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The Importance of Desecuritising Venezuelan Immigration in Colombia

Abstract

In order to analyse the process of inclusion or exclusion of Venezuelan immigrants in Colombia, two tendencies within security studies are taken into account: the Securitisation Model (established by the Copenhagen School) and the concept of Human Security (proposed by the UN). These two approaches have in common the fact that they go beyond the interpretations focused on the defence of the State, the latter being the object of reference for classical security models. Both Securitisation and Human Security will be put into perspective in this paper with respect to the complex panorama of migration, especially on the basis of the place of the immigrants in the security schemes of the States. Without any intentions to give a categorical answer – since the phenomenon and institutional measures have not ceased to mutate over time – it is of particular interest to elucidate to what extent the Venezuelan diaspora has or has not been securitised in Colombia, the first country to which migrants go and the one that currently hosts the most Venezuelans.

Keywords: migration, securitisation, desecuritisation, public policies, human security

Introduction

This article will first address the concept of Securitisation as proposed by the Copenhagen School. Following the term in question, the focus will be on how a specific topic is taken away from regular politics to be included in a securitised agenda. This process, as it will be discussed in more detail, includes the use of *speech acts* that an actor (e.g. the state or the media) uses when it seeks to remove an issue from ordinary public policy and turn it into an area of concern that threatens security. In this way, the

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use of extraordinary measures is legitimised against a threat that has been socially constructed.²

Another important term that will be discussed is Human Security. This is an approach proposed by the United Nations³ whereby people, rather than states, are recognised as the ones to be protected. It is even claimed that if the main objective of State security does not involve ensuring the security of people, then the relevance of the State is questionable.⁴ As it will be emphasised throughout the text, the aforementioned concept extends security to areas other than the military, focusing mainly on the protection of people from threats such as hunger, disease, repression, discrimination, among others.

The interest in both concepts, Securitisation and Human Security, emerges in the framework of a research that revolves around the question of the scenarios or population groups that have been securitised in Colombia. The foregoing, in view of the fact that this Andean country has been affected by an internal armed conflict between state forces, different guerrillas and paramilitary groups. This conflict has lasted for more than half a century and, due to its particularities, it has forged its own way of understanding security that has militarised relations and institutions.⁵ Now, taking into account the migratory dynamics of Venezuelan citizens moving massively to Colombian territory since 2017 and beginning to coexist and intertwine with nationals, the question arises as to whether or not migrants are part of the Securitisation process in Colombia.

Hereinafter, this text will refer to the questions posed by the Securitisation and Human Security models to certain security policies in the field of migration. In this sense, these approaches are taken into account as an analytical tool that allows us to think about the consequences of being subject to Securitisation. At the same time, there is a need to carry out the reverse process, that is to say, to desecuritise the mobility of people, in this case, from Venezuela to different South American nations. For the proposed analysis, a bibliographic review is used as theoretical support, as well as data and statistics provided by official pages of both the Colombian State and different international organisations (including the United Nations and Human Rights Watch); in addition, reports issued by institutions working on specific migration aspects are also taken into account (such as the *Observatorio Proyecto Migración Venezuela* or the *Observatorio Iberoamericano Sobre Movilidad Humana*). Finally, the analysis considers press releases that report events related to migration and at the same time reproduce a particular discourse around the figure of the immigrant.

² EMMERS 2013: 131–143.

³ UN s. a.a.

⁴ KERR 2013: 104–116.

⁵ SERNA 2009: 283–312.

Securitisation and human mobility, the case of the Venezuelan Diaspora

First of all, some terms proposed from an alternative security model will be presented, since this is where the critique of certain public policies on migration that we are interested in elucidating lies. Thus, the Securitisation model theorised by the Copenhagen School emphasises that a situation may not be politicised, that is, it may not be included in the public debate and therefore not be the object of State action. A second option is when, on the contrary, such situation is included as part of public policy, thus requiring governmental decision and allocation of resources. A third scenario arises when actions are taken on the situation that go beyond the limits of standard State policy procedures, in which case the situation is said to have been "securitised".⁶

Such dynamics involve security actors (government, political elites, military, civil society) and objects of reference (national sovereignty, environment, economy, ideology, collective identities). Once the actors and objects involved are described, Securitisation is explained as follows: security actors present a phenomenon (migration, for example) as an existential threat to the objects of reference. This is called Act of Securitisation, namely the accepted classification of certain phenomena, persons, or entities, and not others, as existential threats that require emergency measures. The one who performs the Securitisation Act uses Speech Acts to convince a specific audience of the existential nature of the threat. The Securitisation Act only succeeds once the relevant audience has been convinced of the threat as real to the object of reference.⁷

