

The Importance of Risk in Understanding Contemporary Critical Security Theory

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Abstract

Critical approaches to studying security have emerged in response to traditional and positivist approaches specifically in security studies and more broadly in International Relations. Two of these approaches include the Copenhagen School and International Political Sociology (IPS). Despite the fact that they are in many ways on the forefront of theoretical research, they are limited because they do not fully ontologically integrate the idea of risk. This paper argues that placing risk at the centre of inquiry is crucial if academic work seeks to properly understand, critique, problematize, and analyze how security functions in practice. It examines the distinctions between risk and threat, the disconnect between institutional logic of policy and theory (the Copenhagen School and IPS), the example of police carding in Canada as governance through risk, the role of Foucault's *dispositif* in bridging this disconnect, and how risk can be better integrated into the methodology of both the Copenhagen School and IPS.

Introduction

Critical approaches to studying security have emerged in response to traditional and positivist approaches specifically in security studies and more broadly in International Relations. They differ greatly in methodology, in their way of seeing the world, in understanding practices of security, and in their epistemological and ontological choices and assumptions, but they generally seek to challenge “the theoretical and normative assumptions of traditional security scholarship”.¹ They are “not about identifying and analyzing security *problems*, but rather security *problematizations* as the ways in which things come to be treated as security problems”.² Rather than seeking to create solutions to security problems, critical approaches broadly aim “to understand how they came to be constituted as problems in the first place”.³ In other words, as Benjamin Mueller writes, beyond just what makes up a “security problem”, what is interesting is the “actual process and consequence of ‘labeling’ certain issues ‘security problems’”.⁴

One such theory that has had a significant impact on the discipline is Securitization Theory, often referred to as the Copenhagen School. Under the model of Securitization Theory, the practice of “securitization”, or making something a security issue, is the focus of inquiry. The practice of securitization occurs by way of

¹ Claudia Aradau et al., “Introducing Critical Security Methods,” in *Critical Security Methods: New Frameworks for Analysis* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 6.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Benjamin Müller, *Security, Risk and the Biometric State: Governing Borders and Bodies* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 3.

a speech act, in an attempt to define a political reality and way of doing politics. This requires a securitizing actor with some level of authority and power to speak.⁵ It also requires an audience to accept it and that “authorizes and recognizes that speech”.⁶ Further, the speech act relies on language and social conditions and through the practice of the act, an issue allows for a move from regular, everyday politics to the realm of extraordinary politics, or the politics of the emergency. This is because the issue is deemed an existential threat that requires a response and a new political reality.⁷

Yet Securitization Theory has also been subject to fierce debate and criticism from other critical scholars. It has engaged in an especially fascinating way with the school of International Political Sociology (IPS). The analysis of security found in IPS, particularly in the influential work of Didier Bigo, takes a wider view of how security issues and threats are constituted. IPS broadly analyzes the practices of security professionals and actors and argues that their actions, routines, and choices shape security as opposed to the language-based approach of Securitization theory.⁸

From an IPS perspective as well as a perspective rooted in the work of Michel Foucault, the politics, institutional logic, and practices of contemporary security are focused primarily on risk and the management of uncertainty, both in bureaucratic practices (i.e. policing, intelligence, national security legislation) and in broader public and political security discourse. If we acknowledge that risk is at the

⁵ Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 32.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Columba Peoples and Nick Vaughan-Williams, *Critical Security Studies: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 77–79.

centre of security practice, with a focus on management and mitigation, we need to acknowledge that risk is analytically distinct from the concept of a threat. As a result, our theories must also distinguish between risks and threats. The risk debate in security studies is relatively new and the use of risk to problematize the Copenhagen School and IPS has significant potential, because the Copenhagen School does not take into account risk and IPS does, though without a clear enough distinction between risk and threat and without placing risk as the central ontological focus. As a result of not fully focusing on risk, they can overlook significant aspects of security politics and be rendered unable to analyze certain practices of security. The Copenhagen School focuses its analysis on the construction of threats as opposed to risk. IPS speaks to risk in a number of ways but not necessarily in a way that makes the ontological distinction of “risk as an element of practice” and “risk vs. threats”. Where IPS acknowledges and studies the way that bureaucracies work and the constitution of “security” as the collection of practices, it sees risk as a crucial trend to be examined but not fully distinct from the constitution of security in terms of “threats”. Risk is a consequence of inquiry rather than a central point of inquiry. For both theories, we must take into account the different ontologies and practices of security.

This paper will examine in depth the importance of placing risk at the centre of inquiry, as a discrete category, separate from threats, in contemporary critical security studies. It will do so by analyzing the shortcomings of the Copenhagen School and IPS in this regard over the ideas of threats and risks. As the politics and practice of security move towards management and analysis of risk, this creates a

disconnect between the *field* of security actors (in Bourdieu's sense) and those who are studying it. This has major implications for theory because scholars cannot accurately assess the practices of policing, intelligence, and security bureaucracy without placing risk at the centre of analysis. As a result, if the goal of critical work is to problematize how things come to be treated as security problems and criticize the politics and practices of this, current theoretical frameworks are inadequate if they do not focus specifically on risk and its place, for better or for worse, in the practice of security. Consequently, this paper will also examine the ways in which studying risk changes the way we understand security concepts such as the politics of emergency, the professionalization of security, danger, accountability, prediction, and prevention. I do not necessarily seek to make a value judgment or criticism on the place of risk in the politics and practices of security but rather I argue that if the act of problematizing in critical security studies is to critique or make a normative judgment on how security is practiced, it cannot accurately do so without a focus on risk and that the current academic debates on risk are at this point insufficient. These are the analytical consequences and limits on the politics of security within theoretical circles that come as a result of not engaging with the threat vs. risk distinction.

In outlining this argument, I will first provide a review of the emergence of risk in critical security literature and explain the important distinctions between threats and risk as well as provide an explanation of how Foucault's governmentality and the *dispositif* can illuminate the importance of risk. I will then move to the debates in the Copenhagen School and IPS by first examining the

disconnect between institutional logic and major theoretical assumptions followed by a case study to demonstrate this disconnect. I will wrap up by looking at the methodological implications for theory from the perspective of *security as practice*. Throughout, I will demonstrate the ways in which a lens of Foucault's governmentality, governing through risk, and the *dispositif* can help reconcile disconnects and shortcomings of the Copenhagen School and IPS.

Risk vs. Threats and the Relationship between Risk and Critical Security Studies

Defining Risk

While theory and analysis still tend to operate in terms of threats, there has been some significant work done that seeks to distinguish threats from risks and understand the ways in which risk has entered contemporary critical security literature. Even in the broadening of the security agenda beyond traditional military threats and Cold War era analysis, risk is still a relatively new concept. Oliver Kessler and Christopher Daase argue that in practice in a post-9/11 world, "not threats, but risks dominate the security agenda...thus redefining the task of security policy to proactively prevent or mitigate harm".⁹ Paradoxically, in academic debates, "the two fields of study were defined within different academic disciplines: security studies a matter for International Relations (IR), risk studies a matter for sociology,

⁹ Oliver Kessler and Christopher Daase, "From Insecurity to Uncertainty: Risk and the Paradox of Security Politics," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 33, no. 2 (2008): 211-212.

economics and the natural sciences.”¹⁰ Further, “students of ‘intelligence’ and ‘risk’ have always occupied similar territories but did not normally acknowledge the fact, partly because they tended to use different vocabularies to describe their fields of interest – the former concentrated on security ‘threats’ and the latter on safety ‘risks’”.¹¹ As a result, there is a gap that is only beginning to be investigated between theoretical work on security and actual security policies. It is necessary that they come together because the “focus on catastrophic events has given the fields of security studies and risk analysis a common empirical theme and highlighted the need for a common research agenda”.¹² This section will first look at defining risk as opposed to threats and then will seek to describe the ways in which “risk studies” have been conceptualized as an area of study from which to make connections to theoretical schools of thought.

Peter Gill defines risk as the answer to three questions:

1. *What can happen? (i.e. what can go wrong?)*
2. *How likely is it that it will happen?*
3. *If it does happen, what are the consequences?*¹³

He adds that threats require an “explicit intention to cause harm”¹⁴, whereas risks may have varied intent or no specific intent at all. Threats, in this case, are more specific, urgent, and targeted than risks as well as more tangible. Risks carry with

¹⁰ Karen Lund Petersen, “Risk Analysis - A Field within Security Studies?,” *European Journal of International Relations* 18, no. 4 (2011): 693.

¹¹ Peter Gill, “Intelligence, Threat, Risk and the Challenge of Oversight,” *Intelligence and National Security* 27, no. 2 (2012): 206.

