

# INTERACTING SECURITY THREATS

Exploring interaction between securitization  
narratives through an explorative case study approach

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28,681 Words

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Master Thesis

## **Abstract**

This thesis builds on securitization theory by exploring whether securitization narratives that occur simultaneously interact. Researching the possible interaction of securitization narratives is new. It does so by exploring three separate cases: Brazil, Colombia and Curacao. It proposes four categories for change; intensification, de-securitization, neglect and coexistence. The cases share the same crises that require securitization: the Venezuelan exodus and the Covid-19 pandemic. It explores the changes in the securitization of the Venezuelan migrants in each case over time and brings these together to find significant correlation between the changes in the securitization of migration as a result of the securitization of the pandemic. In the end, it argues that all categories of change are represented in the cases and suggests the addition of a fifth category; contention.

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# Chapter 1 - Introduction and relevance

## 1.1 The thesis

This thesis brings together two of the most important topics of the current times; the crisis of migration and a global pandemic. Much is currently still unclear of what occurs when these two crises intersect. However, that these will affect each other is beyond questioning. The aim of this thesis is to shed some light on the ways in which these crises might affect each other. In doing so this thesis is breaking entirely new academic grounds. The exploration of the intersection of these crises aims to not only make important scientific contributions but also societal ones.

This thesis explores the relationship between the securitization of Venezuelan migrants<sup>1</sup> and the Covid-19 pandemic.<sup>2</sup> As the virus spread governments were forced to respond to the emerging health crisis. The pandemic was made into a matter of security; or ‘securitized’. When this occurred previously securitized debates were likely affected. This thesis sets out to explore what precisely occurred. This is achieved by focusing on the Venezuelan immigration crisis. This is narrowed down further by focusing on three specific countries that have to deal with the effects of both the immigration crisis and experienced a crisis caused by the virus. The selected countries have both felt the consequences of both crises and happen to be contiguous to Venezuela. These selected countries are: Brazil, Colombia and Curacao.

Understanding how one crisis affects another is of importance in any circumstance. As a crisis is securitized extraordinary measures are made possible, which normally have far-reaching consequences. Considering that this thesis deals with the intersection of two separate crises with two separate sets of extraordinary measures, one starts to see the added importance of understanding the effect one crisis has on another. Furthering understanding of countries’ actions in such crises will understand the current crises. Through this hopefully this will aid in understanding future crisis response.

This introductory chapter is meant to provide background for the research conducted, place it in a wider societal context, display its societal relevance, and most importantly explain in broad strokes its aims and the questions that will be addressed. The introduction is followed

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<sup>1</sup> A choice was made to refer to those migrants leaving Venezuela as a result of the humanitarian situation there as ‘migrants’. The hope is that this is the most neutral term. Although an argument can be made for these migrants to be considered refugees, this is not the discussion this thesis occupies itself with.

<sup>2</sup> The global pandemic of the so-called Covid-19 virus will generally be referred to as the Covid-19 pandemic, however occasionally the virus might be referred to by its more colloquial term the Corona virus, mainly for readability.

by a theoretical framework. This will form the academic foundation of the work conducted. Building on this foundation, the following chapter continues with establishing methodology and will address in greater detail both data collection and analysis. Having established a solid academic foundation the focus shall shift towards the cases themselves. These will be discussed one by one in chapters four to six. After which comparison of the cases and discussion of the results thereof occurs. In the concluding chapter, the research questions will be answered. Additionally, the results are placed within a larger scientific context and recommendations for future research are given.

## **1.2 Setting the stage**

In order to grasp the importance of this research and its questions one has to understand the significance of both the Venezuelan exodus and the pandemic. The Venezuelan immigration crisis is a humanitarian crisis of enormous proportions. Approximately 5 million Venezuelans have left their home country throughout the duration its economic collapse (*Venezuelan Refugee and Migrant Crisis*, 2019). For many, life was made impossible when inflation grew exponentially as the economy collapsed with the oil prices that maintained economic prosperity. Unsurprisingly, this crisis brought with it more than economic struggles. It also destabilized the regime in charge of the country. This in turn created much political unrest and deepened the crisis further. As a result, Venezuelans faced widespread famine, poverty and government persecution. Meaning that for many, leaving the country seems to be the only available option (Broner et al., 2018; *Detained and Deported*, 2018; *Everything You Need to Know about Human Rights in Venezuela*, 2019; Doocy et al., 2019; Philips, 2019; Selee & Bolter, 2020).

Leaving the country comes with its own perils. Besides hardships faced on the road to leaving a country that is falling apart, many immigrants face new challenges when arriving at their destinations. In many cases the countries they have fled to are unwilling to accommodate them. In part this is caused by debates on the legal status of the immigrants leaving Venezuela as a result of the economic collapse throughout the region (Broner et al., 2018). Different countries have taken different positions in regard to whom ought to be classified as a refugee and who can receive asylum. However, the legal debate is beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, the focal point is the security narrative dealing with the arrival of the immigrants utilized by the governments of the countries under scrutiny. As more Venezuelans seek asylum, national discussions on their status have grown in importance.



In order to situate in its context it is necessary to explore some of the similarities and differences between the countries and the ways in which the migration crisis developed. Each country has received a significant influx of people. Colombia, which shares a large and easily accessible border with Venezuela has received the largest absolute number of people by far: 1.6 million Venezuelans (*Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela Top 4 Million*, 2019; *Venezuelan Refugee and Migrant Crisis*, 2019). Estimates place about 250 thousand Venezuelan immigrants in Brazil (*Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela Top 4 Million*, 2019). Although this is significantly less than Colombia, this is still an enormous amount of people. Curacao received a relatively small number of immigrants in absolute numbers. The available numbers suggest that it hosts between 5 to 15 thousand immigrants (*Detained and Deported*, 2018; Leghtas & Thea, 2019; Nazarski, 2019). However, when one considers the relative size of the country, consisting of only 160 thousand inhabitants, the significance of the influx becomes apparent. High estimates would mean that the country has seen a population increase of nearly 10% through Venezuelan migrants alone. The national debates in regard to these migrants received a status as a matter of national security. Because of the security threat the immigration crisis is seen to pose extraordinary measures are necessary. The ways in which the governments have done this will be discussed at length in chapters 4 to 6.

There are crucial differences as well. Colombia has also invoked the security narrative to allow many immigrants to be granted documentation and legal status. Brazil seemingly has made similar attempts to care for these migrants, granting a large number of immigrants status in a single fell. Curacao has taken a different stance. Almost no immigrants have been documented there. Indeed, since 2017 (when the UNHCR, which was overseeing the process, was asked to leave by the government) no real procedure for immigrants to obtain legal status has been in place (*Detained and Deported*, 2018). Instead the Curacao government has pursued a policy that can be referred to as ‘arrest, detain and deport’ (*Detained and Deported*, 2018). The Colombian debate seems centered around managing the migrants and mainly seems geared towards allowing safe haven for those being forced to Venezuela, in line with the Cartagena agreement, seemingly exemplifying a securitized debate. On the one hand, the Brazilian state appears hesitant to welcome migrants. On the other hand, it accommodates those that have come their legally as migrants and is internationally required to grant asylum. The debate on Curacao has been entirely securitized. Those arriving from Venezuela are simply cast as a threat to their society and as ‘economic migrants.’

Summing up, although the situation in each country, at first glance, seems to show important similarities in the influx of migrants major differences are immediately visible in the treatment of these migrants and the ways in which the issue is securitized. Additionally, this very brief overview already points towards the complex nature of securitizing migration. This complexity can likely only increase once a second securitization narrative enters.

### **1.3 Securitization in a global pandemic**

A similar argument can be made for the second debate of securitization that will be addressed throughout this thesis. Each country has seen the arrival of the Covid-19 virus as part of the global pandemic. Yet, their individual responses have differed greatly, with vastly different outcomes for their respective populations, and the Venezuelan migrant populations. In this crisis those that have had to flee their home are seen by many as a group that faces significant risk. The situation has been referred to by some as a ‘double emergency (*Covid-19 in Humanitarian Crises: A Double Emergency*, 2020).’

Already we see the emergence of the Covid-19 debate as an ‘emergency’. One can argue that the global debate follows much of what we might consider a textbook case of ‘securitization’. As the virus spread rapidly the world adopted extraordinary language and measures to avoid falling to the threat that Covid-19 posed to society (Sears, 2020). Adoption of this has been nearly universal. However, the particulars and the specific actions adopted and narratives will obviously differ from country to country.

The cases that will be explored provide three distinct approaches to dealing with the virus overall. Most extreme in the adoption of a security narrative and in the measures taken has been Curacao thus far. Despite having very few cases it took early and decisive action. The situation was labelled as an emergency early on and securitized following the rapid spread of the virus. Lock-down measures were put in place and travel was strictly controlled (*Mededelingen over het coronavirus*, n.d.). So far this has proven rather effective in minimizing infections. Colombia has implemented lock-down measures as well. Although has seen a steady increase in the cases of the virus in the country, the measures appear to be somewhat effective (Newbery, 2020). Maintaining that the virus is a severe security threat has led to more control over the disease for these countries. In Brazil things are different. President Bolsonaro has actively contradicted lower level officials calling for lock-down measures, even attending protests against these measures (*Brazil: Bolsonaro Sabotages Anti-Covid-19 Efforts*, 2020; ‘Coronavirus’, 2020).

The coinciding of these two securitized crises begs the question in what ways Venezuelan migrants in these countries were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. There is a noticeable trend that many migrants try to return to Venezuela. This is particularly visible in Colombia. As it also acts as a hub for many migrants coming from Ecuador or Peru that want to return to Venezuela. When borders closed as part of the measures against the Covid-19 virus this has become harder for many migrants. However, Colombia has left two corridors to Venezuela open, specifically for those looking to cross back.

#### **1.4 Research aims**

This thesis asks: In what ways are previously securitized immigration narratives affected when society is faced with a new securitization narrative? The aim is to be able to explain the ways in which narratives are affected. By using several case studies it is possible to explore several different factors that might prove to be of importance in determining the effect of a new security threat for an already existing one. Focus is on the change in securitization narratives themselves. In essence, the focus is on finding correlation, foregoing trying to prove causation. Therefore, each case study focuses on the question: In what ways has the securitized migration narrative changed during the Covid-19 pandemic? These are brought together. In order to determine in which ways the changes have taken place overall. What relations between immigration securitization and Covid-19 securitization can be identified? How do these differ between the cases? Through the answers to these questions it is possible to determine a tentative answer to the overall research question.

Why assume a relation between these debates at all? First and foremost, it is safe to assume there is a relation between these separate securitizations because they operate in the same domains of threat. These domains will be addressed in the theoretical framework. However, it stands to reason that the all-encompassing nature of the Covid-19 securitization, leading to the complete closure of countries globally, cannot leave any other securitized debate unaffected. It is argued that previously securitized debates will most likely require a new way of being securitized in order to compete or coexist with the new securitization debate on Covid-19. Four ways in which these narratives coexist or compete are suggested. These will be discussed in-depth in the theoretical framework.

Concluding, the research contained within this thesis is an exploration of the likely relation between the arrival of a new security frame and an already existing one. Through focusing on a set of 'threats' that remain similar across the discussed cases: the Venezuelan

exodus and the subsequent arrival of immigrants throughout South America, and the Covid-19 pandemic. Although the precise implications for each society differ substantially the crises at their foundations consist of the same issues. Most of the major differences emerge in the way that the countries that make up my case studies have dealt with both situations and their related narratives.

### **1.5 Relevance**

The research conducted is relevant for many aspects of society and the scientific community in which the securitized debates feature. However, its aim is first and foremost to be relevant for those dealing directly with the securitized debates. This means policy makers dealing with immigrants and their securitized debates, and NGOs or CSOs trying to help immigrants in their host communities.

Firstly, as this is an on-going and still developing debate the research itself can become crucial in understanding societies' overall reactions to the new crisis they face. However, the importance goes beyond simple topicality: understanding securitized debates in this new reality, a complicated newly securitized society, is a matter of some urgency. It is necessary to explore the effects of a new securitized debate on a previously existing debate now, as the consequences of the convergence of these frames are affecting already vulnerable communities now. For example, it has allowed Curacao to renew their effort to keep Venezuelans from approaching the island. By arguing that these migrants might pose a health threat. Understanding what happens to immigrant communities in times of crisis is a sincere necessity and understanding the narratives associated with these vulnerable communities is part of that.

Secondly, this thesis aims to reflect on society and its actions in crises. In these turbulent times security debates might unreflexively be transcribed by both media and its publics. This is precisely the reason though that time ought to be taken to reflect and ponder the changing nature of these debates. As scientists it is our duty to critically question everything. This includes policies and narratives in times of crisis. Since, in crisis the implications policies are often exaggerated beyond their normal status.

Thirdly, societal relevance is easily identifiable in the importance of the debates as well. The pervasiveness of the Covid-19 debate is undeniably of epic proportions. One only needs to look at any news to be constantly bombarded with news on the Corona virus. Fostering a better understanding of how this pervasiveness affects securitized narratives that are already in place is another way in which this thesis aims to contribute to our societal understanding. The

assumption is that through better understanding it is possible to create better responses to future crises.

Simply put, the societal relevance can in large part be summed up in one question: In what ways do we see society change throughout the new Covid-19 pandemic? The locus of this thesis is change pertaining to immigration security narratives. However, these changes might be indicative of larger change. Perhaps the changes we find can even teach us something about the natures of our governments and humanity as a whole.

The main element that bolsters its academic relevance is the focus on the interaction between security narrative frames. As interaction between securitization frameworks has not been explored yet. Therefore, it is an innovative method of exploring securitization. Through this the thesis manages to contribute in a more conceptual academic sense as well. It proposes a new conceptual way of researching securitization narratives. This conceptual addition will be tested for viability throughout the thesis. In order to do it also proposes categories for classifying change to securitization narratives, another valuable addition to the academic field of securitization theory.

Additionally, this thesis is at the forefront of academic research as Covid-19 and the narratives around it, are new phenomena. This means that although undoubtedly significant research is being conducted on the virus and its societal and political effects, hardly any, if any, research has been completed and published. Therefore, this thesis garners much of its scientific relevance simply from the subject it explores. In this sense the new empirical data that it gathers might point to fertile grounds for future research.

Furthermore, academic relevance can be distinguished by adding new cases of securitized debates to the academic debate on securitization to begin with. It aims to expand the field of securitization by bringing new and potentially different, cases to the fore. Adding another set of cases to the already established field of securitized immigration narratives is far from a moot point. Many of the previously explored cases have centered on European or American narrative (Curley, 2004). Exploring the South American immigration narratives provides a new arena for securitization debates to play in. Furthermore, many previous case studies center around the ‘immigrants as terrorists’ theme, which has an almost negligible presence in the cases that will be under scrutiny (Vultee, 2010a). By adding these new case studies of securitized immigration debates the academic focus is widened and enriched. Through this new insights are gained.





## **Chapter 2 - Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1 The framework**

This theoretical framework serves the purposes of placing this thesis within relevant wider academical debates and explaining the most significant theories for the research. It is intended to build on the academic debate and distill relevant elements from existing theories, combining these into a concrete analytical framework to study the interaction of different securitization processes. Since securitization is the central element of this thesis this chapter will almost entirely center around the academic debate that underlies the concept of securitization. In this section an attempt shall be made to determine what ‘securitization’ is or rather, what ‘securitization’ means within this thesis. Since, differing interpretations can greatly affect the way in which one ought to treat the concept, and in which ways research can be conducted. The aim of this chapter is therefore to create a framework of securitization suited to explore the nexus between different securitization processes.

### **2.2 Securitization**

The term Securitization garnered much attention following a work by Buzan et al. in their influential book: *Security* (Buzan et al., 1998). Since its inception, the term has consistently seen new interpretations, tweaks and overhauls. For example, through the works of Huysmans, Williams, Balzacq, Wilkinson, Vultee, McDonald and many more (Balzacq, 2005; Huysmans, 2000; McDonald, 2008; Vultee, 2010b; Wilkinson, 2007; Williams, 2003). As the years have reshaped security landscapes so have the conceptions of this term. However, the basis of securitization as a concept and its relevance seem to remain largely unchanged in these works. Although many criticisms have been levied against the original formulation of securitization; it is supposedly too narrow (Williams, 2003), it has been criticized for not taking gender into account (Hansen, 2000), being state-centric (McSweeney et al., 1999) and, being captured by European security contexts and concerns (Curley, 2004). Despite all this, securitization research has only grown in popularity (Balzacq et al., 2016, p. 494).

Selecting in which way to interpret securitization is no simple task. There is much to draw from and much to criticize. Therefore, it is inevitable that the final product will be an amalgamation of those elements that are most relevant for this thesis. The goal is to explore the possible interaction of different securitizations and the respective elements are meant to be conducive to this end, whilst remaining a reflection of the academic debates. The foundation of



what securitization is understood to be is based on a definition given by Williams, as it covers the basis of securitization nicely (Williams, 2003). 'It [securitization red.] is a specific kind of act – a 'securitization' - is its casting of the issue as one of an 'existential threat,' which calls for extraordinary measures beyond the routines and norms of everyday politics (Williams, 2003, p. 514).' It is crucial to realize that securitization theory treats security no longer as an 'objective condition', instead it has become the result of a social process (Williams, 2003, p. 513). It is this process we refer to as 'securitization'. In other words, securitization is the act of identifying a threat, which requires a response that necessitates extraordinary measures. Balzacq puts this as follows, 'securitization combines the politics of threat design with that of threat management (Balzacq et al., 2016, p. 495).' The description used as a foundation is almost identical to the one originally created by Buzan et al., however, the differences are crucial (Buzan et al., 1998).

### **2.3 The act of securitization**

Establishing the nature of the 'act' of securitization is one of the main points of contention in the debates surrounding securitization. The discussion centers primarily on the performativity of the act of securitization. '[S]ecuritization theory is based on the premise that the word 'security' has a performative character – that is, it does not only describe the world but can also transform social reality (Balzacq et al., 2016, p. 495).' The precise ways in which this securitization is performed is the regular point of contention and is also significantly affected by the actors doing the securitization which shall be addressed further on.

The main difference between the definitions created by Williams and the original created by Buzan et al. can be found in securitization constituting 'a specific act'. Williams takes a step moving beyond the original definition of Weaver and Buzan. They defined it as a 'speech-act'(Buzan et al., 1998; McDonald, 2008, p. 567; Wilkinson, 2007, p. 5). This aspect of the conception of securitization garnered significant criticism as some considered it to be too narrow (Balzacq et al., 2016; McDonald, 2008; Wilkinson, 2007; Williams, 2003). Opponents argued that only analyzing acts which could be construed as speech is insufficient to encompass all actions that might constitute the active creation of a threat.

Additionally, focusing only on 'speech acts' might be misleading. Policies that might be adopted may not be phrased in a manner that poses these as a security matter. Yet, their real life effects can have important security implications, or create a narrative of securitization. Focusing only on the specific decision to create a clear securitization would be unable to perceive more gradual shifts in securitization as well (Williams, 2003). Moving beyond this

narrowness has been an important way in which the term of securitization has matured since its inception.

This has created what by some is distinguished as a linguistic approach and a practice-based approach, often referred to as different schools (Balzacq et al., 2016, p. 498). This thesis follows Balzacq's argument which calls for cautious use of the label 'school' and instead argues that much of the practical interpretation of the 'act' of securitization is dependent on the research conducted (Balzacq et al., 2016, p. 499). Crucially as the theory 'has progressively moved towards an investigation of practices in order to complement or sometimes transcend the initial emphasis on linguistic utterances. This focus on practices has also established that emergency measures do not always characterize security situations (Balzacq et al., 2016, p. 507).'

This thesis follows the logic of context dependent interpretation of speech acts. It is argued that in order to explore the ways in which different securitizations might affect each other is crucial to engage with different methods in which topics can become securitized. This is particularly important since the separate securitizations are unlikely to have become securitized through identical acts. Indeed this means looking at 'acts' rather broadly and incorporating elements outside of speech-acts. Other acts than speech acts are crucial for this thesis, due to the topicality and the new nature of the research practiced here as well. This necessitates one to look beyond speech-acts to gather sufficient relevant data. Since the available speech acts are rather limited. Meaning that significant attention shall be given to the ways in which policies act to securitize the migration crisis. In other words, in order to be able to provide a clear as possible image of securitization it is argued that it is necessary to pay attention to both acts of securitization within the realm of 'speech-acts' and those outside it. Although a focus on speech-acts might be preferred, as these elucidate a case far more clearly and leave less room for interpretation, this thesis has to strike a different balance due to the topical nature of the subject and availability of data.

