What Do We Mean When We Talk About the "Securitization" of International Migration in Mexico? A Critique

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Undocumented international migration in Mexico is facing a serious human rights crisis. Each year, hundreds of thousands of migrants, above all from Central America, cross Mexico to reach the United States. Their journey risks extortion, kidnap, torture, disappearance, and death. For activists and civil society organizations, this crisis is explained by what they call the securitization of Mexico's migration policy. By "securitization," they mean a policy imposed on Mexico by the United States that treats migrants as a security threat. This article challenges this interpretation, arguing that the theory of securitization is insufficient to understand the many factors that make possible the systematic violence of the human rights of migrants in transit in Mexico. **Keywords:** *international migration, human rights, securitization, civil society, migratory policy.*

IN 2010 THE BODIES OF SEVENTY-TWO FOREIGN CITIZENS WERE DISCOVERED in San Fernando, Tamaulipas, in northeastern Mexico. The massacre's only survivor testified that they had been kidnapped by members of the local police who then handed them over to the criminal organization Los Zetas (an organization created and trained by former members of the Mexican military). The victims had been asked for money in exchange for their freedom, but they had none and so were shot in the back.[1] From here on, the issue of international migration in Mexico has gradually won some recognition in the media.

It would be hard to say that the San Fernando massacre took the official agencies concerned with international migration by surprise. A year before, the country's National Commission of Human Rights had presented to the public a report documenting how in six months more than 9,000 undocumented migrants transiting through to the United States had been kidnapped in Mexico.[2] Since 2009 the shelters for migrants, journalists, and human rights activists have also reported the grave abuses that they suffer.[3] For Jorge A. Bustamante, former UN special rapporteur on migrants' rights, there is simply "no other country in the world where more deaths of international migrants happen" than in Mexico.[4] Some observers have described the situation of undocumented international migration in Mexico as "a holocaust," "a humanitarian tragedy," "a human rights crisis."[5] And yet the

irregular international migration in transit through Mexico is a problem largely ignored by academia. Its absence is especially striking in the international relations (IR) literature, despite its being an issue that directly concerns this discipline.[6] The reports of activists and human rights organizations have covered the academic silence on the matter.

How have activists and experts tried to explain the human rights crises of migrants transiting through Mexico? After reviewing a significant number of documents published on this issue in the past years by activists and human rights organizations, it is clear that there is a certain consensus among the authors on the principal cause supposedly explaining the deplorable situation of undocumented international migration: the "securitization" of Mexico's migration policy.[7] According to them, the securitization of migration is a migratory policy imposed by the United States on Mexico after the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States. This policy, the authors argue, is based on the belief that undocumented international migration is a national security threat such that the Mexican state has deployed specific practices and laws to halt it.

Studies on the securitization of migration emerged over twenty years ago and have since influenced the discipline of IR.[8] These studies have been useful in understanding the process through which countries like the United States have adopted more restrictive migratory policies and practices with the aim of checking migration. However, as these same studies have demonstrated, the process of the securitization of migration in those countries has not brought with it a human rights crisis.[9] If more deaths of international migrants occur in Mexico than in other country in the world, the explanation drawn from the theory of securitization would appear to be insufficient. If this is so, then what are the causes behind the deplorable situation of undocumented migrants in transit through the country? What are the factors generating the atrocities perpetrated against them?

Responding to these questions entails a substantial inquiry, one beyond the reach of this article. Furthermore, before trying to give a new answer to these questions, it is appropriate to stop and analyze the existing explanation; that is, securitization. Hence, in this article, I seek to respond to two questions. First, how is the reality of international migration in Mexico explained by those authors who approach it through the concept of securitization? Second, what evidence do they have to demonstrate what they say that they explain?

Therefore, my aim in this article is to explore the explanations framed by theories of securitization, their use in understanding what is happening with international migration in Mexico, and their validity based on the empirical evidence that they offer to support what they affirm. First, I briefly describe the concept of securitization. Second, I critically analyze an important number of studies that, framed by securitization theories, attempt to explain the situation of international migration in Mexico. Third, I scru-

tinize the evidence used by the studies that talk of the securitization of migration in Mexico. Then, I show some of the weaknesses of these studies. Finally, I offer a conclusion.

Conceptual and Methodological Notes

Some preliminary conceptual and methodological clarifications are in order. Throughout this article, I use the categories of "activists" and "experts" interchangeably because in Mexico academic experts on the migration issue frequently collaborate with civil society activists and organizations or are fully one with them. The same happens in reverse: academic research is coordinated, edited, and published by activists who collaborate in research centers and universities. In some cases, these activists and experts additionally participate as state agents. In this sense, as Nicholas Guilhot affirms, these actors are "double agents," serving equally in the fields of the state, academia, and the organizations of civil society.[10]

My inquiry draws on Michel Foucault's genealogical methods.[11] This is an interpretive frame that seeks to unsettle the stability of explanations considered fixed, that attempts to fragment apparently solid and unified interpretations, and that shows the heterogeneity and contingency of events and ideas apparently homogeneous and consistent.[12] Thus, unlike all of the documents consulted here, I do not take securitization as something obvious and evident. Also, far from repeating the conclusions of these activists and experts, I aim to challenge them by seeking to demystify the powerful argument that talks of the securitization of migration in Mexico as an easy explanation for what is happening with the undocumented foreign citizens. This is no small matter. I attempt nothing less than to dismantle the interpretation that has dominated analysis on international migration in Mexico for the past ten years.

To select the texts that I analyzed, I followed the "method for composing our world" established by Bruno Latour in his study on the pasteurization of France.[13] For Latour, this method "does not require us to decide in advance on a list of actors and possible actions. If we open the . . . literature of the time," he claims, "we find stories that define for us who are the main actors, what happens to them, what trials they undergo."[14] This method proved useful for this article. It suffices to open any document by an expert or activist for this to guide readers on those texts and actors who have the monopoly on the discourse, on the explanations, or on what is happening with migration in transit through Mexico. To avoid any bias, as may be seen in the endnotes, I cited a large number of documents published by diverse organizations and experts, among whom are the most renowned Mexican migrantologists.

