

## **SECURITY AND RISK. HOW WE HAVE LEARNED TO LIVE WITH DYSTOPIAN, UTOPIAN, AND TECHNOCRATIC DIAGNOSES OF SECURITY SINCE THE 1970s**

*SEGURIDAD Y RIESGO. CÓMO HEMOS APRENDIDO A  
VIVIR CON LOS DIAGNÓSTICOS DISTÓPICOS, UTÓPICOS  
Y TECNOCRÁTICOS DE LA SEGURIDAD DESDE LOS AÑOS  
1970*

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### **Abstract**

This essay starts with the observation that issues of security, safety and risk became highly controversial political topics in the 1970s and 1980s. This is particularly true with respect to West Germany, where one can distinguish a broad and very diverse range of political debates concerning security and safety “gaps” in fields like social and military security, ecology, plant safety, and, with respect to left-wing terrorism, also domestic security. Parallel to these political debates, a vast range of academic and intellectual efforts evolved to conceptualise the ongoing transformation of society and politics by the new issues of security. They range from modernization theory to ideas of newly emerging risk or surveillance societies. These intellectual debates are linked to various strands of social and political movements, both on the left and the right, which more often than not challenged social-democratic and reformist ideas of the Modell Deutschland with its emphasis on security. Debating security and risk went hand in hand with efforts not only to shape actively but also to describe modern societies. Thus the evolving technocratic, utopian, and dystopian models of risk societies are of particular interest.

**Keywords:** Security, Risk, Surveillance Society, Modernization Theory, 1970s, Germany.

### Resumen

Este ensayo comienza con la observación de que las cuestiones de seguridad y el riesgo se convirtieron en temas políticos muy controvertidos en los años 1970 y 1980. Esto es particularmente cierto con respecto a Alemania Occidental, donde se puede distinguir una amplia y muy diversa gama de debates políticos relativos a las “brechas” de seguridad y vigilancia en campos como la seguridad social y militar, la ecología, con respecto al terrorismo de izquierda y también la seguridad nacional. Paralelamente a estos debates políticos, una amplia gama de esfuerzos académicos e intelectuales evolucionó para conceptualizar la transformación de la sociedad y los nuevos temas de la política y de la seguridad. Estas cubrían desde la teoría de la modernización a las ideas de las sociedades de riesgo o de vigilancia, de reciente aparición. Estos debates intelectuales están vinculados a distintos aspectos de los movimientos sociales y políticos, tanto de la izquierda, como de la derecha, que a menudo no desafiaron las ideas socialdemócratas y reformistas del *Modell Deutschland*, con su énfasis en la seguridad. Los debates sobre la seguridad y el riesgo iban de la mano con los esfuerzos para dar forma activa y describir las sociedades modernas. Así, son de particular interés, la evolución tecnocrática, los modelos distópicos y utópicos de las sociedades de riesgo.

**Palabras clave:** Seguridad, riesgo, sociedad de la vigilancia, teoría de la modernización, 1970s, Alemania.

### INTRODUCTION

In the words of the German political scientist Christopher Daase, “security” is not only a “major concept of value for modern –and postmodern– society”; it has actually developed into the “gold standard of all things political”<sup>1</sup>. Debates on (in)security and risks dominate day-to-day political topics, be it in the area of social, internal, or nuclear security, of disaster management or fire protection regulations. An ever-increasing number of scientific studies simultaneously satisfy and create an insatiable demand for analyses on security and risk in nearly all areas of economics, politics, and society. Their diagnoses identify and evaluate specific dangers and risks and thereby often evoke new scenarios of ubiquitous dangers and risks. This is certainly not a new observa-

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<sup>1</sup> Daase, Christopher, “Wandel der Sicherheitskultur – Ursachen und Folgen des erweiterten Sicherheitsbegriffs”. Peter Zoche *et al.* (eds.). *Zivile Sicherheit. Gesellschaftliche Dimensionen gegenwärtiger Sicherheitspolitik*. Bielefeld. Transcript Verlag. 2010. p. 139; similarly, Conze, Eckart, “Sicherheit als Kultur. Überlegungen zu einer ‘modernen Politikgeschichte’ der Bundesrepublik Deutschland”. *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*. Vol. 53. 2005. p. 357-380.

tion with regard to either scientific theory in general or the field of security in particular. Already many years ago, the German sociologist Niklas Luhmann argued along similar lines to refute those experts in the field who promised simple solutions to security issues: “The terminology constitutes that about which is spoken.” Consequently, promises of security imply ever new forms of insecurities and risks: it is, if not a “social fiction” (Luhmann), then a “construct” (Münchener Rückversicherung)<sup>2</sup>. A group of scholars working in the field of international politics associated with the political scientist Ole Wæver that is now known as the “Copenhagen School” places a somewhat different emphasis on the topic. This group of scientists examines performative phrases that actors use in a clearly discernible way to put security and risk issues on the agenda of various policy fields: within the realm of national security policy, a state of emergency and exception is evoked from which a need for action is derived – action that is to be implemented by way of supposedly nonpolitical and fact-based decisionism. Also from the viewpoint of this group, dangers, risks, and security may not only be “real” but also socially and discursively constructed and arise in the form of a specific societal communication of risk. Accordingly, debates on security require a receptive public. This group of scholars highlights the idea that discourses on security in areas such as international politics, economics, and environmental policy interlace and mutually strengthen each other<sup>3</sup>. This applies not the least for certain regions and societies and has far-reaching implications for the development of national and international “security cultures”<sup>4</sup>.

Security and risk are by no means strictly present-day topics and phenomena. Recent language used in connection with security incorporates earlier semantics of “calm and public order” as well as the semantics of peace and the welfare state<sup>5</sup>. The American “national security state” has always included ques-

<sup>2</sup> Luhmann, Niklas, *Risiko und Gefahr*. St. Gallen, 1990, p. 14 and 37; Münchener Rückversicherung (ed.), *Risiko ist ein Konstrukt: Wahrnehmungen zur Risikowahrnehmung*. Munich, 1993; Bonß, Wolfgang, *Vom Risiko. Unsicherheit und Ungewißheit in der Moderne*. Hamburg, Hamburger Edition, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Wæver, Ole, “Securitization and Desecuritization”. Ronnie D. Lipschutz (ed.). *On Security*. New York, 1995. p. 46-86; Wæver, Ole et al., *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Daase, Christopher et al. (eds.), *Sicherheitskultur. Soziale und politische Praktiken der Gefahrenabwehr*. Frankfurt/M, Campus Verlag, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Daase, “Wandel der Sicherheitskultur – Ursachen und Folgen des erweiterten Sicherheitsbegriffs”, p. 139; Nehring, Holger, *The Politics of Security. British and West German Protest Movements and the Early Cold War, 1945-1970*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013; Conze, “Sicherheit als Kultur. Überlegungen zu einer ‘modernen Politikgeschichte’ der Bundesrepublik Deutschland”, p. 484; Sherry, Michael S., *In the Shadow of War. The United States since the 1930s*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1995; Saupe, Achim, “Von, ‘Ruhe und

tions concerning social and economic security since the late 1930s<sup>6</sup>. This said, this essay starts with the observation that, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, issues of security and risk arose to become not only a new guiding concept for political action but also a highly controversial topic in the academic community, especially in West Germany, the country this essay looks at in particular. The questions addressed will explore, for one, the origins of the great contemporary interest in the topic of security starting in the second half of the 1970s and, for another, what it means that scholars treated this topic from the beginning in the context of debates on theories on modernization and modernity. I will start out by exploring the debate on “gaps,” a term prevalent in the public policy debates in West Germany during the 1970s and one closely linked to the guarantee of comprehensive security to be provided by the state. This is then followed by several thoughts on the semantic peculiarities of the German word *Sicherheit*, which point both to nationally specific dimensions as well as to several general developments in the more recent trans- and international debates on security and risk. The solution for security issues played a prominent role in the political catchword *Modell Deutschland*. In this essay, I interpret it as part of a –often diffuse– theoretical and practical paradigm of modernization and reform, whose real or supposed “crises” became the starting point for theoretical criticism and reflections on security, risk, and modernity. Why was the term modernity substituted in this context for the term modernization? What nationally specific peculiarities thus became evident?<sup>7</sup> The discussions presented here on “new” (in)securities, risks, and uncertainties were not limited to the intrinsic logic of academic controversies; as will be argued, they were rooted in social movements and political, social, and economic institutions. Criticism, crisis diagnoses, and thus theory and social practice were tightly interlaced and their mutual reinforcement makes it difficult to untangle them<sup>8</sup>. It is against this

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Ordnung’ zur inneren Sicherheit’. Eine Historisierung gesellschaftlicher Dispositive”. *Zeit-historische Forschungen /Studies in Contemporary History*. Vol. 7. 2010. p. 170-19.

<sup>6</sup> Ewald, François, *Der Vorsorgestaat. Mit einem Essay von Ulrich Beck*. Frankfurt/M, Suhrkamp, 1993; Borscheid, Peter, *Sicherheit in der Risikogesellschaft. Zwei Versicherungen und ihre Geschichte*. Stuttgart, Deutscher Sparkassenverlag, 1999; Moss, David A., *When All Else Fails. Government as the Ultimate Risk Manager*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2002.

<sup>7</sup> Although with another emphasis, see Wagner, Peter, *Modernity: Understanding the Present*. Cambridge, Polity, 2012; Dipper, Christof, “Die deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft und die Moderne”. *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte und Literatur*. Vol. 37. 2012. p. 37-62.

<sup>8</sup> Here I take up ideas presented earlier in Geyer, Martin H., “War over Words: The Search for a Public Language in West Germany”. Steinmetz, Willibald (ed.). *Political Languages in the Age of Extremes*. Oxford. Oxford University Press. 2011. p. 293-330; Geyer, Martin H., “Politische Sprachkritik und Krisendiskurse in den 1970er Jahren”. Thomas Mergel (ed.). *Krisen verstehen. Historische und kulturwissenschaftliche Annäherungen*. Frankfurt/M. Campus

backdrop that this essay describes, on the one hand, the paradigmatic dystopian, utopian, and technocratic diagnoses of security and risk and, on the other, the debates on modernity, which –as it is argued here– significantly shape our current debates, not just in Germany.

### “GAPS”, PREVENTION, AND THE SPREAD OF RISK DEBATES

In 1977, the economist John K. Galbraith published what would become a widely translated book titled *The Age of Uncertainty*<sup>9</sup>. His choice of this title reflected a pervasive feeling that the times were experiencing dramatic change. This was not limited to economic life, where the oil crisis of 1973/74, (stag) inflation, unemployment, and growing public deficits could be felt in almost all countries outside the communist orbit; more often than not, these phenomena could only rather insufficiently be explained by established scientific explanatory models, as the die-hard Keynesian Galbraith was forced to admit. In addition to economic problems, he also stated that international terrorism, environmental hazards, nuclear energy risks, and the classic field of national (military) security would pose new challenges in the future. Such changes were observed by many contemporaries and, in turn, were to become depicted in historiography as the end of the “golden age” (Eric Hobsbawm) and the “social democratic consensus” (Ralf Dahrendorf/Tony Judt), or as the demise of security and optimism about the future in the “period after the boom” (Anselm Doering-Manteuffel/Lutz Raphael)<sup>10</sup>.