The opposite process is called Desecuritisation and consists of the displacement of previously securitised situations out of the emergency mode to be placed within the normal negotiation processes of the political sphere. For the Copenhagen School, societies should operate, as far as possible, within the reality of ordinary politics, that is, where issues can be debated and addressed within the standard boundaries of politics.⁸ This is fundamental as it warns that elites may use a Securitisation Act to restrict civil liberties, impose martial law, detain suspected terrorists without trial, restrict the influence of certain domestic political institutions, or increase military budgets. Consequently, the social risk, stemmed from the abuse of authority, could be avoided by desecuritising an issue and reincluding it in the regular political arena or, from another perspective, by moving it from conflict to cooperation.⁹

A particular case of Securitisation studied by scholars such as Bigo is that of undocumented immigrants fleeing either poverty or political circumstances in their country of origin. Undocumented migration is often articulated by politicians and perceived by specific audiences as a threat to the social, economic, political and cultural

⁶ EMMERS 2013: 132–133.

⁷ EMMERS 2013: 134.

⁸ EMMERS 2013: 143.

⁹ EMMERS 2013: 136.

security of a State and its society. Migrants often face restrictive immigration policies and reduced opportunities as well as association with organised criminal groups.¹⁰

On the basis of models such as the one proposed by the Copenhagen School, which advocates Desecuritisation, it is possible to place the rights of immigrants at the centre of any migration policy. Whereas, from the securitisationist State-centric perspective, priority is given to the transversal fight against irregular migration. Under this premise, human mobility has to be governed through both political and legal channels that turn, for example, border control into a protective shield that seeks to mitigate the supposed new cross-border threats.¹¹

This strengthens the vision that criminalises the permanence of people in an irregular migratory situation under the pretext that they are a threat to the lifestyle and culture of the receiving country. According to Verena Stolcke, anthropologist and professor at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, the new occupants are blamed for contributing to the increase in crime and other social problems, they are described as economic immigrants who seek asylum to take advantage of national social benefits or who compete unfairly in the labour market. In this respect, the main argument for their control or regularisation is the maintenance of the basic identity, economic and social characteristics of the receiving society.¹² Nevertheless, these are discursively created realities that interpret the mobility of people in terms of invasion and conflict in order to act accordingly. While such securitising practices may in some ways facilitate regular migration, they have also produced “the largest accumulation of irregular migrants of all time”.¹³

In Latin America, the millions of Venezuelans who have had to leave their country stand out. Venezuelan migratory crisis has become the largest in the history of the continent. According to figures from the Interagency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela – RV4, there are 6,805,209 Venezuelan immigrants in the world, of which 5,745,664 remain in Latin America and the Caribbean.¹⁴ In order to cope with the massive Venezuelan exodus, certain nations in the region have opted to control migration by militarising borders, adopting securitised postures that add to the growing global trend of assuming migration as a problem.¹⁵ Countries such as Peru and Ecuador implemented passport requirements for entry, while Mexico, Honduras and Costa Rica in 2022 began to require visas for Venezuelans.¹⁶ This happens precisely when one of the difficulties experienced in Venezuela is obtaining official documents such as passports and judicial records. Obstacles to acquiring these documents increase the precariousness and vulnerability of migrants as they are exposed to human trafficking and networks that take advantage to exploit the needs of this population.¹⁷

¹⁰ BIGO 2002: 63–92.

¹¹ LEÓN 2020: 212.

¹² STOLCKE 1995: 1–24.

¹³ MÁRMORA 2010: 73.

¹⁴ R4V 2022.

¹⁵ LEÓN 2020: 220.

¹⁶ HRW 2022.

¹⁷ HRW 2022.

Has Venezuelan migration been securitised in Colombia?

