Division of “Safety” and “Sense of Security”: Knowledge-Politics of Risk Discourse in Japan

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Outline

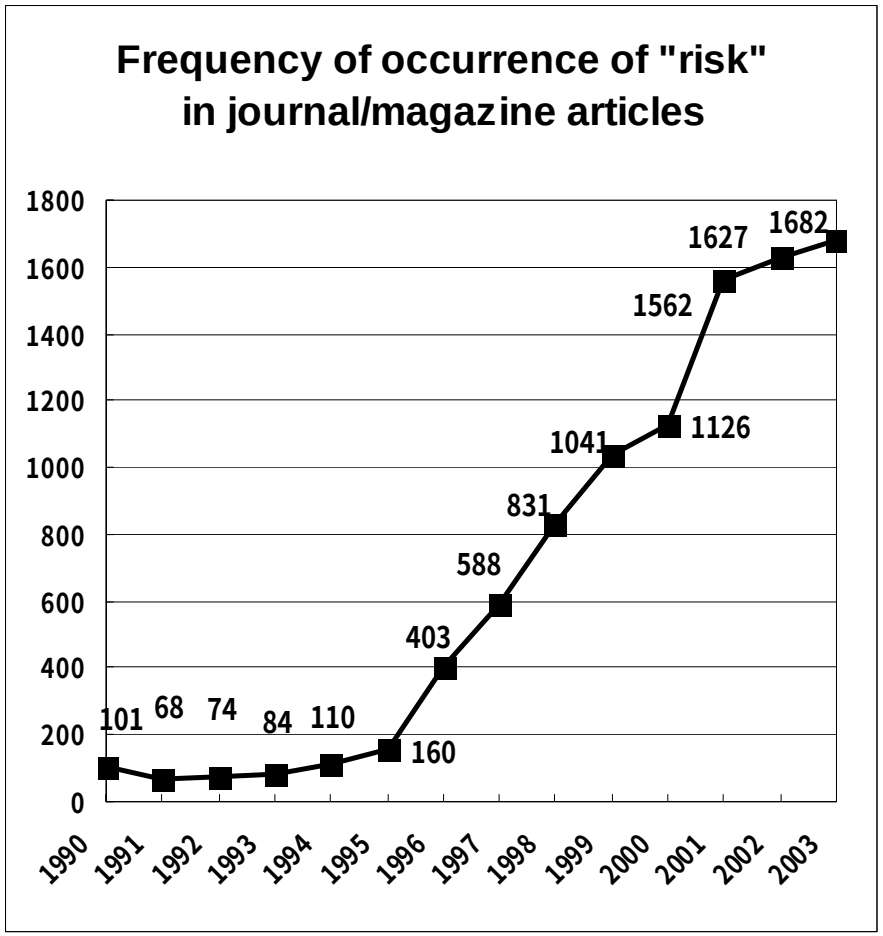
1. What is “Risk Discourse”?
2. Rise of “risk discourse” in Japan and its social background
3. Division of “safety” and “sense of security”
4. Classification of usage of division of safety and sense of security in terms of degree of democratization of “S&T governance”

