

Securitization and 'Riskization': Two Grammars of Security

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Abstract: Sociological risk literature has recently been applied to the study of security discourse to make the claim that the threat-defence modality of the field of security is being replaced by a risk thinking. This amounts to by far the most fundamental critique of the Copenhagen School's securitization theory to date because it suggests that the actual 'grammar' of security has changed. However, the article rejects the suggestion that the field of security has been transformed wholesale into a risk-management field and urges against collapsing the distinction between security and risk. Rather, the field of security is a site within which the two logics of security and risk exist and to some degree compete. Clarifying an analytical distinction between securitizing and 'riskizing', it is argued, gives a clearer understanding of what the risk literature is claiming while not discarding the original insights of threat-oriented securitization theory. The supplementary grammar of 'riskization' that is distilled from the risk literature and the new framework is applied briefly to challenge the idea that climate change has been 'securitized'.

*****Comments welcome *****

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1. Introduction

Recently the influential sociological risk literature has been applied to analysis of security politics and war to make the case that the security field is increasingly infused with notions such as risk-management, precaution and prevention rather than the more familiar security logics of threat-elimination, defence and deterrence. Picking up on Clausewitz's idea that "each period would have held to its own theory of war" (Clausewitz book VIII Ch. 3 B) and inspired by thinkers such as Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens, security analysts argue that "risk is redefining the way Western societies approach questions of war and peace" (Rasmussen 2009) particularly after the end of the Cold War. A typical conclusion is that "the overwhelming challenge that confronts Western policymakers is the management of diverse, amorphous and qualitative security risks, rather than fixed, quantifiable threats of yesteryear." (Williams 2008). For such writers, although the danger of war has generally receded since the end of the Cold War, risk-based security is more difficult to handle politically and less amenable to rational control. This is because 'risk society' has in-built uncertainty due to the central role of science and reflexivity, rapid technological change, the information revolution and the arrival of high-consequence 'manufactured' risks such as nuclear weapons and climate change. As such governance and security itself has become difficult or illusory, rendered impossible by radical uncertainty and the famous 'unknowns' that Donald Rumsfeld popularized. For others drawing more on Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu a risk framework promotes and legitimates rationalities of state control and security 'governmentalities' (Bougen 2003, Dillon 2008, Salter 2008a, 2008b, Aradau and van Munster 2007): "the identification and management of risk is a way of organizing reality, disciplining the future, taming chance and rationalizing individual conduct" (Aradau & van Munster 2007:95). These tend to focus more on security practitioners and the institutionalization of security rather than on elite doctrine and discourse. They disagree on important questions but for both these kinds of risk-security (as well as others such as Heng 2006) analysts the concept of risk brings with it a reconfiguration of the

primary operative goals and strategic concepts of security politics: prevention-of-risk replaces defence-from-threats; the appropriate strategy is pro-action rather than re-action while deterrence loses some of its credibility, and ‘events’ (historical) give way to eventualities (future) as the main focus of security analysis.

This literature has been applied productively to analysis of many cases such as the ‘war on terror’ (Bigo, Aradau & van Munster 2007, De Goede 2008), NATO’s transformation after the end of the Cold War (Coker 2002, Rasmussen 2001, Williams 2008), climate change (Bulkeley 2001, Rasmussen 2006, Brzoska 2008) and studies of aviation security (Salter 2007, 2008)¹. But evidence can also be marshalled against these ideas in favor of traditional threat-based security thinking². Rather than trying to adjudicate on whether security politics is now basically a politics of risk or not, this article argues that it would be unhelpful to either collapse security into the concept of risk-management or to deny the idea that risk is now a major concept in the security field. Instead, traditional threat-based security and ‘risk-security’ are better viewed as ideal-typical³ accounts of different security logics and practices, both of which are currently being played out in the security field. These will coexist and mix in reality but analytically it is useful to be able to distinguish and study how the two relate to each other (see van Munster 2005).

¹ As if he had been reading such literature, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, former General Secretary of NATO, pointed in a recent speech, ‘Managing Global Security and Risks’, to the need for a new paradigm and new doctrines to cope with global risks like terrorist attacks, cyber-attacks and vulnerable energy supplies. Territorial defense and ‘passive’ strategies of deterrence against calculable risks posed by dependably rational enemies belonged to an outdated mind-set. The new risk environment requires ‘engagement’ in outside area operations to preempt attacks and threats. “We need to address the issues where they emerge, before they end up on your and my doorstep”, is the essence of the new ‘engagement’-doctrine, also familiar from US National Security strategies (Scheffer 2007). The transformation of NATO into a risk community is covered more fully in M.J. Williams 2008, *NATO, Security and Risk Management. From Kosovo to Kandahar*. London: Routledge.

² It is easy to point to continued threat-based thinking and argument such as in the run-up to the war in Iraq when president Bush said “The danger is already significant, and it only grows worse with time. If we know Saddam Hussein has dangerous weapons today -- and we do -- does it make any sense for the world to wait to confront him as he grows even stronger and develops even more dangerous weapons?” (Bush 2002). Arguments in favour of nuclear weapons still tend to rely on deterrence – a concept risk society supposedly undermines.

³ i.e. “the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those onesidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct” (Weber 1949).

The article attempts this by relating the risk-security thesis to *securitization theory* as conceived by the Copenhagen School of security studies. This identified a specific security logic or ‘grammar’ of security brought about by speech acts that, if effective, constitute security situations in terms of an existential threat to a valued referent object that legitimizes exceptional political measures or procedures (Buzan et.al. 1998). If as risk theorists say ”the standards by which we measure our security have changed” and “risk-thinking (...) is shaping the strategies by which Western governments seek to achieve security” (Rasmussen 2006: 2-3) this must logically imply that ‘securitizing’ in an age of risk has become a different kind of speech act with different effects. Indeed it is shown that according to the risk narrative, almost every element of a securitization (as defined by the Copenhagen School) would have been transformed. The specific logic of speech acts that turn issues into issues of risk-based security – labelled ‘riskization’ for want of a better term – is distilled from the risk literature identifying what rules or ‘grammar’ a they follow and what the political effects are. This exercise clarifies the claim of the risk-security writers and at the same time sharpens our understanding of the ‘traditional’ threat-based practice of securitization providing an ‘update’ or supplement the securitization theory of the Copenhagen School (which never claimed to have identified an a-historical security logic but rather the core connotations of security as it was practiced at the time⁴).

