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Securitization of Health and Environmental Issues: Process and Effects. A research outline.

Aline Leboeuf
Emma Broughton

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SECURITIZATION OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES: PROCESS AND EFFECTS
A research outline

Be it HIV/AIDS, avian influenza, climate change, etc., many health and environmental issues are now commonplace in international news, political debates, and even global policy arenas like the United Nations Security Council. However, not so many years ago, those subjects were still taken to be secondary, technical issues having to be dealt with at the national level, with the rare occasion when international cooperation was prescribed. Why did the worlds of health and environment become so important in the national and international policy agendas? This article posits that such a development is the result of a growing conceptualisation of health and environmental issues as *security* issues. From the moment an issue is perceived to have potentially negative implications on "our" security – because it results in too many deaths, or inflicts too much damage, for instance, it takes on increased significance and importance; we will be more inclined to devote part of our limited resources to our own protection against this perceived threat. As a result, actions, albeit only declaratory, will often be taken.

At the heart of our research lies a fundamental interest that is not geared towards the process through which a health or environmental issue *becomes* a security issue – what, as many others, we call here the process of "securitization" – but towards the impacts, the consequences and the effects of this process. As such, the three-year research programme that we are launching with this working paper will focus on the *impacts* of the securitization process.[1]

Before one can start working on the impact of a particular object of study, one must first understand the very nature of this object. This paper thus puts forward a description and an analysis of the process of securitization of health and environment, and sets the stage for our future work on the effects of this securitization.

Health and environmental issues have been increasingly "securitized" in the last twenty years. In other words, they have increasingly been considered as security issues. This securitization process has had many effects, one of which being that it contributed to raise the stakes of several issues linked to global health and the environment, like HIV/AIDS or global warming. It also encouraged the development of new policies, the creation of new agencies, institutions, norms, or governance options to try to solve these issues.

This article aims at retracing the history of this securitization process in a broad way. First, it describes how two main schools of thought contributed to the linkage of health and environmental issues and security. Second, it underlines the heterogeneous nature of this

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very process in terms of the different international actors involved, the different chronologies and the specific issues within the field of health and environment that gained most attention as "security issues". In a third part, we will attempt to show what some of the results of this securitization process might be, in terms of global governance or of its impact on global health and environmental issues themselves. What do we know, what hypothesies can one draw, and what would require complementary research? On the basis of this state-of-the-art review, we will expose the research outline that will be followed throughout the three-year program "Health and Environment: from Security and Safety issues to New Governance Options" conducted at the French Institute for International Relations (Ifri).

A chaotic process at the crossroads of two main schools of thought

Even before the Cold War came to an end, and increasingly so since, new discourses have emerged that have depicted health and environmental issues as being linked to "security". This ideational movement grew out of an expanding consensus on the need to enlarge the field of security studies and the concept of security beyond the bounds of the military sector. The analysis of security, threats and risks, especially in the absence of an obvious enemy or principal adversary, had to take into account threats emanating from the economic, environmental or societal fields, to name but a few.

The actual process through which an economic, societal or, for what concerns us, environmental or health issue becomes conceptualised as a security issue in the minds of policy makers, members of the civil society or simply citizens, the so-called securitization process, was first exposed by Ole Waever in his seminal article "Securitization and Desecuritization".[2] While Ole Waever's article lays the conceptual ground for a new perspective on security studies, it is not until the publication of *Security: A New Framework For Analysis*[3] that the theoretical implications and the practical potentialities of the concept of securitization are fully developed. In this book, a "new framework" for the analysis of security issues is effectively devised, enabling the enlargement of the field of security studies and providing a first analysis of the economic, environmental or societal security sectors. "Securitization" is described as the discursive process through which an issue "is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure".[4]

We do not intend here to give a comprehensive view of this chaotic process, but rather wish to focus on what appear to be the main securitization trends, first by presenting briefly the two main securitization approaches (based on traditional and human security)[5], and second by giving a more precise analysis of the securitization of some specific issues.

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2 O. Waever, "Securitization and Desecuritization", *in* R.D. Lipschutz (ed.), *On Security*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1995.
3 B. Buzan, O. Waever and J. De Wilde, *Security : A New Framework for Analysis,* Boulder, Lynne Rienner, 1998.
4 Ibid., pp. 23-24
5 There are other schools of analysis than the two presented here who have contributed to this debate. For more details, refer to K. Lee and C. McInnes, "Health, Foreign Policy & Security, A Discussion Paper", *UK Global Health Programme Working Paper*, n° 1, 2003.

Environment and health as limited resources one has to defend (traditional security approach)

Environment first emerged as a security issue as part of a Malthusian interpretation of global issues. If the Club de Rome's *The Limits To Growth*, published in 1972, focused predominantly on economic issues, the conceptualisation of environmental resources (land, water, air, wood, raw materials, etc.) as both necessary to human life and in limited access and availability gave those ressources a strategic dimension: having them or not could be of national interest.[6] Conflicts and divisions could thus be expected to arise among the many countries and groups competing for access, and environmental scarcity could potentially be used strategically to weaken one's enemy, through the targeting of environmental resources during a conflict, for example. According to this approach, which does not differ greatly from traditional strategic or realist international school thinking, environment is a security issue because environmental resources are strategic: they have to be protected and are worth fighting for.

With the end of the Cold War, this approach, which had emerged more than a decade previously, became highly visible. As some conflicts in the South, which were "read" until then using the "West vs. East" lens, survived the fall of the Soviet Union, it became necessary to find a way to explain their persistence outside the framework of the Cold War. The "resource conflicts" thesis emerged as an interesting and attractive replacement, and led to the development of a popular and influential research program, spearheaded by researchers like Thomas Homer-Dixon or Nils Petter Gleditsch.[7] Journalist and writer Robert Kaplan was also key in popularising the "resource conflict" themes and ideas through his essay "The Coming Anarchy", which figures African wars as examples of wars caused by environmental collapse.[8]

The outbreak and development of the Gulf War also played a part in the democratisation of the "resource conflict" thesis, by showing how the environment could become an indirect military target.[9] The work of Peter Gleick is key in this respect. He showed how the use of environmental resources, even in a non-strategic way – the reduction of resources due to industrial pollution, for example – can lead to conflict as it reduces the resources available for others. He also foresaw, as early as 1991, the conflictual potential of the phenomenon of global climate change, "already evident in the growing split between rich and poor countries in the international negotiations over a framework convention on climate change."[10]

The "resource conflict" framework of analysis can also help us make sense of frozen bilateral conflicts between ex-communist East-European countries that, for some, were

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6 D.L. Meadows et al., *The Limits to Growth,* New York, Universe Books, 1972.

