

**The Securitization of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic as a Norm: A
Contribution to the Constructivist Scholarship on the Emergence and
Diffusion of International Norms¹**

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Abstract

This article discusses the emergence and diffusion in the late 90's of an innovative conceptualization of security that proclaims the global HIV/AIDS epidemic an emergencial threat to international peace and stability. The study provides a framework for understanding the *securitization* of the HIV/AIDS epidemic as an *international norm* defined and promoted mainly by multilateral bodies, powerful states in the north, and transnational HIV/AIDS advocacy networks (including here NGOs, CBOs and epistemic communities). The *HIV/AIDS securitization norm* (HASN) is an intellectual attempt of the present analysis to synthesize under a single analytical concept the myriad of ideas and international prescriptions about HIV/AIDS interventions. The chief objective of this article is to explore the empirical and theoretical foundations of the HASN. It identifies the actors who developed its main strategic prescriptions and the transnational mechanisms that promoted the diffusion of its concepts throughout the state system. It also assesses the theoretical contributions of the HASN to the constructivist debate on the relationship between international norms diffusion and the making of states' policies and ideas.

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Introduction

This article discusses the emergence and diffusion in the late 90's of an innovative conceptualization of security that proclaims the global HIV/AIDS epidemic an emergencial threat to international peace and stability. The study provides a framework for understanding the *securitization* of the HIV/AIDS epidemic as an *international norm* defined and promoted mainly by multilateral bodies, powerful states in the north, and transnational HIV/AIDS advocacy networks.¹ The *HIV/AIDS securitization norm* (from now on HASN) is an intellectual attempt of the present article to synthesize under a single analytical concept the myriad of ideas and international prescriptions about HIV/AIDS interventions.²

The HASN is analytically divided here in two integrated parts: 1) one that *defines* the idea of HIV/AIDS as a security issue, which presupposes rights and obligations (norm); and 2) one which *prescribes* the *right* policies to be implemented in the international, regional and national levels to combat the threat posed by the epidemic (rule). In this respect, one can say that the (international) norm is *deterministic* in terms of defining a supposedly unique and uncontested understanding of what the HIV/AIDS epidemic *is* and also *normative* in the sense of knowing what are the *good* policies to be put in place by states.³

The following discussion explores the theoretical and empirical foundations of HASN. Specifically, it first investigates some analytical advantages for the present study in linking the constructivist literature on the emergence and diffusion of international norms with Buzan's, Waever's, and De Wilde's (1998) securitization framework. It also

assesses the empirical contributions of HASN to the theoretical debate on how pre-existing normative orders, political structures and agents condition the domestic reception of international norms. The article then identifies the conceptual basis of HASN, its empirical origins, the actors who develop its main strategic prescriptions and the transnational mechanisms that promote the diffusion of its concepts throughout the state system.

Theoretical Perspectives on Norm Formation and the Securitization Debate

This section aims to couple in a single analytical framework some of the theoretical contributions given by the securitization framework and the constructivist scholarship on norm formation and diffusion. It explores the analytical advantages that such a merge could offer to the understanding of HASN.

Fundamentally, the constructivist scholarship on international norms focuses on the mechanisms by which ideas emerge and spread. This school is divided in two interrelated perspectives.⁴ The first research agenda looks primarily at the system level (Finnemore, 1993; Barnett and Finnemore, 1999; Finnemore and Sikkink, 1999). It focuses on how international norms emerge and the means of their propagation in the international system. This perspective is also interested in the actors who embrace and promote these norms. They focus on the role of transnational social movements, multilateral institutions and states as *teachers* of norms.⁵

The second group stresses the process by which international norms penetrate the domestic structure of states (Cortell and Davis Jr., 1996; Risse, 1994; Klotz, 1995;

Gurowitz, 1999; Legro, 1997). This perspective confines the analysis to how the particular political, societal and cultural characteristics of states produce distinct outcomes in terms of the domestic absorption of international norms. They describe the levels of convergence between international and domestic understandings about a given issue and how bureaucracies, legal systems, and shared principled beliefs serve as filters of international norms.⁶

In general, these perspectives are exclusively concerned with universal norms of *good* “international citizenship” (protection of wild life, promotion of human rights, protection of women and minority rights, anti-slavery campaigns, transnational movements against land mine, etc.) and with how they promote normative change (Acharya, 2004; Carpenter, 2005).⁷ However, norm formation and diffusion in international politics also involve other types of norms. These authors usually ignore the essential quality and special appeal of some of these international norms that are identified as responding to existential threats to peace and security.⁸

The present argument claims that, by the way of drawing the line between processes of politicization and securitization, Buzan et al (1998) framework provides an important contribution to the constructivist scholarship on international norms in terms of pinning down the constitutive dynamics of international security norms. In fact, by the examination of the emergence, dissemination, and final institutionalization of HASN, this article aims to go beyond these authors' typology, arguing that, at its final stage, the *securitization process* becomes an international norm. In what follows, this section briefly examines some relevant assumptions underlying the securitization framework.

Drawing upon early postulations of the speech-act philosophy (Austin, 1962;

Searle, 1969), the so-called "Copenhagen School" (Wæver, Jahn, and Lemaitre, 1987; Wæver, Lemaitre and Tromer, 1989; Buzan, Kelstrup, Lemaitre, Tromer and Wæver, 1990; Wæver, Buzan, Kelstrup, and Lemaitre, 1993; Buzan et al, 1998) posit that security is not a static concept, as understood by traditional security studies, but an intersubjective rhetorical practice. In line with this basic premise, Buzan et al (1998:32) claim that, to successfully frame something in terms of security, a *securitizing actor* has to convince a significant audience that a specific issue constitutes an existential threat. In that sense, the measurement of (in) security is not given only by an objective assessment of the actual nature of the threat but mainly by the analysis of the conditions by which a securitization claim becomes widely accepted and eventually institutionalized. After an issue is successfully securitized, the next step is the institutionalization of the security rhetoric. At this stage, there is no further need to persuade others through the use of discourse. The security argument and the sense of urgency become implicitly on the standards of behavior, principles, policies, and bureaucratic procedures that were created to deal with the problem. The securitization is institutionalized only if the threat (either perceived or real) is resilient enough to demand the build up of standing bureaucracies and procedures.⁹

Those attempting to institutionalize the securitization of new threats, as in the case of transnational advocacy networks (the Greenpeace is a good example, concerning environmental issues), have in general to face the resistance from a international political context still dominated by traditional security institutions. The degree of either confrontation or adequacy towards these *securitization moves* can vary greatly, depending on the characteristics of the political setting (either multilateral, regional, or

national) in which securitization is attempted (Buzan et al., 1998: 29).

International norms can assume various forms and most of them fall in the realm of politicization. This means that they are in general part of normal public debate and policy decision-making and do not represent an urgent matter requiring actions outside the usual political procedures. However, depending upon circumstantial changes, issues can be moved further up in the list of policy priorities, requiring a special kind of politics and more allocation of human and material resources. As shown later, the HIV/AIDS epidemic is an interesting example, whereby an issue has been gradually moved from the politicized to the securitized category. In this sense, one can say that the process of constituting international security norms is analogous to the image of a *pendulum* that swings from politicization to securitization and vice-versa in terms of the perceived levels of urgency and threat that is allocated to a specific issue. In the case of HIV/AIDS, the *pendulum* has already swung from politicization to securitization and, as long as the disease is eventually controlled, it can move back to the sphere of politicization.

