

18-20 June, 2021

Securitization Of the Environment during the COVID-19 Crisis

¹ Dr.Sana Kadhim Qati, ² Abbas Shati Thajeel

¹ Assistant Professor of Political Thought College of Political Science / University of Baghdad,Iraq.

² Researcher in security affairs,Iraq

Abstract:

Environmental security is one of the most important components of the sustainability of life on Earth, as it contributes to the ability of individuals to practice their various activities. This study is an attempt to show the most important environmental issues affecting global security, which are likely to cause environmental collapse in the twenty-first century, and how to secure it before. The governments of the world, especially the major ones, in coordination and cooperation with the scientific agenda. The study depended on the theory of securitisation inspired by the Copenhagen School, and the study came to the conclusion that regional solutions regarding environmental problems are the best solution in dealing with environmental crises in light of international chaos and for Absorbing future shocks, and the topic of securitizing the Covid-19 crisis, which was presented in political and scientific discourses as an important environmental model that threatens human existence on Earth, which is a turning point in security studies as it contributed to restoring national security priorities and has a clear impact and interdependence with each other , such as political issues Which led the countries of the world to take exceptional measures in dealing with the crisis, and we conclude the article with a number of conclusions on the topic of research.

Keywords: Securitisation theory, environmental issues, regional environmental security complex, COVID-19 crisis.

1. Introduction

Environmental issues are among the important issues facing humanity in contemporary political life and directly affect global security. In this research paper, the topic of environmental security will be studied in light of the Covid-19 crisis. On a global security with an explanation of the nature of the relationship between the scientific agenda and the

18-20 June, 2021

political agenda within the framework of environmental security, the issue of the regional security complex will also be addressed, and we will address the issue of the water crisis as a model. Then we move on to research to address the issue of the security of Covid 19 and the spread of epidemics and diseases, with an attempt to prove the necessity of securing environmental issues, as the Corona pandemic (Covid 19) continues to spread rapidly in most countries of the world, causing heavy losses in lives and the global economy, hence the necessity of securing environmental issues and we conclude the research with conclusions about the study.

2. What is “securitisation”?

Securitisation theory stems from the premise that security is an act of speech and security threats that have been developed as discursive constructions, meaning that it is the process through which an issue is transferred from politicization to an issue of existential threat (Buzan et al, 1998), and Andreas Behnke defined it as a set of Linguistic processes through which social, political, economic and cultural issues are framed in the security discourse and solutions are provided to sources of threat and risks, or vice versa, as contributing factors to safety and security (Behnk, 2013) and Vuori defined it as the act of media discourse where an existential threat to a reference subject is produced (Vuori, 2014), while Barry Buzan shows that it is the classification of an issue as an existential threat that requires drastic measures, or it is the transformation of an issue outside the scope of ordinary political debate into the realm of emergency politics by presenting it as an existential threat, and the Copenhagen School sees securitisation as a rhetorical act through which self-understanding is built (within a political community) to address or counter an existential threat to the values of a reference being and to enable an urgent call for urgent and exceptional measures to deal with this threat (Buzan and waever, 2003).

3. Securitisation of the environmental issues

Within the context of the **Securitisation** theory, we can include below the most important environmental issues that need to be secured in order to maintain global security, which are as follows:

1. Threats to human activity to natural systems, such as emissions of greenhouse gases affecting the ozone layer and the northern and southern frozen ocean, as well as the depletion of minerals, Studies indicate that the impact of human activity on the high rates of increase in the global average temperature is estimated at 90% (Williams, 2010).
2. Disruption of ecosystems such as earthquakes, volcanoes, mega-meteor strikes, climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, desertification and other forms of erosion, and depletion of the ozone layer.

18-20 June, 2021

3. Energy problems, depletion and scarcity of natural resources and their uneven distribution, disaster management related to nuclear energy, oil transportation, and chemical industries associated with chemical emissions, fires, explosions, and dangerous and toxic spills (Theodore, 2012) .

4. Population problems, including population growth, increased consumption, epidemics and illiteracy; Environmental migrations and an increase in urbanization. Large cities crowded with people and buildings are vulnerable to dangerous disasters, such as the rapid spread of diseases and epidemics, fires and building collapse (Rose, 2017).

5. Food problems, poverty, famine, over-consumption, the resulting diseases, loss of fertile soil and water crisis, and the weakness of governance institutions and the spread of poverty are among the most urgent motivators of environmental insecurity (Najam, 2013).

6. Protection of unsustainable production patterns, structural inconsistencies and the spread of societal injustice rooted in the inevitability of growth.

7. Wars between states and civil conflicts have contributed to causing environmental damage, and on the contrary, environmental degradation can lead to conflicts and wars (Buzan, 1998).