Finally, a note on this study's time limit: it is an analysis of texts published by activists and experts up until December 2012. The changes since then in migration management are not part of this article.

**The Theory and Practice of the
Securitization of International Migration**

In 1995, Ole Waever coined the term *securitization* in reaction to traditional studies on security, to the realist and neorealist theories of the discipline of IR that restricted the concept of threats only to dangers of a military type, generally between states.[15] For Waever, and others like Barry Buzan, it was not sufficient to analyze an apparently objective threat. For these authors what mattered was the study of (1) the *process* by which certain actors, such as the press or the executive, present before the public the existence of supposed threats (military or not) as a pretext for deploying certain emergency measures; and (2) the results of this process—for example, an increase in the number of police, greater resources, more armaments.[16] In relation to the migration issue, these authors explored how in some countries international migration, with or without documents, went from being an issue of ordinary policy to a matter of security, one that demanded greater public attention and legitimized urgent public policies.[17]

The importance of this theoretical focus is that it allowed an understanding of the securitization of international migration as a process in which multiple actors—government ministers, members of religions, journalists, academics, experts—intervene, seeking to convince the public that migration is a latent threat to security. And once migration comes to be seen as a danger by the public, these same actors can then justifiably design and dispose actions, laws, ad hoc rules, institutions, budgets, and emergency mechanisms to end, avoid, halt, contain, or control the danger—even if these dispositions violate the constitution, disregard international human rights norms, or go against common sense.

This interpretive frame of securitization won greater salience after the attacks of 9/11. What occurred that day served—and serves—as a pretext for some states (e.g., the United States) to harden their policies vis-à-vis international migration, with it represented as an imminent risk to public security and, above all, to national security.

It is important to emphasize that the events of 9/11 have been an excuse for the change in the policies of only some countries toward international migration. That is, the link between migration and national security to 9/11 was made in some countries but not in others. In France, for instance, as Philippe Bourbeau has shown, 9/11 has had a limited impact. French migration policy has traditionally been restrictive, and the 9/11 terrorist attacks had little to do with this; that is, there were no significant changes in laws, state agents (as was the case with the French ministers) almost did not even talk about the matter, and leading newspapers seldom established the link between migration affairs and the attacks.[18]

By contrast, an example like 9/11 has been manipulated to securitize migration policies in the United States. Adam Isacson and Maureen Meyer have shown that, from 2001 in the United States, there has been an explicit effort to link the migration issue with ideas of threats to national security.

According to those authors, this is something that has been repeatedly affirmed in official documents and speeches such as the 2004 *National Border Patrol Strategy* or the discussion in Congress in the context of the 2002 Homeland Security Act.[19] By this logic, "any illegal entry could be a terrorist."[20]

This rhetoric, so Isacson and Meyer point out, has had concrete consequences through the creation of new institutions and special norms, and through a constant increase in the budget and the number of agents deployed to control international immigration. Evidence of this, according to Isacson and Meyer, is the 2002 creation of the Department of Homeland Security that joins together distinct agencies connected with border security, and the 2005 commencement of the Secure Border Initiative to reinforce the security of the border. Between 1992 and 2011, they observe, the number of agents of the Border Patrol at the southwest border quintupled. And the total budget of the Border Patrol increased by 102 percent from 2005.[21]

This is a brief survey of the emergence of the theory of securitization, of its basic arguments, and of its use to explain (with greater or lesser success) what happens in practice in the sphere of international migration. I do not seek here to go any deeper into this theory. The point for now is to understand the source of the ideas and theoretical concepts that activists and experts collectively use when they try to explain what is happening in Mexico with international migration. Can it be said that the concept of securitization used to illustrate what happens in countries like the United States is of use in explaining the humanitarian tragedy of the migrants who cross through Mexico? How has it been demonstrated by those who affirm that the migration policy in Mexico is securitized? In the following sections, I turn to these questions.

The Answer that Explains Everything: "Securitization"

To understand how activists, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and some academics interpret what is happening with the migrants in Mexico, the departure point is to explore what their publications say. On reviewing a significant number of these texts, it is easy to find that the majority of them coincide in their diagnosis: the deplorable situation of the migrants in the country is the result of what they call "securitization."[22] Advancing further in the analysis of these publications, it is evident that this concept has served to explain almost everything: the abandoning of a law (or the creating of another); the increase in the number of "operations" to carry out "migration checks," but the reduction of migrants "detained" and "returned"; the new dispositions on migration contrived by the federal government, along with their implementation (and manipulation) in the local sphere; the participation of organized crime in the field of migration; migration policies that occurred twenty, ten, or three years since—and changes in the migration norms and practices that perhaps may come about in the future.

But what is securitization? Based on the texts consulted, the concept brings together three central ideas. First, the Mexican state deals with undocumented migration as an issue of strictly national security and that it has deployed certain specific policies for this. Second, this is a policy that commenced after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in the United States and that it was imposed on Mexico. Third, securitization—and only it—explains the increase in the violations of the human rights of the migrants.

The aforesaid may be illustrated by four examples. In the introduction that he wrote for a text published by an NGO, scholar Manuel Ángel Castillo explains securitization in the following manner: "The incidents of September 2001 in United States territory led to" the promotion of "initiatives tending to confront . . . threats" to "national security." This affected "the manner of confronting the migration dynamic," not only in the United States but also in its "immediate area of influence"—that is, in Mexico.[23]

In *Seguridad para el migrante: Una agenda por construir,* the authors propose that "the policy of the United States fosters the perception that migrants are a threat to national security." The "imposition" of this view of migration in countries like Mexico, they affirm, leads undocumented migrants to be a concern within "the agenda of the fight against terrorism."[24] And this, they conclude, is one of "the central causes on account of which a situation of humanitarian crisis is currently being lived in the migration issue."[25]

The topic is tackled in a similar way in the book *Migración y seguridad: Nuevo desafío en México:* "Starting from the attacks of 11 September 2001, migration has occupied an ever more outstanding place in security policies, on the argument of preventing the entry of possible terrorists. This process of securitizing migration . . . has had influence in other countries, as is the case with Mexico."[26]

Finally, according to the document *Situación de los derechos humanos de las personas migrantes y solicitantes de asilo detenidas en las estaciones migratorias de México,* "the repressive model" of migration control has been promoted by the United States "strongly through the last years."[27] Hence, Mexico's migration policy, these authors affirm, "has had as its fundamental engine the interest in guarding the security of the Mexican state from the—unfounded—danger that foreign persons represent."[28]

So far, this is the extent of the apparent consensus among experts and activists trying to explain the situation of transit migration in Mexico based upon securitization. The interpretation and use of this concept, however, changes from one text to another when authors attempt to deepen their analyses. That is, after thoroughly studying the arguments of the texts that I consulted on the securitization of migration in Mexico, there appears to be a series of contradictions. I underline three that, in my opinion, are fundamental.