One way in which these changes were simultaneously debated in various West German policy fields was in terms of *Lücken*, meaning gaps, shortages, and deficits<sup>11</sup>. It is no accident that many depictions of the “crisis-ridden” 1970s identify the oil crisis as the beginning of the troubles. After all, wasn’t the Western model of growth and prosperity threatened by the emerging *Energielücke*, namely by the fact that the plentiful flow of cheap oil could be permanently interrupted? Issues concerning the supply of energy became a matter of “national security”. The report of the Club of Rome on the limitation of national

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Verlag. 2012. p. 257-274; on social practice, see Reckwitz, Andreas, “Grundelemente einer Theorie sozialer Praktiken. Eine sozialtheoretische Perspektive”. *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*. Vol. 32. 2003. p. 282-301; Reichardt, Sven, “Praxeologische Geschichtswissenschaft. Eine Diskussionsanregung”. *Sozial.Geschichte*. Vol. 22. 2007. p. 43-65.

<sup>9</sup> Galbraith, John Kenneth, *The Age of Uncertainty*. London, Houghton Mifflin, 1977.

<sup>10</sup> See also Geyer, Martin H., “Auf der Suche nach der Gegenwart. Neuere Forschung zu den 1970er und 1980er Jahren”. *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*. Vol. 50. 2010. p. 643-670.

<sup>11</sup> In the following, I draw on Geyer, Martin H. (ed.), *Geschichte der Sozialpolitik in Deutschland seit 1945*. Vol. 6. *Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1974-1982. Neue Herausforderungen, wachsende Unsicherheiten*. Baden-Baden, Nomos Verlag, 2008.

resources, which had been published shortly beforehand, set a new, more or less pessimistic tone, also because observers dramatized both the gaps that were to be expected in the future and the possible crises, if not catastrophes linked to them<sup>12</sup>.

Following the first oil crises of 1973 and the second of 1979/80 came, timelagged, recessions that quickly –and permanently– put the topics of *Wachstumslücken* (gaps in economic growth), *Beschäftigungslücken* (unemployment), and *Haushaltslücken* (huge public deficits) on the public agenda. The costs of social entitlements rose rapidly, especially in the public pension and health insurance systems, where a “gap” between revenue and expenditures became blatantly evident in the winter of 1976/77. This particular gap was an embarrassment to the social-liberal government since the SPD had campaigned throughout the preceding federal election that social security contributions would remain stable and that pensions were “safe”<sup>13</sup>. Pensions were just one field in which the controversial question was raised whether the public’s expectations (as measured by public opinion pollsters) concerning the performance of the economy and the government, particularly the social state, would eventually manifest itself in *Erwartungslücken* (gaps between expectations and reality) and a fundamental *Vertrauenslücke* (gap of trust). Catastrophic scenarios were presented depicting *Staatsversagens* (a failure of the state) and an alleged *Legitimationskrisen des Wohlfahrtsstaats* (a crisis of legitimation for the welfare state); such discussions were jumpstarted by similar debates in the United States and came into full swing in West Germany in 1976/77<sup>14</sup>.

It is important to keep in mind, that these debates on economic issues were mirrored in other areas. One such area was that of domestic security, in which the talk revolved around *Sicherheitslücken*, security gaps, that became evident in connection with the threat posed by terrorism. In the early 1970s, the

<sup>12</sup> Graf, Rüdiger, “Between National and Human Security. Energy Security in the United States and Western Europe in the 1970s”. Cornel Zwielerlein and Rüdiger Graf (eds.). *The Production of Human Security in Premodern and Contemporary History*. Cologne. 2010. p. 329-350; Seefried, Elke, ‘Zukünfte’. *Eine Geschichte der Zukunftsforschung 1945-1980*. Munich, (forthcoming 2014/15).

<sup>13</sup> Schmähl, Winfried, “Sicherheit bei Alter, Invalidität und für Hinterbliebene”. Martin H. Geyer (ed.). *Geschichte der Sozialpolitik in Deutschland seit 1945*. Vol. 6. *Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1974-1982. Neue Herausforderungen, wachsende Unsicherheiten*. Baden-Baden. Nomos Verlag. 2008. p. 393-514.

<sup>14</sup> Hennis, Wilhelm et al. (eds.), *Regierbarkeit. Studien zu ihrer Problematisierung*. Vol. 2. Stuttgart, 1977; Hacke, Jens, “Der Staat in Gefahr. Die Bundesrepublik der 1970er Jahre zwischen Legitimationskrise und Unregierbarkeit”. Dominik Geppert and Jens Hacke (eds.). *Streit um den Staat. Intellektuelle Debatten in der Bundesrepublik 1960-1980*. Göttingen. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. 2008. p. 188-206.

sociologist Franz-Xaver Kaufmann could still write that those aspects of security pertaining to the realm of policing had been solved, by and large<sup>15</sup>. The attack of Palestinian terrorists at the Munich Olympic Games of 1972 and the awareness that the Baader-Meinhoff group and their followers were linked, if only loosely, to international terrorist networks in Italy, Northern Ireland, and the Near East, raised the issue of domestic or homeland security<sup>16</sup>. Whereas some critics, among them most pronouncedly conservative ones, attacked what they saw as the “gaps” in domestic security – gaps that would cost lives because of “gaps in personal protection” – and the failure of public authorities to react, others criticized the risks caused by the expansion of the *Sicherheitsstaat*, the security state<sup>17</sup>.

Just as ambivalent sounded the controversy over *Sicherheitslücken*, “safety gaps”, in the area of major technical plants, specifically nuclear reactors and chemical plants, and the potential risks they posed to human health and the environment. Were the guarantees given by technical experts and politicians credible? Were the risks and consequences of highly complex technologies truly calculable and controllable? Such critical questions pushed the topic of industrial and nuclear risks onto the political agenda. There was another side to this rising tide of antinuclear activism. Police, security agencies, and many onlookers considered the proponents themselves of such political and social activism as posing potential “security risks” through their blockades of nuclear reactors and military bases. This illustrates the entire polysemy of the security and risk discourse. Moreover, one “gap” could be played against another. Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, a social democrat, never tired of pointing out that the civilian use of nuclear power needed to be sped up in order to prevent an “energy gap” in the near and far future which might threaten Germany’s economic and welfare growth. Likewise the chancellor argued that the military

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<sup>15</sup> Kaufmann, Franz-Xaver, *Sicherheit als soziologisches und sozialpolitisches Problem. Untersuchungen zu einer Wertidee hochdifferenzierter Gesellschaften*. Stuttgart, 1973, p. 71.

<sup>16</sup> Schenk, Dieter, *Der Chef. Horst Herold und das BKA*. Hamburg, Spiegel-Buchverlag, 1998; Bull, Hans Peter, “Politik der inneren Sicherheit vor einem mißtrauisch gewordenen Publikum”. *Leviathan*. N° 12. 1984. p. 155-178; Jaschke, Hans-Gerhard, *Streitbare Demokratie und innere Sicherheit. Grundlagen, Praxis und Kritik*. Opladen, VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1991; Kunz, Thomas, *Der Sicherheitsdiskurs. Die Innere Sicherheitspolitik und ihre Kritik*. Bielefeld, Transcript, 2005.

<sup>17</sup> Bergstermann, Sabine, *Terrorismus, Recht und Freiheit. Die JVA Stuttgart-Stammheim als Ort der Auseinandersetzung zwischen Staat und RAF*. PhD thesis Munich 2012, (forthcoming 2014/15); Richter, Maren, *Leben im Ausnahmezustand. Terrorismus und moderner Personenschutz 1970 bis 1993 in der Bundesrepublik*. Frankfurt/M, Campus Verlag, 2014.

“security and missile gap”, caused by the Soviet stationing of rockets, required the stationing by NATO of middle-range missiles in Europe<sup>18</sup>.

There existed numerous other debates that revolved around “gaps”, among them the one on the *Geburtenlücke*, the birth gap, as measured by the long evident decline of the birth rate and thus the coinciding increase in the surplus of deaths over births in West Germany since 1972/73. References to the “*ausgefallenen Generation[en]*”<sup>19</sup>, the missing generations, implied far more than prosaic statistical trends. Starting in the second half of the 1970s, this debate played an ever more prominent role in various other debates on social and economic policy. These new demographic arguments linked together various other topics, such as the emerging one on *Rentenlücke*, pension gaps, and also the economic *Wachstumsücke*, the growth deficit<sup>20</sup>.

#### GAPS: THE RISKS OF THE FUTURE

Despite all the differences in emphasis and focus, the various gap-diagnoses at the time did have quite a few things in common. First, spokespeople addressed the discrepancy between the erstwhile predictions and seemingly well-established assumptions regarding the future, on one side, and the actual new developments looming on the horizon, on the other. Many of these assumptions turned out to be “illusionary”, especially after the 1975 recession. Much of what had been considered “doable” and “feasible” until then, not the least thanks to high economic growth rates, proved now to be unrealistic, even “utopian”. The future became “insecure” and “uncertain”; earlier plans needed to be readjusted and adapted to the present. Often there was talk about a loss of optimistic expectations for the future, specifically for a “better future” that was usually understood as a linear improvement of the present<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> Nowotny, Helga, *Kernenergie: Gefahr oder Notwendigkeit. Anatomie eines Konflikts*. Frankfurt/M, Suhrkamp, 1979; Lau, Christoph, “Risikodiskurse – Gesellschaftliche Auseinandersetzungen um die Definition von Risiken”. *Soziale Welt*. Vol. 40. 1989. p. 374-396; Haftendorn, Helga, *Sicherheit und Stabilität. Außenbeziehungen der Bundesrepublik zwischen Ölkrise und NATO-Doppelbeschluß*. Munich, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1986; Risse-Kappen, Thomas, *Die Krise der Sicherheitspolitik. Neuorientierungen und Entscheidungsprozesse im politischen System der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1977-1984*. Mainz, Oldenbourg Verlag, 1988.

<sup>19</sup> Birg, Herwig, *Die ausgefallene Generation: Was die Demographie über unsere Zukunft sagt*. Munich, C.H.Beck, 2005.

<sup>20</sup> Geyer, Martin H., “‘Gaps’ and the (Re-)Invention of the Future. Social and Demographic Policy in Germany during the 1970s and 1980s” (to appear in *Social Science History* 2014/15).

<sup>21</sup> This topic is addressed often in the literature and almost as a cliché in Ruck, Michael, “Ein kurzer Sommer der konkreten Utopie – Zur westdeutschen Planungsgeschichte der langen



Second, the diagnosed “gaps” identified a strange void between what was no longer and what did not yet exist: a state of transition, of liminality, even a latent state of exception, in which – stated pointedly – the laws, theories and expectations of the past no longer functioned or at least were no longer adequate to explain the present situation. In other words, gaps dominated the new social and economic *Erfahrungsraum* (space of experience) and questioned existing and only slowly changing *Erwartungshorizonte* (horizons of expectations), including established assumptions regarding the future. It is no accident that these two terms, coined by Reinhart Koselleck in 1976 (but not with the present in mind), should so successfully persevere in academic debate up to the present day<sup>22</sup>. They concealed a more or less distinct political and scientific skepticism that spread throughout the second half of the 1970s and permanently entrenched itself in West Germany, perhaps more than in other countries. From the discrepancy between spaces of experience and horizons of expectations resulted the gaps in expectation and the alleged crisis of legitimation discussed in numerous diagnoses – for the time at hand and even more so for the anticipated future, both near and distant.