## **2.4 The threat in securitization**

Securitization processes revolve around the creation of a threat. Understanding who, or what is being placed under threat, and what that threat is, is a crucial element of understanding particular securitizations. This section explores what makes a threat in securitization. Its purpose is to show what a threat in securitization can be, but also to demonstrate that case selections that deal with migration and global health emergencies have been researched before,

and are entirely valid. The precise nature of the threat is for a large part dependent on the context within which the threat is created. A threat needs to have a certain degree of credibility. Firstly, it is important to realize that such a threat is not any threat, securitization processes cast an ‘existential threat’ (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 24). This is normally interpreted as a threat that functions on a fundamental level. One that represents not only a level of insecurity for a few citizens but something that threatens to destroy the very fabric of that which is threatened. Buzan et al. puts it as ‘If one can argue that something overflows the normal political logic of weighing issues against each other, this must be the case because it can upset the entire process of weighing as such (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 24).’

Securitization narratives cast a threat. Who, or what, this threat precisely consists of differs per case. In many cases the precise group that threatens society is somewhat vague as to its precise contents. For a classical example of securitization one merely has to look at the ‘war on terror’ which has been researched on multiple occasions (Choi, 2019; Vultee, 2010a, 2010b; Williams, 2003). Casting a threat is an affair that greatly affects the public perception of such a group as it effectively creates an ‘other’ (Karyotis 405). Immigrants might also be cast into such a role (Choi, 2019; Huysmans, 2000; Karyotis, 2012; Swarts & Karakatsanis, 2013). They might be framed to put strain on society (Huysmans, 2000), and to be more prone to committing crimes (Karyotis, 2012). The securitization of migration can be considered to be a relatively common phenomenon.

Does the threat have to be a group of people? Or can the threat be a disease? Global health threats have been researched within securitization. For example, in works by Curley and Herington, Enemark and McInnes and Rushton (Curley & Herington, 2011; Enemark, 2007; McInnes & Rushton, 2013) ‘Following the Copenhagen School’s work on securitisation, we believe that the crucial component in seeking to understand the plurality of policies is whether the disease can credibly be termed a security issue and hence be accepted by an audience as an existential threat to a referent object (Curley & Herington, 2011, p. 143).’ In previous research conducted by Enemark: ‘the health threats most suitable for securitization are *outbreaks* of infectious diseases – specifically, those that inspire a level of dread disproportionate to their ability to cause illness and death (Enemark, 2007, p. 8).’ This includes SARS and pandemic influenza as potential candidates (Enemark, 2007). This addition of disease as a subject that can be securitized is of critical importance for this thesis, as this is one of its primary assumptions.

Additionally, Watson has also argued that humanity can in some cases be argued to be the referent object as well (Watson, 2011). In other words, that the well-being of people can be

seen as an object that can be threatened in securitization narratives. It is suggested that this method of exploring securitizing moves allows for closer study of humanitarianism, its consequences and processes. Although the securitization of migration is the main focus of this thesis, humanitarianism as a referent object is an interesting and potentially more positive take on securitization. This has the potential to turn the securitization of migration on its head. Instead of arguing that migrants pose a threat to society, this theory argues that it is also possible to securitize the wellbeing of the migrants.

Concluding, many different things can come under threat in securitization framings. Research has been conducted looking at securitizations of the war on terror, migration flows, global health emergencies and more (Jackson, 2006). What these threats share is a certain credibility that they might be potentially destructive to society. The threats themselves can show large diversity, the credibility and the disruptive nature of these threats are shared. For this thesis the focus is on the securitization of migration and how this interacts with the Covid-19 pandemic. However, even within such a seemingly narrow approach great diversity is still visible.

## **2.5 Actors of securitization**

One of the main issues that remains contentious in the literature on securitization is the agency of securitization. Who does the securitization? This is of vital importance. Since, ‘for securitization theory, the ‘security-ness’ of an entity does not depend on objective features, but rather stems from the interactions between a securitizing actor and its audience (Balzacq et al., 2016, p. 496).’ Most literature seems to agree that the securitizing actor drives the securitization process and the importance of their role for the securitization process is therefore hard to overstate. However, that is where the consensus stops. Since, there seems to be no definitive standard for which actors are capable of securitizing a particular issue. Finding a suitable focal point for securitizing actors is of importance for this thesis as it largely drives source selection.

Discussion on determining a securitizing actor mainly revolves around issues of establishing who has the capabilities to ‘speak security’ (Vultee, 2010a). Taureck puts it as follows: ‘securitization is “largely based on power and capability and therewith the means to socially and politically construct a threat’(Taureck, 2006, p. 55). The most common answer within securitization theory appears to be that the state is the one that is capable of securitizing an issue. However, this is also one of the most commonly heard criticisms of securitization theory, argued for example by Wilkinson (Wilkinson, 2007). Although the fact that Buzan et

al. already argued that: ‘it is possible for other social entities to raise an issue to the level of general consideration or even to the status of sanctioned urgency among themselves (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 24),’ seems to make this a largely semantical discussion. This particular discussion, although very interesting and crucial for the development of securitization on the whole, is perhaps better suited to go in-depth on in a different thesis. Here it ought to be sufficient that there is some criticism on the state-centric nature of securitization theory. However, as this thesis deals with securitizations done by states this can be taken in stride as this state-centric nature makes it particularly suitable for the research conducted.

The role of the audience however, must not be forgotten. Buzan et al. in their seminal piece argue that: ‘Our argument is that securitization, like politicization has to be understood as an essentially intersubjective process (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 30).’ ‘Thus security (as with all politics ultimately rests neither with the objects nor with the subjects but among the subjects (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 31).’ This intersubjectivity means that the audience that a securitizing actor is attempting to reach with a securitization framework is of crucial importance. The audience has the ability to, to a certain extent, accept or reject a securitization process. In this sense they can contribute or detract from securitization. Additionally, one ought not to forget the role of potential mediators in the securitization process. The way in which a particular issue is securitized, or not, in media can have a significant effect on the effectiveness of the securitization invoked by a state actor, as this directly affects the audience (Vultee, 2010a).

Concluding, to answer the question: “who can do securitization?” Remains an underdeveloped aspect of securitization theory (Balzacq, 2019). However, the starting point of securitization theory was that states perform securitization. This is suitable for this thesis and therefore, solving this particular academic debate is left to another day. The role of the audience ought not to be underestimated, as it can actively reject or accept the securitization of an issue. The same applies to mediators of the securitization, they can play a vital part in the creation of a securitization narrative.

## **2.6 Securitization goals and achieving these**

This chapter has developed what securitization is, what acts are considered to be part of securitization and which actors ‘speak security’. Now it is time to address what is required for a securitization process to become successful. Some attention has already been paid to answering this question. However, McDonald considers that it is still worthy of far more attention (McDonald, 2008, p. 566). Firstly, by Buzan et al., who considered that securitizations

would need to be congruent with the interpretation of its audience and come from a position of power (Buzan et al., 1998). This was expanded upon by Balzacq, whose article explains that he considers the originally proposed factors too formalistic (Balzacq, 2005). In order to make the term into a more effective tool he proposed some changes. He argued for three specific elements which are crucial in determining success for securitization. Firstly, ‘that an effective securitization is audience-centered (Balzacq, 2005, p. 5).’ Secondly, ‘that securitization is context-dependent (Balzacq, 2005, p. 5).’ Thirdly, ‘that an effective securitization is power-laden (Balzacq, 2005, p. 5).’ These elements place the construction of security, and a securitized narrative, within the context they occur. He does this without changing who he considers to be the actors involved in the creation of securitization narratives. Instead of merely being dependent on meeting particular requirements that are achieved by a universal narrative, that is universally applicable, Balzacq suggests in addition to the important role the audience plays, the context in which a securitization is placed is of crucial importance to its credibility, and subsequent potential success as well (Balzacq, 2005). Furthermore, the success of securitization is not necessarily monolithic, meaning that although a securitization might be generally accepted, contestation might persist (Vultee, 2010b, p. 45).

## **2.7 Why securitize?**

At this point it is also crucial to determine why an actor would securitize a particular issue. Generally, two views are considered in this domain. Firstly, actors securitize an issue because they genuinely consider this to be a security issue worthy of the extraordinary measures. Weaver argues that the narrative of security ‘has in some sense, become the name of the management problem, of governance in an extremely unstructured universe.’ In this sense securitization narratives might be seen as a logical and potentially useful tool in societies’ arsenal to organize our surroundings (Wæver, 1993, p. 20).

Secondly, a more cynical approach argues that securitization processes allow these securitizing actors, generally considered to be elites embedded within the state, to benefit from these processes. For example, Karyotis argues:

‘In Greece, it has been shown that the security–migration nexus meant that elites could pursue a range of ulterior and controversial goals, particularly in relation to the promotion of national interests. At the same time, however, securitization subsequently trapped elites in reactive responses that aimed to satisfy myopic political goals, even when their economic evaluations and political circumstances called for a shift to a more liberal migration frame (Karyotis, 2012, p. 405).’

## **2.8 Power structures in securitization**

The power structures that are assumed by securitization is one of the main criticisms levied at securitization theory. It appears that much of securitization theory inherently assumes a predictable power dynamic, which consists of a securitizing actor as sending and an audience as receiver of such narratives (Buzan et al., 1998). Many have dealt with this subject and have come to different conclusions (Balzacq, 2005; Balzacq et al., 2016; Huysmans, 2000; Karyotis, 2012; Vultee, 2010b; Williams, 2003).

However, this thesis accepts the premise that securitization is largely about power. These securitization narratives are potentially employed to establish or strengthen power dynamics. Additionally, this thesis subscribes to the idea that there are only a few actors that are capable of wielding enough power and credibility to successfully securitize an issue. In general, this subscribes to the state-centric nature of securitization but this does not entirely negate the importance of acceptance of a securitization from an audience.

## **2.9 Consequences of securitization**

The consequences of successful securitization are drastic. Securitization leads to a departure of 'normal politics' instead allowing 'emergency politics' (Buzan et al., 1998). To put it differently, the invocation of 'emergency politics' makes it possible for the actor that did the securitizing, normally the state, to put in place measures to combat the perceived threat that were previously not thought possible. There are many examples of situations in which measures that seemed impossible were put into practice. However, the way in which most countries deal with the Covid-19 virus is perhaps, besides total war, most consequential for societies. As action is taken to curb the spread of the virus countries go into lock-down. For example, measures taken in Curacao include: general lockdown measures, cars only being allowed to drive on certain days based on number plates and lists have been created of high risk areas that currently require special permits to travel to (*Mededelingen over het coronavirus*, n.d.). That this is a departure from the norm demands no explanation. However, this is what securitization narratives can achieve when successful, they make the previously unthinkable measures seem inevitable.

This is particularly striking when one considers that the extraordinary measures taken in securitization, potentially have the ulterior motive of benefitting the elites that were a part of the creation of this securitization (Karyotis, 2012). For example, McInnes and Lee cautioned in

2006 that securitized health policies seem to favor the health of the elites, or the West, over a global health strategy (McInnes & Lee, 2006). The morality of securitization is therefore often under question, and was specifically tackled by Floyd in a 2011 article (Floyd, 2011).

Furthermore, these extraordinary measures have the potential to redraw the normative framework of a society. In other words, these extraordinary measures have the potential to become less extraordinary as time passes. In this sense particular emergency procedures can become institutionalized. This is particularly harmful if these emergency measures target minority groups in society, where measures that disproportionately affect these groups become normalized. For example, Pereira et al. couple the securitized immigration debate to increased prejudice and discrimination in Europe (Pereira et al., 2010).

In addition, there are fears that securitization practices could potentially lead to a vicious cycle of securitization. In which a threat remains present after securitization. Therefore, to maintain the securitization narrative that already exists, further securitization is required. Indeed leading to the creation of a security dilemma (Wæver, 2000).

Finally, it is argued that the consequences of securitization, although potentially harmful, also carry potential benefits. This would however have to constitute what might be argued more inclusive approaches to security. Instead of the negative approach that is commonly related to securitization practices. For example, in a case where a global health phenomenon requires securitization, as it poses a significant threat to society, and measures are inclusive, temporary and proportional securitization might bring mostly positive effects to the table.

## **2.10 De-securitization**

The idea that certain subjects can become part of securitized narratives would also indicate that these subjects might at some point stop being securitized. This aspect of securitization is potentially still under-theorized being treated as an ‘excess of the theory of securitization’ according to Aradau (Aradau, 2004, p. 405). This unmaking of a securitization narrative is commonly referred to as de-securitization. For example, this might occur when appeals to empathy are considered more salient than the securitized frame (Arrocha, 2019). Roe explains that:

‘The Copenhagen School’s position on de-securitization – or, perhaps more accurately, Wæver’s position on it – outlines three possible options with regard to how to de-securitize. The first is simply not to talk about issues in terms of security in the first place. The second is that,



once an issue has been securitized, 'to keep the responses in forms that do not generate security dilemmas and other vicious spirals'. And, finally, the third is to move security issues back into 'normal politics' (Roe, 2004, p. 284)

In other words, the securitization process may never begin, end naturally because of the threat ending and securitization not being maintained or, the issue might be moved back into normal politics. These two latter strategies are no simple matter as is touched upon by Roe as well (Roe, 2004). However, this is most strikingly exemplified in the study conducted by Swarts & Karakatsanis which demonstrated that when the political elites attempted to de-securitize the migration narrative in Greece this encountered significant resistance as the context within which this securitization had been placed had changed dramatically as a result of an economic crisis (Swarts & Karakatsanis, 2013). It is argued that de-securitization practices, much like securitization practices have to be accepted by the audience to which they are directed.

Moving security issues back into normal politics is a process that can be done by the securitizing actor. However, it might also be a process that is led by new actors, or the audience. Williams puts it as follows: 'these security policies and relationships are susceptible to being pulled back into the public realm and capable of transformation, particularly when the social consensus underlying the capacity for decision is challenged, either by questioning the policies, or by disputing the threat or both (Williams, 2003, p. 524).' When securitization becomes challenged it is possible that it is 'pulled back into the public realm (Williams, 2003, p. 524)' thus a challenge to securitization policies or threats can cause the de-securitization of an issue.

Finally, an argument has also been made for the possibility of simultaneous securitizing and de-securitizing moves. Although these are usually considered to be mutually exclusive, Austin & Beaulieu-Brossard suggest the opposite (Austin & Beaulieu-Brossard, 2018). They found that these processes can, and do exist alongside each other. The case they make is that the often positive normative association with de-securitization ought to be closely questioned as well. Since, the simultaneous occurrence of these processes could potentially cause additional violence.

Concluding, securitization processes can also become reversed. How this process occurs precisely is still somewhat unclear from the academic debate. Especially the demarcation of when a securitized issue has become completely de-securitized remains relatively unclear. Another problematic element of de-securitization is determining at which point in the process of securitization this takes place. Often securitization and de-securitization processes were considered to be mutually exclusive. However, recent research suggests that these might

actually occur simultaneously. These elements will be taken into consideration throughout the research phase.

### **2.11 Interacting securitizations**

The interaction of separate, but simultaneous securitization processes is currently still unexplored in the available literature. The closest research that has been conducted has been in regards to the questions whether the same securitization processes are even applicable beyond its origins, squarely located in the Westernized world. Wilkinson argued that in its original state the concept was confined by a Westphalian straightjacket and its focus on ‘speech-acts’ (Wilkinson, 2007). Having already dealt with the limiting factor of ‘speech-acts’ and having come to much the same conclusion as Wilkinson, that aspect has been sufficiently addressed. The ‘Westphalian straightjacket’ argument on the other hand does provide new insight. It is true that securitization as a concept is grounded within Western conceptions and has a significant focus on the state as the most prominent actor. At the risk of oversimplifying the conception though, we need to realize that the state, or representatives of the state can be seen as those that determine most actions in the security spheres in the context of this thesis and the securitizations it deals with. Although their grip on this might not be as complete as in what one might consider states within the ‘Westphalian straightjacket’ (Wilkinson, 2007, p. 12). This means that this is something that needs to be considered but, for this case, does not seem to warrant a complete paradigm shift.

Additionally it is worth considering the unique circumstance that the Covid-19 pandemic grants this research. Since, it is not often that such a new threat arises of which the consequences, if left alone, would be so similar around the globe. Meaning that despite the fact that comparing securitizations is very difficult, if ever there was an opportunity to look at how these develop between them, this is the opportunity. However, drawing direct comparisons remains too ambitious.

Instead this thesis aims to explore the interactions between these securitizations. Currently no literature is available in regards to the potential interactions between securitizations. It is here that this thesis contributes to the literature. Intuitively it seems reasonable though that different securitizations would interact, if they occur within the same country. This seems especially straightforward for domains (which will be discussed in the next section) that both securitizations are occupied with. For example, it would seem straightforward that the securitization of a large drought in a region, which poses an existential threat to the

subsistence of a population, might be coupled to the securitization of a hostile neighboring country dependent on the same water source. Both securitizations argue to consist of a contest for the same resources.

In order to explore this, four separate outcomes of interactions between securitizations are suggested. These tentative categorizations are the outcome of discussions between the author and the supervisor of this thesis. They ought to be considered more of a framework within which to potentially measure change than they are set in stone. These four categorizations are suggested to be; intensification, de-securitization, neglect and coexistence.

Intensification signifies an amplifying effect between the securitizations. As a new securitization is constructed the previously existing securitization narrative is strengthened as a result. This could occur if they overlap sufficiently, or if appropriation of resources for a new securitization is met with an equally strong urge to continue securitization of the previous securitization.

The de-securitization category signifies the potential that as a new securitization interacts with a previously existing securitization this has a diminishing effect. In other words, that the pre-existing securitization is lessened in intensity by the securitizing actor. The logic behind this is that: Potentially some of the securitizing actor's attention is directed elsewhere, the securitization of a new issue, and therefore the securitization already in place will suffer as a result. The dynamic could also consist of 'securitization fatigue' as the audience is already saturated with one securitization, the new issue being securitized creates a dynamic in which the effectiveness of the pre-existing securitization. Although the focus in this thesis is on the securitizing actor whether effects occur there. It would not be surprising if the audience has a part to play as well.

The neglect category signifies the complete neglect of the pre-existing securitization as a new issue becomes securitized. This might mean a de facto de-securitizing of the pre-existing securitized issue. However, it is a significantly different effect to warrant its own category. As this indicates a large shift in attention from the securitizing actor. It does not necessarily indicate a shift in securitization or intent from this securitizing actor. This outcome might even indicate the intention of the securitizing actor to deal with the new securitization first. Only to return to the pre-existing securitization as it was.

It might be possible for several of these outcomes to occur simultaneously, but then focused on different subgroups. For example, there might be a difference between documented migrants and undocumented migrants, which would be reflective of pre-existing differences in

the framing of these groups. Documented migrants that have been granted status might be seen as needing extra protection, being a group at risk. Whilst undocumented migrants could be constructed as potential vectors for the virus without government oversight. It will be very interesting to see whether this occurs and if it does, to what extent.

Potentially these outcomes could also exist simultaneously but in different domains of securitization. For example, as the issue of caring for people that have contracted the Corona virus puts additional strain on a health system. This strain might mean that issues pertaining to the health system become securitized, extraordinary measures to ensure the functioning of this system are put in place. However, the military domain might remain relatively unaffected by this crisis, leaving potential for other outcomes than intensification in this domain.

Finally, the coexistence category signifies complete coexistence of the securitizations. In other words, this is the proposed name for the outcome of the securitizations not appearing to interact with one another. Although considered unlikely, it is a possible outcome and is therefore taken into consideration.

Concluding, the interaction of securitizations is currently entirely underdeveloped. Therefore, this thesis aims to explore this subject. It offers up that comparing securitizations directly is practically impossible because of the different contexts within which they function. However, it argues that the Covid-19 pandemic offers an unprecedented chance to explore the different ways in which securitizations interact because of the crisis' similarities across countries. Four tentative categories of interactions have been created and suggested as potential outcomes of this research.