Securitization Is and Will Always Be

The first transformation that the concept of securitization undergoes has to do with its temporal origin. Securitization as a migration discourse and practice, so activists and experts say, arose starting from the terrorist attacks of 9/11. However, when they go deeper into the analysis of the situation of migrants in Mexico, these same activists talk of securitization as an atemporal phenomenon that explains the migration policies in the 1990s (a decade before 2001) or those migration practices deployed since 2011 (a decade after).

For instance, securitization supposedly serves to easily explain what has happened in Mexico "during the last two decades" (i.e., from the 1990s),[29] and "in the current era and especially since September 2001."[30] Others, following the idea that securitization started after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, indicate a crucial example of it in Plan Sur, which was implemented by the Mexican government in 2001 with "a police and inquisitorial focus," and which "oriented migration policy to augment the capacity to guard against, control, inspect and contain the migratory flows."[31] The problem is that Plan Sur, as other experts observe, began in July 2001; that is, some two months before the attacks of 9/11.[32]

For others, securitization can explain any migration law or practice that has taken place in Mexico in the past ten years: in 2002, through the forming of the High-Level Group on Border Security;[33] in 2007, through the mention of the migration issue in the National Development Plan's section concerning national security;[34] in 2010, through the formal delegation of the capacity to carry out migration operations to the regional agents of the National Migration Institute; or in 2011, through the coming into force of the Migration Law, which mentions the topic of national security.

Securitization Is the Origin of Everything

The second transformation that the concept of securitization undergoes when being used by experts and activists to explain the Mexican case is that of its supposed effects in migration policy and practice. Originally, the idea of securitization assumes a discourse based on the definition of migrants as a prominent threat to national security. This implies the deployment of migration norms, laws, rules, institutions, authorities, and practices to control this potential danger to security. In Mexico, securitization serves for the experts to interpret—today—norms, laws, and practices that currently limit the transmigrants' human rights, even though the said dispositions have existed in the country at least since 1974, or even since 1930. For some authors, it is only owing to securitization that we can understand "the applicability of norms and practices of migration control and inspection that restrict the human rights of migrants."[35] And yet how can they explain that exactly the same dispositions functioned in the country since before 9/11 (e.g., the power of the authorities to detain migrants unable to prove their

legal stay in the country or to establish prison-like detention centers where migrants are deprived of their freedom)?[36]

Securitization has been useful in talk of the deployment of practices that even run counter to each other. For example, it serves to approach, at the same time, the consequences of the *excess* and *absence* of border control—depending on which expert considers there to be excess or absence of border control. The authors who believe that the government has been inefficient in border control think this has forced the authorities to increase the number of raids and "migration filters" within the country, outside of international entry points. And "where there are greater [migration] controls, greater are the risks facing persons all along the migration circuit, because migrants have to fall back on the trafficking networks that are today controlled by organized crime networks."[37] By contrast, those who think that there has been greater border control consider that this has "involved negligence in the effective control of the transit routes."[38] And this negligence in the transit routes, in turn, has brought greater abuses against the migrants since there are no authorities to protect them from organized crime.[39] How can securitization serve to support opposing explanations?

Securitization Was Imposed by the United States, Although It Really Doesn't Matter

The final distortion of the concept of securitization has to do with its origin. The consensus among experts and activists is that securitization was imposed on Mexico by the United States after 9/11. This explanation is believable but difficult to demonstrate. "I do not know for a fact if there were pressures or open demands from the United States to exercise a greater control by the Mexican authorities in the southern border," affirms Natalia Armijo.[40] The same is also admitted by Manuel Ángel Castillo and Mónica Toussaint: "It is difficult to prove the influence of the United States policy of national security in the rise of the mechanisms of migration control in the southern border of Mexico."[41] For these authors, the important thing is that "starting from September 2001 there were significant changes that had implications for [the migration] policies and measures." In equal fashion for Adam Isacson, "Mexico has increased its securitization efforts along its border with the United States." However, Isacson observes, "clearly" those securitization efforts have been carried out by Mexico "whether encouraged by the United States or not."[42] Thus, the irony is that the authors who affirm that securitization is something imposed on Mexico from the United States are exactly the same who warn that this cannot be demonstrated, or that it really doesn't matter.

In sum, after reviewing a significant number of texts that talk about the situation of international migration in Mexico, it is plain that "securitization" is a concept fully evoked and shared by activists and experts. With variations and nuances, the majority of the texts coincide on three basic components: that the Mexican state strictly considers international migra-

tion a problem of national security and that it acts in consequence through public norms and policies; that it is a view imposed from the United States that began immediately after the terrorist attacks of 9/11; and that this explains the humanitarian tragedy of the migrants in transit through Mexico. Nonetheless, authors who use this concept in their analyses end up passing over these three factors. These texts produce the sensation that securitization has turned into less an explanation than a dogma of faith—an idea that almost nobody really knows what it is, but that frequently shows up in the rhetoric of the activists, is easily believable, and appears to explain with certain simplicity what is happening (and what is not) with undocumented migration in Mexico.