After a short presentation of the risk-security thesis and securitization theory in the following section, the third section shows how the risk-security thesis challenges virtually all the central tenets of securitization theory’s account of what the logic of security is. The fourth section goes a step

⁴ Waever in fact emphasized when articulating securitization theory that historically “the concept of security refers to the state” (1995:49) but only because the security of the state “is the name of an ongoing debate, a tradition, an established set of practices” that since the end of WWII has evolved into a coherent and recognizable field centred on defence and ‘challenges to sovereignty’ (1995:50). “What is or is not prime in international security, including the state, depends on historical conditions” (Buzan & Waever 1997:249).

further to suggest the new ‘grammar’ of risk-security that establishes in positive terms what rules ‘riskization’ follows and implies. To illustrate the potential of the pluralistic view of security logics, the new dual framework is applied briefly in a fifth section to alleged ‘securitizations’ of the dangers of climate change which, it turns out, are not securitizations but riskizations.

2. Securitization theory and risk society

Securitization theory sought to offer a framework for tackling the question what really makes something a security problem (Wæver 1995). It identified ‘security’ as a speech act that creates (if successful) a certain kind of social situation whereby issues are moved into a special category or politics where emergency rules apply - a ‘securitization’. Not all speech acts are ‘securitizing moves’, so Wæver suggested that a securitization is made up of three basic steps. A securitizing move i) identifies an existential threat to a ‘valued referent object’ (which need not be a state but often has been of late). (ii) It also prescribes a plan of action in relation to this perceived threat. If successful (iii) a securitization moves the issue of the threat into a kind of emergency-politics category that sets aside the ‘normal’ rules governing decision-making in a given society. If all three have happened, we know something has been ‘securitized’.

The aim of the Copenhagen School was to provide a way beyond the debate about the relative virtues of narrow (military) versus broad (non-military) notions of security suggested by ‘alternative’ security theorists keen to attack what they saw as a narrow realist focus on states and military threats (Wæver 1995, Buzan et. al. 1998.). With securitization theory proponents argued that analysis of security across sectors (not just the military) could be expanded to cover threats other than hostile armies and ‘valued referent objects’ other than the state, while staying loyal to the

‘core connotations’ of the concept. Securitization theory has since been used productively to identify a threat-defence modality in a wide range of issue areas and contexts from traditional to non-traditional security problems such as SARS in Asia (Anthony, Emmers, Acharya 2006), the politics of water in the Middle East (Zeitoun 2008) and to securitization of migration and the concept of ‘societal security’ in Europe (Huysmans 2006).

Although securitization theory has been widely criticized on methodological and normative grounds, the Copenhagen School account of the specific logic that marks out ‘security’ has hitherto not been systematically challenged. Criticism has concentrated instead on other aspects of the theory such as the lack of empirical and methodological detail, or that the Copenhagen School is focussed on the ‘speech act’ ignoring than the context of such acts, failing to specify how audiences, the specific local audience, sociological conditions and choice of policy tools affect the likely outcome and motivation of securitizing moves (Anthony, Emmers & Acharya 2006, Balzacq 2005, 2008, Stritzel 2007, Salter 2008b).⁵ While all these are important issues⁶, none of them challenges directly the Copenhagen School’s account of the basic logic of security hinging on a threat-defence modality.

Meanwhile risk-security literature suggests that security has been transformed by the arrival of risk discourse. As a grand theory of how society has changed, risk society potentially points out and explains transformations in the part of society that has traditionally deals with war, threats and

⁵ Some argue in various ways in favour of a “better and more comprehensive awareness of the existence of a social sphere” around a securitizing speech act (Stritzel 2007) adding, for example, dramaturgical analysis that “situates the securitizing move in a particular local ‘regime of truth’” (Salter 2008). Others have criticized the Copenhagen School’s Euro-centrism (Anthony, Emmers & Acharya 2006) or adapted it to non-democratic polities (Vuori 2003) interpreting the criterium of exceptionality in different ways for different societies. Yet others argue that securitization theory overlooks the way securitization actually constitutes identities and objects in the first place (McSweeney 1996, Hansen 1997, Albert 1998). Critical security studies have advanced a normative critique of securitization as a practice or as a theory with dubious ethical implications (Aradau 2004, Anthoy, Emmers & Acharya 2006, see Taurek).

⁶ Many of them are relevant methodological questions but would be relevant regardless of the precise logic of security.

security. Sociologist Ulrich Beck characterises risk society as a ‘second modernity’ “increasingly occupied with debating, preventing and managing risks that it itself has produced”. Also termed ‘reflexive modernisation’ (Beck, Giddens, Lash), this condition is characterised by constant feedback of information as society monitors itself while it generates new technologies and more self-knowledge therefore also new uncertainties and ‘manufactured risks’ (Giddens 1999). The risk society thesis has been radicalised further in terms of ‘world risk society’ which factors in globalisation, creating the idea of a world society preoccupied with de-localised and so-called ‘incalculable’ risks with potentially catastrophic and irreversible damage potential (Beck 2006, Albrow 1996). In a world risk society “the very idea of controllability, certainty or security – which is so central to first modernity – collapses” (Beck 1999:2). This revises the traditional rationalist account of risk as a way of reducing uncertainty through e.g. insurance, as a “controlled extension of rational action” (Luhmann quoted in CASE 2006:468). For Beck the rationalist idea of risk as a way of reducing uncertainty survives only as a thin veneer masking the radical uncertainty of risk society.