7 T. Homer-Dixon and M.A. Levy, "Correspondence, Environment and Security", *International Security*, vol. 20, n° 3, 1995/1996; N.P. Gleditsch, *Conflict and the Environment*, Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic, 1997; P.F. Diehl and N.P. Gleditsch (eds.), *Environmental Conflict*, Boulder (Colorado), Westview Press, 2001. For a critique of the "resource conflict" thesis, see D. Deudney and R.A. Mathew (eds.), *Contested Grounds. Security and Conflict in the Environmental Politics,* New York, State University of NY Press, 1999.

8 R. Kaplan, "The coming anarchy: how scarcity, crime, overpopulation and disease are rapidly destroying the social fabric of our planet", *The Atlantic Monthly*, February 1994. His thesis was criticized by anthropologists like Paul Richards, who underlined the specific rationality and sociologic dynamics of those conflicts. P. Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest. War, Youth & Resources in Sierra Leone*, Oxford, James Currey, 1996.

9 P.H. Gleick writes that "Never before has the environment been used on such a scale as an intentional military target". P.H. Gleick, "Environment and Security: The Clear Connections", *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, vol. 47, n° 3, p. 17, April 1991.

10 Ibid.

rooted in environmental issues – unsolved transborder pollution issues, for example.[11] Over the years, the issue of "water wars" became another popular example of how limited environmental resources could have a strategic dimension, and led to a significant amount of research.[12] Today, discussions on energy security seem often to reflect an approach similar to that used for the management of environmental issues, particularly with regards to oil and gas security. The conjunction of constrained supplies, vulnerable to the political agendas and/or instability of supplier states and to terrorist attacks, and of a high level of dependence on such resources on the demand-side – a demand that is bound to increase as countries like China, India, Brazil etc. develop further – encourages the framing of energy questions as security issues: scarce energy resources are crucial to a state's economy and must be secured.[13]

Discourses on global health issues have also hinged, since the 1990's, on a conceptualisation of health as a limited resource to be defended. Drawing on historical examples elucidating the use of contagious diseases as weapons of war, or the deathly potential of epidemics,[14] researchers have shown the importance of protecting the health of military institutions but also of populations more generally, as a way of protecting states from the destabilising potential of contagious diseases.[15] A number of researchers from this school of thought focused at the end of the Cold War on the threat posed by biological weapons, as new knowledge on Soviet programmes (Biopreparat) was made available, as well as bioterrorism and poor safety measures on scientific sites.[16]

Infectious diseases, whether emerging or re-emerging, also stimulated strong interest, especially in the United States during the Clinton era. At the end of the XXth century, HIV/AIDS came to be fully securitized.[17] Infectious diseases were then perceived as a threat not so much because of their usefulness as weapons or their weakening potential for western militaries, but because of their destabilising potential at the social, economic, and political levels that threatened to spread anarchy within societies. By causing the death of

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11 Up to what point a transborder pollution dispute has the potential to lead to conflict is a question that is still open to discussion. As one study of our program will show, there is a long history of transborder pollution disputes, but actual cases of open conflicts due to such a dispute may be much rarer.

12 See for example the work undertaken by the "Environment and Security Program" of the Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, whose President has been Peter Gleick since 1987 (the work performed by the "Environment and Security Program" is now performed under other programs). Their "Water Conflict Chronology" and "Bibliography" can be found at this address: <`http://worldwater.org`>, accessed 9 April 2008. A resource page on "Water in Conflict" can be found on the Global Policy Forum website: <`http://www.globalpolicy.org`>, accessed 9 April 2008.

13 D. Yergin, "Ensuring Energy Security", *Foreign Affairs,* vol. 85, n° 2, March/April 2006. The United States's energy policy, for example, outlines the strategic dimension of energy, and more specifically the national security vulnerabilities that dependence on imported energy generates. See for example Council of Foreign Relations, "National Security Consequences of U.S. Oil Dependency", *Independent Task Force Report,* n° 58, October 2006. The disputes that Russia has had over the past three years over gas prices with Ukraine and Belarus, with the consequences these had on German, Austrian or Polish supplies, have also contributed to the increasing securitization of energy resources, by making evident to policy makers and populations both the high level of dependence of the European Union on Russia for gas supplies, and the implications this situation might have for the EU's national security. Some analysts even warned, on this occasion, against the advent of a "New Cold War" (E. Lucas, *The New Cold War: Putin's Russia and the Threat to the West,* Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008; L. Fox, "Energy: the New Cold War", *The Times,* 15 July 2007*)*; see also Z. Baran, "EU Energy Security: Time to End Russian Leverage", *The Washington Quarterly,* vol. 30, n° 4, autumn 2007.

14 For example, W. McNeil, *Plagues and People*, New York, Doubleday, 1976; H. Zinsser, *Rats, Lice and History*, London, Routledge, 1935.

15 A.T. Price-Smith, *The Health of Nations, Infectious disease, Environmental Change, and Their Effects on National Security and Development*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 2002.

16 K. Lee and C. McInnes, "Health, Foreign Policy & Security, A Discussion Paper", *UK Global Health Programme Working Paper*, n° 1, 2003.

17 See for example S. Elbe, "Strategic Implications of HIV/AIDS", *Adelphi Papers*, n° 357, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003.

key individuals within the state apparatus, epidemics would weaken those states and their security structures, move power balances in non-linear and unforeseeable ways, and call for stabilisation means far beyond the limited resources of international peacekeeping operations, already weakened by the epidemics.