Migration Control in Mexico: The Available Evidence

To be able to talk about securitization in Mexico, the evidence presented by activists and experts ought to permit us to find three elements in the discourse and practice of the government. The first element is the notion that migration represents an existential threat to the security of the state and society. The second is the preeminence given in speeches and laws to migration as a threat to security. The third is the political and institutional effects of these ideas, which ought to have brought substantive changes in praxis: for instance, greater budgets and more immigration agents.[43] To know if these elements are present in the Mexican case, I consider the examples and evidence that the same activists and experts normally use when they argue that migration in Mexico has been securitized.

Securitization in Official Discourse?

In Mexico, activists and experts affirm that migration is securitized. However, they do not offer examples of how this occurs in government rhetoric. In the texts that I consulted for this article, it was not possible to find examples of speeches or even key phrases pronounced during the terms of Presidents Felipe Calderón (2006–2012), Vicente Fox (2000–2006), and Ernesto Zedillo (1994–2000) that explicitly linked transit migration with security or that represented migrants as threat to Mexico's security.

This allows it to be inferred that the supposed securitization of international migration in Mexico is not present; at least, in official discourse. Neither the presidents nor their secretaries of state, for example, talked about migrants in transit as a danger to the country's security. At any rate, they did not before 2012.

Securitization in Legal Dispositions?

An example frequently cited by the NGOs that seek to demonstrate that migration has been securitized in Mexican norms and laws is the National Development Plan, the Plan Nacional de Desarrollo (PND), of 2007–2012. This is due to its having "fused migration and national security," as the activists affirm.[44]

In effect, the PND's section on national security mentions the migration theme: "A fundamental condition in the policy of national security consists in guaranteeing the order and legality of the migratory and commercial flows, or flows of any type, in the more than 4,300 kilometers that comprise our borders."[45] This is the only time that the theme of migration is explicitly linked to national security. But this is what any state seeks to attain, as a matter of principle. Like any other sovereign country, Mexico has tried to control migratory and commercial flows and its borders since its independence.

The PND's section on national security also talks of border control and again mentions migrants. However, in doing so it does not refer to them as a threat, nor does it represent them as undesirable or dangerous actors. To the contrary, it calls for "safeguarding security on the borders, along with the integrity and respect for the human rights both of the inhabitants of these zones and of migrants."[46] It affirms that "the strategies of border security should focus on the protection of migrants," who are being exposed to "groups of smugglers and traffickers in people and drugs."

Another section of the PND mentions the migration theme: "Effective Democracy and Responsible Foreign Policy."[47] There, it is affirmed that the government is seeking "the protection of Latin American citizens who enter the country, often in an undocumented manner and in deplorable security conditions."[48] It even proposes "building a new culture of migration" that would promote "the co-responsibility between the countries that share with Mexico migration flows to foster economic growth and social development in the most underdeveloped zones, and guarantee at the same time the protection of the rights of the migrants."[49] Is this securitization?

Neither the Mexican constitution nor the Law of National Security present a link between migration and security. So it is from a secondary norm that the texts I consulted cite another example to try to demonstrate the securitization of migration—the accord recognizing the National Institute of Migration, the Instituto Nacional de Migración (INM), as a national security agency.[50] Yet while this is a frequently evoked example, the authors who analyze the reasons why this disposition contributes to securitization are rare.

The main question that ought to be posed is how the formal identification of the INM as one of the multiple national security agencies was justified. The presidential decree giving rise to this disposition maintains that the laws in the framework for the INM have always been related with the country's security.[51] The INM can, for example, restrict the emigration of Mexicans when "national interest so demands," guard the entry and departure of Mexicans (and foreigners), and check their documentation. Are these functions that were imposed by the United States on the Mexican government after 9/11? Were they designed with the objective of controlling the Central American migrants who are represented as a threat to security? In reality, these functions are dispositions that the INM has had since its creation, and,

in distinct forms, they have always been in Mexican legislation.[52] Besides, these measures equally affect Mexicans and non-Mexicans.

A last example is the Ley de Migración of 2011. In effect, this law mentions in its first article that it seeks "the preservation of national sovereignty and security," although it never establishes how it is going to contribute to this or what is understood by security. Furthermore, the law affirms that it seeks "the respect for, protection and safeguarding of the human rights" of migrants.[53] In any case, the relation between security and migration in this law is not something new. As José A. Guevara Bermúdez correctly points out, this link has been present in the legal statutes in Mexico from the beginning of the nineteenth century. Thus, the 2011 law merely consolidates the views of migration and security that already existed in previous pieces of legislation: for example, in the Law on the Faculties of the Government Relative to the Expulsion of Non-naturalized Foreigners of 1832, in the Law on Aliens and Naturalization of 1886, in the Law of Immigration of 1909, in the Law of Migration of 1930, and in the General Law of Population of 1974.[54]

The meticulous review by Guevara of Mexican migration norms thus reveals that the problem is not securitization, that the link between security and migration has always existed in Mexico, and that therefore it has not been imposed by the United States. Guevara's study demonstrates that the problem—perhaps more disturbing—is xenophobia and racism, the pillars that have historically framed the link between international migration and security in the country.[55]

Securitization in Practice?

For some activists, the administrative detention of migrants unable to prove their legal stay in Mexico demonstrates that migration is securitized.[56] The Migration Law of 2011 contemplates, for example, "presentation"—the peculiar term employed in the law to indicate that a migrant can be detained for no more than thirty-six hours. It also establishes "lodging"[57]—the euphemism used to refer to the detention of migrants from between fifteen and sixty days in "migration stations," which in their turn are the name given for the prison-like centers where migrants find themselves detained.[58]

However, these dispositions did not start in 2001 after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, nor have they been justified before the public with the argument that migrants are a threat to national security. These measures have existed since at least 1974, when the General Law of Population established them. This law empowered the Ministry of the Interior to establish "migration stations" in places considered appropriate "to lodge" migrants.[59] The law did indeed criminalize the foreigners who settled without documents in the country, providing for a sentence of up to two years in prison.[60]

For other activists, a second proof of securitization in practice is related to the mechanisms by which certain authorities besiege migrants within the country, in places distinct from the internment points.[61] For this,

the Migration Law of 2011 uses three terms: *control*, *verification*, and *migration revision*.[62]

