Securitization of the “China Threat”
Discourse: A Poststructuralist Account*

Weiqing Song

Abstract

The “China threat” has been a noticeable international topic in Western discourses since the end of the Cold War. Given China’s concurrent rise, this issue has drawn wide-ranging scholarly attention and interest from the general public. In contrast to most existing research, the analysis of the so-called China threat conducted in this article is based on poststructuralist securitization theory. The focus of the article is the securitization of the China threat theme in the process of communication. Three dominant modes of discursive securitization are identified: scientific theory, normative analogy, and political myth. Despite their shared purpose—namely, securitizing the China threat—the three modes differ in their specific methods, each operating within a distinct structural-incorporation setting (broad context), episteme domain (defined arena), and substantial modality (social sphere).

Weiqing SONG, associate professor of political science at the University of Macau, received his Ph.D. in political science from the University of Siena, Italy. His research interests include European politics, Chinese foreign policy, and China’s post-socialist regime. His research has appeared in a number of international peer-reviewed journals.

*The author thanks the three anonymous reviewers and Rodney Bruce Hall for their helpful comments and suggestions on earlier versions of the article.