¹² Karen Lund Petersen, “Terrorism: When Risk Meets Security,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 33, no. 2 (2008): 694.

¹³ Gill, “Intelligence, Threat, Risk and the Challenge of Oversight,” 207.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 210.

them a large amount of uncertainty and the management of risks by the security apparatus is an important area of research. Risks exist on a spectrum between certainty and uncertainty.

In furthering this discussion, Karen Petersen describes risks as being both about calculation and as “overtaking ‘security’ and ‘threats’ as the ruling concepts”¹⁵. This can be described as risks overshadowing threats as the object of practice and the practice being “risk management” rather than “securing” through a definitive response and resolution to a threat. In differentiating threats and risks, Petersen writes that in risk management, “a distinction between *threat* and risk is the baseline for understanding this approach; threats being quantifiable, specific and about intentions and means-ends rationality, while risk is about the unforeseen and not related to a specific incident”¹⁶. As a result, policy-makers with a risk-based approach, “act with far less information” unlike in a threat-based system where “obvious capabilities and intent make it easier for policy-makers to determine where threats lie”.¹⁷ Risks are less concrete and represent the potential of threat and the prevention of threat and have a much more complicated management approach. Threats on their own are the product of older security apparatuses and are more predictable and certain and can be monitored, protected against, and deterred.

¹⁵ Petersen, “Risk Analysis - A Field within Security Studies?,” 703.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

In an article on risk and terrorism, Petersen also writes that traditional understandings of security deal with threats external to the state, whereas a shift to risk thinking focuses on internal self-regulation of governments and societies.¹⁸ Further, risk “establishes the future in the present, as it is the insecurity about the future that is expressed and calculated in risk analysis”.¹⁹ Risk here is ultimately something that has different spatial and temporal boundaries than has traditionally been seen in security because it deals with so much unknown and so much possibility. It deals with the future yet is simultaneously less immediate and urgent than an impending threat. Kessler and Daase argue that risk is defined as the boundary between the unknown and known and it feeds into the relationship between knowledge and power because risk management can frame how the unknown is conceptualized and how uncertainty and potential enemies or threats can be presented.²⁰ Risk changes the goal of security politics and security practices to proactively preventing and mitigating possible harm, but that possible harm needs to be understood and epistemologically defined at that boundary between the unknown and known.²¹ In essence, risk management exists to figure out what may be a threat and manage it.²² Risk logic is preventive, pre-emptive, and mitigatory and beyond defining and managing threats, seeks to prevent risks from emerging in the first place. There is significant uncertainty in the process and it is important to

¹⁸ Petersen, “Terrorism: When Risk Meets Security,” 177.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Kessler and Daase, “From Insecurity to Uncertainty: Risk and the Paradox of Security Politics,” 214.

²¹ Ibid., 212.

²² Gill, “Intelligence, Threat, Risk and the Challenge of Oversight,” 212.

analyze more than just what the threat is and think about how risk is defined, how it is practiced, and where it takes place institutionally.

Gill also argues that much of risk is about pre-emption and prevention²³ but Marieke de Goede goes beyond this. She argues that perhaps what is actually being seen through preventative thinking is pre-mediation of risk. Pre-mediation, she argues, both “deploys and exceeds the language of risk” and it is the visualization of the plurality of possible outcomes.²⁴ Risk involves imagination to predict and project but pre-mediation is more creative and less predictive because it exists to invoke worst case scenarios that are both incalculable and require new methods of defense.²⁵ Like risk, it seeks to imagine and commodify an uncertain future but at an extreme.²⁶ It shares characteristics with risk but because it focuses on mapping and imagining; it allows for risk to be shown as a tactic of governance and regulation.

With risk understood, it is important to identify the existing schools of thought in risk studies and understand one of the most important concepts, *the dispositif*, that will carry forward in understanding risk’s relationship to both IPS and the Copenhagen School. These three schools of thought are well defined by Karen Petersen and look primarily at:

- 1) Economic and financial risk;
- 2) The tradition of Ulrich Beck and the risk society.

²³ Ibid., 208–209.

²⁴ Marieke de Goede, “Beyond Risk: Premediation and the Post-9/11 Security Imagination,” *Security Dialogue* 39, no. 2–3 (2008): 156.

²⁵ Ibid., 160.

²⁶ Ibid., 159.

3) Michel Foucault, governmentality, and the seminal article introducing the dispositif of risk by Claudia Aradau and Rens van Munster;²⁷

Economic and financial traditions of risk analysis represent the concepts and ideas that are traditionally associated with risks. Petersen writes that the main goal of these approaches is anticipating and controlling future risks through prevention. Methodologically, they are based on statistical models.²⁸ Risks are seen as out in the world and to be tamed and they intersect with security when the economic damages from things like terrorism are discussed.

There is an important distinction here between risk in the financial sense and risk in the security sense. For example, risk in finance can be a positive thing to be capitalized on – risks can be actively sought out and the possible consequences can be known (financial loss or gain), though not the outcome. In this case, there is a higher chance that financial trends may mirror the past and risk can be something to be encouraged for future gain.²⁹ On the other hand, in security, risk is about trying to know and prevent the unknown unknowns. One cannot necessarily know the consequences or harness risk for positive purpose. It has a different relationship to the actors who manage it because the risks being managed are for the most part, unknown unknowns. They are more of an externality to security, where they are a danger to be managed, as opposed to finance, where they are a practice to be harnessed.

²⁷ Petersen, "Risk Analysis - A Field within Security Studies?," 694.

²⁸ Ibid., 697.

²⁹ Ibid., 698.

The 'risk society' approach comes from the work of Ulrich Beck. Beck's main argument is that in essence, modern society constructs risks in the world but yet it continues to be more and more occupied with preventing and managing these risks, thus creating more.³⁰ Those in society with power can insulate themselves from risk, and the more the idea of the "risk society" is insulated against and risks are prevented, the more risks appear and the more the risk society can become a reality in the modern, globalized society.³¹ Beck sees risk as the attempt by governments to individualize dangers that have come from industrialization and thus are constructed by the systems of society.³²

The governmentality approach to risk has its roots in the work of Michel Foucault. This is currently the pre-eminent form of risk analysis in security and it has the potential to illuminate the shortcomings of both the Copenhagen School and IPS. Foucault defines governmentality as ways in which "institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations, and tactics "exercise power over a population, using political economy as knowledge and tools of security as the instrument of power."³³ It is ultimately the actual practices of governing and controlling populations. As Benjamin Muller writes, risk is not necessarily a "thing" but rather a

³⁰ Ulrich Beck, "Living in the World Risk Society: A Hobhouse Memorial Public Lecture given on Wednesday 15 February 2006 at the London School of Economics," *Economy and Society* 35, no. 3 (2006): 332.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 330.

³² Mark B. Salter, "Imagining Numbers: Risk, Quantification, and Aviation Security," *Security Dialogue* 39, no. 2-3 (2008): 248.

³³ Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-1978*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2007), 108.

mode of governance.³⁴ Mueller investigates this through the study of the biometric technologies utilized by states and their functioning in governing (in)security through risk and the prevalence of risk logic and governance in border controls.³⁵

Governmentality through risk is defined by the fact that risk is seen “not as an objective result of a complex environment but rather as a way of defining and governing populations...Probabilistic uncertainty [risk] comes to be understood as a governmental resource that can be deployed to create, obscure, or manage certain issues, institutions, or behaviours”.³⁶ Risk as governmentality was first brought into the security debates in IR by Claudia Aradau and Rens van Munster, who argue that risk is socially constructed, focused on precaution, and can be understood as constructing “forms of ordered agency and subjectivity in the population to be governed as part of the social problem identified”.³⁷ Risk further inherently comes with the potential for catastrophic consequences. Risk assessment has a disciplining power and the themes of prevention, precaution, and calculation are prevalent in discussions of risk and governmentality. Risks are not calculable or incalculable necessarily, but the focus is on how incalculable risks are governed.³⁸ For example, Aradau and Van Munster “analyse risk as ordering our world through managing social problems and surveying populations”³⁹ and use Foucault’s work to “understand the challenge of the catastrophic and the ‘incalculable’ in relation to the

³⁴ Müller, *Security, Risk and the Biometric State: Governing Borders and Bodies*, 2.

³⁵ Ibid., 14.

³⁶ Salter, “Imagining Numbers: Risk, Quantification, and Aviation Security,” 247.

³⁷ Claudia Aradau and Rens Van Munster, “Governing Terrorism Through Risk: Taking Precautions, (Un)knowing the Future,” *European Journal of International Relations* 13, no. 1 (2007): 97, doi:10.1177/1354066107074290.

³⁸ Ibid., 101.