Environment and health as common goods (human or global security approach)

In parallel to this traditional security approach of environment and health issues, a body of work, often linked to the field of development studies, has developed, taking as its departure point the conceptualisation of health and environment as "common goods", essential to the preservation of "human", global or enlarged security.[18] At the root of this approach lies a new understanding of security as the protection of communities, individuals, and even basic needs – food, housing, education, health, etc. – rather than the protection of the state, its territory and its interests.[19] Many definitions or conceptualisations of this global/common/human security coexist[20] but all have in common the integration of health and environment, or some parts of it, in their conception of security. This approach is deemed to be potentially problematic at the practical level, as it allows for a quasi-limitless enlargement of the field of security studies to every issue that can affect individuals and their quality of life. The process through which states prioritise security issues could thus be rendered more complex.

Marie-Claude Smouts reminds us that as early as 1982, the Palme Commission[21] called for the adoption of a more global vision of security, "common security", to face two planet-wide threats: nuclear war and environmental degradation. Just before the Rio Conference on environment and development of 1992, the Brundtland report "Our Common Future", and later several other development-inspired reports, also contributed to enlarge the concept of security and make policy-makers and the public aware of the threat to the living world posed by different forms of environmental degradation.

At the further end of the spectrum of "environmental security" are the proponents of "ecological security", like Dennis Pirages, who prioritise threats to the environment above all others, as the ultimate threat to human beings.[22] The planet and all living entities are the referent objects of this securitization and therefore deserve protection. Kelley Lee and Colin

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18 According to David Fidler, Richard Ullman was the first academic to propose an enlarged definition of security. He was, however, drawing on the movement started in the 70s by

> a vast array of public interest organizations [which had] begun to put forward alternate conceptions of national security […] devoted to particular issues-limiting population growth, enhancing environmental quality, eradicating world hunger, protecting human rights, and the like.

R. Ullman, "Redefining Security", *International Security*, vol. 8, n° 1, Summer 1983, quoted by D. Fidler, 1st January 2003, "Public Health and National Security in the Global Age: Infectious Diseases, Bioterrorism, and Realpolitik", *The Georges Washington International Law Review*. <http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa5433/is_200301/ai_n21341887/print>, accessed 7 April 2008.>, accessed April 7, 2008; P. H. Liotta and A. W. Shearer, *Gaia's Revenge, Climate Change and Humanity's Loss*, Westport, Praeger, 2007.
19 See for example J. Barnett, *The meaning of Environmental Security. Ecological Politics and Policy in the New Security Era*, London, Zed Books, 2001.
20 For two more precise but different presentations of the different approaches, see K. Lee and C. McInnes, 2003, op. cit. or D. Fidler, 1st January 2003, op. cit.
21 Independent commission created under the aegis of the UN, it is well known for its report "Common Security. A Programme for Disarmament", *The Report of the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues Under the Chairmanship of Olaf Palme,* London, Pan, 1982; M-C. Smouts, "Risque planétaire et sécurité environnementale", *Esprit*, n° 274, May 2001.
22 D. Fidler,1st January 2003, op. cit.

McInnes argue that in this vision, "human health is intimately dependent on the integrity of the planet and its ecosystems",[23] but health is not as such a security issue. It should, however, be noted that an increasing number of researchers and analysts working on health security – especially on diseases – are taking into account the interaction between the environment and global health.[24]

On the health side, the UNDP Human Development Report of 1994 that popularised the "human security" concept mentions protection from chronic threats, including diseases, as one of the elements of security.[25] But the securitization of "health" itself by this school of thought is a later phenomenon. Lincoln C. Chen contributed to the integration of health as a component of human security, including in the official global policy arena, through the final report of the Commission on Human Security in 2003, "Human Security Now", which includes a chapter on health.[26] In this report, the problem of the prioritisation of human security issues was solved as three issues were highlighted – "health crisis during conflicts and humanitarian emergencies, infectious diseases, and the health problem of poverty and inequity" – through the use of four criteria: "scale, urgency, intensity, and externalities."[27] It is interesting to note that these three issues correspond to what international development agencies consider as being some of their core missions; the report therefore contributes to legitimate those interventions. Lincoln C. Chen indeed notes that "[o]ne of the political purposes of labelling health a human security threat is implicitly to argue for adequate public expenditures for primary health care."[28]

Heterogeneity of the securitization process

Whatever the instrumental reasons behind the securitization process, one has to acknowledge that it has been – and remains – a highly heterogeneous process. The concept of "environmental security" was popularised during the 80s, and yet authors like Robert M. Mcab are still concerned that:

> *Researchers and policy makers have been unable to reach consensus on what constitutes environmental, human and national security, as what, if any, relationships exist between these variables.*[29]

There is no such consensus either on the relationships between health and security. This situation is hardly surprising when one considers the variety of actors that have engaged in this debate in the space of twenty years, and the variety of interests many of

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23 K. Lee and C. McInnes, 2003, op. cit.

24 See for example, A. T. Price-Smith, 2002, op. cit.

25 P.H. Liotta and A.W. Shearer, 2007, op. cit.

26 L.C. Chen et al., "Human Security Now: Protecting and Empowering People", *Commission on Human Security*, New York, 2003. Lincoln C. Chen also published two books and an issue of a journal on the issue: L.C. Chen, S. Fukuda-Parr and E. Seidensticker (eds.), *Human Insecurity in a Global World*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 2003; L.C. Chen, J. Leaning and V. Narasimhan (eds), *Global Health Challenges for Human Security*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 2003; *Journal of Human Development*, vol. 4, n° 2, 2003.

27 L.C. Chen, "Health as a Human Security Priority for the 21st Century", *Paper for Human Security Track III*, Helsinki Process, 7 December 2004. <www.helsinkiprocess.fi/netcomm/ImgLib/24/89/LCHelsinkiPaper12%5B1%5D.6.04.pdf>, accessed 21 January 2008.

28 Ibid.

29 R.M. McCab and K.S. Bailey, "Latin America and the debate over environmental protection and national security", *DISAM Journal,* December 2007. <http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0IAJ/is_4_29/ai_n2461646/print>, accessed 1st April 2008.

those discourses were meant to defend. Securitization discourses were indeed often instrumental, and meant to raise the stakes of given issues to justify specific policies and approaches, or increased resources. As such, they raised the suspicion of analysts who considered such discourses unnecessary, "muddl[ed]",[30] or even dangerous.