Given the above considerations, this article proposes that the explanation of the cognitive process by which issues in the transnational system are moved from the category of normality to emergency and back, is the most compelling contribution of the securitization framework to the study of how international security norms emerge and spread. In this respect, the securitization theory fills an important gap in the literature on international norms; that is their lack of interest on the strategic social construction of threats to international security. Consistent with the view put forward by the Copenhagen group, in general, and Buzan et al, in particular, this study argues that, through the use of rhetoric practices (speech-act) as well as other forms of persuasion, *HASN entrepreneurs*

promoted change in pre-existing interpretations about the HIV/AIDS global epidemic. As further elaborated in the following section, these actors successfully re-framed the disease from an early bio-medical issue to the current immediate threat to global security.

However, despite its relevance to the present discussion, the securitization scholarship has, at least, two very important shortcomings: firstly, while digging deep into the theoretical puzzle, Buzan and his followers neglect the empirical verification of actual processes whereby issues, after being successfully securitized in the realm of discursive practices (speech-act), become widely embedded in transnational institutions and states' bureaucracies. I empirically address this analytical gap in the forthcoming appraisal of the global securitization of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

A second related problem concerns these authors' lack of conceptual tools to understand the impact of externally induced securitization processes in pre-existing regional and domestic systems. This kind of criticism was first raised by authors (Balzacq, 2005; Stritzel, 2005) who pointed to the need of proper social contextualization in the analysis of processes of securitization. Notwithstanding their emphasis on the role of *social power* and *facilitating conditions* (1998: 31-33), Buzan et al do not satisfactorily elaborate on the interplay between the autonomous linguistic practices of securitization and the structured social and power contexts in which those practices take place. Instead, they center the analysis almost exclusively on the subjective practices of discourse, missing, therefore, the strategic environmental factors that deeply influence them.

This article claims that these conceptual tools are better provided by the above-mentioned "second wave" constructivist scholarship on international norms. This literature maintains that states and regional institutions do not react in the same manner to

externally induced/imposed normative frameworks. Rather, their particular domestic and regional contexts conditioned their reception by governments and regional institutions alike. Within this research agenda, a number of important factors have been shown to condition the domestic incorporation of international norms. They have argued that variations in the domestic adaptation of international norms can be explained by the distinctive features of local actors' principled beliefs and cognitive identities as well as by the (mis)match between international norms' prescriptions and states' political structures.

Peter Gourevitch (1978), for example, has usefully demonstrated, on his influential analysis of the role played by domestic structures in mediating the effects of systemic pressures, that some actors have more access than others to policy discussions due to the particular institutional configurations of the decision-making process. Other authors explored a number of similar issues. These are the causal link between the ability of international norms to influence state behavior and the different configurations of state-society relations (Risse, 1994), the congruence between international norms and pre-existing political cultures (Checkel, 1999), the processes wherein domestic groups instrumentally appeal to international norms to further their own local interests (Cortell, and Davis Jr., 1996), and the processes by which international norms re-constitute national interests (Klotz, 1995).

While trying to demonstrate causality relations between international norms and domestic policy structures, these scholars have shown that states are not only passive recipients of international norms but also respond to them in distinctive ways. In other words, in understanding norm diffusion in the inter-state system, they have demonstrated that the agency role of norm takers do matter a great deal. International actors and norms

meet at the state-level particular cultural, social and political contexts that not necessarily fit in their prescribed guiding principles. Regarding the particular problematic of this article, it means that, without denying the active role of international *HASN entrepreneurs*, they impact in very different degrees on the domestic structures of states.

South Africa is an interesting case in this regard. Despite the objective threat posed by HIV/AIDS (the virus is spreading faster in South Africa than anywhere else in the world), the South African President Thabo Mbeki and his close advisers, including the country's Minister of Health, have constantly defied the mainstream international approaches to the epidemic. Mbeki links the epidemic's spread to poverty and the deep-rooted legacies of the Apartheid regime. He also claims that HIV and AIDS are not related and that Pharmaceutical Companies, backed by powerful states, are exploiting (one could also say securitizing) the epidemic exclusively to achieve financial gains.¹⁰

The South African government ideological resistance to *HASN entrepreneurship* in the country clearly illustrates how a *cultural mismatch* (Checkel, 1999) between external and internal understandings about the epidemic's impact can hamper the process of successfully transmitting the *HIV/AIDS securitization norm* from the international to the domestic. In South Africa, this conflictive encounter between international normative understandings (securitization) and local belief systems and practices (de-securitization) resulted in sustained domestic resistance to the internationally prescribed securitization of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.¹¹ The remainder of this article seeks to find empirical support to the theoretical assumptions put forward here.

The origins of the HIV/AIDS Securitization Norm (HASN): From a Biomedical

Approach to the Institutionalization of HIV/AIDS as a Security Issue

The first notified cases of AIDS in the world occurred in 1981 among young gay men in New York (Hymes, Greene, and Marcus, 1981). In the early 80s in the US the HIV virus became primarily associated with homosexuals. The early association of the virus with this politically unpopular group caused indifference towards social movements demanding a more assertive policy action from the US government.¹² This lack of urgency in dealing with the problem was reproduced internationally.

During the 80s and early 90s, the responses from multilateral agencies were directed exclusively to the biomedical aspects of the epidemic. These early efforts were fragmented and under-resourced. Nobody identified the new disease as a mounting global threat. From 1986, the World Health Organization took the lead responsibility on HIV/AIDS at the UN. It set up a department of HIV/AIDS whose primary goal was to assist health ministries and governments to put in place national plans, through the provision of technical expertise, financial support and the centralization of all the information about HIV/AIDS. The policy initiatives at this point concentrated mainly on the promotion of public awareness, blood screening, and prevention efforts.

In the early 90's, the proportion of people affected by HIV/AIDS in Western Europe and the US was still relatively low. In Africa, on the other hand, the prevalence rates were notably higher and growing. Despite the already alarming HIV/AIDS situation in Africa during this period, the US administration of George Bush Senior seemed unaware of the looming crisis in the continent. The shift verified in the US foreign policy as a result of the collapse of the Cold War system was not helpful to the cause of HIV/AIDS

in Africa (Ostergard, 2002:339). With the end of the bipolar conflict and the disappearance of the Communist threat, the US began to reduce their diplomatic presence in the continent. Social programs were cut off or significantly reduced and diplomatic representations closed.¹³ Clearly, at this stage, the rapid growth of HIV/AIDS in Africa was not seen as a direct security threat to the West. It was dealt with exclusively in the sphere of *politicization*, through the established bureaucracies and the normal public policy decision-making mechanisms of states and multilateral agencies.

The epidemic's initial *securitizing move* came in the mid 90's. During this stage of the global epidemic, it became clear that none single United Nations organization or state could provide alone the coordinated level of assistance needed to address the many factors driving the spread of HIV/AIDS, or help countries deal with its impact. A growing sense of urgency prompted the creation of special multilateral and national bureaucracies and more comprehensive policies to deal with the epidemic.

Concomitantly with the global expansion of the HIV/AIDS epidemic was the emergence of a new thinking on security studies that shifted the referent objects of security. The human security perspective focuses on a broad understanding of security not only meaning the security of states against external or internal armed threats but also the security of people living within states against non-military threats, such as disease, environmental degradation, economic and social instability, etc. While breaking down state security in many subcategories, this perspective shifted the levels of analysis from states and the inter-state system to societies and individuals within and across states.

The HIV/AIDS clearly falls into this later categorization of security, what led to the adoption of this broad perspective by a wide range of academics, governments and

multilateral agencies. This group has raised questions concerning the economic impact of the disease at the community and family levels, how the epidemic is generating millions of orphans, whether it can become a threat to food security, how it contributes to crime, the implications of the epidemic to the armed forces, and its impact on social and economic development (Elbe, 2001).¹⁴

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) was the first organization to champion the principles that were introduced by this new agenda of security. UNDP officially launched the concept of human security in 1994 through its Human Development Report. It lists several categories in which human security can be at risk, such as food security, economic security, personal security, community security and political security. Subsequently, UNDP proposed a series of measures to institutionalize the concept, as, e.g., the formulation of a world social charter, the creation of a global human security fund and the recommendation of global taxes for resource mobilization and the establishment of an Economic Security Council (UNDP, 1994: 24-25).