## **2.12 The sectoral approach**

In their seminal work Buzan et al. propose a sectoral approach to securitization. These sectors 'serve to disaggregate a whole for purposes of analysis by selecting some of its distinctive patterns of interaction (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 8).' They argue that although these 'lack the quality of independent existence' and are therefore inherently incomplete methods of viewing security they merely exist to reduce complexity (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 8). It is explained that 'the analytical method of sectors thus starts with disaggregation but must end with reassembly. (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 8)' As such sectors they identify military, political, economic, societal and environmental security. The essence of what they perceive as these sectors is perhaps encapsulated in the following quote from their book:

‘The economist looks at human systems in terms that highlight wealth and development and justify restrictive assumptions, such as the motivation of behavior by the desire to maximize utility. The political realist looks at the same systems in terms that highlight sovereignty and power and justify restrictive assumptions, such as the motivation of behavior by the desire to maximize power. The military strategist looks at the systems in terms that highlight offensive and defensive capability and justify restrictive assumptions, such as the motivation of behavior by opportunistic calculations of coercive advantage. The environmentalist looks at systems in terms of the ecological underpinnings of civilization and the need to achieve sustainable development. In the societal sector, the analyst looks at the systems in terms of patterns of identity and the desire to maintain cultural independence. Each is looking at the whole but seeing only one dimension of its reality (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 8).’

The envisioned division, segments reality into more approachable elements that will more willingly allow analysis. Within this thesis the usefulness of this sectoral approach is accepted. It must, however, be added that both the securitization of immigrants and that of the Covid-19 virus fall into a significant number of these sectors. Of most interest therefore will be those where these narratives are made to compete by the reality in which they are situated. This indicates a logical focus on the societal, economic and political sectors. However, this thesis shall avoid focusing on single sectors. Instead it will address each sector separately per case and per time frame, with the exception of the environmental sector, since this migration crisis is not an environmental issue, nor does it seem to be securitized in that sense.

For this thesis the domains in practice shall mean the following. The economic domain of securitization of migration, is considered to be those acts of securitization that deal with the creation of a threat in a migration narrative on an economic level. For example, this might be the creation of a narrative of migrants being an economic burden. The military domain considers migrants as potential threats to sovereignty or as a military or destabilizing threat. For example, migrants could be made out to be potential combatants for a hostile country, as seen in the war on terror. In the societal domain, the ramifications of migrants on societal affairs are considered, in the sense as belonging to a particular society, or being excluded from this. The political domain considers the changes in political realities, but also the international community on a political level. A health domain is added, as this has been proven to be a battleground for securitization practices as by previous literature (McInnes & Rushton, 2013). This domain is concerned with the role migrants play potentially in regards to the health situation/system in the respective cases. This is a crucial addition when dealing with a global health crisis, in the form of the Covid-19 pandemic.

### 2.13 Securitization for this thesis

Securitization is a complex and, in some areas, controversial term. However, this chapter has attempted to create out of this complexity a coherent and workable view on this topic. Before summarizing the findings of this chapter it ought to be noted that this complexity is a sign of a lively academic debate, that still has areas to grow into. The overall aim of this thesis is to contribute to this debate through its exploration of the interactions of securitizations. Put simply, this chapter has aimed to achieve three things. Firstly, create a concept of securitization. Secondly, theorize possible interactions between securitizations. Thirdly, argue for a sectoral approach as a research method to explore such interactions. These are visualized in the following figure.

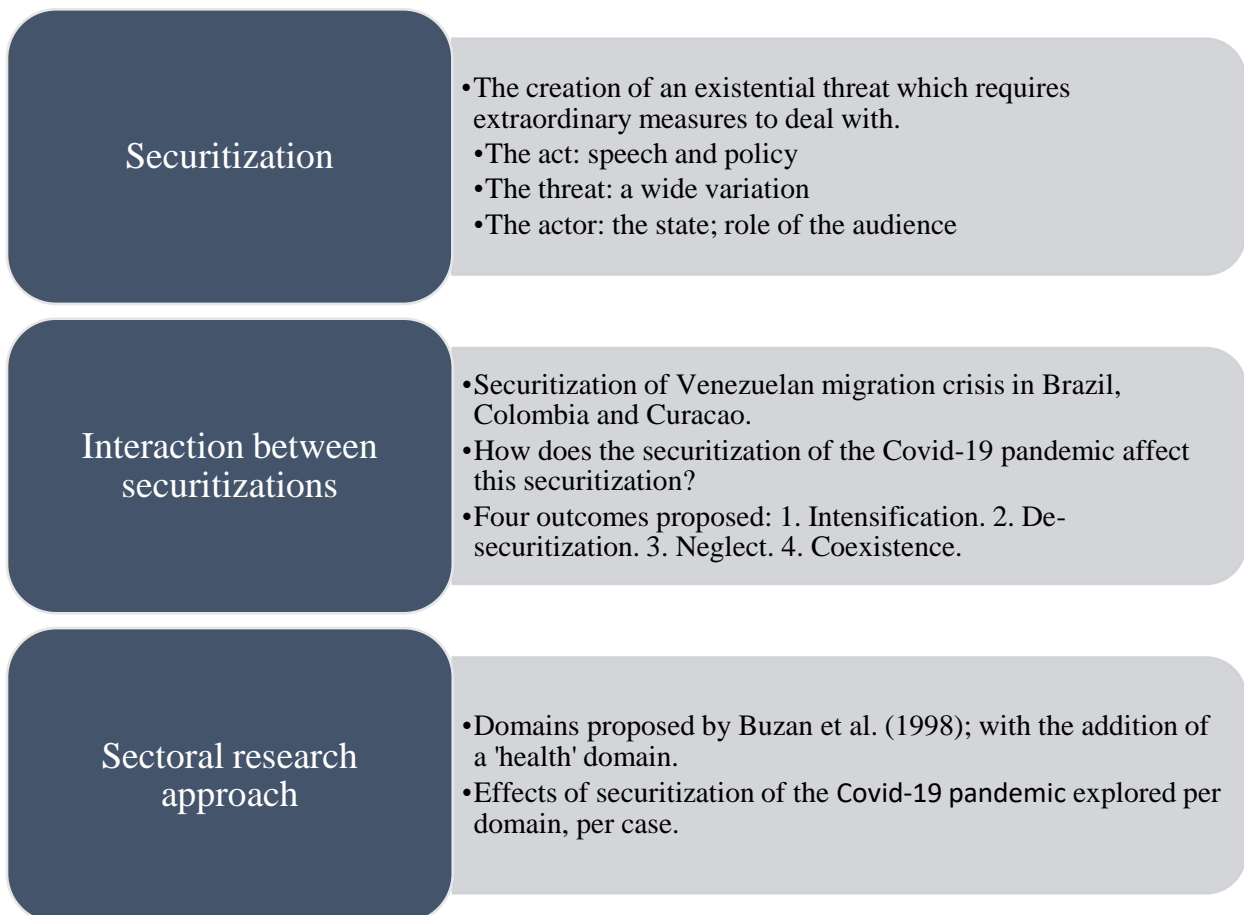


Figure 1: A visualization of the aims of the theoretical framework

What does securitization mean for this thesis? How does it work? What is of consequence? Firstly, securitization is considered to be the active creation of an existential threat to society which requires extraordinary measures to combat. These measures consist of a

significant departure from the normal. Securitization is seen as to consist of more than mere speech acts, instead policies and acts of securitization are considered to be equally crucial, particularly in combination with explicit naming of a particular threat.

Securitization is normally done by states, although this is not exclusive to states. They are the ones that most often have the capabilities and credibility to create a securitization narrative. The audience plays a crucial part in either accepting or rejecting a securitization narrative. The same is argued for de-securitization practices. In other words, audiences are capable of challenging the securitization processes.

The possible interactions between securitization processes are currently still undeveloped. Therefore, this thesis theorizes several possible interactions: intensification, de-securitization, neglect and coexistence. It is argued that intensification would constitute a strengthening of the securitization narrative, as a result of the interaction with a secondary securitization narrative. De-securitization is understood to be the diminishing of said securitization narrative resulting from the interaction with the secondary securitization narrative. Neglect is argued to occur when the securitization narrative is not actively changed as a result of the secondary securitization but stops being actively securitized as well. Quite simply, it becomes neglected. Coexistence is understood as no interaction taking place between the securitization narratives.

Securitization can be explored through a sectoral approach allowing clear distinctions and therefore a more comprehensive and comprehensible analysis. Instead of focusing on a single, or set of sectors, almost all sectors proposed by Buzan et al. will be utilized (Buzan et al., 1998). One sector is left out, the environmental sector, as neither security narratives seem to focus on environmental elements. A health sector is added as well, a logical addition when discussing the securitization narrative of disease. The sectoral approach proposed from the start of securitization theory informs the ways in which analysis was conducted. Further explanation of the utilization of this sectoral approach is discussed in Chapter 3.

## **Chapter 3 - Methodology**

In this chapter the protocols for the actual data collection and analysis will be established and explained. Clear parameters are crucial in furthering the credibility of this research and will provide the backbone of this thesis alongside the theoretical framework. To an important extent securitization research might be considered to be a sub-category of framing research. Therefore, methods for dealing with securitization will, in part, be borrowed from framing research. Although the concept of securitization is utilized as the theoretical ruler that our cases will be measured against.

### **3.1 Research design**

The thesis shall consist of a case study of the Venezuelan refugee crisis during the global Covid-19 pandemic. A case study is understood consist of ‘an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 2003, p. 13)’. The purpose of case studies within a wider discipline is the production of exemplars (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 219). This is precisely what this thesis aims to do. Through researching potential exemplars of interactions between securitizations it aims to explore what these interactions consist of. Case studies are also argued to be:

‘The qualitative case-study is an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data-sources. This ensures that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood. [...] It allows the researcher to explore individuals or organizations, simple through complex interventions, relationships, communities or programs (Yin, 2003) and supports the deconstruction and subsequent reconstruction of various phenomena (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 544).’

These elements are reflected in the research design of this thesis as well. The design accounts for a wide selection of data sources, as will be discussed further on. The research first deconstructs the securitization to its individual components, through use of the sectoral approach, only to reconstruct it to explore the overall changes.

The focus is on the Venezuelan immigrants and their securitization in each country respectively. Initially, this will be explored in the period just before the start of the global pandemic, with a focus on the period of the first three months of 2020. However, the immigration crisis has been going on for a longer period than that. Utilizing some sources from before the established period is therefore necessary. Attention shall be given to the cases of Brazil, Colombia and Curacao. The aim of this triple case study is to explore the ways in which



securitizations interact as a new securitization emerges. The aim is to render visible the interactions between different securitization processes through different contexts.

These countries were chosen because they have to deal with the Venezuelan immigration crisis as well as the Covid-19 pandemic. Clearly, these are not the only countries that meet these criteria. Selecting these countries occurred as follows: Curacao provided a starting point and was a driver for the process. When exploring topics for this thesis the securitization of migration was one of its starting points. At this point in time the Covid-19 pandemic created an additional securitized narrative. At first glance, this process seemed capable of affecting the previously existing securitization, leading to the interaction of securitizations becoming the new focal point of this research. Other cases were then added to explore more dimensions of this interaction and to explore the occurrence of this phenomenon over several cases. Colombia was selected because of the enormous amount of migrants that have entered this country from Venezuela. Brazil was then selected because of its unconventional handling of the Covid-19 pandemic. Intuitively this would likely be an interesting case to further develop an understanding of the interactions of different securitization narratives.

Selection of three cases that deal with the same set of crises that become securitized was intended to create a situation in which the interaction of these securitization narratives the variable that is being researched. Nevertheless, this is not entirely airtight. Therefore, the aim is to not necessarily directly research causation. Instead the aim is to gauge correlation. Does interaction appear to occur? And if so, what interaction is visible?

The collected data for each period shall be brought together and subjected to inquiry based on their connection to the securitization of Venezuelan migrants. This is augmented by some theoretical background of framing. This term is used in social research to refer to the generation of meaning for a particular subject. In practice this means that framing is extremely pervasive and potentially also very powerful. In essence we might consider 'securitization' a directed framing practice. Instead of using the broad term then, which encompasses everything, securitization can be seen as the particular framing of a societal issue as one constituting an existential threat. As has been explained in the previous chapter. Exploring the particular framing of an issue can therefore be considered an important element of exploring securitization. Significant research has been conducted on the subject of framing and its viability has been extensively researched. This is an added advantage of framing research

practices, it allows for the well-researched and well-funded inquiry into a relatively unexplored subject.

Data analysis is segmented based on three elements: per phase (before or during the Covid-19 pandemic) per case (Brazil, Colombia, Curacao), and per domain (Health, Economic, Societal, Military and Political). Changes seen between the different phases are then explored in two separate segments. Firstly, they are discussed per case per domain. Secondly, they are discussed per case. After this the research question is answered. This segmentation is visualized in the following visual, which demonstrates what one branch looks like.

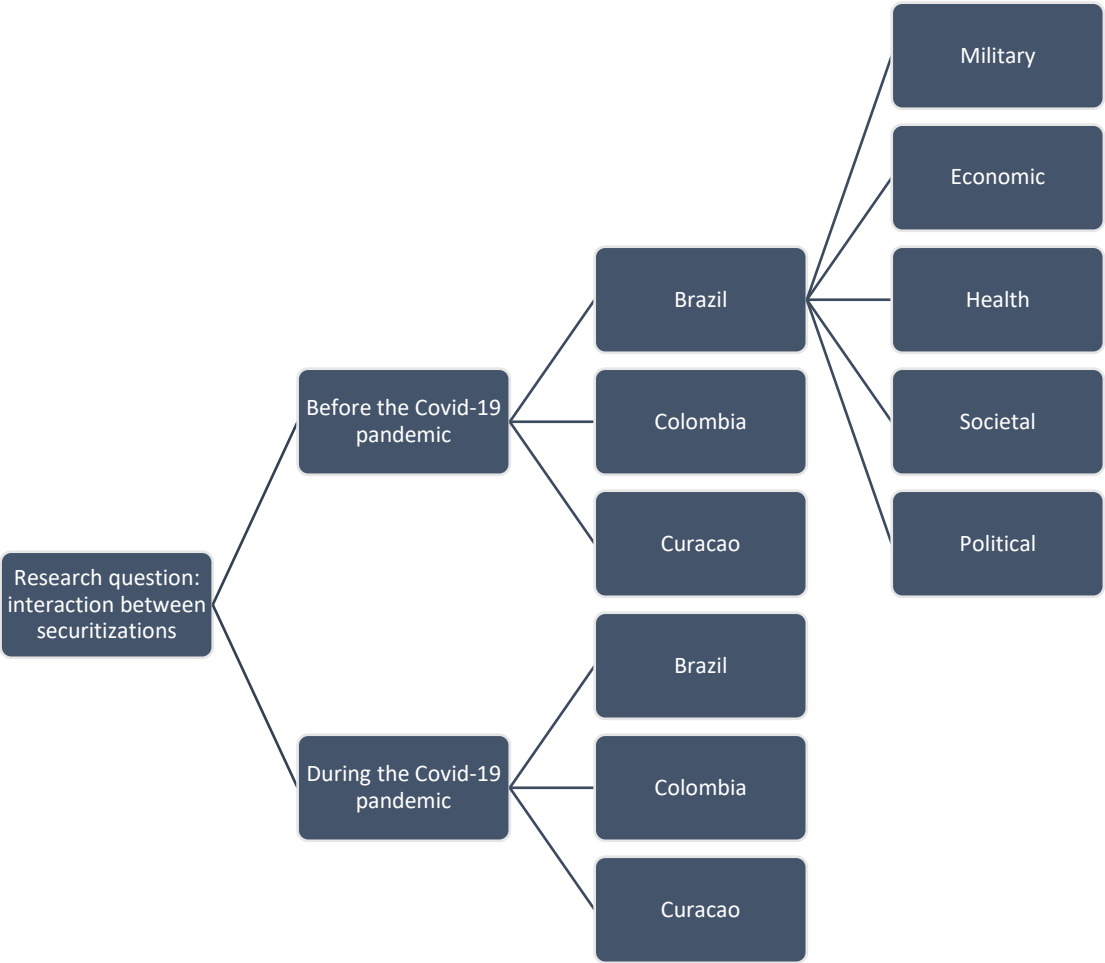


Figure 2: A visualization of the levels of analysis

By approaching the research this way the specific changes in each domain become very clear over the two periods selected. Once the change per domain is established, the overall difference in each countries’ securitization will be identified. Through these results this thesis will be able to suggest in what ways change might occur in securitized narratives during a new crisis. These changes will then be discussed, based on inductive theorizing potential explanations will be offered and the potential impacts for securitization theories will be

explored. Through this process we move back up the ladder of abstraction: Moving from the changes in the securitization of migrants, to the differences between the cases, and finally to the theoretical implications of said changes in order to answer the main research question.

### **3.2 Framing and securitization**

Framing is considered to be the construction of meaning for a referent object. Actors will often attempt to attach a particular meaning, or ‘frame’, to a subject. This framing is visibly done for an audience. Framing echoes securitization in the role of the audience. If the frame comes from a credible source, and the frame is credible as well, the frame resonates with the audience. When a frame resonates it may leave an impact, or become adopted by the audience. As this occurs the perception of the subject by the audience has been adapted. Framing then, much like securitization research assumes that the role of the audience is not passive.

Benford and Snow argue that framing of social issues consists of three phases; prognostic framing, diagnostic framing, and motivational framing (Benford & Snow, 2000) . Prognostic framing is the identification of a problem. Diagnostic framing consists of the identification of a possible solution to said problem. Whilst motivational framing, being aptly named, attempts to mobilize action. Securitization issues operate on all three of these levels. However, the lexicon for securitization seems to place most emphasis on problem, or rather threat, identification. The assumption seems to be that in securitization the threat must always be ‘neutralized’. Framing practices allow one to explore these themes making it possible to pay some more attention to the problem-solving and action elements of securitization, such as we see in emergency politics.

Framing practices are normally used on their own in order to be able to give meaning to very large datasets. Often codes are assigned to particular turns of phrase or terminology. For the current dataset this would not have been sufficient on its own, nor is the dataset large enough. Instead sources will be used to indicate that a particular securitization is being imparted through securitizing acts.

### **3.3 Data generation**

In order to manage data generation it is important to define as clearly as possible what, when and how data is selected. Firstly, a time frame from within which sources are selected is created. This starts in the period just before the start of the global pandemic, with a focus on the period of the first three months of 2020. These sources will be used to establish a baseline

from which to determine change during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Venezuelan immigration crisis has however, been going on for a longer period than that. This means usage of some sources from before this period are necessary. Primarily in an effort to elucidate particular policies, or securitization efforts. In the case of Curacao adhering to the established time frame would have created a significant lack of data, therefore it is more dependent on older sources.

The sources that will be used to establish deviations from this baseline, potentially caused by the secondary securitization process will all be from the period when most countries started implementing measures to curb the spread of the Corona virus. This generally translates to the middle, or end of March. The period this thesis draws from extends until about the end of July. Although the Corona virus has not been overcome in this period, four months ought to be sufficient for a government to establish how they wish to deal with a previously existing securitization in the context of a new securitization. Additionally, this was the widest time frame available to this thesis within its limitations.

First, it is important to determine what type of data will form the foundation of this thesis. The focus shall be on data generated by the respective governments in their efforts to frame the issues at hand, my direct sources. The decision for state-centric sources was made fully aware of the criticisms on the state-centric nature of securitization. Currently it is still believed that the states are the most likely candidates for pursuing securitization, and are the ones most capable of doing so. For each country a set of relevant actors will be identified, consisting of relevant governmental agencies and key individuals in regards to either or both crises. Preferably, these would overlap. However, sources coming from the same government will have to suffice in some cases. The direct data will primarily consist of policy (documents) and speeches. This is done in an attempt to remain as close as possible to the proven data sources for securitization processes. Some data will also come from indirect sources, such NGO's and CSO's, or the media. Data from NGO's and CSO's will be used to explain the ways in which a particular framing coming from the government might be contested, or reinforced through other channels. Additionally, these sources provide context, partial analysis and potential rationales for the government narratives.

Identification of the relevant actors was one of the key challenges faced in regards to data collection. Governmental institutions and their particular roles change per country, as do the roles of particular individuals within these governments. Therefore, each case received an explanation on which sources were used, and an explanation as to their relevance. However, the table underneath ought to provide an indication of some of the sources that were used.

Relevant Securitization actors in: Brazil	Relevant Securitization actors in: Colombia	Relevant Securitization actors in: Curacao
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The office of president</li> <li>•Brazilian Military</li> <li>•Brazilian government migration agency</li> <li>•Brazilian governmental news agency</li> <li>•NGOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The office of president</li> <li>•Migracion Colombia (migration agency)</li> <li>•Largest newspaper in the nation as a mediated source: El Tiempo</li> <li>•NGOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The office of Minister President/ governmental press releases/information made available to the public</li> <li>•Mediated news</li> <li>•NGOs</li> </ul>

Figure 3: A small overview of relevant actors per country case

The original aim of this theses was to add to this data by conducting interviews with several actors for each case that fulfill different roles in the creation of securitization narratives. This proved to be unattainable. Potential respondents were not forthcoming in responding to queries, most likely because of having to deal with an additional crisis in their respective countries and occupations. The aim of these interviews was to provide somewhat of a rationale for much of the securitizations that occurred. Allowing for a further discussion on the mediation of securitization acts. Therefore, it already comes highly recommended as an interesting point for future research.