For the Foucauldians, risk is neither a rational tool nor a sham but itself a particular rationality of government that works to legitimate certain technologies of power. They take seriously Foucault’s advice: “we have to study power outside the model of Leviathan, outside the field delineated by juridical sovereignty and the institution of the State. We have to analyze it by beginning with the techniques and tactics of the domination” (Foucault 2003:34). This leads to focus on the practitioners of security in the security field such as in immigration and asylum (Bigo 2002, Huysmans 2006)) at airports (Salter 2007, 2008) and in the war on terror more generally (Aradau & van Munster 2007). While the two groups of risk theorists reach different conclusions concerning

where risk is generated and dealt with, for the limited purpose of interrogating the discursive logic of security they advance, they can be dealt with together.

According to both kinds of risk-security theorists, a key feature of the sea-change in security thinking comes down to security being thought of by security actors more in terms of risks than threats. A threat is thought of in terms of an identified danger that can be meaningfully thwarted. In contrast, a risk is a possible scenario necessarily located in the future, connected to a policy proposal offering a way of preventing that risk from materialising into real harm (Beck 2000, Luhmann 1993). For Giddens, “the idea of risk is bound up with the aspiration to control and particularly the idea of controlling the future” (Giddens 1999: 3). For risk theorists, this shift reflects a sociological change in how dangers arise but also an epistemological shift in how dangers are viewed. In a risk society, manufactured risks – novel risks created by human development for which history provides very little guidance – dominate. Because of the radical uncertainty built into modern science, they are usually contested and reflexive modernity ensures that this contestation is both constant and loud, in effect creating new risks that need to be dealt with. Potential dangers become visible and tangible as probabilities or scenarios while remaining intangible in terms of gaining full control. Risk logics familiar from domestic politics e.g. the environmental sector, begin to spill over into security rejoining the notion of risk and security originally nursed in domestic regulation and insurance practices (Petersen 2007).

Firstly, risk management is chronic: threats can in theory be eliminated whereas risks, as imagined future scenarios generated by global and reflexive societies themselves, cannot. For Rasmussen “In risk society there is no such thing as perfect security” (Rasmussen 2006:3) since even the absence of threats does not equal security. Even if a risk fails to materialise, it can remain a risk. Once a risk

has become reality in an actual attack or otherwise harmful event, it ceases to be a risk – but the memory of it will factor in generating the next risk scenario for the future, which begins from a new baseline of plausibility. Risk is in this way always one step ahead into the next thinkable future scenario (Rasmussen 2006). This means that risk is resolutely oriented towards the future:

“Thinking in terms of risk means measuring the present in terms of the future – and from the perspective of the first years of the twenty-first century, there is plenty to fear from the future” (Rasmussen 2006:3).

Secondly, risk-security literature emphasises the spread into strategic thinking of logics associated with risk such as the precautionary principle. High-consequence security risk scenarios create a precautionary environment similar to that created by the precautionary principle established in environmental politics. Beck originally conceived of risk society to a large degree in terms of the unintended consequences of industrial society (pollution, nuclear accidents and global warming being favourite examples) suggesting that such themes have become defining for society as a whole (hence: ‘risk society’). Risk-security literature claims that the precautionary principle has become operative in the field of actually existing security, as seen, for example, in justifications for the 2003 attack on Iraq, presidential candidate John Kerry’s focus on the prevention of the export of former Soviet nuclear technology, the EU’s focus on conflict and threat prevention, or campaigns for mitigation of climate change (Rasmussen 2006:125-6). For Christopher Coker, the precautionary principle and anticipatory defense are not just analogies of each other but one and the same strategic doctrine (Coker 2002:73-5).

Thirdly, the fear of the unknown and future and high-consequence risks introduce a logic of defensibility rather than a logical appropriateness into security politics. Policy judgements in risk

society are evaluated not so much according to whether they turn out to be right or wrong but in terms of political defensibility (Kemshall 2001:21). Management of risk involves the recognition that we are planning for things that may never happen or even exist. The legitimacy of a vaccination program is not dependent upon there later being an epidemic. On the contrary: it is celebrated if the illness in question is held at bay. With risk the future ‘causes’ actors to act whereas the past is drained of its potency as a political tool.

3. The transformation of securitization?

What parts of the logic of securitization, as defined by the Copenhagen School as the *construction of an existential threat to a valued referent object legitimizing the imposition of exceptional political rules*, are challenged and which are left in tact by the supposed rise of this risk agenda?

This section shows that risk-security writers are not suggesting an adjustment to the conventional notion of security but a radical reconfiguration of the concept itself.

Firstly, identifying an existential *threat* would no longer be a necessary part of securitization in a global risk society where potentialities rather than actualities dominate the political security imagination. Thus “the current war against terrorism” shows perhaps best that “the central focus of security is no longer focused on existential threats alone, but also on potential threats or risks” (van Munster 2005, 6). Rasmussen explains this using the metaphor of stocks and flows. During the Cold War threats were stable ‘stocks’ represented in stockpiles of weaponry. In a globalizing world, such stability is replaced with ‘flows’ of unpredictable and incalculable risks that move in and out of locations. Though the difference between a threat and a risk is not absolute, security is in this scenario at least one step into the future removed from the idea of an actual threat. For the

Foucauldians, security is not the absence of threats but an expression of an institutional need to govern in the face of radical contingency: “the war on terror emerged out of a generic biopolitics of contingency in the west, and is being conducted according to its political technologies and governmental rationalities” (Dillon 2007:8). In both cases it is the unpredictable nature of risk rather than concrete threats that drives security politics today.

