



Critical Reflections on “Governing Through Risk”



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Governing Through Risk: Overview

- From Risk Management to Governing through Risk
- Governing through Risk at the Border
- Virtual Borders, Bodies, and Mobility
- The Public Security Problem: The 'Risk' of Governing through Risk

Governing Through Risk: Origins

“Risk Tolerance”



Assess and Avoid



Risk Averse



Quantifiable

Insurable

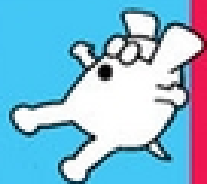
Risk is not a “thing” but a “technology of governance”

“nothing is a risk in itself; there is no risk in reality. On the other hand, anything *can* be a risk; it all depends on how one analyzes the danger, considers the event”

Francois Ewald 1991

Risk management is: “the systematic application of management policies, procedures, and practices to the tasks of analyzing, evaluating, controlling and communicating about risk issues” Canadian Standards Association, 1997

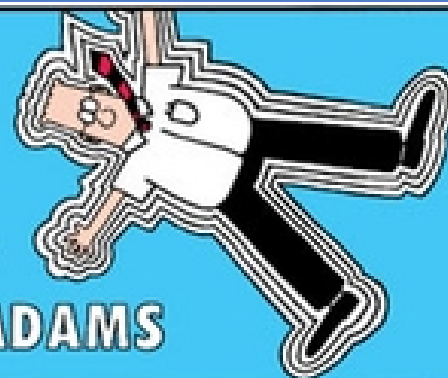
“risk is an ideology concealing the current ungovernability” Rose, O'Malley & Valverde, 2006



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Mitigate



Accept

Safety Culture

Risk Management

Avoid Popular Culture

Transfer

BORDER SECURITY

Catastrophic Thinking

Imagine the “**Risk**”

Assess the frequency and impact

Borders and Security

- Millennium Bomber
1999 - Ahmed Ressam
- 9/11
- Maher Arar (2002) -
rendition
- Drug Trafficking
- Gun Smuggling
- Mobility, liberty and
security (Canada/US
Border)



Borders Post-9/11



- Manage Uncertainty
- Avoid Risk
- “failure of imagination”
- “virtual borders”
- Proliferation of Borders
NOT thickening borders?

Post-9/11 questions for Border Security

- **Q:** How does one go about intensifying border security while maintaining the imperatives of transnational commerce? (i.e. auto manufacturing)
- **A:** Increasing interest in “governing through risk” in order to “**manage** uncertainty” (i.e. Terrorism)

Role of and impact on borderlands?

The “Risk” of Governing Through Risk at the Border?



Governing Through Risk @ the Border

- Keeping “risk” at a distance - pre-assess (virtual border @ the airport)
- Catastrophic Imagination (planned failure & the “failure of imagination” – i.e. “The Vincennes Incident”)
- Border Design - frontier; multi-lane system; borderlands; PPP (redundancy problematic)?
- From examination to surveillance
- From Visa/Immigration to Mobility

PROBLEMS

“Waterboarding works”

Cannot quantify success or failure
i.e. no way of knowing how many
“Dziekanskis” [Taser death at YVR]

The Redundancy Problematic

Authority and Accountability? (risk
transfer)

Whose or what (in)security is being sold?

The Redundancy Problematic

- Sensible in private sector – less so for tax payers
- Serves some commercial interests at the costs of others (i.e. biometrics vs auto-industry)
- Enhancing or encumbering secure border crossings?
- Preliminary research findings of BPRI re: NEXUS
- Proliferation of borders

What is Needed?



Question the (in)appropriateness
of risk management as a policy model
for the provision of public security, and
border security specifically

Come to terms with (map) Authority &
authorization at the (virtual) border

Reconsider how the relationship
between Liberty & Security is framed

Take the redundancy problematic seriously

Recent literature of interest on Risk (aka shameless plug!)

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and the Political