Conceptually, the establishment of the *HIV/AIDS Securitization Norm* (HASN) is also intertwined with the emergence in the late 90's of academic studies and policy reports addressing the epidemic within the more traditional framework of security.¹⁵ Generally, this literature explores the indirect impact that HIV/AIDS could have on the territorial security and integrity of (Western) states. The issues examined in this regard include, e.g., whether high prevalence rates can constitute a threat to the national security of regimes friendly to the West, therefore requiring external intervention. They also assess whether economic and social burdens associated with HIV/AIDS could cause further domestic and regional instability in areas already characterized by entrenched

conflict, and whether new strands of the HIV virus could penetrate Western societies (Price-Smith, 2001, 2002; Elbe, 2003). This new theorizing about the security impact of the global HIV/AIDS epidemic coupled with the growing acknowledgment of its multidimensional and destructive impact promoted a turn on the way the epidemic would be responded to. At this stage, the aforementioned *pendulum* started to move steadily towards the securitization pole.

An important caveat: the human security approach in general accuses the traditional perspective of focusing exclusively on a narrow state-centric understanding of the security implications of HIV/AIDS that frequently ignores the well-being of people both affected and infected by the epidemic. In turn, traditionalist security theorists charge the human security approach of losing focus and expanding the concept too widely at the neglect of very important questions about the impact of the epidemic on state institutions and governance (Elbe, 2001).

What this amounts to is a two-tier perception of the security implications of the epidemic. In one level the referent objects are individuals and societies, whereas in the other states and the international system are seen as the main analytical focus. This article claims that these two-tiers are not divorced from each other. They actually represent two general tendencies that the present study attempts to convey in a single analytical concept, HASN. As shown next, it is done by the way of examining how these intellectual developments around the ideas of national and human security are translated in terms of international security norms and practises through the work of states, transnational networks, and international organizations (IOs), notably the US and the UNAIDS.

The final stage of the securitization process came with the *institutionalization* of the HIV/AIDS security threat. In 1995, the United Nations took an innovative approach by drawing six organizations together in a joint and cosponsored program, the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). The UNAIDS is in charge of promoting a particular understanding of what HIV/AIDS *is* and how it *should* be dealt with by states and non-state actors alike. The UNAIDS embodies a variety of actors and has the institutional capacity to build up wide consensus towards HIV/AIDS policies and practices.

The goal of UNAIDS is to catalyze, strengthen and orchestrate the unique expertise, resources, and networks of influence that each of these organizations offers. Working together through UNAIDS, the Cosponsors expand their outreach through strategic alliances with other United Nations agencies, national governments, corporations, media, religious organizations, community-based groups, regional and country networks of people living with HIV/AIDS, and other nongovernmental organizations (UNAIDS, 2001). The creation of an organization such as this was a visible change of direction concerning the multilateral response to HIV/AIDS. However, it should be stressed that the knowledge about the full-scope impact of HIV/AIDS, together with its necessary corollaries, policy and strategy, evolved gradually over time. In the beginning, the UNAIDS did not articulate a unified message concerning the security threat posed by the global epidemic. At this early stage, both researchers and high political authorities had not yet fully recognized, either through systematic scientific work or international policy debate, the potential impact that the epidemic could have on global security.¹⁶

During the late 90s, an expanding circle of high profile politicians, transnational

activists, and academics began consistently to make it clear that, indeed, the global HIV/AIDS epidemic was a serious threat to security (Prins, 2004). From that point onwards, the UNAIDS embedded this view and started to take the securitization of HIV/AIDS as a *teaching mission*, whereby this organization would work to supply states and other HIV/AIDS actors with information about the *best* HIV/AIDS policies and organizational practices at the state level (Finnemore, 1993). In a lecture given at the London School of Economics, in 8 February 2005, Dr. Peter Piot, executive director of UNAIDS since its creation, acknowledged the epidemic as “unique in human history” and as “an extraordinary kind of crisis”. Demonstrating the shift on the UNAIDS’ institutional rationale from an early politicization of the epidemic to its current securitization, Piot affirmed on this occasion that,

I once thought that the answer [to HIV/AIDS] was that we all had to do much more and to do it much better. I was wrong. Routine development or humanitarian approaches and financing are not sufficient as a response to the pandemic. *AIDS is exceptional in so many ways that only an exceptional response will succeed ... it needs to move to that level of exceptional action* [my emphasis].¹⁷

Another important step towards the securitization of HIV/AIDS came in 1999, when the Bill Clinton administration designated the global HIV/AIDS epidemic a threat to the security of the United States. It was the first time that a US President provided such a designation to a disease. Moving in the same direction, on 10 January 2000, this unconventional thinking on security issues was captured at the UN Security Council (UNSC) when the US Vice-President Al Gore presided a historical meeting devoted to the impact of HIV/AIDS on peace and security in Africa. On that occasion, for the first time in the history of this institution, an issue, other than military, was granted the

relevance of an international security threat.

In 27 June 2001, the Heads of State and representatives of government adopted, at the 26th Special Session of the UN's General Assembly (UNGASS) dedicated to HIV/AIDS, the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS. This document was a landmark in the history of the epidemic. It represented an official recognition by all the UN member states that the epidemic was a "global emergency" and "one of the most formidable challenges to human life and dignity", therefore demanding global action and unrestricted commitment by member states. It also recommended that the multilateral response should be coordinated under the leadership of the UNAIDS, "... which could assist, as appropriate, member states and relevant civil society actors in the development of HIV/AIDS strategies ..." (UNGASS, 2001). From this moment onwards, the securitization of HIV/AIDS became permanently infused into the international normative understandings about the epidemic.

Also part of the agreements set up at the UNGASS, the establishment of the Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GF), represented a substantial step towards the actual implementation of HASN.¹⁸ The fund was formally established in 2001 by the UN and the G8 group of industrialized nations as the global war cashbox against the three most serious epidemic diseases in the world. The GF is an innovative wide-reaching mechanism of health financing. It is formed by a board of international partners (donor and recipient states, multilateral agencies, as the UNAIDS and the World Bank, NGOs and representatives from the private sector). The GF's secretariat is based in Geneva and deals with the routine activities of the organization. It links the disbursement of HIV/AIDS grants to the creation of country coordinating mechanisms (CCMs). These

country-based committees include not only members of the recipient government but also representatives of NGOs and the international community of multilateral and bilateral donors (Global Fund, 2005a).

Under the “technical assistance” of the international partners, the CCM is responsible for preparing the proposals for the GF. In fact, to be approved, the proposals should embody the principles and guidelines *taught* to states by the international actors involved with the promotion of HASN. After grant approval, the CCM is also in charge of overseeing the implementation of the projects. In recipient states, pre-existing institutional structures have to adjust to manage the GF. In general, the CCM nominates a few public or private agencies (in general either the National AIDS Council or the Ministry of Health) that will control the management of the money (Global Fund, 2005a).

The next section explores the role played by the UNAIDS, the US and the HIV/AIDS transnational NGOs as *norm leaders*. The UNAIDS upholds a global bureaucracy and is widely supported by the international community due to its *knowledge claims* about HIV/AIDS. The US is a superpower, controlling massive material and political resources, which allows them to promote globally their particular views about the epidemic. As intermediate institutions, the transnational non-governmental actors transit in between the two, bridging gaps and building *winning coalitions* at the system, regional and local levels.