8. We expect huge marine pollution due to waste, wars, or leakage from giant oil tankers.

9. Poaching has created concerns about the extinction of some animals (especially birds and large mammals), so several countries have used communications, surveillance and espionage technology to pursue poaching as a South African project supported by the Humane Society (Kshetri, 2016).

These environmental issues greatly contributed to the activation of international agreements related to climate, such as the Copenhagen Climate Agreement, which referred to the security repercussions of climate change, as well as discussions away from technology and focus on risks, weaknesses, fairness and justice related to environmental issues (Webersik, 2010), as Nicholas Stern saw that The cost of inaction on climate change Reaching at least 5% of annual global GDP, by contrast, the costs of effective action to curb climate change would cost roughly 1% of global GDP per year (Stern, 2014).

We can refer to two types of environmental disasters, namely acute disasters such as fires, riots and wars, in which priority is given to the emergency plan that replaces the normal policy (security), and the second type is slow creeping disasters such as soil erosion, overpopulation and global warming (Buzan, 1998).

A distinction can also be made between two types of agenda in environmental issues, namely, the scientific agenda and the political agenda. The former is usually an integral part of the natural sciences, primarily non-governmental and with a mental activity built outside

18-20 June, 2021

the core of politics by scientists and research institutions and provides a list of environmental problems that actually hinder The development of current civilizations; as for the political agenda, it is of a governmental nature, represented by public decision-making processes and public policies, and it is responsible for dealing with environmental concerns and threats, and it has a schedule that reflects the need for politicization or securitisation.(1998).

The political agenda carries out the process of securitisation environmental issues through three phases

(1) The state's persuasion of the public and raising public opinion about the seriousness of the issues listed on the scientific agenda.

(2) Consent of decision-makers to deal with environmental issues.

(3) Political administrative discussions, including problems of international cooperation, institutionalization, effectiveness of unilateral national initiatives, distribution of costs and benefits, dilemmas or implementation problems, and so on. We can call this scientific agenda the (environmental knowledge society), which formulates environmental ideas, information and data and includes them in its agenda, and tries to secure environmental issues by pressure on decision makers in order to accept its ideas that focus on potential environmental risks and adopt them as a supreme policy, meaning that The main actor in environmental issues is not only a state but a global environmental knowledge community, and the intergovernmental body and the World Health Organization are one of its pillars as they are concerned.

Climate change as it plays a pivotal role in providing scientific, technical and economic knowledge in the field of environmental and health issues, and the knowledge community includes scientists and researchers in the field of environment and economics who form an intellectual alliance in order to address environmental risks, and their scientific research focuses on interpreting the phenomena of global environmental change and understanding the role of humans Influencing factors and building a predictive understanding of how the planet will respond to these impacts, and then pressure policy makers to make political and economic decisions related to physical and biological aspects (Anderson, 2018).

We believe that the task of the scientific agenda should focus on assessing environmental threats and their securitisation and de-securitisation. As for the political agenda, it must deal with the state of anxiety and fear among the public, according to the logic of securitisation, with allocating the necessary means to deal with the environmental issues raised by the agenda. Scientific.

When tracking environmental developments, there are two opposing trends regarding dealing with environmental security threats. The first is the liberal trend (Central States), which focuses on the future liberal economic situation (assumed resources and knowledge),

18-20 June, 2021

and the unlimited belief in the skills of future generations in dealing with future environmental problems (Wilde, 1994). As for the second trend, it represents the strong agenda of the parties against the center (the West), in light of the disparities and inequality between the North and the South in economic, political and military issues, which may cause the gradual deterioration of the environment, which may lead to wars between countries, ethnic conflicts, political disintegration or civil war. or economic deprivation (hunger and poverty) (pello, 2004). There is also a correlation between environmental issues, political issues (such as immigration, globalization and terrorism) and economic, social and Military issues. Military operations can be a continuation of the environmental conflict or vice versa, and it can be restricted by environmental restrictions, or the science of identity requires the continuation of the economy with a mixture of other means such as legitimizing protectionism or On the contrary, economic free trade arguments can be used as a means of convergence between policies, and environmental issues are closely related to societal security, unlike traditional state security. Security at the level of individuals appears more complex in light of Issues that concern such as - life and health, while it is difficult to compensate for what individuals are exposed to, such as the loss of a member, status, wealth, freedom, etc. (Buzan, 1983). Ken Booth saw that these issues affect each other as they affect local and global security in terms of studying several intellectual aspects such as coercive relations, power relations, ruler status, recognition, trade and production relations, finance, collective identity relations, relations between human activity and the planetary biosphere (Booth, 2007). It can be said that environmental security threats in the twenty-first century will increase in intensity and diversity, and may constitute an environmental security dilemma, and it is possible that several wars will erupt in the future due primarily to environmental reasons, and that the future will be safer through environmental protection instead of spending on weapons (Norman, 1993).