Despite the questionable—and perhaps unconstitutional—nature that these measures may have, they were not designed as a response to the attacks of 9/11. The harassment of migrants has been authorized by law for at least three decades. For example, the General Law of Population of 1974 granted discretionary powers to the Ministry of the Interior to promote before other federal or local authorities measures "to subject the immigration of foreigners to the forms it judges appropriate, and to procure the best assimilation of these to the national setting and their adequate arrangement in the territory."[63] Since 1999, the law has empowered the authorities to undertake "verification visits outside the established fixed revision points," and "migration revision on routes or provisional points distinct from those established."[64] These measures, moreover, affect both foreigners with documents and Mexicans. Furthermore, these migration controls would appear to be rather inefficient, according to official data. The number of Central American migrants detained and expelled by Mexico gradually diminished between 2005 and 2010. In 2005 Mexico detained and expelled 223,000 Central American transmigrants, but less than 64,000 in 2010.[65]

Thus, one of the arguments of civil society organizations to prove that in Mexico migration is securitized in practice refers to the INM's capacity to undertake "operations" with the end of detaining undocumented migrants. However, despite the deployment of "operations" there were less migrants "retained" and "returned." Between 2005 and 2010, there was a decrease of 72 percent in the number of Central American migrants detained and expelled by Mexico. In contrast, in the United States, in exactly the same period, there was an increase of 89 percent in the number of Central American migrants returned to their countries.[66] That is, in the United States the figures match with the policy of securitization: there is a discourse that represents migrants as a threat, there are more restrictive rules and practices, and more people are detained and deported every year. In Mexico, exactly the contrary occurs: there is not an official discourse on securitization; the operations that supposedly demonstrate securitization in practice have existed for decades; and there have been less people detained and expelled between 2005 and 2010, according to the available official information.

A third argument to demonstrate that in Mexico migration policy "has securitization as its cornerstone" is related to the participation of security agents distinct from the personnel of the INM in the migration "control"— for example, the Federal Police.[67] However, this questionable disposition has existed in the country since 1930. The Migration Law of that year authorized the migration authorities to solicit the aid of the public forces, federal or local, to carry out their tasks.[68] Something similar was ordered by the General Law of Population of 1999: "The Ministry of the Interior, through the personnel of the migration services and the Preventive Federal

Police, shall be able to carry out . . . verification visits" and "migration revision on routes or provisional points distinct from those established."[69]

Finally, the evolution of the INM's budget does not follow a coherent pattern. What can be known is that it has not substantially increased. Between 2005 and 2011, it could be said that the resources approved for the INM in the federal budget did not go up in a significant way because they did not go up on average more than 20 percent in all those years.[70] In 2008, seven years after 9/11, the budget suddenly increased by 90 percent. However, in 2009 the resources went down by 14 percent. Can the budget cut also be explained by securitization? Since then and until 2012, it remained constant.

The Insufficiencies of the Discourse of Securitization

Despite the lack of empirical evidence, the idea that Mexico's migration policy is securitized has become a commonplace among many of the activists connected with the migration issue. We could believe that the explanation of securitization, like a dogma of faith, is a truth that does not admit doubts and therefore does not require evidence to be believed. The problem is that the way that experts and activists have adapted the concept of securitization in Mexico presents some problems.

Immutable and Pure

The first weakness of the texts that explain the situation of international migration in Mexico through the theory of securitization is that they assume that the migration policy is immutable (i.e., that it does not change with the passing of time). This allows the activists to explain events that happened in 2011, 2001, or 1990, and to predict situations that may occur in the future as if the migration policy and its management were identical in the governments of Presidents Salinas and Calderón, and as if the civil society organizations that promote and defend the human rights of migrants today were equal to those of the 1980s.

Immutability brings with it another weakness: the fantasy of purity. That is, the texts that I consulted talk of securitization as something that is foreign to its historical, social, political, or economic context. Securitization as a state policy passes across the years without seeing itself affected by economic squeezes, political instability, crises of violence, migratory flows, or the work of civil society organizations or transnational lobbying networks. It walks on without getting dirty. Securitization would appear not to vary in intensity. Is there some change in the level of securitization of migration practice between the Law of Population of 1974 and the Law of Migration of 2011?

Beyond the State

One of the most serious insufficiencies of the securitization discourse of the activists and experts is that it ignores a multiplicity of elements that make

possible the suffering and abuses systematically endured by foreign citizens without documents in transit through the country. The discourse of securitization concentrates on the performance of the state and its agents, along with the effects of restrictive laws that these design and implement. It implicitly assumes that, upon the disappearance of securitization in the migration policy that has been imposed by the United States, the situation of undocumented foreigners in Mexico will improve. However, this overlooks that the humanitarian tragedy of the migrants in transit is also the result of other factors, some structural, others conjunctional, that have nothing to do with the supposed securitization nor with the state. These other factors include xenophobia and racism;[71] the fact that the kidnapping of transmigrants and what comes with it—extortion, torture, murder, disappearance—is a lucrative business for broad sectors of the population in Mexico;[72] and the fact that criminal organizations are exploring new illegal markets (mass kidnappings).

Conclusion

A significant number of activists and experts have found in securitization an argument that apparently explains with ease everything that happens to the migrants in transit in Mexico. And yet they all define "securitization" in a different and at times contradictory way, and almost always without proof. What do we mean when we talk about the securitization of international migration in Mexico?

The securitization that affects the migration policy and management in other countries has entailed three things: the public and extensive notion that undocumented migrants are a risk to security, the preeminence given in speeches and legal dispositions to migration as a threat, and the materializing of policies and institutions designed to detain the danger that migrants represent. The adoption and adaptation of the theory of securitization on the part of many activists and experts who seek to explain what is happening in Mexico has involved three assumptions: that the government treats migration as an issue exclusively of security and that, on account of this, it has implemented restrictive policies; that this policy commenced after the attacks of 9/11 in the United States and was imposed on Mexico; and that it alone explains the rise in the abuses against migrants.