³⁹ Ibid., 97.

ordinary practices of risk management”.⁴⁰ Studying the governance and technologies of risk goes beyond many of the dichotomies of security studies that define the risk vs. threats challenge, including “inside-outside, war-crime, and military-police”.⁴¹

For the purposes of this paper, I would like to streamline a definition of risk in terms of its relationship to security. As I have demonstrated, risk can have different types of significance and purpose depending on the discipline/practice in which it is embedded and the relationship of the actors to key components of risk such as uncertainty, calculability, predictability. Risk, in this paper, refers to an ontological category, separate from threats, and defined by a high level of precaution, prevention, uncertainty, calculability, and unpredictability. Risks become threats when they reach a level of certainty that renders them sufficiently predictable and something to be targeted and defended against. It is the concept of the unknown and the relationship to the unknown that separates threats and risks as well as different types of risk. Risks are to be pre-empted, managed, and mitigated in an attempt to control the uncertain, govern the incalculable, and prevent a catastrophic and unforeseen event.

In this case, risk has an important relationship to security because ultimately, risks become a form of governance and are managed and mitigated by governing actors through policies and practices with a goal of preventing catastrophic events in the name of security. Security is the end goal of the practices of risk, though arguably unachievable. I further argue that is through these characteristics of risk

⁴⁰ Ibid., 98.

⁴¹ Petersen, “Risk Analysis - A Field within Security Studies?,” 701.

that populations are governed and controlled in attempt to combat (in)security and that this important component of defining risk can demonstrate what is obscured by the Copenhagen School and IPS when their central ontological device is threats, rather than risks.

Defining the Dispositif

The most important part of the governmentality approach for this case is the idea of the *dispositif*. The *dispositif* is a capability for governance that stands to represent the self-sustaining structures and tools by which power is maintained over a population. It is heterogeneous, meaning it is made up of different elements; each of the elements all connect with each other to establish power relations, through a dynamic of relationality; and they produce a strategic function.⁴² It creates a way of ordering and organizing an entire population and institutions and expanding governmentality, as opposed to isolating the normal from the abnormal, as in Foucault's disciplinary power.⁴³ Aradau and van Munster argue that risk is itself this type of tool known as a *dispositif* of risk. It "consists of rationalities and technologies to monitor and predict dangerous occurrences in the future".⁴⁴ They state that in creating rationalities and technologies to control behavior and solve a social problem, risk is the driver and the mode of governance, though it can adapt and transform depending on "the knowledgeable representations of the problems

⁴² Owen Thomas, "Foucaultian Dispositifs as Methodology: The Case of Anonymous Exclusions by Unique Identification in India," *International Political Sociology* 8 (2014): 165.

⁴³ Salter, "Imagining Numbers: Risk, Quantification, and Aviation Security," 250.

⁴⁴ Aradau and Van Munster, "Governing Terrorism Through Risk," 103.

and objects to be governed and on the available technologies to produce particular effects in the governed.”⁴⁵

Further, risk connects the uncertain future to security, which “requires monitoring the future, the attempt to calculate what the future can offer and the necessity to control and minimize its potentially harmful effects”.⁴⁶ Ultimately, risk is a tool for security and governmentality by defining and governing populations. It requires calculation and minimization of what are possible threats with varying levels of uncertainty. It uses various technologies for this governing and has a goal of preventing future events, by bringing the temporal concept of the future into the present. The risk dispositif itself allows for measuring and comparing risk practices and discourses.⁴⁷ Finally, the dispositif of risk can change, depending on how the problem is subjectively constructed, the objects/populations being governed, and the technologies to govern.⁴⁸

The dispositif can also be problematized and debated in a number of ways that need to be understood in order to understand its role and value in security analysis. Karen Petersen, in defining the different schools of thought, cautions that risk should not be set up entirely as counter to “security” and that it also may not necessarily be as linked to neo-liberalism as many writers suggest.⁴⁹ Aradau and van Munster define the dispositif of risk as a rationality and technology of government to govern social problems; in this case they focus on risk and the

⁴⁵ Aradau et al., “Introducing Critical Security Methods,” 98.

⁴⁶ Aradau and Van Munster, “Governing Terrorism Through Risk,” 98.

⁴⁷ Petersen, “Risk Analysis - A Field within Security Studies?,” 702.

⁴⁸ Aradau and Van Munster, “Governing Terrorism Through Risk,” 98.

⁴⁹ Petersen, “Risk Analysis - A Field within Security Studies?,” 702.

dispositif of risk is a technology of government dedicated to a specific monitoring and calculation of the future.⁵⁰ In criticism, Mark Salter adds that while he differs little from the assertions of Aradau and van Munster and their definition of the dispositif of risk, there is a difference between the it and the dispositif of security. He refers to Foucault's definition of the dispositif of security, in which the security dispositif creates a spectrum of what is acceptable in society and is governed as such.⁵¹ He adds that dispositifs create their own objects and thus in his specific case of aviation security, a dispositif of security rather than risk is very useful, as it illuminates the objects of security and what is defined as or governed in the name of security.⁵² The dispositif of risk manages populations in the name of risk and with the intention of solving it.⁵³ It focuses attention on how experts define what "security" means⁵⁴ and the ways in which "more and more aspects" of an individual are to be "screened and securitized".⁵⁵ In this case, the dispositif of security encompasses practices of risk management because it shows how risk is used to expand the business of security and justify further securitization.⁵⁶ Where the dispositif of risk serves to solve the unsolvable (risk itself), the dispositif of security serves to manage it and reproduce the system.⁵⁷

⁵⁰ Aradau et al., "Introducing Critical Security Methods," 97–98.

⁵¹ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-1978*, 6.

⁵² Salter, "Imagining Numbers: Risk, Quantification, and Aviation Security," 248.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 247.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 248.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 251.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 252.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 249.

While the dispositif of security and the dispositif of risk require an important distinction depending on the object of analysis (aviation, in Salter's case), they both focus on risk. What changes, is the result of the dispositif – solving risk or mitigating it to maintain processes of security. For both, risk is the driving factor and the ontological choice, as opposed to a threat, and both look at the constituent elements of a problem and corresponding rationalities of governance. It may be the case for some aspects of security that the dispositif of risk is an important analytical tool whereas for others it may be the dispositif of security and that is an important methodological distinction to make for the researcher, depending on what is being analyzed and depending on the role of (un)certainty in the problem. What matters most though is that risk is what drives the analysis rather than threats. For this paper though, I will be referring specifically to the dispositif of risk. This discussion of the dispositive, though, is important in understanding the ways in which this governmentality approach and the existing writing on risk intersects with the critical relationship between theories (the Copenhagen School and IPS) and the risk/threat divide.

The Copenhagen School, International Political Sociology, and the Distinction between Threats and Risks

Practices of Risk

This section will begin with a brief discussion on examples of risk in practice before examining in detail the intersection of theory and the risk/threat divide.

Security priorities across the Western world are quite clearly centered on the idea

of minimizing and mitigating risk. This is seen in a number of ways. The focus on preventing radicalization of those who may commit terrorist attacks, for instance, seeks to address the factors that may cause someone to be violent and treat those social processes in a calculable way. Further, prevention of terrorist violence is one of the main themes of counter-terrorism strategies today despite the fact that preventing violence is such a massive undertaking. As a result, a number of risk-mitigating tools appear. In the United Kingdom, the most recent edition of the counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST, presents 4 areas of work.

“Pursue: to stop terrorist attacks

Prevent: to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism,

Protect: to strengthen our protection against a terrorist attack,

Prepare: to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack”⁵⁸

This strategy is risk oriented because of its connections to what may happen in the future; the broad sense of uncertainty inherent in the idea of a terrorist attack; calculability and the idea that the state must be prepared for a number of different unknown events, as seen in the statement “improve preparedness for the highest impact risks in the national risk assessment”.⁵⁹ Risk-based measures and tools become the ways in which security is ultimately practiced.

Similarly, in Canada, strategies and documents are published that illustrate to Canadians the ways in which their government deals with security challenges

⁵⁸ Home Office, “Policy Paper: 2010-2015 Government Policy: Counter-Terrorism” (Gov.uk, May 7, 2015), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2010-to-2015-government-policy-counter-terrorism/2010-to-2015-government-policy-counter-terrorism>.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

such as terrorism. Very recently, Public Safety Canada published its newest counter-terrorism report for Canada and featured the newest framework for its counter-terrorism strategy. At its core, the strategy is focused on resilience and its aim is “to counter domestic and international terrorism in order to protect Canada, Canadians, and Canadian interests.”⁶⁰ The four major components of the strategy include Prevent, Detect, Deny, and Respond.⁶¹ These four components are carried out through policing, countering radicalization, intelligence activities, intervention, and preventing extremist travellers. All of these seek to mitigate the risks of a large unknown and use policy to try and define the realities of the future. Language demonstrating ideas of “reducing risk” or using risk to try and pin down potential catastrophic events is common.