Third, the various diagnoses of gaps called for practical action. It was in this context that risk discourses emerged and quickly spread, starting in the mid-1970s. Certain terms corresponded to one another: *risk and security*, *risk and insecurity*, *risk and uncertainty*. Actors questioned, deconstructed, and fundamentally redefined real or assumed certainties using the topos risk in areas ranging from reactor safety and domestic security to the certainty of economic prognoses. In principle, this is not a new phenomenon. However, what makes this notable here is the backdrop against which it occurred, namely against the preceding assumptions in politics and science that it was possible to minimize risk, if not even eradicate it altogether, with the proper care and planning.

This indicates, fourth, that whoever brought up the topic of “gaps” simulta-

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60er Jahre”. Axel Schildt *et al.* (eds.). *Dynamische Zeiten. Die 60er Jahre in den beiden deutschen Gesellschaften*. Hamburg. Christians. 2010. p. 362-401; among others, see Metzler, Gabriele, *Konzeptionen politischen Handelns von Adenauer bis Brandt. Politische Planung in der pluralistischen Gesellschaft*. Paderborn, Schöningh, 2005; Seefried, ‘Zukünfte’. *Eine Geschichte der Zukunftsforschung 1945-1980*.

<sup>22</sup> Koselleck, Reinhart, “Erfahrungsraum` und `Erwartungshorizont` – Zwei historische Kategorien”. Reinhart Koselleck (ed.). *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*. Frankfurt/M. Suhrkamp Verlag. 1989. p. 349-375; at least as important as the experience of the 1970s is the rekindling of the controversy over the “defeat” of 1945, which started not by accident in the mid-1970s, see Geyer, Martin H., “Am Anfang war... Die Niederlage. Die Anfänge der bundesdeutschen Moderne nach 1945”. Inka Mülder-Bach and Eckhard Schumacher (eds.). *Am Anfang war... Ursprungsfiguren und Anfangskonstruktionen der Moderne*. Munich. Fink Wilhelm. 2008. p. 279-306.

neously called into question widespread expectations regarding the present and the future. This was a crucial shift. It gave the risky near or distant future –or better, what was predicted as risky– a strong veto power over actions and policies in the present<sup>23</sup>. Such not the least rhetorical operations went hand in hand with the dramatization of all sorts of risks. In a subtle way, assumed future risks colonized the present and asserted preventative maxims for action.<sup>24</sup> This might include the shutting down of nuclear reactors as a preventative measure to protect against “incalculable security gaps” (risks) that they entailed. Another example of the colonization of the present by the future was the “demographic gap”, namely the bleak consequences for an apparently distant future with regard to both the Germans as a people and the country’s social (insurance) policy. The “demographic gap” acted as a veto against both past and present pension policy, and this veto conjoined with alarmist demands for a change of the regime of social policy (such as through privatization or by changing the financing process) and to bring about, for example, the development of new family policy measures. The risks of the future called for comprehensive preventive measures<sup>25</sup>.

Last but not least, methodological and theoretical reflections make up a remarkable fifth commonality in the context of all of these changes. “Gaps” underscored the power of (also at the time) newly “discovered” (historical) contingency: coincidence and accident as moments of all things unexpected, incalculable, and rule-breaking. This made the central premises even of major theories, including both liberal and Marxist theories of modernization, questionable and challengeable<sup>26</sup>. This was accompanied by a call to reformulate existing theoretical knowledge. In fact, we can observe an explosion of (post) modern debates –not only on risk– occurring concurrently with this new perception of contingency. Processes of “modernization” in the various different areas of public life appeared not only questionable and disputable, but often as the signum of the past, of a bygone epoch or era. This was clearly expressed in new concepts of a “first”, “classic”, and “industrial” modernity that suddenly

<sup>23</sup> On this, see also Opitz, Sven and Ute Tellmann, “Katastrophale Szenarien. Gegenwärtige Zukunft in Recht und Ökonomie”. Leon Hempel *et al.* (eds.). *Sichtbarkeitsregime. Überwachung, Sicherheit und Privatheit im 21. Jahrhundert*. Wiesbaden. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften. 2011. p. 27-52; Geyer, “Gaps’ and the (Re-)Invention of the Future”.

<sup>24</sup> Bröckling, Ulrich, “Dispositive der Vorbeugung: Gefahrenabwehr, Resilienz, Precaution”. Christopher Daase *et al.* (eds.). *Sicherheitskultur. Soziale und politische Praktiken der Gefahrenabwehr*. Frankfurt/M. Campus Verlag. 2012. p. 44-93.

<sup>25</sup> See the contribution by Ulrich Bröckling in this essay.

<sup>26</sup> Graevenitz, Gerhart *et al.* (eds.), *Kontingenz*. Munich, 1998; Knöbl, Wolfgang, *Kontingenz der Moderne. Wege in Europa, Asien und Amerika*. Frankfurt/M., Campus Verlag, 2007, p. 169-207.

cropped up everywhere; crude as some of them were, they cleared the way for what become conceived a new “second”, “postmodern”, or “postindustrial” modernity<sup>27</sup>.

### **“GERMAN ANGST” AND THE SEMANTICS OF *SICHERHEIT***

As “real” as most of these gaps were in many instances, they only became public issues because of the new societal discourse on security and risk. The new social movements scandalized the technological risks of nuclear energy, asbestos or chemical production. However, important as it is, this is only part of the story. The new risk debates in the areas of economic and social policies, as well as domestic security, indicate that other, completely different actors were also contributing at the time to the outburst of talk about risk and security. One good example is the conservative Bavarian minister president Franz-Josef Strauss, who dramatized in his famous Sonthofen speech in 1974 an immanent catastrophe facing West Germany in nearly all areas and by urging his party to make “insecurity” the major theme in the upcoming election campaigns, as did others in the CDU/CSU. The theme of insecurity pertained not simply to the challenge of coping with terrorism, for which Strauss (and others) blamed the social-liberal government, but also to social security pensions, state finances, and particularly inflation. In turn, Social Democrats branded the CSU aspirant for the chancellorship, Strauss, as a “security risk” to German democracy, which was also a way to pay back the accusation made not only by Strauss that the political left in general posed a risk to domestic security<sup>28</sup>. The conservative opposition and the new social movements attacked the social-liberal coalition government wherever it used its security guarantees (to which we will return) to score points with voters. The point is that, at the time, “security” embedded itself as a hotly contested political term into the political conflict over the use of language and terminology<sup>29</sup>.

This entanglement of different security and risk discourses fit well into the foreign perception of Germans and Germany as a people and a country driven by angst, particularly in the late 1970s and early 1980s: angst about an atomic meltdown, nuclear war, the reduction of pensions and retirement benefits, in-

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<sup>27</sup> See the contribution by Steffen Henne in this essay.

<sup>28</sup> Geyer, *Geschichte der Sozialpolitik in Deutschland seit 1945*, p. 39-42; Mergel, Thomas, *Propaganda nach Hitler. Eine Kulturgeschichte des Wahlkampfes in der Bundesrepublik 1949-1990*. Göttingen, Wallstein, 2010, p. 257-281.

<sup>29</sup> Geyer, “War over Words: The Search for a Public Language in West Germany”; Geyer, “Politische Sprachkritik und Krisendiskurse in den 1970er Jahren”.

flation, dying forests, social and political unrest in Poland, communists, the 1983 national census – angst about nearly everything and everyone. Some in the US administration were convinced that Helmut Schmidt was also driven by “fears” and by the very “German anxiety” that the chancellor decried in others so often. “German angst” became a catchword abroad<sup>30</sup>.

As divergent and polyphone as the talk about angst, (in)security, and risks might have been, it was precisely this divergence that amplified it. This can be attributed to the semantics of security in the German language<sup>31</sup>. The German word *Sicherheit* has a far broader meaning than the English word “security”. *Sicherheit* combines under a single semantic umbrella issues that the English language tends to keep separate. First of all, *Sicherheit* includes the broad field of safety, meaning protection against bodily harm, the protection of life and property in whatever form. Thus, in the internal operation of an economic enterprise, safety denotes the measures and policies aimed at reducing the risk of danger. In an airline company, for example, this involves the upkeep and inspection of airplanes and procedures designed to prevent accidents. For the industry as a whole, it means taking measures to ensure the smooth running of international air traffic. The English word “security”, which – tellingly – is now often used also in German, applies to the dangers threatening operations from the outside, dangers that are intentional, not accidental, such as the hijacking of an airplane. The dramatic increase in hijacking in the 1960s actually inaugurated the dynamically expanding field of security in the airline industry. Analogous to this in the field of nuclear energy, starting in the 1970s, were the debates about “safety risks” (and the need for protection against radiation leaks) and “security gaps” (and the need for protection against terrorist attacks)<sup>32</sup>.

However, *Sicherheit* can also mean “certainty” in the sense of dependability and a reliance on the permanence of rules and values. In turn, *Unsicherheit*

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<sup>30</sup> For critical evaluation of German angst by foreign observers, see Zapf, Wolfgang, *Lebensbedingungen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Sozialer Wandel und Wohlfahrtsentwicklung*. Frankfurt/M., Campus, 1977, p. 5-10; Bracher, Karl Dietrich, *Die deutsche Diktatur. Entstehung, Struktur, Folgen des Nationalsozialismus*. Frankfurt/M, Ullstein Taschenbuchvlg, 1976, p. 352; Wiegrefe, Klaus, *Das Zerwürfnis. Helmut Schmidt, Jimmy Carter und die Krise der deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen*. Berlin, Propyläen, 2005, p. 380; Kuby, Erich, *Die Deutsche Angst. Zur Rechtsdrift in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. Berlin, Scherz Verlag Bern, 1970; on dealing with angst in the area of personal protection, see Richter, *Leben im Ausnahmezustand*.

<sup>31</sup> See also Bonß, Wolfgang, “(Un-)Sicherheit in der Moderne”; Peter Zoche *et al.* (eds.). *Zivile Sicherheit. Gesellschaftliche Dimensionen gegenwärtiger Sicherheitspolitiken*. Bielefeld, Transcript Verlag, 2011. p. 44-47.

<sup>32</sup> Yonah, Alexander and Euegen Sochor, *Aerial Piracy and Aviation Security*. Dordrecht, BRILL, 1990.

corresponds to the English word “uncertainty”, meaning a loss of trust in a situation. This is, first, a loss of trust in the permanence of rules, values, and statements, and –thus closely linked to it– in the value of scientific explanations, be it Keynesianism, modernization theories, or scientific-technical risk analyses. Second, this implies a loss of trust in persons and institutions assumed to hold authority. Uncertainty is the mother of doubt, concern, uneasiness, and mistrust<sup>33</sup>. The coalescence of the English terms “(in)security”, “safety”, and “(un)certainly” into the single German word (*Un*)*Sicherheit* points to national specifics regarding the new reality of risks in West Germany starting in the 1970s.

