limited resources to address these needs. For example, substance abuse programs that might address these “needs” are not available. “High risk” young women may simply be isolated for lengthy periods, an experience that is highly punitive and traumatic in effect and thus paradoxically actually exacerbates the risks of reoffending.

Finally, Barron examines how systems of representation such as gender, race, age and sexuality interact with risk logics with exclusionary consequences for the young women she studied. For example, institutional rules implicitly give the message to the girls that expressions of sexuality are risky. Barron concludes by noting, like Scott in the previous chapter, that the authority of risk assessment techniques is difficult to resist, as they evade signifying overt coercion and rely simply on impersonally sorting individuals into aggregates.

Penetrating this veneer of impersonalism and neutrality is also a theme in the next chapter, by Meredith Celene Schwartz. Her chapter fits very well with the themes developed in the previous two chapters, particularly with the notion of hidden moralization in expert risk management. Schwartz reveals and articulates the relationship between risk, trust and exclusion in
a particular social context — the institutional treatment of pregnancy. This provides a strong example of the degree to which we have become a risk society. As Deborah Lupton (1999) notes, all pregnancies are either “high risk” or “low risk,” never “no risk.” Schwartz’s piece focuses empirically on prenatal testing for genes identified as “risks” for disabling conditions, conditions that some consider harmful enough to warrant selective abortion, although whether this is actually warranted is highly contestable and contested. The scientific assessment that a given gene can and should be avoided as a “risk” appears to be value-neutral, even though, as Schwartz shows, the certainty and severity of being born with the condition are unclear, and how much it may impact quality of life may be open to challenge. Paralleling Scott’s and Barron’s analyses, Schwartz examines how this allegedly neutral assessment ignores or silences alternative interpretations of genetic differences, and yet how these tendencies are very difficult to resist.

Schwartz draws on the work of Giddens (1990) to explore how trust in expert systems is key in risk society. Individual experts are the “access points” in fostering what is really trust in institutions, and bad experiences with experts lead to distrust in institutions. She examines the politics and power dynamics in relations of trust. It may be demoralizing if trust is not given, setting up a cycle of distrust. Lack of inclusion undermines trust. In turn, though, distrust can also be a wellspring of resistance, which may lead to positive social change.

Genetic medicine differs from other institutions in that it ostensibly puts the burden of the decision in the hands of the pregnant women and partners. Since counsellors are taught to identify their own value set and then bracket it, expert, “non-directive” counselling is only supposed to convey “significant information” to help with the decision. In practice, though, there are values embedded in the “information” about risks. Certainly not all situations are equally supported or problematized. The language of risk itself constructs disability in negative terms and separates the notion of disability from its social context.

Schwartz makes the important point that prenatal genetic diagnosis and selective abortion also has an expressive property, sending a hurtful message about people currently living with disabilities. Schwartz highlights the general distrust on the part of disability activists towards the current practice of prenatal genetic testing with the possibility of selective abortion. She argues that this distrust shows that the current practice of genetic medicine has not done enough to include the voices of people with disabilities when setting the agenda and context for prenatal genetic testing. Based on her exploration of the resistance expressed by disability rights activists, Schwartz suggests a more inclusive strategy for genetic medicine that may increase trust regarding genetic medicine on the part of disability activists. The inclusive strategy requires social changes that go beyond simply enhanc-
ing the expertise of genetic medicine, and focuses more broadly on genetic medicine as embedded in a social context. This view of genetic medicine suggests that the negotiations required to justify trust in genetic practices must occur with the inclusion of many different perspectives. The innovative new employment Schwartz discusses of individuals with disabilities as “disability consultants” exemplifies the kind of space that people with disabilities can create.