Since, it is impossible explore all the information that is produced in the relevant realms of governments that might remotely be applicable, nor would it be make for an interesting thesis, some starting assumptions are required. The first assumption is that; as governments wish to frame an issue they do so publicly. Therefore, the necessary data is available in public spheres. Secondly, there is an assumption that governments will generally act as they say they will. At the very least, to the extent that their actions appear congruent with their statements to their audience. This is potentially a significant limitation of this thesis, as governments' actions are often incongruent with their words. However, in the current context of conducting research, being unable to conduct research on the ground, this is an inevitable limitation.

### 3.4 Data analysis

After completion of data collection data analysis will by and large follow the following three steps: coding, comparing and contrasting, and theorization. Coding shall consist of determining the presence, or lack thereof, of securitizing acts established based on the

theoretical framework in the collected data. More precisely, for the first section, dealing with securitization of migration per case study the focus is on developing an understanding of the ways in which the migration of Venezuelan migrants is securitized. This means exploring the sources that have been gathered for their respective framings of Venezuelan migrants. As has previously been mentioned, the information gathered here shall be gathered per domain. For a source to be considered to be involved in a domain it needs to; explicitly mention a frame related to this domain (using the frame of ‘economic migrants’ for example), form part of a narrative surrounding a policy (explaining why a particular policy in the securitization framework of migration is necessary), or inform of a securitization policy. For the second phase a very similar process shall be employed. The focus for this phase is on the change in the securitization narrative, in particular change that is informed by the Covid-19 pandemic. The way in which sources are processed is explained in a more detailed manner in the appendix.

Comparing and contrasting of the codified data occurs on two levels. A within-case comparison is made in order to determine the change in each case. In this within-case comparison the changes will be determined per domain. This will aid in answering the research question: In what ways has the securitized migration narrative changed during the Covid-19 pandemic? This question is the focal point of each case study. Once an attempt at an answer has been made an across-case comparison is made exploring in which ways these changes have occurred over the cases and the differences between these. In what ways have the securitized migration narratives changed overall? And what relations between immigration securitization and Covid19 securitization can be identified? How do these differ between the cases?

Having organized the insights gained through the comparing of data the move is made to theorization and finding an answer to the overall research question: In what ways are previously existing securitized immigration narratives affected? An effort is made to theorize why the differences and similarities between cases have occurred. Additionally, the consequences of the findings for securitization theory are discussed.

### **3.5 Reflection**

The methodological choices made have great ramifications, not just for the data collected but also the particular strengths and weaknesses of this research. Several of these aspects still warrant attention. It ought to be noted that the points addressed here are perhaps not complete. Furthermore, nor should the potential weaknesses addressed here be seen to

detract from the validity of the research conducted. Instead they ought to be seen as stepping stones for future research.

Firstly, due to current circumstances around the Covid-19 pandemic crisis international travel has become practically impossible, not to mention morally questionable. This means that this research was conducted at a distance. The research design has attempted to take the problems created by distance into consideration as much as possible. However, it is undeniable that embeddedness in the societies under scrutiny would likely create a richer research base. Sources might be more readily available and conducting interviews would likely have been possible. On the other hand, physical distance might also provide an advantage as this allows a much broader scope within the available time than what would likely be possible being physically present.

Secondly, its broad scope might also be a potential pitfall in this research in two separate but equally important reasons, the number of sources and superficiality. As the data horizon expands so too do the available sources. Having a broad scope could potentially lead to an overwhelming amount of data. Measures have been built into the research design to avoid this eventuality. Primarily reflected in the fact that data collection will occur only from sources within a particular time frame, from previously established sources. Furthermore, the framing approach to data is potentially well suited to dealing with large bodies of source material.

Thirdly, the research could negatively be affected by its broad scope if it, because of the comprehensive amount of ground it wishes to cover, does not manage to achieve more than superficiality. Glancing off the surface of the material instead of diving deep into the subject. This hazard can only be avoided by keeping the research objectives in mind at all times. The research design aims to reflect this, it has a clear focal point, which draws all attention. Furthermore, the main aim of this research is to explore a broad topic, in a relatively broad manner. Indicating that a broad scope is the only way to move forwards. In this sense, the research conducted here is largely exploratory. It is meant to indicate the potential of interacting securitization narratives as a new and urgent research domain not to (dis)prove theory.

Finally, it is crucial to remain aware that this thesis could suffer from a confirmation bias. Its aim is to explore how one securitization narrative might affect another securitization. In this sense it presupposes that this is a likely outcome, and is therefore more likely to find one. This is hopefully negated by including the possibility of no real effect, as a potential outcome. In conclusion, through these reflections it is shown that this research was conducted thoughtfully and purposefully.

## **Chapter 4 - Securitizing Venezuelan migrants in Brazil**

This chapter explores the securitization of Venezuelan migrants in Brazil. This will be split in three separate sub-sections. Firstly, attention is given to the situation before the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent crisis. Secondly, the focus shifts to the securitization of migrants in Brazil during the crisis. Finally, these two different securitizations will be compared and discussed. This utilizes the separation of securitization into different domains. However, once again it ought to be mentioned that this separation is artificial, and not entirely reflective of reality. It is simply useful for the purpose of exploration of differences. In reality securitization is far more complex and can encompass many domains much more simultaneously than is made apparent in this section. Although true for all three cases, this is particularly true for the Brazilian case, as shall become clear.

The sources that were utilized are largely from three types of sources. Firstly, the Brazilian government directly. The focus here is on public statements made by high level individuals and press statements issued by institutions that are directly involved in migration. In practice this means Bolsonaro and the military in particular. Secondly, news issued by the governmentally controlled news agency Agencia Brasil. It is not a stretch of the imagination to consider what is produced through this medium is in line with what the Brazilian administration wishes to show. Finally, this is augmented by information gathered from a selection of other sources, mainly NGOs and other news agencies, that discuss particular aspects of policies, provide additional information, or provide a different viewpoint.<sup>3</sup>

### **4.1 Before the Covid-19 pandemic**

#### *4.1.1 Military domain*

In what ways were migrants securitized in the military domain in the period leading up to the Covid-19 pandemic in Brazil? Firstly, one ought to address what is being securitized. Although traditionally securitization in this domain might focus on migration itself as a potential threat to the military security. The military domain of the securitization of migrants in Brazil shifts the focus to the state the people are coming from. The securitization sees the threat

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<sup>3</sup> Throughout this chapter (and Chapters 5 and 6) footnotes are used, as opposed to the previously utilized classical APA style annotation. This was done for three reasons: Firstly, to improve readability, many of these sources have no distinct authors and long titles, making them more intrusive to quote in-text. Secondly, the amount of sources, although not sufficient for an interesting quantitative research design, is still high. Once again footnotes are the more reader-friendly option dealing with large quantities of sources. Finally, this is also a way of separating these sources from the academic ones utilized before. In doing so there remains a clear distinction between academic theory and research which this thesis considers to be valuable.



emanating from the Venezuelan state, not the necessarily the migrants. Often Brazilian state media will refer to the migration crisis as being caused by the failure of the Venezuelan state.<sup>4</sup> Some even go as far to place the blame entirely on socialism. Especially Bolsonaro argues this point in his public statements, notably in his speech to the UN in 2019.<sup>5</sup> Referring to the Venezuelan leadership as leading a ‘foul regime’<sup>6</sup> and joking that ‘socialism is working in Venezuela.’<sup>7</sup> In other words, he appears eager to point to Venezuela as a great danger on the border of Brazil. Including in this danger his perceived failure of socialism in general.

Although this might be considered to constitute political discourse this is sufficiently backed up by policy to consider it a crucial element of the securitization of migration in Brazil. As this is accompanied by the governmental decision to place the Brazilian military in charge of the humanitarian operations.<sup>8</sup> In this way the relation between Venezuelan migration and the Brazilian military is fostered on a policy level. It appears that this self-proclaimed use of ‘soft-power’ is not accidental. Instead using the military in order to run this humanitarian operation could potentially be seen as a part of a military strategy. This strategy allows for the buildup of significant military forces on the Venezuelan border without arousing suspicion.

That the military is not only there to fulfill the role of humanitarian aid is tellingly revealed in a small military incident. What allegedly occurred in this incident is that former soldiers, that attacked other soldiers of the Venezuelan army were apprehended by the Brazilian authorities, who seem unwilling to extradite them.<sup>9</sup> However, it shows that the military is focused on control over the border as well. As they were apprehended during a reconnaissance patrol. After being apprehended the Brazilian government they were included in the humanitarian program through which asylum can be requested, a move that reads like a provocation by the Brazilian authorities. Through all this it appears that the intimidating role of the Brazilian military is not directed at the Venezuelan migrants, but rather at the Venezuelan authorities. This indicates that the threat of Venezuela is being taken seriously.

One might argue that this is not directly related to migration, this would not be misguided. It appears that, on a military domain at least, the securitization of the actual migration of Venezuelan migrants that occurs is barely present at all. Instead the focus is on the

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<sup>4</sup> *Speech by Brazil’s President Jair Bolsonaro*, 2019; Valente, 2020a

<sup>5</sup> *Speech by Brazil’s President Jair Bolsonaro*, 2019

<sup>6</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>7</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>8</sup> *With Support, Venezuelan Immigrants Are Rebuilding Their Lives in Brazil*, 2018; *Army Chief Of Staff Checks Actions To Welcome And Internalize Venezuelan Immigrants*, 2020; Ommati, 2020

<sup>9</sup> Valente, 2020a

threat posed by the Venezuelan state, which is arguably used as a means to an end, combating, or preparing for combat, with a Venezuelan state. The extraordinary measures taken to securitize the migration, in this domain, involving the military in the operation to care for the migrants are more directed towards defending the country from the threat that is apparently formed by Venezuela than by the migrants.

Additionally, one could argue that the Venezuelan immigrants are perhaps seen as an extension of the Venezuelan state, and are securitized militarily by proxy. That there is a securitization of migration taking place through the militarization of the humanitarian operation to care for the migrants. This is seemingly in line with the argumentation employed by the Brazilian government. It argues publicly that Venezuela and socialism pose great dangers to Brazil and places the military in a position where it is not only close to the border, but also where it leads operations caring for Venezuelans that have entered the country.

#### *4.1.2 Health domain*

In the time frame before the entrance of the Corona virus the health domain barely seemed to feature in the securitization of Venezuelan migration. Sources linking the migrants to any existential health threats do not appear to be created by the Brazilian government. However, a lack of public statements does not necessarily mean that this domain did not play a part. Extraordinary measures were taken to care for the migrants which ought to allow registered migrants access to the Brazilian health system, even taking additional measures to care for groups at additional risk (underage migrants travelling alone).<sup>10</sup> Outside sources report the health system to be overloaded.<sup>11</sup> In the end though, these reports were created by other actors than the Brazilian government and can therefore hardly be considered of consequence in the securitization of migration in Brazil as managed by the government. Therefore, it is argued that although there are extraordinary measures undertaken in the health domain to accommodate the migrants these do not seem to form a direct part of the securitization narrative employed by the Brazilian government.

#### *4.1.3 Economic domain*

The economic domain of securitization of migration demonstrates a somewhat different story. Narratives that can be linked to securitization seem to center around expressions of

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<sup>10</sup> *Brazil: Venezuelan Children Fleeing Alone*, 2019

<sup>11</sup> *The Struggle of Venezuelan Migrants and Asylum Seekers in Northern Brazil*, 2019; *Brazil: Venezuelan Children Fleeing Alone*, 2019

concerns from both the Brazilian government and outside NGOs. In a measure package aimed at improving the situation for the Venezuelan migrants for example, the government briefly mentions that it will provide opportunities for migrants to enter the job market.<sup>12</sup> However, the number of participating Venezuelan migrants seems to be very low, accounting for less than 2,500 migrants.<sup>13</sup> This coupled to reports by outside organizations that are concerned with an increase in illegal markets as a result of the vulnerable position of migrants that work without obtaining official status seems to indicate that a majority of the migrants work in illegality.<sup>14</sup> There are additional reports that criminal gangs are actively, and forcibly, recruiting migrants.<sup>15</sup> However, the threat this poses is not focused on by the reporting done by the government on the economic domain. Instead, the Brazilian government hardly seems to report on this domain, providing only a single source on this topic. Therefore, it is argued that, although securitization narratives might be at play in this domain below the surface, the economic domain before the Covid-19 pandemic does not appear to be a significant part of securitization narrative.

#### *4.1.4 Societal domain*

When it comes to the societal domain of the securitization of the Venezuelan migration crisis the Brazilian administration seems to wish to demonstrate a largely positive approach to the migrants themselves. Instead of securitizing the migrants as the threat themselves. In this domain the policies seem to be focused on securitizing the wellbeing of the migrants. The humanitarian operation undertaken seems to be focused on bringing migrants care and attempts at integration.<sup>16</sup> It does so by internalization practices that come down to relocating migrants into society throughout Brazil.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the narratives plays into rights to migrate and appears to aim to grant people refugee status in the country.<sup>18</sup> However, this policy falls short in several aspects. Firstly, in that it does not provide adequately for children that have traveled alone.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, those people that do not fall within the current categories created by

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<sup>12</sup> *Government Allocates R\$ 14 Million for Assistance to Venezuelan Immigrants*, 2019

<sup>13</sup> *Government Allocates R\$ 14 Million for Assistance to Venezuelan Immigrants*, 2019

<sup>14</sup> *Brazil: Venezuelan Children Fleeing Alone*, 2019, Costa, 2020

<sup>15</sup> *Brazil: Venezuelan Children Fleeing Alone*, 2019, Costa, 2020, Vilela, 2020a

<sup>16</sup> *With Support, Venezuelan Immigrants Are Rebuilding Their Lives in Brazil*, 2018; Macklin, 2020; Ribeiro, 2019; *Government Allocates R\$ 14 Million for Assistance to Venezuelan Immigrants*, 2019; *Operation Welcome: Command Switching Ceremony is held at Planalto Palace*, 2020

<sup>17</sup> *With Support, Venezuelan Immigrants Are Rebuilding Their Lives in Brazil*, 2018; *Government Allocates R\$ 14 Million for Assistance to Venezuelan Immigrants*, 2019; *Brazil: Venezuelan Children Fleeing Alone*, 2019; Boadle, 2020; *Operation Welcome: Command Switching Ceremony is held at Planalto Palace*, 2020

<sup>18</sup> Santiago, 2019; Muñoz & Broner, 2019

<sup>19</sup> *Brazil: Venezuelan Children Fleeing Alone*, 2019; Costa, 2020

Brazil are often and easily forced into a life of crime to provide for themselves.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, the integration practices similarly do not seem to include everyone, an *Medecins Sans Frontieres* report seems to indicate that particular shelters (housing indigenous migrants) are excluded from these programs.<sup>21</sup> A further important aspect of the societal domain of the securitization of the Venezuelan migrants is that the policies here are widely reported on and potentially used to make Brazil look like a good Samaritan on an international level.<sup>22</sup>

Overall, what does this mean for the societal domain? Initially, it appears that the Brazilian government is eager to demonstrate a positive approach to securitization, by for example attempting to incorporate the migrants into Brazilian society. However, this approach is not ubiquitous, falling short in crucial areas. Primarily, their approach seems to exclude indigenous population migrants. It appears that this domain has the potential for demonstrating the limitations of this research: the government is arguing a positive approach, but not acting entirely in the spirit of these statements. Therefore, determining a definitive outcome for the securitization is made complex. In the end, it is argued that this might be an example of simultaneous processes. On the one hand, the Brazilian government has a positive approach to the migrants. On the other hand, the indigenous migrant population appears to be excluded from the process. Indicating that perhaps it is more showmanship than an actual approach.

#### *4.1.5 Political domain*

The political securitization of the issues surrounding the Venezuelan migration crisis in Brazil is a complex and somewhat confusing affair. As it appears that the Brazilian government is seemingly split on political issues of control and political sovereignty. This can largely be traced back to policies and political discourses that take place on different levels. Instead of being a political whole, Brazilian politics under the Bolsonaro administration seem to be split. This split is most strongly characterized by a simultaneous attraction to further international integration, giving up control over the migrant population and a disengagement from international cooperation efforts on a larger scale, under a narrative of reclaiming sovereignty.

This is seen in the policies of the Bolsonaro administration as follows: The international community is of quite some importance for the successful execution of the humanitarian operation that aids the migrants. United Nations agencies and large international NGOs provide

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<sup>20</sup> Vilela, 2020a; Costa, 2020

<sup>21</sup> *The Struggle of Venezuelan Migrants and Asylum Seekers in Northern Brazil*, 2019

<sup>22</sup> Ribeiro, 2019; Vilela, 2020a; Barchfield, 2019

many services to the migrants that arrive and remain in the Roraima region.<sup>23</sup> Simultaneously there is a large disengagement from the international community by the Bolsonaro administration. For example, a withdrawal from a set of regional (non-binding) accords, arguing that they infringed on Brazil's sovereignty<sup>24</sup>, or that they were beneficial to the Venezuelan state.<sup>25</sup>

What does this actually mean in the sense of securitization? Who is the threat? What is being threatened? What are the extraordinary measures necessary? On the one hand, there is the securitization of Brazilian sovereignty as being under threat from the international community requiring extraordinary measures to extract Brazil from these threats. On the other hand, the Brazilian administration securitizes the needs of the migrants. The extraordinary measures required consist of bringing in the international community agencies that play a vital role in caring for these migrants. In short, when it comes the political domain of securitization in Brazil of the Venezuelan migrants, there seems to be a split personality. Potentially this might be explained by the differences between the previous administration and the current administration and their viewpoints. That is however, a topic for a different thesis.

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<sup>23</sup>*With Support, Venezuelan Immigrants Are Rebuilding Their Lives in Brazil*, 2018; Ommati, 2020; *Red Cross Expands Immigrant Posts in Roraima*, 2019; Boadle, 2020

<sup>24</sup> Londoño, 2020; Valente, 2020b

<sup>25</sup> Valente, 2020b

## 4.2 During the Covid-19 pandemic

### 4.2.1 Military domain

In what ways were Venezuelan migrants securitized in the military domain during the Covid-19 pandemic? Firstly, the military domain does not appear to be one of the main domains in which the securitization takes place. However, the military remains in charge of the humanitarian operation and is the main organizer when it comes to taking measures for the migrants during the Covid-19 pandemic.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, the framing of the Venezuelan state has remained<sup>27</sup>, although the nature of the threat has shifted, which will be discussed in the appropriate domain. In other words, the military domain of the securitization of Venezuelan migrants is not emphasized. However, the unusually large role for the military ought to be noted once again. Why involve the military if there is no threat? Additionally, as the spread of the Covid-19 virus became a global pandemic Brazil closed its border with Venezuela first. Closing the border with Venezuela first indicates that this country and migration from this country are considered more threatening than others.<sup>28</sup> The sources at hand provided by the Brazilian government neglect to argue this element. Therefore, current research is unable to do more than recommend that this is reflected upon further critically in the future.

### 4.2.2 Health domain

One of the domains that, unsurprisingly during a global pandemic, seems to have gained increased attention is the health domain. It is now placed on the agenda to a small extent as opposed to being given almost no attention previously. The securitization of this health emergency and the corresponding securitization of the migrants during this crisis can be seen as a complex affair. On the one hand, there are serious concerns when it comes to the migrants. On the other hand, measures are extremely lacking and Bolsonaro is famously a non-believer of the dangers posed by the Corona virus.<sup>29</sup> However, UNHCR reported that some measures have been taken:

‘In order to assist possible confirmed COVID-19 cases, Operação Acolhida (OA) developed a contingency plan in partnership with UNHCR and other actors in Roraima and Amazonas, including the establishment of a field hospital in Boa Vista (Area of Protection and Care – APC),

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<sup>26</sup> Barretto, 2020

<sup>27</sup> Vilela, 2020c

<sup>28</sup> Vilela, 2020b

<sup>29</sup> *Brazil: Bolsonaro Sabotages Anti-Covid-19 Efforts*, 2020

with the capacity to host up to 2,200 Venezuelans and host community members. Additional isolation facilities are also being established in the city of Manaus.<sup>30</sup>

Nonetheless, the outbreak of the virus has exacerbated the already vulnerable health position of the migrant population.<sup>31</sup> Especially when one takes into account that the region in which most migrants from Venezuela reside has been hit exceptionally hard by the Corona virus.<sup>32</sup> This is furthered by the fact that many of the indigenous people, of which many are a part of this group, are amongst the most vulnerable.<sup>33</sup> Once again leading to questions whether the measures are sufficient and whether more ought to be done.