Secondly and further to this, identifying an *existential* threat would also no longer be an essential ingredient in a securitizing move in today’s risk-based security rationality. For a state an existential threat is normally thought to entail the prospect of destruction or some form of fundamental compromising rendering sovereignty meaningless or untenable. For other referent objects than state sovereignty such as the environment, there is a parallel in the shape of ‘sustainability’. Without them little else is seen to matter much. In a risk paradigm, however, securitization can seemingly be achieved by invoking a set of potential risks of a different order of gravity: “Contrary to existential threats, risks only exist as potentialities, which entails that risk management is mainly concerned with making sure that risks are prevented from developing into concrete acute threats to the survival of a community” (van Munster 2005:7). Risk is rooted in a different tradition and a different set of (economic) management practices in which risks come in all kinds of magnitudes from the uncomfortable to the potentially catastrophic. They can be graded in a way that security threats that pivot on the binary question of survival cannot. The infusion of risk-thinking into the security field has in other words softened up the question of survival such that “many current security practices deal with ‘threats’ below the level of exceptionality“ (Stritzel 2007:367).

Thirdly, van Munster (2005) has argued that securitization theory is based on a friend-enemy figure and that this breaks down with the advent of a risk-security paradigm. Williams (2003) and van

Munster (2005) make this point by reading a friend-enemy logic similar to that of Carl Schmitt into securitization theory: “for Schmitt the concept of the political occupies a similar place [defined by the intensity of the positions adopted] as the concept of security occupies for the Copenhagen School” (van Munster 2005:4). In contrast, according to them ”risk management, is not a decision that calls the binary opposition between friend and enemy into existence” (ibid.). However, this Schmittian reading of securitization theory seems unfair since the grammar of a securitising speech act is defined by the Copenhagen School only by the existence of an existential threat, not an existentially threatening *subject*. Otherwise securitization would not be able to happen in all five societal sectors (e.g. environmental threats would not have made sense, if the friend-enemy logic were that central to securitization). Though traditionally an enemy (state), the existential threat in a securitization could also come from natural disasters or other non-intentional sources that are not in the friend-enemy sense of an ‘other’. Van Munster is right, however, that subjects are *systematically* written out of the security equation in favor of statistical probabilities, averages and risk profiles as risk-thinking advances. He cites Castel to this effect:

“What the new preventive policies address is no longer individuals but factors, statistical correlations of heterogeneous elements. They deconstruct the concrete subject of intervention and reconstruct a combination of factors liable to produce risk” (Castel, 1991: 288 in van Munster 2005:7).

Whereas securitization tends to personalize, risk-thinking objectifies.

Fourthly the risk paradigm also down-plays the importance of the construction of a threatened *object*. This point is overlooked in the risk literature but becomes clear when it is held up against securitization theory. A ‘valued referent object’ is defined by securitization theorists as “an object by reference to which a security action can be taken in a socially significant way” (Buzan et.al.

1998:38). In a securitization such an object is constructed as being essential to survival and in immediate and mortal danger. If, however, in a risk-management scenario there is no calculable threat and not necessarily a threatening subject, the referent object is also likely to be left correspondingly vague. As the Danish minister of defense put it in a speech about homeland security “The threat we face is diffuse and enormously varied. The possible targets are basically infinite, and the list of potential tools or weapons is close to endless as well” (Gade 2006). If all members of a population are potential threats (van Munster 2005) all parts of society are also potential targets. What, for example, has happened to the referent object for NATO's security operations after it turned itself into a ‘risk community’ (Coker 2002, Williams 2008)? The out-of-area operations, most notably Afghanistan, that have arisen during that period, and the shift from territorial defense to risk management reflect the fact that as a risk community, the valued referent object has for NATO becomes nebulous. This is now to the point where one common argument for prosecuting the war in Afghanistan is to prevent NATO itself from collapse. Of course at a very abstract level, the securitized object in a risk securitization may be ‘Western Society’, ‘freedom’ or ‘democracy’. But the concept of security is thereby collapsed to encompass potentially everything (and therefore nothing). The avoidance of this was one express aim of securitization theory in the first place (Weaver 1995: 49) indicating that securitization theory is brought out of balance or even unravelled by the idea of a security field potentially lacking both subject and object.

A fifth element in the Copenhagen School requirements for securitization is the existence of a plan of action in relation to the threat. If a risk is defined as a possible scenario followed by a strategy to prevent that scenario, then this particular part of the grammar of security appears to remain in place. Risk-security is still all about plans of action. However, the plan for dealing with a risk-security scenario will tend to be directed towards a different category of objects. Threat-mitigation is

typically focussed on removing an actual threat, whereas risk-management, lacking a concrete threat, focuses on the *conditions of possibility* that make the risk thinkable.

Finally, risks are seldom construed as temporary exceptions to the norm as threats are. If risks by their very nature cannot be eradicated, only managed, the absence of a politics of emergency in risk-security discourse should not be surprising. Measures dealing with security *risks* are often presented as permanent and as new permanent norms because risks are presented as being driven by macro-sociological developments (e.g. globalisation, clash of civilisations, carbon emissions) rather than as a concrete identifiable, exceptional and acute existential threat. Management of more traditional risks in the domestic sphere such as crime have involved engineering society to reduce the opportunities for crime by preventive programs and removing potential ‘targets’ of crime (e.g. putting locks on doors and surveillance cameras up over them). As security politics as a field imports risk and preventive doctrines, the impulse towards social engineering inherent in traditional risk-management fields is felt in the security field. For Rasmussen “the purpose of security policy is no longer to stop threats, but to ‘filter’ the really bad risks away. Where the metaphor of the Cold War was the wall – (...) – the metaphor of the post-Cold War security environment is the filter. Governments now try to set up a ‘risk filter’ that screens their jurisdiction against the most dangerous elements coming from the flows of globalisation.” (Rasmussen 2006: 109). Re-engineering society against flows of risks therefore presents a different mentality of governing that is more permanent, holistic and long-term in its nature than temporarily mobilising to thwart or defeat a threat. For example, as one writer has pointed out, an airport security check is like a condensed history of airborne terrorism as each terrorist event has triggered a new security practice

that cumulatively remains in place (Burkeman 2001)⁷. Risk management thereby involves a new kind of routine politics of the long term rather than a politics of exception and emergency (van Munster 2005).