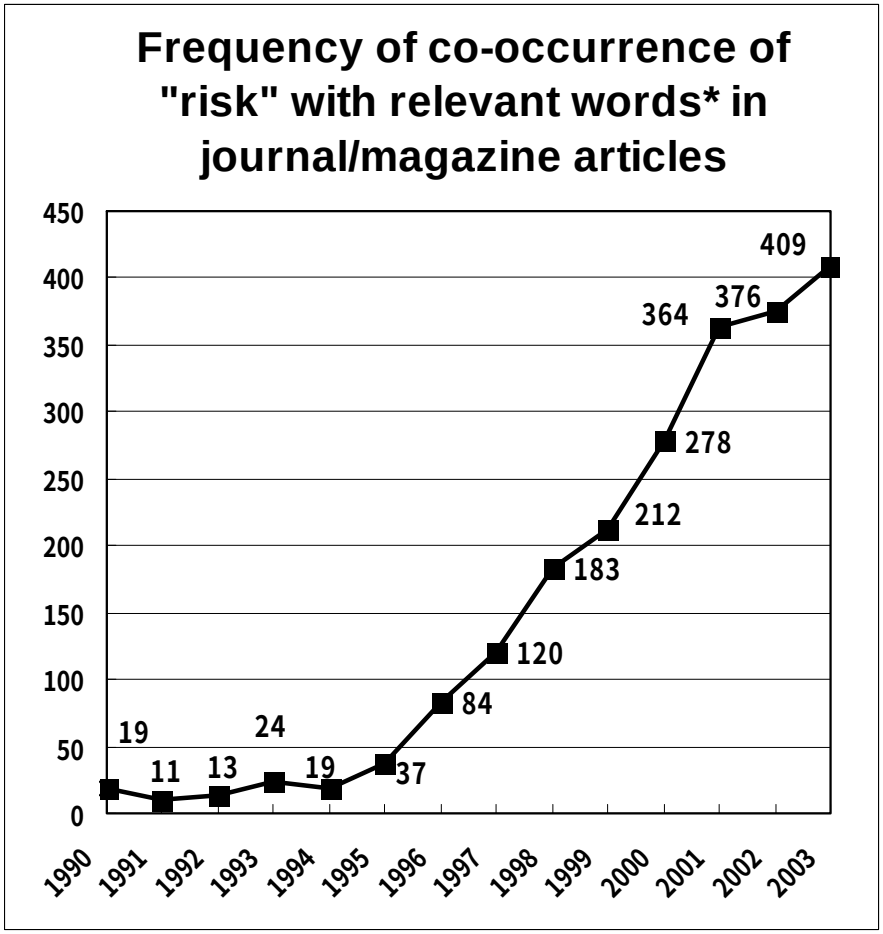
1. What is “Risk Discourse”?

- Discourse about risks in terms of the language of risk analysis:
  - ‘scientific risk’, “probability”, ‘risk assessment’, ‘risk management’, ‘risk communication’, ‘risk-benefit analysis’ etc…
- Function of risk discourse:
  - it works as an ideology to propagate the conception of risk analysis among general public, experts and policymakers and persuade people to think issues in a certain way.

2. Rise of Risk Discourse in Japan

- Rapid growth of risk discourse in late ’90s.





* Environment, nuclear, radioactive, health, food, chemicals, electro-magnetic waves, BSE, genetic, cloning, dioxin, PCBs, science, and technology

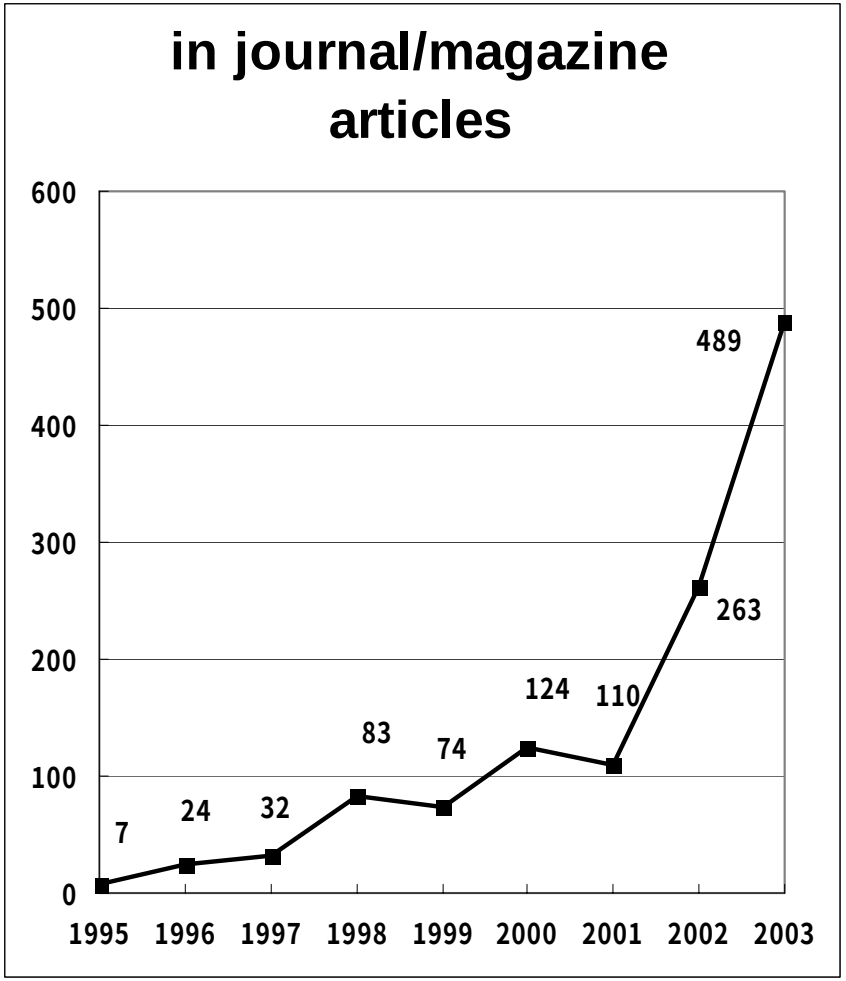
Background and Outcomes of the rise of RD