A non linear process

David Fidler, in a paper from 2001, reflects on the history of international health diplomacy. He shows how European states began to develop an international framework for cooperation on health issues, as well as a body of law. These initiatives took as their departure point the realisation that the process that we now call "globalisation", spearheaded at the time by railways and faster ships, was making the task of controlling epidemics more difficult. The 1851 first International Sanitary Conference discussed cholera, plague and yellow fever, and more specifically the failure of national policies, such as quarantine measures, to prevent or curb the spread of epidemics. It did so amidst strong discontent from representatives of the trade business, who feared that measures taken to prevent the spread of diseases would affect international trade and thus lobbied states for measures safeguarding international cooperation. According to Fidler, other "global public health risks" that mobilised the international interest included occupational safety and health (creation of the International Labour Organisation in 1919), transboundary water pollution (ten treaties signed between 1869 and 1944) and international trade in narcotic drugs and alcohol.[31] Fidler, however, does not consider these developments as early signs of a securitization process, but rather as the results of a diplomatic process between states for whom health remained a secondary issue, not to be equated "to the heights of the 'high politics' of national security."[32] Nonetheless, these developments have laid the ground for the securitization of health and environmental issues in a similar but more favourable context (absence of major threats, formal homogeneity of the international system, strengthening of the globalisation movement, development of a large movement of non state actors eager to have a larger influence in world governance). The role played by these early developments for the emergence of today's securitization discourses can be analogised to the preparatory role played by the XIXth century humanitarian movements for the development of humanitarian interventions in the 1990's.

Nonetheless, and these connections aside, health and environmental securitization only really took hold in the political and public arena in the 1990's. Furthermore, the process of securitization, since its inception, has been and remains non-linear: some health and environment issues rose onto the agendas of states and then disappeared, only to reappear again subsequently.

Before we move to the description and analysis of the securitization of such specific issues, the heterogeneous nature of the securitization process in terms of its *geographical* origin will be exposed.

Lost within so many voices: A specific geography of securitization

One can quite easily map out the main geographical areas and actors who have contributed to devise the new health and environment security agenda, even if a multitude of voices have participated, at their own level, to this process. These central actors are indeed in a limited

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30 D. Deudney, "Environment and Security: Muddled Thinking", *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, vol. 47, n° 3, April 1991.
31 D. Fidler, "The globalization of public health: the first 100 years", *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, n° 79, 2001.
32 D. Fidler, 1st January 2003, op. cit.

number: states like the United States and Canada, supported by the United Kingdom and Australia (and other voices from think tanks or non governmental organisations from those countries), have had a huge impact. International organisations like the UNDP and the World Health Organization also contributed directly to the development of health and environmental security policies and discourses, to the point that some have wondered if these organizations did not adopt and defend the vested interests of their main founders rather than those of the poor countries. Other states and institutions have also had a more limited or marginal influence on the securitization process, but we focus here on the more vocal and visible actors.

The United States, with an obvious "national security" approach, have clearly been the leading state actor in health and environmental securitization. This leadership position could be attributed to the sheer size of the International Relations and security research field in the U.S., and its privileged position and relationship with administrations and policy-makers. The securitization of health and environmental issues took hold in the U.S. specifically during the Clinton administration – possibly on account of the need to find "new" issues to justify the maintenance of Cold War levels of State expenditures. Environment was first mentioned as a security issue in Bush's 1991 *National Security Strategy* (NSS), which states that "we must arrange Earth's natural resources in ways that protect the potential for growth and opportunity for present and future generations."[33] In his 1994 NSS, Clinton declared that "environmental degradation" was a security risk.[34] During his term, he also emphasised that infectious diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, posed "a threat to US national security because of its catastrophic social consequences, particularly in the developing world."[35] Since then, health and environment have remained on the U.S. security agenda but always as secondary security issues, especially when compared to the importance given to other threats, such as terrorism.

Canada has also played a leading role in the securitization of environmental and health issues, through a human security approach to foreign policy making. The concept of human security was adopted as a "foreign policy leitmotif" in Canada's diplomacy and indeed as a central component of its self-identity, both on the national and the international stage. The strategy of elevating human security issues to the sphere of "high politics" served to strengthen Canada's status as a middle power in the international community.[36] This strategy is now a key and central asset of Canada's foreign policy, and informs its seizure of related questions such as health and environmental issues. Sara Davies notes that Canada "hosted the first G7 plus Mexico ministerial meeting which led to the Ottawa Plan [for improving health security] and the Global Health Security Initiative in November 2003". In terms of environmental security, the team of Canadian negotiators were key actors[37] in the ratification of the breakthrough Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer of 1987, which recognized the "adverse effects resulting or likely to result from human activities which modify or are likely to modify the ozone layer."[38] and paved the way for global cooperation on environmental issues. Moreover, much of the academic research made on the links between environmental scarcity and conflict was carried out by Thomas Homer-Dixon and his team of

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33 U.S. President (1989-1993, Georges W. Bush), *National Security Strategy*, Washington D.C., U.S. Governement Printing Office,1991; quoted by P.H. Liotta and A.W. Shearer, 2007, op. cit.
34 U.S. President (1993-2001, William J. Clinton), *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, Washington D.C., U.S. Governement Printing Office, 1994, quoted by P.H. Liotta and A.W. Shearer, 2007, op. cit.
35 Anon., "AIDS pandemic declared threat to U.S. national security", *CNN,* 30 April 2000. <http://archives.cnn.com/2000/US/04/30/aids.threat.02/>, accessed 7 May 2008; D. Fidler, 1st January 2003, op. cit.; S.E. Davis, "Securitizing infectious disease", *International Affairs*, vol. 84, n° 2, 2008.
36 A. Shurke, "Human Security and the Interests of States", *Security Dialogue,* vol. 30, n° 3, 1999.
37 Anon., "The Montreal Protocol: Twenty Years of Progress", *EnviroZine,* vol. 75, 2007.
38 United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, 1985.

researchers at the University of Toronto. Projects such as the *Global Environmental Change and Human Security Project* also originate in Canada (University of Victoria).[39]

Interestingly, for both states, discourses were often ahead of the reality on the ground but did not prepare them adequately for it: both states were caught unawares by the Anthrax attacks, in the case of the United States, and by the outbreak of SRAS in Toronto in 2003, in the case of Canada.