Risk-security has thus been articulated as a critique of ‘traditional’ security, but taken to its logical conclusion it implies more than just the replacement of threats with hypothetical risks: it includes also the expansion of security logics below the existential level, the fading of the referent object as the focus of defence, the internalisation of the problem and a weakening of the friend-enemy logic and the replacement of the criteria of emergency and exceptional politics with a governmental policy of longer term social engineering. To suggest that the concept of risk has taken over the ‘security’ field begs the question: Are we still talking about security at all?

4. A new grammar of riskization?

If field of security had been revolutionized in this way through and through in its fundamental concepts and institutions then it would surely need to be renamed as the ‘risk field’. Therefore it seems prudent to assume that threat-based security-security still exists but has been joined by another logic of risk and another kind of speech act capable of establishing this logic (the ‘field’, i.e. the system of social positions structured by power relations, cf. Bourdieu, would remain in terms of the institutions and actors now using both concepts). Risk-security literature has described many aspects of a risk-paradigm and how it differs from the old one but we still lack a positive model or

⁷ “Already, the journey from the entrance of an international airport to an aeroplane seat offers a concise history of airborne terrorism. You will be asked whether you packed your luggage yourself because, at Heathrow in 1986, an Irish woman was found to be carrying 10lbs of explosives in a suitcase, placed there without her knowledge by her Palestinian boyfriend. Your hand luggage will be screened for guns or other weapons because armed Palestinian guerrillas took control of an El Al flight from Tel Aviv to Rome in 1968, forcing it to land at Algiers. The airport staff you meet will have been subjected to rigorous background checks because the radical Islamic hijackers of a TWA flight from Athens in 1985 used airport cleaners to smuggle guns on board. If you never end up boarding the plane, your luggage will be removed from the hold because that is what did not happen in the Lockerbie bombing of 1988.”

‘grammar’ of risk-security discourse⁸. What would a ‘riskization’ – a speech act that activated a specific form of risk-security politics – look like and what would the political consequences of doing risk be? I suggest the following:

Firstly, a successful riskization is dependent upon something being construed as both real and governable: that is to say, it must be claimed as a meaningful entity that can be wilfully steered through political action. Turning something into an object of risk means first of all construing it as in some way malleable and subject to political action. If bird populations are construed as a risk to public health (i.e. bird flue carriers), they become objects of regulation and governance in a new sense. If immigrants are riskized, this also calls for governance of them. If radicalization of minorities is deemed a risk, ‘radicalization’ must be construed as something we can understand, influence and, ultimately govern. Building on Foucault, Mark Salter suggests that within a ‘dispositif of security’ risk management institutions and logics produce “security objects” in a system that “continually incorporates more and more aspects” of social life under its remit (Salter 2008b:249). Although Salter here equates risk and security, the point that riskization creates governance objects is important. Most aspects of the world have not, historically, been construed as governable. Before the arrival of liberal governmentality the idea of governing populations and economies rather than territories or moral communities did not hold general sway (Foucault 2002)⁹. More recently, to most people ‘the climate’ was simply the weather, which was real enough but not relevant as an object of governance. Now the climate is widely thought of as something we can potentially control and adjust by regulating the mix of gasses making up the atmosphere or by other forms of geo-engineering (e.g. by injecting sulfur into the atmosphere as a planetary sun-screen or

⁸ But see van Munster 2005.

⁹ Foucault acknowledges that pre-liberal policing techniques existed and that e.g. Mercantilism aimed at boosting the economy. But this remained locked within a logic of sovereignty preventing a full-blown governmental programme of governing society for the good of the population itself.

even erecting giant mirrors in the outer atmosphere to reflect the energy from the sun) or removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere (through ocean iron fertilisation to sequester carbon).¹⁰ It has, in other words, become a governance-object (Author). A securitization, by contrast, does not necessarily involve the construction of a governance-object. An existentially threatening 'Other' of a securitization is in many ways the opposite of a governance-object: it is external, as a threat it is uncontrollable and needs, ultimately, to be eradicated to secure the valued referent object.

Secondly, casting something as an object of risk requires, additionally, speech acts that make a potentially intolerable potential future scenario (rather than an actual threat) plausible: the object is governable *and* in need of governance. Unlike a constructing 'a threat' in a securitization, in a riskization the scenario need only be potential – i.e. it need only be accepted by the audience as something that *cannot be ruled out*. The speaker would need to point convincingly not to a threat but to the existence of *conditions of possibility* or 'permissive causes' of harmful events. For risks, these tend to be a *part of* the valued referent object since vulnerability is a feature, primarily of the system itself (since the risks themselves are very often theoretical or wholly unknown). A risk is not a purely external entity that can be 'destroyed' as a threat can. The riskiness of a society is a function of characteristics of that society – its vulnerability. Riskizing (as opposed to securitizing) thus shifts the focus of such plans of action away from eliminating a threat towards changing the conditions that make a future risk possible. Risk-security thinking encourages plans of action directed at boosting institutional and (state) regulatory capacity rather than the removal of an existing and identified threat. This makes risk-security ultimately more about securing *resilience*. Resilience concerns the ability of a system to carry on functioning, adapt and learn, despite dramatic change or disruption (Walker et. al. 2004). In fact, while risk-writers have been quick to

¹⁰ The arrival of the climate as an object of governance marks, for some, the arrival of a new epoch in planet Earth's history: the anthropocene (the age when the natural systems of the Earth became significantly affected by human activity) (Crutzen & Stoermer 2000).

point to the demise of the ‘threat-defense modality’ they have not yet named the replacement, which I propose is a ‘risk-resilience modality’. Resilience is thought of in terms of latitude (“the maximum amount the system can be change before losing its ability to recover”, resistance (“the ease of difficult of changing the system”, precariousness (“how close [the system] currently is to a limit”) and panarchy (how resilience is influenced by the systems around it) (Walker et.al. 2004). Exogenous to society, threats can typically be destroyed (or imagined to be destroyed) whereas risks (building on vulnerabilities) are ‘built in’ (conceptually if not physically) and can therefore not be purged without changing society.