To draw on Aradau and van Munster’s definition of governance through risk, Canada’s counter-terrorism strategy is operated through policy practices and programs that try and govern the incalculable (through prevention tactics such as counter-radicalization or the idea of detecting unknown dangers), and manage both the possibility and consequences of catastrophic events in the future through governance (in denying and responding to such future events). For example, the *2014 Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada* states that it seeks to prevent radicalization towards violent extremism, “but once an individual crosses the threshold to supporting terrorism-related activity, the Government takes action to

⁶⁰ “2014 Public Report On The Terrorist Threat to Canada” (Public Safety Canada, 2015), <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/2014-pblc-rpr-trrst-thrt/index-eng.aspx>.

⁶¹ Ibid.

“Detect” and “Deny” such activity”.⁶² Attempting to both define and track any possible instances across Canada where this threshold may be crossed is nearly incalculable and temporally difficult, given that it is in the future. Yet, the strategy seeks to deny this threshold from being crossed, create an atmosphere of precaution against this type of violence, and ultimately, deny a catastrophic event from happening. This suggests that the strategies in these counter-terrorism and security policies are tools that fall within Aradau and van Munster’s definition of governing through risk as well as that outlined in this paper. With evidence that risk is the object by which security is practiced and pursued, then it would then make sense that the study of security practices and apparatuses should also function in terms of risk. In order to properly criticize and evaluate and problematize what security issues are, it should follow that both the study and the practice should follow the same ontological divisions. As a result, this section will investigate the ways in which the Copenhagen School and International Political Sociology are rendered insufficient in understanding the ways in which certain issues become security problems. For example, with the Copenhagen School, if they only examine threats as existential emergencies, they miss the ways in which security problems are constructed through the discourse and prioritization of risk, as demonstrated through the *dispositif*.

Aradau and Van Munster use the *dispositif* and governmentality to argue that risk should become an important object of inquiry in security studies. They argue that security regimes such as the War on Terror are forms of governmentality and

⁶² Ibid.

as a result, the “risk society” described by Beck is insufficient. The risk society also needs to take into account the precautionary and preventative aspects of risk, where potentially catastrophic elements of the future are to be avoided.⁶³ Risk is ultimately what is being dealt with as counter-terrorism and similar security policies are functions of the dispositif of precautionary risk.⁶⁴ Petersen sees risk as important not as something to “turn to...because we think that it would provide us with better analytical tools” but rather “we should attempt to understand the sociopolitical meaning given to the concept in the practices [of security]”.⁶⁵ This is the suggestion that thinking in terms of imminent and extreme threats alone is insufficient.

The Copenhagen School and Risk

The Copenhagen School works with the idea of threats in a number of ways. Primarily, as Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde state, “what is essential is the designation of an existential threat requiring emergency action of special measures and the acceptance of that designation by a significant audience”.⁶⁶ Most straightforwardly, a threat is identified and a political response is constructed. The important part of the Copenhagen School is the process by which the complexities of the speech act occur to designate the existential threat as such. Ultimately, as Rita Abrahamsen points out, securitization through a speech act by a securitizing actor is a political

⁶³ Aradau and Van Munster, “Governing Terrorism Through Risk,” 91.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁶⁵ Petersen, “Terrorism: When Risk Meets Security,” 708.

⁶⁶ Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, 27.

choice. It comes after an event has occurred and so it becomes a security issue that mobilizes and has consequences.⁶⁷

Thierry Balzacq argues that securitization can be seen either as philosophical, making the speech act reduced to a procedure, or as sociological, which understands securitization in the context of circumstances, social conditions, and where power lies in the relationship between the speaker and the audience.⁶⁸ In both situations, security is performative. In the philosophical case, the audience that either accepts or refuses the speech act is a formal category that is simply “receiving”, whereas in the sociological category, there is a mutually constitutive relationship between speaker and actor. Securitization, either way, is “not a self-referential practice but an intersubjective process...[it is] understood as a set of interrelated practices, and the processes of their production, diffusion, and reception/translation that brings threats into being”.⁶⁹

While the debates about how the speech act is constituted and meaning is derived, the *threats* are the outcome and uncertainty or prevention are minimally discussed. Contemporary debates around performativity or the role and context of the audience are important, but they come down to the idea of *defining* a threat in the end and the discursive aspects of how a threat comes to be spoken and accepted. Regardless of how this happens, a threat is concrete and something to be addressed through various security practices and regulations, regardless of the importance of

⁶⁷ Rita Abrahamsen, “Blair’s Africa: The Politics of Securitization and Fear,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 30, no. 1 (2005): 57.

⁶⁸ Thierry Balzacq, “A Theory of Securitization: Origins, Core Assumptions, and Variants,” in *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 1–2.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

context or linguistic factors. As Olaf Corry, asks, “but what if risks and threats depend on two qualitatively different logics rather than risk simply amplifying processes of securitization?...What happens to securitization in an age of risk?”.⁷⁰ The precautionary, calculative, and preventative aspects of risk that are seen in security practices and in risk-based studies of security are significantly lacking in debates within the Copenhagen School. Balzacq refers to a *dispositif* within securitization but rather than being about practices of risk mitigation, the policy practices making up the *dispositif* represent the devices by which actors of security conceptualize a threat and form a background knowledge of said threat and how to confront it.⁷¹ Despite the position that there is room to discuss Foucauldian concepts within the Copenhagen School, there is much more certainty in the problem as defined by Balzacq and others than evidence and debate that includes risk would suggest. In short, the *dispositif* in use in the Copenhagen School refer to tools of governance in the case of an emergency and existential threat rather than the tools of governance through risk. With an existential threat, the problem is known, whereas with risk, there is governance in the name of the monitoring and calculating the unknown future. The use of a *dispositif* is helpful, but not helpful enough without the idea of risk involved.

The problem in the case of the Copenhagen School is that while debates within the field are crucial in understanding how security issues are brought to the forefront and are constituted, the focus on threats rather than risk puts the

⁷⁰ Olaf Corry, “Securitisation and ‘Riskification’: Second-Order Security and the Politics of Climate Change,” *Millennium - Journal of International Studies* 40, no. 2 (2012): 236–237.

⁷¹ Balzacq, “A Theory of Securitization: Origins, Core Assumptions, and Variants,” 16.

constitutive focus on the wrong subject. It focuses on how threats and threat-based practices come to be defined as “existential threats” requiring action rather than those of risk. There are important components of power, discourse, governance, and practices of security that are missing with a threats-based approach. This is because there are significant aspects of political and social discourse as well as power that are articulated and operated through the dispositif of risk, governmentality of risk, and the ontological shift towards risk as a whole. Olaf Corry delves into the relationship between risk and securitization and argues that if one is not careful, the logic of risk can appear to defeat the purpose of the Copenhagen School by invoking “danger” far more often than securitization should actually describe. As a result, risk politics becomes difficult. Corry argues that instead, securitization can make room for risk by identifying specific ways that speech acts can account for risk and what those political implications are.⁷² He believes that the distinct nature of risks vs. threat-based traditional security has a significant impact on normal politics and extraordinary politics, with risk discourse activating a “second-order security politics” [emergency].⁷³ Ultimately, this changes the nature of the existential threat and creates a temporal problem, as existential threats and emergency politics are much more immediate than risk as a way of managing the future would allow for. I further assert that risk problematizes the existential threat because of its relationship with other components of security politics.

⁷² Corry, “Securitisation and ‘Riskification’: Second-Order Security and the Politics of Climate Change,” 237.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 238.

To build on Corry's work, risk, when brought in to the Copenhagen School, can be beneficial as a connection between other categories. It illustrates an important aspect of how securing the referent object from an existential threat is about collective survival: survival is about the future. It is about maintaining concepts of identity or sovereignty and preserving the future existence of either or both of those through prevention and precaution. It is about trying to know the unknowns and governing as such in order to maintain survival into the future. Both the temporal nature of risk and the relationship between risks and actors is crucial to understanding how risk can connect to securitization. Risk as governance and as a *dispositif* is a tool for maintaining the existence of the referent object. When one focuses on an existential threat, it is about maintaining survival for the future from an urgent, short-term perspective. When one focuses on risk, it is a long-term, less urgent management strategy that allows the referent object to continue to exist (that may also still be presented with an existential threat). Risk and securitization exist in separate moments in time and are driven by different sense of urgency.

