‘Narrativizing’ global health: discursive legitimation strategies in the arena of epidemiological surveillance

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Abstract
The goal of this paper is to discuss discursive legitimation strategies in the arena of global epidemiological surveillance. Literature on global health policies has addressed the increased relevance of epidemic surveillance. However it remains to be discussed in depth which discursive strategies are employed in order to legitimate epidemiological surveillance and intelligence. Departing from Leeuwen’s work (2008) concerning discursive legitimation strategies this paper intends to debate how health authorities, namely the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, use narrative legitimation tools in order to validate its policy options. The legitimation discursive strategies of authorization and rationalization (Leeuwen, 2008) are addressed in order to understand how political narratives increasingly frame global health issues employing normative representations. The global health discourses developed by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control are discussed from the perspective of the legitimation discursive strategies mentioned above.

Key words: health, security, legitimacy, rationalization, authority

1. Discourse, security and public health policies

Health public policies are discussed as having increased global relevance (Lakoff, 2010). The existence of global health institutions, namely the World Health Organization (WHO) or the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

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