In the region, Colombia is the country to which most Venezuelans have arrived; by May 2022 the figure amounted to 2,477,588,¹⁸ which is equivalent to about 40% of the total Venezuelan migrant population. This country does not have the experience as a recipient of migration as other South American countries may have. At the time of the exodus, it was one of the least prepared nations to deal with the migratory wave that exceeds the population of some of the departmental capitals.¹⁹ Paradoxically, by the 1950s, it was the Colombian population that began to migrate to Venezuela, partly to escape the violence associated with the internal conflict, and partly attracted by the comparative advantages that Venezuela had traditionally offered as an oil-producing country.²⁰ Now then, several of these migrants are Colombian returnees²¹ as well as people with whom they share common characteristics: there is no linguistic, ethnic, cultural or religious difference that generates insurmountable barriers. Yet, despite the fact that both in Juan Manuel Santos's and Iván Duque's administrations, Colombia has sought to facilitate the entry of neighbours by trying to formalise them,²² however, historical, economic, political and social factors have prevented the projection of the country as a destination for immigration and, instead, have made it a nation of emigrants. This means that the logistical and political infrastructure has historically been configured according to a logic of outflow rather than inflow of people into the national territory.²³

Nevertheless, Colombia's approach to the reception of Venezuelans has mutated over time. The year 2015, during the Santos Administration, marked a first turning point in the recent migration agenda. The Venezuelan Government carried out a massive deportation of Colombians and Colombian Venezuelans. Such deportation demanded on the part of the State punctual control and monitoring actions as well as humanitarian care measures in the border areas.²⁴ During 2017, a time when the economic, political and social crisis in the neighbouring country worsened, the Colombian Government channelled greater attention to the migration agenda and favoured a set of measures aimed specifically at the migrant population that began to arrive en masse. Under this logic, the Border Mobility Card is issued for those living in border areas and the Special Permit to Stay, which aims to regularise the situation of migrants who intend to reside in Colombia, guaranteeing them access to basic services.²⁵ In March 2018, the Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants in Colombia (RAMVC) was created,²⁶ the first step towards a more structural response.

However, a series of actions were also taken to reinforce border control through increased security operations. For example, in February of the same year (2018), the

¹⁸ R4V 2022.

¹⁹ Migration Colombia 2022.

²⁰ DE FLORES 2004: 200.

²¹ LEÓN 2020: 220.

²² ACOSTA et al. 2019.

²³ LEÓN 2020: 222.

²⁴ BARBIERI et al. 2020: 221.

²⁵ BARBIERI et al. 2020: 223.

²⁶ UNGRD 2018.

Special Migration Group (GEM), which includes the National Police, the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF), the National Tax and Customs Department (DIAN) and Migration Colombia, began to operate in the Colombian–Venezuelan border zone.²⁷ The group in question “responds, above all, to the reinforcement of the foot of force, militarization and »securitization» to contain Venezuelan migration mainly on the border”.²⁸ In this sense, the National Police has described as successful operations carried out in parks, shopping centres and establishments open to the public, in which verifications, sanctions and deportations of Venezuelans are carried out.²⁹ On the other hand, on the eve of the end of his term, former President Santos through Decree 1288 of August 2018, regulated the legal conditions of permanence, regularisation and access to services such as health, education, work and care for children and adolescents in the different territorial levels.³⁰

With the arrival of Duque to power in 2018, in a framework of diplomatic tensions between the governments of Colombia and Venezuela, the continuity of the decisions made by his predecessor and the support for Venezuelans who decide to enter or transit through the national territory were reiterated. However, most of Colombia's institutional responses were short-term and immediate, with short and medium-term reactions taking precedence (including alliances with international organisations to address the migratory wave, delivery of food baskets, access to community kitchens and hygiene kits³¹), necessary but insufficient measures³² as they do not solve the problem of labour incorporation or xenophobia, the latter being key to true social integration.

On 23 July 2019, a bill to establish a comprehensive immigration policy was filed in the Senate Secretariat. In procedural terms, such law aims to resolve migratory procedures regarding nationality, visas, passports, rights, duties and protection of migrants.³³ In 2021, Duque's government announced the creation of the Temporary Protection Statute for Venezuelan Migrants,³⁴ which seeks to regularise them definitively. This statute allows migrants to stay in Colombia regularly for ten years, access to social security, validation of professional qualifications, free entry and exit of the country and accreditation of their migratory status before the country's authorities.³⁵

As a result, the Colombian Government has become an international benchmark in terms of migration policy.³⁶ However, despite the efforts made by the country in this area, there are several barriers to integration. One of the main ones is insertion in the labour market, as many migrants are excluded and end up in the informal sector.³⁷

²⁷ BARBIERI et al. 2020: 223.

²⁸ OBIMID 2018: 36.

²⁹ Colombian National Police 2018.

³⁰ Decree 1288 of 2018: Whereby measures are adopted to guarantee the access of persons registered in the Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants to the institutional offer and other measures are dictated on the return of Colombians, 25 July 2018.

³¹ GIFMM – R4V 2020.

³² BARBIERI et al. 2020: 223.