The “Norm Leaders”: Institutional apparatus and Norm Diffusion

a. The UNAIDS

In the foreword of the UNAIDS' 2004 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic, Peter Piot assertively affirmed that "as our report indicates, we know what works".¹⁹ Piot's confidence on the guiding role played by UNAIDS is based on this organization's unmatched capacity to globally acquire comprehensive information and technical expertise about the evolution of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. This factor alone becomes an important institutional asset in terms of building its legitimacy as a *global norm leader* or, employing Foucault's terminology, as an *institution of truth*.²⁰

In very sensitive and complex issue-areas, in which international policy coordination is needed, policymakers must rely on the advice given by recognized epistemic communities, including here authoritative multilateral institutions, capable of providing and disseminating information globally.²¹ This dependency upon international sources of expertise is even greater in states lacking capacity to produce local knowledge about issues, as in the case of many developing states. This type of technical/bureaucratic authority on HIV/AIDS confers to the UNAIDS a great deal of *symbolic power* (Bourdieu, 1994) to influence states' national policies as well as allows it to spread that power on a global scale.

Bourdieu, for example, uses the term *habitus* to explain how human beings are socialized into "a system of durable, transposable dispositions which functions as the generative basis of structured objectively unified practices" (Bourdieu quoted in Dreyfuss and Rabinow, 1999:86). If one transposes his concept to the level of states and other transnational actors, the UNAIDS can be seen as a source of *habitus* in the sense of determining the meaning of organized practices concerning HIV/AIDS. In this respect,

Finnemore and Barnett (1999:700) observed that "even when they lack material resources, IOs exercise power as they constitute and construct the social world". The authors resorted to Weberian assumptions about how bureaucracies produce and use knowledge to develop a constructivist approach to think the role of IOs as autonomous and powerful non-state actors in world politics. Their claim about the important agency role of IOs offers an alternative approach to traditional perspectives. These conventional views see them exclusively as static structures, which are either an institutionalized representation of the balance of power logic between states (neo-realists) or used by them to maximize the benefits of collective action (neo-liberals).²²

The present study argues that IOs, in general, and the UNAIDS, in particular, embody elements of agency and structure pointed out by both schools. It agrees with the constructivist assumption that the power of IOs derives from their capacity to produce autonomous knowledge and promote normative change. Since its creation, the UNAIDS has led the global response to HIV/AIDS, defining new concepts and policy priorities that are adopted widely by states and non-state actors alike. In this sense, unlike the (neo) realists hold, the UNAIDS' behaviour can not be seen simply as the result of a compromise between its powerful member states. Rather, it produces a kind of autonomous social/scientific interpretation that has been proved strong enough to suppress other competing views about the epidemic.

However, the powerful influence of the US at both the GF and the UNAIDS confirms the (neo) realist presumption that the autonomy of IOs is constantly checked by narrow national interests. Since the election of George W. Bush, in 2000, the US government has pursued its own foreign policy agenda to deal with the global epidemic.

As this article shows later, the main source of contention between the *global HIV/AIDS polity* and the US government is George Bush's President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the disruptions it has caused to the unified international front led by UNAIDS.

The UNAIDS works mainly as a coordinating body as opposed to a direct implementing and funding agency. Its bureaucratic structure is made up by a permanent Secretariat, based in Geneva, Switzerland. It is guided by a Program Coordinating Board (PCB) which comprises 22 delegates of governments, representing all regions of the world, representatives of the 8 UNAIDS Cosponsors (UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNESCO, WHO, World Bank, UNDOC, ILO) and 5 representatives of NGOs, including associations of people living with HIV/AIDS.²³ The PCB serves as the UNAIDS' governing body and holds at least one annual working session at its headquarters in Geneva. Only the governments' representatives have voting power at the PCB. The UN Cosponsors and Secretariat meet several times a year as the Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations (CCO) (UNAIDS, 2004a: 4).

The largest donor to UNAIDS is the US Government, followed by the Governments of the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. Other UNAIDS sponsors, such as the UN agencies and the World Bank, also provide direct financial support for country-based HIV/AIDS plans. Concerning the allocation of money, the Secretariat assesses projects and makes funds available for selected HIV/AIDS initiatives. All the UNAIDS' activities are discussed and further coordinated every two years through the *Unified Budget and Work Plan*. It is a very important institutional instrument for controlling overall accountability and structuring the

organization's fundraising initiatives (UNAIDS, 2004a: 4-5).

At the state level, the UNAIDS operates mainly through the *UN Theme Group*. It is comprised by the country-based staff of the UNAIDS' seven Cosponsors. In there, representatives of the cosponsoring organizations share information, plan and monitor coordinated action between themselves and with other partners, and decide on joint financing of major AIDS activities in support of the country's government and other national partners. The principal objective of the Theme Group is to support the host country's efforts to organize an effective and comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS. In most cases, the host government is invited to be part of the Theme Group. Increasingly, other partners such as bilateral development agencies and NGOs have also been included.

To date, the UNAIDS has established more than 130 UN Theme Groups, covering all regions of the globe. For their day-to-day operations, most Theme Groups have set up special working groups that involve donors, NGOs and groups of people living with HIV/AIDS. In countries with high rates of HIV/AIDS infection, the Theme Group has the support of a UNAIDS staff member, called a Country Program Adviser (CPA). Elsewhere, a staff member of one of the seven Cosponsors serves as the UNAIDS focal point for the country. In addition to supporting the UN system, this staff member is in charge of reinforcing national commitment to HIV/AIDS action and providing information and guidance to a range of host country partners, including government departments and groups and organizations from civil society.

Barnett and Finnemore (1999:713) observed that "having established rules and norms, IOs are eager to spread the benefits of their expertise and often act as conveyor belts of norms and models of *good* political behavior". It is interesting to note that the

UNAIDS case is consistent with this assumption. Considering the diffusion of HASN as an example, these *conveyor belts* correspond to the institutional mechanisms described above by which the UNAIDS Secretariat inculcates and enforces globally its norms. As far as December 2002, around 100 states had already set up *National HIV/AIDS plans* following the UNAIDS recommendations. Additionally, the UNAIDS has helped 85 countries to establish *National HIV/AIDS Councils*. It has also supported these governments in the actual implementation of their national plans by assisting in many technical areas, such as the drafting of donor proposals, the process of integrating HIV/AIDS in broader development strategies, and the undertaking of reviews that assess the progress of the national responses (UNAIDS, 2004a:5).

In April 2004, the UNAIDS sponsored discussions in Washington among governments of affected countries, key donor states and multilateral organizations, aiming to achieve further international harmonization on the HIV/AIDS global response. As a result of those talks, the participants agreed upon a set of guiding principles that became known as “The Three Ones”. Basically, “The Three Ones” is a blueprint of general policies to be implemented by all governments affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Its strategic message is for donor states, multilateral agencies, and governments affected by HIV/AIDS to coordinate their response to the epidemic within a single normative and institutional framework. The policies are: 1) one agreed HIV/AIDS action framework that provides the basis for coordinating the work of all partners; 2) one national AIDS coordinating authority with a broad based multi-sectoral mandate; 3) one agreed country-level monitoring and evaluation system (UNAIDS, 2004b).

Shortly after the meeting, the UNAIDS started to engage with other leading states in

building commitment towards the fulfillment and wide adherence to these improved standards for state behavior. Within the agreement that led to the adoption of “The Three Ones”, the UNAIDS was recognized as the main facilitator between stakeholders as well as the institution with the responsibility of monitoring its implementation by national governments (UNAIDS, 2004c).