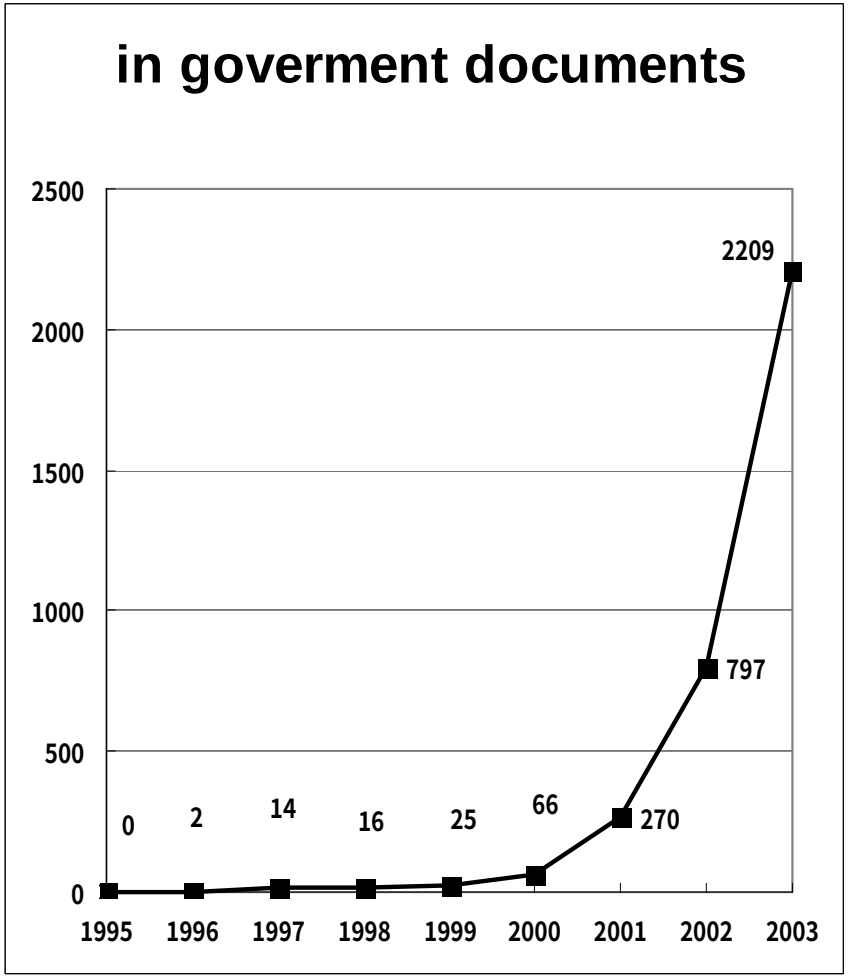
- Before ’95: “Safety Myth” denying the existence of risk
- Outbreak of various scientific and technological accidents since mid-‘90s and consequent decline of public confidence in science, technology, government and Industry.
  - Kobe Earthquake (Jan. 17, ‘95)
    - 6,433 died and US $180billion economic damage
  - Sodium leak accident at prototype fast breeder reactor (FBR) “Monju” (Dec. 8, ‘95)
  - Fire and explosion at reprocessing plant (Mar. 11, ‘97)
  - JCO (Japan Conversion Operation Co. Ltd.) criticality accident (Sep. 30, ‘99)
  - BSE crisis (Sep. 2001 ---) and other food scandals
- Political outcome:
  - Reformation of nuclear and food safety policy and administration (e.g. Food Safety Commission)
  - Promotion of Risk Communication

