

Abstract

The Limits and Possibilities in the Securitization of Global Environmental Problems

YAMADA, Takahiro (Nagoya University)

This article first reviews past governmental practices of securitizing global environmental issues to determine what kind of existential threats have been presupposed by such securitization, and finds that most of the securitization discourses have been based on the “resource-war” hypothesis, which argues that resource and environmental problems likely trigger war. The article then points, through the examination of water resource management cases in the Middle East, to the danger that the “threat-defense logic” of such securitization may lead to the justification of the use of violence and also to the hindrance of international cooperation aimed at solving transnational resource problems. The article also examines the effect of securitization on governmental responses to climate change to find that securitization has not promoted the international collaboration necessary to eliminate the existential threats posed by climate change. Nonetheless, the analysis of the balance between climate-related human casualties and national environmental budget allocations finds that in many less developed countries environmental budgetary allocations are too small to cope with the threats. In conclusion, the article thus prescribes more environmental securitization, not less, albeit from the perspective of human security, which is presently being promoted through the worldwide implementation of Sustainable Development Goals.

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