³³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs Colombia. Comprehensive Migration Policy. *Cancillería*, 07 October 2022.

³⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs Colombia 2021.

³⁵ GALINDO 2022.

³⁶ RAMÍREZ 2021.

³⁷ Observatorio Proyecto Migración Venezuela 2019.

The *Observatorio Proyecto Migración Venezuela* estimates that the informality rate of Venezuelans is around 89.6% and at least 50% are in the country irregularly.³⁸ During 2020, the homicide rate of Venezuelan migrants tripled that of Colombians (62.96 vs. 21.87 persons per one hundred thousand inhabitants). In the same year, 1,650 migrants were victims of forced displacement. Between 2015 and 2020, 2,319 Venezuelans suffered sexual violence (62.6% of the victims were female minors).³⁹

In addition, migrants must face cases of xenophobia, aporophobia and prejudice that bring social exclusion and fear.⁴⁰ The above in spite of the fact that according to a report by the Ideas for Peace Foundation, security conditions in Colombia have not been significantly affected by Venezuelan migrants, they have been inserted into the Colombian dynamics behaving mostly as the bulk of the population.⁴¹ The report also emphasises that institutions such as the World Bank, Fedesarrollo and the French Bank BNP point out that although migration may represent in the short term significant pressures on institutions, service provision systems and the labour market, in the medium and long term it may have an impact on the economy by producing an increase and dynamisation of the productive force (most of the migrants are of working age), attracting foreign investment and the reception of Venezuelan companies. However, for this impact to occur, it is necessary to prioritise the incorporation of migrants into the labour market and mitigate their vulnerabilities.⁴²

Between 2017 and 2021 Colombia went from hosting less than 100,000 Venezuelan citizens to more than 1,500,000⁴³ (reaching, as alluded to, by August 2022 around 2,400,000⁴⁴). During that time (2017–2021), the opinion of the average Colombian about his neighbours went from being undecided to escalate to more than 60% of disapproval, as indicated by a survey conducted by 40dB for the newspaper *El País*.⁴⁵ Media voices promoting stereotypes and portraying Venezuelans in relation to criminality contributed to this gradual change in perception among Colombians about migrants.⁴⁶ In the political sphere, the mayor of Bogota launched polemic messages and even proposed the creation of a special police command for criminal migrants.⁴⁷

Regarding the Temporary Protection Status for Migrants mentioned above, a measure applauded by international organisations and other countries, it is paradoxical that the majority of Colombian citizens (52.5%) are against it.⁴⁸ On the other hand, it is curious what the then Vice President Martha Lucia Ramirez said to the OAS assuring that "Colombia does not have the capacity to continue assimilating new migrants or refugees from Venezuela" and regretting that, unlike the United States, Canada or Spain, Colombia has been "affected by the less wealthy and less qualified sectors".⁴⁹

³⁸ Observatorio Proyecto Migración Venezuela 2019: 5.

³⁹ CODHES – UNHCR 2021: 40.

⁴⁰ GAUNA 2021: 445–461.

⁴¹ FIP 2019: 4.

⁴² FIP 2019: 8.

⁴³ Migration Colombia s. a.

⁴⁴ R4V 2022.

⁴⁵ GALINDO 2022.

⁴⁶ TABORDA et al. 2021: 146.

⁴⁷ TORRADO 2021.

⁴⁸ GALINDO 2022.

⁴⁹ TORRADO 2022a.

This type of posturing is often fuelled by not only political but also media and stereotypical narratives about migrants; for example, the boom in publicity about citizen security that links immigrants with delinquency stands out. But migrants have also been blamed for unemployment levels, the decline in quality of life and even for the "increase in infidelity" and "family disintegration".⁵⁰ In addition, other political and media narratives show them as extremely vulnerable subjects, deserving pity and charitable aid, thus making their strengths, capacities and potentialities invisibles.⁵¹

Researcher Ronal Rodríguez of the Venezuela Observatory of the Universidad del Rosario points out that the Colombian Government sometimes appears as if the "solidarity" that the State has shown through some measures were a sort of act of grace, but the reality is that it is an act of pragmatism because, given the geographical characteristics and the extensive border (2,200 kilometres) with the neighbouring country, Colombia is not able to build a wall as it is done in Europe or the United States, so the country has no choice but to seek integration. In this regard, he adds: "For example, if Venezuelan children and adolescents are not inserted in the educational system, this would represent a social bomb for Colombia in the medium and long term."⁵²