Next, Ghislain Thibault’s chapter examines the question of risk and democratization in a novel context: the risk of spam or junk e-mail. In the context of his ethnographic research on Canada’s federal “Task Force on Spam,” Thibault’s chapter shows how Beck’s analysis of the risk society can be drawn together with related work in the sociology of scientific knowledge (for example, Latour 1991) and actor-network theory (ANT). Thibault shows how the work of Latour and others tells a story parallel to that of the risk society theory, a story of an emerging crisis of modernity centred on science confronting its own problems and limits. As we have discussed, Beck and Giddens argue there are new types of uncontrollable “manufactured” technological risks, risks that are “reflexive” in that they stem from modernization itself. These are paralleled, in ANT terms, by new kinds of “hybrid” risks, in part social, in part technical. For ANT theorists, it is the inability of the modern world to deal with such hybrid risks that leads to crisis. Thibault argues that spam is just such a risk flowing from science and technology: global, in certain ways unknowable, both “reflexive” in the terms of Beck, and a “hybrid” social/technical risk in terms of ANT theory.

In setting up his argument, Thibault offers a socio-historical account of the spam phenomenon, tracing it all the way back to a particular e-mail message sent May 3, 1978. He quotes Industry Canada who suggest that spam now constitutes 80 per cent of the world’s e-mail messages. Spam became seen as a threat to Canada’s goal of becoming a global leader in e-commerce, and thus a target for political intervention. Thibault traces various attempts by Canada’s federal government to address the spam problem. Bill S-23 met with resistance when it attempted to transfer the governance of spam to Internet service providers and cast it as a problem of users rather than technology. According to Thibault, spam cannot be “purified,” in actor network theory terms, as either natural or social. It is thus a “hybrid object,” difficult for experts to manage, and, more broadly, difficult to conceive of within the framework of modernity. This problematic hybridity has forced the Canadian government into a diffusion of responsibility as much as possible for the troublesome phenomenon. Thibault argues this difficulty has resulted in the “Task Force on Spam” dispersing their response to a new hybrid collective of scientists, government and the public.

Other authors (see, for example, Scott, this volume) have spotlighted the anti-democratic aspects of the risk discourse. Thibault suggests in contrast that a new kind of deliberative or participatory democracy may
actually emerge from the challenges of these new risks. However, he also sounds a cautious note concerning whether or not the ways in which the public are incorporated into this process are actually democratic, or merely symbolic efforts for legitimation purposes. In the case of the task force, there was only an online discussion group that was little used and the introduction of spokespeople who were actually experts themselves. Thus, in the token efforts at deliberative democracy, the modern gap between experts and everyday people that is characteristic of the risk discourse was largely reproduced.

As discussed above, Beck (1992) has argued that another key aspect of the risk society is individualization. Risk technologies can be either socializing, as with social insurance, or individualizing (Ericson, Barry and Doyle 2000), when “unpooling” occurs (Gowri 1997), and only some deemed more worthy are included among those protected in the risk pool. Mark Schaan’s chapter demonstrates how the welfare state and its social assistance policies are transformed in risk society, portraying how the socializing aspects of social insurance start to break down, unpooling occurs and the burden of risk is increasingly downloaded to the individual, resulting in a diminished notion of citizenship. Schaan reviews literature showing that the very inclusive social safety net of the “golden age” of the welfare state is in tatters. In this golden age, the premise was that poverty was a universally distributed risk. The post-1945 welfare state took up responsibility for a broad range of risks like illness, disability, family loss of primary income earner, old age and unemployment. However, over approximately the last two and a half decades, during the rise of neo-liberalism, the state has moved away from generalized social rights to a “negotiated contract,” featuring conditional and selective take-up of the risks to citizens. The poor, with fewest active “loyalty groups” supporting them, are an easy target for such retrenchment. Governments now dictate that funds and opportunities should be afforded only to those who can prove both their deservingness and their willingness to take the actions the state proposes to move out of poverty. Only a very select group is permitted not to work. Here the state no longer guarantees protection against risk and those deemed unworthy are excluded. Ironically the policies of the state itself are often implicated in the conditions leading to the unemployment of the prospective claimant. Of course, the resulting economic insecurities also feed into the climate of doubt and fear discussed above.

Schaan highlights difficulties with welfare-to-work programming. There may be problems with “creaming” of the most employable, and the most vulnerable may be the least supported by programming, because of political pressures for “success.” Retrenchment of the welfare state is most punitive in stringent American “workfare” programs but has also occurred in Canada. Schaan briefly discusses his own empirical study of the implementation of welfare-to-work policies in Manitoba and Ontario. Schaan's study shows
this stratification is intensified in the decisions of front-line bureaucrats who have a high level of discretion, causing further individualization at the ground level.