The United Kingdom and Australia, as well as Norway, Denmark or the Netherlands, have also contributed to the securitization of health and environmental issues but appear to have been less influential, even if the UK is now very vocal in its promotion of climate change as the main security threat facing the world today (cf. infra).

Intergovernmental agencies like the World Health Organization (WHO) also played a leading role in the securitization process. We have already made mention of several reports originating from the UN that contributed to the redefinition of security and its linkage to health and environmental issues. Sara Davies has shown that the WHO, after some initial hesitations, supported the call for the securitization of infectious diseases. It adopted an approach heavily influenced by the vision and interests of its main donors – Western states – but managed nonetheless to strengthen its own position within a new global health governance regime.[40] The WHO today seems reluctant to push for the securitization of new health issues such as food security or obesity.[41] This may be linked to the limited mandate of the WHO, or to the possible reluctance of states to securitize such issues, especially when this involves the relinquishment of their power and control over them. There is however a possibility that food scarcity be securitized in the coming years: food shortages are growing in scale and becoming more deathly, as the current crisis shows, and actors from the trade business could be tempted to launch securitizing moves in order to ensure the maintenance of trade networks.

In addition to the main state actors, like the United States, and intergovernmental organisations, like WHO or UNDP, a third group of actors participates in the securitizing game. Some non-state actors (NGOs, lobbies, think tanks) indeed use the prominence of the human security agenda on the international stage to promote and legitimise their own actions, geared towards the protection of individuals, and to upload their own agendas on the agendas of states or international organisations. Through the creation of a "buzz" around certain issues, such organisations have managed to set up global campaigns, in more or less organised ways. Table 1 (infra) proposes a list of some of the key reports produced by those actors and gives an idea of this heterogeneous process. Whatever the differences, tensions and competition that exist between all these actors, they are united in their claim to a role in what Fidler calls the "open-source anarchy", in reference to the anarchical system of international relations theorised by International Relations scholars, and to the "open source" movement in the software development field. In this specific type of "governance space, […] accessible to, and shaped by, non-state actors as well as States", non-State and State actors compete and contribute to transform and modify the global health and global environment "source code" or more precisely:

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39 R.A. Matthew, "The Environment as a National Security Issue", *Journal of Policy History,* vol. 12, n° 1, 2000.

40 S.E. Davis, 2008, op. cit.

41 For example, in one of its report, WHO Europe mentions that "Food safety and food security, access to safe water, clean air and affordable energy supply are also intimately linked to health in a number of ways." But the report does not take them into account as "health security issues". G. Rockenschaub, J. Pukkila and M. Cristina Profili (eds.), "Towards Health security. A discussion paper on recent health crises in the WHO European Region", World Health Organization Discussion Paper*,* Copenhagen, World Health Organization Europe, 2007.

> *the collection of normative policy reasons that drive States, intergovernmental organizations, and non-State actors to pursue the protection and promotion of health [and environment] in world politics*[42]

Through this open source process of transformation of the health and environmental source code, even reluctant countries can be made to join the securitization movement through imitation, persuasion or pragmatism.[43] These countries can, however, keep a degree of distance from this discourse, or adopt a strongly realist approach to it.

The geographical divide between the promoters of this securitization process, largely based in the North, and the rest of the world, has the potential to trigger a new form of security dilemma. Health and environmental issues are considered by the majority of developed countries as security issues that need to be addressed hastily. In developing countries, however, and while health and environmental issues have gained greater saliency on national agendas in recent years, the highest priority issue for the development and stability of a state remains the issue of socio-economic development. Thus, while countries of the North have prioritised health and environmental issues and are ready to dedicate extraordinary measures to address them, developing countries have made it clear that they will welcome such measures only to the extent that they serve or leave unscathed their objective of socio-economic development. The global scope of health and environmental issues, which calls for global measures, might therefore bring developed countries to intervene outside their boundaries, creating resistance in the South against both those interventions and the discourse supporting it. This could in turn encourage developed countries to pursue even more forcefully their health and environmental security agenda, which they see as being in the interest of the South as well.

Such a process is arguably already under way, particularly for what concerns environmental security issues. The capping of carbon dioxide emissions, put forward within the framework of the UNFCCC negotiations as a possible way to curb global climate change, have been decried by developing countries as a threat to their livelihood through the imposition of constraints on their economic development. Emissions originating in developing countries have thus been coined "survival" emissions as opposed to the "luxury" emissions of developed countries.[44] In a similar logic, biofuels, because they may divert agricultural resources used by and for developing countries, have also been perceived as a threat.[45] This resistance to certain environmental security measures goes hand in hand with a resistance to the discourse supporting them, coined as a new form of colonialism: "ecocolonialism".[46]

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42 D.P. Fidler, "Architecture amidst Anarchy: Global Health's Quest for Governance", *Journal of Global Health Governance*, vol. 1, n° 1, January 2007. <http://diplomacy.shu.edu/academics/global_health/journal/PDF/Fidler-article.pdf>, accessed 6 April 2008.

43 See for example the case of China in V. Rollet, "Nouveau Concept de Sécurité et Gestion des Epidémies en Chine", *Politique et Sociétés,* vol. 25, n° 2/3, 2006.

44 Y. Kobayashi, "Navigating between "luxury" and "survival" emissions: tensions in China's multilateral and bilateral climate change diplomacy", 2003, *in* P.G. Harris (ed.), *Global Warming and East Asia: the Domestic and International Politics of Climate Change*, London, Routledge, 2003.