The country faces several challenges in dealing with the Venezuelan diaspora, among them, generating actions that successively allow the incorporation of migrants into society. As a first step, it is urgent to address the deep conflicts that have plagued the Colombian nation for decades: serious cases of corruption that affect the institutional framework, the lack of state presence in many regions, social inequalities and extreme poverty. These situations generate an atmosphere of uneasiness among locals and may be a trigger for xenophobic reactions as the arrival of migrants is seen as one more threat in an already complex panorama. At this point it should be emphasised that Venezuelan migrants should not bear the blame for the historical absence and negligence of the State in many of the municipalities where they arrive. In relation to the above, a proposal for radical change has emerged, represented by the progressive Gustavo Petro, who became president on 7 August 2022 with the promise to fight against inequality, protect the marginalised and excluded people, preserve the environment, defend human rights, develop the national economy and dialogue with all sectors. His proposals regarding security⁵³ include the concept of "Human Security". Concerning this term he emphasises that law enforcement alone cannot solve the problem of violence, it is also necessary to involve other institutions that work for welfare.

Proposal to implement the Human Security model in Colombia

The complete absence of the State in remote or peripheral territories, inhabited mainly by indigenous and Afro-descendant ethnic communities, as well as the peasant

⁵⁰ PINEDA-ÁVILA 2019: 71.

⁵¹ PINEDA-ÁVILA 2019: 71.

⁵² TORRADO 2022a.

⁵³ Official Website Gustavo Petro President 2022.

population, is one of the causes of the internal armed conflict. This is due to the fact that these territories have become the preferred scenario in which different armed actors confront each other.⁵⁴ Now then, speaking of the need for a comprehensive institutional presence does not only refer to bringing the public forces to the territories affected by violence, but also implies providing basic public services in those territories, supplying hospital infrastructure, sewage, suitable roads so that the peasants can take their products to the city, quality education, or improving the conditions of justice in the territories, etc.

In relation to the above, the peace process carried out during Juan Manuel Santos's two terms in office was aimed at stabilising the regions affected by the internal war. In other words, it was assumed that, when the FARC guerrillas left the territories, it should have been the State that would have been present and not other armed groups, as has been seen in recent years especially during the administration of Duque's government (who disagreed from the beginning with the peace process carried out by Santos). Among the most complex phenomena left by Duque's mandate is a country crossed by violence. During the 4 years of his administration, more than 957 social leaders and human rights defenders as well as 261 signatories of the peace agreement were murdered and 220 cases of forced disappearances plagued the country.⁵⁵

Faced with such a scenario, Gustavo Petro proposes to implement the Human Security strategy based on moving from counting the number of casualties to emphasising the increase of life.⁵⁶ The term Human Security can be traced back to the early nineties when the United Nations Organization – UN began to question the concept of economic development, the dominant paradigm in the world until then, and proposed the use of the term Human Development.⁵⁷ The latter aims not only at the economic growth represented by the Gross Domestic Product, but also at the equitable distribution of benefits, the restoration of the environment instead of its excessive devastation and the promotion of people's autonomy instead of their marginalisation.⁵⁸ Subsequently, following that paradigm (later called Sustainable Human Development), the UN proposed the approach of Human Security. This concept does not limit itself to estimating security in terms of nation states or power blocs. Instead, it is proposed as a paradigm that defines and seeks solutions to difficulties affecting the survival, livelihoods and dignity of citizens.⁵⁹ In summary, Human Development implies a process in terms of broadening the range of choices available to people, while Human Security implies being able to exercise those choices with security and freedom, as well as confidence that current opportunities will not disappear entirely in the future.⁶⁰

Human Security, as President Petro has repeatedly stated, prioritises the protection of life. In this sense, the results are focused on seeking strategies to protect the civilian population, respecting International Humanitarian Law in order to avoid cases such

⁵⁴ YAFFE 2011: 197.

⁵⁵ INDEPAZ 2022.

⁵⁶ Official Website Gustavo Petro President 2022.

⁵⁷ UNDP 2016.

⁵⁸ UN s. a.b.

⁵⁹ UN s. a.a.