Corry argues that with risks, security in terms of securitization is still constitutive but also causal. In other words, the second-order security politics and politics of emergency can "direct attention to the level of conditions of danger or harm".⁷⁴ For example, rather than a distinct *threat* of a terrorist attack brought to attention by a speech act, the factors that make *future* terrorist attacks possible and the vulnerabilities that allow for them can become the object of the speech act. Further, Corry effectively makes the ontological distinction and shifts the speech act

⁷⁴ Ibid., 246.

to take into account risks without necessarily losing the entire concept of the existential threat. He is careful to point out though that “whereas securitisation involves a plan of action to defend a valued referent object against a threat, riskification implies a plan of action to govern the conditions of possibility for harm”.⁷⁵

Since Corry argues that in this case, the referent object (state, group etc) is not defended but rather governed⁷⁶, I can take this one step further and identify the role of the *dispositif*. If the ontological choice is shifted to risk rather than on threats, as I have identified, and if that shift moves towards governance rather than protection, then the *dispositif* of risk can be useful since it can trace the heterogeneous and often-changing elements of governance through risk. It can allow for a thorough examination of the different factors that are assumed to exist in order to allow for governmentality to control the potential for a terrorist attack and the different vulnerabilities in a society and their relationship to one another. It can seek to understand the risk-based conditions that make an existential *danger* possible, the strategies of prevention, and the temporal relationship to risks and governance rather than simply the discursive circumstances. The *dispositif* of risk can have a better handle on governance through risk and societal factors that lead to securitization that are missing when security is reduced to only performativity and temporally limited.

Further, Aradau and van Munster add that because of the performative nature of the Copenhagen School, techniques and rationalities of risk are unable to

⁷⁵ Ibid., 247.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 68.

be identified by the theory at all if they are not explicitly stated and part of the speech act, which they often are not.⁷⁷ For example, if there is not a speech act specifically articulating that something is a threat and that brings about an action, the practices of risk in security may go unnoticed. This is where the discussion of securitization that is inclusive of risk can overcome such a shortcoming. In the same way that Lene Hansen argues that those who are silenced or marginalized may not have their threats defined as security issues/existential threats through securitization⁷⁸, without a voice to express risk, much is excluded. As a result, consequences of risk based security practice that a dispositif approach may reveal are missed if they are not included in a threats-only system of Securitization. For example, a dispositif may illustrate governing power (via risk) of practices of surveillance and data gathering on citizens and the relationship between them, but the Copenhagen School would fail to capture this problem and the importance of risk within it beyond perhaps a speech act or political rhetoric defending such practices and attempting to declare a “threat”. As a result, the nuances of risk are important to try and include in the framework that makes up the Copenhagen School.

The Copenhagen School also creates a dichotomy between the politics of the exceptional (existential threats) and normal politics and the idea that risk is an all-encompassing strategy of precaution disrupts this dichotomy.⁷⁹ The politics and practices of risk become all encompassing because they are covering a variety of

⁷⁷ Aradau and Van Munster, “Governing Terrorism Through Risk,” 98.

⁷⁸ Lene Hansen, “The Little Mermaid’s Silent Security Dilemma and the Absence of Gender in the Copenhagen School,” *Millennium* 29, no. 2 (2000): 287.

⁷⁹ Aradau and Van Munster, “Governing Terrorism Through Risk,” 98.

practices and policies from preventing radicalization from happening in the first place to responding to situations when they do arise, as seen in the counter-terrorism strategies discussed earlier. Governance through risk, as mentioned earlier, is something that is happening all the time for an unknown number of dangers. As a result, risk makes it very difficult to necessarily differentiate between normal politics and extraordinary politics as easily or as dichotomously as the Copenhagen School would suggest. Further, Petersen adds that the Copenhagen School is too formal an understanding of security and that risk studies could provide room for growth within the debates. She writes, “critical risk studies seek to show how risk management decisions and security policies establish certain meanings of politics and political power”.⁸⁰ Petersen also argues that the *dispositif* can be used to measure specific practices of risk as well as the discourse surrounding it.⁸¹

Finally, in his expression of Aradau and van Munster’s precautionary principle, “by which action must be taken before clear data or intelligence justify that action”, Mark Salter writes that in problematizing security, one does not begin with the observable problem but rather it is deduced from defined dangers that “one wishes to prevent”.⁸² As a result, the Copenhagen School’s focus on examining problems and scenarios in the stage of performativity rather than pre-emptive practices, misses significant opportunities to problematize and understand the constitution of what actually occurs in security scenarios and how risk drives the practices and policies of security. This brings the debate back to the idea of the

⁸⁰ Petersen, “Risk Analysis - A Field within Security Studies?,” 701.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 707.

⁸² Salter, “Imagining Numbers: Risk, Quantification, and Aviation Security,” 255.

dispositif which can bring together multiple constituent elements and contexts that allow for dangers to be deduced in the name of prevention and seek to look beyond just performativity, emergency, and discourse. Risk demands more from analysis of security in the Copenhagen School because it asks questions about how securitization comes to be and also about consequences for practices and for the future rather than performativity of the present.

International Political Sociology and Risk

The IPS approach to security broadly utilizes a sociological set of tools. Rather than focusing on speech acts and the resulting politics of emergency, IPS focuses on the bureaucratic practices, networks, and relationships that shape security. It focuses on individual actors and bureaucratic agents rather than individual leaders, decision-makers or performers of the speech-act of security. IPS further uses the authority of statistics and the daily practices of classifying/prioritizing threats, and bureaucratic behaviours of those in the security realm to analyze security.⁸³ Didier Bigo argues that it is the “convergence of defence and internal security into interconnected networks, or into a “field” of professionals of management of unease that lies at the heart of the transformations concerning global policing.”⁸⁴ He refers to Bourdieu’s field, or “the social universe within which actors relate to each other and those structures: a complex web of relations between

⁸³ Aradau and Van Munster, “Governing Terrorism Through Risk,” 98.

⁸⁴ Didier Bigo, “Globalized (In)Security: The Field and the Ban-Opticon,” in *Terror, Insecurity and Liberty: Illiberal Practices of Liberal Regimes after 9/11*, ed. Didier Bigo and Anastassia Tsoukala (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 11.

different positions determined by inequalities such as power and wealth”.⁸⁵ In this case, security actors create a field by which they “cultivate fear, unease, and (in)security”.⁸⁶

The actors in this field, the “mangers of unease”, manage a world of security that is increasingly globalized, less concrete in its division between internal/external to the state, and inherently interrelated and interdependent with the concept of insecurity.⁸⁷ Security, in the view of scholars of IPS, has a complex relationship with liberty, where “liberal regimes create an atmosphere that both justifies and necessitates...illiberal practices”.⁸⁸ Further, the social and professional dynamics within the field are also important in understanding how security “happens.” As Bigo writes, actors come together for a production of a “*regime of truth*” and the battle to establish the “legitimate” causes of fear, of unease, of doubt and uncertainty, the (in)security professionals have the strategy to overstep national boundaries and form corporatist professional alliances to reinforce the credibility of their assertions and to win the internal struggles in their respective national fields”.⁸⁹

While IPS often considers and analyzes risk in the broad concept of managing unease and the future, risk is still in many ways outside the scope of the analysis of the statistical and bureaucratic practices being analyzed. In other words, the ontological focus is still more on threats and individuals and their actions within the

⁸⁵ Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, *Critical Security Studies: An Introduction*, 69.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 69–70.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 69.

⁸⁹ Bigo, “Globalized (In)Security: The Field and the Ban-Opticon,” 13.

field and the habitus, or the social structures and framework in which actors are embedded.⁹⁰ It is not necessarily on the effects and politics of governance through risk, as seen through a *dispositif*. IPS also considers a *dispositif* though not one that explicitly refers to risk. For Bigo, there is a *dispositif* in the sociological setting of the managers of unease called the Ban-opticon. The *dispositif* is established in relation to a state of unease defined by the blurring of internal/external boundaries and the sociological field of actors. It is a tool of a governmentality of unease, defined by multiple elements, and is characterized in international security politics by “practices of exceptionalism, acts of profiling and containing foreigners, and a normative imperative of mobility”.⁹¹ The *dispositif* creates an “authority” or a “regime of truth” that ultimately defines the field based on sociological profiles, numerical and technological data, and a motivation of fear.⁹²

Risk is certainly considered within this analysis of the field and the governmentality of the field but yet it is in many ways still peripheral. Bigo discusses the importance of risk when he writes that security services “want to monitor the future in order to control uncertainty and opportunities; but this goal is unrealistic and inefficient as it generates more problems than it solves”.⁹³ Specifically, it leads to more insecurity and less liberty and can reinforce the institutional systems.⁹⁴ Risk is thematically present in this analysis of how the field functions but the effects of governing through risk are not fully explored. Mark

⁹⁰ Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, *Critical Security Studies: An Introduction*, 69.