45 Anon., "Biofuels: A Disaster in the Making", *Energy Bulletin,* 31 October 2006.

46 See C. Beuermann, "China and Climate Change", 1997, *in* G. Fermann (ed.), *International Politics of Climate Change : Key Issues and Critical Actors*, Oslo, Scandinavian University Press, 1997; A.S. Hug Najam and Y Sokona, "Climate Negotiations Beyond Kyoto: Developing Countries Concern and Interests", *Climate Policy,* vol. 3, n° 3, 2003; C.P. Nielsen and M. B. McElroy, "Introduction and Overview", 1998, *in* M. B. McElroy, C. P. Nielsen and P. Lydon (eds.), *Energizing China,* Cambridge, Harvard University Committee on Environment, 1998; S.E. Davis, 2008, op. cit.; N.B. King, "Security, Disease, Commerce: Ideologies of Postcolonial Global Health", *Social Studies of Science*, vol. 32, n° 5/6, 2002.

Table 1: Some key reports from think-tanks, NGOs and IGOs[47]

Common Security: A Blueprint for Survival, report of the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues, 1982.

Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Annex I of the Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 1992.

S. Libiszewski, "What is Environmental Conflict", occasional paper from the Environment and Conflicts Project (ENCOP) of the Center for Security Studies and Conflict Research (ETH) and the Swiss Peace Foundation, 1992.

T. Homer-Dixon, "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases", report from the Peace and Conflict Studies Program of the University of Toronto, published in *International Security*, vol. 19, n° 1, Summer 1994.

Global Environmental Outlook-1 of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 1997.

W. Hauge and T. Ellingsen, "Beyond Environmental Scarcity: Causal Pathways to Conflict", report from the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, published in *Journal of Peace Research,* vol. 35, n° 3, 1998.

The Global Infectious Disease Threat and Its Implications for the United States, National Intelligence Estimate of the National Intelligence Council of the United States, January 2000.

M. Moodie and W.J. Taylor Jr, *Contagion and Conflict: Health as a Global Security Challenge*, joint research paper for the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the Chemical and Biological Arms Control Institute (CBACI), 2000.

"HIV/AIDS as a Security Issue", report of the International Crisis Group (ICG), *Issues Report*, n° 1, June 2001.

AIDS and Violent Conflict in Africa, special report of the US Institute of Peace, October 2001.

Abrupt Climate Change: Inevitable Surprises, report of the National Research Council, Washington D.C., National Academy Press, 2003.

Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 2003.

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47 This table, which is not comprehensive, is based on personal research and on D. Fidler, 1st January 2003, op. cit. and K. Lee et C. McInnes, 2003, op. cit.

> J. Brower and P. Chalk, *The Global Threat of New and Reemerging Infectious Diseases: Reconciling U.S. National Security and Public Health Policy*, RAND, 2003.
>
> M. S. Smolinski, M. A. Hambourg, Joshua Lederberg (eds.), *Microbial threats to health: emergence, detection and response*, Committee on Emerging Microbial Threats to Health in the 21st Century, Board on Global Health, US Institute of Medecine, Washington D.C., The National Academies Press, 2003.
>
> Adil Najam, *The Human Dimensions of Environmental Security: Some Insights from South Asia*, Report 9 of the Environmental Change and Security Project (ECSP), 2004.
>
> Laurie Garrett, *HIV and National Security: Where Are the Links?*, report of the Council of Foreign Relations, July 2005.
>
> C. Abbott, P. Rogers, J Sloboda, *Global Responses to Global Threats*, report of the Oxford Research Group, June 2006.

Various issues, more or less interest, different time scales

Some issues like climate change or infectious diseases caught the interest of researchers and policy makers alike and were, as a result, more convincingly securitized than was the "lumber room" of other health and environmental issues, like acid rain, forests, transborder environmental issues, non-infectious disease, etc. As Peter Liotta and Allan Shearer write:

> The list of environmental topics that have been suggested for inclusion as security issues is extensive and includes – in part – acid rain, fossil fuels, natural disasters, nuclear waste, oil crises, ozone depletion, rising sea levels, and soil degradation.[48]

However, those other issues often won their share of the public attention as part of a package of environmental or health issues, whose linkages with security called for concern. Individual mobilisation around these issues remains limited in time and space.

The securitizations of two specific issues, however, seem to have summoned an international, if uneasy, consensus; these are climate change and diseases. The process through which such a consensual situation was established was all but linear.

Climate change is an "old" issue; in 1992 already, the UN sponsored the Framework Convention on climate Change (UNFCCC). Its acceptance as a security issue has, however, been rather long, on account of the disagreements on the science of climate change: its causes (human and/or natural), its potential impact and the debate between prevention and adaptation strategies. As a result, recognition of climate change as a security issue by the American state is recent. The Department of Defence (DoD) has since played a leading role in pushing forward the issue on the national and international agenda. According to Peter. Liotta and Allan Shearer, Andrew Marshall, director of DoD's Office for Net Assessment (ODA), was the one who ordered the study "An Abrupt Climate Change Scenario and Its Implications for United States National Security" to foresight specialists Peter Schwarz and Doug Randall (Global Business Network, 2003)[49] after he read the National Academy of Sciences report "Abrupt Climate Change: Inevitable Surprises" (2002). This study had a huge

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48 P.H. Liotta and A.W. Shearer, 2007, op. cit., p. 26.
49 Ibid., p. 18.

public impact. The actual institutionalisation of climate change as a security issue within the DoD has been rather slow, even if several papers/articles/reports are slowly contributing to make the issue a security issue in its own right.[50] On the international arena, a UN Security Council (UNSC) debate on the impacts of climate change and its linkages to international security took place on April 17, 2008 "for the first time in history"; it was initiated by the United Kingdom, seemingly as a response to the Oxford Research Group's report "Global Responses to Global Threats" according to which the effects of climate change "have long-term security implications far greater than those of terrorism", and to the launch of the report of the Working Group II of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on the future impact of climate change on humankind.[51] The issue of global climate change seems therefore to have gone back and forth on the international agenda for the past twenty years.

The issue of infectious diseases has long been a concern of states and was one of the issues that led to the development of international health diplomacy (cf. supra). This did not prevent the issue from benefiting from fluctuating state support and interest since the end of the Cold War. As mentioned earlier, the issue only really became securitized in the U.S. during the Clinton administration, and even then, the National Intelligence Council's January 2000 report on "The Global Infectious Disease Threat and Its Implications for the United States in Foreign Affairs" raised the eyebrows of leading security experts such as Philip Zelikow, who found the case for securitization "thin".[52] It was not until the SRAS and the avian influenza epidemic that the "reality test" of health security issues was passed, forcing reluctant observers to acknowledge the national security dimension of epidemics. With such case studies, infectious diseases were further securitized.