### **SICHERHEIT AND THE MODELL DEUTSCHLAND**

With all this talk about security, were Germans just playing it safe? Certainly in soccer the defensive strategy of *Sicherheitsfußball* (and its first generation of true soccer millionaires in the 1970s) had helped the German national team win the World Cup in 1974. Whether this soccer strategy reflected a German obsession with security in everyday life is certainly debatable and, like many political analogies in the world of sports, rather facile. However, it definitely illustrates the semantic flexibility of the German word *Sicherheit*.

On the real playing field of politics, we find that Willy Brandt had been open to experimentation –“dare democracy” was the slogan of the 1969 election– yet *Sicherheit* definitely seemed to triumph under his successor Helmut Schmidt<sup>34</sup>. On various playing fields in national and international politics, the new chancellor Schmidt took on the position of “crisis manager”. This was immediately evident in energy and economic policy and in his resolution not to give in to terrorists. Part of his trademark politics was a pessimistic evaluation of the global economy, namely his warning in the mid-1970s that the world was teetering on the edge of a global economic crisis, one whose magnitude would match that of the Great Depression in the early 1930s<sup>35</sup>. Schmidt and his government were under heavy fire from the opposition, regardless if the issue was combating terrorism and correcting budgetary imbalances or problems of economic growth. Yet, like few others, Schmidt was a master the rhetoric of *Lücken* –gaps– be they in energy, investment, or public trust. His pessimisti-

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<sup>33</sup> Dosse, Francois, *Geschichte des Strukturalismus*. Vol. 2. *Die Zeichen der Zeit 1967-1991*. Hamburg, Junius, 1996/97.

<sup>34</sup> Seitz, Norbert, *Bananenrepublik und Gurkentruppe. Die nahtlose Übereinstimmung von Fußball und Politik 1954-1987*. Frankfurt/M, Eichborn, 1987, p. 78-111.

<sup>35</sup> On this and the debate over economic policy as security policy, see Böhm, Enrico, *Die Sicherheit des Westens. Entstehung und Funktion der G7-Gipfel (1975-1981)*. Munich, Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2014, p. 277-289.

cally imbued undertone and his insistence on the “tyranny of circumstances” (as the German translation of the above-mentioned book by Galbraith was tellingly titled), which was used by his government to block exaggerated expectations for the future, irritated not only Schmidt’s fellow social democrats but also many of his international counterparts and partners, who might have had far more reason for such pessimism<sup>36</sup>.

In Schmidt’s public image, the ability to “manage” new risks was a badge of efficiency and a certification of a “modern Germany”. In the federal elections of 1976, the SPD attempted to market this success story as the *Modell Deutschland* (Model Germany) and simultaneously pull the rug from underneath the opposition’s plans to present itself as having greater competence in the broad field of security policy. From the standpoint of the social-liberal coalition government, the handling of the recent crises was a political success story, in which the relatively small number of industrial conflicts, the increasing standard of living, and the German reaction to inflation, unemployment, and recession during such uncertain times also played a key role<sup>37</sup>.

Politics for Schmidt was about coping with new risks and insecurity, both at home and in international politics. This becomes particularly evident in his Alastair Buchan Memorial Lecture at the London Institute for International Strategic Studies in 1977. His key message was that “the economic, the social, and the international aspects of Western security” had taken on a new dimension as a result of the oil crises, the phasing out of the Bretton Woods currency system, worldwide inflation, unemployment, and the low rates of economic growth. With respect to “economic security”, he maintained that it was necessary “to safeguard the basis of our prosperity” and especially “to safeguard free trade, access to energy and to raw materials, also a monetary system which assists us in reaching those targets”. This was, as he emphasized, no less important than “social security”, which for him meant “the necessity to achieve and maintain

<sup>36</sup> Geyer, *Geschichte der Sozialpolitik in Deutschland seit 1945*, p. 49-58; Haftendorn, *Sicherheit und Stabilität*; Rebentisch, Dieter, “Gipfeldiplomatie und Weltökonomie. Weltwirtschaftliches Krisenmanagement während der Kanzlerschaft Helmut Schmidt 1974-1982”. *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*. Vol. 28. 1988. p. 307-332.

<sup>37</sup> See Paterson, William E. and Gordon Smith (eds.), *The West German Model: Perspectives on a Stable State*. London, Routledge, 1981; Markovits, Andrei S. (ed.), *The Political Economy of West Germany: Modell Deutschland*. New York, Praeger Publishers, 1982; Scharpf, Fritz W., *Sozialdemokratische Krisenpolitik in Europa. Das ‘Modell Deutschland’ im Vergleich*. Frankfurt/M, Campus, 1987. German descriptions tended to be more critical, see Altwater, Elmar, “Editorial: Modell Deutschland. Anatomie und Alternative”. *Prokla*. Vol. 40. 1980. p. 1-13; Rödder, Andreas and Thomas Hertfelder (eds.), *Modell Deutschland. Erfolgsgeschichte oder Illusion?*. Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007.

social peace at home, making the goods and the jobs available for our people and at the same time bluntly telling them [the people] that there are limits to what the state can do for them. This last point underscored his emphasis on the need to overcome the “inflation mentality” found everywhere, which Schmidt considered to be responsible for widespread “gaps in expectations” in other contexts. In addition to economic and social security, as well as domestic security in the face of terrorism, the chancellor evoked vital and classic aspects of international security: “Political and military balance is the prerequisite for our security, and I would war against the illusion that there may be some ground or other for neglecting that balance. Indeed, it is not only the prerequisite for our security but for fruitful progress with *détente*.” Characteristically, he combined his call for stationing middle-range missiles with an appeal to incorporate all other dimensions of security, since they were all interconnected: “In the past, we have worked towards maintaining and mending our defences, but have possibly neglected the economic structure of our gardens, the importance of its beauty, and the threats to the roots of that beauty”<sup>38</sup>.

A certain measure of national arrogance was clearly inherent in such deliberations. Hadn’t West Germany learned the lessons from the past, namely from the “German catastrophe,” better than many other countries? Schmidt would juxtapose (much like Willy Brandt before him) the risk the “old Germany” had posed for the world with the security offered by the new Germany, one integrated into the West; Germany was no longer a warfare state but a welfare state<sup>39</sup>.

To no small degree, the charm of *Modell Deutschland* was that its set pieces fit well in the theory building taking place in the social sciences at the time. A younger generation of economists, legal scholars, and social scientists operated with the term “security” and comprehensive models of security. Much of this work was more or less reminiscent of, if not borrowed outright

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<sup>38</sup> Schmidt, Helmut, “Politische und wirtschaftliche Aspekte der westlichen Sicherheit. Vortrag des Bundeskanzlers in London, 28 Okt.1977”. *Bulletin der Bundesregierung*. Vol. 112. 1977. p. 1013-1020; Schmidt, Helmut, “The 1977 Alastair Buchan Memorial Lecture”. W.F. Hanrieder (ed.). *Helmut Schmidt, Perspectives on Politics*. Boulder. Westview Press. 1982. p. 24f; on the *Modell Deutschland* in 1976, see Geyer, *Geschichte der Sozialpolitik in Deutschland seit 1945*, p. 42-46; see also the observations by Conze, “Sicherheit als Kultur. Überlegungen zu einer ‘modernen Politikgeschichte’ der Bundesrepublik Deutschland”, p. 373-375.

<sup>39</sup> Schmidt, Helmut, “Gedenken an den 8. Mai 1945. Ansprache des Bundeskanzlers vor dem Kabinett”. *Bulletin der Bundesregierung*. Vol. 59. 1975. p. 554f.; for very short references to post-nationalism, see Bracher, *Die deutsche Diktatur. Entstehung, Struktur, Folgen des Nationalsozialismus*; Bracher, Karl Dietrich, “Politik und Zeitgeist. Tendenzen der siebziger Jahre”. Wolfgang Jäger and Werner Link (eds.). *Republik im Wandel 1969-1974. Die Ära Brandt*. Bd. 5/1. Stuttgart. DVA. 1986. p. 406.

from, approaches in modernization theory (although these models appeared to have long surpassed their zenith of popularity and explanatory strength internationally by the mid-1970s)<sup>40</sup>. With regard to security, their main unifying postulate declared the state as the guarantor of “welfare” and “security” in a broad bandwidth of areas ranging from social and economic policy to foreign and international security politics, precisely in the sense that Schmidt meant his message to be taken in his Buchan lecture. The terms *Wohlfahrt* and *Wohlfahrtsproduktion*, meaning welfare and its creation, thus covered various areas that were designated in the English language by the terms “security” and “safety” and, so went the technocratic assumption, could be measured through the use of indicators: the creation and guarantee of security was a credential of modern societies.

The knowledge gained through such scientific research was to be fed into the political process in order, for one, to rationalize policies and make it plannable and, for another, to minimize social conflicts and guarantee economic growth<sup>41</sup>. Since the use of the term security had been rather narrowly confined to international politics, approaches in political science sought to expand its applicability by referring to the internal and external security of a state in other policy fields and to the protection of society from risks, especially in the context of social and economic security<sup>42</sup>. Important international impulses emanated from the report of the North-South Commission, published in 1980 under the chairman-

<sup>40</sup> For a good overview, see Wehling, Peter, *Die Moderne als Sozialmythos. Zur Kritik sozialwissenschaftlicher Modernisierungstheorien*. Frankfurt/M, Campus-Verlag, 1992; Wehler, Hans-Ulrich, *Modernisierungstheorie und Geschichte*. Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1975; Knöbl, Wolfgang, *Spielräume der Modernisierung. Das Ende der Eindeutigkeit*. Weilerswist, Velbrück Wissenschaft, 2001.

<sup>41</sup> Kaufmann, *Sicherheit als soziologisches und sozialpolitisches Problem*; Zapf, *Lebensbedingungen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Sozialer Wandel und Wohlfahrtsentwicklung*; Zapf, Wolfgang, “Wohlfahrtsentwicklung und Modernisierung”. Wolfgang Zapf (ed.). *Modernisierung, Wohlfahrtsentwicklung und Transformation. Soziologische Aufsätze 1987-1994*. Berlin. Edition sigma. 1994. p. 175-187; Roller, Edeltraud, *Einstellungen der Bürger zum Wohlfahrtsstaat der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. Opladen, Springer-Verlag, 1992; Kunz, *Der Sicherheitsdiskurs. Die Innere Sicherheitspolitik und ihre Kritik*.

<sup>42</sup> One good example is Schwarz, Klaus-Dieter (ed.), *Sicherheitspolitik. Analysen zur politischen und militärischen Sicherheit*. Bad Honnef-Erpel, Osang Verlag, 1981; the authors classify topics of military security within the larger framework of security; see especially the introduction in Frei, Daniel and Peter Gaupp, “Das Konzept ‘Sicherheit’ – Theoretische Aspekte”. Klaus-Dieter Schwarz (ed.). *Sicherheitspolitik. Analysen zur politischen und militärischen Sicherheit*. Bad Honnef-Erpel. Osang Verlag. 1981. p. 3-16; in this connection, also Buzan, Barry, *People, States & Fear. Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era. With a New Introduction by the Author*. Colchester, ECPR, 2007; Wæver, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*.



ship of Willy Brandt, who put the fight against hunger and underdevelopment at the heart of a comprehensive concept of global justice and security<sup>43</sup>.