⁹¹ Bigo, “Globalized (In)Security: The Field and the Ban-Opticon,” 11.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 13.

⁹³ Didier Bigo, “Internal and External Aspects of Security,” *European Security* 15, no. 4 (2006): 386.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

Salter, in discussing risk, writes that “the practice of risk management is not intended to resolve the risks to an enterprise; rather, risk is used by the ‘managers of unease’ as a justification for expanding their security business”.⁹⁵ This is an incomplete picture of risk because it focuses only on the institutions and actors rather than broader governance and its effects on society. Here, Salter is using a *dispositif*, but like Bigo, he is not using one that centralizes risk. It is motivated by risk but he is referring to the “*dispositif* of security”, as differentiated from the *dispositif* of risk, which could provide a much more complete picture of governance through risk.

Ultimately, risk is discussed but it is secondary to the choice of the field of actors, system of institutions, and their perceptions of “unease” as the central point of inquiry. Elements of risk such as unease are important, but they do not tell the entire story of risk. Governance through risk is not centralized in IPS work as something being studied explicitly. This means that the effects of risk-based policy can be seen in terms of how it affects actors but the effects on actual political realities, lived experiences, and governance are not as fully explored as they could be. The answer here is again the integration of a *dispositif* of risk. Where the Copenhagen School fails to acknowledge risk in speech acts, it focuses on discursive political realities, which I have suggested can improve to include risk. In the case of IPS, the discussion on risk is limited since it centres on the construction and dynamics of the field, of the relationship between security and (in)security, and only a lesser amount on the actual experienced effects of risk on those who are governed,

⁹⁵ Salter, “Imagining Numbers: Risk, Quantification, and Aviation Security,” 252.

controlled, and inhabit the political reality. Integrating it in a way that examines the relationship between the field and society more broadly or the field and political discourses may be useful.

In addition, Aradau and van Munster problematize IPS and another element of its incomplete understanding of risk. It may take into account unease and the future but it does not take into account other elements that define risk. They ask, “What happens, however, when the authority of knowledge and statistical technologies become insufficient or are surpassed by catastrophic events?”⁹⁶ In other words, when analyzing the ways in which bureaucratic actors manage security, the idea of catastrophic events that defy that type of management is forgotten and this important concept is directly related to how risk is defined. Catastrophic events exist at the previously discussed boundary between the unknown and the known and the fact that they cannot actually be predicted is important. Managing security through threats, even when considering the concept of the future, is limited because it does not take into account a lot of the ideas of possibility and uncertainty. More importantly, considering risk as ontologically peripheral rather than central means that the disciplining, behavior-shaping and controlling effects of risk in terms of catastrophic events are not fully understood.

As with the gap in the Copenhagen School, the dispositif of risk stands to be productive. Aradau and van Munster add “a genealogy of the dispositifs of risk would allow us to understand the challenge of the catastrophic and the ‘incalculable’

⁹⁶ Aradau and Van Munster, “Governing Terrorism Through Risk,” 98.

in relation to the ordinary practices of risk management”.⁹⁷ In other words, much is obscured in understanding the field and the practices of the “managers of unease” when one is only looking with a higher level of certainty and without much focus on catastrophic events or the effects of governance. The dispositif of risk can illuminate much about the ordinary practices that are studied in IPS. In order to reveal more about how security comes to be, it is important to integrate into IPS the ways in which practices of risk are used to control and govern and what the effects of those are. Essentially, the integration of risk from a governmentality perspective in IPS needs to be researched further.

Overall, it is clear that there are gaps in the ability of both IPS and the Copenhagen School in terms of their ability to capture the full picture of security practice. Where we see the ways in which risk presents itself in discourse and in the outputs of security, we do not see the necessary analysis of security work that integrates risk as it should. We further see issues of power, knowledge, and performativity being obscured because of the focus on the composition of threats or an incomplete integration of risk rather than a comprehensive understanding of governance through risk.

Case Study – Police Carding in Canada

The purpose of this case study is to take the discussions of the Copenhagen School and International Political Sociology and demonstrate their shortcomings through a discussion of practice and demonstrate how the dispositif can reveal and

⁹⁷ Ibid.

create scholarship surrounding what they miss. While many examples of the dispositif in security, both with reference to risk and without, have covered policies and practices of national security and counter-terrorism (in particular aviation security)⁹⁸, the idea of risk and governmentality can capture security across both high politics and low politics. I am going to draw on a very timely example that is currently ongoing: the debate on the practice of “carding” by the Toronto Police Service, among other police departments in Canada. I have chosen to step away from national security and counter-terrorism for this case study firstly because there is so much literature on those topics but primarily because with the aim to properly illustrate the weight of governance through risk as a practice, I seek to also demonstrate the ways in which it can transcend different types of policing and law enforcement beyond traditional security and reflect broader power structures within society and the lived experience of citizens.

Carding is the practice whereby a police officer can stop a person at random on the street, question them, ask for identification, and then record their information to be stored. It has been the subject of criticism from activists for some time but is recently very much in the public eye following an article in *Toronto Life* by Desmond Cole, in which he chronicles his racialized experiences with carding.⁹⁹ I argue that carding is a practice of governmentality through a dispositif that is

⁹⁸ Salter, “Imagining Numbers: Risk, Quantification, and Aviation Security”; Claudia Aradau et al., “Discourse/Materiality,” in *Critical Security Methods: New Frameworks for Analysis* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

⁹⁹ Desmond Cole, “The Skin I’m In: I’ve Been Interrogated by Police More than 50 Times - All Because I’m Black,” *Toronto Life*, April 21, 2015, http://www.torontolife.com/informer/features/2015/04/21/skin-im-ive-interrogated-police-50-times-im-black/?page=all#tlb_multipage_anchor_1.

inspired and motivated by a logic of risk. Many, including the Ontario Human Rights Commission and the Mayor of Toronto, have called for an end to the practice, following years of demands for the same by local activists and racialized people across Canada.¹⁰⁰ Both those who vocalize lived experience as well as a variety of data sources strongly assert that carding disproportionately affects young black and brown men.¹⁰¹

Mark Saunders, Chief of Toronto Police Service, argues that stopping and questioning people via carding can “enhance public safety” and is “intelligence-based”.¹⁰² What can be seen here is a practice in which no threat is imminent and not everyone is a threat but there is a possibility that many people could *become* a threat in the future and that danger is unknown and needs to somehow be predicted. Carding, especially in the idea that it is intelligence-based, is a form of governance through risk in order to enhance public safety from the eyes of those who govern (rather than the governed). It represents a type of intelligence-led policing at a different level of law-enforcement than that with which intelligence-led policing is usually associated. Intelligence-led policing traditionally refers to larger national security policing¹⁰³, which is what makes carding a particularly interesting

¹⁰⁰ Colin Perkel, “Ontario Human Rights Commission Calls for Immediate End to Carding,” *The Toronto Star*, June 11, 2015, <http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2015/06/11/carding-can-make-toronto-safer-when-done-right-police-chief-says.html>.

¹⁰¹ “Interactive Map: Young, Male and Stopped,” *The Toronto Star*, March 7, 2012, http://www.thestar.com/news/crime/known_topolice/2012/03/07/interactive_map_young_male_and_stopped.html.

¹⁰² Perkel, “Ontario Human Rights Commission Calls for Immediate End to Carding.”

¹⁰³ David L Carter and Jeremy G Carter, “Intelligence-Led Policing: Conceptual and Functional Considerations for Public Policy,” *Criminal Justice Policy Review* 20, no. 3 (2009): 310.

example. Carding is a mode of governance that citizens are expected to conform to but also a mode that defines and categorizes bodies – both through discourse and power and through the materiality of their existence and appearance – as threatening or non-threatening and places them within policies. Risk, as reflective of broader racial power structures, is what informs a practice of security.