It is crucial to bear in mind at this point that the process of securitization of an issue can vary with each securitizing actor. The threat of global warming, for example, while it is recognized by a great number of actors, can mean different things to different people. Thus one can detect four main securitizing discourses around the threat of climate change, built around the recognition of four different but non-exclusive referent objects: global climate change is framed as a threat to the earth's ecosystem; to our current conditions of life; to the security of individuals through the advent of natural disasters and increased resource scarcity (the two latter conceptions can both be seen as pertaining to the "human security" school of thought, the former putting forward much broader criteria for the definition of human security than the latter); to the security of states (the realist "resource conflict" conception). The nature of the threats posed to these referent objects are also varied: for some, human activity, broadly speaking, is responsible for global warming, while for others it is developed countries, or the capitalist nature of our economic system, which have to be held accountable. This heterogeneity also characterises the securitization of health issues. Still today, different conceptualisations of what should or should not make up the field of security studies are proposed and opposed through the advocacy of different international actors.

The securitization process is therefore not homogeneous, and neither is it linear, appearing intermittently on the agendas of international actors with fluctuating priority and focus. Nonetheless, the "speech acts"[53] that were and are carried out as part of this process

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50 J.T. Ackerman, "Climate Change, National Security, and the Quadrennial Defense Review. Avoiding the Prefect Storm", *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Spring 2008; The CNA Corporation, *National Security and the Threat of Climate Change,* 2007. <www.SecurityAndClimate.cna.org>, accessed 4 December 2007.

51 A. Roul, "Beyond Tradition: Securitization of Climate Change", *Society for the Study of Peace and Conflict*, Article n° 112, 1st May 2007. <http://www.sspconline.org/article_details.asp?artid=art124>, accessed 6 April 2008.

52 D.P. Fidler, 2003, op. cit.

53 The theory of "speech act" was first developed by J.L. Austin in J.L. Austin, *How To Do Things With Words,* Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1962. It was introduced in International Relations theory most prominently through the work of the German philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas of the school of Frankfurt. See for example J. Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action,* Boston, Beacon Press, 1984.

always had an impact that went beyond the reconceptualisation of the links between health, environment and security, and affected the very practise of health and environmental issues.

Why, then, is it so important to securitize health and environmental issues? Why and how does the process of securitization raise the stakes of specific issues? Answering these questions requires an exploration of the links existing between the definition of interests, on the one hand, and the actual mobilisation of resources, on the other.[54] While the reality of the existence of a "common interest" might seem disputable, anything shown to be promoting collective security does seem to have the power to muster and legitimise collective action, so central is the "security" mission in any collective entity, be it the state, the empire, or the UN. This has led some critics to argue that the extraordinary measures taken by states, particularly developed ones, as part of the securitization of health and environment, were a mobilisation of the rich to protect the poor only to the extent that such a mobilisation is in itself a way of protecting the rich.[55] Bill Foege thus recommends to"[t]ie the need of the poor with the fears of the rich. When the rich loose their fear, they are not willing to invest in the problems of the poor."[56]

But does it really work?

From securitization to action: impacts of the securitization process

The securitization processes of health and environment issues have often been well documented. Researchers have spent time and resources to try and demonstrate either the robustness or the fallacy of the causal links that are perceived to exist between security and the sectors of health and/or environment. However, the actual effects of these securitizations tend to be less analysed, and more thinly understood.[57] Using a constructivist approach, we argue that it is as interesting, insightful and/or important to assess the validity of a securitizing discourse as it is to study its effects: how is it used by policy-makers and different international actors to "make certain thing happen or not"? What are the unexpected results of those speech acts? We present here some general conclusions already put forward by researchers studying the securitization of HIV/AIDS, and then develop the framework of analysis that will support our own research, and present the methodology we intend to use.

The impact of securitization on HIV/AIDS

The securitization of HIV/AIDS aimed to increase the international resources dedicated to the fight against the disease. It resulted in a strong visibility of the issue, as exemplified by the debate on the HIV/AIDS crisis in sub-Saharan Africa in 2000 in the Security Council, and the

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54 P. Trenell, "The (Im)possibility of 'Environmental Security", *Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for MSc(Econ) in Security Studies*, University of Aberystwyth, September 2006. <http://cadair.aber.ac.uk/dspace/bitstream/2160/410/2/trenellpaulipm0060.pdf >, accessed 2 May 2008.

55 A. de Swam, "Project for a beneficial epidemic: On the collaborative aspects of contagion and prevention", 1998, *in* P H. Streefland (ed.), *Problems and Potentials in International Health: Transdisciplinary Perspectives*, Amsterdam, Het Spinhuis, 1998, quoted by A. Harmon and P. Streefland, "Sida en Afrique. A quand la Grande Peur de l'Occident?", *Critique Internationale*, n° 9, October 2000.

56 Ibid.

57 We will not discuss here available researches on the *impacts* of securitization, since this would justify the drafting of a completely different article. We will rather highlight their interest in forthcoming publications. We therefore decided to focus rather here on the example of HIV/AIDS.

adoption of resolution 1308 on HIV/AIDS that called for pre-deployment testing and counselling for peacekeeping personnel. Peter Piot, Executive Director of UNAIDS, played a key role in pushing the issue on the UNSC's agenda, contributing simultaneously to the prestige and visibility of this institution. The first effects of the securitization of HIV/AIDS seem to have been the elaboration of new international policies and the development of an improved status for the organization dealing with the issue. It also stimulated reluctant UN bodies to adopt internal policies taking into account the threat of HIV/AIDS (for example, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) put in place a specific policy to protect peacekeepers from getting HIV/AIDS).

How efficient were these developments practically? Did they help increase the resources dedicated to HIV/AIDS? Were those resources used in an efficient way?