Such broadly conceived models of security were closely linked in the 1970s to social-liberal reform policy, in which security was not defined primarily in a national, military sense (the outline of which is apparent in Schmidt's stance), but through the security offered by the welfare state. The socially emancipatory dimension resonating from this welfare-state postulate is unmistakable: the individual has the right to security, guaranteed by the state, also in the context of the international system of the United Nations<sup>44</sup>.

Inevitably, such a nexus between these highly heterogeneous fields of security and reformist-emancipatory principles was not plausible to everybody. This was and still is true for practitioners and technocrats with their specialized focus in certain areas. Likewise, it is true for many social science theorists studying phenomena of risk and security. In fact, it was at this precise moment – the mid-1970s – that a great many debates started which still preoccupy us today in some way or another. They have led to manifold attempts to describe and conceptualize security practices and to frame them within concepts of modernization and modernity.

### **NUCLEAR RISKS: THE TIGHTROPE BETWEEN CATASTROPHE AND UTOPIA**

Ironically, at the very moment when comprehensive guarantees of security found their way into politics and when social scientists began to present their comprehensive theoretical conceptualizations of security, much of this started to be fundamentally questioned. Starting in 1976, critics from the left turned the SPD slogan *Modell Deutschland* on its head, albeit not for the first time: instead of stability and security, the new catchwords were "crisis" and "new risks", in particular the risks of nuclear energy. The declared aim of the government's fourth – and in every sense overblown – nuclear program of 1974 was to close the looming "energy gap" by implementing an enormous reactor construction program and thereby, so it was argued, guarantee the continuation of the modernization course in social policy through economic growth. This program became the spark kindling the fire of a rapidly forming and by now well-

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<sup>43</sup> Independent Commission on International Development Issues, North-South, *A Program for Survival*. London, 1980. On this, see also the contribution by David Kuchenbuch in this essay.

<sup>44</sup> Kaufmann, *Sicherheit als soziologisches und sozialpolitisches Problem*; Geyer, *Geschichte der Sozialpolitik in Deutschland seit 1945*, p. 187-191; Wehling, *Die Moderne als Sozialmythos. Zur Kritik sozialwissenschaftlicher Modernisierungstheorien*.

documented protest movement that took off in the second half of the 1970s. The “Seven Years War in Brokdorf”, the site of one of the new nuclear power plants, became an on-going media event<sup>45</sup>. The confrontation over nuclear energy escalated in West Germany like nowhere else, during which time the discourse over security and risk flooded the political landscape. Various aspects of public “safety” and “security” became intertwined. If anything was certain at the time, then it was the loss of trust in scientific and governmental authorities who promised security<sup>46</sup>.

Who defined risks, and which risks were to be considered acceptable and which were not? The ecological movement and, following on its heels, the media not only dramatized these industrial risks and their side effects but also challenged ideas and policies concerning economic growth and, more generally, ideas about modernization<sup>47</sup>. A lay public became increasingly sensitized to the issue of “risk”. Soon experts were also challenging the expertise of their colleagues, which in turn raised many questions regarding the reliability, objectivity, and “constructedness” of scientific knowledge<sup>48</sup>. The result was a cacophony of risk discourses about security measures. How probable was the occurrence of the improbable? How risky was economic progress? The debates were fuelled by the accidents at the nuclear power plant in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in 1979,

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<sup>45</sup> Gaul, Ewald, *Atomenergie oder Ein Weg aus der Krise?*. Reinbek/Hamburg, Rowohlt, 1974; Haenschke, Frank, *Modell Deutschland? Die Bundesrepublik in der technologischen Krise*. Reinbek/Hamburg, 1977; Hirsch, Joachim, *Der Sicherheitsstaat. Das ‘Modell Deutschland’, seine Krisen und die neuen sozialen Bewegungen*. Frankfurt/M, Europ. Vlg, 1980; Rucht, Dieter, *Modernisierung und neue soziale Bewegungen. Deutschland, Frankreich und USA im Vergleich*. Frankfurt/M, Campus, 1994; Traube, Klaus, “Der siebenjährige Krieg um Brokdorf”. Stefan Aust (ed.). *Brokdorf – Symbol einer politischen Wende*. Hamburg. Hoffmann und Campe. 1981. p. 20-46; Kliment, Timor, *Kernkraftprotest und Medienreaktionen. Deutungsmuster einer Widerstandsbewegung und öffentliche Rezeption*. Wiesbaden, Deutscher Universitätsverlag, 1994.

<sup>46</sup> Weisker, Albrecht, “Expertenvertrauen gegen Zukunftsangst. Zur Risikowahrnehmung der Kernenergie”. Ute Frevert (ed.). *Vertrauen. Historische Annäherungen*. Göttingen. 2003; Weisker, Albrecht, “Powered by Emotions? Affektive Aspekte in der westdeutschen Kernenergiegeschichte zwischen Technikvertrauen und Apokalypseangst”. Franz-Josef Brüggemeier and Jens Ivo Engels (eds.). *Natur- und Umweltschutz nach 1945. Konzepte, Konflikte, Kompetenzen*. Frankfurt/M. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. 2005.

<sup>47</sup> On this point, see the contribution by Dietmar J. Wetzel in this essay.

<sup>48</sup> For an early and interesting treatment of the topic, also on the basis of debates in Great Britain and the United States, see Nowotny, *Kernenergie: Gefahr oder Notwendigkeit. Anatomie eines Konflikts*; Evers, Adalbert, “Risiko und Individualismus. Was in Ulrich Becks ‘Risikogesellschaft’ unbegriffen bleibt”. *Kommune*. 6. 1989; Kuhbier, Peter, “Vom nahezu sicheren Eintreten eines fast unmöglichen Ereignisses – oder warum wir Kernkraftwerkunfällen auch trotz ihrer geringen Wahrscheinlichkeit kaum entgehen werden”. *Leviathan*. N° 14. 1986; and Lau, “Risikodiskurse – Gesellschaftliche Auseinandersetzungen um die Definition von Risiken”; Stehr, Nico and Reiner Grundmann, *Expertenwissen. Die Kultur und Macht von Experten, Beratern und Ratgebern*. Weilerswist, 2010.

and at the chemical plants in Seveso in 1976 and Bophal in 1984, in which chemical leaks killed people and animals. New topics emerged, among them the risks posed by asbestos or the causes of forest dieback (*Waldsterben*), and in the shadows of each of these bleak scenarios was the worst one of all, that of a M(aximum)C(redible)A(ccident) –the German equivalent “GAU” became a common word to designate the worst kind of accident in any context– in the nuclear energy industry<sup>49</sup>.

Shortly after the nuclear reactor accident of Chernobyl in 1986, the German sociologist Ulrich Beck introduced the neologism *Risikogesellschaft*, risk society, into the public debate, in order to describe modern societies. He certainly hit a nerve, especially in West Germany. Most of the themes about risks and side effects he dealt with in his book had already been raised prior to this in one way or another in the context of the “*Atomtheater*” (Helga Novotny) and had found their way into academic discourse. The success of Beck’s book and a number of similar publications by him at the time can also be attributed to the fact that he presented the argument in a much wider framework. He proclaimed nothing less than a historical caesura: not only was this the end of the great “Ma(r)x-Weber-modernization consensus”, meaning a paradigm of scientific explanation, but it was also the end of the age of “industrial modernity”<sup>50</sup>. Actually his argument was a tacit rudimentary criticism of those premises on which the *Modell Deutschland* and its promises of growth, security, and welfare were based. He presented the argument that capitalism produces its own self-destructive contradictions by warning that the side effects of traditional growth policy were increasingly destroying the very base of this growth. These side effects of earlier forms of modernization could not be corrected by simply stepping up modernization efforts, be it in the form of changes to the welfare state (Beck’s general argument regarding the inexplicitly raised topic of *Modell Deutschland*) or of technological improvements (his more specific argument about the risks of technology). The journey down this old path had come to a dead end in light of the challenges posed by the “new risks”, meaning the nuclear risks. This would have to lead inevitably to a break with existing policy,

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<sup>49</sup> Among others in the contemporary literature, see Koch, Egmont R. and Fritz Fahrenholt, *Seveso ist überall. Die tödlichen Risiken der Chemie*. Cologne, Fischer-TB, 1978; Kraatz, Birgit, *Seveso oder wie Verantwortung zur Farce wird: Ein Leerstück, aus dem die Großchemie nichts gelernt hat*. Hamburg, Rowohlt, 1979; Perrow, Charles, *Normal Accidents. Living with High Risk Technologies*. New York, Princeton University Press, 1984.

<sup>50</sup> Beck, Ulrich *et al.* (eds.), *Reflexive Modernisierung. Eine Kontroverse*. Frankfurt/M, Suhrkamp, 1996, p. 37; Beck, Ulrich, *Risikogesellschaft. Auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne*. Frankfurt/M, Suhrkamp Verlag, 1986; Beck, Ulrich, *Die Erfindung des Politischen. Zu einer Theorie reflexiver Modernisierung*. Frankfurt/M, Suhrkamp Verlag, 1993.

which in hindsight reads like the justification for the recently implemented nuclear power phase-out by the government of Angela Merkel in the wake of the Japanese Fukushima accident.

The conclusions Beck reached were sweeping in every sense. In his opinion, future politics would no longer focus primarily on the distribution of wealth but on the distribution of risk. Modern risk societies revolved around problems and conflicts resulting from the production, definition, and distribution of risks produced by scientific, technological advancement<sup>51</sup>. This is precisely what characterized the transition, as Beck saw it, from a “first modernity” (which he hardly reflects upon) to a “second modernity”. Modern societies had to face up to the risks they produced in order to go beyond the ideas and solution of a “simple modernization”. This made a critical evaluation and departure from earlier premises of modernization necessary. He introduced the –ambiguous and often misunderstood– concept of “self-reflexivity”. A “self-reflexive” society not only encouraged new ways of thinking but also enabled the flourishing of civil society. Solutions could not come primarily from agents of the state but from a politically active and conscientious society that critically reflects its very foundation. Hence, Beck understood the communication of risk as a new form of social communitization, be it on the national or global level, of the “global risk society”<sup>52</sup>.

### THE ATOMSTAAT AND THE DYSTOPIAN AMBIVALENCE OF MODERNITY

What is remarkable about Beck is that he developed an optimistic, in some aspects almost utopian model of a project of civil society. He firmly put society’s handling of new risks at the heart of his social theory and questioned the state’s competence at providing solutions (even if it can be argued that a few of his premises bordered on triviality and naiveté)<sup>53</sup>. The ongoing debates on nuclear energy provided the inspiration. However, the sociologist Beck clearly distanced himself from a discourse of angst, one imbued with dystopian scenarios. This is noteworthy because prophecies of gloom and doom anchored in the German

<sup>51</sup> Beck, *Risikogesellschaft. Auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne*, p. 48; Beck, Ulrich, “Das Zeitalter der Nebenfolgen und die Politisierung der Moderne”. Ulrich Beck *et al.* (eds.). *Reflexive Modernisierung. Eine Kontroverse*. Frankfurt/M. Suhrkamp. 1996. p. 29; see also Giddens, Anthony, *Beyond Right and Left. The Future of Radical Politics*. Cambridge, Stanford University Press, 1994, esp. p. 219-228.