In the end, however, it appears, based on the governmental narrative, that the threat emanates from the virus, not necessarily the migrants. Further mention of the role of migrants, and migration in potential spread of the virus remains de-securitized. In conclusion, despite some measures taken by the humanitarian operation to deal with Corona no new extraordinary measures that deal with the migrants seems to have been taken, nor have the migrants suddenly become securitized in the health domain. Acting as if business continues as usual is perhaps unsurprising as Bolsonaro is famously a non-believer of the threat of the Corona virus.

#### *4.2.3 Economic domain*

The securitization of the economic domain when it comes to Venezuelan migrants in Brazil is an interesting case. It is argued that this does constitute a securitization process. Instead it can potentially be that this rather constitutes a de-securitizing process. Although even this is difficult to argue, due to the reporting done on the economic domain in the framing processes of the Venezuelan migrants. The projects that have been created seemed to play the Covid-19 pandemic as being inconsequential. For example, there are reports by the Brazilian government on projects for employment and projects to make people more employable and to keep the migrants occupied during this crisis.<sup>34</sup> One might argue that this falls more under the purview of framing than actual policy. Since, it appears that large-scale policy changes have been withheld.

This is further complicated by Bolsonaro's constant attacks on economic support measures taken on lower governmental levels for those affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *Brazil Operation: Covid-19 Response June 2020*, 2020

<sup>31</sup> *ONZE COVID-19-RESPONS IN BRAZILIË: WE RICHTEN ONS OP DAKLOZEN EN MIGRANTEN IN SÃO PAULO EN BOA VISTA*, 2020; *Indigenous Refugees Battle Coronavirus in Latin America*, 2020; Hugueney & Irinaldo, 2020; *COVID-19 already reaches almost a third of indigenous groups*, 2020

<sup>32</sup> Hugueney & Irinaldo, 2020

<sup>33</sup> *Indigenous Refugees Battle Coronavirus in Latin America*, 2020; Hugueney & Irinaldo, 2020

<sup>34</sup> *Project promotes employment for Venezuelans in Brazil*, 2020; Boehm, 2020

<sup>35</sup> Vilela, 2020c

Although this is not necessarily a policy, this political discourse does seem to resonate in the policies that are undertaken, or not, by the Brazilian administration. In other words, the securitization of the economic domain for Venezuelan migrants in Brazil does not resemble an actual securitization process. It lacks creation of an existential threat. This is most likely done intentionally since the Brazilian administration does not want the Corona virus to be seen as an existential threat.

#### *4.2.4 Societal domain*

During the Covid-19 pandemic the societal domain of any potential securitization of Venezuelan migrants in Brazil is significantly contended. The Brazilian governmental reporting, insofar this exists, seems to focus on business as usual. There are reports on people obtaining refugee status<sup>36</sup> in this period and the continued internalization processes for migrants.<sup>37</sup> The only exception is that there is a significant number of Venezuelans returning home.<sup>38</sup> Proof that business is not continuing as usual can however be found in the active contention of this efforts. Groups of indigenous people, who are overrepresented in refugee populations, have taken it upon themselves to blockade roads leading to their communities<sup>39</sup> and there is some reporting on projects of efforts to foster empathy between the Brazilian population and migrant groups.<sup>40</sup> These actions countermand the idea that business can continue as usual and perhaps constitutes a separate securitization process that is taking place alongside the official government narrative.

What does all this mean for the securitization of the societal domain for the Venezuelan migrants in Brazil? At this point much is still unclear. However, if one attempts to cut through this confusion we find two distinct narratives emanating from two distinct places. Firstly, the Brazilian government that seems to act like things are continuing as normal, which is the precise opposite of a securitization process. Secondly, civil society organizations that argue that the Covid-19 pandemic is a major threat and requires taking extraordinary societal actions, such as disrupting movement, which potentially constitutes a separate process. Although the precise impact of this secondary securitization process on the securitization of the migrant population is unclear. Yet, it is worth including, because of the potential it indicates for securitization to occur on different levels and the active efforts it is undertaking to reframe migrants.

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<sup>36</sup> *Brazil has 43,000 people recognized as refugees, says Conare, 2020*

<sup>37</sup> Verdelio, 2020

<sup>38</sup> Parkin Daniels & Philips, 2020

<sup>39</sup> Rodrigues, 2020

<sup>40</sup> Scalzaretto, 2020



#### 4.2.5 Political domain

In the political domain we see a similar distinction as witnessed before. Because of the Brazilian administration's unwillingness to recognize the Covid-19 pandemic as a real crisis much of the policies seem aimed to downplay the importance of the virus. For example, it is striking that there is no further call for support for the migrants<sup>41</sup>, and as seen before, the focus politically remains on the granting of asylums<sup>42</sup> and the antagonization of the Venezuelan state.<sup>43</sup> The simultaneous push and pull of international organizations remains unchanged, with the Brazilian government seemingly using gestures to appease the international community.<sup>44</sup> Closing the borders in general appears to contradict efforts to downplay the importance of the Covid-19 pandemic.<sup>45</sup> In the end, the securitization in the political domain of the migrants in times of this pandemic appears to be somewhat of a mixed bag. It appears that the aim is to continue with previously established processes, which were already complex, potentially in an effort to play that business continues as usual.

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<sup>41</sup> *Indigenous Refugees Battle Coronavirus in Latin America*, 2020

<sup>42</sup> *Brazil has 43,000 people recognized as refugees, says Conare*, 2020

<sup>43</sup> Vilela, 2020c

<sup>44</sup> *To Fight COVID-19, UNFPA Brazil Delivers Dignity Kits to Migrant and Refugee People in Roraima*,

2020

<sup>45</sup> Perobelli, 2020; Vilela, 2020b

### **4.3 The change in securitization**

#### *4.3.1 Military domain*

The differences between the processes of securitization of Venezuela (and migration from there) over the two phases is only found in lessened direct attention coming from the military and government from the military aspect of the humanitarian operation. The securitization remains primarily the same; the Venezuelan state still remains the enemy, and the military remains responsible for executing the extraordinary measures required to take care of the migrants. Diminished attention is reflected in the amount of sources that deal with this military aspect, only 3 as opposed to 6. Making it possible to argue that although the role of the military has not been changed between the two phases, the attention given to the military aspect has diminished.

#### *4.3.2 Health domain*

Logically when exploring the interaction between different securitizations, one of which being a global pandemic, one expects major change in the health domain. However, the securitization for the migrants has seemingly been less affected than one might expect. The focus on this domain has shifted, however, this appears to only have occurred in NGO sources, which reported more often on this domain than before, six sources as opposed to three. Whereas, the Brazilian government had too few sources to adequately address potential change over both phases; one as opposed to none. Furthermore, although some measures have been taken, securitization of both the virus and the migrants remains lacking in this domain. On a humanitarian scale it has become visible that the vulnerable position of the migrants has worsened. In the end, the change in securitization is minimal, since the government hardly securitizes this domain at all when it comes to the Venezuelan migrant population.

#### *4.3.3 Economic domain*

The role of the economic domain in the securitization of Venezuelan migrants shifted significantly over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic. Whereas beforehand the economic domain seemed to center around combating illegality and to a certain extent finding vocations for the migrants. In the times of the Covid-19 pandemic the economic domain mainly seems used to downplay the importance of any securitization for the Corona virus. This is exemplified by the fact that the main reporting on the subject focuses on projects to keep Venezuelan migrants working, or focuses on how these refugee groups find new ways to work despite the

virus. One could potentially argue that the economic concerns of the Brazilian administration seemingly outweigh the economic concerns of the Venezuelan migrants in general in both scenarios. Supported by the fact that this administrations' focus has always been on the importance of free markets and economic growth. As far as changes go however, the economic securitization of migrants has been somewhat turned on its head over the course of the crisis. Instead of a focus on illegality there now is a focus on innovation efforts from the migrants, which can be considered a breakdown of the existing securitization.

#### *4.3.4 Societal domain*

When it comes to the societal domain of the securitization of Venezuelan migrants in Brazil there has been some change over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic. Most significantly, this change has occurred in the sense that securitization narratives have become a lot more contentious. As the Brazilian government attempts to present the securitization as business as usual. This has increasingly come under fire from other organizations. In particular, indigenous populations that have taken matters into their own hands. They have proven willing to take the extraordinary measures that are required to combat the virus that the Brazilian administration has been unwilling to take. It is interesting to note that this potentially results in a less intense securitization of the Venezuelan migrants. Since in the new efforts to pretend normalcy the focus seems to shift away from the migrants and onto the Corona virus. This also means that the focus has shifted away from the wellbeing of the migrants, which was one of the commendable aspects of the Brazilian policy approach.

#### *4.3.5 Political domain*

The changes in the securitization in the political domain of the Venezuelan migrants in Brazil are complicated. However, most notable is a sudden lack of focus on the international community overall. It appears that as the Brazilian government has grown more divided attention might be focused on internal issues. So what is the threat? On a political level this is hard to decide, because in some areas business has continued as normal, with a focus on the Venezuelan state, and threats to national sovereignty as the major threats. However, the presence of the virus is undeniable in the current execution of the securitization.

Although many of the elements remain the same and the landscape remains extremely polarized the main change is where this polarization is taking place. At least, that is the way it seems from the available sources that deal with the Venezuelan migrants. At first, the

polarization seemed to be located between the international community and the Brazilian administration. Currently the focus seems to have shifted as the polarization seems to be centered within the country itself. This does not mean that the previous securitization efforts have been neglected. The simultaneous push and pull towards the international community still remains. However, the focus has shifted and there seems to be a larger focus on internal affairs.

What does this mean for the change in securitization of Venezuelan migrants in Brazil? Although this is somewhat unclear, since the situation is rather muddled. It is argued that this mainly constitutes a momentary shift in attention that hardly affects the pre-existing securitization narrative overall. This means that both the Venezuelan state and general perceived threats to the sovereignty of Brazil are still considered the main threats.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

Before the Covid-19 pandemic migrant securitization in Brazil appeared to be centered around a proxy securitization of the Venezuelan state. In this securitization it is argued that the Venezuelan state is a threat, but the migrants themselves seem relatively absent in the governmental narrative of security. However, some hints towards the opposite do exist. During the Covid-19 pandemic the securitization of the migrant population in Brazil appears to exhibit only relatively minor changes. For a large part it has become more unclear, with increased contestation and a governmental narrative that appears to be centered around continuing as before. The change and its theoretical implications shall be addressed more in-depth in the concluding chapter.



## Chapter 5 - Securitizing Venezuelan migrants in Colombia

The following section explores the securitization of Venezuelan migrants in Colombia before and during the Covid-19 pandemic one domain at a time. Sources utilized in this section have mostly come from the *Migración Colombia* agency, which deals with migration into Colombia, and a selection of news sources. These news items were almost entirely sourced from *El Tiempo*, the largest newspaper in the country. Therefore, it might be considered an important element in any framing and securitization efforts undertaken in Colombia. Although the newspaper is directly linked to Duque's predecessor, the Santos family owns the newspaper, the newspaper appears to be favorable, or at least neutral, towards Duque.<sup>46</sup> He has published several columns with them before becoming president for example.<sup>47</sup> In other words, it is a traditionally government-leaning newspaper, historically though, it does follow a different political line than Duque does. Furthermore, these news items are mainly used to discuss particular securitization processes as they provide additional information. A small selection of other sources were also utilized, these vary from securitization acts directly attributable to the president, information from NGOs, or additional news sources.

### 5.1 Before the Covid-19 pandemic

#### 5.1.1 Military domain

The military domain of the securitization of Venezuelan migrants in Colombia can be best characterized as an extension of Colombia's own pre-existing problems. In some border regions there is significant rebel activity.<sup>48</sup> These rebel groups attempt to recruit as many people as possible, this includes (forcibly) recruiting migrants.<sup>49</sup> This might have significant consequences for the framing of these migrants. For example, they could be construed to be aiding the rebel groups. However, the Colombian administration recognizes the vulnerable position that the migrants find themselves in, they are in that sense under threat from the rebels as well.<sup>50</sup> Instead of creating a narrative in which the migrants are a threat, because of their potential for joining rebel groups, the government appears to focus on a narrative in which the rebel groups pose a threat to the migrants as well as the country. *El Tiempo* has an article

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<sup>46</sup> *El Tiempo*, n.d.

<sup>47</sup> Wallenfeldt, 2020

<sup>48</sup> Duque, 2020; *ELN is a 'threat to the stability in the region'*, 2020

<sup>49</sup> *ELN is a 'threat to the stability in the region'*, 2020; Quintero Ceron, 2020; Gomez Maseri, 2020a

<sup>50</sup> Quintero Ceron, 2020

extensively reporting on the ways in which the rebel groups pose precisely this threat, and the ways in which the Colombian military, customs and local authorities attempt to combat this.<sup>51</sup>

It appears that the securitization encountered here might be one in which the migrants are actually the ones under threat. The threat they face is recruitment by rebel organizations. This would constitute a more positive approach than most traditional securitizations. It appears that although the reporting is done by the news media, the policies that are covered are largely governmental policies. Therefore, it is argued that the Colombian government is largely responsible for this securitization process.

### *5.1.2 Health domain*

When it comes to the health domain of the securitization of Venezuelan migrants in Colombia the government once again paints the migrants to be the ones under threat. Overall the Colombian government enabled migrants to make use of their health system. However, only to the extent that they are able to provide for them without disenfranchising its citizens.<sup>52</sup> This means they opened the system to Venezuelans in need of emergency services.<sup>53</sup> Most of the other work has been done by international NGOs.<sup>54</sup> These speak of deteriorating health conditions for many and the problems that come with migrants entering the country illegally.<sup>55</sup> One might argue that caring for the migrants can be done because they are seen as a threat by the government. For example, in order to avoid infectious disease spread. However, it is argued that this is very unlikely as this does not appear to feature in the uncovered narratives here. This does not necessarily discount this entirely. Nonetheless, it does make the explanation uncovered in the previous domain, the migrants are being threatened and need extraordinary measures to be taken care of, significantly more applicable.

### *5.1.3 Economic domain*

Once again when looking at the economic domain of the securitization of Venezuelan migrants in Colombia we see that according to the government it is again migrants that are the

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<sup>51</sup> Quintero Ceron, 2020

<sup>52</sup> *Venezuelans in Colombia: An Unattended Crisis*, 2019; *The Uncertain Lives of Venezuelan Migrants on the Colombian Border*, 2019; *National Government Launches Package Of Measures For Regularization Of Venezuelan Citizens*, 2020

<sup>53</sup> *Venezuelans in Colombia: An Unattended Crisis*, 2019; *The Uncertain Lives of Venezuelan Migrants on the Colombian Border*, 2019

<sup>54</sup> *Venezuelans in Colombia: An Unattended Crisis*, 2019; *The Uncertain Lives of Venezuelan Migrants on the Colombian Border*, 2019

<sup>55</sup> Quintero Ceron, 2020

ones under threat, not necessarily the Colombian economy. In fact, one Colombian official publicly expressed their belief that the Venezuelan migrants might provide a valuable addition to the Colombian workforce.<sup>56</sup> This is also formalized by the policies of the Colombian government in which there is a support system that allows them to legally work with easily gained permits.<sup>57</sup> Through this policy the aim is to avoid people working in illegality or in informal economies and being dependent on day to day incomes.<sup>58</sup> This positive approach is argued to; ‘not only seek to maintain the line of aid to the Venezuelan people implemented by the National Government, but also to guarantee order and security throughout the region.’<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, the migrants often still find themselves in vulnerable economic positions.<sup>60</sup> The Colombian migration agency recognizes that many Venezuelan migrants work in order to send remittances back to Venezuela.<sup>61</sup> This issue might provide a foundation for securitization. Instead the Colombian migration agency, Colombian economic policy and Colombian news seem largely focused on, once again, focusing on the well-being of the Venezuelan migrants. It is argued that, the extraordinary measures that have been taken on an economic level (the PEP),<sup>62</sup> are aimed at securitizing the well-being of Venezuelans and avoiding situations in which migrants are unable to make a living.

#### *5.1.4 Societal domain*

When it comes to the societal domain of the securitization of Venezuelan migrants in Colombia things get a little bit more complicated than in the previous domains. Although, the securitization of migrants as the ones being threatened is still the primary securitization, there are other elements at play. Most notable is a growing fear of the Venezuelan migrants in general.<sup>63</sup> This xenophobia is exhibited throughout the country and occasionally flares up.

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<sup>56</sup> Norman, 2019

<sup>57</sup> *National Government Launches Package Of Measures For Regularization Of Venezuelan Citizens*, 2020

<sup>58</sup> Ajiaco, 2020

<sup>59</sup> *National Government Launches Package Of Measures For Regularization Of Venezuelan Citizens*, 2020

<sup>60</sup> *ELN is a ‘threat to the stability in the region’*, 2020; Quintero Ceron, 2020; Ajiaco, 2020; Bohorquez, 2020

<sup>61</sup> *More Than 200 Thousand People Have Crossed The Border Between Colombia And Venezuela In The Last 72 Hours*, 2020

<sup>62</sup> *National Government Launches Package Of Measures For Regularization Of Venezuelan Citizens*, 2020

<sup>63</sup> *Migration Colombia Rejects Threats against Venezuelans in Bucaramanga*, 2019; Ajiaco, 2020; *Venezuelan musicians denounce xenophobia of police officer*, 2020; *After expulsion of 59 Venezuelans, they ask to avoid xenophobia*, 2019



There have been numerous crimes that target Venezuelan migrants.<sup>64</sup> Despite consistently arguing against xenophobia Migracion Colombia expels people, including Venezuelans, very publicly when they are apprehended for committing crimes.<sup>65</sup> This might be partially responsible for the creation of a political discourse in which these Venezuelan migrants are seen as potential criminals. Instead of expelling migrants at this point it might be better to demonstrate how these people might become valuable assets to Colombian society.

This is what the measures for regularization attempt to do.<sup>66</sup> Although they are not always successful these measures managed to create a situation in which about half of all Venezuelan migrants is documented.<sup>67</sup> This is a significant amount especially when compared to other countries where this fraction is significantly smaller. For example, Curacao, which is admittedly an extreme case, has seemingly no real documented Venezuelan migrants. Movements against xenophobia are also seen on a local level. For example, one report speaks of local integration practices because a large portion of the people that cross the border there do so illegally avoiding the normal border crossings.<sup>68</sup> It is also noticeable that in some of the publications about the Venezuelan migrants there is a call upon brotherhood.<sup>69</sup> Arguably, this is an indication of the success of the securitization of the well-being of the Venezuelan migrants.

To sum up, it appears that Venezuelan migrants are primarily seen by the government narrative in Colombia as victims and as potential people under threat, not as a threat themselves. Crucially this is echoed by parts of the Colombian population that have started up their own programs as well. However, it must be noted that there is significant movement against this securitization. The reported xenophobia demonstrates that this securitization does not go uncontested.

### *5.1.5 Political domain*

The political domain of securitization of Venezuelan migrants is best exemplified by Colombian official's willingness to ask for outside help. The Colombian government is unable to fund the campaign to care for the Venezuelan migrants, unsurprising considering the enormous amount of people that have entered the country.<sup>70</sup> However, this has meant multiple

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<sup>64</sup> Bohorquez, 2020; Gomez Maseri, 2020a

<sup>65</sup> *Colombia Migration Hard Strike Against Crime In Bogotá And Cundinamarca*, 2020; 127

<sup>66</sup> *Colombia Migration Hard Strike Against Crime In Bogotá And Cundinamarca*, 2020; Ajiaco, 2020

<sup>67</sup> *More Than 1 Million 825 Thousand Venezuelans Would Be Filed In Colombia*, 2020

<sup>68</sup> Quintero Ceron, 2020

<sup>69</sup> *Migration Colombia Rejects Threats against Venezuelans in Bucaramanga*, 2019

<sup>70</sup> Ajiaco, 2020

instances of top political members having to publicly ask for more international aid to be able to take care of the Venezuelan migrants.<sup>71</sup> It appears that on an international level the well-being of Venezuelan migrants might be at the top of the agenda once again.