What the above suggests is that the UNAIDS is a primary source of norm creation and diffusion by virtue of its widely recognized authority to orient and coordinate states and non-state actors towards the best policies to face the HIV/AIDS threat. Nonetheless, the constitution of what is called here HANS is not only the work of an autonomous bureaucracy with knowledge claims about the epidemic. It is also the result of the interaction between powerful Western governments, namely the US government, and transnational networks of HIV/AIDS activists who operate strategically both inside and outside the institutional structure given by the UNAIDS. Their political agendas can either contain shared understandings about HIV/AIDS as well as contested ones. This article explores next the role played by some of these actors in the process of HANS formation as well as the political contexts within they operate.

b. The US Government

As demonstrated in the previous section, the UNAIDS is a powerful actor in creating and promoting social knowledge about HIV/AIDS. It is not alone though. The US government and its associate agencies also play a fundamental role in the process of creating international understandings about the epidemic. In shedding light on the US

government's contribution to the formation of HASN, one should first set the epidemic within the wider political context of the US foreign policy at the beginning of the century.

In the heart of the foreign policy of the Bill Clinton administration was the problem (later resolved by the terrorist attacks of 9/11) of how to use the disproportional power of the United States in the post-Cold War world. The answer back then was to join the EU and the UN in the construction of a kind of cosmopolitan new world order in which the notion of national sovereignty would be downplayed to a holistic conceptualization of humanity. Bill Clinton's approach to the global HIV/AIDS epidemic should be set against this same background of multilateral engagement.

Conversely, George W. Bush administration response to the global epidemic reflected the logic of its own world view. In this respect, any assessment of Bush's foreign policy towards the HIV/AIDS has necessarily to deal with the subjective issue of how decision-makers see the role of the United States in the world and how the epidemic fits in it. Since the very beginning, the inner circle of Bush's foreign policy establishment was infused by the realist ideas of an elite of neo-conservative ideologues, on the one hand, and the President's own moral instincts, on the other. This merge between realism and morality turned into the ideological justification for a wide range of divisive policies (Wallis, 2005). The 9/11 gave the Bush administration the opportunity to fully develop this new foreign policy thinking and to act upon it. The pursuit of national security abroad was framed by the symbolic image of a battle between good and evil. The terrorist attacks re-ignited among foreign policy pundits the long-standing (yet prior to 9/11 dormant) foreign policy principle of an alleged "American exceptionalism". The idea that, given the United States' moral uniqueness and disproportional power, God has

delegated to its leaders the divine duty to protect and lead the world. This means in the words of Michael Cox that,

... most members of the Washington foreign policy elite do tend to see themselves as masters of a larger universe in which America has a very special part to play by virtue of its unique history, its huge capabilities and accumulated experience of organizing the world for the last 50 years. (2003:21)

The rise of the United States as a “crusader state” (McDougall, 1997) is not a totally new development. It is rooted in a long history of idealism in the North American foreign policy that goes back to the Founding Fathers (Cox, 2003:8). However, since Ronald Reagan’s use of American ideology as a powerful foreign policy instrument against the Soviet Union, the world has not seen nothing like the present strong idealist imprint of George Bush’s War on Terror.²⁴ This time nonetheless the perceived security threat does not come from a communist totalitarian regime but from a rather disperse global network of Islamic extremists backed by a hand-full of “rogue” states with weapons of mass destruction.

Goldstein and Keohane asserted that ideas, "and the principled or causal beliefs they embody", provide "road maps" for political action. According to them, "these conceptions of possibility or *world views* are embedded in the symbolism of a culture and deeply affect modes of thought and discourse" (1993:8). Similarly, the present argument claims that the Bush government's approach to the global HIV/AIDS crisis is deeply embedded in this *world view* that understands the US as a special nation with global responsibilities.

You know, the world looks at us and says, they're strong. And we are; we're strong militarily. But

we've got a greater strength than that. We've got a strength in the universality of human rights and the human condition. It's in our country's history. It's ingrained in our soul. And today we're going to describe how we're going to act -- not just talk, but act, on the basis of our firm beliefs (US Department of State, 2003).

The idea of a practically innate burden to lead the world against HIV/AIDS becomes manifest on this fragment of a speech about the epidemic given by Bush, in 31 January 2003, two days after the announcement of his global HIV/AIDS plan. More than two years after the September 2001 events, the Bush administration publicly acknowledged the devastating impact of the global HIV/AIDS epidemic as a global emergency and seemed to be moving towards its securitization.

The Secretary of State Colin Powell stated that “bureaucracy as usual was unacceptable in dealing with this emergency, and we have moved forward urgently” (US Department of State, 2004). He was talking about the launching of PEPFAR. Through this initiative, the President committed US\$ 15 billion over 5 years. It is by far the largest pledge to HIV/AIDS international assistance by a single government to date.²⁵ The funds will be largely spent on ongoing and new bilateral projects with recipient states. The Plan is run from the State Department by a Global AIDS Coordinator.²⁶

Notwithstanding the significant political move of the Bush administration towards the global securitization of the epidemic, the motivations behind the President's HIV/AIDS Plan are mixed. The securitization of HIV/AIDS as promoted by the US is the result of a complex compromise between various domestic and international interests that are not always related with the security aspects of the epidemic. Within the North American establishment, these security aspects are continually interacting with other ideational and material foreign policy interests. Depending on the political circumstances of their interaction, they can either reinforce or contradict each other.

For example, as part of PEPFAR, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is working on a complex system to purchase and distribute AIDS drugs to 2 million people until 2008.²⁷ It will be the biggest international aid scheme in the USAID's history, with the release of US\$ 7 billion from PEPFAR to be used on AIDS drugs and related services (Graham-Silverman, 2005). However, expensive patented drugs, mostly from North American pharmaceutical companies, are to be used in this program. Referring to concerns with drug safety, the US government is putting extra barriers in buying cheap generic drugs from developing countries, namely India and Brazil.²⁸ Moreover, in the 15 countries included in the PEPFAR²⁹, development agencies and NGOs fear that the huge parallel structure put in place by the USAID will duplicate pre-existing systems for the management of HIV/AIDS funds and projects, such as the abovementioned "The Three Ones". The problem is that the PEPFAR's management strategies have been neglecting these multilateral mechanisms, bypassing National HIV/AIDS Councils and other established country coordinating structures.

The influence of evangelical Christians in the President's decision to set up a HIV/AIDS global plan should be also added to the equation. Influential evangelical lobbying groups are behind the selective way the money is allocated to HIV/AIDS programs in target states.³⁰ At least one third of the PEPFAR's US\$ 15 billion is earmarked to projects that stress abstinence until marriage as the primary preventive measure against the epidemic.³¹ The other two principles, which stand for the so-called "ABC strategy", are "be faithful" and "condoms".

In states financially supported by the US, assistance to HIV/AIDS programs is attached to these moral strings.³² In 2005, for example, Brazil took a strong position

against the US administration's attempt to link US\$ 40 million in HIV/AIDS grants to an antiprostitution pledge by the Brazilian government (Phillips and Moffet, 2005). Brazilian authorities rejected the grants and reaffirmed their commitment with the country's widely praised approach to the epidemic.³³ Brazil has been seen by a wide community of HIV/AIDS specialists as a model in terms of best practices to fight HIV/AIDS. This success is in part due to the inclusive way they deal with high-risk groups as well as to the premise that prevention actions should be guided by epidemiological assumptions rather than moralistic ones. It is reflected on the strong investment by the Brazilian government on nation-wide educational campaigns to stimulate the use of condoms by the public at large (Brazilian Ministry of Health, 2000).