<sup>52</sup> Beck, Ulrich, *Weltrisikogesellschaft. Auf der Suche nach der verlorenen Sicherheit*. Bonn, Suhrkamp Verlag, 2007.

<sup>53</sup> Evers, “Risiko und Individualismus. Was in Ulrich Becks ‘Risikogesellschaft’ unbegriffen bleibt”; Weiss, Johannes, “Die Zweite Moderne – eine neue Suhrkamp-Edition”. *Soziologische Revue*. Vol. 21. 1998.

intellectual tradition found their way into the antinuclear and peace movement. Such apocalyptic visions in the form of a nuclear MCA whether at a nuclear power plant or as result of deploying nuclear weapons (as depicted in the 1983 U.S. feature film *The Day After*) were able to evoke nightmares. Not for the first time, Günter Anders, an activist in the antinuclear power movement of the 1950s, castigated humankind for its “apocalyptic blindness”, which he said resulted from a discrepancy between what humans could technically produce and what they could take responsibility for<sup>54</sup>. His writer colleague Christa Wolf took up this and other ideas of Anders and spoke of humanity’s “blind spot”, which she diagnosed as being caused by a “perception gap” (*Wahrnehmungslücke*)<sup>55</sup>. Such expressions of cultural criticism are numerous and can be found alongside debates in the peace and antinuclear movements on the probability of an MCA or other technological risks. They are another illustration of how societal risk communications, albeit dystopian, could bring together and communitize individuals. A good example in this respect is the spread of the grassroots social movement of “*Zukunftswerkstätten*” (future workshops), which were created by Robert Jungk and which developed an educational program for peace and ecological thinking. So, too, is the nuclear physicist Robert Jungk himself, who originally had played an important role in the German nuclear modernization program and “futurology”<sup>56</sup>.

For Jungk, the earlier scenarios of a better technological future had turned nightmarish. As he argued in his book *Der Atomstaat* (*The Nuclear State*, originally published in 1977 with several subsequent reprints), the nuclear industry was driven by powerful economic and political interests that made it a security risk to Western democracies. The protection of its citizenry from the dangers of nuclear energy, if not from the potentially destructive effects on all of humanity, made far-reaching preventative measures necessary that strongly impacted the private sphere of citizens<sup>57</sup>. Jungk’s assessment was prompted not only by law violations perpetrated by the police and justice authorities, but also by new forms of control and monitoring directly affecting scientists and employees in nuclear power plants. He had in mind the “Traube case”, which the magazine

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<sup>54</sup> Anders, Günter, “Über die Bombe und die Wurzeln unserer Apokalypse-Blindheit”. Günter Anders (ed.), *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen. Über die Seele im Zeitalter der industriellen Revolution* (1st edition, 1956). Munich. C.H.Beck. 2010.

<sup>55</sup> Delisle, Manon, *Weltuntergang ohne Ende. Ikonografie und Inszenierung der Katastrophe bei Christa Wolf, Peter Weiss und Hans Magnus Enzensberger*. Würzburg, Königshausen u. Neumann, 2001, p. 81.

<sup>56</sup> Seefried, 'Zukünfte'. *Eine Geschichte der Zukunftsforschung 1945-1980*.

<sup>57</sup> Jungk, Robert, *Der Atom-Staat. Vom Fortschritt in die Unmenschlichkeit*. Munich, rororo, 1977, p. IX-XI.

*Der Spiegel* had made public and thereby sparked a major public controversy. Klaus Traube was a physicist who played a significant role in developing the so-called fast breeder nuclear reactor in the town of Kalkar. Because the security authorities suspected him of maintaining contact to terrorists, West German intelligence had kept him under surveillance since 1975 and had wiretapped his apartment without any legal authority. His employer, the Kraftwerk-Union AG fired him. The idea that fissionable material could wind up in the hands of nonauthorized persons was a strong argument for a new and comprehensive form of preventative surveillance of people and objects<sup>58</sup>.

Was West Germany on the way to becoming a modern *Sicherheitsstaat*, a security state? Jungk was not the only one to draw comparisons to the Nazi era. The focus was not simply on nuclear energy; in fact, talk about the "nuclear state" thrived on the multifarious associations with other risky fields of security. Among these, in the critical year 1977, were the very far-reaching measures within the framework of an –undeclared– state of emergency in combating the escalation of terrorism. These included special deployment forces like the GSG9 (a newly created special police task force), police actions against suspicious groups of people like house squatters, new police techniques like drag-nets, and last but not least, security checks to determine whether employees, civil servants, and personnel in "security-relevant areas" as well as teachers were "loyal to the constitution". All of this went hand in hand with preventative measures to create risk profiles of possible perpetrators and also potential victims of terrorism<sup>59</sup>.

It was in this context that the *Modell Deutschland* came under criticism for its peculiar composition as a cross between a welfare state and a technologically perfect police-surveillance state. The social scientist Joachim Hirsch voiced the opinion of many members of the new social movements: the social and welfare state served to advance social conformity and new forms of social control and repression, with the aim of bringing under control the consequences not

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<sup>58</sup> Traube, Klaus, *Müssen wir umschalten? Von den politischen Grenzen der Technik*. Reinbek/Hamburg, 1978; Traube, Klaus, "Lehrstück Abhöraffaire". Wolf-Dieter Narr (ed.). *Wir Bürger als Sicherheitsrisiko. Berufsverbot und Lauschangriff. Beiträge zur Verfassung unserer Republik*. Reinbek/Hamburg, 1977. p. 61-78; Funk, Albrecht and Falco Werkentin, "Die siebenziger Jahre. Das Jahrzehnt innerer Sicherheit?". Wolf-Dieter Narr (ed.). *Wir Bürger als Sicherheitsrisiko. Berufsverbot und Lauschangriff – Beiträge zur Verfassung unserer Republik*. Reinbek/Hamburg, 1977.

<sup>59</sup> For a good overview, see Becker, Peter, *Dem Täter auf der Spur. Eine Geschichte der Kriminalistik*. Darmstadt, Primus, 2005, p. 187-209; Schenk, *Der Chef. Horst Herold und das BKA*; Reichert, Ramón (ed.), *Governmentality Studies. Analysen liberal-demokratischer Gesellschaften im Anschluss an Michel Foucault*. Münster, 2004.

only of modernization and reform politics but also the protests and resistance these provoked. The security guarantee of *Modell Deutschland* and modernization politics had the reverse effect: new forms of surveillance and security, predicted Hirsch, would become increasingly important, not the least because the number of discontented people, namely the losers of modernization, would be on the increase<sup>60</sup>.

In 1975, Michel Foucault published his book *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison*, which appeared two years later in English and in German. With this book the French theorist did indeed touch a raw nerve. Stammheim Prison, where some of the imprisoned members of the Baader-Meinhof group committed suicide in 1977, certainly did not resemble Bentham's panopticum. In fact, its so-called "high security tract" was somewhat of a misnomer, considering the peculiar setup of cohabitation and the availability of communication devices and even weapons<sup>61</sup>. However, Foucault's ideas turned out to be powerful both as a way to conceptualize modern ideas on surveillance and (self-)control, as implemented also in psychiatric hospitals, schools, the military, and factories. In these institutions built on discipline and normalization, Foucault discerned the origins and the basis of both modern societies and modern individuals.

Foucault was not only an observer and analyst of the German situation; he was also an active participant in the political and ideological confrontations and controversies in Germany at the time. He spoke out on behalf of Klaus Croissant, a lawyer for the terrorist Red Army Faction, who had fled to France and applied for political asylum in order to evade prosecution in West Germany. In connection with the public campaign supporting Croissant, Foucault even visited Germany in 1977, where in Berlin he apparently gained first-hand experience in dealing with the police and border guards of both German states<sup>62</sup>.

Against the backdrop of these events, Foucault developed his ideas about the *état de sécurité*, the security state. According to Thomas Lemke, this was the period in which the idea crystalized in Foucault's mind that the state he lived in was less a state of law than a security state, whose measures simply overrode legal norms (an argument somewhat reminiscent of Ernst Fraenkel's Dual

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<sup>60</sup> Hirsch, *Der Sicherheitsstaat. Das 'Modell Deutschland', seine Krisen und die neuen sozialen Bewegungen*; see generally also Wehling, *Die Moderne als Sozialmythos. Zur Kritik sozialwissenschaftlicher Modernisierungstheorien*.

<sup>61</sup> See Bergstermann, *Terrorismus, Recht und Freiheit. Die JVA Stuttgart-Stammheim als Ort der Auseinandersetzung zwischen Staat und RAF*.

<sup>62</sup> Macey, David, *The Lives of Michel Foucault*. New York, Vintage Books, 1993, p. 392-396.

State from 1942 in which the German lawyer described the Nazi state)<sup>63</sup>. This security state, argued Foucault, was based on a security pact between agencies of the state and the populace, the basis of which was fear. In order to guarantee security, the state had to have the freedom to act against and outside the law. In Foucault's view, the "fear state" was the Janus face of the "state of law"<sup>64</sup>. By all means, this was another dystopian interpretation of the events of 1977, one reflecting ideas that exceeded the specific German case and the period of the 1970s.

In West Germany, such arguments could easily be mingled with the thoughts argued by Horkheimer and Adorno in their classic *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944): The very ideas of universal reason, the rational pursuit of order, and the power of knowledge inherent in modernity, with their expressed assumption of universal validity, could and did bring not only benefits but also terrible excesses. These arguments were reworded during the 1970s in French debates over the Soviet Gulag and Auschwitz, not the least in terms of a fundamental critique of the 'project of the left' and its theoretical *grand récits*<sup>65</sup>. In different ways, Zygmund Baumann and Giorgio Agamben followed up on these arguments. By the 1990s, this critique of modernity was having a major impact on academic debates (although comparatively late in West Germany). Baumann became certainly one of the more influential thinkers with his argument that efforts to do away with uncertainty and ambivalence – also in the sense of essentialist thinking, the essence of project of enlightenment – could and did lead to the abyss of totalitarianism in the twentieth century. Since 9/11, such disquieting, dystopian models of the "security state" have received much attention, not just in scholarly historical research, but also in analysis of contemporary liberal states<sup>66</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> Geyer, Martin H., "Grenzüberschreitungen: Vom Belagerungs- zum Ausnahmezustand". Niels Werber, Stefan Kaufmann and Lars Koch (eds.). *Erster Weltkrieg. Kulturwissenschaftliches Handbuch*. Stuttgart. J. B. Metzler Verlag. 2014. p. 375f.

<sup>64</sup> Here I follow Lemke, Thomas, *Eine Kritik der politischen Vernunft. Foucaults Analyse der modernen Gouvernementalität*. Berlin, Argument Verlag, 1997, p. 192.

<sup>65</sup> Christofferson, Michael Scott, *French Intellectuals against the Left. The Antitotalitarian Moment of the 1970s*. New York, Berghahn Books, 2004; Lyotard, François, *The Postmodern Condition* (French original: 1979). Minneapolis, University Of Minnesota Press, 1984.