Third, if the haul mark of a securitization is the politics of exception, secrecy, extraordinary means and time pressure justified by reference to survival, what is the political effect of a riskizing move? Van Munster contends that risk calls for ‘normal measures’ that contribute to the social control of large populations (2005:8). However, if ‘normal’ is reserved for a politics where best estimates and most likely future scenarios are considered the ‘correct’ guidance, then this is slightly off the mark. Riskized politics are subject to a specific risk-logic. I suggest that if an audience accepts the logic of the precautionary principle in relation to a certain risk – the idea that something should be governed in such a way that a margin of error should be applied to protect against possible harmful consequences – then this is a sign that a riskitizing move has been successful. The precautionary principle is defined in various ways but at base it implies the logic that early or ‘exaggerated’ action is justified to insure against harm in the face of uncertainty. Normal political logic weighs pros and cons more or less evenly so that if the benefits outweigh the negatives, a course of action may appear rational. A good in this normal category of politics can be traded one-to-one with other goods based on ‘most probable’-scenarios. Riskization moves towards a logic of consciously paying for a safety margin – something that has been summarized under the slogan ‘better safe than sorry’

(Giddens 2009:57)¹¹. In a securitization, by contrast, the precautionary principle is replaced with 'no holds barred' logic of exceptionality identified by the Copenhagen School, typically directed at an adversary. Exactly opposite securitization, riskization will tend to increase debate, promote long-term thinking and legitimate investment in 'internal' governance capacity. Time is also by definition more plentiful for politicians confronting a future risk scenario than those dealing with an immediate threat. For instance, the process of securitizing the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein in the run-up to the Iraq war led not so much to secrecy as to the publishing of evidence that would normally have been kept secret and was preceded by arguably the longest and loudest global public security debate ever staged, involving disclosure (albeit selective) of otherwise classified information. More familiar *security* strategies of retaliation to aggression or preemptive (rather than preventive) strikes imply the existence of an actual or imminent attack. In contrast, as Freedman observed "prevention is the product of calculation" (Freedman 2003:107).

Thus, a riskization can be defined as a situation in which a discourse is dominant that a) posits conditions of possibility allowing general or non-specific harm to a governable object (vulnerability) b) generates plans of action aimed at increasing governance capacity and adaptability (resilience) and c) moves an issue into a category of precautionary politics focused on long-term scenarios and insurance in the form of safety margins (as opposed to the no-hold barred logic of security and the optimizing logic of normal politics).

¹¹ The precautionary principle has been criticized as logically inconsistent, since inaction may technically be as risky as proaction (or even more risky) (Sunstein 2005). But this is not the issue here, since we are concerned with the actually existing field of risk politics, where the discursive appeal to the precautionary logic, critics agree, is commonplace.

Securitization (security politics)	Riskization (risk politics)	Politicization ('normal' politics)
Construction of an existential threat to a valued referent object	Construction of the vulnerability of a valued referent object	Construction of object as governable (malleable, measurable and
Plan of action to eliminate deal with threat which by definition is external to referent object	Plan of action to increase resilience of referent object.	Plan of action to maximize utility in trade-offs with other goods.
Legitimation of exceptional measures (secrecy, no-holds-barred action, no trade-offs with security)	Legitimation of precautionary politics. Insurance against risk + inclusion of a safety margin.	Legitimation of optimizing politics including trade-offs with other substitutable goods

5. Single versus multiple security logics

Are we as analysts better off identifying the dominant logic of security, or are multiple logics helpful? The argument here is that when different grammars are at work in the actually existing field of security, it is best to separate them, if only in order to be able to analyze their interaction and relative strengths. Some risk-security writers have chosen to make the 'sea-change' argument that risk has become the master signifier of security instead. The following illustrates briefly how this can lead to mistaken conclusions from those who see 'securitizations' of the debate on climate change.

There is some worry, particularly amongst risk-security writers, that the climate change problem, because of the rise of risk-security thinking, is being wrongly treated as a security issue, leading to increased military spending and too prominent a role for military institutions (Buckland 2007). Risk-security writers, collapsing the distinction between security and risk, have argued that the climate lobby is securitizing climate issues on a par with how terrorism and the war on terror is securitized (Coker 2002, Brzoska 2008, Rasmussen 2006). They point out that the same temptation is there to securitize prevention of climate instability and terrorism, both moving them out of ‘normal’ politics into exceptional politics and hence militarization. For Brzoska “diagnosis of climate change as a security issue is likely to push the climate change discourse towards the use of traditional security instruments” (2008). Both the war on terror and the battle against global warming, it is claimed, are based on future scenarios involving incalculable risks and unknowns. For Vedby Rasmussen “President Bush’s ‘securitization’ of non-existent Iraqi WMD is similar to the way in which former Vice-President Al Gore makes the climate itself a security issue by invoking a scenario. Future environmental problems become today’s security problems and climate skeptics become appeasers, when Al Gore delivered his Nobel Lecture” (Rasmussen forthcoming). This involves a wider parallel between securitization in environmental politics and security politics: “Gore’s Nobel Lecture demonstrates how the environmental logic of the ‘precautionary principle’ and the security logic of ‘anticipatory defense’ are indeed two sides of the same risk-based policy.” (Rasmussen forthcoming). Those arguing that climate change has been securitized also point to military think-tanks such as the CNA Corporation (2007) and other reports linking security and climate such as one entitled *Climate Change as a Security Risk* by The Scientific Advisory Council on Global Environmental Change of the Federal Republic of Germany (WBGU 2008) and one published by the organization International Alert called *A Climate of Conflict* (Smith & Vivekananda 2007). UN sources such Ban Ki Moon, General Secretary of the UN, are also quoted as comparing

war and climate change as threats and also emphasized the connection between the two: “The majority of the United Nations' work still focuses on preventing and ending conflict, but the danger posed by war to all of humanity and to our planet is at least matched by the climate crisis and global warming... [the effects of climate change are] likely to become a major driver of war and conflict.” (Moon 2007).