Ericson and Haggerty write in *Policing the Risk Society* that risk is socially constructed within policing and represents a communications system to identify and manage risks by individuals and institutions.¹⁰⁴ This is very sociological and systems-based but similar to the idea that risk is not a “thing” necessarily but rather should be thought of as governing through risk. Les Johnston writes that security, in terms of policing, can be defined in terms of an absence of risk and policing is a set of techniques intended to try and guarantee that security. Risk, in this case, while more concrete than previous definitions, can be understood for policing as still a driver of security policy and governance. Ericson and Haggerty further write that because of risk, “people, organizations, and environments are sorted into whatever categories will fit the practical purpose of the institution that wishes to make them predictable”.¹⁰⁵ Further, in categorizing and dividing bodies to fit a norm that reflects power structures, risk designates anything that deviates from a defined norm as “dangerous”.¹⁰⁶ As a result, this thinking is what justifies practices such as carding in order to reinforce norms and order and through risk. It reflects a thinking of deviance and danger that is also deeply embedded in race and biopolitics, , or the

¹⁰⁴ Richard V. Ericson and Kevin D. Haggerty, *Policing the Risk Society* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 4.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 39–40.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 39.

control and disciplinary power over populations through the body. Surveillance follows from this logic because it is operated through these concepts of risk and produces knowledge of populations that allows for governing them and prioritizes the gathering and storing of knowledge to be accessed and analyzed later.¹⁰⁷ When combined with ideas of deviance and sorting of who fits and who does not, the idea of risk as a mode of governance and way of defining behaviour is reinforced. Ericson and Haggerty define risk management in policing as governmentality,¹⁰⁸ similar to the functional definition of risk as a *dispositif* in this paper.

In examining risk as a *dispositif* in this case, it is possible to see that carding is a practice that can change over time and has multiple different constituent elements that relate to one another – intelligence, data gathering and storage, racism. Some are discursive, such as public conversations and political debates about carding and some are more material and embedded in biopolitics. Both are in the name of managing risk and preventing crime or catastrophic events (though on a likely smaller scale than counter-terrorism) from happening. Stopping people may be a strategy to pre-empt crime. It may also be a strategy to gather intelligence and information on people in order to continue to prevent crime in the future and pre-empt unknown unknowns by making people “knowns” through surveillance. It also puts into practice underlying socially constructed notions of norms and deviance that inform surveillance. More importantly, carding serves to collect information to minimize unknowns that can be processed or drawn upon at a later date if someone suddenly became a danger or needed to be assessed as a risk. This speaks directly to

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 94.

Ericson and Haggerty's discussion on surveillance as filling a primarily information gathering purpose that puts intelligence first and is informed by multiple elements of risk.

Altogether, what the process of carding produces is a disproportionately discriminatory result that may not be explicitly defined by those in power or publicized as a purpose of the policy, as defined by Thomas.¹⁰⁹ What those in power define though does not reflect the realities of those who are governed and affected by the practice. Carding produces a very political result and one that reflects dominant racial power structures. Through these broken down elements of a risk dispositif, one can see the ways that carding comes to be an issue and the different ways in which risk logic is justified and practiced.

As risk logic through carding is preventative and no threat is imminent or explicitly expressed, the Copenhagen School would not properly understand carding as a practice of security. Further, where the result is that racialized groups of young men are disproportionately identified as problematic through the relationship between risk and systemic, implied racism, the Copenhagen School would only capture this relationship if police officers or politicians were explicitly stating, through a speech act, that these young men *were in fact* threats. It would be at that point that society would have an entirely different set of challenges because of the way that the issue would be presented. Further, the Copenhagen School would not capture all of the elements of policing and of politics that are driven by risk and allow carding to occur. IPS may tend to capture the bureaucratic nuances of how the

¹⁰⁹ Thomas, "Foucaultian Dispositifs as Methodology: The Case of Anonymous Exclusions by Unique Identification in India," 169.

data is taken, where the data goes, and what the experiences of officers are, but it may fail to take into account the effects of carding on individuals and their lived experience as a result of a risk-inspired practice. It is limited in its ability to understand all of the effects of intelligence-led and risk-driven policing because it can only capture the institutional side of governance through risk and often misses the societal side that represents lived experience and political realities. As such, the dispositif approach as defined and motivated through the logic of carding-as-risk-mitigation and governing through risk properly captures the many shifting and interrelated dynamics, actions, and power structures that make carding the problematic practice that it is.

Questions of Methodology – *Security as Practice and Risk*

What can the conclusions of the previous section – that both schools of thought are insufficient without risk – say about methodology? What needs to change about the way the study of security is “done” from the basic philosophical assumptions to the actual tools of doing research? If scholars are missing the opportunity to integrate risk and as a result, not analyzing all that could be analyzed, how can that change?

Methodology in critical security studies is still a growing area of debate with only a small handful of seminal books on the subject. The first, Lene Hansen’s *Security as Practice*, sets out to define how post-structuralism in security can be analytically valuable and methodologically concrete and sound by examining discourse analysis and identity in foreign policy and security. It provides a

comprehensive approach to methodological tools within the post-structural tradition and seeks to demonstrate the ways in which the post-structural tradition is relevant and valuable in understanding problems in “the real world”.¹¹⁰ It set a standard for which to understand the relationship between critical security studies and the subjects which scholars study. What has slowly emerged is a debate on not only the analytical and theoretical questions of what it means to “do” critical security studies but also the actual practical questions of “how”. IPS tends to be indicative of a turn to practice as something to be studied, through its study of the field and the habitus.¹¹¹ The Copenhagen School tends to represent a discursive turn.

To define the terms of this section, both methodology and method will come from Patrick T. Jackson’s work on philosophy of science in world politics. Specifically, methodology is defined as “the intellectual process guiding reflections about the relationship among all of these [epistemology, ontology, method, as well as ethics]; that is, guiding self-conscious reflections on epistemological assumptions, ontological perspective, ethical responsibilities, and method choices”.¹¹² Method is defined as “the kind of tool of research or analysis that a researcher adopts; for example, discourse analysis, oral history, participant observation, and qualitative

¹¹⁰ Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 7.

¹¹¹ Mark B. Salter, “The Practice Turn: Introduction,” in *Research Methods in Critical Security Studies: An Introduction*, ed. Mark B. Salter and Can E. Mutlu (New York: Routledge, 2013), 87.

¹¹² Patrick Jackson, *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations: Philosophy of Science and Its Implications for the Study of World Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 25.

data collection”.¹¹³ Similarly, Laura J. Shepherd writes that theories are packages of ideas, methods are tools, and as a result, methodology is the theory of methods.¹¹⁴ In this case, the specific tools adopted are important, but the question for methodology in the context of risk asks, how does risk as an object of inquiry change the broader relationship between research choices and the overarching guiding philosophy of the research? Further, it can ask how *security as practice* can be a functional concept in the context of risk.

The first major publication to address these questions is the book, *Critical Security Methods: New Frameworks for Analysis*, released in 2014 by Claudia Aradau, Jef Huysmans, Andrew Neal, and Nadine Voelkner. One of their main premises is that methods, as part of a larger methodology, do not exist only to connect what is happening in security practice and in security theory. Instead, they can engage the two and blur the distinctions between what is specifically a tool of research and what is a tool of practice. In many cases, they can inform one another and method can be conceptualized as practice itself.¹¹⁵ Method and methodology are interrelated and can be part of the larger social discourse or broader spaces within security, often overlapping with communities of security practitioners. Knowledge produced can reinforce norms, conduct, marginalization, and ideas of security that can come from practice.¹¹⁶ Research “questions how to problematize security practices and processes, how to interfere and intervene in security knowledge by analyzing the

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Laura J. Shepherd, “Introduction,” in *Critical Approaches to Security: An Introduction to Theories and Methods* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 1.

¹¹⁵ Aradau et al., “Introducing Critical Security Methods,” 3–4.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 10.

process and conditions through which insecurities are made politically significant”.¹¹⁷ This is incredibly important to remember when understanding that critical approaches to security seek to problematize, criticize, and understand concepts such as power and knowledge.

Methods fit into larger philosophies of methodology as well though they are “not simply tools of analysis but are developed and deployed as part of security practices themselves”.¹¹⁸ As an example, they argue that “analysis, precaution, horizon scanning, mapping, visual representation all make possible the multiplicity and dispersion of security practices. Social network analysis is an oft-cited example, used by security experts for the purposes of risk profiling as well as by social scientists”.¹¹⁹ Methods are “situated in political life” and shaped by social practices and power relations; for example, statistical analysis creates population categories upon which states can act and ethnographic methods are not separate at all from powers of colonialism and violence.¹²⁰ For example, with carding, data may come from police services, ensuring connectivity between research and practice, or researchers may be embedded in certain modes of governance or the racial power structures of the problem itself. Methodology in security has the ability to “raise questions about the power relations that are simultaneously shaped by and shape methods”.¹²¹ As a result, researchers should not engage with methods or

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 9.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 5.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 6.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

methodology as if it exists separately from practice, in order to maintain the integrity of their critical positions.