3. Division of “Safety” and “Sense of Security”

- Safety (*an-zen*: **安全**) is the states in which:
  - it is judged ***objectively*** that there is no damage on human and their communities and properties;
  - risks are minimized to the acceptable level for society (i.e. there is no such a thing as “zero risk”);
  - risks are identified and managed to minimized.
- Sense of security” (*an-shin*: **安心**)
  - strongly depends on individuals’ ***subjective*** judgment;
  - is a matter of trust between people and organizations;
  - is a state in which people keep themselves ready for emergency.

Frequency of Co-occurrence of "Safety" and "Sense of Security"





Political & Conceptual Roots of the Division

- Government's documents:
  - National Lifestyle Council's report ('92): *Basic Measures for Realization of Lifestyle with the Easefulness, Sense of Security and Diversity*
  - Economic Planning Agency: *White Paper on the National Lifestyle 1996: Redesigning Safe and Secure Life*
  - Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology ('04): *Report on Science and Technology Policy for Establishing Safe and Secure Society*.
- BSE countermeasure: blanket screening test (BST)
  - measure against public distrust, led by politicians acknowledging psychological/sociopolitical dimensions of risk issue beyond science.

  ← Beyond scientism, but lots of problems….

4. Classification of Usage of the Division (1)

1. Scientism (technocracy): No division
   - Safety is the necessary & sufficient condition for sense of safety
   - If the publics understand the safety or the nature of risks scientifically, then they have a sense of security.
   - Conversely, if they still claim fear, it is irrational, or even pathological obsession due to the lack of scientific way of thinking
   - Calling for PUS, science literacy, science education, etc, based on the deficit model
   - Risk communication is an one-way process

Classification of Usage of the Division (2)

2. Instrumentalistic division of labor
   - Safety is the business of science, while the sense of security is the business of psychology.
   - Calling for social psychology studies of risk perception
   - Risk communication as social engineering
3. Science/politics division of labor:
   - Safety is the business of science, while the sense of security is the matter of communication, mutual understanding and trust.
   - Risk management process is subject to public deliberation, while risk assessment is not.
   - Risk communication for information sharing, exchange of opinions about risk management, mutual understanding and trust.

Classification of Usage of the Division (3)

4. Downstream democratization of “S&T governance”
   - Both safety and sense of security are subject to public deliberation;
   - Risk assessment as well as risk management are open to the public scrutiny and deliberation, based on the recognition that:
     - Science in regulatory decisionmaking always operates within a specific social, political, cultural and economic context, and
     - risk assessments always involve the analysis of selected scientific information within a prior set of non-scientific considerations (social framing assumptions).
   - But the deliberation is exclusively limited to the issues concerning “risk”, backend/downstream element of whole process of “Science and Technology Governance”.

Classification of Usage of the Division (4)

5. Full democratization of “S&T governance”:
   - the issues of S&T governance are not limited to the backend/downstream element of S&T enterprises (i.e. risk), but include the frontend/upstream elements such as design, planning, driving purposes, interests, necessity, etc... (B.Wynne)

Evolutionary Stages of Democratization

1. Scientism

safety = s. security

2. Instrumental division of labor

safety = science + s. security = psychology

3. Science/politics division of labor

safety = science + s. security = politics

5. *Upstream*

R&D
design/planning, purpose, interests, necessity, etc…

4. *Downstream*

Risk analysis
= safety + s. security
= science + politics

Degree of Democratization