<sup>66</sup> Bauman, Zygmund, *Modernity and the Holocaust*. Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1989; Bauman, Zygmund, *Modernity and Ambivalence*. Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1991. Agamben, Giorgio, *Ausnahmezustand*. Frankfurt/M, Suhrkamp Verlag, 2004; Neocleous, Mark, *Critique of Security*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2008.



## THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RISK SOCIETY: LIBERAL CRITICISM OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY STATE

With its criticism of the assumptions bolstering modernization and reform theories, on the one hand, and of the social-liberal politics of economic growth and reform, on the other, the discourse in leftist and “alternative” circles questioned, in equal measure, theoretical assumptions, political and technological guarantees of safety and security, and their corresponding policies, for which *Modell Deutschland* was the metonym. The story of the emergence and political institutionalization of the social movements in West Germany starting in 1977 was rather unique and relied on a successful communication about risk, not only in the policy areas of environmental protection and nuclear power. Ulrich Beck’s “risk society” can be considered the unofficial albeit controversial manifesto of this project, not the least because he offered perspectives on alternatives to the taming of apocalyptic and dystopian types of energy by way of civil society.

However, it is extremely short sighted yet quite common to search for the conjuncture of the critical debates on risk and security primarily only within the realm of the ecological movement. After all, we need only remember the polemic political debates on gaps in areas like domestic security, economic policy, and social policy. Starting in the second half of the 1970s, the conservative political opposition, a growing number of economists, and certainly a great deal of the press never tired of underscoring the serious risks linked to the social-liberal reform politics. In fact, there existed no shortage of catastrophic scenarios that revolved around the ghost of (hyper)inflation, economic decline, technological gaps, the dissipation of bourgeois values during an acclaimed “value change,” the crises of state legitimation on a Weimarian dimension, and not to forget the implications of the “birth gap”<sup>67</sup>. We may evaluate these dramatic scenarios of decline and downfall as being primarily calculated arguments reflecting political strategy, quite unlike emotional and “fundamentalistic” scenarios of the antinuclear and peace movements. But this seeming realism should not obscure the fact that the real or supposed gaps and their consequences for the near or distant future were very alarming and therefore made it necessary to revise earlier policies and to develop new intellectual approaches and theories, including ideas of comprehensive prevention in various policy areas.

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<sup>67</sup> See Geyer, *Geschichte der Sozialpolitik in Deutschland seit 1945*.

Open to criticism were all aspects of social-liberal reform politics<sup>68</sup>. One key idea of this criticism was that of uncontrollable and unintended “side effects”. This topos permeated not only ecological debates, but also those of economists and many culture critics. It was argued that the government’s reform politics created the very problems –namely the risks– that it was attempting to solve. In the 1975 report of the Trilateral Commission, called into existence by David Rockefeller, Samuel Huntington and his colleagues blamed welfare-state politics for the demise of private and public values and argued that the welfare state represented a risk both to social and political stability and to the military strength of the West. The democratic process and the “lack of trust” created by the welfare state came under fire<sup>69</sup>. “The government is the problem”, declared the newly elected president of the United States, Ronald Reagan, in a catchy and immediately famous statement during his 1981 Inaugural Address, a statement that appeared to announce a fundamental change of the political and theoretical paradigms. At its extreme, this line of argument resulted in a fundamental criticism of the state that featured dystopian scenarios in which an expansive government was said not only to lead to economic and social disaster but also to restrict individual freedoms one by one and thus lead the country down the “Road to Serfdom” (Hayek)<sup>70</sup>.

The new paradigm of side effects implied vehement controversy over reform and modernization policies. Be it university reform or social policy, it appeared necessary to “reform the reforms” in all areas and so rectify the side effects of earlier government interventions. The sociologist Franz-Xaver Kaufmann later coined this as “reform of the second order” (*Reform zweiter Ordnung*)<sup>71</sup>. When Beck criticized that, in the “first modernity”, interventions would continue to be necessary in order to correct unintended side effects, he was certainly in keeping with the trends of the time. Similar arguments had been made earlier by advocates of critical theory and, from a thoroughly different angle, by

<sup>68</sup> Also for the many examples to follow, see Wehling, *Die Moderne als Sozialmythos. Zur Kritik sozialwissenschaftlicher Modernisierungstheorien*.

<sup>69</sup> Huntington, Samuel P., “The United States”. Michael Crozier et al. (eds.). *The Crisis of Democracy*. New York. New York University Press. 1975.

<sup>70</sup> The work of Ayn Rand are a good example of this, see Burns, Jennifer, *Goddess of the Market. Ayn Rand and the American Right*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009; Cockett, Richard, *Thinking the Unthinkable. Think-Tanks and the Economic Counter-Revolution, 1931-1983*. London, Fontana Press, 1995.

<sup>71</sup> Kaufmann, Franz-Xaver, “Der Sozialstaat als Prozeß für eine Sozialpolitik zweiter Ordnung”. Franz-Xaver Kaufmann (ed.). *Sozialpolitik und Sozialstaat: Soziologische Analysen*. Opladen. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften. 2002; Hockerts, Hans-Günter, “Vom Problemlöser zum Problemerzeuger? Der Sozialstaat im 20. Jahrhundert”. *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*. Vol. 47. 2007.

proponents of radical free market reforms. Yet opinions diverged about the conclusions to draw from such diagnoses. If the “actual problem” was government policy, then the implication was a corrective plan of action, beginning with comprehensive guarantees of security. This meant the dismantling and restructuring of the social and interventionist state, which – we must remember – was created to rectify market failures and thus the side effects of capitalism and to guarantee “security”<sup>72</sup>. Welfare state guarantees, economic growth, and social security were contrasted to market liberalization, be it in the health industry, aviation industry, energy industry, or on the capital markets. Liberalization meant the transfer of risk from the state and public institutions to the individual and the realm of the market in the sense of “reprivatizing risks,” a still relatively new catchphrase in the second half of the 1970s that was used in both a critical and affirmative context. It was argued that individuals and market institutions could deal with risks better, more efficiently, and more rationally (in terms of rational choice models) than the state. Funded pension schemes were considered to be a safeguard against the emergence of any gaps in financing (as existed in pay-as-you-go systems), especially in the context of demographic change. The option to bundle (mortgage) loans and risks and to disperse these widely through new financial products seemed to offer a promising way to deal with risks. “Securitization” became the new technical term for this (and should not be confused with the term as used also by the political scientist Ole Wæver)<sup>73</sup>.

From this vantage point, the *Modell Deutschland* looked like a relic from the past, not the least because the fixation on state-guaranteed security on which these models were based was said to limit economic freedom and mobility, for one, and an individual and entrepreneurial spirit of risk-taking, for another<sup>74</sup>. The reprivatization of risk pointed to the solution: unfetter not only the Schumpeterian, risk-taking, no-longer-government-regulated entrepreneur, but also the entrepreneurial self of every individual. Although Schumpeter’s destructive capitalism produced uncertainty and insecurity, it offered at the same time vast new opportunities, growth, and thus prosperity, argued its proponents<sup>75</sup>.

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<sup>72</sup> Rodgers, Daniel T., *Age of Fracture*. Cambridge/Mass, Harvard University Press, 2011, p. 41-76; Cockett, *Thinking the Unthinkable. Think-Tanks and the Economic Counter-Revolution, 1931-1983*. Comparable studies are currently not available for Germany.

<sup>73</sup> Ranierie, Lewis S., “The Origins of Securitization, Sources of its Growth, and its Future Potential”. Leon T. Kendall and Michael J. Fishman (eds.). *A Primer on Securitization*. Boston/Mass. The MIT Press. 1996. p. 31.

<sup>74</sup> See the contribution by Wencke Meteling in this essay.

<sup>75</sup> The almost classical argument originates from Giersch, Herbert *et al.*, *The Fading Miracle: Four Decades of Market Economy in Germany*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press,

In contrast to the state, "the market" and its actors were said to guarantee the efficient and economic communication of risk, which in turn would make it possible to handle economic and social risks effectively; security had a price, one that was measurable and calculable by way of the financial assessment of specific risks. There can be no doubt that a latent utopian undercurrent existed in the political expression of neo-liberalism at the time. The likes of Milton Friedman promised not only "freedom" (thus the title of his 1980 television series starring the Chicago economist) but a brave new world.

One underestimates all too easily the popularity of the appeal of freedom and its polemics against the fetters of the old security of the welfare state. This seemingly new philosophy of the market was probably more popular in West Germany than it has often been assumed, in part because of the strong theoretical tradition of market liberalism in Germany which experienced a revival in the 1970s, but also because it corresponded so closely with aspects of modern consumerist lifestyles, such as taking risks and managing individual risks. Good examples are the various "alternative" health movements that sprung up in the second half of the 1970s which advocated "self-help" and criticized the "industrial-health complex," including the welfare state. This is also illustrated well by the notorious "free climbers" of the 1970s who expressed the spirit of the times in their own way: they heaped scorn on those fellow climbers who went into the mountains with large crews and the latest high-tech gear meant to provide an old-fashioned type of safety at the expense of ruining virgin rock. To the outsider, free climbing might appear as outrageously risky. However, by the 1980s, its practitioners had developed various sophisticated systems of classification with which they measured the degree of difficulty of mountain slopes. Dangers were thus being transformed into a calculable set of "professional" risks; each rock climber had to know which risk he could manage. By the 1990s, the "cliff hanger" had become an icon of modern culture of individualism, although most mountain climbers strongly disliked the commercial box office hit with the same title released in 1993, starring Sylvester Stalone<sup>76</sup>. Another example of the new attitude toward managing risk on an individual basis was the endless German debate over speed limits on the autobahns, in

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1992; Caldwell, Bruce J., *Hayek's Challenge: An Intellectual Biography of F.H. Hayek*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2004; Abelshausen, Werner, *Kulturkampf. Der deutsche Weg in die Neue Wirtschaft und die amerikanische Herausforderung*. Berlin, Kulturverlag Kadmos, 2003.

<sup>76</sup> Gschwendtner, Sepp, *Sicher Freiklettern. Technik und Training*. Munich, Bergverlag Rother, 1981; Messner, Reinhold (ed.), *Freiklettern mit P. Preuß*. Munich, 1986. Thompson, Michael, "Aesthetics of Risk: Culture or Context". Richard C. Schwing and W. A. Albers (eds.). *Societal Risk Assessment. How Safe is Safe Enough*. New York. Springer. 1980.

which the popular slogan of the 1980s was “*Freie Fahrt für freie Bürger*” (let free citizens drive freely)<sup>77</sup>.

Once again it was Michel Foucault who recognized these developments quite perceptively and also attributed a pioneering role to the “German model”. Did liberalism and its emphasis on individual freedom and the free movement of people and goods not also bring about surveillance and monitoring technologies in the form of a highly differentiated system of public security? What interested Foucault the most in 1977/78 was the emergence of new technologies of the self, which enabled modern individuals to govern and control themselves. He linked this development to the rise of neo-liberalism generally and to the “German model” specifically. Although this was a somewhat maverick interpretation both of the intellectual tradition of German economic liberalism and –albeit not specifically addressed by Foucault– of the *Modell Deutschland*, it was indeed an accurate view of the new reality in which the concern over collective and individual security and the concern about government control and self-control intermingled with and complemented each other<sup>78</sup>.