However, it ought to be noted that the political domain of the securitization of Venezuelan migrants is further characterized by the distinction between what the Colombian government wishes to accomplish, and what it is actually able to accomplish. Migracion Colombia projects to be under control of the migration processes. However, reports demonstrate not only growing xenophobia<sup>72</sup>, but also the tenuous hold of Colombian authorities over particular areas. In one instance, protesters blocked a runway to avoid the arrival of 59 Venezuelan citizens that were being deported.<sup>73</sup> Additionally, control over certain border areas is disputed by rebels<sup>74</sup> and an attempted border closure has had no effect.<sup>75</sup> The same applies for the role of the international community in Colombia when dealing with the Venezuelan migrants. Although the Colombian government is very eager and open to the international community being included in the process, the international community might prove unwilling to provide sufficient support for the Venezuelan migrants.<sup>76</sup>

In the end, this gap between what the government says it will accomplish, and what it actually manages to achieve in this domain is likely to be detrimental to the positive framing, and the extraordinary measures as a result, of the Venezuelan migrants. However, it is argued that even within the political domain the Colombian government seemingly argues that the migrants are the ones being threatened by exigent circumstances which requires extraordinary help from the international community.

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<sup>71</sup> Alsema, 2019; Gomez Maseri, 2020b; *ELN is a 'threat to the stability in the region'*, 2020

<sup>72</sup> *Venezuelan musicians denounce xenophobia of police officer*, 2020

<sup>73</sup> *The Expulsion of 59 Venezuelan Citizens*, 2019

<sup>74</sup> Gomez Maseri, 2020a

<sup>75</sup> Quintero Ceron, 2020

<sup>76</sup> *Venezuelans in Colombia: An Unattended Crisis*, 2019

## 5.2 During the Covid-19 pandemic

### 5.2.1 Military domain

The military domain of the securitization of Venezuelan migrants in Colombia during the Covid-19 pandemic centers largely around the militarization of the borders as these were closed.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, these border regions are still often contested regions, indicating that the military presence is even more active.<sup>78</sup> For migrants this means that there are now only two official corridors into Venezuela and no official ways of getting into Colombia.<sup>79</sup> This in turn means that these Venezuelans are even more likely to fall into illegality when they cross the border (illegally). However, besides the border closure, there seems to be no special military aspect to the securitization during the Covid-19 pandemic for the migrants from Venezuela. Therefore, it is argued that this policy places the virus as the threat, that this is seen as an attempt to securitize the health of the Colombian population, and the Venezuelan migrants in the country by extension. This actually means that besides the supposed impossibility of movement the securitization of migrants in a military domain seemingly plays no real part.

### 5.2.2 Health domain

In order to explore the health domain for securitization of Venezuelan migrants during the Covid-19 pandemic it is vital to know that the Colombian government attempts to keep the system available to Venezuelan migrants during times of extreme pressure on this system.<sup>80</sup> Although this is attempted, in reality this may not be successful since the Colombian health system was already capable of only delivering emergency services to Venezuelan migrants. Therefore, it is argued in *El Tiempo* that the health system is in significant need of reinforcement.<sup>81</sup> The same goes for the international community and the health system set up by international NGOs. Despite being instrumental in caring for the Venezuelan migrants, the system is being taxed to the maximum of its capabilities. Additionally, it is being asked to do things it was not meant to do such as fighting misinformation.<sup>82</sup>

What does this mean for the securitization of Venezuelan migrants during this period? Ironically, despite the actions undertaken to care for the migrants, no real framing of this

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<sup>77</sup> Baddour, 2020; *Closing Of The Border With Venezuela One Of The New Measures To Contain The Coronavirus*, 2020; Melgarejo, 2020; *Migration Colombia Is Allowed To Inform That:*, 2020

<sup>78</sup> *Covid-19 Forces Migrants and Refugees Back to Crisis-Ridden Venezuela*, 2020

<sup>79</sup> *New Restrictions In Humanitarian Corridors By Venezuela*, 2020

<sup>80</sup> *How the coronavirus has affected migration in Colombia*, 2020; Ruiz Hurtado, 2020

<sup>81</sup> Gonzalez Laya & Borrell, 2020

<sup>82</sup> *Disinformation Is One of the Main Obstacles to Face COVID-19 in Colombia*, 2020

appears to be done by the government. It is however notable that there is no securitization of the migrants occurring either. The head of the Colombian migration agency even actively argued against seeing the migrant population as a potential health hazard in times of the Covid-19 pandemic.<sup>83</sup>

### 5.2.3 Economic domain

The economic domain of security narratives of Venezuelan migrants in Colombia during the Covid-19 pandemic can best be characterized as an effort to incorporate both security issues into a single policy. Before delving into what this statement means, one needs to look at the economic policies of the Colombian government during their securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic. In principle the financial support given to the Colombian population also extends to Venezuelans with proper documentation and formal jobs. However, this is not applicable to most Venezuelan migrants, as these tend to work informally, live in hotels that they pay daily from which they are evicted easily, and attempt to send as much money back to Venezuela as possible, leaving them with no cash on hand. This means that even those working legally, but informally may now have to turn to illegal means of sustaining themselves.<sup>84</sup> Additionally, some policies that were put in place to safeguard the (migrant) population that works informally have proven ineffective. A policy that does not allow for the eviction of anybody during times of quarantine was put in place.<sup>85</sup> Although these policies have placed a moratorium on evictions throughout the country, there are still reports of evictions taking place.<sup>86</sup>

It might be argued that in making these policies, that are supposed to incorporate the migrant population into the measures taken to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic, the Colombian government seems to want to create a single securitization narrative of the pandemic that applies to both its own population and the migrants. Instead of the migrants being threatened by exigent circumstances now both groups are under threat from a single source. This threat requires extraordinary measures to combat its potentially devastating consequence, which apply to both groups. However, it seems that the Colombian government does not entirely succeed in creating

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<sup>83</sup> *'Thinking Of The Venezuelans As Biological Weapons Is A Miserable Concept'*; Director Of Migration Colombia, 2020

<sup>84</sup> Panayotatos & Schmidtke, 2020; Alsema, 2020; *Covid-19 Forces Migrants and Refugees Back to Crisis-Ridden Venezuela*, 2020; *How the coronavirus has affected migration in Colombia*, 2020; Ruiz Hurtado, 2020; *Migrants at the time of the coronavirus in Bogotá, is a crisis looming?*, 2020

<sup>85</sup> Panayotatos & Schmidtke, 2020; *Migrants at the time of the coronavirus in Bogotá, is a crisis looming?*, 2020

<sup>86</sup> Panayotatos & Schmidtke, 2020; *How the coronavirus has affected migration in Colombia*, 2020; *Migrants at the time of the coronavirus in Bogotá, is a crisis looming?*, 2020

a completely coherent policy, nor, by extension, do they succeed in creating the security narrative they seemed to aim for.

#### 5.2.4 Societal domain

When discussing the societal domain of the securitization of the Venezuelan migrants in Colombia one has to talk about unintended consequences. These unintended consequences consist of increased contestation of the security narrative that the government aimed to achieve. What this means is that on a societal level and partly on a governmental level the policies of openness are met with xenophobia by the general population.

The unintended consequences of the Colombian policy largely comes down to the inability of many Venezuelan migrants to comply with the quarantine measures.<sup>87</sup> As mentioned in the economic domain many migrants work in informal economies. This whole group does not benefit from the policies put in place by the Colombian government to combat lost income due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This has led to an increasing criminalization of Venezuelan migrants, they are unable to comply with quarantine measures, which is illegal.<sup>88</sup> This illegal behavior strengthens the pre-existing notion that these migrants could potentially be responsible for criminal activities. What this means is that the Venezuelan migrants are more often portrayed as potential criminals than before. Muñoz who leads the Colombian states efforts to deal with the socioeconomic impact of the migration from Venezuela explicitly stated that they are ‘concerned about the increase in xenophobia.’<sup>89</sup> In other words, the policies of the government that are aimed at protecting Colombian citizens and Venezuelan migrants are at the same time forcing many migrants into illegality.

This led to a substantial increase in levels of xenophobia over the past months.<sup>90</sup> This xenophobia takes many different shapes and forms; Venezuelan migrants might be refused certain services or even potential jobs. Most striking is the case of a mayor of one of the major cities in Colombia denying care to Venezuelan migrants, arguing that there were not enough

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<sup>87</sup> Alsema, 2020; Baddour, 2020; Collins, 2020; *Migration Colombia Is Allowed To Inform That*, 2020; 61; *How the coronavirus has affected migration in Colombia*, 2020; Ruiz Hurtado, 2020; *Migrants at the time of the coronavirus in Bogotá, is a crisis looming?*, 2020

<sup>88</sup> ‘*We are concerned about the increase in xenophobia*’: Felipe Muñoz, 2020; *Migrants resist in the middle of the pandemic*, 2020; *Venezuelan gangs already lead micro-trafficking and prostitution in Bogotá*, 2020; *This is how three Venezuelan gangs in Colombia operate*, 2020

<sup>89</sup> ‘*We are concerned about the increase in xenophobia*’: Felipe Muñoz, 2020

<sup>90</sup> Panayotatos & Schmidtke, 2020; Grattan, 2020; Basset, 2020; Ruiz Hurtado, 2020; ‘*We are concerned about the increase in xenophobia*’: Felipe Muñoz, 2020; *Migrants resist in the middle of the pandemic*, 2020; *Mayor’s statement on migrants would be discriminatory*, 2020; 120

resources to take care of them.<sup>91</sup> This created several outcries against xenophobia.<sup>92</sup> Such acts of xenophobia are still indicative of the fact that the policies, which were seemingly intended as a coverall response have had as an unintended consequence that they have furthered the decrease in effectiveness of the previously existing positive securitization effort.

It is important to note that the Colombian government's political discourse still focuses on humanizing the Venezuelan migrants; even invoking brotherhood.<sup>93</sup> This indicates that the Colombian government actively attempts to maintain their previous positive securitization of the Venezuelan migrant population but that their policies are failing to uphold this.

All in all, the societal domain of the securitization of migrants from Venezuela and Colombia is a complex affair. The governmental securitization seems to focus on creating policies that take care of the Venezuelan migrants. However, they are currently not succeeding. This is attested by a growing level of xenophobia which has permeated into lower governmental levels as well. It is argued that the wellbeing and the rights of the Venezuelan migrants are being securitized by the Colombian government through their policies and framing. However this is not successful. Instead what one sees is a growing level of concern and xenophobia from the Colombian population. It is argued that this is, in large part, due to the unintended consequences of their policies.

#### *5.2.5 Political domain*

On a political level the way that is dealt with the Venezuelan migrants during the times of the Covid-19 pandemic is rather straightforward. High level officials have taken this opportunity to ask for more funding for their efforts to take care of the Venezuelan migrants and organized an urgent conference to further this end.<sup>94</sup> On an international level there is still much debate about whether the international community is willing to provide and actually deliver sufficient support.<sup>95</sup> Although some countries have pledged funds to the Venezuelan

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<sup>91</sup> *Migrants resist in the middle of the pandemic*, 2020; *Mayor's statement on migrants would be discriminatory*, 2020

<sup>92</sup> *More Than 1 Million 825 Thousand Venezuelans Would Be Filed In Colombia*, 2020; Ruiz Hurtado, 2020; *'We are concerned about the increase in xenophobia': Felipe Muñoz*, 2020; *Mayor's statement on migrants would be discriminatory*, 2020

<sup>93</sup> Millan, 2020; Gonzalez Laya & Borrell, 2020; *More Than 1 Million 825 Thousand Venezuelans Would Be Filed In Colombia*, 2020; *Duque warns of risk for region due to coronavirus in Venezuela*, 2020; *Mayor's statement on migrants would be discriminatory*, 2020

<sup>94</sup> *Duque warns of risk for region due to coronavirus in Venezuela*, 2020

<sup>95</sup> Panayotatos & Schmidtke, 2020; *Covid-19 Forces Migrants and Refugees Back to Crisis-Ridden Venezuela*, 2020; Gonzalez Laya & Borrell, 2020; Baddour, 2020

migrants these have not been forthcoming.<sup>96</sup> However, the aim of securitization in the political domain of the Venezuelan migrants seems to have been focused on the pre-existing positive securitization, in which the migrants are under threat, which requires urgent help from the international community.

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<sup>96</sup> *Migration Colombia Expelled 5 Venezuelan Citizens Who In The Middle Of The Isolation Measure Were Found On The Street Consuming Alcoholic Beverages And Causing Damage To Property, 2020*

### **5.3 The change in securitization**

#### *5.3.1 Military domain*

What change has occurred in the military domain of the securitization of the Venezuelan migrants in Colombia over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic? The focus has seemingly shifted to border control, over one in which Venezuelan migrants were in need of protecting. However, the needs and rights of the Venezuelan migrants are still respected in the policies that are being implemented, the crossings into Venezuela being the most important example. Therefore, it is argued that although the realities within which the security narrative is placed has changed the security narrative itself has not.

#### *5.3.2 Health domain*

There seems to be very little change in the actual securitization in the health domain for the Venezuelan migrants. As indicated in both time frames the wellbeing of the Venezuelan migrants in Colombia seems to be at the forefront. The health system has remained as open to Venezuelan migrants as possible without compromising the needs of the Colombian population. It is however interesting to note that as the system is being over asked reality seems to catch up with these policies. Meaning that pre-existing inadequacy's have become exacerbated and now pose even larger problems for the Venezuelan migrant population.

#### *5.3.3 Economic domain*

The positive securitization of the Venezuelan migrants in the economic domain has not remained unaffected by the Covid-19 pandemic. This change is founded in the pre-existing security narrative, in which the migrants are the ones being threatened by exigent circumstances. This was then adapted to include the Covid-19 pandemic as well, or vice versa. Primarily this change can be found in the fact that the government attempted to incorporate those migrants working legally and with proper documentation into their overall policy. However, this policy was proven ineffective for many other migrants, which fell outside the purview of the protection granted by the Colombian government in their Covid-19 pandemic measures. Meaning that an even larger portion of the Colombian population has been drawn into illegality or is forced to work illegally. These byproducts of the policies of the Colombian government are potentially detrimental to their attempt at continuing the pre-existing security narrative in this domain.



#### *5.3.4 Societal domain*

Dealing with the societal domain of the securitization of the Venezuelan migrants in Colombia throughout the Covid-19 pandemic reveals that unintended consequences can significantly impact security narratives. The security narrative securitizes the safety of the Venezuelan migrants. This seems to not have changed all that much. Instead the change seems to be located partially in the unintended consequences of their policies. As times have grown more difficult for the Colombian population began to see the Venezuelan migrants as a potential threat more and more. Despite governmental efforts to avoid this. One likely cause is that as the policies created by the Colombian government have caused many migrants to move towards illegality xenophobia has been on the rise. This growing xenophobia has had many effects for both groups. However, the Colombian government still makes many active moves against xenophobia; calling upon Brotherhood, maintaining their right to migrate and humanizes the Venezuelan migrants. It is however the level of success of this securitization that has changed.

#### *5.3.5 Political domain*

In the political domain of the securitization that deals with the Venezuelan migrants in Colombia not much has changed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The only potentially significant event in this domain was a conference that aimed to raise funds for the care of the Venezuelan migrants in Colombia. Such conferences have been organized before. However, the urgency associated with this conference was new. Therefore, it is argued that no change occurred in the narrative itself. But some change has occurred in the urgency associated with this domain.

### **5.4 Conclusion**

Before the Covid-19 pandemic the securitization of migration in Colombia was centered around a very positive narrative. It securitized the wellbeing of the Venezuelan migrants, meaning that extraordinary measures were being taken to take care of them. At the Covid-19 pandemic reared its head the Colombian government still attempted to maintain its previous narrative. Even attempting to incorporate both narratives into a single one. However, due to some of unintended consequences of ineffective policies to achieve this goal this may have had the opposite effect. Nevertheless, the securitization narrative created by the Colombian government is centered on the wellbeing of the Venezuelan migrants.

## **Chapter 6 – Securitizing Venezuelan migrants in Curacao**

The securitization in Curacao follows an entirely different logic than those previously encountered. By and large, the security narrative dealing with these migrants can be best characterized as a policy of denial. It is argued that this part of a securitization narrative, the Curacao government has actively chosen to ignore the migrants and their rights. This denial is coupled to a small number of sources being available for public scrutiny. This means that data has been sourced from more diverse source material than the other data. With a significant focus on news items that report on the securitization and its processes. Additionally, the little data that is made available by the Curacao government is utilized. Finally, there is also room for further information provided by NGOs and civil society. The sources themselves are available in an appendix.

### **6.1 Before the Covid-19 pandemic**

#### *6.1.1 Military domain*

There is a distinct military aspect to the securitization of Venezuelan migrants on Curacao. Because of a lack of sources that are attributable to the Curacao government it is necessary to reverse the usual workflow for exploring securitization. Normally, one deals with the speech-acts and then explores in which ways the policies implemented line up with these acts. For the current domain it is necessary to reverse engineer from the implemented policies.

The policies that are in place involve the (Dutch) military playing a part in the detention of these migrants prior to deportation and occasionally in arresting migrants.<sup>97</sup> These measures were likely taken by the Curacao government because of the potential dangers these migrants pose. This is indicative of a security narrative in which the migrants need to be separated from the general population because of the (military) threat they pose.

What does this mean for the securitization of these migrants? Firstly, it indicates that the arrival of the migrants can be considered to be a danger to Curacao society. Secondly, the military role in the detention of these migrants indicates that these migrants are considered too dangerous for more regularized detention. These policies were put in place by the Curacao

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<sup>97</sup> Vivanco, 2018; *Asielzoekers op Curaçao*, 2019; *Nederlandse militairen helpen bij beveiliging Venezolanen op Curaçao*, 2019

government. This points towards a securitization narrative that places the Curacao society to be under threat from the arrival of Venezuelan migrants.

### *6.1.2 Health domain*

Hardly any securitization occurs in the health domain on Curacao. Only two of the used sources mention that a large influx of migrants would be detrimental to the health system.<sup>98</sup> Although it seems to be used very sparingly, it is a surprisingly simple securitization narrative. It places the health system under threat from migrants. Making it possible to argue this as a potential reason to take extraordinary measures to keep the migrants out of Curacao.

### *6.1.3 Economic domain*

The securitization of the Venezuelan migrants in the economic domain is similarly straightforward. The Curacao government argues that the economy cannot sustain a large influx of people, in part because of them already being in an economic downturn.<sup>99</sup> Arguing that the migrants that work without documentation are simply doing so illegally and ought to be deported.<sup>100</sup> Adding that most are not migrants but economic migrants looking to better their future.<sup>101</sup> In other words, it is the economy that is under threat from the influx of outsiders which perform illegal jobs for no other reason than their own personal gain. Meaning that extraordinary measures are necessary to exclude these people from their economy.

### *6.1.4 Societal domain*

In the societal domain of the securitization of Venezuelan migrants in Curacao the process appears to be rather straightforward. The reasoning appears to be that Venezuelan migrants arriving illegally have no place in Curacao society and need to be separated and deported. This means that they are detained in prison.<sup>102</sup> Through this they are actively criminalized. For example, VluchtelingenWerk (a Dutch organization that works for refugees) reported on the case of a migrant who had a UNHCR declaration of refugee status being detained in the prison before deportation. According to the Human Rights declaration this refugee status is sufficient to be granted asylum, Curacao is part of this declaration.<sup>103</sup> The

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<sup>98</sup> *Waarom wil/kan Curaçao de Venezuelanan geen tijdelijke opvang geven?*, n.d; Vivanco, 2018

<sup>99</sup> *Waarom wil/kan Curaçao de Venezuelanan geen tijdelijke opvang geven?*, n.d; Vivanco, 2018; 10

<sup>100</sup> Ebus, 2018; *Asielzoekers op Curaçao*, 2019

<sup>101</sup> Ebus, 2018; Vivanco, 2018

<sup>102</sup> 2, Ebus, 2018; Vivanco, 2018; 11

<sup>103</sup> *Asielzoekers op Curaçao*, 2019

argued criminalization is supplemented by the argument that the Curacao government is unable to care for these people.<sup>104</sup> This seemingly claims that even if they were not criminals, they would not be able to become part of society.