Schaan argues the changes in welfare regimes demonstrate that a stratified, disempowering conception of citizenship has evolved, linking citizenship to paid work. The paper reveals the destructive impacts of these policies as they have wounded trust and stripped recipients of agency. He quotes Ruth Lister (2004), who argues that “To act as a citizen first requires agency.” Agency is not only the economic means to survive but involves full political participation by the poor and full control over their lives. However Schaan argues that nevertheless we cannot ignore that with welfare there is a dependency problem, perceived or real. In his final section, Schaan’s response is to begin to try to articulate elements of a conceptual space between universal and conditional benefits, one that would separate workfare from the core assistance function, be incentive-laden but also compassionate, one that encourages paid work without stigmatizing, and one that offers a more robust sense of agency.

Finally, Augustine Park’s chapter focuses on the constitution of citizenship in risk society. In particular, it concerns the paradoxical place of child soldiers in global risk society, focusing on the case of Sierra Leone. As of 2001, Park tells us, approximately 300,000 children were participating in armed conflicts around the world. Children have always participated in war, but an explosion in both regional conflicts and the availability of cheap light guns has meant there are more child soldiers now than ever before. Park’s chapter illustrates the paradox of risk society discussed above: these children (broadly defined as participants under age eighteen) are both seen as being in need of adult protection because they are vulnerable objects at risk, but they are also seen as being among the soldiers who were most feared as risks. Park argues that this paradox is tied to the social construction of children as incompetent and incomplete persons. As she puts it, “children’s presumed closeness to nature bequeaths them with both innocence and savagery.”

The brutal eleven-year civil war in Sierra Leone was fought in large part by marginalized youth, youth that were responding to a crisis of post-colonial corruption, state terrorism and economic devastation, or who were simply coerced into the military by force or lack of economic alternative. The children faced risks not only from enemy forces and combat, but were also victimized and forced into the most risky roles by their own side; for example, being made to plant or clear mines, being sent on suicide missions, or, especially, for the female children, being used as objects of sexual exploitation. Even while victimized, the children are simultaneously seen as risks because their immaturity is symbolically linked to mercilessness. They are also seen to pose risks to their future selves and future society.

Park reviews literature on the social construction of childhood and argues the hegemonic discourse of childhood in the West is being globalized:
childhood as a sheltered time of play and learning. She suggests that this discourse of childhood banishes children from the present, so that children’s lives are organized around what they will be when they grow up. She explores how children’s exclusion from personhood and status as incomplete citizens and adults-in-the-making is reproduced in international law. For example, “voluntary recruitment” into the military seems to mean in legal terms that adults volunteer children.

As discussed earlier, risk society is future oriented. There is a very interesting tie-in with Park’s chapter. She raises the point that the way to grant full citizenship for children is tied up with the notion of re-presenting them (James and Prout 1997), or seeing the children in the present, rather than in terms of nostalgia for an imagined innocent past or a predicted risky future. Park argues that our understanding of citizenship must be expanded to include children as full persons, including enablement of their meaningful participation through institutionalized mechanisms. She argues for a “differentiated citizenship” that recognizes children in the present rather than in terms of risks to or from their imagined futures. Indeed Park argues that risk discourse can be recast for democratic purposes, and used to justify recognizing and enabling children and re-making their place as citizens.

Taken together, these six chapters offer effective illustrations of the various facets of “risk society” I outlined above: for example, its currents of globalization and the breakdown of local ties and support, its yearning for security that simply breeds more insecurity, the hidden moralization in expert “information” about risks, and how the scientism of the risk discourse is difficult to resist (and yet also how people successfully resist it). Collectively, the six chapters show how these facets of risk society can undermine trust, erode the definition of citizenship and exclude people who need our help. Yet the chapters go beyond simply identifying problems of the risk society and also move towards theoretically and empirically informed solutions. Thus these pieces themselves, and their authors, illustrate the final, more positive aspect of the new society that I also outlined: there has been the rise of a new generation, more educated than ever before, highly politically aware and attuned to critical thinking, a generation that can provide important answers to the anti-democratic aspects of risk society that are challenged in this book.

References
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