Critics note that while more funding was indeed earmarked for the fight against HIV/AIDS, such resources were not always efficiently put to use, due to the weak infrastructures and capacities – such as dysfunctional health systems – of a number of African states affected by the epidemic. Moreover, increased resources sometimes led to the creation and the development of parallel systems devoted specifically to the HIV/AIDS epidemic (specific commissions, etc.), which impacted negatively on the functioning of the existing health system, and had the effect of increasing health problems in the countries concerned.[58]

Studying the impacts of securitization on global environmental and health governance: a research framework

We formulate the hypothesis that securitization processes led existing international actors to create, imagine and implement new options to increase their control and governance of health and environmental issues. Such options have proliferated with time and given way to a wide range of governance tools, from new institutions – be they regional/international organisations, intergovernmental organisations, NGOs, forums, etc. – new norms – international laws, regulations, gentlemen's agreements, etc. – or even what some have called "regimes" – complex systems of "governance options" which limit international anarchy and regulate actions of all actors in a given field. The long list of laws or treaties designed to regulate the environmental field, and the string of corresponding institutions set up to monitor compliance, exemplifies this development.[59]

The first level of our analysis will focus on the empirical description of the governance options that were created as a result of the securitization processes. The second level of analysis will focus on the study of the consequences that such new developments had on the global governance of health and the environment. Have they changed the balance of power

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58 P. Calain, "From the Field Side of the Binoculars: A Different View on Global Public Health Surveillance", *Health Policy and Planning*, vol. 22, 2007; S. Elbe, 2006, op. cit.; A.L. Colgan, "Hazardous to Health : the World Bank and IMF in Africa", *Africa Action Position Paper*, April 2002. <http://www.africaaction.org/action/sap0204.htm>, accessed 2 May 2008.

59 For example: Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (1989); Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (1989); Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (1993); International Tropical Timber Agreement (1994); Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1997); Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice (1998); Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade (1998); Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (2001); Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (2003); Protocol to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, (1972); and their corresponding bodies: Multilateral Fund for the Implementation and Non-Compliance Procedure of the Montreal Protocol; Compliance Committee of the Basel Protocol; Compliance Committee to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety; the Kyoto Protocol compliance mechanism; the Compliance Committee of the Aarhus Convention; Chemical Review Committee of the Rotterdam Convention.

between the South and the North, or between some categories of countries? Have they modified the relative influence and power of some leading actors in the international arena, like states, Intergovernmental Organizations or NGOs? Finally, the impact of the securitization process and of new governance options will be assessed in terms of efficiency. New governance options are not necessarily more efficient than existing ones to address health and environmental issues, nor an adequate solution to the initial environmental/health/security problem. We will therefore study the impacts of securitization both in terms of the global health and environmental regimes and the creation of governance options, and in terms of the actual practical health and environmental issues.

Methodology

What do we know, what do we do not know, and what would require complementary research? How to conduct it? At this stage of our research (which started in March 2008), we do not pretend to have reviewed and integrated all of the existing research on the securitization of environmental and health issues and on its consequences. We present here an introductory working paper. The study of existing research, as well as sustained exchanges with other interested researchers and academics, will be an ongoing effort of those involved in the research program.

The specific added value of our research program will be the conduct of three case studies each year exploring the impacts of the securitization of specific environmental and health crisis/problems in terms of governance and efficiency. Those case studies will lead to the publication of reports that will include a research-oriented section based on empirical comparative research and two more policy-oriented parts, offering a forecast analysis of the issue under study for one, and policy recommendations for the other.

Our methodology will be comparative. One of our first reports, which deals with a case of transborder industrial pollution, will systematically explore similar cases and draw comparisons.

Towards the end of the first part of our programme, which will last three years, we should therefore have at our disposal an interesting kaleidoscopic image of the state of health and environmental governance as a result of both fields' securitization. We will also be able to draw some conclusions, based on this research, to increase the efficiency of global governance and improve common security, health and environment.

As mentioned earlier, the collective dimension of any research work is essential to us, and highly valued. We have therefore decided to use our programme as a departure point for the creation of a global network of researchers, academics and policy-makers interested in the issue of health and environmental global governance. In that perspective, funding was secured to establish a systematic peer-review process for all our research, and to hold two annual "rendez-vous" for the network, through the organization of two free annual conferences.

Conclusion

At the heart of our project lies a key but simple hypothesis. As health and environmental issues are increasingly considered as having an impact on our security, as they are "securitized", such issues gain in prominence and importance on the agendas of international actors. We hypothesise that; as a result, many actors will alter their approach to these issues and devise new ways to address them, most notably through the freeing up and dedication of increased resources. Behavioural change could thus be understood to be stimulated, in part, by the process of securitization itself.

To test this hypothesis, we had first to set the foundations of our research by elucidating the meaning of securitization or, rather, by elucidating the multiple meanings of

securitization; for the core object of this research project is not what we, as researchers or scientists, consider to be "objective" security issues, but what different international actors *perceive* to be security issues. To do so, we presented the various schools of thought that contributed to and influenced the chaotic process of securitization of health and environmental issues. We then showed the heterogeneity of this process, exposing by the same token its variety and complexity. Finally, we presented the fundamental rationale of our research programme: understanding, testing and explaining the impacts, the consequences and the effects of the securitization process by focusing on specific health and environmental issues.

This research will be structured along two axis: the potential impacts of securitization on governance tools and mechanisms (What new forms of governance emerged as a result of the securitization of such and such issue?), and the potential impact of securitization on the health and environmental issues themselves (Were any solutions adopted? What was their impact? Did they solve the problems addressed, or make them worse?). It could well be that no impacts or effects generated by the securitization process are found. In this case, we will be able to prove our original hypothesis false.

This article is meant to provide the firm grounding onto which we develop an ambitious research programme on the effects, in terms of governance and efficiency, of the securitization of health and environmental issues. This programme is ambitious because it has the potential to assess the value – in terms of efficiency, potency, robustness…– of a much used rhetorical device: the framing of an issue as a "risk", a "threat", for political means. At this point in our research, we are not convinced this is the safest or most efficient way to implement convincing solutions to deal with global health and environmental issues, such as climate change or diseases. But the very objective of this research programme is to prove us right, or wrong.