⁶⁰ UN 2017: 22.

as “false positives” (young people from marginal classes killed by members of the Colombian army and disguised as guerrillas in order to show results in terms of security⁶¹). Human Security also aims to develop a different type of relationship between Law Enforcement (Police and Army) and civil society by including activities that are not directly related to military coercion or the control of public order, for instance, accompanying the process of industrialisation and development of the territories.⁶²

In short, the purpose consists of starting to demilitarise civilian life, in this way, Petro is emphatic when he refers to the fact that in Colombia there are “things that we should not criminalize” and wonders: “Since when is a farmer who harvests coca leaves a criminal, if he is a simple farmer who has nothing else to grow? [...] Since when is a criminal a young person who consumes and who should have a doctor, a psychologist by his side, trying to overcome the weaknesses of the mind?” He adds that it is necessary “to choose well who is the one to confront. It is not the poor, it is the powerful multi-criminal organization”; for President Petro, with Human Security “what increases is the full enjoyment of existence”.⁶³ Therefore, his proposal implies moving towards a security approach in which the State is present not only with the military forces but also by attending to the basic needs of the population, to the extent that the presence of soldiers is not enough to build security.

Regarding the subject matter of this article, it remains to be seen if such Human Security proposal extends to the migrant population. In the framework of the reestablishment of relations between Colombia and Venezuela (the countries had no diplomatic relations since 2019), according to the ambassador in Caracas, Armando Benedetti, work is being done “both for the pendular migration, that every day moves across our borders, and that very soon thanks to the reopening of the border will be able to do so in better conditions, as well as for those migrants who come to our country to settle and contribute to the development”.⁶⁴ This is important because the absence of governance of both States in the border area, especially since the rupture of relations in 2019, has allowed the positioning of different actors related to crime and smuggling. Although in June 2021 the crosswalk was enabled, this was not the case for the passage of goods. Venezuelans are supplied with goods and services in Colombia, so when the possibility of transporting them is denied, the door is open to informal passage. This situation is being exploited by armed groups that take over the *trochas* (or illegal crossings) demanding a “toll” on transit and establish their own increasingly abusive rules of control.⁶⁵

There is a hope that the recent reopening of the border will generate dignified living conditions for migrants and people living in the area. In statements made during the reopening, Petro pointed out the need “not to close the doors to one’s own house”, and added “I would like the first beneficiaries to be those who live on both sides of the border, those who took risks on those trails, the women who walked along them, practically, depending on officials who even came to collect tolls, on gangs of all kinds,

⁶¹ GÓMEZ 2020: 23–71.

⁶² RONDÓN 2022.

⁶³ Presidency of the Republic 2022a.

⁶⁴ TORRADO 2022b.

⁶⁵ Venezuela Observatory 2019.

multi-crime, who could kill, who could rape". He also emphasised the importance of completely legalising both cultural and economic population flows, "this should result in a qualitative leap in human rights throughout the Colombian–Venezuelan border, it should result, we will measure it publicly, in an increase in the quality of life".⁶⁶ It is expected, therefore, that migrants will be included in Petro's call for "total peace", it is necessary that they have a place in the national project since – being around two and a half million, most of them with a vocation to stay in Colombia – they are already an important part of the country's reality.

Conclusion

Through security policies, borders are being created that reinforce a sense of belonging to a hermetic territory from which it is possible to claim political and economic rights that are supposed to be defended from "others" (different from nationals). Security actors activate a discourse that seeks legitimacy by using ideological tricks that conceive difference as something natural and immeasurable and as an existential threat to the objects of reference. Therefore, national discourses are part of those narratives that define "us–others" (nationals and foreigners, for example) and legitimise the exclusion of the latter through the use of "extraordinary measures"; this process has been called Securitisation by the Copenhagen School. These discourses often lead to concrete actions and policies of a securitising nature that transform the territorial borders of States into mechanisms of migratory control.

The case of the Venezuelan diaspora in Latin America is also mentioned, as well as the migration governance model adopted by the region in its attempt to cope with mass mobilisation. Several countries, adopting securitised postures, have favoured migratory control through border militarisation and visa requirements. The actions taken by Colombia, which hosts the largest Venezuelan migrant population in the region, have been of different sorts, have mutated over time and include measures that impose restrictions, but also assistance and administrative actions that favour the regularisation of the migratory situation (internationally applauded). They have been mixed however with messages that from the political discourse and the media have constructed the Venezuelan immigrant as a threat to security.

Finally, the article highlights the need to manage migration within a Human Security policy. This narrative, which is new in Colombia, focuses on building an integral way to protect people, who should be in the centre of security measures. Human Security seeks the prevalence of civil authority over military authority or, in other words, to demilitarise relations between the State and civil society. This includes providing guarantees of fundamental rights, as well as ensuring access to food, land and means of production. It is emphasised that Desecuritisation proposes to address the mobility of people through cooperation and within the orbit of ordinary politics, where there is room for dialogue rather than reprisals.

⁶⁶ Presidency of the Republic 2022b.

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