However, these same authors have not provided convincing evidence to demonstrate that this occurs. There are no traces of an official discourse that explicitly portrays migrants as a potential threat to national security. By contrast with what happens in countries like the United States, in Mexico government rhetoric talks, ironically, of protecting migrants and of respecting their human rights. Not all dispositions that currently serve to control international migration—revisions, lodgings, operations—are necessarily more restrictive than in the past. Moreover, the majority of the dispositions have existed for decades; that is, they do not appear to have been imposed by the United States after the attacks of 9/11.

Beyond the absence of evidence, the argument of securitization is founded on assumptions that are not totally correct. For example, it assumes that migration dispositions, policies, and management in Mexico are immutable and detached from their political, historical, or social context. To claim that everything that happens to undocumented migrants can be understood by securitization obscures other types of more ranging explanations such as the multiplication of criminal groups, the indifference of Mexican society to the drama of Central American migration, the fact that undocumented migration means lucrative business for wide sectors of the population, and the limited capacity of the language of human rights to represent the suffering caused not only by the state but also by ordinary Mexicans. ⊕

Notes

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2. Comisión Nacional de los Derechos Humanos, *Informe Especial sobre los casos de secuestro en contra de migrantes* (Mexico City: Comisión Nacional de los Derechos Humanos, 15 June 2009), p. 12.

3. Belén, Posada del Migrante, Humanidad Sin Fronteras y Fronteras con Justicia, *Quinto Informe sobre la situación de los derechos humanos de las personas migrantes en tránsito por México* (Saltillo City, Mexico: Belén, Posada del Migrante Humanidad Sin Fronteras, A.C. and Frontera Con Justicia, A.C., 2009); Federico Mastrogiovanni, "El negocio de la migración: Migrantes centroamericanos en tránsito por México hacia Estados Unidos" (master's thesis, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2013); Amnesty International, *Invisible Victims: Migrants in Movement in Mexico* (London: Amnesty International, 2010).

4. Jorge A. Bustamante, "¿Son nuestros muertos?" *Reforma,* 28 March 2012.

5. Carmen Aristegui, "Holocausto," *Reforma,* 27 August 2010; Comisión de Derechos Humanos del Distrito Federal, "Las y los migrantes viven una tragedia humanitaria en México," *Boletín,* no. 288 (2 August 2013).

6. To my knowledge, the only exception to this is the article published by Olga Aikin and Alejandro Anaya Muñoz, "Crisis de derechos humanos de las personas migrantes en tránsito por México: Redes y presión transnacional," *Foro Internacional* 53, no. 1 (2013).

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en la frontera sur," in Arturo Alvarado and Mónica Serrano, eds., *Seguridad nacional y seguridad interior, Los grandes problemas de México,* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2010), pp. 269–300; Maureen Meyer, *A Dangerous Journey Through Mexico: Human Rights Violations Against Migrants in Transit* (Washington, DC: Washington Office on Latin America, 2010), p. 4; Adam Isacson and Maureen Meyer, *Beyond the Border Build-up: Security and Migrants Along the U.S.-Mexico Border* (Washington, DC: Washington Office on Latin America, 2012), p. 15; Idheas, *En tierra de nadie: El laberinto de la impunidad: Violaciones de los derechos humanos de las personas migrantes en la región del Soconusco* (Mexico City: Idheas, 2011); Ana Lorena Delgadillo and Christian Rojas, (coord.), *Informe sobre la situación general de los derechos de los migrantes y sus familias: Elaborado en ocasión de la visita a México del señor comisionado Felipe González, Relator Especial de Trabajadores Migratorios y Miembros de sus Familias de la Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos* (Mexico City: Sin Fronteras, July 2011), p. 18, www.sinfronteras.org.mx/attachments/1160_Informe_Final.pdf.

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11. Michel Foucault, "Questions of Method," in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 77–83; Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in Paul Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1986), pp. 76–104.

12. Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," p. 82.

13. Bruno Latour, *The Pasteurization of France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 9.

14. Ibid.

15. Ole Waever, "Securitization and Desecuritization," in Ronnie D. Lipschutz, ed., *On Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 46–86.

16. Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998), p. 23; Thierry Balzacq, "The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context," *European Journal of International Relations* 11, no. 2 (2005): 175; Hogel Stritzel, "Towards a Theory of Securitization: Copenhagen and Beyond," *European Journal of International Relations* 13, no. 3 (2007): 360; Claire Wilkinson, "The Copenhagen School on Tour in Kyrgyzstan: Is Securitization Theory Usable Outside Europe?" *Security Dialogue* 28, no. 1 (2007): 6.

17. Didier Bigo, "Security and Immigration: Toward a Critique of the Governmentality of Unease," *Alternatives* 27, no. 1 (2002): 64; Ayse Ceyhan and Anastassia Tsoukala, "The Securitization of Migration in Western Societies: Ambivalent Discourses and Policies," *Alternatives* 27, no. 1 (2002): 22.

18. Bourbeau, *The Securitization of Migration,* chap. 6.

19. Adam Isacson, "A Build-up in Search of a Threat: U.S. Policy, 'Securitization,' and Migration Along a Dramatically Changed Border," paper presented at the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Ford Foundation Office for Mexico and Central America, 10 September 2012, p. 2.

20. US Customs and Border Protection Office of Border Patrol, *National Border Patrol Strategy,* cited by Adam Isacson and Maureen Meyer, *Beyond the Border Build-up: Security and Migrants Along the U.S.-Mexico Border* (Washington, DC: Washington Office on Latin America, 2012), p. 15.

21. Isacson and Meyer, *Beyond the Border Build-up,* p. 17.

22. These texts are cited in note 7.

23. Manuel Ángel Castillo, "Introducción," in Fabienne Venet Rebiffé and Irene Palma Calderón, eds., *Seguridad para el migrante: Una agenda por construir,* Documento de trabajo No. 2 (Mexico City: Instituto de Estudios y Divulgación sobre Migración-Instituto Centroamericano de Estudios Sociales y Desarrollo, 2011), p. 8.