The spread of the Covid-19 pandemic between 2019-2021 led to many world governments securitizing this issue and declaring a state of emergency in many countries where the epidemic spread. We find there is a clear weakness in the liberal regimes in declaring a state of emergency due to the imposition of people on liberties and the lack of state intervention, and we find there a distinguished role before NGOs and the scientific agenda trying to pressure the political authorities to take urgent and exceptional decisions (Buzan , 1998), and to assume responsibility Medical insurance and treatment for anyone who needs medical attention, ignoring one person infected with an infectious disease may lead to its spread to millions of people, and then the government pays a high cost in controlling the epidemic or may lose control of it (Pippard, 2005). There are also three factors that help the state's success in dealing with the crisis, Covid 19, the first is the state's ability, meaning its possession of a competent body to deal with the pandemic, the second, social trust in the government and the scientific agenda and their citizens 'listening to it, and the third is leadership in the sense that the state has effective and active leaders. There is no doubt that

18-20 June, 2021

these crises were It is accompanied by social and ideological crises, and in this context, a role is emerging rumours practiced by the media, especially social media, to mislead public opinion about the ineffectiveness of vaccines against the Corona virus (Fukuyama, 2020). The exceptional logic of the securitisation of the COVID-19 pandemic is sometimes appropriately accommodated by the logic of force, and the logic of security measures does not necessarily include violence or military action, but rather a case of exception can entail not allowing the citizens of a large city to leave their homes due to potential health threats; Researchers need to secure the Corona pandemic, which represents a crisis for the neoliberal economic model and as a result of the process of increasing weakness due to neoliberalism. Rethinking the weaknesses resulting from global interdependence calls for the importance of public health and participation in the context of thinking about the possibilities of sustainable life with solidarity on a global scale (Nunes, 2020).

4. Regional Environmental Security complex

A regional security complex is defined as “a set of units whose major processes of securitisation, desecuritisation, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another”(Buzanandwaeever, 2003, p.44), and there are many regional security compounds, but the focus will be on security vehicles Regional water resources in light of the Covid-19 crisis, being the most influential on regional environmental security in many regions of the world. In the exacerbation of the Covid-19 crisis due to health instructions as well as other needs in daily life (Loftus, 2020).In this context, we will address five important regional vehicles in the world that threaten security instability and suffer from water crisis and problems that have not yet been resolved, the most important of which is a complex (Iraq -Syria - Turkey) have disagreements about sharing the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers and the issues of dams built by Turkey (Hötz, 2008), and the complex (Jordan - Palestine - Lebanon - Israel) they have a water crisis around the Yarmouk and The Litani, the West Bank, groundwater links, disputes over water allocation and linking the crisis with migrants in Jordan (Erika,2015); And another regional security complex that includes the countries of the Nile River Basin (Egypt and Ethiopia and Sudan), which suffer from a lack of water resources, and that future hot and dry years will exacerbate the waters of the river.(B.B.C, 2021); The complex (China, Kazakhstan and Russia) and the existence of disputes over water Kazakhstan is concerned about the construction of a canal that transports water from the Irtysh River shared between them in several dry basins in the center of northern Xinjiang, as well as the complex (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) or the Central Asian countries around two major rivers: Syr Darya, Amu Darya and Isfara), which are under the control of the upstream states of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which built hydroelectric dams (Hangzhou),and due to water shortages in the Asfara River basin, battles occurred between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (Sky news, 2021). It can be said that local and regional solutions are more effective than global

18-20 June, 2021

solutions to environmental problems, and there are those who believe that achieving global water security will be difficult between 2050-2100 (Jones, 2009).

5. Conclusions

1. Securitisation theory is a good tool for analysing environmental phenomena that are likely to pose an existential threat to a reference organism.
2. Regional solutions to environmental crises are the most effective compared to international solutions.
3. The task of securing the environment is not limited to the exceptional measures of the state, but includes the scientific agenda (the specialized knowledge society) and the society's awareness and confidence of what each of the political agendas and the scientific agenda do.
4. There is a positive role for the media represented in contributing to public awareness of environmental security measures at the local, regional and global levels, and it can play a negative role in contributing to spreading terror and chaos in the hearts of societies.
5. The necessity of securitizing the Covid-19 crisis and making it exceptional, and declaring the end of the crisis (de-securitisation) is the responsibility of the scientific community.
6. Marine pollution and the water crisis require knowledge, research and development, investments, political cooperation and legal schemes, as well as including them on the scientific and political agenda.
7. The Corona pandemic threatens the survival of the human race and forced people to live in a new situation, and the levels of threat start from the individual, then the community, the state, and the world.
8. Environmental threats, especially the threat of the Corona pandemic, relate to the political, economic and social aspects of the state, and from here stems the necessity of securitizing contemporary environmental issues.