This particular case sheds some light on a wider philosophical division among the HASN norm leaders. Brazil clearly follows the line of the UNAIDS and other epistemic communities of public health specialists and HIV/AIDS activists. The US administration, on the other hand, has its own (mis) perceptions³⁴ about the best policies to fight the global spread of the epidemic. During the 15th World AIDS Conference, in Bangkok, in 2004, the contrast between these two world views came into light in the fears demonstrated by HIV/AIDS activists that the widespread use of condoms had been played down by religious dogmas behind the PEPFAR plan.³⁵

Building on the above analysis, one could understandably argue that these conflicting world views between secular pragmatism and religious morality undermine the understanding of HASN as a single and bounded community of knowledge. However, this article suggests that, rather than falsifying the conceptual relevance of HASN, this sort of *dialectic engagement* between the moral and pragmatic understandings of HASN

reveals interesting empirical dynamics of norm formation and socialization at the level of the international system. I return to this issue in the conclusion. As the next section shows, transnational civil society groups are also important channels for the communication of norms from the system to the state level and vice-versa.

c. Transnational Networks of NGOs³⁶

The widening of the international security agenda in the mid 90s to include non-military issues gave extra leverage to the international affairs of many non-state actors. A global public space emerged with transnational networks of activists pressuring governments and IOs to fulfill their human security commitments.³⁷ Some of them framed their traditional causes, around areas such as human rights, development, and environmental issues, with the language of security to raise the salience of their claims.³⁸ The constant flow of information, further facilitated by technological tools as fax machines and the internet, brought the language of security to a wide-range of non-governmental groups. Through world conferences, web-debates and the circulation of individuals, transnational networks have become acquainted with each other's activities and developed similar world views about the security dimension of their distinct issue areas.

Transnational networks involved with HIV/AIDS issues grew against this backdrop of increasingly global interactions between non-state actors. During the early 90s, their actions were discursively framed by symbolic categories (such as development, humanitarianism, human rights, and, after 1994, human security) that appealed to a moral language familiar to the international community of donors (Carpenter, 2005: 297). Since

the late 90s, nevertheless, in the context of the growing international securitization of the epidemic, these transnational actors have been increasingly unifying their discursive practises around the concept of security.

The global HIV/AIDS epidemic is a transnational issue *par excellence*. Its indiscriminate global impact blurs the traditional division between the domestic and the international. Accordingly, the proposed securitization of HIV/AIDS also transcends the conventional practice of state sovereignty. It prescribes normative constraints to the way states behave towards their own citizens. Within the HASN's recommendations, go-alone national policies to tackle the epidemic are not an option.³⁹ In highly affected regions, the global mechanisms for promoting and monitoring the implementation of internationally agreed HIV/AIDS national plans and bureaucracies are transforming the relations between states, its citizens and the international community.

In this respect, transnational HIV/AIDS activists are very important instruments of norm diffusion. Although many times lacking material and economic power to make a difference, networks of activists promote norm change and adaptation by disseminating globally ideas, information and strategies (Florini, 1999). As Keck and Sikkink (1998) noted, they are also important actors in promoting norm implementation at the state level. By their participation in National HIV/AIDS Councils as well as by linking up with civil society groups at the grass-roots level, transnational advocacy networks engage in discursive practices with local actors. In participating on these social interactions, they aim to ultimately transform domestic behavior and policies to match with international prescriptions.⁴⁰

However, these networks are not homogeneous structures. As noted before, the

international normative framework of HASN has been fractured by conflicting world views about HIV/AIDS. Faith-based organizations are not seen as belonging to the same *identity group* as other secular international partners.⁴¹ Moral reformists, as protestant and catholic NGOs backed by the US government, emphasize de-securitizing initiatives, such as long-term changes in sexual behavior and the reinforcement of family and community values. On the other hand, secular international NGOS stress the short-term emergencial situation that demands effective and immediate measures against the security threat posed by the epidemic. These conflicting principled beliefs have ideologically divided the international community of HIV/AIDS activists into two main sets of organizations.

The first and wider group supports a pragmatic and secular approach to the HIV/AIDS and is aligned closer to the UNAIDS and to most of the UN member states. The distinctive feature of these HIV/AIDS networks is that they seek to be widely recognized as an autonomous and legitimate political space for civil action regardless of either creed or ideological stance. They also stand for the scientific guidelines proposed by the UNAIDS and the WHO, regarding, e.g., the promotion of condoms as the best prophylactic available to anyone to counter the spreading of the epidemic.

The International Council of Aids Services Organizations (ICASO) is one such organization. Since 1991, ICASO connects and represents HIV/AIDS NGOS networks from all five continents. Through its five regional secretariats spread throughout the globe, coordinated by a central bureau in Canada, ICASO brings the voices of community-based organizations from all over the world to the higher levels of decision-making at the state and multilateral levels. Their main arena of negotiation is under the

institutional umbrella of the UNAIDS' Program Coordinating Board, in which it is one of the NGO sector's representatives, and the United Nations' Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

They discuss internationally and try to apply nationally the outcomes of those debates by lobbying governments at the domestic level and by disseminating information to other networks of NGOs. ICASO is an interesting example of a transnational channel for the transmission of HASN that works in both directions, bringing ideas and experiences from the grass-roots levels to the international system and also promoting policy outcomes emanating from the HASN decision-making centers back to the recipient states.

Through widely exposing the actual or potential violation of HASN, ICASO also operates as a sort of watchdog of donor states' commitments towards the fight against HIV/AIDS. In July 2005, for example, ICASO and Aidsplan, another influential global HIV/AIDS network, launched with other NGOs from Europe, the US and Japan a worldwide advocacy campaign, called GF+. It sought to persuade governments of donor countries to increase their financial commitments to the GF. The advocacy groups forming the GF+ claimed that with the pledges already made by donors, the GF would not be able to launch new grants for the financial year 2006/7. This means that insufficient funds from developed states will probably hamper the G8's promise to get close to the goal of universal access to AIDS drugs until 2010 (ICASOa, 2005). In the months preceding a donor conference to discuss the replenishment of the GF, held in London, in September 2005, ICASO and its allies disseminated this politically important information (largely through the internet) in order to persuade a worldwide audience to

sign a petition urging developed states to fulfill their HIV/AIDS commitments to the GF (ICASOb, 2005).⁴² Despite their coordinating efforts, in 6 September 2005, soon after the end of the conference, the GF+ released a communiqué stating that the final pledges of money (US\$ 3.7 billion) by donor states fell short of what the GF needs to sustain and scale up the global fight against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GF+, 2005).

Another very proactive HIV/AIDS global network is the US based Health Global Access Project (GAP). GAP's stated mission is to "campaign for drug access and the resources necessary to sustain access for people with HIV/AIDS across the globe" (GAP, 2005). The organization's structure is made up of a core "national steering committee" of 20-25 people drawn from human rights, people living with HIV/AIDS, fair trade activists, and public health. It has three national program coordinators leading national activities on the areas of advocacy, mobilization and campaigns. Internationally, it is also represented at the UNAIDS' PCB and has staff members actively participating on international meetings at multilateral organizations and target countries. GAP also pressures governments, IOs and multinational corporations by globally disseminating information with potential for political impact upon public opinion. GAP exposed, e.g., the profits of pharmaceutical companies in rich states and how they sabotage developing countries' efforts to produce cheaper generic drugs. They also use *symbolic politics* by framing situations with sensitive symbols that will make sense to a wider audience (GAP, 2005).⁴³

The second group is formed by HIV/AIDS activists pursuing a different normative agenda. Either for instrumental or ideational reasons, these networks of NGOs associated themselves to the US government's global HIV/AIDS policies. Although holding the

status of "non-governmental", most of these organizations get money from the Bush's administration PEPFAR plan and either directly or indirectly they work to achieve its goals. In most of these cases, instead of using its own embassies and international assistance agencies, the US government takes on these networks to actually implement its HIV/AIDS policies abroad.⁴⁴ The funds are allocated to them either directly by US government's agencies, such as the USAID, or indirectly by multilateral agencies and other international partners.