24. Venet Rebiffé and Palma Calderón, *Seguridad para el migrante,* p. 17.

25. Ibid., p. 34.

26. Natalia Armijo Canto, "Introducción," in Natalia Armijo Canto, ed., *Migración y seguridad,* p. 5.

27. Sin Frontera I.A.P., *Situación de los derechos humanos de las personas migrantes,* p. 12.

28. Ibid., p. 15.

29. Venet Rebiffé and Palma Calderón, *Seguridad para el migrante,* p. 11.

30. Ángel Castillo and Toussaint, "Seguridad y migración en la frontera sur," p. 270.

31. Delgadillo and Rojas, *Informe sobre la situación general de los derechos,* pp. 18−19. See also Isacson and Meyer, *Beyond the Border Build-up,* p. 15.

32. Rodolfo Córdova Alcaraz, "Delitos cometidos contra los migrantes en la frontera sur de México: La relevancia de la participación ciudadana para combatirlos y erradicarlos," in Natalia Armijo Canto, ed., *Frontera sur: Retos para la seguridad* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Seguridad Pública Federal, 2012), p. 129; Armijo Canto, "Frontera sur de México…", p. 42. Manuel Ángel Castillo and Mónica Toussaint suggest that Plan Sur started in 2003. Ángel Castillo and Toussaint, "Seguridad y migración en la frontera sur," p. 281.

33. Ángel Castillo and Toussaint, "Seguridad y migración en la frontera sur," p. 291.

34. Isacson and Meyer, *Beyond the Border Build-up*.

35. Sin Fronteras I.A.P., *Situación de los derechos humanos de las personas migrantes.*

36. José A. Guevara Bermúdez, "Conexiones entre los derechos humanos de las personas migrantes y la seguridad. ¿Es posible afirmar que el derecho mexicano criminaliza la migración indocumentada?" *Cuestiones constitucionales* 31 (2014): 81–117.

37. Venet Rebiffé and Palma Calderón, *Seguridad para el migrante,* p. 35.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Armijo Canto, "Frontera sur de México," p. 43.

41. Ángel Castillo and Toussaint, "Seguridad y migración en la frontera sur," p. 290.

42. Adam Isacson, "A Build-up in Search of a Threat: U.S. Policy, 'Securitization,' and Migration Along a Dramatically Changed Border," paper presented at the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Ford Foundation Office for Mexico and Central America, 10 September 2012.

43. For the case of Canada and France, see Bourbeau, *The Securitization of Migration*; for the United States, see Isacson, "A Build-up in Search of a Threat."

44. Isacson and Meyer, *Beyond the Border Build-up,* p. 15.

45. Presidencia de la Republica, *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2007−2012,* (Mexico City: Presidencia de la Republica, 2007), p. 67.

46. Ibid., p. 70.

47. Certainly, because the PND talked about migrants and development or democracy does not mean that the government actually did anything about them. Given the critical situation of the migrants, it is most likely that the Felipe Calderón government did all too little about them—but that is not the theme of this article.

48. *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2007–2012,* p. 305.

49. Ibid., p. 307.

50. Isacson and Meyer, *Beyond the Border Build-up,* p. 15; Ángel Castillo and Toussaint, "Seguridad y migración en la frontera sur," p. 278.

51. Poder Ejecutivo-Secretaría de Gobernación, "Acuerdo por el que se reconoce al Instituto Nacional de Migración como Instancia de Seguridad Nacional," *Diario Oficial de la Federación,* 18 May 2005, pp. 9–11.

52. José A. Guevara Bermúdez, *Marco institucional y normativo en materia de migración internacional en México: Análisis y propuestas* (Mexico City: Instituto de Estudios y Divulgación sobre Migración, 2011), p. 92, note 340.

53. *Ley de Migración* (2011), art. 1.

54. Guevara Bermúdez, "Conexiones entres los derechos humanos."

55. Javier Treviño Rangel, "Racismo y nación: Comunidades imaginadas en México," *Estudios Sociológicos* 26, no. 78 (2008): 669–694; Javier Treviño Rangel, "Los hijos del cielo en el infierno: Un reporte sobre el racismo hacia las comunidades chinas en México, 1880–1930," *Foro Internacional* 45, no. 3 (2005): 409–444.

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57. Javier Cruz Angulo, "Ley de Migración y derechos fundamentales," in Jorge A. Schiavon and Gabriela Díaz Prieto, eds., *Los derechos humanos de las personas migrantes en México: Estudio de caso para promover su respeto y defensa* (Mexico City: Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas, 2011), p. 214.

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59. *Ley General de Población* (1974), art. 71.

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61. Secretaria de Governacion, "Accord delegating faculties to authorize migration proceedings and exercise diverse functions envisaged in the General Law of Population and its Regulation, to public servants assigned to the Regional Delegations of the National Institute of Migration in the states of Aguascalientes, Baja California, Baja California Sur, Campeche, Coahuila, Colima, Chiapas, Chihuahua, Durango, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Jalisco, México, Michoacán, Morelos, Nayarit, Nuevo León, Oaxaca, Puebla, Querétaro, Quintana Roo, San Luis Potosí, Sinaloa, Sonora, Tabasco, Tamaulipas, Tlaxcala, Veracruz, Yucatán y Zacatecas," *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, 9 Septermber 2010.

62. *Ley de Migración* (2011), arts. 81, 92, 97.

63. Article 3, part VI of the *Ley General de Población* of 1974. See also Guevara Bermúdez, "Conexiones entre los derechos humanos"

64. *Ley General de Población* (1999), art. 151.

65. Ernesto Rodríguez Chávez, Salvador Berumen Sondaoval, and Luis Felipe Ramos Martines, "Migración centroamericana de tránsito irregular por México. Estimaciones y características generales," *Apuntes sobre migración,* no. 1 (July 2011): 3.

66. Ibid., p. 4.

67. Venet Rebiffé and Palma Calderón, *Seguridad para el migrante,* p. 20.

68. Guevara Bermúdez, "Conexiones entres los derechos humanos."

69. *Ley General de Población* (1999), art. 151.

70. My interpretation, with data from Rodolfo Córdova Alcaraz, ed., *Una mirada al presupuesto del Instituto Nacional de Migración en México: ¿Dónde estuvieron sus prioridades durante 2011?* (Mexico City: Fundar, Centro de Análisis e Investigación, 2013).