Unsurprisingly, the migrants feel unwelcome. To such an extent even that they are unwilling to ask for official asylum because of fear of deportation.<sup>105</sup> This fear seems to be well-founded, reports from NGOs indicate that there is no formal procedure through which migrants can claim asylum.<sup>106</sup> This is disputed by the Curacao government, however, this appears to be merely rhetoric, no documentation was provided in support of this.<sup>107</sup>

Furthermore, the existence of the migrants is not officially supported by the Curacao government, when looking at statistics of immigration, the number of immigrants arriving from Venezuela is placed at only 200 to 300 yearly between 2017 and 2019.<sup>108</sup> These numbers are disputed by most other estimates, which place 5,000 to 16,000 migrants on the island.<sup>109</sup> To sum up, the Curacao government securitizes the influx of Venezuelan migrants by policies that criminalize them, separate them from society, and through outright denial of their existence, and their rights. The supposed threat these migrants pose to society is that they would be a burden and that allowing them would constitute criminalizing Curacao society.

### 6.1.5 Political domain

The securitization of Venezuelan migrants in the political domain is a complicated affair. It is argued that the Curacao government seems to believe that recognizing the migration crisis would create a situation in which their political sovereignty would be threatened. This has led to two simultaneous processes. Firstly, the government has adopted a tactic which focuses on avoidance. It avoids addressing the situation surrounding Venezuelan migrants directly, denies the existence of a problem and avoids giving clear definitions.<sup>110</sup> The administration seems to wish to remain vague on the topic of the Venezuelan migrants. In one instance the government, comically enough, created a page on the governmental site that addresses how they define migrants and place no definition on there at all.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> *Waarom wil/kan Curaçao de Venezuelanen geen tijdelijke opvang geven?*, n.d; Vivanco, 2018

<sup>105</sup> Ebus, 2018

<sup>106</sup> Ebus, 2018; *Asielzoekers op Curaçao*, 2019; *Human Rights Caribbean: Curacao is putting pressure on Venezuelan migrants*, 2019; *Detained and Deported*, 2018

<sup>107</sup> Vivanco, 2018

<sup>108</sup> *Immigration by country of departure and sex*, 2014-2019

<sup>109</sup> Ebus, 2018; *Detained and Deported*, 2018

<sup>110</sup> *Wanneer noem je iemand een asielzoeker?*, n.d; Vivanco, 2018; *Blijft Curaçao Venezolanen terugsturen, ondanks de situatie daar?*, n.d

<sup>111</sup> *Wanneer noem je iemand een asielzoeker?*, n.d.

Secondly, the government seems focused on protection of their political sovereignty by denying international organizations access to the country. It told the UNHCR to leave the country and that they would take over the duties processing migrants that the agency fulfilled in 2017.<sup>112</sup> Although, to this date they have seemingly not taken over these duties.<sup>113</sup> Furthermore, the Curacao government adheres to a narrative which argues that their migration policies are their own business and that active removal strategies are forced by space issues on the island.<sup>114</sup>

All in all, the political domain shows the same trend as all the other domains when it comes to the Curacao securitization of Venezuelan migrants. There is a policy of denial of the issues at hand and placing their own political interests as being those under threat. It seems that recognition of a migration crisis, and through this the necessity for international aid, is the threat the migrants pose on a political arena. In other words, the recognition of the crisis would lose them credibility.

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<sup>112</sup> *Detained and Deported*, 2018

<sup>113</sup> Vivanco, 2018

<sup>114</sup> *Waarom wil/kan Curaçao de Venezuelanan geen tijdelijke opvang geven?*, n.d; *Blijft Curaçao Venezolanen terugsturen, ondanks de situatie daar?*, n.d

## 6.2 During Covid-19 pandemic

### 6.2.1 Military domain

During the Covid-19 pandemic the military domain of the securitization of Venezuelan migrants is, albeit rather straightforward, very powerful and at the forefront. There is significantly increased military vigilance both in the streets and on the seas.<sup>115</sup> The Coast Guard has been augmented with military technology and personnel to avoid Venezuelan boats reaching the shores of Curacao.<sup>116</sup> The increase in military vigilance is indicative of the fact that the Curacao administration securitizes the arrival of Venezuelan migrants within the military domain. In particular this is true for an increase in military presence on the island which is argued to be to combat crime.<sup>117</sup> Connecting this to the fact that the Curacao administration is often eager to criminalize Venezuelan migrants. This military presence in a non-military role to curb criminality can be suggested to be a new escalation in the securitization of the military domain.

### 6.2.2 Health domain

The securitization process as conducted by the Curacao government of the health domain of Venezuelan migrants during the Covid-19 pandemic is similarly straightforward as that encountered in the military domain. The government securitization seems to suggest a very classical securitization narrative. It argues that the migrants could potentially act as carriers of the virus and therefore should be kept off of the island and completely separate.<sup>118</sup> It ought to be noted that this narrative is contested by several local NGOs and individuals caring for the Venezuelan migrants. One individual even calls upon the government to grant the migrants refugee status so it will be possible to track and trace them in case they do carry the virus to Curacao.<sup>119</sup> Although the focus is on the governmental securitization processes, it is interesting to note that despite utilizing a powerful securitization narrative the governmental securitization of the health domain has seemingly become less convincing to its audience. As individual discontent over this framing seems to have gained increased traction. The governmental securitization of this domain is nonetheless clear. According to them the Venezuelan migrants

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<sup>115</sup> Drayer, 2020a; *Kustwacht blijft patrouilleren*, 2020, *Marine ondersteunt kustlijnbewaking*, 2020; *Extra militaire bijstand*, 2020; *Geen aanlandingen na militaire bijstand*, 2020

<sup>116</sup> *Dutch Military Installs Observation Posts on Curaçao*, 2020; *Drukke op zee vanuit Venezuela*, 2020

<sup>117</sup> Drayer, 2020a

<sup>118</sup> *Kustwacht blijft patrouilleren*, 2020; *Drukke op zee vanuit Venezuela*, 2020; *Marine ondersteunt kustlijnbewaking*, 2020; *Veel militairen voor grensbewaking*, 2020

<sup>119</sup> *Cordaid in actie voor Venezolaanse vluchtelingen*, 2020; Koek, 2020; Casimiri, 2020

pose a substantial health hazard to the Curacao population and extraordinary measures are required to avoid these.

### *6.2.3 Economic domain*

When it comes to the economic domain of the securitization of Venezuelan migrants in Curacao during the Covid-19 pandemic it is most striking that this is almost entirely neglected. There is some mention of Venezuelans being equally hit hard by the quarantine measures that have basically suspended economic activity.<sup>120</sup> However, no governmental sources were uncovered. Seemingly indicating that the economic well-being of the Venezuelan migrants is of no concern to this government.

### *6.2.4 Societal domain*

The societal domain of the securitization of Venezuelan migrants during the Covid-19 pandemic contains several interesting elements. On the one hand, certain elements of society have been actively contesting the securitization used by the Curacao government. This is visible in actions undertaken by local NGOs and individuals, particularly in their efforts of registering migrants through care.<sup>121</sup> Generally this is considered to be a task reserved for governmental organizations. In the case of Curacao it is also one that was very publicly claimed by the Curacao government after their 2017 expulsion of UNHCR.<sup>122</sup> Although no actions have since then been undertaken by the government to implement their system. These actions that circumvent the government are not reserved to NGOs, citizens weigh in as well. For example, an open letter was published which implored the government to take action. It argued that processing the Venezuelan migrants would also benefit track and trace efforts to contain potential spread of the Coronavirus.<sup>123</sup>

On the other hand, the government seems to maintain its regular stance when it comes to Curacao society and the Venezuelan migrants. The criminalization of migrants continues unabated.<sup>124</sup> The minister of Justice, whose ministry is in charge of legal status for migrants, was attributed as having stated unequivocally that they pose a threat to Curacao society in local news.<sup>125</sup> However, the policy of arresting, detaining and deporting large numbers of migrants

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<sup>120</sup> Drayer, 2020b

<sup>121</sup> *Cordaid in actie voor Venezolaanse vluchtelingen*, 2020; Koek, 2020

<sup>122</sup> *Detained and Deported*, 2018

<sup>123</sup> Casimiri, 2020

<sup>124</sup> *Politie arresteert Venezolaanse bende*, 2020; *Kustwacht blijft patrouilleren*, 2020

<sup>125</sup> *“Venezuela wil geen residenten terug”*, 2020

has become impossible due to the Covid-19 pandemic measures.<sup>126</sup> Although they are unable to arrest these migrants currently, they are notably excluded from legislation made for tourists, and legal migrants that grants extended stay due to the Covid-19 pandemic measures as well.<sup>127</sup>

Concluding, the Covid-19 pandemic measures have made the implementation of the measures that are part of the securitization nearly impossible. However, the government adheres to a securitization that casts the Venezuelan migrants as unwanted and a potential threat to society. The civil society and NGOs have become more vocal in their criticism of this securitization, in some cases even taking matters into their own hands. The securitization these groups create are less coherent: in some cases the well-being of the migrants is what is being threatened, in other cases it is the Curacao citizens' health that is threatened by undocumented migration.

#### *6.2.5 Political domain*

The securitization of the Venezuelan migrants during the Covid-19 pandemic on Curacao in the political domain comes with some complications as well. The government does not appear to actively securitize the migrants in this domain in this time period. However, several actors question the legitimacy of the actions of the Curacao government in this domain. The Netherlands has been critical, NGOs have been calling for support, individuals are questioning government policy and the Council for Justice has been critical.<sup>128</sup> In other words, in the political domain the securitization utilized by the Curacao government comes across criticism. However, the Curacao government seems to neglect to act in this domain during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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<sup>126</sup> *Illegale fruithandelaren aangehouden*, 2020; *Aliens Are Not Arrested*, 2020

<sup>127</sup> *Ministerie van Justitie Doet Tijdelijke Aanpassing Aan Verblijfsregels*, 2020

<sup>128</sup> 103, Koek, 2020; Casimiri, 2020; *RvR Caribisch Nederland over mensenhandel en -smokkel*, 2020



## **6.3 The change in securitization**

### *6.3.1 Military domain*

What has changed in the securitization in the military domain on Curacao throughout the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic? Change has primarily occurred in the role of both the Dutch and Curacao militaries. Although their role in controlling migration was already significant before the lockdown measures were put in place, during these measures the roles the military fulfilled became even more significant. As these roles increased in intensity, so did the securitization in the military domain of the migrants on Curacao. The simple fact of military involvement is indicative of the dangers that the Curacao government believes the Venezuelan migrants pose.

### *6.3.2 Health domain*

Change during the Covid-19 pandemic in the health domain of the securitization of migrants on Curacao takes place along two major lines. Firstly, the addition of another element to the reasoning why the migrants pose a potential risk to the physical wellbeing of Curacao citizens. This is the addition of Venezuelan migrants as potential carriers of the Corona virus which may bring new cases to the island. Secondly, contestation of this securitization has increased. As the situation has grown more dire there have been calls from NGOs and civilians to change the policies in regards to the Venezuelan migrants. To sum up, this means that as the government intensified their securitization in the health domain, by adapting it to the Covid-19 pandemic, more counter-narratives have emerged as well. Nevertheless, it is argued here that this constitutes an intensification of the securitization of the migration in general.

### *6.3.3 Economic domain*

Change in the economic domain of the securitization of Venezuelan migrants on Curacao throughout the Covid-19 pandemic is rather radical. The argumentation of migrants posing a threat to the economy seems to have been abandoned during the crisis. Instead the focus seems to have shifted to other domains. This is particularly striking since a large portion of the pre-existing securitization of migration seemed to hinge on the elements within the economic securitization. Although this securitization has been abandoned it has not been reversed, nor has it been de-escalated. Instead it is argued that this has simply been halted. Furthermore, the extraordinary measures to ensure economic wellbeing of Curacao citizens crucially do not include the migrants. Indicating once again that the economic concerns of the

Curacao population are of more significance than those of the migrants. This in turn reifies the belief that this ought not to be read as a de-securitizing move, but rather as neglect of this domain.

#### *6.3.4 Societal domain*

Change in the societal domain of the securitization of migrants on Curacao follows a similar trend to many other domains on Curacao. The government attempts to hang on to the previously created securitization under a new set of circumstances. This means that the seemingly straightforward securitization narrative created before the Covid-19 pandemic: which argued that Venezuelan migrants pose a substantial threat to Curacao society, has increasingly come to be disputed. Partially, because the implementation of the measures to arrest, detain and deport the migrants has become impossible. Furthermore, civil society and NGOs have become more vocal in their criticisms of this securitization narrative during the Covid-19 pandemic. The previously straightforward securitization has become increasingly muddled and ineffective. Therefore, this domain might show a small decrease in intensity of securitization, even though the securitization policies have, in theory, remained the same.

#### *6.3.5 Political domain*

The change in the securitization in the political domain follows the same trend as the societal domain. The government attempts to keep to the pre-existing securitization narrative, however, due to changes caused by the Covid-19 pandemic the securitization has become less effective. Although the outcome is similar, what has occurred is slightly different. In this case the Curacao government almost entirely neglects the political domain of the pre-existing domain. At the same time, some political pressure has been levied upon the Curacao government to implement changes in their policies. This however, has had no effects. This neglect is not entirely surprising when one considers the fact that the policy of the Curacao in this domain was already centered on denying the existence of the issues in general. It is argued that this neglect is not indicative of de-securitization, but rather of this particular element of the securitization becoming dormant.

## **6.4 Conclusion**

The securitization of migrants before the Covid-19 pandemic was focused on the argumentation that Venezuelan migrants were supposed to be dangerous because of their perceived criminality and the Curacao society inability to care for them. Over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic this has not been changed significantly. However, the focus did shift. The security narrative shifted to incorporate the potential risks of the Covid-19 virus. This is particularly visible in the military and health domains. In these domains the Curacao actively seemed to argue that the dangers posed by migrants were increased due to the global pandemic.

## **Chapter 7 - Changing securitizations**

This chapter works towards answering the main research question for the cases specifically at first, and overall in the end. In what ways are previously securitized immigration narratives affected when society is faced with a new securitization narrative? Or put differently, in what ways might securitization narratives affect each other? The aim is to determine informed correlation, causation can only be suggested as this would require a much more in-depth approach. Research was conducted by exploring the individual securitizations, per domain, and in two time frames in the previous chapter. For each case the changes per domain were also detailed. This chapter shall bring these changes together as a whole. Initially, this will be done on a per case basis. Afterwards, these changes per case shall be explored and discussed on the whole. This layered approach allows for the gradual introduction of new layers of abstraction in this analysis. This chapter concludes with an answer to the main research question, the implications of which shall be expanded upon in the discussion in the chapter that follows this one.

### **7.1 The change in Brazil**

Firstly, the military domain saw the securitization narrative shift away from this domain. Secondly, surprisingly enough the health domain did not see definitive change come from the government in the security narrative on migrants, nor a real securitization effort at all. Thirdly, securitization of the economic domain seemingly was lessened, or rather somewhat de-securitized as a result of the Bolsonaro administration's attempts to downplay the Covid-19 pandemic. Fourthly, the societal domain saw an effort to feign business as usual. It was argued that this might constitute a shift away from previous security narrative which focused on the well-being of the Venezuelan migrants. At the same time the governmental securitization of their society became more contested, indicating a less resonant securitization. Finally, the political domain hardly saw a significant shift in securitization overall. It was remarked however, that a momentary shift in attention was identifiable, from political securitization processes that were largely externally focused to ones that are more internally focused.

In what ways might one characterize these changes? The research suggests that the changes in the securitization narratives have been diverse. Firstly, there were shifts in emphasis between the domains. The military domain seems to have lost in importance. However, it is important to note that the military domain was primarily focused on the state Venezuela as an

adversary, not necessarily the migrants. Whereas change in the political domain seems to suggest a shift in attention as well.

Secondly, the intensity of the securitization in a few domains showed change. Interestingly enough, it is argued that the economic domain saw somewhat of a de-securitization as efforts to frame a 'business as usual' narrative resulted in migrants receiving a positive spotlight. Although on a policy level no change seems to have occurred. The securitization of Venezuelan migrants was partially neglected in several domains; the political, the societal and the health domain. In these domains the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic, or rather discussion on the Covid-19 pandemic dominated the agenda. Indicating that the previously established threat surrounding the Venezuelan migrants seemingly has been neglected. Whereas the military domain seemingly lessened in emphasis, but still largely seems to argue the pre-existing narrative which casts the Venezuelan state as the main adversary, not the migrants.

Thirdly, interestingly enough, in the societal domain it appeared that as civil society grew malcontent with the measures taken by its government that they have taken matters into their own hands. This is in part an indicator of a partially less resonant securitization narrative, and therefore could constitute a de-securitization. However, arguing it to be a de-securitization might be an exaggeration. Nonetheless, it is a very interesting result, as this direct rise in contention does not directly categorize within the presupposed options. This shall be addressed further in the discussion.

The change in securitization in Brazil does not appear to indicate intensifications of the securitization narrative. Although, it is necessary to add the caveat, that as this is an exploratory study, this is clearly not entirely excluded. Nevertheless, it is significant that as the Brazilian society has come under additional danger from the Covid-19 pandemic, the Brazilian government has seemingly not deemed the Venezuelan migrants an increased threat.

It is difficult to accurately determine to what extent the changes in securitization were attributable to the secondary securitization narrative. Additionally, it is not the exact of this thesis to provide an argument for causation instead the focus is on correlation. However, it is interesting to very briefly explore whether causation might be present. This causation is in some domains more readily argued than others. On the one hand, the change in the economic domain, which is argued to consist of a slight de-securitization, is easily argued to be caused by Brazilian governmental efforts to argue that business is continuing as usual despite the Covid-19 pandemic. Generally similar arguments can be made for the shifts in attention in the societal, military and political domains. It is considered likely that these are caused by a shift in attention.

On the other hand, surprisingly enough, the health domain saw hardly any change at all and appears unaffected by the global pandemic. Therefore, it is argued that it is considered likely these changes were at least in some part caused by the additional security narrative as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

What change is visible in the securitization of the Venezuelan migrants in Brazil throughout the Covid-19 pandemic? Overall, the change can only be characterized as split. Three categories have seen less attention, which could be construed as (slight) neglect. The economic domain saw what might be categorized as a de-securitization process occur. Whilst the health domain appears to be almost unaffected when it comes to the securitization of migrants, which is extremely counterintuitive.

## **7.2 The change in Colombia**

The overall change in securitization narrative in Colombia demonstrates an unexpected trend. Although the change per domain may differ, overall the trend seems to be that the Colombian government aims to maintain the already established securitization narrative of Venezuelan migrants throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. As reality changes around the securitization narrative, so do crucial elements of this securitization.

An overview of the change per domain might prove helpful here. Firstly, the securitization narrative in the military domain seems to shift some of its attention. Instead of a focus on the migrants, their attention to direct border control, militarily speaking was increased. However, it is argued that this does not constitute a significant change in security narrative. Secondly, in the health domain no real change in what the securitization narrative entailed occurred. The well-being of the migrants is still its primary aim. However, the extent to which the policies are able to deliver the outcomes they aim for has changed as the system has become even more strained. Thirdly, the securitization of Venezuelan migrants in the economic domain shows a rather unique development. It was argued that the Colombian government appeared to incorporate the threat posed by the Covid-19 pandemic into their pre-existing securitization narrative. However, the policies that were seen as an attempt at this change were considered to be ineffective and therefore potentially detrimental to the Colombian government's attempts at this securitization process. Fourthly, the societal domain demonstrates the effects of unintended consequences as well. The pre-existing securitization narrative is adhered to by the government. However, the success of this securitization is diminished as xenophobia grows. It was argued that this was in part due to the Colombian government's own policies. Finally, the political domain demonstrates no real change in the securitization narrative created by the government, except for a sense of urgency.

In what ways can these changes be characterized? Firstly, most domains seem to exhibit a trend in which the realities in which the securitization is placed changes significantly, without the securitization changing very significantly in the content of its narrative. For most domains the aim of the securitization of the Venezuelan migrants still remains the care for these migrants, having securitized their well-being. However, the consequences of these securitization efforts have changed. It was argued that in the societal and economic domain the unintended consequences of efforts to securitize the well-being of the migrants were detrimental to its effectiveness.

Secondly, shifts in domain are present. A shift in attention given to the securitization of Venezuelan migrants is mostly evident in the military domain. Where attention to the security of the country is diverted to mean an attempt at more well-established border control through border closure. Instead of its previous focal points, which seemingly was the protection of the Venezuelan migrant population.