With a distinction between securitization and riskitization we can ask whether the same logic is in fact in play for the climate as for, say, arguments about the Iraq war. Analyzing the same material that the critics of alleged securitization of the climate, we come to a different conclusion:

For climate to be securitized, an existential threat to a valued referent object must be construed to be present suggesting a threat-defense logic, probably involving a threatening Other, legitimizing emergency political measures and procedures. It is true that the existential threat involved in the loss of a stable and hospitable climate is a common feature of climate lobbying discourse. In his Nobel Prize lecture we were warned that “We, the human species, are confronting a planetary emergency – a threat to the survival of our civilization that is gathering ominous and destructive potential even as we gather here” (Gore 2007). Metaphors of war are used liberally: we have begun to wage war on the earth itself. Now, we and the earth's climate are locked in a relationship familiar to war planners: “Mutually assured destruction.” (ibid.). However, this on close inspection does not conform very neatly to the grammar of securitization, resembling more a riskitization.

Firstly, dangerous climate change is still for the most part construed as a possible future scenario despite the idea that some discernible change is already observed. Gore continues: “But there is hopeful news as well: we have the ability to solve this crisis and avoid the worst – though not all –

of its consequences, if we act boldly, decisively and quickly.” Although Gore advises urgency most of the damage is still a future scenario within our own control, not an imminent external threat to be eradicated. Dr. Pachauri of the IPCC who also spoke at the Nobel ceremony, saw the Nobel award as an “acknowledgement of the threats to stability and human security inherent in the impacts of a changing climate and, therefore, the need for developing an effective rationale for timely and adequate action to avoid such threats in the future” (Pachauri 2007, emphasis added). For the WBGU climate change could go either way: “This could result in destabilization and violence, jeopardizing national and international security to a new degree. However, climate change could also unite the international community” (WBGU 2007:1). Similarly for the International Alert report, there is also an opportunity here: “if it is targeted and appropriately addressed, this vicious circle can be transformed into a virtuous one. If communities can enhance their ability to adapt to consequences of climate change, this will help reduce the risk of violence.” (Smith & Vivekanada 2008:7).

Secondly, the climate itself is not generally construed as a direct threat and there is no external aggressor, nor a hostile ‘Other’ in most climate change politics (we are not being attacked by greenhouse gases themselves). The threat-defense logic is not strongly suggested even by highly rhetorical climate campaigners such as Gore, despite the use of military metaphors and allusions to the Second World War and the Cold War. The object of governance is a group of factors believed to provide conditions of possibility for actual threats including the makeup of the gasses surrounding the Earth, the resilience of security apparatus and other aspects of societal preparedness in relation to extreme weather. Climate security reports direct attention towards conditions that make the risk of damage and conflict possible – a central feature of riskization – namely weak governance. For

the WBGU it is diplomacy and governance-capacity of the international community that is key and in fact rule out a military-based security policy:

At international level, the focus will be on global diplomacy to contain climate-induced conflicts, as well as on the development of compensation mechanisms for those affected by climate change, global migration policy, and measures to stabilize the world economy. (...) Climate change thus poses a challenge to international security, but classic, military-based security policy will be unable to make any major contributions to resolving the impending climate crises. (WBGU 2007:6)

To be sure, the Zinni Report written by retired military leaders emphasizes a more direct threat in terms of the idea that "the consequences of climate change can affect the organization, training, equipping, and planning of the military services" (CAN.org 2007:36-41) but there is still no 'Other' involved, sabotaging or outmanoeuvring military equipment.¹² Instead it is an internal governance-object that is proposed: the governance-capacity of vulnerable states and communities must be boosted. Even Zinni and the CNA body of retired military officials who focus most directly on the impact of climate change on military capacities and demands, focus in their recommendations, like the WBGU, overwhelmingly on strengthening 'normal' political procedures such as stronger engagement in multilateral agreements on mitigation, "global partnerships that help less developed nations build the capacity and resilience to better manage climate impacts" and energy efficiency in military infrastructure (CAN.org 2007: 46-7). For the International Alert report, tackling the climate change and security "involves applying the established principles of conflict-sensitive development practices to climate change policies and practice. At the very least, climate change need not increase the risk of violent conflict and, at best, addressing climate change in fragile states can promote peace" (Smith & Vivekananda 2007:38). They invoke the concept of resilience as the key to

¹² A securitization of climate change proper could theoretically arise if carbon emitters being constructed as enemies – as hostile agents that were unmanageable and essentially to be eliminated in the interests of survival. Unrepentant major emitters such as the US have at times been depicted as major culprits in causing climate change (Singer 2007), but never in a way that excludes them from being a part of the solution.

avoiding a vicious spiral where political instability and climate change compound each other: “a harmonised approach – whereby peacebuilding activities and climate adaptation strategies respond to the need to strengthen governance and social resilience – provides the best solution to address the key risks of political instability, economic weakness, food insecurity and demographic changes posed by climate change in fragile states” (Smith and Vevekananda 2007:38). This is not the language of an ungovernable threat but of an ultimately manageable process.

Finally, while climate campaigners at times urge drastic action, the kind of exceptional political rules that according to the Copenhagen school are the hall-marks of a successful securitization such as secrecy, lack of debate, circumvention of democratic procedures are rarely found in climate discourse. Gore in fact specifically warns against such things warning against a new lock-stepism:

“We must abandon the conceit that individual, isolated, private actions are the answer. They can and do help. But they will not take us far enough without collective action. At the same time, we must ensure that in mobilizing globally, we do not invite the establishment of ideological conformity and a new lock-step "ism.”” (Gore 2007).