71. Treviño-Rangel, "Racismo y nación."

72. Mastrogiovanni, "El negocio de la migración."

BOOK REVIEWS

Regulating Business for Peace: The United Nations, the Private Sector, and Post-Conflict Recovery. By Jolyon Ford. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Jolyon Ford has written an excellent debut monograph on the regulation of business activities in postconflict reconstruction. *Regulating Business for Peace* advances the existing literature on business and peace and conflict in important new directions and will be indispensable for scholars and practitioners seeking to understand and integrate the private sector into peacebuilding activities. Ford draws on a nice array of research methods and disciplinary perspectives to advance his central arguments. He claims that peacebuilders, usually authorized by the United Nations, have been largely inattentive to the role of the private sector in advancing peacebuilding activities in postconflict situations. Both the formal mandates of UN-authorized peacekeeping missions and the practices of external interveners have failed to offer a regulatory framework for the private sector that might cultivate peace. Ford rightly suggests that postconflict business regulation need not focus exclusively on the "spoilers" (trying to enforce compliance among would-be bad actors) but rather must also try to cultivate virtue in the business community in such a way that it contributes to peacebuilding and governance in fragile and conflict-affected states. The optimal transitional business regulator will be responsive, responsible, and realistic. This approach wisely takes seriously the feasibility constraints in postconflict situations, noting that every instance of corruption or malpractice ought not concern that transitional business regulator. Rather, the regulator should focus on those issues that are most important for moving on the path toward sustainable peace. The book concludes with suggestions for future peacebuilding operations and directions for future research. Readers will benefit from case studies on East Timor and Liberia as well as a thorough set of references to the literature on business, peace, reconstruction, and regulation. ⊕ *Reviewed by Scott Wisor*

The First Global Prosecutor: Promise and Constraints. Edited by Martha Minow, C. Cora True-Frost, and Alex Whiting. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015.

This volume of thirteen essays explores the legal, practical, and institutional challenges faced by Luis Moreno Ocampo, the first prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Why focus on the ICC's prosecutor? Because

as the title of the book suggests, Ocampo was the world's first global prosecutor and, both before and since the role was created, the issue of an independent prosecutor who can bring cases that charge individuals with international crimes has proved controversial (p. 20). A persistent theme binding the chapters together is the focus on whether and how a "restrictive approach to law and procedure hurts or helps the prosecutor" or the institution more generally (p. 59). A "restrictive" approach refers to the ICC's institutional design. While the prosecutor "enjoys considerable independence and discretion, the position is also highly constrained" (p. 21). For example, the ICC prosecutor cannot make arrests or order the production of documentary evidence or witnesses: the prosecutor requires assistance and cooperation from states to obtain custody over suspects and to conduct investigations (pp. 23–24).

These constraints have meant that the Office of the Prosecutor has suffered some failures: one such failure is that it has been unable to arrest Omar al-Bashir. Alex Whiting addresses some of the ICC's failures in his essay, explaining that the court has often lacked the support of influential actors like the United Nations—an institution that was critical to the success of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (p. 141). Although the UN Security Council referred the situations in Sudan and Libya to the ICC, it thereafter turned its attentions to efforts at achieving peace in these states instead of pushing for justice (pp. 141–142). This volume of essays, however, also challenges us to consider the possibility that "limitations on the prosecutor's powers also suggest strengths" (p. 22). Why? Because the limitations mean that the prosecutor must obtain the support of states and institutions to survive. In her essay, C. Cora True-Frost provides an example of how the prosecutor was able to turn the Security Council into something of an ally. It referred the situations of Sudan and Libya to the ICC for prosecution. Further, over Ocampo's tenure, the Council "increasingly frequently reaffirmed the ICC's role in prosecuting violations of international criminal law in twenty-six of its resolutions, and it eventually ceased its attempts to defer potential ICC prosecutions" (p. 251). The excellent essays in this book make it one that scholars of the ICC will want on their shelf. ⊕ *Reviewed by Yvonne M. Dutton*

Climate Change in World Politics. By John Vogler. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

As John Vogler acknowledges in the opening pages of *Climate Change in World Politics,* many books have been written about global climate change

governance so one must have a good reason to write another. He certainly found that reason, and scholars of international relations and global environmental governance alike will welcome this contribution to the literature. Vogler's justification for this book is twofold: first, the politics of states has been rather sidelined by the recent interest in nonstate actors and private environmental governance; and, second, much analysis of international climate change politics neglects the impact of the broader global political context within which climate governance unfolds. The book examines and explains how the international climate regime has developed over the past three decades against the backdrop of profound changes in the international system and global economy.

The analysis is organized into six substantive chapters focusing on different factors that explain the development of the international climate regime. The relevance of issue framing, economic interests, and principles of justice are examined in Chapters 2 through 4. This material is interesting, but I found Chapters 5 and 6 particularly engrossing. There, Vogler first examines how the pursuit of prestige and recognition drives states' negotiating positions: the leadership ambitions of the European Union (EU) in the climate regime reflect wider efforts to assert its status as a unitary actor on the international stage; China's and India's positions are shaped by a desire to reassert their power status; and the left-leaning Latin American states use climate change to assert their opposition to imperialism. Next, Vogler "provides a chronological view of the development of the climate regime within the context of the ongoing changes in the international system" (p. 131). Relevant factors here include the end of the Cold War; German unification; the dissolution of the USSR; the creation of the EU; the 2007 global economic crisis; and the formation of the Group of 20, and the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) and BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India, and China) coalitions. Vogler is right in arguing that this ought to be the "stock-in-trade" of the study of international relations (p. 6), but it is generally left in the background in studies of international relations and the environment.

Climate Change in World Politics is comprehensive in its coverage and points readers to a vast literature in which specific aspects can be explored in more detail. It is written with a fluidity and confidence that probably is only possible from someone who has been studying world politics and environmental politics since before the issue of climate change even appeared on the international agenda. Vogler's ideas are not couched in complex language, and the book is better for it. It is accessible to (and deserves to be read widely by) a broad audience of students, scholars, and the interested public. ⊕ *Reviewed by Hayley Stevenson*