Transnational networks linked to evangelical and right-wing religious sects are the most active advocacy groups promoting compliance with the HIV/AIDS principles of the US government. World Relief, World View, HOPE, Samaritan's Purse, Catholic Relief Services, Opportunity International are some of the North American based international Christian organizations that are very active in HIV/AIDS related projects. Each of them will receive around US\$ 100 million from PEPFAR to develop HIV/AIDS projects in target countries.⁴⁵

The World Relief, e.g., is subordinate to the US National Association of Evangelicals, which is formed by something as 50 member denominations and hundreds of evangelical churches all over the US. World Relief's stated mission is "to work with, for and from the Church to relieve human suffering, poverty and hunger worldwide in the name of Jesus Christ" (World Relief, 2005). The organization's Mobilizing for Life project supports a moral/religious approach to HIV prevention (abstinence until marriage and fidelity within marriage) in Haiti, Kenya, Mozambique and Rwanda. Although they are not systematically promoted, pastors sometimes supply condoms to people who request them (Avert, 2005).

Additionally, there is a wide range of smaller international NGOs moving between the two groups. As the securitization of HIV/AIDS got in motion, they were attracted by the new funding mechanisms putting in place by the GF and the US' PEPFAR. These organizations saw in the massive influx of cash to HIV/AIDS programs an opportunity to "stay in business" and expand their activities.⁴⁶ Whatever humanitarian motives may have caused their creation, these NGOs have to generate surplus to stay active. This means that their financial needs sometimes precede any prior commitments with certain policy principles, as in the case of NGOs that are reducing their condom distribution programs to qualify for PEPFAR money.⁴⁷

Going beyond the idea that "transnational civil society actors matter" in international politics, what the particular phenomenon of HIV/AIDS transnational activism shows is that these actors are not always autonomous sources of normative change in international relations. They can also be instrumentally co-opted by powerful states interested in using them to advance their foreign policy objectives. Therefore, the puzzle here has been to empirically differentiate between the political agendas and policy processes of HIV/AIDS transnational NGOs from the ones of states and multilateral institutions. The above evidence suggests nonetheless that these boundaries are far from being unambiguous.⁴⁸

Conclusions: The Argument Summarized.

This article has proposed a new conceptual framework to help in the understanding of the international responses to the HIV/AIDS global epidemic. By combining insights from the scholarship on international norms and the securitization debate, this framework

defined a single concept, namely the HIV/AIDS Securitization Norm (HASN). It is aimed to analytically embrace the myriad of implicit and explicit principles, rules, and ideas underlying international action towards HIV/AIDS.

Regarding the historical constitution of HASN, the analysis has claimed that the *securitization* of the HIV/AIDS global epidemic in the late 90's followed the steps described before from *politicization*, in the early stages of the epidemic, to a *securitizing move* through the emergence of a security discourse, in the early 90's, and finally to the institutionalization of the securitization process towards the end of the decade. This later period was marked by the creation of a specialized multilateral bureaucracy, namely the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), designed to respond to the global threat posed by the epidemic. Subsequently, as a result of the United Nations General Assembly Special Meeting on HIV/AIDS (UNGASS), the UN member states adopted unanimously the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS. By this time, the securitization of the epidemic became a recognized international norm. This norm held a series of understandings, policy prescriptions and recommendations about the epidemic, which were internationally promoted as the panacea for efficient HIV/AIDS interventions.

The article has then turned to the analysis of the agents or "norm leaders" that promoted the worldwide diffusion of HASN. It described the fundamental role of the UNAIDS as a recognized global authority about HIV/AIDS. It was demonstrated that, by constituting understandings and giving normative value to the epidemic, this organization deeply influences the behavior of states and non-states actors alike. Similarly, networks of HIV/AIDS activists are powerful transnational mechanisms of norm creation and

diffusion. As in a *conveyor belt*, they promote normative change by transmitting norms from the international system to states and vice-versa.

The study has also focused on the role of the United States as a powerful actor in undergoing international normative change. It was shown that material and ideational motivations, derived from deep-rooted world views and interests, shaped the particular way the US administration interpreted and reacted to the global epidemic. The US administration's approach to HIV/AIDS suggested that the limits between process of politicization and securitization are not easy to assess. As already noted, the move towards securitization taken by the Bush administration was counterbalanced by the de-securitization bias of evangelical groups. These religious organizations pressured against policies that supported some important HASN recommendations, as, e.g., in the case of condom education and promotion.

Buzan et al affirmed that for an issue to be successfully securitized "significant audience" should be persuaded to be afraid of the threat. However, what the above suggests is that securitization initiatives, as in the case of PEPFAR, are not necessarily dependent upon the people's conviction about the emergent security threat posed by the epidemic. As noted previously, the President's HIV/AIDS plan was mainly justified on the grounds of religious compassion and of an allegedly moral mission in the foreign policy of the United States.

In the same way, the quite recent creation of special HIV/AIDS bureaucracies and policies at the system, regional and state levels indicates that the aforementioned *pendulum* has moved towards the institutionalization of the security threat. Nevertheless, it does not mean that a significant world audience was convinced about the emergent

threat posed by the epidemic. Contrasting with the more present danger of international terrorism, e.g., the insidious character of HIV/AIDS has disguised the actual magnitude and emergency of the security threat. This particular feature of the securitization of the HIV/AIDS epidemic challenges previous understandings about the determinants of successful securitization claims.

Finally, this article has demonstrated the important role played by transnational networks of NGOs as instruments of HASN diffusion. It has also exposed some central ambiguities in the institutional mission of those organizations. Reflecting broader structural contradictions in the global securitization of HIV/AIDS, transnational NGOs of HIV/AIDS activists and service providers have been divided by their distinct moralistic, pragmatic and, sometimes, opportunistic motivations. While more systematic research is needed to unveil the evolution and effects of the transnational phenomena underlying the emergence and global propagation of HASN, the argument presented here aimed to devise the theoretical and empirical basis for this further endeavor.

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Endnotes

¹ The concept of transnational advocacy networks is from Keck and Sikkink (1998).

² At a first glance, the concept of *international regime* would sound analytically more comprehensive than the concept of international norm. For example, Stephen Krasner provides a definition of international regime which encompasses a “set of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors expectations converge in a given-area of international relations” (1982:186). However, in Krasner’s formulation regime is not a single concept but a set of blurry terms, consisting of norms, principles, beliefs, rules, and procedures, that are really hard to cope with when applied to specific empirical cases. Therefore, to avoid intangible definitional complexities the present study opted for a minimalist conceptualisation of the HASN in terms of an internationally agreed normative/prescriptive framework promoted with the help of states, IOs and transnational advocacy networks.

³ Consistent with the scholarship on the field of international relations, this thesis accepts Krasner’s definition of norms as “standards of behaviour defined in terms of rights and obligations” (1982:186). It is different from rules that comprise the application of norms to particular situations (Cortell and Davis Jr., 1996:452). For the purposes of this study, the subsequent discussion conveys in a single definition the above understandings of norms and rules.

⁴ Cortell and Davis Jr. (2000) pointed to “two waves” in the scholarship on international norms. Amitav Acharya (2004) also acknowledged this division in the literature.

⁵ The idea of IOs working as “teachers of norms” is from Finnemore (1993). There are a number of other concepts to define the role played by transnational actors in promoting norms, such as “norm entrepreneurs”, “norm leaders”, “norm maker/norm taker”, etc. For examples, see Keck and Sikkink (1998), Checkel (1998) and Naldeman (1990).

⁶ For a useful review of this literature see Cortell and James Jr (2000).

⁷ Acharya (2004:242), e.g., called “moral cosmopolitanism” the process whereby international norms are promoted as “universal” and not subjected to resistance or contestation.

⁸ They are also blamed for failing to grasp the forms by which norm entrepreneurs sometimes manipulate international norms to serve their own particularistic interests (Barnett, 1999; Joachim, 2003; Carpenter, 2005).