A recent speech by the new Secretary General of NATO to the insurance industry confirms this riskization idea, explicitly distinguishing between long-term risks such as climate change and here-and-now threats such as pirates and cyberwar. For the latter two “the threat is very clear. We know what a pirate looks like (...) the kidnapping and ransom is taking place now. The costs to industry and governments are easily calculated ... we have a pretty good idea what the right solutions might be” (NATO 2009). Climate change is different. There is uncertainty (“the science is not yet perfect”) but it pays to start acting on the ‘trendlines’: “We may not yet know the precise effect, the exact costs or the definite dates of how climate change will affect security. But we already know enough to start taking action. ... either we start to pay now, or we will pay much more later” (ibid.).

Although the harm will come from droughts, floods, famine, water shortages and migration, it is the *conditions of possibility* that need to be focussed upon: “we have to address the root cause: global warming itself.” (ibid.) The solution is not primarily military: “climate change may have potentially huge security implications, but the response cannot be exclusively military. In fact, I’d go so far as to say that the military aspects are really only one tool in what will have to be a big toolbox.” (ibid.). Focus, even for NATO the military alliance, is instead on increasing governance-capacity, ‘preventive diplomacy’ in the High North, disaster preparedness, “prudent planning” (ibid.). Action does not need to be immediate or drastic: “before anyone assumes that I think NATO should taking action, tomorrow, in all these areas. I don’t” (ibid.).

In sum, climate change is ‘riskized’ more than it is securitized: the climate is construed ultimately as governable, the precautionary logic is emphasized in the face of uncertainty and long-term societal engineering towards resilience rather than emergency politics is promoted. The worry that some risk-writers have, that ‘securitization’ of the climate will bring extra resources to inappropriate military means and an unhelpfully antagonistic frame of thinking to international cooperation, appears misplaced because the climate has not generally been securitized. It is a reminder that uttering the word ‘security’ or invoking military metaphors and making references to past wars, does not make a securitization.

Those against climate change “alarmism” claiming that the climate has been securitized, may think they are de-securitizing climate change while in fact, they are attempting a ‘de-riskization’ that moves climate change away from a precautionary logic of erring on the side of safety and into a ‘normal’ politics of distribution of goods. Climate skeptics such as Bjorn Lomborg try to frame climate as a political problem appropriately tackled like normal issues, by assuming, not worst case,

but the *most likely* scenario (removing the grounds for the precautionary logic). They therefore feel most comfortable with the idea that climate change can be subjected to policy tools and rationalities such as cost-benefit analysis and ‘traded’ incrementally with other ‘goods’ and contest a riskization logic that suggests that deliberate long-term reengineering of global society to avoid vulnerability itself is possible or even desirable. If successful, this de-riskizing stance would bring (or maintain) climate change politics on a par with other welfare goods such as health, education, development aid, sanitation etc. (Lomborg 2001, 349; 2007).

5. Conclusion

This article has argued that risk-security literature rightly identifies risk thinking in the field of security but unhelpfully collapses the distinction between risk and security. It was suggested that instead of a wholesale change in logic, an additional logic to the threat-based one has become (more) operative in the actually existing field of security practices and institutions. This logic was extracted and defined in terms of another ideal type for political speech acts that create risk-objects: ‘riskization’. Rather than being two sides of the same coin, securitizations and riskizations are quite different and have different logics and consequences. Instead of moving an issue into a category of exceptional politics, a riskization expands the remit of governmental power by creating new risk governance-objects and prescribing a re-engineering society to boost resilience and protect against flows of risks. This is a different mentality of governing to security that focuses instead on *conditions of possibility* of risks, i.e. resilience, and is more permanent and long-term in its nature than thwarting or defeating a threat. Whereas securitization tends to identify a threat that is external to the ‘valued referent object’ (a terrorist may live inside the state that feels threatens but ‘terror’ is construed as being outside the object under threat) a riskization focusses on governance-capacity and resilience as an internal property of the referent object.

For all its insights, risk-security writing has tended to subsume security under 'risk'. Thus Aradau and van Munster, in their highly illuminating analysis of the 'war on terror' point to a set of practices, rationalities and institutions used to govern incalculable and uncontrollable risks using a logic of 'precautionary risk'. For them the risk logic involves a severance of the link between knowledge and decisions. In the absence of computable statistics or regularity necessary for risk factors and risk profiles to be constructed a "rationality of zero-risk" (Aradau & van Munster 2007: 106) takes hold which "activates all the technologies imaginable in the face of uncertainty" ranging from airport security procedures to full scale war, as seen in the case of war against Iraq (ibid. 105). Expertise-based risk calculations familiar from earlier generations of risk politics give way to an ultimately arbitrary 'decisionism' (ibid..105) that "privileges a politics of speed based on the sovereign decision on dangerousness" (ibid. 107). What they describe in terms of risk resembles to a striking degree the Copenhagen School's definition of securitization: an emphasis on speech acts that call for maximum mobilization, zero risk acceptance (because security threats are constructed as existential in scale) and the legitimation of exceptional political measures and speed. Equating risk and security leads them to lump full-scale exceptional use of force and routine bureaucratic surveillance and governance techniques together under the same label of a 'precautionary risk dispositif': "decisionism and speed coexist with routines and everyday practices" (2007:107). The subject of 'security' is thereby made to cover all forms of threat and risk management deploying a precautionary logic, something that broadens the security concept radically – even more than the 'alternative security' writers did with their focus on environmental, economic or human security.

With a more pluralistic lens, the complex field of security politics need not be viewed as either a grand *dispositif* of risk or in terms of the dichotomy: 'normal' 'de-securitized' politics versus emergency and exceptional securitized politics. The vast ensemble of practices that make up the

'war on terror' or the panoply of reactions to climate change can be seen in terms of both securitization and riskization, highlighting separate logics. A logic of risk tips policy and the rationality of security actors, not towards zero-risk tolerance and a politics of speed and exception aimed against an adversary (that is for securitization proper), but in favour of a danger-averse strategy of containment, long-term management and governance-capacity building. It is therefore of some considerable consequence, whether something has been securitized or riskized.

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