

# Cultural Models and Risk Perception

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# What *is* a Cultural Model?

- Social construct
- Mental model or schema
- Usually implicit

# Facets of Risk Perception

- Dread
- Control
- Familiarity
- Voluntariness
- Natural
- Fairness

# Facets of Risk Perception

- Memorability
- Size
- Moral relevance
- Detectability
- Source
- Benefits

# Example Models

- *Expert*
- “In Science We Trust”
- Appeal to authority
- Depersonalized risk
- Narrow boundaries
- *Citizen*
- “In People (Politics?) We Trust”
- Appeal to people
- Personalized risk
- Broad boundaries

# Example Models

- *Expert*
- Emphasize statistical variation
- Focus on consistency
- Status prevails
- Can't measure = irrelevant
- *Citizen*
- Emphasize impacts of risk
- Focus on specifics
- Status irrelevant
- Can't measure = still relevant

# Example Social Groups

- **Scientists**
- See the details
- “It’s not that simple”
- Set selves apart
- Usually introverts
- Want status
- **Politicians**
- See the big picture
- “It’s just that simple”
- Immerse selves
- Usually extraverts
- Want re-election

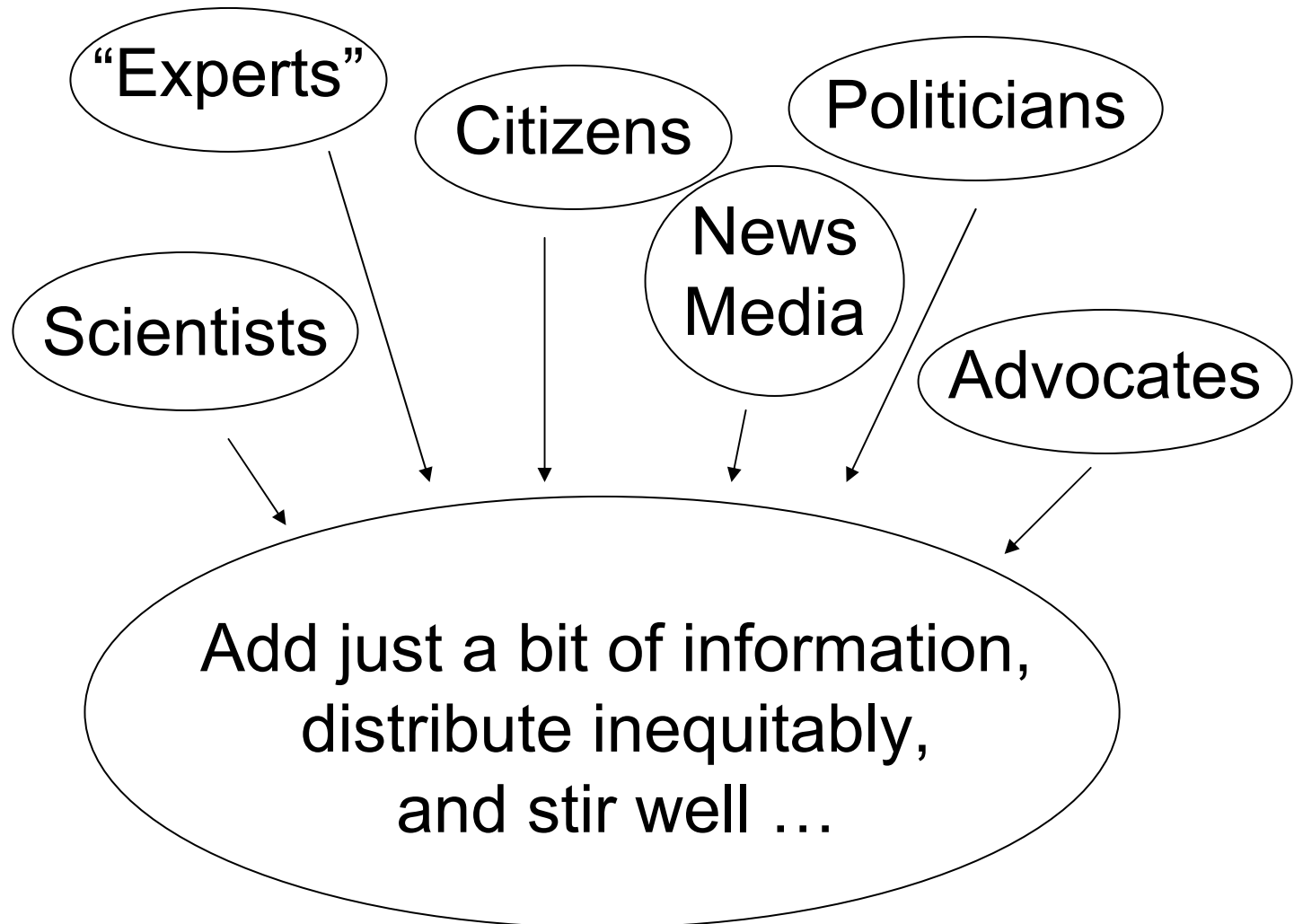
# Example Social Groups

- **Advocates**
- Emphasize “taking it personally”
- Want publicity
- May want conflict
- May have hidden or unclear agenda
- **News Media**
- Want to sell papers, ads, etc.
- Know what sells
- Engage people
- May have limited tech. background

# Context

- Risk Perception
- Trust & Credibility
- News Media
- Advocates

# Into the Mixing Bowl ...



# Cultural Models for GMOs

- Uncertainty
- Mistrust
- Fear
- Involuntary risk ...
- ... for someone else's benefit

# For Positive Models

- Create an atmosphere of trust
- Take citizens' concerns seriously
- Communicate clearly
- Treat citizens as legitimate partners