## THE TECHNOCRATIC RISK SOCIETY

Like no other scholar, the sociologist Niklas Luhmann challenged various assumptions of the contemporary debate on security. For Luhmann, security was not just an empty term, it was social fiction.<sup>79</sup> In like manner, he equally condemned the security guarantees of the social and welfare state and almost ridiculed the assumptions of his colleague Ulrich Beck<sup>80</sup>. For him security was unattainable, and the pursuit of security only created new insecurity. As had many others, Luhmann criticized the social and welfare state for creating its

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<sup>77</sup> Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobil-Club, *Argumente und Dokumente des ADAC gegen Tempo 100 auf Autobahnen*. Munich, 1986.

<sup>78</sup> Foucault, Michel, *Geschichte der Gouvernementalität*. Vol. 2. Frankfurt/M, Suhrkamp, 2004, esp. p. 269; see also Hesse, Jan-Otmar, “Der Staat unter Aufsicht des Marktes – Foucaults Lektüren des ‘Ordoliberalismus’”. Susanne Krasmann and Michael Volkmer (eds.). *Michel Foucaults ‘Geschichte der Gouvernementalität’ als Prädigma der Sozialwissenschaften. Internationale Beiträge zu Rezeption und Anschläßen*. Bielefeld. 2007; Bröckling, Ulrich et al. (eds.), *Gouvernementalität der Gegenwart. Studien zur Ökonomisierung des Sozialen*. Frankfurt/M, Suhrkamp Verlag, 2000. Reichert, *Governmentality Studies. Analysen liberaldemokratischer Gesellschaften im Anschluss an Michel Foucault*. For the following observations, Cruikshank is of particular interest. Cruikshank, Barbara, *The Will to Empower. Democratic Citizens and other Subjects*. Cornell/London, Cornell University Press, 1999.

<sup>79</sup> Luhmann, *Risiko und Gefahr*.

<sup>80</sup> Luhmann, Niklas, “Die Welt als Wille ohne Vorstellung. Sicherheit und Risiko aus der Sicht der Sozialwissenschaften”. *Die politische Meinung*. Vol. 31. 1986; Luhmann, *Risiko und Gefahr*.

own risky side effects, which either needed to be mended or were used as a pretext to expand the welfare state. Thus the welfare state had the tendency to grow to vast dimensions because nearly every aspect of societal life can be seen as containing inherent social dangers and risks<sup>81</sup>. Luhmann also found fault with all those, including technology experts, who claimed to create and guarantee security. Here he questioned the logic of their arguments: if the evolution of the modern world was characterized by the transformation of an ever greater number of dangers into risks, then for precisely this reason, security was never attainable. On the contrary, all talk about security implied a growing insecurity for the present and in the future, because that which was traditionally viewed as dangers becomes defined in terms of risk. For this reason, Luhmann argued that modern societies are characterized by ever-increasing insecurity. Who decides what the risks are? Furthermore, who knows what the possible side effects of earlier decisions are?

Luhmann thus provided a fundamental critic of the assumptions and theoretical stances based on broad concepts of security. In a highly differentiated modern society with distinct debates on risk in various fields of science, law, economics, and politics, it is futile to imagine that there could be a unifying concept of risk and security. His basic argument that security is not only something unattainable but that it obfuscates more that it explains was another renunciation of those slightly varying models of security that operated more often than not on the basis of assumptions of modernization theory<sup>82</sup>. Ever new forms of risks were the feature of modern societies, in fact, of modernity. Modern societies or, simply put, "modernity" was embroiled in endless risk debates, for these societies always have to make decisions regarding a future that neither individuals nor institutions could really know much about. This could be juxtaposed to theories and policies of modernization which had promised safety and security<sup>83</sup>.

Luhmann's decisive point was that these risks were very different in each field or societal subsystem, be it in technology, the economy, or the social sciences. In other words, each subsystem develops its own logic with respect to risk debates, and this logic need not correspond with that of other subsystems. In fact, it could often contradict these. This was reason enough for Luhmann to consider it illusionary, if not absurd, to demand democratic participation in the decision-making processes, as was being advocated by laypersons within the

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<sup>81</sup> Luhmann, Niklas, *Politische Theorie im Wohlfahrtsstaat*. Munich, Olzog, 1981.

<sup>82</sup> This should also be read with regard to his criticism of the welfare state, see *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Luhmann, *Risiko und Gefahr*, p. 10-12; see also Bonß, *Vom Risiko. Unsicherheit und Unge-  
wißheit in der Moderne*.

antinuclear movement and other self-declared lay experts. Just as illusionary in his mind were the visions of societal risk communication as propagated by Ulrich Beck<sup>84</sup>.

The rejection of broad concepts of security, whatever the type, in favor of diagnosing specific, case-based concepts of risk in scientific research corresponds not only to the trend toward scientific specialization. It also reflects “system logics” of the lawyers who run the government’s bureaucratic apparatus with their narrowly defined departmental responsibilities. Even without any understanding of Luhmann’s complicated social system theory, we can see how such highly specialized expertise on risk multiplied, professionalized, and institutionally established itself starting in the second half of the 1970s (a story that has yet to be written, especially with regard to possible particularities of the West German experience). There can be no doubt that a rapidly growing academic industry dealing with risks emerged and became loosely entwined with the science bureaucracy, in part with the scientific-industrial complex. Much like the “hungry little caterpillar” of children-book fame, this insatiable research on risk has embedded itself in science and bureaucracy. It identifies not only looming safety and security “gaps” and an increasing number of risks, but also defines the threshold values (*Grenzwerte*), whose compatibility and reasonableness need to be determined in the context of highly controversial debates on security, not only within scientific circles but also in the public media.

In many respects, the technocratic operators of these safety and security technologies are the true inheritors of *Modell Deutschland*. Its advocates, who had claimed to guarantee fundamental security for all of society, might have lost their somewhat naïve belief in guarantees of security; however, securing against risk remains an ever-present political mission. This has inspired new governmental and nongovernmental agents and industries dealing with security issues, which in turn demand new models for risk analysis that – at least theoretically – can already identify the next security gaps and lurking risks. In this process, the emphasis is on prevention<sup>85</sup>. It is always about extrapolating current risks and security gaps to predict those of the future (and vice versa), whereby the – if not catastrophic then at least gloomy – scenarios of the future colonize the present: technocratic micromanagement of real and potential risks becomes the iron cage of self-created “practical constraints” on bureaucratic apparatus.

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<sup>84</sup> Luhmann, *Risiko und Gefahr*, p. 27f.

<sup>85</sup> On the logic of prevention, see the contribution by Ulrich Bröckling in this essay.

## CONCLUSION

Despite all of this criticism leveled against political guarantees of security and modernization theories, we can neither overlook the fact nor deny the irony that the guarantee of security did indeed become the “political gold standard”. This is clearly evident with regard to international initiatives. In 1994, the head of the Development Program at the United Nations, delineated in its Human Development Report a program for action, at the heart of which was nothing less than “a new concept of human security”: The world will not live in peace “unless people have security in their daily lives”. In this report, security is defined on a very broad scope so as to protect against all possible dangers. Security here ranged from “economic security, food security, health security, environmental security” down the line to “personal security” and “political security”. “Personal security” referred to “threats from the state (physical torture), threats from other states (war), threats from other groups of people (ethnic tension), threats from individuals or gangs, against other individuals or gangs (crime, street violence), threats directed against women (rape, domestic violence), threats directed at children based on their vulnerability and dependence (child abuse), threats to self (suicide, drug use)”. Under the rubric “political security”, the stated aim was to ensure that “people should be able to live in a society that honours their basic human rights”<sup>86</sup>. All of these aspects could be based on the security of each country – the Human Development Report included the publication of a Human Development Index with national rankings – but, as the authors underscored, “threats to human security [are] (...) no longer just personal or local or national. They are becoming global: with drugs, AIDS, terrorism, pollution, nuclear proliferation. Global poverty and environmental problems respect no national border. Their grim consequences travel the world”. There was no reason for trepidation. Just as the world had made progress in the past, it was possible “to engineer change”<sup>87</sup>. It is quite obvious that the subtle charm of 1970s modernization theory enveloped this program. On a political-normative level, a high degree of security in society was propagated as being not only desirable, but plannable and doable. Very similar to the German-language usage of the word *Sicherheit*, here “human security” comprises the areas of “safety” and “security”. In contrast to government actors as the guarantors of security, nongovernmental actors are given

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<sup>86</sup> *Human Development Report*, Published for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). New York, 1994, p. 1, 30, 32.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.



greater weight, thereby enhancing the chances to guarantee “human security” through a global, civil-society community of fate<sup>88</sup>.

Thus we have come full circle. We started by looking at a process that commenced in the late 1960s and 1970s in West Germany and – at first glance – appears contradictory. On the one hand, the agendas of reform and modernization played a major role in soundly anchoring postulates about the state guarantee to provide social, economic, and domestic security. On the other, public diagnoses of existing “gaps” in various policy fields placed the topic of risk prominently on the political agenda. It is in this constellation that we can locate the explosion of public debate and theoretical deliberation on topics concerning risk and security. Typical for this debate is the polyphony of voices that ranged from the ecological movement via the rapidly growing group of security technocrats to the neoliberal economists. These converged in their criticism of all comprehensive models and premises of security that were connected to the reform agendas of the social-liberal government coalition and to the policy models inspired by modernization theory. With this waned the self-confident positioning of scientists and practitioners in a purposeful process of modernization that promised a more publicly guaranteed security both in theory as in practice. Their optimism was struck down by the “(residual) risks” surfacing everywhere in “gaps” and by the incalculable “side effects” of this same modernization process. Yet this exercise in distancing from and critically reflecting upon the modernization process and its theories cleared the way, if not for the reconceptualization, then the discarding of the assumptions inherent to modernization theory. Characteristic was the substitution of the term modernization and the emergence of the abstractly conceived term of “modernity” – be it a “first”, “second”, even “post” modernity – that was used to describe the transition to new forms of security and risk societies.

Many questions remain open, particularly those dealing with the international comparison of the German debate and thus the construction of German perceptions of security. Striking is that the guarantees of security were criticized early and very boldly in West Germany, which certainly has something to do with the peculiarity of German terminology. What is also notable is the strong fixation of West German social theorists on the concept of risk, which can un-

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<sup>88</sup> Paris, Roland, “Human Security. Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?”. *International Security*. 2001; Chandler, David and Nik Hynek (eds.), *Critical Perspectives on Human Security. Rethinking emancipation and power in international relations*. New York, Routledge, 2011; Conze, Eckart, “Securitization. Gegenwartsdiagnose oder historischer Analyseansatz”. *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*. Vol. 38. 2012.

doubtedly be traced to the practical experiences of social movements. As has been argued in this essay, the concept of risk – with thoroughly positive connotations – experienced a boom, especially in the realm of neoliberal economic theory. However, everything indicates that the *fundamental* positions and diagnoses, which surfaced in the 1970s and are identified in this essay, are generalizable and to be found in one form or another in more recent approaches and debates on security in other industrial societies, namely the dystopian, utopian, and technocratic models of security and risk. These are as varied and multiform as the different fields of policy and action to which they pertain and as different as the respective orientation of the authors, be their intent critical, affirmative, or strictly technocratic.

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