⁹ Buzan et al (1998:27-28) note that this process is most clear in the military sector, where the enduring perception of threats, as internal strife and external invasion, demand the built up of strong bureaucracies.

¹⁰ For more on this, see, for example, "Stop denying the killer bug", *The Economist*, 21 February 2002.

¹¹ A comprehensive examination of the domestic incorporation of HASN in South Africa is beyond the scope of this article. On his doctoral thesis, however, the author has developed an extensive analysis of the impact of HASN on the domestic structure of three Southern African states (South Africa, Mozambique, and Botswana), as well as in the regional structure of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

¹² The political climate in the US during the 80s took a conservative turn with the election of Ronald Reagan. Family and religious values were strongly emphasised as indispensable components of society's cohesion (Ostergard, 2002: 338).

¹³ In the subsequent years after the fall of the Berlin Wall the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs cut off its staff in 70 positions. Consulates in important African states were closed, as in the case of Kenya, Cameroon and Nigeria. The US Agency for International Development (USAID) reduced in 30% the staff on its African desk (Michaels, 1992).

¹⁴ With regards to academic works on the subject of HIV/AIDS and Human Security, see, for example, Ostergard, (2002), Elbe (2003), Fourie and Schonteich (2001), Heinecken (2000), Kristofferson (2000).

¹⁵ Stefan Elbe (2001) has first acknowledged this division on the security interpretations of HIV/AIDS.

¹⁶ These questions started to be systematically asked in the academic literature as well as in the political circles only about 6 to 7 years ago.

¹⁷ "Why Aids is Exceptional", Speech given at the London School of Economics, London, 8 February 2005. See the full transcript at http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/LSEAIDS/pdfs/peter_piot_talk_020805.pdf.

¹⁸ In 26 April 2001, at the African Summit on HIV/AIDS, Secretary-General Kofi Annan called for the creation of a Fund to channel money to affected countries. Two months later, at the UNGASS, the representatives of states committed themselves to create such a fund. The GF Secretariat was established in

Geneva, in January 2002 and the first money allocations were approved to 36 countries three months later.

¹⁹ Every two years, the UNAIDS publishes a HIV/AIDS Global Report to update the state of the epidemic worldwide. This study is considered the most reliable HIV/AIDS statistical reference to almost all the institutes, NGOs, governments and anyone interested in following the progress of the epidemic in the world.

²⁰ Foucault (1980:115) describes a normative collection of rules, or “discursive knowledge”, which are produced in the service of modern institutions and have the character of truth. For more on this, see also Clegg (1994).

²¹ This author understanding of epistemic community resembles Peter M. Haas’ (1996:3) insightful notion of a “network of professionals with recognised expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area”.

²² For an interesting review of the different theoretical positions with regards to the autonomous role of IOs in world politics, see Reinalda and Verbeek (1998). See also Baldwin (1993).

²³ Curiously, the UNAIDS is the first United Nations programme to include NGOs in its governing body.

²⁴ Some authors believe that the foreign policy of George Bush is a revision of Ronald Reagan’s idealism. See, for example, Wallinson (2004).

²⁵ Assistance from all developed nations to the Global Fund, e.g., amounted to US\$ 6 billion in 2004. The Global Fund’s believes that US\$ 38 billion per year will be needed by 2015 to close the gap in health in the poorest countries in the world (Global Fund, 2005b).

²⁶ George Bush named Randall Tobias for this position in 2 July 2003.

²⁷ This programme is to be launched by mid 2005.

²⁸ Notwithstanding the widely supported approval system run by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the USAID requires that an US agency, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), approve AIDS generics.

²⁹ These are Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Cote d’Ivoire, Nigeria, Guyana, Haiti, and Vietnam. It is interesting to note that, with the exception of Vietnam, every country benefiting from PEPFAR is predominantly Christian.

³⁰ Religious conservatives, including not only Protestants but also traditionalist Catholics and Jews, are the most loyal supporting base of President Bush’s Republican Party. The powerful influence of religious right

wingers goes deep into the US Congress as well as into the Judiciary and the Executive. For additional information on this, see “The Triumph of the Religious Right”, *The Economist*, 11 November 2004.

³¹ Bush himself is a devoted evangelical Christian, who had risked a lot of his domestic political capital working against very sensitive moral issues as gay marriage and abortion. In June 2005, e.g., he addressed the Southern Baptist Convention, promising to work hard in the promotion of their common family values. For more on this, see also "You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet", *The Economist*, 23 June 2005.

³² Financial aid to HIV/AIDS projects is also linked to political support from recipient states to American strategic interests in multilateral institutions, which in many cases are not even slightly related with the HIV/AIDS humanitarian crisis. Human rights activists from Botswana, e.g., accused the Bush government to attach financial aid from PEPFAR to the support of Botswana’s government to US interests towards the International Criminal Court (Ditshwanelo- Botswana Centre for Human Rights, 2003).

³³ Prostitution is not considered a crime in Brazil and prostitutes are a very organised group with many associations throughout the country. Brazilian public health officials work in coordination with prostitutes’ associations in condom education and promotion (Phillips, M. M. and Moffet, 2005).

³⁴ Robert Jervis (1976) addressed the problem of misperceptions as a major psychological factor in foreign policy decision-making.

³⁵ “The End of the Beginning?” *The Economist*, 15 July 2004.

³⁶ Several notions have been employed to define transnational civil society actors. For some useful distinctions, see, for example, Florini (1999), Khagram, Riker, and Sikkink (2002). It refers here to “self-organized advocacy groups that undertake voluntary collective action across state borders in pursuit of what they deem the wider public interest” (Price, 2003: 580).

³⁷ For a comprehensive review of the international relations scholarship on the emergence of transnational advocacy in world politics, see Price (2003).

³⁸ Drawing upon David Snow’s concept of “frame alignment”, Keck and Sikkink noted that to influence broad audiences “network members actively seek ways to bring issues to the public agenda by framing them in innovative ways ... sometimes they create issues by framing old problems in new ways; occasionally they help transform other actors understandings of their identities and their interests” (1998:17).

³⁹ Except for the special case of the global superpower.

⁴⁰ Keck and Sikkink (1998), for example, usefully explore the impact of transnational civil society groups in world politics. The authors set up a list of goals these actors pursue and the strategies they deploy to achieve them.

⁴¹ In this regard, Goldstein and Keohane assert that both the world's great religions and the scientific rationality of modernity provide *world views* that are "entwined with people's conceptions of their identities, evoking deep emotions and loyalties" (1993:8).

⁴² This case is illustrative of one of the tactics specified by Keck and Sikkink in which HIV/AIDS networks generate credible information and quickly move it "to where it will have the most impact" (1998:16).

⁴³ For example, GAP uses human rights claims to challenge multinational corporations to provide free AIDS drugs to their workers. The notion of symbolic politics is from Keck and Sikkink (1998).

⁴⁴ Joseph Hanlon, for example, called this process "the privatisation of foreign policy implementation" (1991:204).

⁴⁵ Besides those faith-based organisations, there are hundreds of other North American based NGOs, Academic Institutions and private companies receiving money from PEPFAR.

⁴⁶ The opportunities created by the "aid boom" towards HIV/AIDS related projects favoured the emergence of a number of organisations that established themselves in developing countries without a proper knowledge of the local conditions. They were staffed by young professionals and volunteers that frequently engaged in activities outside the grasp of the established state agencies and coordinating mechanisms. These "side-effects" of HASN are further analysed in this author's doctoral thesis.

⁴⁷ "Too Much Morality, Too Little Sense", *The Economist*, 28 July 2005.

⁴⁸ Theoretically, these contentions bring back to light neorealist and neoliberal assumptions about the predominance of states in international politics as well as Gramscian perspectives which emphasise the underlying logics of global capitalism in shaping actors' preferences.