Acknowledgment

I would like to express my special thanks of gratitude to Dean of the collage of Political Science at Unversity Baghdad University (Batoul Hussein Alwan)who gave me the golden opportunity to do this wonderful **project** on the topic (**Securitisation The environment during the COVID-19 crisis**), which also helped me in doing a lot of Research and I came to know about so many new things I am really thankful to them. Secondly I would also like to thank my parents and friends who helped me a lot in finalizing this project within the limited time .

18-20 June, 2021

References

1. .Adam Rose,(2017).*Defining and Measuring Economic Resilience from a Societal Environmental and Security Perspective*, .United State of America: Springer.
2. Andreas Behnk.(2013). NATO's Security Discourse after the Cold War: Representing the West (first ediytion). Oxon and New York: Routledge .
3. Antony Jones,(2009).Threats to Global Water Security,Nato Diplomacy Division. Springer.
4. B.B.C News, Arabic.2021,30 March .
5. Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver.(2003). Regions and Power: The Structure of International, United Kingdom, Cambridge University press.
6. Barry Buzan. (1983). People States and Fear: the National Security Problem in International Relations , London : wheat sheafbooks .
7. Buzan, B. et al. (1998). Security: New Framework for Analysis (. first edition). United Kingdom: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc.
8. Christian Webersik,(2010). Climate change and Security:a gathering storm of global challenges,California: Praeger.
9. Columba Peoples and Nick Williams,(2010).Critical Security Studies ,London: Rutledge.
10. David pello,(2004). w,Garbage Wars:The Struggle for Environmental Justice in Chicago ,London: ,MIT press.
11. Dupont,L.T.(2012).Environmental Health and Hazard Risk Assessment:Principles and Calculations. London: CRC press.
12. ErikaWeinthal,(2015).Securitizing Water Climate and Migration in Israel Jordan and Syria. Politics Law and Economics.
13. Fathi Zereini and Heinz HötZ,(2008). Climatic Changes and Water Resources in the Middle East and North Africa. Verlag Berlin Heidelberg: Springer.
14. Felix Dodds and Tim Pippard. (2005). Human and Environmental Security:An Agenda for Change). London and Sterling: Earthscan.
15. Francis Fukuyama,(2020). The Pandemic and Political Order . Foreign Affairs No. 99.

18-20 June, 2021

16. Jaap de Wilde,(1994). *The World at the Crossroads: Towards a Sustainable, Liveable and Equitable World*. London: Earthsca.
17. James Boyce,(1994). *Inequality as a cause of environmental degradation*. Ecological Economics.
18. João Nunes,(2020).*The COVID-19 pandemic:Securitisation, Neoliberal crisis, and global vulnerabilization*. Cad. Saúde Pública.
19. John Reilly and Margot Anderson, (2018). *Economic issues in global climate change :agriculture, forestry, an natural resources*., London and New York: Routledge.
20. Juha Vuori , (2014) .*Critical Security and Chinese Politics, The Anti-Falungong Campaign*, London and New York: Routledge.
21. Ken Booth,(2007) .*The Theory of World Security* . United Kingdom.: Cambridge University press.
22. Loftus, A and Sultana, F. (2020). Are we all in this together? COVID-19 and the human rights to water and sanitation. In D. McDonald, S. Spronk, and D. Chavez (Eds.), *Public water and COVID-19: Dark clouds and silver linings* (pp. 49–60). The Transnational Institute (TNI) and Municipal Services Project (MSP).
23. Louis Theodore,(2012) .*Environmental Health and Hazard Risk Assessment* .London and New York: CRC press.
24. Myers Norman ,(1993) .*Ultimate Security:The Environmental Basis of Political Stability*, .New York:W.W.Nortonm.
25. Najam, A. (2013). *The Human Dimensions of Environmental Insecurity:Some Insights from South Asia*,*The Environmental Change and Security Project Report,NO.9* . Washington: The Woodrow Wilson Center,.
26. Nicholas Stern,(2014).*The Global Development of Policy Regimes to Combat Climate Change* .,London and New jersey: World Scientific.
27. Nir Kshetri ,(2016) .*Big data's big potential in developing economies :impact on agriculture, health and environmental Security* .Boston: CABI.
28. Robert Watson ,(2001) .*Future Work Program of the IPCC Seventeenth Sessions*.
29. Sky news Arbic ,19-April,2021.

18-20 June, 2021

30. Zhang Hongzhou(no date)" *Can China Solve Central Asia's Impending Water Crisi*".Available:
https://fddi.fudan.edu.cn/_upload/article/files/3c/c1/b5120acb41a3b9374c22b081e478/1c7e126e-7264-4942-b3e2-f57b74ea2d63.pdf .