The interrelation between security practices and methodology is similar to the interrelation between researcher and subject, particularly when the subject is practice. In many ways, the researcher's relationship to research, which Jackson argues is inseparable from a critical perspective (mind-world monism)¹²² is parallel. Jackson argues that there are many ways for the researcher's positionality to affect the research.¹²³ This messiness is indicative of the values and approaches of how critical security theories work. Researchers are not separate from research or practice and neither is methodology. In this case, if risk is the practice being studied, then there is significant weight to the argument at hand if neither the researcher is fully separate nor the method is fully separate. Both are deeply interconnected with risk and have a responsibility to research as such. With this in mind, how do researchers move forward with this "messy" approach to methodology?

If methodology is not separate from practice, then the idea of *security as practice* becomes problematized. Risk as an ontological category complicates both IPS and the Copenhagen School because risk management *is* the practice. If we aim to do *security as practice* and risk management is practice, then risk is critical to achieving that aim. As Olaf Corry points out, the unique security logic that is identified by risk in the Copenhagen School is questioned, making the problems with the relationship between the Copenhagen School and risk primarily

¹²² Jackson, *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations: Philosophy of Science and Its Implications for the Study of World Politics*, 37.

¹²³ Salter, "The Practice Turn: Introduction," 20.

methodological.¹²⁴ When thinking in terms of simply threats, both theories are unable to fully engage with practice and thus by the standards of Aradau et al., are insufficient. As a result, if methodology is to be considered holistically as practice, and methods are to be practices, then both theories not only have a problem in terms of the object of inquiry and ontological division, but they face a crisis of methodology as well. If they are not functioning in terms of risk, then there is significant room for growth. Risk not only opens up significant areas of inquiry and debate, but it opens up significant space for reconsidering the relationship between methodology, researcher, and practice.

The question then arises as to whether it is possible to utilize a methodological approach that includes a *dispositif* and governmentality lens to understand what the Copenhagen School and IPS miss not just in terms of ontological questions and consequences but also in terms of methodology. One suggestion for this may be drawing on Philippe Bonditti's existing work with the *dispositif*. While not speaking specifically about risk, he states that in doing critical security research with a focus on practice, it is crucial to think about the *dispositif* and subsequent social effects. He argues, "bring out the *dispositifs*, follow them and look at what they produce as well as how they make it possible for power to operate: this is what I look at as the actual challenge of a Foucauldian method, a method that constantly strives to refuse the division between the thinking subject and the (research) object". A researcher is not separate from their research and arguably, the methodology of the research should not be separate from practice and

¹²⁴ Corry, "Securitisation and 'Riskification': Second-Order Security and the Politics of Climate Change," 238–239.

so this gives utility to the dispositif of risk. If the dispositif of risk is a structure and tool of practice for governing and combatting (in)security through risk management and mitigation, it can be harnessed methodologically to better engage with the idea of *security as practice*. Ultimately, risk is both the object of inquiry, as the practice being studied, but it is methodologically vital if doing research is to be considered inseparable from practice.

Another suggestion comes from *Critical Security Methods: New Frameworks for Analysis*, but from the chapter on discourse and materiality by Claudia Aradau, Martin Coward, Eva Herschinger, Owen D. Thomas, and Nadine Voelkner. They examine how objects, as a crucial element of the material turn in security studies, become dangerous both through materiality as well as through discourse. For example, bans on liquids in the airline industry reflect both the materiality of liquids themselves but also their emergence as dangerous through discourses. Specifically, “terrorism is made governable by both discourses of threat and danger, and arrangements of objects”.¹²⁵ While they do not explicitly speak about risk, the discourses about which they speak suggest that they are dealing with risk-based policy as they discuss the relationality between discourse and materiality in defining what is dangerous and the practices of “securing”. To “secure”, there is a role for the objects and corporeal realities of existence (materiality) as well as the discourse and political understanding that defines those objects as dangerous. To properly understand this methodologically, they suggest working with a dispositif to trace the different constituent elements (via relationality) of a problem that work

¹²⁵ Aradau et al., “Discourse/Materiality,” 71.

towards a strategic end of governance and control, or how different elements come together to influence how an apparatus of security performs its role of “securing”.¹²⁶ This approach is comprehensive, as it looks at both the consequences of practice and policy but also all of the elements, ideas, and actions that come together to create the practice. As Owen D. Thomas identifies, the *dispositif* is useful because of its ability to capture relationships between changing elements of power, both discursive and non-discursive, their strategic modes of governance, and the variety of consequences that may appear.¹²⁷

In the case of risk, there may be multiple elements coming together to render governance through risk possible. There may be certain elements of intelligence or data gathering, screening of individuals, regulations on material objects, and danger-infused discourse that all come together to define a policy and subsequent programs and practices and all are operated by different types of practitioners. By tracing the different constituent elements to understand both their consequences but also their goals, a broader picture can be painted of how security practices function and their effects on citizens. In doing this with a focus on risk, both the practices themselves and their wider goals can make sense together. With the example of carding, it is known that not every person can constitute a “risk” of danger to society, but the practice exists to strategically develop intelligence and analysis that will mitigate risk and the unknown unknown of who may be dangerous and how. There are multiple elements that come together in order to govern

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Thomas, “Foucaultian *Dispositifs* as Methodology: The Case of Anonymous Exclusions by Unique Identification in India,” 169.

people's behavior, both actions of stopping people on the street and taking and keeping their information and also dynamics of power, privilege, and race, violence. A method that thinks about how risk informs each of these elements and traces how they come together can be useful and can uncover more about the practices by letting risk shape and influence the overall methodology. It further better maintains the integrity of the critical approach of understanding *how* security problems are constituted by looking at risk as practice, practice as a huge component of method, and ultimately better carrying out *security as practice*.

To consider risk as a *dispositif* and an element of governmentality may be a way to reconcile the methodological challenge identified and as Petersen points out, not create better analytical tools but better understand practice and the political meanings that come along with it.¹²⁸ In this case, the *dispositif* of risk and a governmentality approach hold weight in maintaining scholarly integrity through *security as practice*. They also hold weight in revealing what is missed in the shortcomings of the Copenhagen School and IPS both pragmatically and in terms of their crisis of methodology.

Conclusion

If we understand the purpose of critical security theory to be distinct from problem solving theory and to be about problematizing security/(in)security and understanding how it is conceived in the first place,¹²⁹ then it is important to

¹²⁸ Petersen, "Risk Analysis - A Field within Security Studies?," 708.

¹²⁹ Aradau et al., "Introducing Critical Security Methods," 6.

understand why the practice of security functions the way it does. If we can conclude that risks are distinct from threats and that the major component of practice in security is risk-based, featuring certain levels of uncertainty, probability, calculability, engagement with the future, prevention, and mitigating the (unknown) unknown, then it follows that security scholarship should logically be engaged very heavily with risk. Risk itself is a mode of governance that operates in the name of security. I argue that since many of our theoretical models for understanding security focus on threats and do not take into account risk and its many implications, then they are insufficient in their analysis.

Examples of these theories include the Copenhagen School and International Political Sociology. Both the Copenhagen School and International Political Sociology are deeply ingrained in the critical tradition but the Copenhagen School still functions in terms of threats and IPS considers risks too peripherally. The Copenhagen School runs into challenges with risk when it focuses on how security issues are brought to the forefront. This in itself is not problematic, but the focus on threats rather than risk puts the focus on the wrong subject. It can make important discursive claims but it still creates a disconnect between theory and the actual practices of security it claims to analyze. International Political Sociology runs into similar problems because in analyzing the field of security actors, much is obscured in terms of the effects of governance without inquiry into uncertainty, catastrophe, and risk as a central object of study. The governmentality approach to risk, involving a *dispositif*, is a useful tool for understanding how risk operates in contemporary security practices. The *dispositif* brings risk to the forefront of analysis and can

explain many parts of security practice that the Copenhagen School and IPS render invisible.

An important example of this is the practice of carding by the Toronto Police Service, something that is very much in the public eye currently. I argue that carding is a practice of risk management that can be analyzed through the *dispositif* and demonstrate many of the challenges of the Copenhagen School and IPS. With this example in mind and an understanding of the shortcomings, it is important to understand what this means not only for the products of research but how research is done.

This has implications both for the results of research and theoretical conclusions as well as creating a larger distinction between the conclusions of scholars and the practice of security actors and the discourse they produce. It also has significant implications for methodology. If the goal of methodology in contemporary writings on critical security studies is to engage with *security as practice*, then thinking in terms of threats when risk is the practice, creates a crisis of methodology and prevents *security as practice* from being properly realized. By suggesting a governmentality-based approach that uses a *dispositif* of risk to help understand structures of power, knowledge, and control related to risk and the management of (in)security, there may be space to move forward and solve each of these crises. Perhaps, further, a call for a multi-theoretical, plural approach that combines theoretical approaches and integrates risk across them is an important direction to explore in the future.

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