Thirdly, the effectiveness of the securitization in the societal domain was affected. The government adheres to a narrative that places the Venezuelan migrants as under threat. Increasingly this seems to have come under question by its own society as levels of xenophobia seem to rise. This breakdown in the securitization ought to be seen as a simultaneous intensification of securitization and a de-securitization. Primarily it is a de-securitization of the narrative created by the Colombian government. On the other hand, this can also be seen as an intensification of a different securitization narrative created by other actors. In this more xenophobic narrative the Venezuelan migrant population is the threat to Colombian society. In other words, as the threat of the secondary securitization narrative increases, so did the societal contestation of the pre-existing narrative increase.

What change is visible in the securitization of the Venezuelan migrant population in Colombia throughout the Covid-19 pandemic? The changes overall can best be characterized as follows: Although the securitization narrative of the migrant population adhered to by the Colombian government seems to have seen almost no change over the two periods some changes have occurred. Primarily, in the sense that the Colombian government attempted to incorporate the migrant population in their securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, as policies have been seemingly less effective than intended, some unintended consequences have likely played a part in the lessened success of the securitization narrative in the societal and economic domains.

To what extent are the changes identified likely attributable to the secondary securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic? Although determining this accurately is not the aim of this thesis, it does provide an interesting insight to discuss a short potential answer to this question. In the Colombian case study the overall securitization of Venezuelan migrants showed little significant change. However, the changes that have occurred in the effectiveness in the securitization of the migrant population seem largely to have been caused by the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, the effectiveness of the securitization in the societal domain was affected, not because the securitization narrative changed, but the context within this occurred had changed. The policies created by the Colombian government demonstrated



unintended consequences as a result of the new securitization narrative, they were unable to adhere to their own policies, which undermined the pre-existing security narrative. Although more research is required, this does seem to indicate that this change may have been caused by the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **7.3 The change in Curacao**

The change in Curacao, unlike the other countries, shows a relatively clear trend. There is a move towards a clear intensification in certain domains, whilst other domains become more or less neglected. Acknowledging the attitude of the Curacao government before the Covid-19 pandemic, this seems fairly predictable. At this time they already adhered to a securitization narrative that was highly securitized in particular domains, whilst it neglected others. An overview per domain might prove to be illustrative.

The military domain gained significant profile during the Covid-19 pandemic. The role of the military was very visibly expanded to domains that were previously non-military. The health domain came to the forefront as well. During the Covid-19 pandemic the Venezuelan migrants are primarily argued to be potential carriers of the virus and supposedly form a major threat in this sense. Even though this domain was almost completely absent in the securitization narrative previously. The economic domain saw the opposite development. Before the Covid-19 pandemic this was a highly securitized domain and a crucial element of the overall securitization narrative. However, during the Covid-19 pandemic this became almost entirely neglected. The societal domain seems to follow a different trend. During the Covid-19 pandemic the securitization of this domain remained largely the same. However, the policies that were at the core of securitization efforts in this domain became impossible to implement. It might be argued that this constitutes a small de-securitization. The political domain became almost entirely neglected by the government. This led to an increase in criticism, however, the securitization narrative was not adapted.

In what ways can these changes be characterized? Firstly, overall it is argued that these changes might be considered an intensification of the securitization narrative in regards to the effective securitization narrative. Several domains became more securitized but no domains were de-securitized. That this constitutes an intensification of securitization is evident. As the narrative shifted with the crisis to these new domains this effectively increased the overall perceived threat the migrants pose to Curacao society.

Secondly, one might argue that this intensification is due to the introduction of a new securitization narrative, instead of an intensification of already existing securitization. For example this would argue that the new narrative is: The virus is a threat to society, the migrants could potentially have the virus, and therefore the migrants are a threat to society. However, it is argued here that this constitutes a shift in domains, and does not create a whole new securitization. Because the threat does not change. The migrants are still recognized as the

threat. However, the narrative how migrants constitute a threat is changed. It is argued that this is an addition to the pre-existing narrative, which is the primary addition to the intensification of the overall securitization. However, a case could be made that this is an additional securitization narrative that is placed on top of the pre-existing narratives.

Thirdly, it is clear that over time the criticism on the Curacao government has increased without severely affecting the narrative. This increased criticism is likely due to increased attention for the migrants in this time in which they become more vulnerable. This combined with the neglect that seems to occur in the affected domain gives other actors than the government the opportunity to attempt to re-shape the securitization narrative. Why does this attempt to re-shape the narrative seem unsuccessful? These attempts are likely unsuccessful because of the overall lack of attention anyway. There is no real narrative to re-shape through criticism.

Finally, the ineffectiveness of adhering to pre-existing securitization policies during this enormous change in reality is interesting. Although not much has changed in the securitization of the societal domain, the policies that were a part of this securitization have temporarily been rendered ineffective. This demonstrates the difference in governmental capacities between large countries, such as Brazil and Colombia, and small ones, like Curacao. Whereas these larger countries were able to create new policies to deal with such issues, the Curacao government is seemingly unable to do so, and unable to adhere to its own policies.

What change is visible in the securitization of the Venezuelan migrant population in Curacao throughout the Covid-19 pandemic? There is an intensification of the securitization narrative, which uses an additional element to cast the Venezuelan migrant population as a threat to Curacao society. It is argued that this is an adjustment to the securitization narrative, and not necessarily a new one. Although a case could be made for it being an additional securitization narrative. Criticism on the securitization policies has increased. However, the effectiveness of these criticisms is questionable. Finally, it is interesting to note that Curacao experiences a large gap between what it aims to do, and what it is actually capable of doing. As is evident in the societal domain.

To what extent are these changes attributable to the Covid-19 pandemic and its securitization? As previously mentioned, it is the aim of this thesis to provide a correlation, not to prove causation. Nevertheless, it is worth it to very briefly explore whether the changes in securitization narrative may have been caused by the secondary securitization. In the case of Curacao the intensification of the health and military domains seems to be directly caused by

the addition of the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic in the pre-existing narrative. Indicating that it is likely that at least some change witnessed in the securitization narrative is attributable to the secondary securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### **7.4 The changes in general**

The most notable result so far is in how much the cases differ in their change. If brought back down to one main element one might argue that: The change in Brazil can best be characterized as an increase in complexity. The change in Colombia is more straightforward. The securitization narrative itself remains largely unaffected. However, due to the new situations in which this securitization is placed, the results of this have changed. The change in Curacao can best be characterized as an intensification of the securitized narrative about migrants. However, the new situation has also partially softened this. Therefore, there is no straightforward answer to what type of change securitization narratives undergo when another securitization narrative enters society.

There is, however, definitely change in the securitization of motivation motivated by the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic. This is most readily identifiable in the case of Curacao, where the emphasis of the securitization narrative has completely shifted to include the Covid-19 pandemic. In Colombia the change in securitization is primarily visible in a small shift in domains and in the urgency of particular elements of the securitization narrative. In Brazil the changes are in no way straightforward, this is potentially due to the uncertain securitization of the coronavirus in general. This has led to very large differences between the domains, where some de-securitization may have taken place, contestation in other domains is growing, and other domains appear unaffected.

It can be argued that the Colombian case study demonstrates an attempt at achieving coexistence. At the Colombian government attempts to have both securitizations exist alongside each other. However, this proved to be impossible, due to the unintended consequences of the policies flowing from the secondary securitization. The Curacao case can be seen as an attempt to add the securitization of the coronavirus onto the pre-existing securitization narrative of migrants. Making them even more of a potential threat to society than they already were. The Brazilian case might be seen as an attempt to very publicly denounce the securitization of the coronavirus and therefore attempts to play things off as business as usual. However, this ironically has led to some shifts in narrative.

So have the securitizations in the cases been affected by the emergence of a secondary securitization? This has to be answered affirmatively. The cases have all been affected in one way or another, with significant differences occurring even between domains within cases, by the secondary securitization brought about by the coronavirus.

## 7.5 Conclusion

As has become remarkably visible throughout this thesis, the change that occurs in securitization during a period characterized by a secondary securitization narrative is highly context dependent. In the three developed securitization case studies the change differed greatly between the cases. Additionally, the change demonstrated great variation between different domains within the same case as well. The one element that all three cases shared was that the securitization of the Venezuelan migrants became somewhat more contested, in one or several domains. The effects of this varied significantly as well. Nonetheless, it is an interesting dynamic that has been uncovered. As a securitization narrative is changed over time, and likely affected by a secondary securitization, it is also likely to experience increased contestation.

At the start of this thesis three categories of change were proposed; intensification, securitization, and neglect. There was an additional fourth category proposed in case there was no identifiable change over time; coexistence. The definition of the fourth category needs a small addition in order to remain effective. In its original proposal this was argued to simply be that no interaction seemingly took place between the security narratives. However, as has become visible in the Colombian case, it is possible that the two securitizations can be partially morphed into a single securitization without affecting the pre-existing securitizations' contents. Although there are effects on the outcome of the securitization, the narrative itself remains almost entirely unaffected. This particular process, which had not been accounted for, ought to be classified as coexistence as well. It was proposed that these categories of change could potentially occur simultaneously or alone within a single securitization narrative. This is what has been found as well. Furthermore, all four categories seem to have been represented in one way or another. However there is no singular way in which all the cases have been affected. Instead each has been affected differently and often in contradictory ways.

There was only one way in which all the cases were similarly affected. Each case saw an increasing contestation of the securitization narrative created by the government. It could be argued that a new category of change ought to be added. One that could be called contention. This intervention category would be useful to indicate that a particular domain or securitization has become more contested whilst the original actors doing the securitization have adhered to the pre-existing securitization narrative. Change is triggered by new actors because they intervened in this securitization narrative. Intervention would supposedly be more likely to occur in a domain that is neglected by the government because there is potential for change in these domains. Intuitively one might argue that an increase in securitization would generate

more contention. Although the findings do not seem to directly support this. Instead, as seen in the case of Curacao, which saw a general intensification, contestation appeared to take place in the domain(s) being neglected by the government. The feasibility of adding this as a category is still under question. Because all cases of securitization will be contested in one way or another by other actors. Therefore, creation of a new category may perhaps be redundant since it could be indicating a fact of life and not real change in a securitization narrative.

Another element that needs further consideration when reviewing my answer to the main research question is the role of denial of the secondary security narrative. The Brazilian government largely denies the existence of the coronavirus as a potential threat to their society. However, this denial has also had some consequences for the securitization narrative adhered to by this government. In that sense this might indicate a particular type of change that is not currently contained within the categories of neglect, intensification, de-securitization, coexistence or even intervention. As neglect has so far been understood vis-a-vis the previous securitization narrative when a new secondary securitization narrative emerges. However, this does not account for the reverse process. Where a government denies the existence of the secondary securitization whilst attempting to maintain the first. However, proposing the creation of a new category seems unnecessary. Instead neglect ought to be adapted to contain this reverse process as well.

In the end, it appears that no matter what line governments seem to take, even if they attempt to deny the existence of a new securitization narrative, the securitization narrative was still changed over time as a new securitization came to the stage. Throughout this thesis this has become clear as the securitization narratives of migrants have changed as the Covid-19 pandemic developed. Although the focus has been on proving correlation, not causation, it ought to be abundantly clear that correlation does exist. This thesis wondered in what ways such a change might be visible and proposed several possible categories in order to categorize this change. After due consideration it appears that although correlation is easily identifiable the interactions of securitization narratives are highly context dependent. The types of changes differ greatly per domain and per case.

#### *7.5.1 Theoretical implications*

The main theoretical contributions of this thesis, besides a direct answer to the main research question and the proposal of the categories for change in securitization include the following: Firstly, it seems that a new securitization has an effect on a pre-existing

securitization. It is notable that the role of the audience or rather the other actors besides the government it seemed to change in every case. Although the extent to which this change occurred is context dependent. This makes this highly unpredictable. One case even demonstrated the government's own securitization efforts seemingly backfiring. This unpredictability, although not entirely surprising, is however an interesting theoretical finding. If we assume securitization narratives to be about power, it indicates that this maintenance of power of narratives can be unpredictable and context dependent as well.

Finally, in this thesis it has been argued that securitization does not necessarily require the creation of an 'Other' it simply requires a referent object. Instead of arguing that a group of people constitutes a threat it appears that it is possible to argue for other things to be threats as well. Research has already been conducted into securitizing disease (Curley & Herington, 2011; Enemark, 2007; McInnes & Lee, 2006; McInnes & Rushton, 2013). However, minimal research has been conducted on using the dangers a particular group faces as a threat in securitization (Watson, 2011). Nevertheless it is argued that this is precisely what takes place in the case of Colombia. The securitization, or rather the extraordinary measures that were required, were all framed as being necessary to take care of the migrants' wellbeing. The implications of this finding should be a shift of attention within the field of securitization to devote further research to this particular type of securitization.

### *7.5.2 Reflections on this thesis*

Looking back at the research conducted in his thesis several elements worth reflecting upon methodologically. Firstly, it is necessary to reevaluate the relevance of exploring the cases and the main research question. Overall, it is considered to have been useful to explore this particular topic since it had been unexplored and it has been shown that securitizations do affect each other. Although the hoped for outcome of a similar effect in all cases however did not occur. Instead this thesis ended up with an amalgam of different outcomes between the cases and even within the cases. Therefore, it is argued that looking for a baseline was not necessarily required. Instead a very close study of one case could perhaps have sufficed. However, using multiple cases does reinforce the idea that securitizations do clearly affect each other. In that sense the relevance of using multiple cases remains without question.

Secondly, the topical and pervasive nature of the secondary securitization has, in hindsight, granted the potential for a very large data set. This thesis has helped circumvent that by sticking to a particular set of sources as much as possible. However, the dataset remains a



potential pitfall. Thirdly, it might be argued that researching this topic through the domains is too formalistic. Although it was useful in this particular case when to look at three different countries that deal with two securitization narratives. When one considers the overlap between domains it is identifiable that information and insight may have gotten lost here. It was attempted to circumvent this by paying specific attention to bringing the insights gained from the individual domains together. Nonetheless, a more holistic approach from the outset might provide meaningful new insights.

Finally, this thesis consciously focused on the changes that occurred and the processes of securitization were less directly addressed. However, addressing these processes, and perhaps categorizing these processes as well may have added an interesting additional way of determining change in the case studies. Perhaps this would have helped create a more cohesive image of the changes that occurred in the securitization narratives as it remains unexplored whether similar processes yield similar results.

### *7.5.3 Reflections on the securitization of immigration*

When one reflects on the securitization of immigration overall throughout this thesis several elements stand out as well. Primarily, that one might argue a seeming lack of more traditional securitization narratives. Only one case, the case of Curacao seems to adhere to a classical securitization narrative. Although more traditional cases may have been informative as well it is argued that the inclusion of the cases of Brazil and Colombia did contribute in meaningful ways to explore the potential interactions of securitization.

Additionally, it is worth noting that this also points to the potential necessity of a shift in securitization theory. Perhaps the focus ought to be less on classical securitization but more on the securitization process, as argued before. It appears that traditional securitization narratives are relatively rare. However, the creation of a threat to accomplish extraordinary measures, securitization, is significantly more common in diverse forms.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that although the securitization of immigration has been researched throughout the existence of securitization theory this may indeed have been focused too narrowly as well. Migrants are not always a threat, nor are they always perceived to be. Instead some societies, such as the Colombian society see migrants leaving their home for good reasons as the ones being threatened. This might challenge the preconceptions of securitization of immigrants at large thus far.

#### *7.5.4 Reflections on the effects of the Covid-19 crisis.*

Although this was not the direct goal of this thesis, several insights have been gained into the situation of the Covid-19 crisis in the countries that were studied which are worthy of some short reflections. These insights focus on the situation of the Venezuelan migrant population as the situations around the corona virus have developed. Firstly, it is notable that significant streams of migration have been halted. This is not an absolute certainty due to the porous nature of the Brazilian and Colombian borders to Venezuela. Nevertheless, the influx of migrants has significantly decreased as a result. This means that the nature of the migration crisis has significantly changed throughout the duration of the crisis. The implications of the halting of migration streams are currently still unclear.

Additionally, as a byproduct of this thesis we have learned that the situation of the already vulnerable migrant group has seemingly become even more vulnerable. In all the case studies the health situations for the migrant group has not been improved, in fact these have deteriorated. This makes them even more vulnerable to the dangers of the Coronavirus. These increased vulnerabilities are also identifiable in the economic domains and in the societal domains as well.

#### *7.5.5 Future research recommendations*

Finally this thesis would like to make some future research recommendations. Firstly, it argues for the further study of changing securitizations in general. Particularly expanding on the theoretical and analytical foundations that this thesis has attempted to create. However, work is still required into explorations of change of securitization in general. As simply exploring these changes, through repeated studies of a single case for example, would provide meaningful new insights in the process of securitization. Augmenting such research with research delving into the interactions between different securitization processes might then prove exceptionally insightful.

This thesis so far has suggested that securitization processes can react very differently to the introduction of a new securitization. However, what this thesis has not done was research this based on already similar securitization narratives. Instead it looked at cases that vary significantly between them. It is also recommended that research be conducted, using the theoretical foundation created in this thesis, using case studies that have more similar starting points.

Additionally, whereas this thesis focused almost entirely on the outcomes of the interactions of securitizations it did not explore the process of such interaction in-depth. It is thought that such research, on the actual process of interactions, would prove very insightful as well. This thesis might provide some useful starting points for such research. For example, perhaps certain categories of change go with certain processes. Such a finding would help significantly in understanding the processes of securitization overall.

Additionally, it might be interesting to research securitizations that seemingly do not overlap in the domains they occupy. One might consider exploring the securitization of terror in the context of a global pandemic for example. At first glance, these appear to be unrelated. Even determining whether it is possible for securitizations to be entirely unrelated would prove to be an interesting subject. In what ways do these types of securitization affect each other, or do these affect each other at all?

It could potentially be interesting to focus on a single case study. Additionally this might be augmented with the originally proposed interviews for this thesis that were unable to be conducted. This potentially creates a more complete and well-rounded picture of the interactions of securitizations.

Research is recommended into defining when a particular securitization shifts into being a new securitization as well. When does a particular securitization end and when does another one begin? This is one of the elements that this thesis was unable to address satisfactorily, but did come across. Do we consider the securitization of the Venezuelan migrants in Curacao during the times of Corona to be a new securitization? Or, should it be categorized as an evolved version of the pre-existing one? For now, this thesis chose the latter. However, future research may make different decisions in this regard.

## **Executive Summary**

This thesis contains research conducted into the interaction of separate securitization processes. In doing so it adds a new way of researching securitization to the field as the interacting securitizations has seemingly not appeared yet on the research agenda. Therefore, this thesis is an effort to uncover its feasibility and potential. It is determined that correlation between changes in pre-existing securitization and the appearance of a secondary securitization does exist. However, it does not go so far as to argue for direct causation. Nonetheless, it is argued that this requires significantly more research.

Securitization is understood to be the creation of an existential threat by a securitizing actor to lift a particular security issue out of the realm of ‘normal politics’ and into the realm ‘emergency politics’. Through this process it becomes possible for securitizing actors to create extreme policies that were previously thought unimaginable. It is posited that different securitization narratives can exist simultaneously, and that when they do these are likely to have an effect on each other.

This suggested interaction of securitization is explored through exploration of three separate case studies: Brazil, Colombia and Curacao. These cases were selected because of the commonalities between them when it comes to potential for securitization narratives and their interaction. All three cases have seen the impacts of migration from Venezuela to their countries and, have been affected by the Covid-19 global pandemic as well. This thesis aimed to determine in what ways the securitization of immigration changed over time and what potential influences the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic may have had.

It proposes four categories of change: intensification; strengthening of the security narrative, de-securitization; a weakening of the security narrative, neglect; neglect of the original security narrative and coexistence; no real effect.

After discussing all three cases it finds that all these are present, in some cases simultaneously. Additionally, it is found that in particular the Colombian case study demonstrates an unusual securitization narrative from the start. It securitizes the wellbeing of the Venezuelan migrants, casting them as victims, not as threats. This form of securitization has been proposed before, but is still an interesting finding.

Furthermore, at the end the thesis proposes the creation of a fifth category: contention. In this category the change to the security narrative consists of increased contestation by the audience, which is seemingly attributable to the effects of the introduction of a secondary

securitization narrative. The category of neglect is also amended to include the neglect of the new securitization narrative, as this is what appear to occur in the case study in Brazil.

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## **Appendices**

The appendices that contain my sources is provided in a separate document, since it would be detrimental to the readability of the thesis. The appendices consist of the primary source materials utilized in the research conducted in Chapters 4 through 6, with the exception of several reports by organizations that would exponentially increase its size. However, as is with all sources utilized in this thesis, they are easily and publicly available.