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Paper Title: Modes of institutionalized securitization: bottom-up and horizontal forces in ethnic conflict environments

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Abstract:

This paper examines the possibility that in ethnic conflicts the securitization process could develop into a more institutionalized form, which in turn opens up the possibility for the process to be expanded, as securitization is no longer limited to the typical unidirectional top-down (i.e. elite-driven) path, but rather it becomes subject to bottom-up and horizontal forces, creating what is termed in this paper 'horizontal and 'bottom-up securitization'. Thus, the 'creation' of threats is no longer 'left' solely to elite, as the public has a more active role in the creation and perpetuation of security narratives and threats.

The paper also examines two of the most important driving forces behind the institutionalization of securitization, namely the domestic competition for political power (and thus the elite's motives to maintain specific security narratives) and specific conflict perpetuating routines found in ethnic conflicts, (presumed by each side as necessary to maintain their ontological security). At the center of both these forces is the issue of national security, both physical and ontological, as well as the perpetuation of each group's distinct identity.

The Cyprus conflict, as one of the most intractable ethnic conflicts, is used to test the abovementioned arguments (i.e. institutionalized, bottom-up and horizontal securitization and underlying forces) and the role they play in the intractability of the specific conflict and ethnic conflicts in general. As the case study indicates, the more institutionalized securitization is, the more rigid the ethnic groups' relations are, which reduces the chances for resolution or settlement of the conflict.

Key Words: Securitization, security, ethnic conflict, conflict resolution